

**ANIMAL IMAGERY IN TED HUGHES POETRY****ANUPAMA.K**

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Abstract

Poets draw inspiration through nature .It is the Nature that nurtures our thoughts and guides .Keen observation of the water bodies the surroundings and the animals subtly silently help to think on their behavioral pattern. We have many poets ShelleyKeats Wordsworth, Robert frost and so on. One such poet who grew observing animals and their behavior in the moors and valleys and wrote poems on animal imagery is none other than Ted Hughes.

We can be sure and get convinced of his sharp observation of the animals and birds he mentioned with the vocabulary he used . Personification of the hawk especially and the authority and superiority it expresses the confidence it displays grabs the attention of the readers .

Here I would like to discuss regarding "Ted Hughes "poetry which deals with the observation of nature and animal instincts. Ted Hughes is one of the greatest modern poet . His poetry on animals has won him the accolades. His poetry deals with animals and their behavior which has a closer resemblance to human nature. The animal imagery he used are horses, foxes, hawk and deer .He appreciates the animal behavior for it is simple straight forward and unsophisticated. He has concern towards the animals that they may be endangered due to human interference. He passes a message to protect the wild life from the urban lot.

Key words:Animals, Instincts, Nature, Skills and Human Perception

Introduction

Ted Hughes was an English poet and the Poet Laureate of England from 1984 until his death. He is considered as one of the best poets of his generation.

Hughes early childhood was spent in moors and valleys of Yorkshire which paved way to the fascination of animals. He had a natural talent for writing, and encouraged by his teachers and elder sister, he had started writing by the age of fifteen and by sixteen he knew he wanted to be a poet.

After graduating from Cambridge, he worked on his poetry and at the age of 27 he released his first book of poems, which earned him a critical acclaim and established him as a poet. He later started writing books for children and soon made his mark in that field.



As a child, he was fascinated by animals. He also loved to fish, to draw, and collected toy animals. In 1946, he had his first poem published. Titled 'Wild West', it appeared in the school magazine called 'The Don and Dearne.' It also carried one of his short stories. Later, he had a few more poems published in the same magazine.

In the year 1949 he joined royal Air force as a ground mechanic at an isolated post which gave an opportunity to read the works of Shakespeare. He joined Pembroke College on scholarship English as a major subject. He could not carry on his studies but later spent time in reading Mythology and W.B. Yeats. He took up various jobs to support himself financially for a year and had a plan to migrate to Australia. Eventually he met Sylvia Plath got married to her then published "The Hawk In the rain". She also helped in typing the work and was awarded the first prize. Together they published poems in acclaimed Journals.

He also wrote plays and critical essays also involved in running Poetry International festivals with Patrick Garland and Charles Osborne. He set up a Rainbow Press along with his sister. From then he produced poetry book 'Crow: From the Life and Songs of the Crow', published by Faber and Faber. He went on writing and produced many books for children also established a charity farm for the children and his last book published few months before his death with a collection of eight poems.

Ideas on Hawk

Ted Hughes poetry animal imagery to look at may give an instant impression of violence in the animals and the similar behavior in the humans. If we look at the other way round a small bird like hawk, which considers its webbed feet as its strength gifted by god to it that paves way to find its prey and reaches the target without fail, this could also mean that humans need to look at the bright side of their life and project themselves towards the better life rather than feeling dejected. The emphasis and focus may be on the good things they possess. Hawk's confidence and its skill to catch the prey are to be appreciated. The bird sitting on the high end of a branch could locate its prey from the great distance and catches without a second thought. Its dedication to hold the prey makes it possible to do so unlike us who anticipate problems, explore problems and miss the target. The hawk is mentally a superior and intelligent bird which sees buoyancy and convenience are its assets. These are all the sophisticated elevated discussions.

The hawk works on its task rather than thinking much beyond. This sort of focus concentration and devotion helps an individual a better skilled one. The thought of taking everything to our advantage and moving towards the goal could be the idea.

The Jaguar Poem



To look at the poem Jaguar all the caged animals look life less whereas the jaguar does not lose its valor, not seems to be disappointed its inner strength could not be destroyed. The visitors to the zoo are interested in jaguar draws the attention of all the visitors due to its inner strength. The mark of the personal integrity that remains intact in spite of it being controlled and caged forcibly.

What we need to look at these and learn not to lose our courage in spite of unduly forced circumstances. The bravery displayed by jaguar is what we need to learn.

Horse poem

Again in the poem horse the poet speaks about the endurance of the horses when they are left in chill wind. The speaker would be walking through the frosty woods and the horses are left to the frosty whether they appear like a statue on the cold climate and as the sun rises the horses seem to take a magic element. The horses appear calm to the speaker. The speaker feels they have some spiritual strength to bear extreme climates. The calmness of the horses can be understood as the silence is needed during the turbulent time. Agony and agitation only add pain to the situation.

The thought Fox

The thought fox in this poem the author wants to convey how the brain silently gets tuned with the help of all the sense organs and finally gives birth to an idea of the poem he writes.

In the beginning of the poem the page is a blank one but slowly with the imagination and

Perception of these senses, the thoughts get translated into a poem. It is the cunningness of the brain like a fox which slowly converts his thoughts into an action.

Interpretations of the poem may differ but on reading it we could even draw these conclusions about the poem. All five senses are evoked in this poem. This shows that silence evokes all the senses and activates the brain cells to nurture the creativity.

Deer poem

The poem is from the collection of "Moor town Dairy" which was written in 1973. The poem begins with the bad dawn due to poor sunlight and lot of snow and the poet finds two deers

Which are in dark blue color. The animals disappear into snow as soon as they see the poet. He feels alienated though he grew up in the moors and had been in close association of the animals. He feels the deer have a life which is still unknown to him. We can see the poet has a strong connection to the animals yet he could not observe them well.

Black beast



Here the black beast is the crow which tries to struggle who is bad and finds out that it itself is bad. Here the message is humans also try to find the bad elements externally but they ultimately discover it in themselves.

Conclusion

Hughes animal poetry is appreciated universally. His love for animals got him popularity across the globe. He always bothered about the human interference in the world of animals. He feels animals are better than humans, they do not live under the fear of mortality. The use of animal imagery shows his fondness towards the animals and attachment he developed with them. He wonders how the animals are so skillful in catching the prey and finds it astonishing that they are so sharp without any training. The poet's intention is to speak on the art in getting their prey and the focus and attention they pay for it. Animals do act impulsively but they do not damage on the large scale where as humans interference with the nature comes on a large scale of destruction.

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