

Hello students. I am Michelle D'Mello, Assistant Professor from MES College of Arts and Commerce.

This is for the program of Bachelor of Arts for 3rd year students. The subject is English, for semester 5. The paper code is END 105 and the title British Literature: Post World War Two. This is the module on Ted Hughes where we will analyze his two poems, 'Hawk Roosting' and 'Crow's Fall'.

In this module, we will look briefly at the life of Ted Hughes. We will analyze two of his poems, 'Hawk Roosting' and 'Crow's Fall'. We will analyze the poetic devices he uses, the themes, the features of his poetry, and his poetic style.

By the end of the module, you would acquire knowledge about the life of Ted Hughes. You would be able to analyze the poetry of Ted Hughes in the context of Post World War Two. And you would be able to evaluate the poetry of Philip Larkin and Ted Hughes. You would be able to compare the two poets and their writing.

A brief overview about Ted Hughes. He was born in 1930 and he was a young boy when the Second World War took place. His childhood was quiet, rural and has an impact on his poetry, as we will see little later. He studied at Cambridge, where he met another famous poet, Sylvia Plath, and a few months later in 1956, they got married. Their marriage was plagued by discord and after the birth of the second child, Sylvia Plath committed suicide. In fact, this was quite intense for Ted Hughes, and he was silenced for three years because of this. In 1984 he was the poet Laureate. If you remember, Philip Larkin declined becoming the poet laureate because he did not want media attention.

The first poem, 'Hawk Roosting'. It is a poem in six quatrains. A quatrain is a stanza of four lines. It has free verse. A first person narrative or rather, internal monologue, and this is a poem about a Hawk as he is perched on a tree high up in the forest and he is observing the landscape below. The phrase 'A Bird's Eye View' is important here because the Hawk has a panoramic view of the surroundings below.

The poem gives us a glimpse into the hawk's mind as he surveys the landscape.

The first stanza, "I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed in action. No falsifying dream between my hooked head and hooked feet or in sleep, rehearse, perfect kills and eat."

Two stanzas later.

"My feet are locked up on the rough bark. It took the whole of creation to produce my foot my each feather. Now I hold creation in my foot."

As you read the poem, you realize that the Hawk is actually an arrogant figure or an arrogant animal here.

The final stanza.

"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."

This last line is very important because this really reflects the arrogance, the megalomania of the Hawk.

The Hawk becomes a symbol of isolation, inhumanity, power and brute strength. The poem is also symbolic of modern man being driven by control and impulse, and really disregarding the environment and destroying the environment. The poem becomes a political allegory for tyrants when they are in power and control. They possess a ruthless attitude, arrogance and megalomania. An example is Hitler of World War Two.

The second poem we will analyze is 'Crow's Fall'. It is a poem in free verse of 17 lines, uneven meter and no particular rhyme scheme. This poem is about a crow, which according to myth or Mythologically was white, and it realized that the sun was much brighter than himself, and so it engaged in a battle with the sun. It was defeated, but again, its arrogance, just like the Hawk, its arrogant attitude, and its excess power took hold of him, and he returns.

But he still says, "I didn't. I was not defeated. Infact, I won."

In this poem, this mythological Crow, as I said, is arrogant, and he challenges the heliocentric nature of the universe where the sun is actually the center of the universe. But here the Crow thinks he himself is the center.

It begins with these three lines.

"When Crow was white, he decided the sun was to white. He decided it glared much too whitely. He decided to attack it and defeat it."

The final four lines of this poem.

"The sun brightened and Crow returned, charred black. He opened his mouth. But what came out was charred black. Up there, he managed, where white is black and black is white. I won."

This line, this last line is very important because it reflects that while the Crow outwardly was white, his inner self was still dark, was still black. Also, his perspective is clouded. He is observing the sun and he is feeling that even the sun is black. So his perspective is a very wrong perspective. The Crow here when it is white, is a symbol of purity and innocence. But now when it is black, is a symbol of darkness and has negative interpretations.

The end of the battle causes ablin ambition and arrogance has burnt the crow's purity. Hubris, or excessive power, leads to downfall, and very often when you have power, you become arrogant. You become a control freak and this leads to your downfall. This poem is also symbolic of Satan, defying his limits against God.

The poetic devices in Hughes' poetry

Anaphora - the repetition of words "he defeated, he attacked."

Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds.

Anthropomorphism, or personification, where human qualities are attributed to animate or inanimate objects. For example, the Crow here and the Hawk in the previous poem are given human qualities.

He uses metaphor

And the final line "where white is black and black is white" is an example of chiasmus, which is the reversal of words in a particular phrase.

His imagery is also very vivid.

Themes that are highlighted in his poetry, man's relationship with nature and in fact Man's control or man's neglect of the environment around. Nature becomes an allegory in many of his poems. There are concerns of human consciousness, violence, war and death.

Some features of his poetry.

They depict the bleak Yorkshire landscape because of the nature, imagery and as I said, his rural childhood really impacted his poetry. Unlike the Movement poets who were more traditional and I said Philip Larkin was a Movement poet. They are more traditional. In contrast, Hughes' poetry reflects the vitality, the energy, and through this violence and brutality that he describes, the energy of life is brought out.

Very often he is described as an animal or nature poet, and he uses mythology or mythological symbols and folkloric elements to highlight his themes. Much of his poetry is rooted in his experiences as a farmer in Yorkshire and Devon.

His poetic style.

He puts words together in unusual combinations. He uses simple vocabulary and syntax.

There is extensive use of similes and metaphors. The imagery he employs is very graphic, very realistic and one important feature about his poetry, is that not only does it have a visual impact where the reader reads the poetry and completely imagines the poetic world, but the auditory effect is also very important that the sound of the words also provide the poetic experience.

In conclusion, when we compare Philip Larkin's poetry and Ted Hughes' poetry, Philip Larkin's poetry is more traditional in nature in terms of rhyme. In terms of meter, he also employs irony, whereas Ted Hughes, on the other hand, depicts the vitality of life through aggression, through violence through brutality. Both poets are critical of the modern world and the need for development and progress, and the

fact that humanity has completely neglected the environment and destroyed nature. Through their poetry, they reflect contemporary life in England in that era, that is post 1940s onwards. As a result they are two of the most acclaimed poets of the latter half of the twentieth Century, and you can really imagine the situation and the life at that time as a result of World War Two.

For further information you can refer to the links mentioned.

Thank you for watching.