

Poetry essay

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Poetry essay ' Hawk Roosting' by Ted Hughes Question: Poetry is the expression of a poet's singular outlook. Ted Hughes uses many poetic techniques to give an insight as to his outlook on an aspect of life. He shows us his outlook on the natural world and his fascination with powerful animals of nature as he does in ' Hawk Roosting' by depicting a hawk as an all-powerful leader. However, I feel the poem predominantly exhibits human ideas existing in the natural world by using the hawk as a metaphor for humans and their power and control over society. Through this we see Hughes' outlook on human society. In ' Hawk Roosting' Hughes shows us his admiration for the natural world and its predators. We see this through the paradox of ' Now I hold Creation in my foot' and in the monosyllabic language in the line ' I kill where I please because it is all mine'. These two lines show us the power Hughes thinks the hawk has in the natural world as the paradox of ' holding Creation' tells us the hawk has total dominance over all those in his world. The monosyllabic language expresses the simplicity in the hawk's life as he can act as he pleases as he is the sole ruler of the natural world. These two devices show that he feels the natural world is controlled and maintained through the dominance the hawk exhibits. However, using the hawk metaphorically, I feel these lines give us a look into Hughes' outlook on human civilization. They both give the idea of humans being the most powerful beings to exist. ' I kill where I please because it is all mine' shows the sense of entitlement we feel we have over the world as if we were commit heinous crimes there would be no retribution due to the power we hold over society. The line ' Now I hold Creation in my foot' I find interesting as it suggests as we hold ' Creation' that we are the creators of

the universe. This would lift us to the highest level of authority over life itself. Also I see this line capture the psyche of the human species; to conquer all and become the ultimate leader as it tells us we now rank above the Gods of all religions. It shows Hughes' outlook on human society as he sees our ego inflated and exaggerated among society. What I find ironic about all of these ideas coming from a hawk is that as humans we consider our species to be the forefront of the animal kingdom and to have a hawk expressing his dominance over the world is astounding but extremely effective. Ted Hughes exhibits the hawk's perfection in ' Hawk Roosting'. This is seen in the (unknown device) of ' For the one path of my flight is direct' and the monosyllabic language in ' Or in sleep rehearse perfect kills and eats'. Both lines explain the hawks' strive for perfection as to hold complete control over others. Hughes suggests that the hawk will always work to find new ways to control and subdue his subjects to ensure he remains in control. I see this as a direct metaphor to humans. I feel that Hughes' sees humans constantly trying to improve what already works in society, to uncover the best strategy to overcome adversity. Through this I feel we get an insight into the insecurity of humans where nothing can be good enough therefore we must continue to strive to perfection. Also the line ' For the one path my flight is direct' tells me that Hughes' feels that once humans envision something, nothing can stop the dream from becoming a reality. I find this very ironic coming from a member of the natural world as man has dismantled the natural world in order to build society by demolishing forests and destroying habitats. So to have an uninterrupted vision occurring in the natural world in a poem the metaphorically refers to the power held by humans, I find

effectively ironic. In ' Hawk Roosting' Hughes uses poetic devices to show us his view on the natural world and the animals that live in it. I feel he also shows us his views on human society through using the hawk and its ideas as a metaphor to that of a human. He shows the awesome control of the hawk over the natural world while referring to the power humans feel they have over civilization. He tells of the perfection needed by the hawk and also humans as we strive to find faults in what occurs in society. Adam Pearse