

# Unveiling the Human-Nature Relationship: An Analysis of Ted Hughes' Poetry

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Humans are a part of nature, yet relationship marketing and sustainable marketing fail to fully understand the interaction between people and the environment. Ted Hughes, a prominent figure in modern poetry, explore the complex relationship between man and nature in this works. This paper examines how Hughes portrays primal instincts within humans and animals, and their connection to the natural world. This paper also discusses how Hughes uses vivid imagery and metaphors to depict nature as a powerful force that can inspire and consume humanity. Additionally, the paper analyzes how Hughes highlights the destructive aspects of nature in his poems. Overall, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the interconnectedness between man and nature, as portrayed in Hughes's poetry.

**Keywords:** nature, humans, animal, imagery, metaphor.

## 1. Introduction

Humans are a part of nature; they are surrounded by it all the time and engage with it. Despite the fact that people are a part of nature, neither relationship marketing nor sustainable marketing fully grasps how people and the environment interact. Human beings harm the environment, and many of the natural resources that come from them are taken for granted. Nature often refers to the physical world encompassing all living organisms, landscapes, ecosystems, and natural phenomena. It includes elements such as mountains, rivers, forests, animals, plants, and the weather. In this sense, nature is the sum of Earth's biodiversity and natural processes. Twentieth-century poetry has witnessed a profound and diverse evolution, with poets exploring new forms, styles, and themes that reflect the rapidly changing social, political, and cultural landscape. The century began with a continuation of established traditions but quickly gave rise to various movements and revolutions in poetry.

British poets have often explored the relationship between humanity and the natural world. Romantic poets like S.T. Coleridge and William Wordsworth celebrated the beauty of nature and its influence on human emotion and imagination. The Victorian era saw continued interest

in nature, but often with a more introspective and sometimes darker tone. Tennyson's "In memoriam" explores the connection between the natural world and a human grief, contemplating the cycles of life and death. While modernist poets often engaged with urban and industrial themes, some continued to explore the relationship between humans and nature. D.H. Lawrence, in poems like "Snake" and "Bavarian Gentians", delves into the primal connection between human instincts and the natural world.

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in natural poetry, often framed within the context of environmentalism and ecological concerns. Poets such as Mary Oliver and Wendell Berry exemplify this trend, emphasizing the importance of a harmonious relationship between humans and the natural environment. The connectivity between man and nature in British poetry is complex and multifaceted, reflecting evolving perspectives across different literary movements and historical content. It explores the spiritual, emotional, and ecological dimensions of this relationship, offering diverse insights into human experiences in relation to the natural world. Ted Hughes, one of the prominent figures in modern poetry, delves deep into the intricate relationship between man and nature in his poem. Throughout his life, he received multiple literary honors, such as the T. S. Eliot Prize and Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry. Hughes' legacy was somewhat complicated by his personal life, especially his turbulent marriage to the American poet Sylvia Plath in 1956.

Hughes' influence on the literary world is still felt today, and his poetry is widely read and studied. His art was praised for its strength, originality, and capacity to convey the natural world's raw beauty and brutality. It is evident from his poetry that anthropomorphism is present masterfully captures the raw power and primal instincts that exist within both humans and the natural world. Through his vivid imagery and metaphors, Hughes portrayed nature as a force that can inspire and consume humanity. In poems such as "Hawk Roosting" and "The Jaguar," Hughes explored the primal nature of animals and their connection to the natural world, highlighting their inherent wildness and untamed energy. Additionally, Hughes emphasizes the destructive aspects of nature through poems like "Wind" and "Flood," where he depicts the uncontrollable forces of wind and water wreaking havoc on human civilization. Overall, Hughes's poetry highlights the interconnectedness between man and nature, portraying both the harmony and tension that exist within this relationship.

In his poems, Ted Hughes showcases the deep connectivity between humans and nature. He explored primal instincts within humans and animals, emphasizing their connection to the natural world. Through vivid imagery and metaphors, Hughes portrays nature as a powerful force that can both inspire and consume humanity. Ted Hughes, one of the prominent figures in modern poetry, delves deep into the intricate relationship between man and nature in his poems. He masterfully captures the raw power and primal instincts that exist in both humans and the natural world. Through his vivid imagery and metaphors, Hughes portrays nature as a force that can both inspire and consume humanity. In poems such as "Hawk Roosting" and "The Jaguar" Hughes explores the primal nature of animals and their connection to the natural world, highlighting their inherent wildness and untamed energy.

Ted Hughes' renowned poem 'Hawk Roosting' is composed from the hawk's perspective, utilizing first-person narration. The work portrays an unyielding facet of Nature. Many interpret the poem as having historical connotations, with the hawk symbolizing the essence

of a dictatorial figure, such as Hitler. This interpretation is particularly evident in certain lines of the poem.

My manners are tearing off heads—  
The allotment of death.  
For the one path of my flight is direct  
Through the bones of the living.  
No arguments assert my right:  
The sun is behind me.  
Nothing has changed since I began.  
My eye has permitted no change.  
I am going to keep things like this.  
(Lupercal: 'Hawk Roosting,' 26)

The poet portrays Nature as indifferent and relentless through the hawk's predatory instinct, suggesting it seeks no justification, allows "no change," and aggressively opposes human rationality. "The Bull Moses" aims to reconnect humans with their repressed animal nature. The poem guides readers from their physical realm of conscious thought to the depths of their subconscious.

The jaguar's rebellious and independent spirit is depicted as resisting captivity and embracing its primal instincts. These poems suggest that man and nature are intertwined, but they approach their relationships from different angles. In "Hawk Roosting," the connection between man and nature is portrayed through the hawk's belief that it possesses complete control over its environment and acts as the ultimate authority. On the other hand, "Jaguar" presents man as an observer and admirer of the jaguar's wild nature. The poem highlights the jaguar's freedom and power, distancing it from the constraints of human civilization. These contrasting portrayals reveal the complex and multifaceted relationship between humans and nature. In "Hawk Roosting," the speaker takes on the persona of the hawk and embodies a dominant and egoistic view of nature.

The poem "Hawk Roosting" deeply explores the relationship between man and nature, highlighting the dominance and power of the natural world. In the poem, the hawk represents nature and its primal instincts while also serving as a metaphor for human desires and ambitions. The hawk's perspective in the poem emphasizes its sense of superiority and control over its surroundings, mirroring how humans often exert power and dominance over the natural world. The hawk's description of its surroundings, such as the "no arguments assert his right" and how it "reposes in the immediate". Captures the hawk's belief in its inherent entitlement and its disregard for any opposition or challenge to its authority. This poem suggests that humans, like the hawk, have an innate connection to nature and a primal desire for power and control. This primal connection between man and nature is further emphasized by the intense imagery and language used throughout the poem. The poem establishes a strong connection between man and nature in its portrayal of hawk. A hawk is portrayed as a symbol

of nature's raw power and primal instincts, highlighting the inherent ties between humans and the natural world. Additionally, the poem explores the idea of man's desire to harness and dominate nature for his own purposes. Overall, the poem "Hawk Roosting" highlights the connection between man and nature through its portrayal of the hawk as a symbol of nature's dominance and power, and man's desire to exert control over the natural world.

The poem Wodwo begins with the mythical figure of Wodwo, as Hughes portrays him sniffing roots and questioning his own existence upon finding sustenance in the form of food and drink as he enters the water. This displays the curiosity of the primeval man, Wodwo. He is depicted as conducting an investigation of his reflection in the water of the river and then examining a frog. He subsequently contemplates the situation of the frog and the freedom enjoyed by natural creatures, placing himself amidst the natural objects and considering his own freedom. He ponders his relationship with the Creator and realizes that the entire ecosystem revolves around him. The enigmatic final words of Wodwo shed light on the poet's philosophical dilemma, illustrating that Wodwo's thoughts are not only about himself, but also about nature in which he finds himself contemplating other things.

Three major thematic strands in this poem are nature, man, and individual freedom. The poem starts with this primitive human being searching for water by sniffing roots and pondering the living and non-living things around him. Beyond this threshold, there exists a relativism that asserts that everyone with a soul will have their own world, and as many worlds as there are humans, so too will there be worlds. However, the true dialectics of life suggest that a person is unique both in their outer and spiritual life, belonging to the universal from which they emerged.

Ted Hughes' nature poetry is centered on human survival in a violent and chaotic world, as seen in his works such as "The Hawk in the Rain" and "Wind." His understanding of violence in both human and non-human spheres is influenced by Schopenhauer's vision of a world driven by will and Dionysian fury, as well as the Goddess's violent emergence from the forces of life and death. The lack of a natural bond with the world of nature results in a child-like, spontaneous response to the various aspects of nature being absent. Man feels extremely threatened when exposed to the conflicting forces of nature as revealed in these poems, and the animals in these poems exhibit vital energies in the face of the threatening elemental forces. Hughes criticizes man for lacking animal voluntarism, the life-force, and the will to live, which would enable him to adjust to such violent surroundings. Trapped in futile rationalism and materialism, man has suppressed his life-force or vital energies in his unconscious mind. As a poet, Hughes attempts to purge man of his rationalism and the resulting pretensions and encourages him to recognize his own life-force or animal energies, which will enable him to reconcile with the violent but vital forces of nature and ultimately the Goddess.

William Wordsworth believed that nature presented three significant benefits to humans: it brought joy to the heart, purified the mind, and served as a healing influence on grieving souls. Wordsworth found solace in nature, using it to purify his mind in both secluded settings and amidst the chaos of urban environments. Additionally, nature did not simply serve as a picturesque landscape for Wordsworth; rather, he viewed it as a medium through which a spiritual connection between humans and the natural world could be established. For Wordsworth, nature had a moral influence on humans, providing a spiritual exchange between

the two. He considers nature as

The anchor of my purest thought, the nurse  
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul  
Of all my moral being. ( TA 107-110)

In “October Dawn,” the poet anticipates extreme cold, reminiscent of another ice age, evoking images of Mammoth and Sabre’s tooth. The poet envisions vast amounts of ice covering rivers, rendering them completely immobile. The poem subtly conveys the cruelty of nature towards man. The poet describes his house as drifting on the sea like a ship, with the inhabitants sitting before the fireplace in a state of numbness verging on paralysis. Langston Hughes’ poetry draws wisdom from diverse fields, including psychology, philosophy, feminism, linguistics, Surrealism, shamanism, anthropology, hermetism, astrology, and the occult. This distinguishes his work from the prevailing poetic trends of his time and sets it apart from the “middle-class” attitude commonly found in the poetry of Larkin, Eliot, and Auden. Hughes’ poetry is characterized by vigor and violence, contrasting with the poetry of his contemporaries. He portrays nature as both a beautiful, life-giving force and a violent, predatory entity that encompasses the irrational and instinctive forces that govern life. Hughes skillfully blends the attitudes of both Wordsworth and Tennyson towards nature in his poetry. Furthermore, his world of nature is both nurturing and threatening, life-giving and life-denying.

Since humans have become detached from nature, they suffer when they are exposed to the natural forces that are both creative and destructive in the universe. This idea is exemplified in “The Two Eskimo Songs,” where Hughes emphasizes how humans have lost their connection with nature and are unable to confront the creative-destructive forces of life. Hughes’ poetry suggests that humans can find redemption by undergoing the processes of purgation and atonement, which will enable them to reconnect with their instinctual and natural bond with nature. The Crow, for instance, faces various trials and tribulations that result in an awareness and acceptance of its relationship with the creative-destructive forces of nature. Hughes’ poetry also celebrates the female principle in nature, advocating for its importance.

In the poem “Thrushes,” the thrush is portrayed as a formidable hunter, representing resilience and determination. With eyes that gleam like cold steel and delicate yet deadly legs, the bird is a symbol of beauty and brutality. The poet admires the thrush’s unwavering focus on survival and compares it to humanity’s lack of single-minded purpose, emphasizing the contrast between nature’s clarity and human ambiguity. “Is it their single-mind-sized skulls, or a trained/ Body, or genius, or a nestful of brats/ Gives their days this bullet and automatic/ Purpose?” ( Hughes, Lines 10- 13).

Nature, in Hughes’ poetry, is portrayed as being both violent and chaotic due to the constant presence of the opposing forces of creation and destruction that coexist in the universe. This depiction of nature differs significantly from the vision presented in Movement poetry, which emphasizes a more refined and controlled world. By describing the wild and instinctual world of nature, Hughes distinguishes himself from the pretentious and disciplined world of Movement poetry. Additionally, he juxtaposes the irrational and instinctual mode of living

with the rational and moral order of Western society. Through his portrayal of nature, Hughes escapes the constraints of the rational and moral codes of Western society.

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