

# A description of relationships in hughes' poetry

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## **Explore How Hughes Presents Relationships in Full Moon and Little Frieda and At Least One Other Poem**

Hughes uses the description of his daughter to depict the relationship between humans and the natural world. His daughter is the epitome of innocence, described as a “ spider’s web”, which has connotations of delicacy and intricacy as a web is made up of hundreds of small intricate strands. This innocence is explored in terms of her relationship with the natural world and how that differs from that of an adult. Her innocence is further established through the metaphor of a “ brimming” pail; this creates tension and is an allegory for a child’s mind, almost overflowing with ideas and thoughts. This symbolism is extended through the description of her mind as a “ mirror”, reflecting the night’s sky. This could perhaps be Hughes alluding to the the perceptive nature of children, whom reflect the world around them. This creates a closeness to the natural world that adults simply cannot achieve due their closed mindedness. Hughes highlights the different relationships between adults and the natural world through his blunt, somewhat crass descriptions of nature. He describes cows as a “ dark river of blood, many boulders”. Through these vacuous metaphors, Hughes is stressing how elemental his relationship with the natural world is compared to the magic of his daughter’s experience.

Hughes’ elementary relationship is particularly prevalent in “ View of a Pig”. This poem focuses on the lack of sentimentality attached to the death of an animal, in this case a pig. Hughes uses repetition of the word “ dead” to eradicate any compassion that is felt by the reader and employs dramatic, violent adjectives to describe the death wound; “ the gash in its throat was

shocking, but not pathetic". Hughes acknowledges the horror of the situation, but accentuates the lack of terror in the situation, with the line "not pathetic" stressing the need for complete dispassion when observing such a scene. Hughes ponders for a moment if one should feel "guilty insulting the dead, walking on graves", but then remarks that "this pig did not seem able to accuse". Hughes is ridiculing to use of meaningless human constructs such as the superstitions of walking on graves, and emphasizes the lack of dignity in death, describing the pig as lying there, "its last dignity entirely gone". This description, although perhaps correct, lacks the wonder of the way his daughter sees nature. In "Full Moon and Little Frieda", the word "Moon!" is repeated twice. This repetition gives the word a supernatural feeling and shows that the relationship between such an virtuous mind and nature is far more magical.

The brutal, dull aspect of nature is further stressed by Hughes in 'Wind'. Hughes differentiates himself from the Romantic poets by not touching on the pastoral elements of the wind but focusing on the never-ending onslaught of wind, and in greater terms, nature, on human life. Hughes emphasises the insubstantial makeup of the human world, using imagery of the house which 'strained on its guyrope'. The power of the wind is close to overcoming human life but interestingly Hughes never allows the wind to fully prevail over the extended metaphor for the human world. He stresses that although 'the roots of the house move', they 'sit on'. Hughes is advocating the viewpoint of mutual respect between man and nature, an idea that his upbringing in the Pennines had cemented. This relationship

between man and nature is still incredibly dispassionate and is a reflection of the spoiled mind of the adult world.

In most of Hughes' poetry, nature is presented as completely dispassionate and inanimate, something which we should avoid anthropomorphising.

However " Full Moon and Little Frieda" rejoices in the the wonder of a personified natural world. As Hughes looks on at his daughter, pointing " amazed" at the wondrous cosmic landscape, he acknowledges the benefits of seeing the world through credulous eyes, and perhaps declares that this relationship is far more beautiful.