



THE USAGE OF ANIMAL IMAGERY IN THE WORKS OF TED HUGHES

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Abstract

The article examines the imagery of animals in poetry in the works of the modern British poet Ted Hughes, explains what factors determined by nature and animals.

Keywords: Modern poetry of Great Britain, the work of Ted Hughes, imagery poetry, poetry about animals.

Introduction

The British poet's interest in animals Ted Hughes was awakened in childhood. At the age of four, he received a large album of photographs from his parents as a gift. Various representatives of the fauna and various explanatory captions under them. He couldn't read yet, but he was diligently redrawing images, and sculpting some animals out of plasticine. Over the years, the creative process itself begins to merge for him with this aspiration to the foundations of the animal world. In his book "Poetry in the Making", Hughes often uses examples from this field to illustrate some of the hidden mechanisms of the poetic text's construction. He dedicates the poem to an animal with its own energetic, but at the same time crunchy his life: "A poem is a collection of living components driven by a single spirit." The living components are words, phrases, and rhythm. The Spirit is the life that fills these people when they work in unity. In the book, Hughes draws a



parallel between the search for creative inspiration and fishing. Like the fisherman in the poem According to Hughes "Pike", the poet should focus on the float and not be distracted by other stimuli that produce his consciousness. Concentrate until he catches the tremor of the float, that is, the thrill of inner excitement, then he must quickly hook and pull his theme out of the dark depths, bypassing the censors of the psyche, into the light. By acting this way, the artist learns to focus his imagination on his inner world until he grasps a thought, a feeling, or some movement of intuition, or some object that excites him, in order to discover the truth hidden in them: "This process of rounding up, or chasing, or ambushing, or hunting with hounds is a way thinking, which we must learn, and if we fail to learn it for some reason, then our mind rests in us like a fish in a pond that belongs to a person who does not know how to fish."¹ The poet's task, Hughes believed, is to debunk false myths and affirm true myths, which usually involve a journey into our inner world and painful knowledge in itself.

Discussion

The images of animals in Hughes' poetry are an integral part of his system of views on nature and bear the stamp of his fascination with mythology. Already in Ted's first poetry collection Hughes' "Hawk in the Rain" (1957) the animalistic theme becomes predominant. And one of the central places in the book is occupied by the image of a fox. She became something of a totem for the poet. He recalled that once, as a child, he was climbing a steep hillside, and when he reached the crest, he discovered that on the other side of the hill, at the same time, Lee climbed. The boy and the animal were several centimeters apart and looked eye to eye. Indeed, the very name "Thought of fox" indicates that we are talking about an unusual animal, and the first line imagine highlights this. In this poem, Hughes tries to tell how a poetic text is born, and the image of a fox participates in the objectification of this process. The poet waits in front of an empty sheet of white paper. He waits intently, as the fisherman from the poem "Pike" mentioned above has already mentioned. At first, there is an indeterminate feeling:

¹ Hughes, T. (1967) Poetry in the Making. L. : Faber



Something else is alive. Then it becomes clearer:

Through the window I see no star:

Something more near

Though deeper within darkness

Is entering the loneliness²

Windows that do not show stars do not look out into the outside world, but into the darkness of the car subconscious. It is from there that the creative impulse comes, which should destroy the "loneliness" without inspiration. From this darkness and night, the image of a fox begins to form gradually:

Cold, delicately as the dark snow,

A fox's nose touches twig, leaf...

The poet conveys the animal's movement with great skill. The sense of smell turns on first. Life and sustenance depend on him in many ways. The fox's nose moves cautiously from object to object, trying to catch prey or danger beyond Easter. Then eyes appear from the "dark snowy" subconscious, and the animal approaches:

Two eyes serve a movement, that now

And again now, and now, and now

Sets neat prints into the snow...

The given lines above depict the nervous running of a fox: after taking a few steps, it stops to look around, runs again - and stops again. This effect is achieved by the rhythm of the verse and the repetition of the adverb now. The name appears at the end of the first line, then repeats in the next line, each time ending up in a phrase with a different number of syllables -this technique should highlight the unevenness of running.

Analyses

Trying to step over stereotypes about nature and show that the usual categories of good and evil, crime and punishment do not work here, the poet still cannot give up these stereotypes, and he himself, probably unwittingly, gives the worldview of the hawk an anthropomorphic character. At the same time, he projects onto the

² Hughes" PIKE"1995: Macmillan Press.



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bird the features of a degraded consciousness that evokes associations with Richard III, Hitler and similar personalities. Obviously, this hypostasis of nature has given rise to a hidden fear in the author himself. Therefore, already in this collection, Hughes presented other parallels. between the inhabitants of the natural world and man. The creation of "An Otter" is particularly interesting in this regard. It shows how much the poetic mass of Hughes has increased compared to his first collection, where there were still some chewy poems written with an eye to other authors. Here he already manages to succinctly but very expressively describe the appearance of a man:

With webbed feet and long ruddering tail
And a round head like an old tomcat
Gallops along land he no longer belong to;
Re-enters the water by melting³

The awakened longing for this world forces the otter to go to his search. She dives into the ponds that cross her path to see if she will relive the sweet feeling of harmony and fullness of being that she experienced when she first realized herself and her presence in the world. Hughes again uses the poetic form very skillfully to literally graphically convey the flexibility and mobility of an animal and its inner restlessness with the help of lines of different lengths, hyphenation, and free syntax.

To sea crosses in three nights
Like a king in hiding. Crying to the old shape
of the starlit land,
Over sunken farms where the bats go round....

The second part of the poem is characterized by a greater formal order and symmetry. These qualities should emphasize the resistance of the space in which you travel, guided by your dream. Order and symmetry seem to suppress her free spirit, creating obstacles on the way to a distant utopia. The world you're traveling through is populated by hostile aliens. It is no coincidence that the second part begins with a mention of hunting. This time, the otter managed to escape the chase thanks to its ambivalent nature , but the future is painted in pessimistic tones..

³ Hughes, T. New Selected Poems. L. : Faber & Faber.1995 .P-37



This tendency, the deepening of philosophical overtones in animalistic poetry, persists in Hughes' next poetry collection, *Wodwo* (1967). Hughes found the title for him in the medieval English novel "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight." The book tells us that Gawain had to deal with giants, wild animals, and "woduo" to the detriment of his travels. Who or what "woduo" is is not mentioned in the novel. In the creation with the same name, the image of woduo is also unclear and vague, not only for the reader, but also for the being itself, and it seeks to get rid of this uncertainty, seeks its place in the surrounding nature:

"Do these weeds know me and name me to each other have they seen me before, do I fit in their world?"⁴

One gets the impression that anything but what was born, therefore, in his perception of the world, surprise and curiosity prevail. It tries to connect itself with the three stigmas - earth, water and air, but I am sure that the news to which of them it belongs by birth does not arise. He places it in the conventional past, where the pastoral ideal is already located, striving for the fusion of man with nature.

Conclusion

Ted Hughes' early poetry attests to his abiding interest in animals. In them, the poet identifies a number of qualities, the absence of which in a person, as it seems to him, impoverishes his existence. At the same time, there are forces in nature that make him wary and even afraid, although he tries to overcome them. Hughes tries to convince himself and the reader that natural phenomena cannot be viewed through the prism of habitual ethical categories, they require a different attitude, but he himself cannot avoid anthropomorphism when depicting animals. Gradually, the tendency towards the convergence of the human and animal worlds increases in Hughes' poetry. As a result, the images of animals in his poems acquire great philosophical depth and symbolism. Whether it is the menacing hawk, the elusive fox, or the brutal pike, each creature encapsulates a distinct emotional and philosophical dimension. Through these portrayals,

⁴ Hong, Ch. Hughes and Animals The Cambridge Companion to Ted Hughes. Cambridge : 2011. Cambridge University Press. P. 87.



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Hughes explores themes of violence, survival, instinct, and the often fraught relationship between humanity and the natural world. His unique ability to infuse animals with mythic intensity and psychological depth allows readers to confront the untamed aspects of existence. Ultimately, Hughes's animal imagery challenges the romanticized view of nature, offering instead a vision that is stark, unsentimental, and deeply resonant with the elemental forces that shape both the outer and inner worlds.

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