

Rekindling Hope: Isotopic Traces Of Resilience And Rising Spirit In Post-Pandemic Indonesian Cyber Poetry

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Abstract:

Background: This research stems from the urgency of documenting the transformation of social media into a new public space for the development of cyber literature in Indonesia, particularly in response to the global crisis. Post-pandemic, social media has become not only a means of communication but also an arena for creative expression that cannot be conveyed directly. The phenomenon of the rise of public hope, particularly among Generation Z, is an interesting topic to study. This research aims to reveal public optimism in cyber poetry through an analysis of the works of Euis Cucu Sukmanah ("Goodbye Pandemic"), Didi Prasetyo Budi ("Face-to-Face Learning"), Parni Hadi ("Rise Together with Corona"), and Sheli Rahmadina ("Generasi Bangsa Rising Berkarya").

Materials and Methods: The method used is descriptive-analytical with a basis in isotopic theory.

Results: The results reveal the poets' hopes for the post-pandemic situation. This research also makes an important contribution to understanding the function of cyber literature as a means of healing collective trauma post-pandemic.

Key Word: Cyber Poetry; COVID-19; Optimism; Isotope

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I. Introduction

From 2019 to 2020, the world was hit by the devastating COVID-19 pandemic. Indonesia was not immune to this virulent virus (Harapan et al., 2023). Even in 2021, Indonesia is still struggling to adapt to policies imposed by COVID-19. Nearly all activities requiring large gatherings were immediately halted and shifted to virtual meetings (Salehudin et al., 2021). Millions of lives have fallen victim to the ferocity of the virus, which originally originated in Wuhan, China. The resulting chaos has not only paralyzed the health sector but also triggered massive socio-economic disruption. Information uncertainty, prolonged physical isolation, and the loss of stability have created a tense, dystopian atmosphere in society (Megatsari et al., 2020). Is there hope amidst this desperate situation? A quote from Desmond Tutu, a humanitarian activist from South Africa, emphasizes that no matter how dire the situation, there is always hope and light.

"There may indeed have been moments when God may have regretted creating us. But I am certain there have been many more times when God has looked and seen all these wonderful people who have shone in the dark night of evil, torture, abuse, and suffering... It has filled people with new hope that despair, darkness, anger, resentment, and hatred would not have the last word... There is hope that nightmares will end, hope that seemingly intractable problems will find solutions." (Tutu, 2012).

In line with this, Frankl (2006) emphasized that even in seemingly hopeless situations, humans still have the capacity to rise and find meaning, a concept relevant to understanding how society survives the psychological stress of the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a widespread wave of layoffs. The most significant impact has been experienced by informal workers, the self-employed, and economically vulnerable groups who have suddenly lost their sources of income and livelihoods (Dera, 2021). Many of them have also experienced bankruptcy.

This disruption also significantly impacted the education sector. The simultaneous closure of schools forced millions of students in Indonesia to switch to online learning. Teaching and learning activities were conducted via mobile phones, laptops, or computers from morning until evening. However, many students also missed out on learning materials due to a lack of adequate facilities for online learning. This triggered new social issues in the world of education (Wahyono et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the sudden adaptation process also triggered stress, impacting the mental well-being of adolescents. This was reflected in the high prevalence of emotional and relational problems among students (Wiguna et al., 2020).

In the arts and literature, the pandemic forced a massive acceleration in the migration of literary works from print to digital media. This phenomenon was also observed in research by Boydell & Lupton (2023), who

explained that during the lockdown, poetry developed as a medium of expression, widely circulated through digital platforms. The online distribution of poetry not only maintained artistic activity when physical space was restricted but also strengthened social connections and served as a means of healing for communities experiencing anxiety due to the pandemic. When physical bookstores and libraries restricted operations, social media (such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter) became the primary platform for creative expression that could not be channeled in person. When physical activity was restricted and conventional performance stages were closed, internet technology became the primary support for writers and artists to continue creating and interacting with readers. This gave rise to the phenomenon of cyber literature, which allows for instant interaction between poets and readers, without the bureaucratic barriers of conventional publishing. The pandemic has killed the space for various artistic expressions, including painting, dance, music, and literature (Amorim & Teixeira, 2020).

During the pandemic, social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter, accommodated the aspirations of many poets (Jeannotte, 2021; Setiawan, 2018). Amalia (2022) conducted research on poetic texts found on Twitter, which has now been renamed X. Poets expressed themselves through the verses of poetry on X. These limitations not only gave rise to poetic texts but also gave birth to new forms of poetry, such as poetry in Wira Negara podcast. This has become commonplace because they cannot express themselves in open spaces. However, restricting open spaces for poets doesn't necessarily limit their imagination. Even amidst the anxiety and discomfort of the pandemic, poets and their poetry continue to thrive.

The purposes for writing poetry vary. Some write to express their feelings and thoughts. Others write to rekindle broken communication. Others write simply because they love poetry. In line with this view, Caleshu et al. (2024) explain that during the COVID-19 pandemic, poetry writing has developed as a therapeutic medium, helping individuals process traumatic experiences, reflect on life, and rebuild hope amidst uncertainty. Through this creative process, poetry serves not only as a means of aesthetic expression but also as a means of psychological recovery, strengthening people's optimism in the face of crisis. Research by Khusniyah (2019) demonstrates a breakthrough in poetic form. In short, poetry has never lost its fans. People continued to write poetry even though the pandemic devastated almost half the world.

Now, the pandemic has subsided. People have resumed their normal activities, although in some places restrictions remain, such as mandatory mask-wearing in public and hand-washing. Literary activities have also resumed as usual. Several literary communities and institutions have begun holding various literary competitions, such as poetry readings, poetry musicalizations, monologues, and literary essay writing competitions. Participants enthusiastically participate in various competitions held both offline and online, both by the government and the private sector. This demonstrates their continued interest in participating in literary activities.

Artists are also engaged in various activities championing humanity through literary works. They discuss formulating policies related to the arts. Meanwhile, works by writers addressing issues of life and humanity continue to emerge. It seems the pandemic has not diminished writers' passion for continuous creation. While limitations on movement and activity exist, these can be overcome by shifting media. Post-pandemic poetry is unique because it often explores diction related to hope and how humans achieve it (Khotimah & Agustini, 2023). Therefore, research on poetry in the post-pandemic era, particularly that found on social media, is necessary.

II. Material And Methods

The poems that emerged in the post-pandemic era largely embrace themes of enthusiasm, optimism, and hope. This paper examines only four poems. These poems were chosen based on their shared themes. These poems were collected from various social media platforms: "Goodbye Pandemic" by Euis Cucu Sukmanah and "Face-to-Face Learning (PTM)" by Didi Prasetyobudi; "Rise Together with Corona" by Parni Hadi; and "Generasi Bangsa Rises to Work" by Sheli Rahmadina. These poems were analyzed using isotopy theory.

Isotopy theory was developed by Greimas. This theory is typically used in the analysis of utterances. The act of presenting events sequentially through sentences is called utterance. Genette (Zaimar, 1991) proposed the concept of mode and speech. Within the category of speech, narrative is discussed, encompassing the narrator, while the narrative's traces are described through pronouns, determiners, variations in lexical fields, and various syntactic functions. Isotopy lies in the variation of lexical fields. Lexical fields are cultural clues that can explain the narrator's background and can reveal hidden ideas that are at the heart of a work. Greimas, within his structural semiotic framework, introduced the concept of isotopy as a semantic category of repetition that examines the coherence of a text. This means that a poem is not only coherent because it is grammatically correct, but also because it contains a consistent "path of meaning." This path is deliberately formed by small components of meaning called *seme*, which are the repetition of one lexeme after another. Saaffan & Mahmoud (2024) include repetition of other units such as phonetics (rhyme) and prosody (rhythm). For Saaffan & Mahmoud, isotopy is not simply the repetition of the same word, but rather a "direction of interpretation" that

allows readers to organize semantic and lexical networks into a coherent network, while still considering the subject's involvement in it. Rejo (2014) also states that isotopy refers to the phenomenon where different expressions in a text share the same seme, thus creating a homogeneous meaning.

The theories of fields of meaning and lexical fields were pioneered by Trier. He stated that the vocabulary of a language is synchronically the entire system of lexemes interrelated in a single meaning (Lyons, 1977). Porzig also researched fields of meaning. Lyons then summarized the two theories by stating that lexemes that are paradigmatically and syntagmatically related can be said to be elements of the same field. For example, the lexemes "hit," "punch," and "hand" can be grouped into one field of meaning because all three are associated with the lexeme "hand."

Genette's procedure in lexical field analysis is to examine isotopy. Isotopy is a type of repetition. The word isotopy comes from the Greek *isos*, meaning "same," and *topos*, meaning "place" (Zaimar, 1991). Isotopy is an open area or field of meaning consisting of all elements found throughout a discourse/text. There is no specific criterion for determining isotopy in a work. Usually, just by grouping prominent words that do not need to have a generic relationship, but can be linked to human personal experience.

III. Result

SELAMAT TINGGAL PANDEMI
(Euis Cucu Sukmanah)

Dua tahun sudah dilanda pandemi
Seakan hidup terasa ngeri
Berjuta rakyat sengsara tiada henti
Menyisakan kepedihan ditinggal pergi dari orang-orang yang dicintai

Warga kehilangan pekerjaan
PHK 'tak bisa dihindarkan
Pembatasan hidup penuh kendala
Penderitaan rakyat merajalela
Corona banyak meregang nyawa

Siswa bingung menghadapi
Ruang sekolah 'tak boleh diisi
Terombang-ambing dalam berbakti
Pendidikan terbatas ruang dan waktu
Tugas dalam buku dibimbing ibu

Seiring berjalannya waktu
Kini negeriku berangsur pulih
Suasana kembali berseri
Pembelajaran Tatap Muka dimulai
Syarat divaksin harus terpenuhi

Aktivitas warga terkendali
Lapangan pekerjaan tampak berdiri
Mari bangkit dari keterpurukan ini
Patuhi Prokes dan vaksin diri
Demi kesehatan 'tuk kemajuan negeri.

Ciamis, 20 Januari 2022

Overall, readers have no difficulty grasping the meaning of the verses above. The poet clearly expresses the idea of society's revival after the pandemic has passed. Through isotopic analysis, the moral issues hidden behind these lines of poetry can be discerned.

An isotopy is a region or field of meaning that unfolds throughout a discourse/text. Readers can perceive several words that share similar meanings. Each isotopy forms a motif, and this motif indicates the poem's theme.

A theme is a basic idea that runs from the beginning to the end of the text. The theme of a poem can be identified through repetition. In the three verses above, there is an isotopy of sadness based on the following lexemes: horror, misery, pain, abandonment, loss, limitation, constraint, suffering, dying, confusion, and adrift.

These lexemes are found in the same region, namely related to unpleasant (negative) events. The isotopy of sadness reveals the motif of sadness.

Meanwhile, stanzas four and five are dominated by the isotopy of resurrection. This isotopy is based on the following lexemes: recover, radiant, controlled, rise, obey, stand, and progress. All the lexemes found point to the motif of resurrection. The motif of sadness gives way to the motif of resurrection, indicated by the phrase "the passage of time," a process that all of society must go through.

This poem also utilizes the element of opposition (contrast). This poetic device is often used by poets to emphasize their intended ideas. Sapardi Djoko Damono (Triadnyani, 2021) once stated that there are three important elements in assessing good poetry: the use of allusion, contrast, and extensive metaphor. Based on an isotopic analysis of the poem entitled "Goodbye Pandemic," it can be concluded that the poet offers the idea of resurrection. Society must rise and not be swept away by decline. This is clearly evident in the line: "Now my country is gradually recovering / The atmosphere is radiant again."

In line with this, it can also be concluded that this poem as a whole possesses linear isotopy, meaning it moves sequentially from the reading of "Death/Chaos" to "Life/Order." The coherence of the text is maintained because the author consistently repeats metaphors related to the changing social conditions from darkness to light.

The next poem, entitled "Face-to-Face Learning (PTM)," is by Didi Prasetyobudi. Face-to-face learning is a direct learning process between teachers and students at school. The idea for this poem may have been based on the situation during the pandemic, which prevented in-school learning. As a result, happiness is clearly visible in the image the poet presents through his poem.

Pembelajaran Tatap Muka (PTM)

Sapa, senyum, hadir dalam cerah mentari
Menyambut pagi di hari ini
Setelah sekian lama berkutut di ruang sunyi
Kini tiba saatnya bangkit dari pandemi

1,5 tahun ku berkecamuk dengan layar teknologi
Tak kenal dunia luar yang penuh pengalaman
Ku ke sana ke sini serba dibatasi
Akhirnya ku seperti hidup dalam kekangan

Kini saatnya tinggalkan peraduanmu yang kau sebut bantal
Melangkah keluar, menyambut pendidikan normal
Lentara bersinar menuntun generasi berakal
Dalam ruang ilmu disambut jiwa yang penuh akal

Pagi Nak... sambutan ramah para pejuang ilmu
Senyum bahagia generasi berakal menyambut pagi
Mulai berkutut dengan banyak ilmu yang lama tak bertemu
Menuntut ilmu untuk selalu berpikir membangun negeri

Setelah sekian lama, akhirnya bertemu kawan
Berkumpul dalam ruang, walau harus berjarak
Dan tak lupa kuucap terima kasih Tuhan
TanpaMu kami hanyalah insan tak bergerak

Kebumen, 16 September 2021

The PTM poem opens with visual imagery, as in the lines: "Greetings, smiles, present in the bright sun / Welcoming this morning." The sun is a symbol of enthusiasm and happiness. The students appear happy to begin face-to-face learning. They are tired of staring at their phone, laptop, or computer screens in their rooms, and now they are happy to reunite with their friends and companions at school. The distinction between space and place becomes important during the pandemic. This distinction is what the poet wants to highlight.

An isotopic analysis of the poem above reveals several dynamic lexemes. In the first stanza, the lexemes "smile," "bright," "sun," and "rising" are found, which point to the motif of happiness. In the second stanza, the lexemes "rage," "unaware," "limited," and "constraint" are found, which give rise to the motif of misery. The motifs in the second stanza contrast with those in the first. The poet seems to be trying to convey

dynamism. In the third stanza, the lexemes "welcome," "lantern," "shine," "guide," and "reason," all point to the motif of hope. In the fourth stanza, several lexemes (morning, friendly, fighter, smile, happy, intelligent, welcoming, knowledgeable, thinking, and building) can be linked to the motif of happiness. The choice of the word "morning" clearly indicates an atmosphere full of hope and enthusiasm.

The final stanza contains a crucial lexeme: gathering, something that is prohibited during the pandemic. Ultimately, gathering in one space provides a sweet ending to this poem. The motif of happiness is expressed in gratitude to the Creator. Without His power, humans are meaningless.

Based on an isotopic analysis of the poem "Face-to-Face Learning," the poet aims to portray the happiness of students learning at school. School is an important public space because it is where they gain knowledge and experience to become superior and independent individuals, while also being able to socialize. Technological advancements that offer virtual spaces for learning do not appeal to students. They desire the company of their friends in the classroom.

The next poem is titled "Generasi Bangsa Rising Berkarya" (A Generation of the Nation Rising Up and Working) (Sheli Rahmadina). This poem is interesting because it uses many metaphors to describe the hopes and challenges of young people facing the pandemic. One of the important things in creating poetry is metaphor. Metaphor is the language of comparison. Etymologically, metaphor comes from the Greek, namely from the word 'meta' which means above and the word 'pherein' which means to move so that metaphor is defined as the transfer of meaning or imagery of an expression into another expression. Metaphor compares one thing with another without using comparative words: like, like, like, and so on (Pradopo, 2009). The basic structure of metaphor is very simple, namely there are two things: something being discussed (which is being compared) and something used as a comparison. Metaphors in this poem, for example, tears turn black, struggle is the implementation of words, courage is the horizon. Besides metaphors, symbols and imagery are also used by the poet.

"Generasi Bangsa Bangkit Berkarya"

Apa kabar pemuda-pemudi?
Yang kini masih bergelimpungan ditelan kabar duka negeri sendiri
Ke sana ke mari mencari jawaban dalam lautan tanda tanya
Jiwa berkarya seakan menyala
Mengapa kesadaran ini terjeda begitu lama?
Tangisnya terurai, namun terabai
Nusantara butuh pejuang, tapi ku tak siap berperang
Namun haruskah aku bungkam, hingga air mata menghitam?
Sudah saatnya aku keluar dari labirinku sendiri
Memompa kesadaran dari perubahan negeri ini
Mulai buktikan diri dan tunjukan potensi
Agar tidak terus terjebak dalam halusinasi
Bukankah Indonesia kaya akan pemuda berkarya?
Saatnya kita mulai menajamkan panca indera
Di rumah saja bukan berarti tak berdaya
Kita bisa asalkan ada niat sebagai pelurusnya

Ilmu bukan mutiara, yang hanya ada di lautan saja
Namun ilmu adalah udara, yang ada di mana-mana dan terasa manfaatnya
Untuk sekarang, belajar di rumah adalah jalan keluarnya
Kita masih bisa berkarya di saat Indonesia sedang tidak baik-baik saja

Perjuangan adalah pelaksanaan dari kata-kata
Keberanian adalah cakrawala
Kita ini pemenang, bukan pecundang
Jangan kau kotori semangat dengan keragu-raguan

Ibu pertiwi butuh perubahan
Pandemi corona bukanlah penghalang
Generasi muda adalah harapan
Menghantarkannya ke gerbang kesuksesan

The poem "Generasi Bangsa Rising to Work" utilizes a direct narrative style by addressing its readers: "How are you, young men and women?" In the first stanza, we find the following lexemes: sorrow, pause, cry, unravel, neglect, war, silence, blackened, trapped, barrier, loser, dirty, and doubt. All these lexemes form the motif of defeat. Therefore, the poet seeks to encourage young people to rise. The motif of resurrection is invoked several times by the poet, for example, in the exclamations: "The soul of work seems to be burning," "It's time for me to escape the labyrinth, to raise awareness," "Prove myself, show my potential," "Struggle, courage," and "Winner." Thus, the poet's intended message is about the rise of the younger generation.

The final poem, titled "Rise with Corona," by Parni Hadi, illustrates the narrator's belief that the pandemic has two opposing states: positive and negative, for example, in the words "plague-preacher," "ghost-teacher," "provocateur-inspirator," and "disease-inducer." This contrasting situation makes this poem unique. Isotopic analysis of this poem yields the following lexemes: affected, affected, suffering, plague, ghost, provocateur, and disease, all associated with the motif of suffering. On the other hand, the lexemes: preacher, enlightener, teacher, inspirator, awakener, messenger of the times, whip, justice, and prosperity, are associated with the motif of resurrection/hope. From suffering to resurrection is a process of improvement. This process of change is necessary to achieve a good state.

"Bangkit Bersama Corona"

Siapa yang tidak terdampak, terkena dan menderita?

Hampir semua sedunia!

Corona, engkau adalah makhluk multi wajah

Wabah sekaligus pengkotbah, pencerah

Hantu sekaligus guru

Provokator sekaligus inspirator

Penyakit sekaligus sang pembangkit

Engkau adalah utusan zaman,

Zaman now, yang galau, kacau balau

Pengingat dahsyat sejagad.

Engkau adalah cambuk menuju ufuk,

Dunia baru, yang lebih adil dan sejahtera bagi sesama makhluk

The poem "Rise with Corona" builds its coherent meaning through four isotopes. The first isotope is suffering and threat, clearly evident in the opening line: "Who hasn't been affected, hit, and suffered? Almost everyone in the world!" Words like "plague," "ghost," "provocateur," "disease," and "whip" all carry the same meaning. This also emphasizes that corona is something dangerous, attacking, and painful. The second isotope, which contrasts with the first, is enlightenment and teaching. Corona is previously referred to as a ghost and plague, and later as a "preacher," "enlightener," "teacher," and "inspirator." These words convey the meaning of guidance and awareness. These two opposing isotopes are united by a single key word: "at once" in "plague and preacher," "ghost and teacher," "disease and awakener," which can be interpreted as implying that COVID-19 and society must coexist as one entity.

Next, the third isotope is at the heart of the entire poem: transformation and resurrection. The evidence flows from the title to the final line. The poem contains the words "rise," "awakener," "messenger of the times," "toward the horizon," "new world," and "more just and prosperous," emphasizing change and hope. Even the painful word "whip" is not omitted, but becomes a direction of that pain: "a whip toward the horizon, a new world." The pain itself becomes a driving force for humanity toward a better order. The entire movement of meaning in this poem is framed by the fourth isotope, namely the vastness and scale of the universe, which is present through words such as "worldwide," "worldwide," "messenger of the times," and "for all creatures." This discourse emphasizes that COVID-19 has affected all layers of civilization. It can be concluded that the four isotopes support each other in a single logical flow: suffering that gives rise to awareness, awareness that drives transformation, and transformation that is meaningful for all creatures in this world.

IV. Discussion

An analysis of the four poems above reveals a consistent isotopic pattern: the movement of meaning from a realm of suffering to resurrection. In the poem "Goodbye Pandemic," the isotopes of sadness (horror, misery, pain, loss of life) linearly transform into isotopes of resurrection (recovery, radiance, rise, progress). A similar pattern emerges in the poem "Generasi Bangkit Berkarya," which moves from motifs of defeat (sorrow, tears, silence, loser) to motifs of resurrection (igniting, proving oneself, winner). The poem "Rise with Corona"

is composed of four isotopes—suffering, enlightenment, transformation, and the scale of the universe—in a logical flow, as if suffering gives rise to awareness and awareness drives transformation. Even in the more dynamic poem "Pembelajaran Tatap Muka," the tension between motifs of misery and happiness still culminates in a positive resolution through the use of the symbols "morning" and "sun." This consistency across texts confirms that post-pandemic optimism is not merely an individual theme of one poet, but rather a collective tendency embedded in the semantic structure of Indonesian cyberpoetry. This finding strengthens the argument that isotopy not only ensures the grammatical coherence of a text but also records the reader's psychological interpretational direction. As Kerbrat-Orecchioni emphasized, isotopy is an interpretive direction that allows readers to organize networks of meaning (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1976). In the post-pandemic context, this direction transforms darkness into light. The linear pattern "from death/chaos to life/order" found in the poems above can be read as a textual representation of the trauma recovery process. The decline

The linear pattern "from death/chaos to life/order" found in this corpus can be read as a textual representation of the trauma recovery process. The decline is first acknowledged and then transformed into hope. This structure distinguishes the optimism in these poems from mere consolation to hope after suffering is given space to be expressed.

The use of contrast and paradox reinforces this therapeutic function. The poet does not erase painful lexemes and instead creates productive meaning. This is most evident in "Rise with Corona," where the painful word "cambuk" becomes a directional marker ("cambuk untuk ufuk"), and the pandemic is depicted as a dual entity through the keyword "sekalimat" (plague and preacher, disease and awakener). This strategy demonstrates that poetry allows poets and readers to reinterpret traumatic experiences as something that encourages growth. This finding aligns with Awodiya et al. (2024)'s view that poetry writing during the pandemic serves as a therapeutic medium for processing traumatic experiences and rebuilding hope, and with Boydell & Lupton's (2023) view of lockdown poetry as a means of healing. What distinguishes this phenomenon is the medium. The four poems were born and spread through social media rather than through conventional publishing channels. Cyberspace allows the process of expression and acceptance to occur instantly without bureaucratic barriers, so that recovery that was initially personal can quickly become a shared experience. Thus, post-pandemic cyber poetry serves a dual function: (1) as a space for individual catharsis, and (2) as a medium for collective trauma recovery, namely a place for society, especially the younger generation, to express hopes openly in the digital public space.

V. Conclusion

Through isotopic analysis, the ideas of a literary work, particularly poetry, which are often difficult to grasp, can become easier to interpret. Language is inherently polysemic, meaning that the same components of meaning can exist in various vocabulary words. This leads to repetition. Repetition in poetry is an important poetic tool for emphasizing the poem's ideas, as well as for aesthetic achievement.

The post-pandemic era has opened up new possibilities for interpreting literary works, particularly poetry. From the analysis of the four poems above, it can be concluded that in this post-pandemic era, poets clearly express revival, hope, and optimism for a better future.

These poems demonstrate that the optimism expressed by the poets stems from an honest recognition of pain and loss. The poets deliberately incorporate suffering into their poems, emphasizing that revival always arises from suffering. Thus, post-pandemic poetry not only reflects the spirit of the times but also bequeaths a perspective: that in every crisis, humans always have the capacity to find meaning, choose direction, and move toward a better life. This is what makes poetry, with all its complex language and layers of meaning, remain relevant and increasingly needed in a world that is constantly changing.

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