

Title: The influence of British Romanticism on Ted Hughes poetry from a mythological perspective

Background:

Explore the enchanting world of British Romanticism and mythological contemplations in Ted Hughes's mesmerising poetry, where each line serves as a gateway to an incredible universe awaiting discovery. Academics have had a longstanding fascination in the influence of British Romanticism on literature due to its valuable contributions in understanding the connections between artistic trends and individual writers. This thesis explores the influence of British Romanticism on Ted Hughes' poetry, specifically emphasising its impact on mythology. This study seeks to provide a fresh perspective on the extensive impact of British Romanticism, a significant literary era, on Hughes's artistic perspective through an examination of his engagement with mythological themes.

The poems "Hawk Roosting" and "The Minotaur" were composed in the mid-20th century. This era witnessed substantial cultural, social, and artistic transformation, frequently marked by a critical evaluation of conventional standards and a reconsideration of mythology and old folklore. Ted Hughes' examination of mythical topics in these poems can be understood within the framework of a wider cultural and creative transformation, wherein poets and authors endeavoured to reevaluate and actively involve themselves with age-old myths in innovative and intellectually stimulating

manners. During this age, there was a rise of innovative poetic voices and styles that defied traditional literary norms and expanded the limits of poetic communication.

Ted Hughes was a renowned and famous English poet and author, acclaimed for his potent and evocative poetry that frequently incorporated elements of nature, mythology, and the human condition. His birthdate is August 17, 1930, and he was born in Mytholmroyd, West Yorkshire, England. Hughes has a profound affinity with the natural world, which exerted a significant impact on his artistic creations. He frequently delved into the wild and fundamental components of nature inside his poetry. Hughes pursued his education at Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he honed his poetry abilities and encountered Sylvia Plath, a fellow aspiring poet whom he subsequently wed. Considerable emphasis has been focused on his personal life, particularly his association with Plath. Their marriage and Plath's unfortunate demise have been extensively examined and debated. Hughes was awarded various accolades and honours throughout his lifetime in recognition of his literary achievements, including as the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry and the T. S. Eliot Prize. He served as the Poet Laureate from 1984 until his death. Ted Hughes' profound influence on 20th-century poetry, as well as his profound examination of mythological and environmental subjects, have firmly established him as one of the most prominent poets of his era. His profound comprehension of the natural world and the human predicament still has a strong impact on readers and poets around the globe. Hughes' writing career was characterised by a high level of productivity and

significant influence. He authored a multitude of poetry compilations, such as “The Hawk in the Rain” (1957), “Crow” (1970), and “Birthday Letters” (1998), among numerous others. The poet frequently explored topics of authority, aggression, and the environment, demonstrating his unique style and fearless examination of human feelings and instincts. Besides his poems, Hughes also authored plays, children’s literature, and articles, so demonstrating his variety and talent as a writer.

The poem "Hawk Roosting" by Ted Hughes adopts a hawk’s perspective, offering a portrayal of the world via the hawk’s vantage point. The poem delves into the topics of authority, dominance, and the innate drive for self-preservation. The hawk depicted in the poem emanates an aura of self-assurance and supremacy, asserting its position as a prevailing power in the realm of nature.

Hughes employs the hawk’s vantage point to contemplate the relentless and uncompromising features of nature, as well as to examine the inherent instinct for self-preservation and dominance. The poem functions as a contemplation on the fundamental forces operating in the natural world and the unyielding supremacy of the hawk within it.

In general, the poem “Hawk Roosting” presents a vivid depiction of the hawk as a representation of unquestioned dominance and

control, encouraging readers to reflect on the wild and innate aspects of the natural hierarchy.(Ghazzoul, 2021)

And the second poem The Minotaur

Ted Hughes' poem "The Minotaur" explores the Greek tale of the Minotaur, a hybrid creature with a human body and a bull's head, who was imprisoned in the labyrinth of Crete. Hughes' examination of the Minotaur's point of view offers a chilling and insightful depiction of the creature's internal thoughts and feelings. The poem explores the concepts of imprisonment, loneliness, and the quest for identity, employing the Minotaur as a representation of innate tendencies and the intricacies of human existence. Hughes portrays the Minotaur in a way that emphasises their humanity, delving into their innermost psychological and emotional struggles. In "The Minotaur," Hughes effectively examines issues of alienation, longing, and the quest for belonging, utilising aspects of ancient mythology to provoke a profound contemplation of the human condition. The poem presents a stimulating reinterpretation of the Minotaur's narrative, encouraging readers to reflect on the ubiquitous elements of yearning, longing, and the desire for connection. Essentially, "The Minotaur" is Hughes' poignant examination of the intricate and fragile nature of human beings, inspired by the ancient tale and imbued with a timeless and profound emotional intensity. (Berry, 2002)

Problem statement:

1- How does Ted Hughes's use of folkloric and mythological themes in his poems influence literary traditions and relate to British Romanticism?

This issue has served as a significant catalyst for numerous writers to address it. Ted Hughes's poetry incorporates folkloric and mythological themes, which have a significant impact on literary traditions and are closely associated with British Romanticism. Hughes establishes a connection between his work and the history of the Romantic poets by using these topics. The Romantic poets frequently sought inspiration from old folklore and mythology. Hughes utilises these themes to tap into universal and enduring narratives and symbols that have a profound impact on literary history, so enriching the ongoing discourse within British Romanticism. The reference ("Longstaffe, 1998") is provided. Upon

examining the poems “Hawk Roosting” and “The Minotaur,” it becomes evident that they embody this issue by virtue of their association with legendary motifs. “Hawk Roosting” encapsulates the fundamental nature of a formidable predator, conforming to the archetypal patterns of dominance and authority frequently observed in traditional tales and legends. Similarly, “The Minotaur” derives inspiration from ancient Greek mythology and delves into themes of savagery and vulnerability, reflecting the longstanding history of legendary narratives interwoven with British Romanticism.(Lidstrom, 2015) Ted Hughes’s incorporation of folkloric and mythological elements in “Hawk Roosting” and “The Minotaur” reflects and adds to the larger issue I have outlined, since it demonstrates the profound interconnection between his poetry, literary conventions, and enduring historical narratives. The enduring influence of British Romanticism as it engages with perennial mythical motifs.(Bentley, 2014)

2- How does Ted Hughes’s depiction of nature relate to romantic ideals? What are the main points of similarity and divergence with respect to British romantic poets?

This issue served as a significant impetus for numerous writers to engage in writing and conducting research on it.

Ted Hughes's portrayal of nature exhibits similarities to romantic ideals in multiple aspects. Like the British Romantic poets, Hughes frequently depicts nature as a formidable and uncontrolled entity capable of inspiring both admiration and trepidation. His poems often portray the natural world as a reservoir of primal energy and a domain where human experiences are intricately connected with elemental forces, exemplifying a distinctive feature of Romantic poetry. (Bentley,2014)

The poem "Hawk Roosting" exemplifies its mythological element by portraying the viewpoint of a hawk as it confidently asserts its supremacy and unwavering bond with the natural world. This depiction aligns with Romantic principles by amplifying the unrefined potency of nature and the interdependence of all organisms within it. The hawk's portrayal is in line with the Romantic interest in animal symbolism and the instinctual nature of the natural world. (Robert's, 2018)

This demonstrates Hughes's involvement with mythological ideas that were significant in the Romantic tradition.

In "The Minotaur," Hughes used the fabled character of the Minotaur to examine the issue of nature's innate and frequently brutal characteristics. Through the reinterpretation of this tale, he explores the Romantic fascination with the awe-inspiring and wild elements of the natural world. This depiction of the Minotaur symbolises the

mythological element of the issue, illustrating the Romantic writers' inclination to explore the awe-inspiring and occasionally frightening forces of nature through ancient stories. (Hibbet, 2005)

To summarise, Hughes's depiction of nature corresponds to Romantic principles by highlighting the fundamental and enigmatic elements of the natural realm. The poems "Hawk Roosting" and "The Minotaur" exemplify this concept by exploring mythological themes. Hughes's poems add to the ongoing conversation in British Romanticism by exploring the mythical and fundamental aspects of nature, which aligns with the concerns of the Romantic poets.

Purpose of study:

The objective of this thesis is to provide a thorough examination of the impact of mythological motifs and themes commonly found in British Romanticism on the poetry of Ted Hughes. The study seeks to analyse Hughes' poetic works in a thorough manner in order to clarify the precise methods through which he interacts with and reinterprets myth. It intends to investigate the complex relationship between Romantic mythopoeics and Hughes' unique mythic perspective. The thesis aims to enhance comprehension of the

lasting influence of myth on literary expression, specifically within the framework of Hughes' poetic works, by exploring this intertextual link.

Significance of study:

This thesis investigates the enduring influence of British Romanticism on subsequent poets, such as Ted Hughes, through a meticulous analysis of the evolution and utilisation of renowned concepts and themes across different literary eras. This thesis offers a meticulous examination of Hughes' adept use of legendary motifs providing a nuanced and perceptive perspective on the transformations and enduring elements within the Romantic tradition. As a result, it rejuvenates and reassesses established literary standards. This not only improves our understanding of how we perceive and express poetry, but also sheds light on the symbolic significance and unique creativity that arise from legendary themes within the context of British Romanticism.

Moreover, this work contributes to scholarly conversations about British Romantic poetry, specifically focusing on Ted Hughes and broader considerations of literary influence, continuity and transformation. Through a meticulous examination of Hughes' investigation of mythical themes, research provides a complete and detailed understanding of the interconnected relationship between tradition and originality in the evolution of poetry. This thesis enriches the academic landscape by offering scholarly enrichment that fosters a more profound comprehension of the complex interplay between literary traditions and individual creativity.

Furthermore, the educational importance of my findings is noteworthy as my research has the capacity to enhance the teaching of literature and poetry. The objective of my thesis is to analyse the correlation between tradition and originality in poetry. By doing so, I intend to enhance instructors' and students' comprehension of how poetic traditions are preserved and revitalised throughout history. This, in turn, will foster a more profound engagement with the evolution of poetry. The pedagogical importance of my research not only amplifies its influence on teaching methods but also cultivates a deeper comprehension of the interrelation between classical literary works and contemporary breakthroughs in the field of poetry.

Limitations of study:

Exploring the mythological and legendary aspects of Hughes' poetry in my thesis provides a fertile ground for investigation. More precisely, I can analyse how Hughes utilises old myths, folklore, and archetypal imagery to imbue his poems with powerful meaning and significance. Through an analysis of the distinct mythical motifs and folklore aspects found in Hughes' work, I can clarify how he revives

and reinterprets these enduring themes within the framework of British Romanticism.

Furthermore, my research aims to thoroughly analyse how Hughes' interaction with myth and folklore goes beyond mere reference, as I investigate the profound impact of these mythological and folkloric aspects in developing the profound themes and imaginative world of his poetry. Examining these traditions in a more thorough manner can offer useful understanding of the lasting appeal and significance of mythological and folkloric traditions in the development of poetic expression. This examination can reveal how Hughes' poetic vision engages with the diverse range of myth and folklore.

Through an in-depth analysis of Hughes' poetry, my research aims to reveal how the mythological and folklore elements function as channels for investigating universal issues, delving into the depths of the human mind, and producing a mythopoeic world that connects with modern audiences. An in-depth analysis of the interplay between myth, folklore, and legend can provide a deep comprehension of how these elements contribute to the richness

and vitality of Hughes' poetic legacy, particularly within the context of British Romanticism and literary tradition.

Research question:

1. How does British Romanticism manifest itself in Hughes's poetry?"
2. How did Ted Hughes' poems reflect the Romantic era?

Definition of terms:

1. British Romanticism: The Romantic movement emerged during the late 18th and early 19th centuries.
2. Mythical thought : is rooted in the observation of the physical world using sensory perception, as opposed to scientific thought.
3. Legendary Concepts: Legendary conceptions generally pertain to ideas, narratives, or individuals that have attained lasting renown and importance within a specific society or domain.
4. Mythological Imagery: Derived from mythological themes

5. Folkloric Elements: Folklore encompasses a range of cultural expressions, including dramas, rituals, fairy tales, riddles, poems, and songs.