

Review of: "Mimicking Humanity: The Use of Anthropomorphism in Ted Hughes' Nature Poetry"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The article presents the argument that Ted Hughes' use of anthropomorphism in his poetry destabilizes traditional hierarchies of the human and nonhuman worlds, by highlighting similarities in the behaviour and concerns of both humans and animals.

The concept of anthropomorphism could have been developed further. For example, rather than simply a "literary technique", anthropomorphism is a perceptual strategy (see, for example, Stewart Guthrie, or the work of Alexa Weik von Mossner), a human tendency to attribute intentionality and mental states to living and nonliving entities. More importantly, the deployment of the concept in the paper in fact serves to reify the human/animal hierarchies it claims to problematize. The author argues that Hughes' poetry "uses animals and the natural world as metaphors to explore the human experience", transforming "the natural world into a mirror of human experience". Using animal behaviour to uncover insights into human experience is an anthropocentric, rather than ecocritical endeavour. Often the symbolic function of the animals in the analysis seems entirely disconnected from the creatures themselves (e.g. the horses symbolising hope), which further suggests the lack of attention to the animals *qua* animals. This falls prey to what Marco Caracciolo calls the 'risks' (2020, 245) of an anthropocentric projection which seeks to overcome epistemological limitations of the subject by misattributing self-knowledge onto the unknown object. The anthropomorphism described here doesn't so much highlight similarities between humans and the natural world but rather provide imagery to furnish an analysis of human experience.

In terms of structure, there is also considerable repetitiveness (e.g. the paragraph format "In this poem..." is repeated 10 times. This makes the essay appear as if it were written by generative AI rather than an actual person). The same points are repeated several times, with slightly different emphasis. Finally, ideas need to be synthesized, rather than listed. However, overall the essay provides an interesting and thorough analysis of anthropomorphism in Hughes' poetry.