 Pathetic fallacy

Learning intention: To define pathetic fallacy /identity examples of pathetic fallacy in Jasper Jones/understand the purpose of this technique.

Pathetic: pertaining to emotion

Fallacy: falseness

What is it?

Pathetic fallacy is a literary device that attributes human qualities and emotions to inanimate objects of nature.

Authors use the weather or seasons to give the story a flavour or sense of mood.

The word ‘pathetic’ in the term is not used in the derogatory sense of being miserable; rather, here, it stands for ‘imparting emotions to something else’.

Who created it?

British cultural critic John Ruskin coined the term in his book, Modern Painters (1843–60)

Why do authors use pathetic fallacy?

Helps the reader understand the characters emotion easily

Can change the viewer’s mood

For example; rain makes you sad, sunshine and rainbows make you happy, therefore as the reader we gain deeper perspective of the character and the authors intended message.

Task

Identify the mood in the following images. Write down one adjective that best describes the image (Teacher to select images)

Watch Justin Timberlake’s video clip ‘[Cry Me A River](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DksSPZTZES0)‘: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DksSPZTZES0

Class discussion: How does the filmmaker use weather and nature to impact on your emotions?

Pathetic fallacy in Jasper Jones

Examples

The thick heat seems to seep in and keep my sleep out (Page 1)

…after they left, the room felt empty and hot (Page 211)

‘The world is aflame. The sun is a giant red ball’ (Page 295).

A selection of quotes from pages 275-277

The roar of the rain gets louder, and a sheet of white flashes. Thunder erupts soon after…

Activity:

1. Describe the mood that is created
2. Explain why each example of Pathetic Fallacy is effective with the context. Refer to the page and read the whole paragraph in to gn a better understanding (the first one has been done for you)

‘The thick heat seems to seep in and keep my sleep out’

Mood: Charlie feels trapped and irritated by the summer’s heat.

Why is it effective?

Silvey on the very first page builds a sense of atmosphere by detailing the hot, dry weather in Corrigan. By doing so Silvey is conveying how people are affected by the weather as it causes them to become restless, irritable and unpredictable. This is used to build up to Jasper’s involvement in the scene at Charlie’s window. This is pivotal point in the story that changes Charlie’s world forever.

1. ‘…after they left the room felt empty and hot’

Mood

Why is it effective?

1. The roar of the rain gets louder, and a sheet of white flashes. Thunder erupts soon after … It’s pissing down now, blanketing our house.

Mood:

Why is this effective?

1. ‘The world is aflame, the sun is a giant red ball’.

Mood:

Why is it effective?