

## A Rhetorical Deconstruction of Amanda Palmer's Poem on the Boston Marathon Bombing; 'Empathy is Nothing'

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*Terrorism in the United States, particularly highlighted by the infamous 9/11 attacks, continued to be a persistent concern. This study investigated the intricate relationship between terrorism and sporting events and examining the emergence of global-local terrorism, exemplified by the Boston bombers. Methodologically, this research incorporated Amanda Palmer's poem written in the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombing. Using qualitative analysis, the study examined the rhetorical elements and appeals employed in the poem to convey the emotional toll and complexities faced by individuals in the aftermath of terrorism. Thematic analysis reveals recurring rhetorical strategies, emphasizing the transformative influence of art and the human spirit during difficulty. The researcher employed classical rhetoric to dissect the poem, exploring ethos, pathos, logos, and other rhetorical elements to assess its persuasive and artistic effectiveness. This comprehensive analysis contributes valuable insights into the rhetorical strategies used by artists in addressing societal challenges and highlights the importance of empathy and compassion in artistic expression.*

## 1. Introduction

Terrorism in the United States has been a perennial concern, underscored by the infamous attacks on September 11, 2001. While the Middle East has long grappled with suicide bombings, events like the Boston Marathon bombing and the emergence of an American Al-Qaeda suicide bomber in Syria, have raised the specter of a growing risk of similar incidents within the United States (Johnson et.al., 2015; Abhik et al., 2021). Terrorism is conceptualized as a strategic communication tactic inherently characterized by negativity, offering a means to disseminate messages to a vast, diverse, and dispersed audience in a brief time frame. The intricate relationship between terrorism and sporting events, designed to instill a culture of fear within society, serves as a fertile ground for such hostile actions. Despite the robust security measures in place for these events, the symbolic targeting emphasizes global exposure, challenging the host nation's assertion to provide a protective atmosphere (Richards, 2012; Simpson et al., 20 Silva & Greene-Colozzi, 2021). Whether implemented single-handedly by the perpetrators being affiliates of extremist group, aiming sporting events often shoots from an inherent reasoning aimed at accenting government policies supposed as misapplied, partial, and defective, particularly towards specific ethnicities. These activities result in repercussion, damaging and disturbing the lives of innocents. Such examples during sporting events become symbolic validations for grumbles and vindictive intentions, with far-reaching media attention creating a symbiotic relationship that resonates and mainstreams these atrocious deeds, providing terrorist groups with considerable global promotion (Gonzalez, 2020).

The conceptualization of the foe and the notion of the outsider in dealing with the 'others' was often taut to trepidations experienced during lacerating events, superseding narratives of solidarity, communal collectivism, and inclusion ( Lin, 2023; Schmitt, 2007; Simmel, 1971). It is the outsider's encouraged variableness that has led to chaos within the recognized order, enunciating contradiction that subverted state's law, representing both inclusion and exclusion concurrently (Huysmans, 1998; Seppälä, 2022). This has led to the appearance of inconsistent binaries such as acquitted and guilty, compassionate and destructive, us and them, comrade and adversary, pushing them into the political attention and requiring further intercession. As traditionally relegated individuals and immigrants, this was obvious in the case of the Tsarnaevs, branded as foreigners due to their connection to the Boston Marathon Bombing in 2013 (Corry, 2023). They were dispensed with the liability based on their connection with a particular recluse group, crediting them as an prevailing threat and intensifying communal bafflement. These entwined apparatuses of identity construction equivocate distinct phases in the Boston narrative, stressing the importance of inspecting identity as a procedure and molting light on the ambivalence towards the Tsarnaev brothers, a vital aspect of the preliminary account of the attack (deRaismes, 2017).

Individuals inherently strive for coherence between their internal thoughts and the external world. Consequently, when legal authorities render decisions, individuals tend to accept and

adhere to these verdicts to maintain alignment with the prevailing norms in their societies. Limited research has delved into these cognitive biases within practical contexts. A natural quasi-experiment explored the sentencing of Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, the Boston Marathon bomber, and Americans' perspectives on his punishment. A survey of a representative U.S. national sample conducted between April 29 and June 26, 2015, assessed opinions on Tsarnaev's sentencing (Thompson et al., 2020). Multiple logistic regression analyses revealed that respondents who participated in the survey after Tsarnaev received a death sentence were more inclined to support capital punishment compared to those surveyed before the sentencing. These findings retained significance even after accounting for key covariates, such as gender, race, religious affiliation, Boston residency, beliefs in a just world, and Republican political party identification. The results from this quasi-experiment suggest that individuals tend to adapt their opinions to align with the established outcome, particularly once the result becomes widely known (Thompson et al., 2020).

Anti-Muslim ethno-racial discourse built by utilizing a media analysis approach focused on the coverage of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings were extensively documented as a notable case of Muslim terrorism perpetrated from the domestic front within the United States, linking individuals born and/or raised in Western societies since the 9/11 attacks (Haider, 2021). Boston Globe, CBS Boston, and the New York Times reports framed and corroborated the subsequent narratives concerning the perpetrators; two brothers of Chechen origin who were long-time U.S. residents. It uncovered the advent of an anti-Muslim ethno-cultural narrative that promptly acknowledged Muslim individuality and proclaimed the absence of aggression and discernment towards Muslims, framed within a narrative of extremism. The narrative of Muslim radicalization aimed at attention to individual life paths wherein mental and religious factors interconnected with contact to radical Islamist groups, propelling young homegrown Muslims toward extremism and violence (Gonzalez, 2020). However, the probability of this narrative to challenge notions of intrinsic Muslim difference was constrained by its reliance on nested binaries, including the contrast of good versus evil and the West versus Islam. Additionally, the amalgamation of a racial notion of vehement potential disseminates the view that Muslims are integrally tended towards fanatically vicious behavior, limiting the narrative's knack to interrogate essentialized opinions of Muslim distinctiveness (Kibria et al., 2018).

The rise of twenty-first-century terrorism, demonstrated gaudily by the Boston bombers, was a composite chemistry of international and domestic dynamics. The U.S. has approached its reaction to terrorism as fragment of a global war, while its European complements have unwaveringly treated domestic terrorism as criminal cases (Ostman, 2020).. The Boston case presented a unique classification of terrorism, termed as glo-cal terrorism, personifying a crossbreed nature that posed momentous challenges to both the global and criminal justice-oriented approaches. The difficulties were particularly marked when examining cases where second and third-generation immigrants, as witnessed in the U.S. and the UK, engaged in acts of terror in the role of instigator-agitators who radicalized individuals that successively committed

acts of terrorism. This impelled an investigation into whether the phenomenon of local-global terrorism has necessitated the obligatory limitations on otherwise secured free expression (Guiora, 2015; Ouassini, 2022).

## 2. Literature Review

The global prevalence of extremism, fueled by discontent and animosity among nations and sects, induced shifts in preferences, leaving a destructive impact on humanity. Every individual has been touched by the ramifications of extremism in human societies, with poets often serving as early responders, capturing and articulating these sentiments in their poetic creations. Such reflections endured, integrating into languages, literatures, and cultures. Extremism, in its wake, gives rise to novel words, similes, metaphors, and other linguistic devices that become integral components of language and literature, perpetuating through time. Extraordinary incidents give rise to a reservoir of words, vocabulary, similes, and metaphors, each contributing to a nuanced understanding of these occurrences. In the contemporary world, extremism pervades various aspects, encompassing thoughts, actions, and attitudes that deviate from a balanced state (Jan and Mobeen, 2022).

Barlow and MacGregor (2021) delved into the prospects of self-restoration facilitated by drama conventions with a focus on narrative poetry as a catalytic stimulus. The analysis centered on the poem by Wislawa Szymborska, employing it as a medium to engage with drama conventions. The selection of Szymborska's poem as a stimulus was deliberate, given the poet's adept use of multiple perspectives and roles across different temporal and spatial dimensions. This approach enabled individuals to dynamically reshape and re-imagine their identity while critically examining dominant narratives related to terrorism (Bhatia, 2021). It contended for the significance of integrating poetry and drama as vehicles for constructing meta-narratives of discourse, thereby empowering participants to re-frame their narratives within prevailing narrative structures through innovative exploration.

In the contemporary literary landscape, a multitude of literary movements and genres have emerged, and among them, documentary poetry stood out as a noteworthy addition (Dowdy, 2020). This innovative genre seamlessly intertwined primary source materials, encompassing a diverse range of subjects such as war, political events, terrorism, and incidents involving people in detention, with the artistic expression of poetry. Amiri Baraka, a prominent contemporary American poet, contributed to this genre with his poem 'Somebody Blew up America' (Barker, 2020). This work, situated within the aftermath of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center, presented a perspective distinct from the narratives propagated by American propaganda and mass media. It aimed at illuminating his stance regarding the September 11 events, exploring the motivations behind his perspective, identifying the perceived actual perpetrators, and deciphering the intentions attributed to this terrorist incident. It was contended that the American government possessed prior knowledge of the impending destruction of the Trade Center, asserting

that the orchestrated event unfolded according to a carefully crafted plan in collaboration with the American government and the CIA as cooperative partners (Al-Douri, 2023).

Poetry has not only been transcended as a mere creative outlet; it also emerged as a platform to combat not only dictatorial regimes and oppressors but also ideologies and political hegemony (Macrine, 2020). These forces replaced notions of resistance and self-defense with those of terrorism, effectively silencing the oppressed. Refusing acquiescence to the status quo, it voiced dissent by challenging the prevailing state narrative through the medium of poetry. This poetry has not served to propagate or invent violence; rather, it aimed to connect a moment to the ongoing fight for freedom. By transforming language into a vessel of universal human experience, rejecting oppression, and infusing it with identity, the poetry served as a powerful instrument of dissent (Athamneh, 2018).

Moran (2020) has analyzed the poems by Suheir Hammad and Martin Espada to highlight the role of trans-cultural counter witnessing in activating alternative perspectives to challenge the prevailing patriotism perpetuated by mainstream media and exposed how pervasive patriotism often conferred ethical and moral privilege upon dominant cultural groups. These performances served to unravel the intricate realities faced by marginalized groups within diverse societies, such as the United States (Thiruselvam, 2019). Trans-cultural counter-witnessing has encouraged readers to witness the attacks from diverse perspectives by acknowledging the multifaceted nature of terror in multicultural societies and underscored how a multi-directional consciousness fosters diversity in public discourses. It also served as a reminder of how sites of violence, like the 9/11 attacks, became entangled in larger networks of cultural, political, and social realities. This approach compelled readers to recognize the collision and ricochet effect of national foreign policies, economic practices, and military actions with other interconnected events. Considering poetry as a vehicle for posing questions, the poems raised numerous questions about the significance of 9/11, both in its historical context and its enduring impact on present perceptions as well as the lasting effects of historical trauma on the imagination of claimed national and global identity. Art and literature, as demonstrated in the analyzed poetry, provided spaces that extended beyond the boundaries of patriotism. In an era of polarized politics, 9/11 remains a crucial site for cultivating empathetic imagination, as evidenced in the poetry under consideration.

McCooley (2012) delved into the intricacies of the final written statement of 'Timothy McVeigh; the Oklahoma Bomber' dissecting the deliberate choices he made in crafting his last communication before execution. The analysis begun by scrutinizing the intentional disjunction between the document title and content, pondering whether his omission of the poem's title was intentional. It explored the broader impact of his media engagement, highlighting how he strategically used silence and poetry, specifically W. E. Henley's 'Invictus' as symbolic language aimed at cultural vandalism. The passage delved into the uncanny features of McVeigh's appropriation within literary theory especially in the realm of quotation challenging utopian perspectives within the field. It also contemplated the extraordinary features of McVeigh's crime

and punishment, emphasizing the unsettling intersection between terrorism and poetry. His appropriation was positioned as a thought-provoking element that drew attention to the unstable nature of texts and their varied uses. The study thus contributed to a significant understanding of literature, terrorism, and cultural appropriation.

Boston Marathon Bombings (2013) marked a significant terrorist incident, the first of its scale since September 11, impacting a large public gathering. Dugan and Fisher (2015) emphasized the importance of directing additional resources toward preventive measures to mitigate the risk of casualties in terrorist attacks during open-space sporting events. The celebration of freedom and human achievement in these events necessitates strategic security investments to deter terrorist threats. The rarity of terrorist attacks at major sporting events was highlighted, emphasizing the need for a thorough understanding of potential targets and effective preventive strategies.

### **3. Methodology**

Amanda Palmer's poem written in the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombing, provided a deeply personal and introspective perspective. The narrative revealed the complexity and emotional toll of a moment that unexpectedly catapulted her into controversy and criticism. The initial shock and horror of the bombing were vividly described, as she grappled with the immediate aftermath, seeking solace in connecting with her community online. The poem, crafted in response to the overwhelming emotions and chaos, became a focal point of both support and criticism. The account underscored the vulnerability of individuals in the face of terrorism and the need for communal strength. She reflected on the unexpected backlash she faced, not only from those who disagreed with her but also from within her own ideological circles. The perceived betrayal by fellow liberals and the loneliness she experienced revealed the complexities of navigating compassion and empathy in the aftermath of a tragedy. The narrative also delved into the artistic aspect of the poem, exploring Palmer's struggle with being labeled a "shitty poet" and the internal conflict over potentially revising the poem for a more considered response. This struggle highlights the artist's dedication to her craft and the tension between artistic expression and public perception. The narrative captures the fear, growth, and the ongoing journey toward healing and understanding along with exploration of radical compassion and empathy that served as a testament to the transformative influence of art and the human spirit during difficulty (Palmer, 2019).

The researcher has used a qualitative approach based on purposive sampling technique reflecting Boston Marathon Bombing 2013 and its repercussion based on how an individual view it from within. Through methodical inspection of rhetorical rudiments and appeals existing in the poem the data was coded using recognized classifications to categorize rhetorical devices, appeals, and elements employed in the poem. Thematic analysis was then applied to explore repeated linguistic stratagems to evaluate communication effectiveness. The outline adopted classical rhetoric appeal to investigative use of ethos, pathos, logos, and other features present in the poem.

The study envisioned to suggest valuable acumens into the rhetorical tactics employed by artists in addressing communal trials through cogent artistic *modus operandi*.

For an inclusive analysis, the title of the poem was reviewed initially, delving into the rhetorical reasoning behind its selection. Subsequently, the physiognomies of rhetoric were discovered, encompassing the use of invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery in both the poem and the poet to assess its cogent handling of the text. The analysis ensued to separate the rhetorical construction of the poem, investigating how the poet effectively combined empathy into the message by methodically guiding the audience from introductory paragraphs through the body to the concluding theme of collectivism and unison as a community and nation.

Having gripped the tenor, the research probed into scrutinizing branches of rhetoric induced in the audience to impact lucidity and emotions with caution. Additionally to understand the articulateness of Amanda Palmer as a powerful yet empathetic artist, the focus shifted to rhetorical appeals. This exploration enabled the researcher to distinguish among ethos, pathos, and logos, identifying specific qualities that formed the strength of Palmer's artistic expression. The researcher evaluated how she judiciously contextualized the narrative for superior memorability and relevance with the audience.

Finally, the researcher reconnoitered all conceivable use of literary devices in detail, finding that Palmer employed balanced sentence structures, positive and proactive language, syntax, metaphor, simile, irony, diction, personification, analogy, symbolism, repetition, alliteration, imagery, anaphora with extreme intelligence. These literary devices added to making the poem one of the most associable texts, nurturing communal unity and fortitude-driven national harmony.

#### **4. Analysis and Discussion**

The poem not only reflected evil other Tsarnaevs and was vividly critical of multicultural America but had also promoted American exceptionalism and advocated American creed through the strengthening notions of unity as a nation state rejecting others ethno-culturally blurred identities within the system as intruding terrorist and urged the need to revise standards to empathize with enhanced carefulness. The very notion is exclusively projected through the title as well where the duality of meaning not only suggested process of empathy as an unneeded thing but also reflected that those sabotaging the peace process, for them their must be strict dealing mechanism where empathy must be excluded as the first thing to make them learn the lesson in a better way for the damage caused by their brutal, ferocious and violently mean acts. The poet also demonized the perpetrators through staunch and resilient tone by stating that the immigrants must be contained and refrained from coming to the streamlined and civilized world to stop their anarchic acts and those supporting them actually harbored the same peace disrupting temperament but the American patience is over now and they must be dealt iron handedly now to revive the peace and serenity once again

The poem reflected a *central theme* focused on the complexities of empathy and understanding, particularly in the context of conflict, adversity, and societal divisions. It delved into the challenges of embracing compassion for those who may be perceived as adversaries or as embodying the darkest aspects of humanity. The poem prompted readers to consider the limitations of empathy and the emotional toll of striving to comprehend the experiences of others, especially those who have committed heinous acts.

The poem does not follow a traditional *narrative structure*. It relied on metaphor, symbolism, and allegory to convey its message and by not adhering to a specific narrative type. It utilized a fragmented and introspective structure through its thought-provoking imagery and evocative language, exploring various themes and ideas related to empathy and human understanding. The modality of the poem was predominantly *subjective*. The poem expressed the speaker's personal thoughts, emotions, reflections and conveyed the speaker's intimate perspective and emotional experiences, encouraging readers to reflect on the challenges and limitations of fostering genuine connections with others. By presenting a subjective viewpoint, the poem prompted readers to consider the intricacies of empathy in a divided world.

The *tone of the poem* was impassioned, introspective, and contemplative, reflecting a sense of urgency and emotional intensity. It oscillated between moments of introspective reflection and fervent urgency, conveying a deep emotional resonance that engages the reader on an intimate level. The poem's tone was marked by a mixture of despair, frustration, and a call for action, emphasizing the importance of empathy and understanding in a world fraught with conflict and division. Moreover, it was characterized by a sense of disillusionment with societal attitudes and a profound yearning for greater compassion and unity. It conveyed a strong emotional depth that encouraged readers to reflect on the complexities of human nature and the challenges of fostering empathy amidst turmoil and adversity. Apart from being somber and reflective, it also carried a subtle undercurrent of resilience and determination, urging readers to confront the limitations of empathy and to strive for a more empathetic and understanding society.

The *voice of the poem* was thoughtful, emotional, and pensive, reflecting a deep sense of emotional resonance and urgency oscillating between moments of despair, frustration, and a call for action, thus emphasizing the importance of fostering compassion and unity in a divided world. It also carried an underlying tone of resilience and determination, urging readers to confront the limitations of empathy and to strive for a more compassionate and understanding society by evoking a strong emotional response through power of contemplation of this divided world marked by clash.

The *mood of the poem* was introspective, somber, and contemplative, reflecting the complexities of human emotions and the challenges of fostering empathy in the face of adversity and conflict. Throughout the poem, there was a pervasive sense of emotional weight and introspection, as the speaker grapples with the limitations of understanding and compassion in a



divided and tumultuous world. The mood of the poem was also marked by a sense of urgency and emotional intensity, emphasizing the importance of addressing societal divisions and fostering a greater sense of empathy and unity. The somber tone underscored the gravity of the themes explored, while the contemplative nature of the poem encouraged readers to reflect on the complexities of human nature and the moral dilemmas inherent in navigating conflicting perspectives and experiences. Apart from contemplative and introspective mood, it also conveyed a subtle undercurrent of resilience and determination, suggesting the possibility of fostering greater empathy and understanding despite the challenges presented.

The *setting of the poem* appeared to be metaphorical, reflecting the societal and emotional landscape rather than a specific physical location. It encompassed a complex and tumultuous environment characterized by division, conflict, and a struggle to understand and empathize with others. The poem's setting was evoked through vivid imagery and symbolic representations, such as the references to running in different directions, the race through the dark, and the platforms of austerity. These elements created a sense of chaos and uncertainty, reflecting the challenges faced by individuals and communities in navigating a world fraught with ideological, emotional, and social turmoil. Additionally, the poem's setting was further shaped by the portrayal of darkness and light, representing the dichotomy between fear and hope, hatred and love, and the struggle to find common ground amidst adversity. This symbolic setting emphasized the importance of empathy and understanding in overcoming the divisions and conflicts that permeate contemporary society.

In the poem the use of *perspective* was primarily focused on the personal viewpoint of the speaker, which allowed for a nuanced exploration of the complexities of empathy and human understanding within a fragmented societal landscape. The poem's perspective was introspective, inviting readers to engage with the speaker's intimate thoughts and experiences, fostering a sense of empathy and connection with the themes and ideas presented. Through the speaker's perspective, the poem encouraged readers to reflect on the challenges and limitations of fostering genuine connections and compassion between societal struggles and intricacies of human relationships within a troubled and divided world.

In the poem the *rhythmic pattern* served to reinforce the emotional intensity and thematic complexity of the text. The fluctuating rhythm reflected the emotional turmoil and internal conflicts experienced by individuals within the narrative. The variations in the rhythmic pattern mirror the complexities of human emotions and experiences, emphasizing the challenges of fostering empathy and understanding in the face of suffering and adversity. It has also created a sense of urgency and emotional intensity, underscoring the gravity of the themes and ideas explored in the poem. The shifts in tone and pacing contributed to the heightened emotional impact of the text, prompting readers to engage with the poem's central message about the divided and troubled world. The rhythmic pattern also allowed for moments of pause and reflection,

encouraging readers to contemplate the complexities of human relationships and the challenges of extending empathy to others.

The poem appeared to utilize a *varied rhyme scheme*, incorporating both end rhymes and internal rhymes to create a rhythmic and musical quality. While the poem do not adhere to a consistent rhyme pattern throughout, it incorporated occasional rhyming words and phrases to enhance its overall flow and poetic resonance. For example, the lines *'we are strong'* and *'we won't be taken down'* utilized end rhymes, contributing to the rhythmic structure of the poem. Additionally, the repetition of phrases such as *'stand your ground'* and *'running to the right'* introduced a form of internal rhyme that helped to create a sense of continuity and musicality within the poem. While the poem primarily focused on conveying its powerful message and evoking emotional responses, the strategic use of rhyme further added to its overall poetic impact and resonance.

By employing *free verse*, the poet has effectively conveyed the internal struggles and contemplation of the speaker, while also addressing the broader societal challenges and moral dilemmas presented throughout the poem. This form allowed for a more organic and unrestricted exploration of the central themes, encouraging readers to engage with the emotional and philosophical depth of the narrative. The poem has utilized free verse and do not adhere to a consistent rhyme scheme yet it occasionally incorporated *slant rhyme*, which involved the use of words with similar but not identical sounds. These instances contributed to overall musicality and rhythm. Some examples of slant rhyme within the poem included: *'bomb'* and *'down'* *'further'* and *'slaughter'* *'fear'* and *'here'* *'understanding'* and *'nothing'*. The sporadic use of slant rhyme in the poem thus enhanced the lyrical quality of the text without imposing a strict formal structure allowing the poet to emphasize the thematic depth and emotional intensity while maintaining a sense of fluidity and natural expression. Through that the poem achieved a balance between musicality and the freedom to explore complex and emotionally charged themes.

In the poem there were several *references* that allude to various cultural, societal, and historical contexts, enriching the thematic exploration and adding depth to the poem. These references contributed to the overarching message and helped to contextualize the complex themes of empathy and human understanding within the poem. Some references in the poem included allusions to societal tensions, cultural divisions, and historical perspectives, encouraging readers to consider the broader implications of empathy and compassion within a troubled and divided world. By incorporating references, the poem prompted readers to reflect on the multifaceted nature of human relationships and the challenges of fostering genuine connections between societal struggles and moral dilemmas. The poet emphasized the importance of trying to comprehend the experiences of others, even those who may be considered *'monsters'* or have committed heinous acts. The call for understanding, even in the face of darkness, suggested that true empathy required us to extend our hearts beyond the boundaries of our comfort and preconceived notions. The piece also delved into the nuances of fear, forgiveness, and the moral

dilemmas that arise when confronted with violence and hatred. The poem concluded with a powerful call to action, urging readers to choose empathy, even when it seems most challenging, and to stand their ground against forces that seek to divide and spread fear. The repeated refrain of *'stand your ground'* underscored the importance of holding onto one's convictions in the face of adversity, while also recognizing the need for empathy and understanding in order to move forward as a united and compassionate society.

The *syntax* of the poem was complex and varied, contributing to its overall structure and rhythm. The poet utilized a combination of sentence structures, including simple, compound, and complex sentences, to create a diverse and dynamic flow that reflects the intricacies of the themes being explored. Throughout the poem, the syntax was often deliberately disrupted or rearranged, creating a sense of tension and emphasis on certain ideas or phrases. This intentional manipulation of syntax served to highlight the emotional intensity and the complex nature of the poem's subject matter.

The *language* used in the poem was relatively complex and sophisticated, reflecting a high level of literary skill and emotional depth. The poet employed vivid imagery and figurative language to convey the intricacies of human emotions and the complexities of empathy. The use of metaphors, such as *'the heart's imagination'* and *'the surgeon's mask'*, added depth and nuance to the exploration of empathy and its limitations. The poem also included strong and evocative imagery, as seen in lines like *'every hill is heartbreaking'* and *'a race through the dark'*, which intensified the emotional impact of the narrative. Additionally, the use of repetition with phrases like *'stand your ground'* and *'some are running to the left, and some are running to the right'*, created a rhythmic flow and emphasizes the central themes of determination, conflict, and the duality of human experiences.

The poem employed a rich and evocative *selection of words*, emphasizing its emotional depth and thematic complexity. The word choice contributed to the poem's overall impact, conveying a sense of urgency, introspection, and emotional intensity. The poem uses vivid and poignant imagery, such as *'the uncomfortable trying out / of shoes that won't slip on'*, to evoke a sense of emotional resonance and convey the complexities of empathy and understanding. Symbolic language was utilized throughout the poem to underscore its central themes and ideas like *'a climate of fear'*, *'a race through the dark'*, and *'the finish line'* served as symbolic representations of societal turmoil, conflict, and the struggle for resolution. The poem incorporated figurative language, including metaphors and similes, to add depth and nuance to its exploration of empathy and human nature. Examples include *'the heart's imagination'*, *'the surgeon's mask'*, and *'the heart that is the darkest'*, which served to underscore the complexities of emotional understanding and the challenges of embracing compassion. The choice of emotionally charged words and phrases like *'heartbreaking'*, *'crippled in the darkness'*, and *'terrorism of the soul'* has contributed to the poem's overall tone of urgency and introspection, underscoring the profound emotional impact of the themes being addressed.

The poem featured a diverse array of *sentence structures* to convey its message and create a rhythmic and evocative reading experience. The poem included straightforward sentences that convey clear statements or descriptions like ‘*we are strong*’, ‘*we are unflappable*’, and ‘*we won’t be taken down*’. It also used compound sentences combining two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction like ‘*and*’ or ‘*but*’. For example, ‘*there is a crack in everything, remember?*’ and ‘*and some are running to the left, and some are running to the right*’. The poem employed complex sentences that consist of one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. These sentences often introduce additional information or provide context. An example is, ‘*what I want to say is that we will stay crippled in the darkness if we cannot feel compassion for the heart that is the darkest*’. The poem occasionally used sentence fragments, which are incomplete sentences that may serve a specific purpose in the poem, such as conveying a thought or emotion. For instance, ‘*there’s a limit to forgiveness*’ is a fragment used for emphasis. The poem included questions, such as ‘*what if they are we and us, and what if us is them?*’ These questions prompted readers to contemplate the ideas presented in the poem. Imperative sentences also issued commands or instructions. In the poem, phrases like, ‘*let it begin*’, and ‘*let it begin here*’ urging readers to take action or consider a particular perspective.

The use of *first person* was primarily seen in the poem and that is from the perspective of the speaker, who shared personal reflections and emotions related to the complexities of empathy and human understanding within a fragmented societal landscape. The use of the first-person perspective allowed the reader to engage with the speaker’s intimate thoughts and experiences, fostering a sense of empathy and connection with the themes and ideas explored in the poem.

The poem primarily utilized the *active voice* to convey its message, emphasizing the directness and immediacy of the speaker's intentions and emotions. For instance, the lines ‘*we are strong*’, ‘*we won’t be taken down*’, and ‘*there’s a crack in everything, remember?*’ all used the active voice to convey the speaker's direct thoughts and feelings to maintain a sense of urgency and engagement, encouraging readers to connect with the emotional depth of the narrative.

The poem primarily utilized the *present tense* to create a sense of immediacy and to engage the reader directly in the emotional and narrative aspects of the piece. It also served to heighten the emotional impact of the narrative, allowing readers to experience the events and emotions described as if they were unfolding in real time. For instance, lines such as ‘*we are strong*’, ‘*we won’t be taken down*’, and ‘*there’s a crack in everything, remember?*’ all use the present tense to convey the speaker's immediate thoughts and feelings. While the poem predominantly employed the present tense, there may be occasional shifts to the past tense to provide context or to reflect on events that have already occurred.

The poem used *conjunctions* to link words, phrases, and clauses, contributing to the overall flow and structure of the piece. The poem made use of *coordinating conjunctions* that has joined elements of equal syntactic importance like ‘*and*’, as in ‘*and some are running to the left, and*

*some are running to the right*, and *'but'*, as in *'but it isn't going to change, my friends'*. While the poem does not heavily rely on subordinating conjunctions, it does use *'if'* in the line *'if they mean to have a war'* to indicate the relationship between the dependent clause and the independent clause.

The poem utilized various types of *clauses* to create a sense of depth and complexity in its exploration of empathy, conflict, and societal divisions. Some examples of the different types of clauses used in the poem include *independent clauses* that stand alone as complete sentences and express complete thoughts like *'We are strong'*, *'We won't be taken down'*, and *'There is a crack in everything, remember?'* There was also an instance of *dependent clause* used in the poem such as *'what if they are we and us, and what if us is them?'* There was also reflection of *subordinate clause* evident in the poem through the following example *'if they mean to have a war, let it begin here'*. By incorporating different types of clauses, the poem created a layered and nuanced exploration of its central themes and ideas.

In the poem, the poet has used a variety of *pronouns* to convey a sense of inclusivity, personal reflection, and shared experiences. The pronouns used in the poem serve to establish a connection between the reader and the emotional journey presented in the text. The poet used first-person pronouns such as *'I'* and *'we'* to create a sense of personal involvement and shared humanity. It encouraged readers to reflect on their own experiences and emotions, fostering a sense of empathy and connection with the themes explored in the poem. The use of second-person pronouns like *'you'* has helped to engage the reader directly. By addressing the reader directly, the poem prompted introspection and encouraged readers to consider their own perspectives on the themes of sympathy and compassion. The poem also employed third-person pronouns, such as *'they'*, *'them'* and *'it'* to create a sense of distance and perspective, allowing the poet to reflect on broader societal issues and challenges. It facilitated a more detached analysis of the complexities of human relationships, encouraging readers to consider the experiences of others beyond their immediate personal context.

In the poem there are several instances of *proper nouns* that have contributed to the overall thematic and emotional impact of the text. The reference to Jesus alluded to the teachings of love and compassion, emphasizing the moral and ethical considerations surrounding the very concept by evoking religious and spiritual dimensions, encouraging readers to contemplate the implications of empathy within the framework of shared ethical values. The mention of *'austerity'* pointed to a specific socio-political context that underscored the broader societal issues and disparities that influence human relationships and the ability to extend understanding across diverse circumstances. The repetition of the word *'darkness'* as a proper noun throughout the poem symbolized the overarching theme of suffering, despair, and emotional turmoil. By personifying darkness, the poem created a symbolic representation of the complex and often tumultuous human experiences that can hinder the cultivation of empathy and compassion.

The poem has utilized a range of *punctuation marks to structure the text*, convey its message, and guide the reader's interpretation. *Periods* and *commas* were used to separate complete thoughts, signal the end of sentences, and create pauses for the reader, contributing to the overall flow and rhythm of the poem. *Ellipses* were used to indicate a pause, hesitation, or continuation of thought, often creating a sense of contemplation or reflection within the poem. They served to underscore the complexity of the ideas and emotions being explored. *'and what if us is them? what if we can't separate so easily...what then?'* The ellipsis in this example allowed for a moment of reflection, emphasizing the uncertainty and complexity of the questions posed by the speaker. *'they are running for survival they are running for their life'*. The use of ellipsis in this instance creates a pause, emphasizing the urgency and intensity of the situation described in the poem. *Colons* are used to introduce lists of contrasting ideas, as well as to provide additional information or elaboration on previous statements. *Exclamation marks* were occasionally employed to intensify certain lines and to provoke a sense of urgency and engagement in the reader. The poem included *question marks* for rhetorical questions that prompted readers to consider the complexities of empathy and compassion, as well as to engage in introspective thought. *Parentheses* were employed to provide contextual information and clarification of certain ideas, adding depth to the narrative. *Quotation marks* were used to set off direct speech or to highlight specific words or phrases. In the poem, these marks were used to enclose phrases like *'love your enemies'* that emphasized the contextual importance of these words in the poem. The poem also made use of *dashes* that were used to introduce pauses and to separate thoughts within lines.

Analyzing the poem for its *parts of speech* revealed the various grammatical components that contributed to its overall structure and meaning. *Nouns* were used to identify people, places, things, or ideas in this regard the examples in the poem included *'heart', 'imagination', 'act', 'surgeon', 'patient', 'shoes', 'burqa', 'fatigues', 'backpack', 'bomb', 'friends', 'child', 'mother', 'darkness',* and *'compassion'*. *Verbs* have expressed actions, events, or states of being through following examples in the poem, *'is', 'walking', 'feeling', 'running', 'falling', 'bleeding', 'stand', 'fire', 'ban', 'manage',* and *'won'*. The poem employed *adjectives* to modify or describe nouns through such examples like *'uncomfortable', 'strong', 'unflappable', 'afraid', 'lawless', 'legless', 'dark', 'heartbreaking', 'different', 'dangerous', 'new', 'prudent',* and *'dark'*. To provide information about manner, place, time, or degree *adverbs* have been used in the poem modifying verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs which include *'strangely', 'easily', 'thus', 'exhausted', 'everywhere', 'here',* and *'farther'*. The poem has used *pronouns* to replace nouns, functioning as substitutes for nouns like *'we', 'they', 'them', 'us', 'it', 'my',* and *'your'*. Lastly, *prepositions* used in the poem have expressed relationships between different words in a sentence, typically indicating location, time, or direction such as *'of', 'in', 'on', 'by', 'to', 'for', 'with',* and *'towards'*.

#### 4.1 Use of Rhetorical Devices in the Poem

The poem employed a range of *rhetorical devices* and strategies to effectively convey its message and provoked critical reflection on the complexities of empathy and human understanding.

By engaging readers in a reflective and introspective exploration of empathy, the poem has prompted critical inquiry into the nature of compassion and the challenges of extending understanding to those who may be perceived as adversaries or as having committed unforgivable acts.

By using *analogy* in the poem the poet employed analogy to draw parallels between different concepts and situations, inviting readers to consider the complexities of empathy and human understanding within a fragmented and tumultuous societal landscape. Some key instances of analogy include: '*the uncomfortable trying out / of shoes that won't slip on / or a burqa / or fatigues / or a backpack with a bomb*'. This analogy highlighted the challenges of empathizing with individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences, emphasizing the difficulties of understanding and connecting with others. '*there is a crack in everything, remember?*'. This analogy emphasized the inherent imperfections and complexities of human experiences, prompting readers to reflect on the nuances of empathy within a fragmented and tumultuous society.

The poem also employed *allegory* to convey deeper symbolic meaning and to underscore the complexities of human empathy and understanding within a fragmented and tumultuous societal landscape. Through the incorporation of allegorical elements, the poem invites readers to contemplate broader philosophical and ethical concepts, prompting introspective reflection on the challenges and limitations of fostering genuine connections and compassion. The motif of *running* was interpreted as an allegory for the relentless pursuit of understanding and compassion within a society marked by turmoil and division. The allegorical use of *darkness* symbolized the pervasive suffering and emotional turmoil experienced by individuals within the poem. The symbol of the *heart* was used allegorically to represent the emotional and empathetic core of human experiences. References to the heart's imagination and the emotional burden carried by individuals within the poem underscored the importance of understanding and connecting with others on a deeper, emotional level.

The poem incorporated *alliteration* to create a musical and rhythmic effect, emphasizing certain phrases and images, and adding to the emotional resonance of the text. Alliteration is used to draw attention to specific words and ideas, highlighting the thematic depth and complexity of the poem through these instances: '*the heart's imagination*', '*a climate of fear*', '*race through the dark*', '*stand your ground*'. These examples have contributed to musicality and emotional intensity, emphasizing the urgency and gravity of the themes by creating a sense of cohesion and rhythm within the poem, allowing certain phrases to resonate with readers and emphasizing the emotional and philosophical underpinnings of empathy and human understanding in tumultuous societal landscape.

Furthermore, the poem has incorporated *allusions* to religious and moral concepts, such as the reference to '*Jesus*' teaching to '*love your enemies*' and the notion of standing one's ground.

These allusions have served to contextualize the poem within broader ethical and philosophical frameworks, prompting readers to consider the implications of these moral imperatives in the context of contemporary societal challenges and conflicts. The poem also alluded to contemporary *sociopolitical contexts*, such as references to *running to the left or right*, platforms of austerity, and the tightening of borders. These allusions underscored the broader societal issues and challenges that influence human relationships and the ability to extend understanding and empathy across diverse circumstances, encouraging readers to reflect on the implications of empathy within the context of contemporary sociopolitical realities.

Although the use of *apostrophe* as a literary device in the poem was limited. Yet the poet addressed an abstract idea through the following line: *'there is a crack in everything, remember?'*. Interpreted as a form of implied apostrophe the reader here was urged indirectly to remember the imperfections and complexities inherent in human experiences by reflecting nuanced aspects of empathy.

The poem utilized *assonance* to create a musical and rhythmic effect, contributing to the overall emotional resonance and thematic depth of the text. Some examples of assonance in the poem included: *'the heart's imagination'*, *'the patient dons the surgeon's mask'*, *'there is a crack in everything, remember?'*. These instances contributed to the poem's musicality and emotional intensity, emphasizing key phrases and themes. The use of assonance served to create a cohesive and rhythmic flow within the poem, allowing certain words and phrases to resonate with readers and underscore the emotional and philosophical underpinnings of empathy.

While the poem primarily employed assonance still there were few instances of *consonance* that contributed to the overall musicality and emotional resonance of the text. Some of these are: *'and some are running to the left and some are running to the right'* / *'they are running for survival they are running for their life'*. These instances created a sense of harmony and cohesion within the poem, highlighting specific phrases and themes and emphasizing the challenges and complexities of human understanding within a fragmented societal landscape.

The poet also employed *contrast* to underscore the complexities and challenges of empathy and human understanding within a fragmented societal landscape. Through the use of contrasting images, themes, and ideas, the poem prompted readers to contemplate the shades of human experiences and relationships, emphasizing the need for genuine compassion and connection during adverse and conflicting times. Some examples includes: *'the uncomfortable trying out / of shoes that won't slip on / or a burqa / or fatigues / or a backpack with a bomb'*. This showed contrast discomfort and challenges associated with trying on different roles or identities, by highlighting the complexities of understanding diverse perspectives and experiences. In another example *'love your enemies / is open to a new interpretation'*. This contrast highlighted the shifting interpretations and complexities of moral and ethical principles, prompting readers to consider the challenges and implications of extending compassion to perceived outsiders.



In the poem there were instances of *disjunction* that contributed to the overall emotional intensity and thematic depth of the text. The poem employed disjunction to disrupt the expected flow of language, creating a sense of urgency and contemplation. Some examples of disjunction in the poem include: '*what if we can't separate so easily... what then?*'. This example showed disruption of the expected flow of the sentence, emphasizing the uncertainty and complexity of the situation being presented. '*stand your ground. / stand your ground./ stand your ground.*' The repetition here created a disjunctive effect, emphasizing the persistence and urgency of the speaker's message. The deliberate disruption of syntax and grammar served to emphasize limitations of fostering genuine connections and compassion during challenging times.

The use of *caesura* and *enjambment* has created a natural flow of ideas and emotions, prompting readers to consider the nuances of empathy. This fluctuation symbolically represented the ebb and flow of human empathy and compassion as a metaphor for the challenges and limitations of fostering genuine connections and understanding during darkness and despair, prompting readers to reflect on the complexities of human relationships and the need for empathy in the face of adversity. The poem thus incorporated both regular and irregular meter, utilizing a combination of stressed and unstressed syllables to create a sense of musicality and emotional resonance. The use of enjambment and caesura throughout the poem subsidized to the dynamic rhythm, allowing for a natural flow of ideas and emotions while also creating moments of pause and reflection. Additionally, the repetition of certain phrases and images, along with the use of rhetorical devices such as anaphora and alliteration, further enhanced the rhythmic quality of the poem, emphasizing key themes and fostering a sense of emotional engagement and introspection.

The poem used *fragmented and truncated sentences* to create a sense immediacy and impact, drawing attention to specific phrases and concepts within the poem. Some instances are: '*ready set / and on your marks / a climate of fear / a race through the dark / a climate of change / the gun bangs / and we... / stop*'. The fragmented structure in this example emphasized the rapid succession of events and the abrupt halt in the narrative, creating a moment of pause and reflection for the reader. In another example, '*love your enemies / is open to a new interpretation. / love the ones that you can manage / is a more prudent expectation*' these truncated sentences served to underscore the evolving interpretation of the concept of love, prompting readers to contemplate the complexities of human relationships and empathy within a shifting societal landscape. The deliberate use of this stylistic device contributed to the poem's emotional intensity and thematic depth.

The use of the *imperative voice* was a prominent feature, contributing to the sense of urgency and emotional intensity within the text. The imperative voice was used to convey commands, requests, or strong suggestions, often creating a direct and engaging tone through following examples of the imperative voice in the poem: '*love your enemies*', '*stand your ground*', '*let it begin*'. The use of the imperative voice effectively engaged readers in a contemplative exploration of the challenges and limitations of fostering genuine connections and compassion.

The use of *irony* was evident, contributing to the overall depth and complexity of the text. Some instances of irony in the poem include: *'we are strong. we are unflappable. we won't be taken down'*. This example highlighted the contrast between the speaker's assertions of strength and resilience and the underlying vulnerability and fragility evident within the societal context being described. In another example *'the most dangerous of recent acts, to ban where hearts can go'*, the use of irony in this instance emphasized the paradox of restricting emotional empathy and understanding, underscoring the inherent complexities and challenges of fostering genuine connections within a troubled and divided world.

The poem has employed *juxtaposition* to contrast different perspectives and experiences like *'we'* and *'them'* dichotomy that emphasized the divide between individuals and groups, highlighting the challenges of empathizing with those who were perceived as different or even antagonistic in approach. This dichotomy was further emphasized through the contrasting images of running to the *'left and running to the right'*, symbolizing the diverging paths and ideologies that individuals and societies might have adopted when confronted with adversity driven moral dilemmas. *'we're all one, with rare exceptions, we have standards to uphold'*. This example juxtaposed the idea of unity with the acknowledgment of exceptions, highlighting the tension between inclusivity and exclusivity within societal standards. *'love your enemies is open to a new interpretation. love the ones that you can manage is a more prudent expectation'*. Here, the contrast between loving one's enemies and managing one's relationships underscored the complexities of human empathy and understanding within challenging circumstances.

The use of *metonymy* was evident, enhancing the depth and meaning of the text to create vivid imagery and convey complex ideas in a concise and impactful manner. Some examples are: *'the heart's imagination'* where *heart* was used to represent the emotional capacity and empathy of individuals. *'the patient dons the surgeon's mask'* used *surgeon's mask* represented the transformation and role reversal mentioned in the poem. These vivid and evocative imagery, prompted readers to reflect on the challenges of fostering genuine connections within a divided society marked by turmoil.

The poet has also employed *personification* to imbue inanimate objects or abstract concepts with human qualities, creating vivid imagery and enhancing the emotional impact of the text. Here are some of the examples: *'the heart's imagination'*, *'every hill is heartbreaking'*. By personifying the *heart's imagination* and *hills*, the poet emphasized the emotional depth and intensity needed for compassion within a bicameral society

*Repetition* being another rhetorical device was strategically employed throughout the poem. Phrases such as *'empathy is nothing'*, *'stand your ground'*, and *'what I want to say'* have served to emphasize key themes and ideas, reinforcing the poem's central arguments and encouraging readers to contemplate the significance of these recurring concepts. This repetition has contributed to the overall emotional intensity and urgency of the poem's message, commending readers to

confront the complexities in the face of darkness and adversity. The poem utilizes the rhetorical device of *anaphora* through the repetition of phrases such as '*some are running to the left*' and '*some are running to the right*'. This repetition emphasizes the prevalence of division and polarization within society, reinforcing the poem's theme of the challenges of empathizing with those perceived as different or antagonistic.

In the poem there was a notable use of *pathetic fallacy* to evoke a sense of emotional intensity and reflect the complexities of empathy and human understanding within a troubled societal landscape. Some examples of the pathetic fallacy in the poem included '*every hill is heartbreaking*' which imbued the natural landscape with human emotions, emphasizing the emotional weight and turmoil present within the poem's context. '*A climate of fear / a race through the dark*' has conveyed the emotional intensity and tension inherent in the societal landscape depicted in the poem. By employing the pathetic fallacy, the poem effectively enhanced the emotional resonance and thematic depth of the text.

The poem utilized *personification*, to evoke a deeper emotional connection and emphasized the themes explored. It was employed to create vivid and relatable imagery that resonated with the reader. Some examples included '*the heart's imagination*' where heart was personified as having the capacity for imagination, highlighting the emotional and imaginative aspects of empathy. '*every hill is heartbreaking*' personified the hills, imbuing them with human emotions, to convey the emotional weight and turmoil within the context of the poem.

This poem has also used the *rejet* technique to create a sense of abruptness and interruption, thereby drawing attention to key moments or ideas. For instance, the line '*and some are running to the left*' was followed immediately by '*and some are running to the right*', which broke the expected flow of the narrative and emphasized the contrast and division within society. Similarly, the use of *rejet* in the lines '*empathy is nothing / but the heart's imagination*' served to underscore the paradoxical nature of empathy, highlighting its complexities and limitations. These instances of *rejet* contributed to the overall impact of the poem, prompting readers to pause and reflect on the underlying themes and conflicts presented throughout the piece.

Although the poem do not primarily rely on *satire*, but it does contain elements that reflected a critical and satirical view of certain societal attitudes and behaviors. The poem satirized the notion of unwavering strength and resilience in the face of conflict, highlighting the limitations of rigid and uncompromising attitudes that hinder the development of empathy and understanding. The repetition of phrases such as '*stand your ground*' and '*we won't be made to feel afraid*' can be interpreted as a satirical commentary on the stubborn and unyielding nature of certain ideologies and the reluctance to consider alternative perspectives or experiences. Additionally, the poem's exploration of the challenges of embracing empathy and understanding, particularly in the context of conflict and division, satirized the tendency to prioritize self-preservation and security over compassion and reconciliation.

The poem incorporated *sibilance*, a literary device characterized by the repetition of the 's' sound, to create a specific auditory effect and enhance the overall musicality and rhythm of the piece. There are instances where it is employed to add a subtle sense of flow and emphasis to certain lines. For example, in the lines '*the lawless / and the legless / and the bastards with the bombs*', the repetition contributed to the rhythmic quality of the verse, creating a gentle hissing sound that can add emphasis to the descriptions of the individuals mentioned.

In the poem various *parts of rhetoric* were utilized to effectively convey the author's message and to prompt readers to contemplate the thematic complexities central to the poetic narrative. The poem established *ethos* by appealing to shared values and beliefs, as well as invoking references to moral and ethical principles. The reference to *Jesus*' teaching to '*love your enemies*' appealed to a widely recognized ethical standard, thereby strengthening the poet's argument about the challenges of extending compassion even to those perceived as opponents. The poem also evokes *pathos* through a strong emotional response in readers by using vivid imagery, moving descriptions of suffering, and the portrayal of human vulnerability and understanding. The poem presented logical arguments and reasoning, prompting readers to engage in critical thinking by juxtaposing different perspectives and experiences, the poem encourages readers to consider the limitations and boundaries thereby prompting a deeper understanding of the challenges involved in empathizing with others, particularly in the context of conflict and hardship.

The poem utilized various forms of *rhetorical invention* to provoke thoughtful contemplation and emotional engagement with its central themes. By using vivid and evocative imagery, such as the '*surgeon stepping into the patient*', the individuals running in different directions, and the '*darkness*' that pervaded the narrative, served to create a sensory and emotional experience for the reader. These images helped to underscore the poem's central theme of the challenges and limitations of understanding the experiences of others, especially in the context of conflict and adversity. These scenarios served to evoke empathy and encourage readers to consider the intricacies of understanding diverse perspectives and experiences. The poem presented complex ethical dilemmas, particularly concerning the concept of loving one's enemies and the boundaries of compassion in the face of heinous acts. By exploring these ethical dilemmas, the poem prompted readers to confront the moral complexities inherent in extending empathy and understanding to individuals who may be perceived as adversaries or perpetrators of violence. The poem juxtaposed contrasting perspectives and experiences, highlighting the divisions and complexities within human relationships and societal dynamics. By contrasting different points of view, the poem encouraged readers to consider the multifaceted nature of empathy and the challenges involved in comprehending diverse and often conflicting experiences. The poem utilizes symbolic language, such as the references to running in different directions and the darkness that permeates the narrative, to symbolize the challenges and uncertainties associated with empathetic understanding. This symbolic language prompts readers to reflect on the

complexities of navigating emotional and moral landscapes, especially in the context of societal conflict and polarization.

## 5. Conclusion

The bombings during the Boston Marathon in April 2013 introduced a distinct unease in the United States concerning "self-radicalized" terrorists, particularly those associated with Muslim immigrants. The alleged perpetrators, siblings with Chechen roots, had received their education in U.S. public schools. Media coverage often depicted them as "immigrants," highlighting a perceived struggle between their Chechen and American identities. The reevaluation of conversations and narratives surrounding immigrants and immigration, advocating for a more nuanced comprehension of trans-nationalism is needed to educate and meaningfully incorporate this concept to foster a deeper understanding of recent arrivals to the United States, empowering them with greater choices in shaping their identities and determining who they become (Kasun, 2013). According to a study empathy and the forgiveness of Muslim Americans within the context of non-Muslim college students to a media report recounting the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings, perpetrated by domestic Muslim American terrorists has unveiled a positive and statistically significant relationship between empathy and forgiveness among undergraduate college students (McDowell-Smith & Morreale, 2016). According to research regulating negative emotional responses to threatening events may contribute to diminishing out-group bias during periods characterized by relative benignity versus threat. Participants were instructed to regulate their emotions using specific strategies (reflection, rumination, or control) while exposed to a reminder of a past terrorist event, and subsequently, they reported their levels of anger and bias toward Muslims (Steele et.al., 2019). This poem explored the complex nature of empathy, compassion, and understanding in the face of adversity, conflict, and the human condition. It delved into the challenges of stepping into someone else's shoes, acknowledging the discomfort and difficulty in doing so. The poem raised questions about the limits of empathy, compassion, and forgiveness, especially when confronted with acts of violence and hatred. The poem also touched on the idea that there are limits to empathy, forgiveness, and compassion, particularly when faced with heinous acts. It grappled with the difficulty of extending understanding to those who committed atrocities, acknowledging the challenges in finding compassion for the darkest hearts. Conclusively, the poem urged individuals to stand their ground and take a stand against injustice, while recognizing the importance of compassion and understanding, even in the face of seemingly insurmountable darkness. It prompted reflection on the complexities of human nature and the struggle to navigate a world filled with both light and darkness.

### 5.1 Limitations of the Research

1. As this research was based on rhetorical analysis so being interpretive in style the chances of researcher bias and subjectivity was undeniable as the same poem could be understood

with varied meanings based on other person's differing backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.

2. The availability options of fewer sources related to Amanda Palmer's poems, such as interviews, statements and commentaries have impacted the comprehensiveness of the analysis as most of the details have been sorted out based on the background information she provided herself on her website which revealed this poem to be an answer to her earlier written poem "A Poem for Dzhokhar" written in 2013 right after Boston Marathon Bombing for which she mostly received a severe backlash being sympathetic towards the terrorists.
3. Lastly, focusing solely on one poem has limited the broader understanding of Amanda Palmer's perspectives on the Boston Marathon Bombing overlooking recurrent themes, patterns, or rhetorical strategies present in her other works.

## 5.2 Contributions of the Research

- a) The study can contribute to the field of literary analysis by offering an in-depth examination of the rhetorical strategies employed in Palmer's poem by exploring language, symbolism, and other literary devices used to convey meaning.
- b) It can provide insight into use of rhetorical techniques to examine persuasive elements, appeals to emotions, or strategies to engage and challenge the audience.
- c) The research can provide discernment on how artists use poetry as a medium for social commentary and reflection.
- d) Along with understanding of manifesting authorial unique voice and personalized perspective, this research can add to the understand of how artists respond to traumatic events through their work having implications for psychology, literature, and the arts.
- e) By incorporating elements of literature, rhetoric, psychology, and cultural studies, the research can contribute to an interdisciplinary understanding of how artistic expression contributes to meaning-making in the aftermath of significant events.
- f) Findings from the analysis can contribute to educational resources for literature and rhetoric classes, providing students and educators with a case study for discussing the intersection of art, rhetoric, and societal issues.

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