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Man and Nature in The Poetry of Dylan Thomas and Ted Hughes

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Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Autorka se ve své bakalářské práci bude zabývat vybranou poezií básníků Teda Hughese a Dylana Thomase. Zaměří se na jejich zobrazování vztahu člověka k přírodě a jejím součástí. V teoretické části načrtne podstatu ekokritického smýšlení o těch tématech, které jsou relevantní k analýze primárních textů (egocentrism, anthropocentrism, organicism, atd.). V hlavní části práce pak na tomto základě vypracuje detailní komparativní analýzu stěžejních básní obou básníků. Cílem bude zmapovat a vymezit oblasti, ve kterých se tito tvůrci ve zvolené problematice překrývají a rozcházejí. Analýza bude podpořena využitím ilustrativních citací z primární a sekundární literatury. V poslední části práce shrne dílčí zjištění jednotlivých kapitol a vyvodí z nich obecnější závěry.

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- Woodhead, Chris. *Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Verse: An anthology of sixteen poets*. Oxford University Press, 1984

Prohlašuji:

Tuto práci jsem vypracovala samostatně. Veškeré literární prameny a informace, které jsem v práci využila, jsou uvedeny v seznamu použité literatury.

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Souhlasím s prezenčním zpřístupněním své práce v Univerzitní knihovně.

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ANNOTATION

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to provide an analysis of Ted Hughes's (1930 – 1998) and Dylan Thomas's (1914 – 1953) poetry. The first two chapters describe the theoretical background to ecocriticism and the subjects closely connected with the environmental criticism - anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism. There is also explained the use of pathetic fallacy – a literary device used in the environmental literature. The third chapter of the thesis is divided into three subchapters and includes ecocritical comparative analyses of the selected poetry of Ted Hughes and Dylan Thomas. The results of the analyses are summarized in conclusion.

KEY WORDS

Ted Hughes, Dylan Thomas, animals, anthropocentrism, anthropomorphism, ecocriticism, nature, poetry

ANOTACE

Cílem této bakalářské práce je zmapovat vybranou poezii básníků Teda Hughese (1930 – 1998) a Dylana Thomase (1914 – 1953). První dvě teoretické části popisují principy a podstatu ekokritického myšlení. Práce se zaměřuje na lidské vnímání jak živé, tak i neživé přírody. Zabývá se tématy, které souvisejí s ekokritickým myšlením – antropocentrismem a antropomorphismem. Dále je zde vysvětlen pojem „pathetic fallacy“, který slouží k literární analýze. Analytická část je rozdělena do tří kapitol, které obsahují ekokritické analýzy vybraných děl těchto dvou autorů. Výsledky této analýzy jsou shrnuty v závěru.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Ted Hughes, Dylan Thomas, zvířata, antropocentrismus, antropomorphismus, ekokritika, příroda, poezie

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INTRODUCTION

You could cut off my hand, and I would still live.
You could take out my eyes, and I would still live.
Cut off my ears, my nose, cut off my legs, and I could
still live. But take away the air, and I die. Take away
the sun, and I die. Take away the plants and the
animals and I die. So why would I think my body is
more a part of me than the sun and the earth?¹

Ted Hughes and Dylan Thomas are one of the most popular British poets who became concerned with the ecological issue after the 1st half of the 20th century. Both of them grew up in the country side and therefore, they were influenced by their natural background.

Both authors felt very strongly about the environmental crisis and in case of Ted Hughes it was the main reason why the subject of his poetry gradually changed from anthropocentrism towards the subject of ecocentrism, organicism and anthropomorphism. Since his childhood, Ted Hughes was very interested in animals and that is the reason why they appeared in his poetry for all his life. Generally, Ted Hughes is called “an animal poet”. The aim of Hughes was to warn the humankind and change their destructive behaviour towards the environment. As the result, he was often criticized for cruelty and violence that appears in his work.

Dylan Thomas was also called “the poet of nature”. His perception of nature was strongly influenced by his Welsh religious background where he was brought up.

Ecocriticism - a literary criticism emerged as the consequences of the environmental crisis. Destructive behaviour of humans towards the planet and gradual oppression of animals have become the pivotal focus of ecocriticism.

This bachelor thesis focuses on selected poems by Ted Hughes and Dylan Thomas. Three poems of each poet were chosen and analysed. The first two theoretical chapters examine the perception of human and non-human nature in the ecocritical context. These chapters also include explanations of the terms such as anthropomorphism, biocentrism, egocentrism and anthropocentrism.

¹ Kathleen Dean Moore, *The Pine Island Paradox* (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2004), 12.

The third chapter is divided into three subchapters and deals with the attitude of Ted Hughes and Dylan Thomas towards man-nature relationship. The first subchapter maps the perception of the environment and nature of both authors and how they describe it in their work and what the nature means to them. Their poetry is analyzed from the ecocritical point of view.

The second subchapter deals with anthropomorphism and depiction of animals in the poems. Again, both authors share the same topic but their approach toward this theme is different.

The last subchapter describes the symbolism of birds as the common topic of both authors.

The aim of the thesis is to compare the work of Ted Hughes and Dylan Thomas and concentrate on those parts where the authors share their opinion and those parts where their opinion is different.

1 EMERGING OF ECOCRITICISM

Changes in nature caused by humankind can be traced long back in human history, ever since the human population became a numerous species. Glotfelty and Fromm lists some of historical facts that contributed to such changes, Romans cut trees to build ships to fight, the Frisians and Hollanders have been pushing the North Sea for thousands years, the invention of automobile killed big flocks of sparrows. Since the thirteenth century the smog problems have been arising from burning of soft coal, and in the 1760s the Industrial Revolution emerged.²

All these human actions caused that a wide range of environmental problems has emerged. Those problems include global warming, the ozone hole, acid rain, the destruction of tropical forests, the depletion and extinction of species and the precipitous decline of biodiversity. Potential solutions are invariably bound up with human attitudes, belief, values, needs, desires, expectations and behaviours.³

Dr. Haydn Washington, an environmental scientist and activist, describes the environmental crisis as a very complex problem caused by modern civilization. He believes that modern industrial civilization has ignored the fact that humankind is only one species among many and relies on the world around to survive. Washington also claims that modern society overlooks the problem that our ecosystems have their own limits. Further, he warns that if humans do transgress the limits for too long, then ecosystems collapse and that rebounds on humanity.⁴

According to Aldus Huxley man has treated nature in an unnatural way and the consequences sadly influence our environment.⁵ This behaviour might be unintentional, however, it often notably affects nonhuman nature.

Influenced by these events and alarming changes, many authors and poets started to think about this issue and the themes of environment started to appear in their work. Consequently, a new kind of criticism was created – ecocriticism.

²Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, ed., *The ecocriticism reader: landmarks in literary Ecology* (Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 3-5.

³“The Earth System and its Components,” *Environmental Science and Management*, accessed April 20, 2017, www.soas.ac.uk/cedep-demos/000_P500_ESM_K3736-Demo/unit1/page_11.htm.

⁴Haydn Washington, *Human Dependence on Nature* (London: Routledge, 2013), 2.

⁵Glotfelty and Fromm, *The ecocriticism reader*, 3.

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO ECOCRITICISM

Ecocriticism belongs to a field of literary studies. William Rueckert coined the term “ecocriticism” in 1978. It appeared in his essay *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism*⁶, so this critical movement is relatively new and therefore ecocriticism is still working to define itself exactly.⁷

However, ecocriticism is based on the thought of organicism, which means that the universe and its parts should be taken into consideration as a whole. Organicists believe that everything in nature has an organic basis and therefore we should not make difference between human and non-human nature.⁸

The main interest of ecocritical studies is the relationship between man and nature. Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, who edited an ecocritical publication called *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary and Ecology*, focus not only on this kind of relationship but also mapped the most important facts and events that led to creating ecocritical thinking. Glen Love, in his work *Practical Ecocriticism: Literature, Biology and the Environment*, tries to connect ecocriticism and science and therefore he is considered to be “a promoter” of an interdisciplinary approach to ecocriticism. Lawrence Buel, in his publication *The Future of Environmental Criticism*, divides ecocriticism into two waves.

The term ecocriticism originates in *eco* and *critic* which is derived from Greek, *oikos* and *critos*, and together they mean “house judge.”⁹ Greg Garrard sees ecocriticism as “the study of the relationship between the human and the non-human, throughout human cultural history and entailing critical analysis of the term ‘human’ itself”.¹⁰ Glen A. Love also adds that “ecocriticism, unlike all other forms of literary inquiry, encompasses nonhuman as well as human contests and considerations.”¹¹ Glotfelty and Fromm define ecocriticism simply as: “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment”.¹² They also state

⁶ Glotfelty and Fromm, *The ecocriticism reader*, 16.

⁷ Catrin Gersdof and Sylvia Mayer, ed., *Nature in Literary and Cultural Studies: Transatlantic Conversations on Ecocriticism* (New York: University of Bath, 2006), 28.

⁸ Washington, *Human Dependence on Nature*, 6.

⁹ Glotfelty and Fromm, *The ecocriticism reader*, 69.

¹⁰ Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 5.

¹¹ A. Glen Love, *Practical Ecocriticism: Literature, Biology, and the Environment* (Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 2.

¹² Glotfelty and Fromm, *The ecocriticism reader*, 17.

that one of the main interests is to raise questions about human relationship and attitudes towards Nature and its inseparable parts. Then they described an ecocritic as following:

The ecocritic wants to track environmental ideas and representations wherever they appear, to see more clearly, a debate which seems to be taking place, often part-concealed, in a great many cultural spaces. Most of all, ecocriticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in term of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis.¹³

Glan A. Love in his book claims that the study of the relationship to the physical world in literature has its roots in ancient times and the poetry, fiction and essays of the British and American Romantics have always belonged to the literary spectrum. However, Love believes that early beginnings of a distinctly contemporary environmental criticism – ecocriticism, emerged in the 1960s as a result of public widespread concerns over nuclear annihilation, rapidly increasing human population, loss of wild nature, accelerated species extinction and growing contamination of the air and water.¹⁴

As Gersdorf and Mayer argue, ecocriticism was developed out of traditional scholarship about literary attitudes towards the natural world, such as studies of European pastoral writing or the American nature writing genre.¹⁵ Further, both authors remark that theoretically, ecocritics are re-evaluating Romantic concepts of nature in not only European but also American nineteenth-century literature.

1.2 PRINCIPLE OF ECOCRITICISM

As mentioned above, Lawrence Buell divided ecocriticism into two waves.

He described the first-wave as following:

Its goal was to contribute to “the struggle to preserve the “biotic community””. The paradigmatic first-wave ecocritic appraised “the effects of culture upon nature, with a view toward celebrating nature, berating its despoilers, and reversing their harm through political action. In the process, the ecocritic might seek to redefine the concept of culture itself in organicist terms with a view to envisioning a “philosophy of organism” that would break down “the hierarchical separations between human beings and other elements of the natural world.”¹⁶

¹³ Glotfelty and Fromm, *The ecocriticism reader*, 5.

¹⁴ Love, *Practical Ecocriticism*, 2.

¹⁵ Gersdorf and Mayer, *Nature in Literary and Cultural Studies*, 26.

¹⁶ Lawrence Buell, *The future of environmental criticism: environmental crisis and literary imagination* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005), 21.

In other words, the literature of the first wave of ecocriticism is used to value Nature and it also laments sometimes destructive human behaviour towards Nature. The first wave also claims that Nature and man stand in opposition to each other. However, it also points out how humans should treat nature and what kind of attitude is appropriate. The literature of the first wave includes natural writing of Romantic poets as well as pastorals.¹⁷

The second wave can be then characterized as:

Second-wave ecocriticism has tended to question organicist models of conceiving both environment and environmentalism. Natural but built environments revisionists point out, are long since all mixed up; the landscape of the American “West” is increasingly the landscape of metropolitan sprawl rather than the outback of Rocky Mountain “Wilderness”...¹⁸

The second-wave of ecocriticism sees human and non-human nature as inseparable and interconnected part. Wilderness is no longer romanticized and kinship between humans and animals is highlighted. The second-wave also questions the anthropocentric point of view and starts to pursue the idea of anthropomorphism.

Buell also states that the interpretation of both anthropocentric, as well as biocentric concerns, must be taken into account. He also says that significant divisions separate first-wave projects to reconnect humans with the natural world from second-wave which is more skeptic and that it is necessary for the literature-and-environment studies to develop a “social ecocriticism” that takes urban and degraded landscapes just as seriously as “natural” landscapes.¹⁹

Anyway, it is important to think about the words Buell says: “Literature can be thought to model ecocentric values. Literature of nature does bear important witness against “the arrogance of humanism”.”²⁰

There are different ways how to perceive nature.

¹⁷Erik Fredriksson, “The Human Animal: An Ecocritical View on Animal Imagery in Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*” (Bc thesis, Halmstad University, 2013).

¹⁸ Buell, *The future of environmental criticism*, 10.

¹⁹ Buell, *The future of environmental criticism*, 25.

²⁰ Buell, *The future of environmental criticism*, 22.

1.3 INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN ECOCRITICISM AND ANTHROPOMORPHISM

Animals have appeared in literature for thousands of years. Not only in real life, the relationship between humans and animals is very complicated, but also in literature, the roles of animals are very complex and inconsistent.²¹

In Aesop's fables animals represent the standards of morality and try to teach us moral values. The Judeo-Christian tradition describes animal characters such as a sly snake or an innocent lamb in both the Old and New Testament in the Bible. In the Romantic era, poets such as William Wordsworth or Lord Byron appreciated the beauty of wild animals.

With emerging of the modern age literature, animals are often depicted in a world ridden of nature and of natural laws. In this world, animals serve as a reminder of the things that have been lost and they invite us back to the world that is more human, for "when compassion towards animals is lost, so too is humanity toward a fellow man."²²

As we, as humans, have accepted the fact that animals are very important part of our physical environment and we classified them as part of non-human nature, to understand animals and improve our attitudes towards them, we undertake studies for this improvement. Greg Garrard observed that most recently, we analyze animals within contexts of ecocriticism to interrogate the presumed discontinuity between humans and animals. The most important thought that eco-critics consider when thinking about animals in literature and culture, is the idea of anthropomorphism.²³

Timothy Clark in his book "The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment" defines anthropomorphism as: "the attribution of a human form or personality to a god, animal, or thing". He also hopes that anthropomorphism is such a strong tool to question "the complacency of dominant human self-conceptions". In other words, anthropomorphism is used as a literary device where the writer imputes the human qualities to non-human beings, especially animals.²⁴

²¹"Ask the Animals and They Will Teach You," last modified July 4, 2011, <http://www.flourishonline.org/2011/07/lessons-from-literature-about-animals/>.

²²"Ask the Animals and They Will Teach You."

²³ Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 148.

²⁴ Literarydevices.net/anthropomorphism

Garrard claims that the boundary between animal and human is arbitrary. Further, he claims that we even should not think about this boundary since animals and human share a capacity for suffering and we as humans should not ignore it and consider the suffering of animals as something less than the suffering of a human.²⁵ Garrard also tries to draw an attention to the fact that most of the ecocritics show their sympathy towards wild animals. Unfortunately, the difference between wild and domestic animals has still been taken for granted. Garrard supports the opinion of Mary Austin who challenged this system of distinction:

She finds wildness in both genders and domesticity in both, just as she finds wild animals very domestic and domestic animals very wild. She argues convincingly that the urban notion of 'domestication' barely describes much livestock, with its connotations of docility, stupidity and lack of autonomy, while protected bears and mountain lions habituated to humans are now a serious problem in many 'wild' areas of North America. In many parts of the world, dogs and cats move freely back and forward across the conceptual divide, suggesting that a detailed analysis of ferality as both theoretical construct and historical practice may be opportune in ecocriticism.²⁶

Further, Garrard argues that some animals, such as gazelle and Barbary sheep, despite their domestication were returned back to the wild nature. And also zoo animals crossed the same boundary as feral animals. Therefore domestic animals should be analyse with the same approach and attention as the wild animals²⁷

It is important to point out that from the scientific point of view, anthropomorphism is perceived very negatively and moreover, scientists have been trying to prove that it is impossible for animals to have for example the same feeling of fear or shame as humans.²⁸ Therefore, this thesis will further consider only the cultural use of anthropomorphism.

Pathetic fallacy is a term that is directly connected to anthropomorphism.

The term pathetic fallacy was created by the Victorian literary critic John Ruskin. He coined the term in 1856 and described its usage in his book *Modern Painters*, Vol.3²⁹.

The term is summed up in Encyclopedia Britannica:

²⁵Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 137.

²⁶ Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 150.

²⁷ Garrard, *Ecocriticism*, 151.

²⁸ Lorraine Daston and Gregg Mitman, *Thinking with animals: new perspectives on Anthropomorphism* (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2007), 39.

²⁹ Abrahams, Mayer, *A Glossary of literary terms* . Australia: Cengage Learning,2015. 76

Pathetic fallacy, the poetic practice of attributing human emotion or responses to nature, inanimate objects, or animals. The practice is a form of personification that is as old as poetry, in which it has always been common to find smiling or dancing flowers, angry or cruel winds, brooding mountains, moping owls, or happy larks.³⁰

“Truth” was for Ruskin an elementary criterion of art and therefore the term pathetic fallacy was for Ruskin rather derogatory. He claims that strong feelings, usually negative or violent feelings, make humans irrational and therefore produce falseness in ourselves. Writers then, especially poets, connect these emotions to natural objects such as trees, flowers or animals. Ruskin demonstrates his theory on Oliver Wendell Holmes’s poem called *Astrea*:³¹

The spendthrift crocus, bursting through the mould
Naked and shivering, with his cup of gold.³²

Ruskin says: “This is very beautiful and yet very untrue. This crocus is not a spendthrift, but a hardy plant; its yellow is not gold, but saffron.”³³

Another example, where according to Ruskin, the pathetic fallacy is clearly demonstrated is poem *Christabel* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge:

The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,

Ruskin claims that when Coleridge speaks about the red leaf, he has a morbid and false idea. “He confuses its powerlessness with choice, its fading death with merriment, and the wind that shakes it with music.”³⁴ However, Ruskin claims that using false ideas in poetry is wrong, but he also admits that reader finds more pleasure in poetry where the pathetic fallacy is used than in poetry that is written according to the truth”.³⁵

³⁰“Pathetic Fallacy,” accessed May 5, 2017, www.britannica.com/art/pathetic-fallacy.

³¹“Ruskin’s Discussion of the Pathetic Fallacy,” accessed May 1, 2017, www.victorianweb.org/technique/pathfall.html.

³² John Ruskin, *Modern Painters vol 3* (Boston: D. Estes, 1913), 155.

³³Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 155.

³⁴Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 155-156.

³⁵Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 155.

2 ANTHROPOCENTRISM

Anthropocentrism is probably one of the biggest opposites of ecocriticism. Unlike ecocriticism, anthropocentric or ego-centric thinking is entirely based on the idea that humans are superior to nature.³⁶ Egocentrism is described as: an inability to see other point of view than mine.” Egocentric person behaves as an individual who believes that “all the actions revolve around his or her existence and fails to acknowledge any perspective other than their own.”³⁷

2.1 PRINCIPLE OF ANTHROPOCENTRISM

Lawrence Buell describes anthropocentrism as “the assumption or view that the interests of humans are of higher priority than those of non-humans”. According to Washington, the concept of anthropocentrism has started to dominate modern societies since the sixteenth century. However, Glotfelty and Fromm argue that the beginning of anthropocentric thinking is “as old as Jewish religion.”

Judaism is based on the anthropocentric thought that Nature was created for man’s sake. Moreover, Judaism influenced Christianity in great terms and therefore Christian religion inherited not only a concept of time as non-repetitive but also a striking story creation. All-powerful God had created light and darkness, the earth, plants and animals. As an afterthought, God had created Adam and Eve. It was them who named all the animals, thus they established their dominance over them³⁸. Not only Christianity is based on anthropocentrism, as mentioned above, Judaism has the same concept and even Islam believes that humans are the noblest creatures.³⁹ When we count a number of people whose religious beliefs are based on anthropocentrism, we will come to 56% which is an alarming number for ecology.

On the other hand, American philosopher Paul Taylor believes that human beings might see respecting nature as their duty:

A human-centred theory of environmental ethics holds that our moral duties with respect to the natural world are all ultimately derived from the duties we owe to one another as human beings. It is because we should respect the human rights of everyone, or should protect and promote the well-being of humans, that we

³⁶ Glotfelty and Fromm, *The ecocriticism reader*, 9.

³⁷ Washington, *Human Dependence on Nature*, 102.

³⁸ Glotfelty and Fromm, *The ecocriticism reader*, 9-12.

³⁹ Karen Armstrong, *History of God: from Abraham to the present: the 4,000-year quest for God* (London: The Folio Society, 2014), 140.

must place certain constraints on our treatment of the Earth's natural environment and its non-human inhabitants.⁴⁰

However, Taylor also believes that these human-centred values are not based on the eco-centric principles but on the feeling of obligation to the future generations of people that have right to live a physically secure and healthy life as much as those of the present generation do. In other words, every single human-being is obligated not to allow the nature to deteriorate to such an extent that the survival and well-being of the future generation are put into risk.⁴¹

2.2 INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN ECOCRITICISM AND ANTHROPOCENTRISM

Mayer and Gersdof claim that there are five directions that ecocriticism can be divided into:

1. A content-oriented direction: criteria such as the attention to nature, namely place, landscape, earth, environment, biosphere, the degree of environmental awareness, recognition of diversity, the attitude to non-human forms of life are applied to literary and non-literary texts. The aim of this kind of analysis is to increase ecological sensibility that can indirectly contribute to a change of political and social practice.

2. According to a cultural-anthropological direction, human beings have a deep-rooted feeling of self-alienation from nature which is the result of their anthropocentric illusion of autonomy. In other words, modern society tries to deny the fact that their roots come from the natural world and they unintentionally suppress their natural need of interaction and exchange with natural life cycles – a situation described as the ‘Common Human Pattern’ explained by Herbert Grabes as “basic anthropological need for an integrated culture/nature connection.”⁴² To put it simply, modern society experienced the loss of its ties with natural life. This loss has been transformed into a virtue as the problems of isolation, emotional displacement and feeling of rootlessness seem to be the current trend of modernity. A cultural-anthropological direction of ecocriticism, therefore, examines two extreme counterpoles – the extreme individualism and anthropocentrism of a one-sided, over-economized civilization.

⁴⁰Taylor, Paul W. *Respect for nature: a theory of environmental ethics*.11

⁴¹Taylor, Paul W. *Respect for nature: a theory of environmental ethics*.11-12

⁴² Taylor, Paul W. *Respect for nature: a theory of environmental ethics*.13

3. Ethical level explores an anthropocentric cultural value system which involves the recognition of the dignity and value of nonhuman nature and also examines the source of such values that enrich our ethical orientation. It means to observe the level of our evolution of life, competition and the struggle for survival and also contact, cooperation and co-evolution between human and nonhuman nature.

4. An epistemological perspective accepts evolution as a basic axiom and believes that knowledge of such issue is not linear but very nonlinear and very complex. It claims that models of historical progress are very inadequate as well as causal models of explanation for natural processes which is supported by the thought that the historical process is shaped by its own mixture of contingencies and feedback loops. With this kind of considerations, this perspective can open up possibilities of cybernetics, system theory or chaos theory, which according to Mayer and Gersdorf can become a promising branch of ecocriticism.

5. The fifth direction of ecocriticism has special importance for literature. It defines the potential implications and perspective of the aesthetic and imaginative dimension of literature. It tries to redefine model of humanity and human culture. "The question here is what function the fictional mode of literary communication, which is characterized not by the direct imitation but by the defamiliarization and symbolic transformation of 'reality' and 'nature', can have within the larger system of cultural institutions and discourses." In other words, what impact will literature has on the readers and how it can change its perception of their relationship with the environment⁴³

⁴³ Gersdorf and Mayer, *Nature in Literary and Cultural Studies*, 51-54.

3 MAN-NATURE RELATIONSHIP IN THE POETRY OF TED HUGHES AND DYLAN THOMAS

The environmental crisis affected both authors greatly. These two poets devoted their life to increase the awareness of the importance of nature. Both of them also share the opinion of the doctor Washington that the environmental crisis is caused by the arrogant and egocentric behaviour of humankind.⁴⁴ Therefore, their poetry tries to explain why the humankind should change their attitude and describes the potential consequences of such destructive treating nature. The aim of this chapter is to analyse Hughes's and Thomas's depiction of the man and nature relationship, their interconnection and also examine their different perception of natural environment and the features that are described in the theoretical part of this thesis.

3.1. PERCEPTION OF NATURE/ENVIRONMENT IN HUGHES AND THOMAS

Hughes's poetry became concerned with viewing nature from an ecocritical perspective since the 1960s, therefore his work changed from anthropocentric to biocentric perspective. He shared the opinion of many ecologists that the only possibility to save our planet is to change the perceptions of the human inhabitants about nature.⁴⁵

Hughes's poetry can be understood in relation to ecocriticism, particularly when humans use nature for utilitarian purposes. His poetry often critiques anthropocentric ideology which transforms external nature in forms of ecological disintegration and probes the categories of man and nature.⁴⁶

Ted Hughes was born in 1930. He grew up in the Calder Valley in Yorkshire. The weather in this place was very unpredictable and the landscape was solid and unchanging. He loved the place, although the nature was rough and harsh and it became his infinite inspiration for many of his poems. The sense of the moors and rain that is associated with the Calder Valley can be

⁴⁴Washington, *Human Dependence on Nature*, 2.

⁴⁵Sagar, Keith M. *The Laughter of Foxes*. 160

⁴⁶ Chaiyon Tonguskaeng, "Ecocritical Reading in the Poetry of Ted Hughes (Bc thesis, The University of Leeds, 2015) 11

also seen in his poem “Wind”.⁴⁷ This poem is very straightforward description of “a dynamic process in nature.”⁴⁸ It is inspired by Hughes’s own experience with such strong weather:

A strong wind certainly stirs your mind up, as if it actually could entre you head, and sometimes on such occasions you get the feeling of having lost your bearings, and that something terrible is about to happen, almost as if it were the beginning of an earthquake. On and off I live in a house on top of a hill in the Pennines, where the wind blows without obstruction across the tops of the moors. I have experienced some gales in that house, and here is a poem I once wrote about one of them⁴⁹

The poem starts with a dreary description of a house “far out at sea all night”.⁵⁰ Then the author goes on and depicts the powerful wind. Tonguskkaeng mentions that Hughes uses action verbs such as “crashing”, “booming” or “floundering” to emphasis the mighty power of wind.⁵¹ When reading these lines, the reader can easily imagine how threatening the wind will be for the dwellers of the house.

This house has been far out at sea all night,
The woods crashing through darkness, the booming hills,
Winds stampeding the fields under the window
Floundering black astride and blinding wet⁵²

As the poem progresses, a narrator in the third stanza appears: “Once I looked up -”, “Through the burnt wind that dented the balls of my eyes.”⁵³ Now it is very clear that the narrator himself sees the power of the wind and is aware of the danger that would be caused by the natural powers.

At noon I scaled along the house-side as far as
The coal-house door. Once I looked up –
Through the burn wind that dented the balls of my eyes
The tent of the hills drummed and strained its guyrope,⁵⁴

⁴⁷www.bbc.co.uk/bradford/content/articles/2009/05/27/ted_hughes_2009_featre.shtml

⁴⁸Sagar, Keith M. *The Laughter of Foxes*. 160

⁴⁹Moulin, Joanny. *Ted Hughes: alternative horizon.s* 32

⁵⁰Hughes, Ted, and Paul Keegan. *Ted Hughes: collected poems*. 67

⁵¹Chaiyon Tonguskkaeng, “Ecocritical Reading in the Poetry of Ted Hughes (Bc thesis, The University of Leeds, 2015). 75

⁵² Hughes, Ted, and Paul Keegan. *Ted Hughes: collected poems*. 67

⁵³Hughes, Ted, and Paul Keegan. *Ted Hughes: collected poems*. 67

⁵⁴Hughes, Ted, and Paul Keegan. *Ted Hughes: collected poems*. 67

The forth stanza is an example of anthropomorphism. In the first line “The fields quivering” and “the skyline a grimace” are expressions used to intensify the reader’s emotions. The wind, so powerful, forces the fields to shiver and even the sky is made grimace. This kind of anthropomorphism is supposed to evoke the power of the natural elements once again. Hughes uses dynamic verbs to create the image of the wind’s powerful effects.⁵⁵

The fields quivering, the skyline a grimace,
At any second to bang and vanish with a flap:
The wind flung a magpie away and a black-
Back gull bent like an iron bar slowly.⁵⁶

In the last two stanzas, Hughes talks about humans and their perception of the natural powers. Although the narrator should feel safely at his home, he becomes aware of the strength of the natural powers that can destroy all his property. He realizes his own vulnerability in relation to the environment and the only thing he can do is to wait for the rain to manifest its destructive power.

Rang like some
fine green goblet in the note
That any second would shatter it. Now deep
In chairs, in front of the great fire, we grip
Our hearts and cannot entertain book, thought,

Or each other. We watch the fire blazing,
And feel the roots of the house move, but sit on,
Seeing the window tremble to come in,
Hearing the stones cry out under the horizons.⁵⁷

Tongsukkaeng sees the message of this poem: “Human beings are part of the environment, not as a maker, who claims ownership, but as an inhabitant.”⁵⁸

When talking about environmental poetry and interest in nature, Dylan Thomas and his work must be mentioned. Thomas grew up in Swansea in Wales. This background rapidly influenced

⁵⁵Chaiyon Tonguskaeng, “Ecocritical Reading in the Poetry of Ted Hughes (Bc thesis, The University of Leeds, 2015) 76

⁵⁶Hughes, Ted, and Paul Keegan. *Ted Hughes: collected poems*. 67

⁵⁷Hughes, Ted, and Paul Keegan. *Ted Hughes: collected poems*. 67

⁵⁸Chaiyon Tonguskaeng, “Ecocritical Reading in the Poetry of Ted Hughes (Bc thesis, The University of Leeds, 2015) 77

his perception of nature. Modernism and romanticism had also a great impact on him. Thomas was also influenced by James Joyce and D.H. Lawrence. In his work we can very often find a feature called pantheism:

Pantheism is the belief that all reality is identical with divinity, or that everything composes an all-encompassing, immanent god. Pantheists thus do not believe in distinct personal or anthropocentric god.⁵⁹

For this reason, his poetry and perception of nature is different from Ted Hughes. Thomas feels captured in his own thoughts and feels isolated from the natural world. Ackerman claims that: “His aim was always to re-establish the living organic connections with the cosmos. And he adds that: “Throughout his verse he promotes a celebration of the instinctive life.”⁶⁰ He also believes that: “A relate concern in his poetry is the attempt to fit this sense of the unity of human and natural life into the developing pattern of religious thought and feeling.”⁶¹

Thomas’s poem “The force that through the green fuse drives the flower” is poetry of a different perception of nature. The narrator is Thomas himself. This poem connects humanity and nature in Thomas’s very specific way. He identifies himself and his own body with nature and the universe. Ackerman also says that: “A relate concern in his poetry is the attempt to fit this sense of the unity of human and natural life into the developing pattern of religious thought and feeling.”⁶²

In this poem, we can see that it is very hard to recognize the speaker from the natural world. In the first three stanzas, the speaker seems to be kind of dispersed in the natural world.⁶³ The natural objects are compared to the parts of human body. And at the same time, Thomas tries to create an organic connection between life cycle and the cycle we can find in nature.⁶⁴ It seems that although the speaker himself feels closely connected to the nature, somehow, he is not able to share this fact with the world: “And I am dumb to tell”⁶⁵

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower
Drives my green age; that blasts the roots of trees
Is my destroyer.
And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose

⁶⁰Ackerman, John. *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work* xviii

⁶¹Ackerman, John. *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work* 41

⁶²Ackerman, John. *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work* 41

⁶³Goodbye, John. *The poetry of Dylan Thomas: under the spelling wall* 103

⁶⁴Goodbye, John. *The poetry of Dylan Thomas: under the spelling wall* 103

⁶⁵Thomas, Dylan. *Dylan Thomas: Collected poems*. 55

My youth is bent by the same wintry fever.

And yet again, in the second stanza Thomas highlights the essential connection between the natural processes and the physical processes of a human body: “The force that drives the water through the rocks”, “drives my blood; that dries the mouthing streams.”⁶⁶

The force that drives the water through the rocks
Drives my blood; that dries the mouthing streams
Turns mine to wax.
And I am dumb to mouth unto my veins
How at the mountain spring the same mouth sucks.⁶⁷

In this poem the force that passes through the green fuse identifies its growth and decay with the growth and decay of the natural world.⁶⁸ And again, in the third stanza, the author is not able to share his thoughts, in this case with “a weather’s wind.”⁶⁹ However, Louis Simpson believes that Thomas found the unity with the natural cycle – “being renewed by ‘fallen blood.’” Further, she explains that: “Knowledge of the split between human consciousness and nature has halted it, but by refusing to ‘express’ a determine truth by a self-identical speaker, the abjection of silence has been offset by the intransitive force of ‘I am dumb to tell.’”⁷⁰

The lips of time leech to the fountain head;
Love drips and gathers, but the fallen blood
Shall calm her sores.
And I am dumb to tell a weather’s wind
How time has ticked a heaven round the stars.⁷¹

3.2 ANIMAL IMAGERY IN THE POETRY OF TED HUGHES AND DYLAN THOMAS

Until the end of the eighteenth century, anthropomorphism was an indivisible part of the man-animal relationship. Unfortunately, in the last two centuries, animals started to disappear. During the twentieth century, animals were forced out of their natural environment. Due to growing cities, the surrounding countryside was transformed into suburbs. As a result, wild and

⁶⁶Thomas, Dylan. *Dylan Thomas: Collected poems*. 58

⁶⁷Thomas, Dylan. *Dylan Thomas: Collected poem*. 58

⁶⁸Ackerman, John. *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work* 140

⁶⁹Thomas, Dylan. *Dylan Thomas: Collected poems*

⁷⁰Ackerman, John. *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work* 140

⁷¹Thomas, Dylan. *Dylan Thomas: Collected poem*.60

domesticated animals became rare. Certain species such as bison or reindeer, have become almost extinct. Later, animals got treated as raw material, required for food.⁷²

After the Second World War many British authors felt disillusioned by the consequences of the war that had impact on British inhabitants and the social situation in general. These changes were reflected in literature. Many writers such as Philip Larkin or Kingsley Amis joined the literary group “The Movement.” While these writers kept expressing their pessimistic feelings about the current situation, Ted Hughes seemed to ignore the after-war mood and devoted his work to the environmental issues and concentrated especially on the theme of animals.⁷³

Ted Hughes is often called an “animal poet” and most of his poems deal with animal imagery. His early poetry, Hughes emphasis the animal struggles to survive and the kinship between humans and animals. Sagar says: “One can see in his early poetry an emphasis upon kinship with animals and a longing to fuse with Nature’s vital energy and a questioning of anthropocentrism⁷⁴

“The Jaguar” is probably one of the most famous animal poetry of Hughes. It is part of Hughes’s collection *The Hawk in the Rain*, which mostly deals with the problematic of civilized world and the animals who are forced to live in such environment. The reader can see the tendency of de-romanticizing of the animal that is captured in a cage in the zoo.⁷⁵

In the first and second stanza we can see description of different animals which are destined to spend their whole life in the zoo. Most of them ignore the fact that they are not in their natural environment and adjust to their new surroundings. As Tonguskkeang notices, behaviour of these animals is more or less institutionalised and they react in a lethargic way.⁷⁶ “The apes yawn and adore their fleas in the sun” and “The parrots shriek as if they were on fire or strut” are examples of such behaviour.

The apes yawn and adore their fleas in the sun.
The parrots shriek as if they were on fire or strut
Like cheap tarts to attract the stroller with the nut.
Fatigued with indolence, tiger and lion

Lie still as the sun. The boa-constrictor’s coil

⁷²Berger, Peter .Why we look at animals 4-5

⁷³Berger, Peter. – Why we look at animals 4-5

⁷⁴Sagar, Keith M. *The Challenge of Ted Hughes* 163

⁷⁵Tonguskkeang. “Ecocritical Reading in the Poetry of Ted Hughes” 35

⁷⁶Tonguskkeang. “Ecocritical Reading in the Poetry of Ted Hughes” 35

Is a fossil. Cage after cage seems empty, or
Stinks of sleepers from the breathing straw.
It might be painted on a nursery wall.⁷⁷

But the third and fourth stanzas draw their attention towards the wild jaguar, an animal that lives differently from those mentioned above. The jaguar unlike the apes or parrots “mesmerizes” the crowd that keeps staring at the jaguar. The reason for such attention is the wildness in the jaguar behaviour, which is fascinating to the humans. According to Tongskkeang, the wild behaviour of the jaguar is called “otherness.” She also presents two different opinions of the authors mentioned in the theoretical part of this thesis.⁷⁸ While Greg Garrard believes that humans are afraid of wild animals for their “otherness” and as the result they consider them to be a source of violence and threat for the human kind. John Berger in his work “Why Look At Animals” argues that “zoo animals are ambivalently positioned between wild and domesticated animals because they are objects of the politics of power – understood as imperial.”⁷⁹

But who runs like the rest past these arrives
At a cage where the crowd stands, stares, mesmerized,
As a child at a dream, at a jaguar hurrying enraged
Through prison darkness after the drills of his eyes

On a short fierce fuse. Not in boredom-
The eye satisfied to be blind in fire,
By the bang of blood in the brain deaf the ear-
He spins from the bars, but there’s no cage to him

In the final stanza Hughes points out that human will have no power over the jaguar despite being captured from his natural environment and put in the isolation far away from his “natural home”. The point of this poem is that humans, however powerful, are not able to take away his wildness, or as Garrard calls it – “otherness.”

More than to the visionary his cell:
His stride is wildernesses of freedom:
The world rolls under the long thrust of his heel.
Over the cage floor the horizons come.

Hughes himself tried to explain many possible meanings of “The Jaguar.”

⁷⁷Hughes, Ted, and Paul Keegan. *Ted Hughes: Collected poems*.89

⁷⁸Tongskkeang. “Ecocritical Reading in the Poetry of Ted Hughes” 43

⁷⁹Tongskkeang. “Ecocritical Reading in the Poetry of Ted Hughes” 43-45

A jaguar after all can be received in several different aspects...he is a beautiful, powerful nature spirit, he is a homicidal manic, he is a supercharged piece of cosmic machinery, he is a symbol of man's nature shoved down into the id and growing cannibal murderous with deprivation...he is a precise historical symbol to the bloody-minded Aztecs and so no. Or he is simply a demon.⁸⁰

Hughes became so fascinated by the wildness of the jaguar that in his collection of poems "*Wodwo*," he devoted another poem to this admirable creature. In this poem he does not deal with the relationship between human and animal, but he rather describes the beautiful appearance of the wild animal.

Skinful of bowl, he bowls them,
The hip going in and out of joint, dropping the spine
With the urgency of his hurry
Like a cat going along under thrown stones, under cover,
Glancing sideways, running
Under his spine. A terrible, stump-legged waddle
Like a thick Aztec disemboweller,⁸¹

Dylan Thomas never wanted to be identified with any literature group in the Great Britain. However, he was strongly influenced by his deep religious Welsh background. Not many poems of Dylan Thomas concentrate just on the animal imagery, he rather tends to identify the animals with the natural world that is inseparably connected to humans and God. Unlike Hughes who sees humans as the main enemy not only for animals but for the nature in general. In his poem "Prologue", Thomas describes how to protect animals and sees all kinds of animals as a part of human companionship.

He seeks the inspiration in his religious roots. The poem is based on the biblical story of Noah and his arch and yet again his pantheism is shown, when Noah gathers the animals in seeking for the ultimate unity between man, nature and God. For him Thomas, these three parts are inseparable in all his poems. He believes that humans and animals can live in harmony, as he usually doesn't promote the idea of the traditional Christian God for whom the humans are superior to animals but God as omnipresent in plants, animals, ourselves as humans, ground and the universe. He puts emphasis on the animals that are invited to the arch. He is not celebrating Noah for building his arch, but instead, he is greeting the animals who are actually

⁸⁰ Sagar, Keith M. *The Laughter of Foxes*. 164

⁸¹ Hughes, Ted, and Paul Keegan. *Ted Hughes: collected poems* 88

willing to come to the arch, and therefore they agree that they will unity with man, nature and God.

According to Ackerman, in this poem Dylan is “the ark of his poetry into which he invites all nature’s creatures.” While in the first part of this poetry, Dylan depicts the natural life, in the second part he carefully lists and welcomes the countryside animals” such as “ring dove,” which is the universal symbol of peace and love, “reverent rook,” who informs others about the beauty of his home forest.⁸².

Huloo, on plumbed bryns,
O my ruffled ring dove
In the hooting, nearly dark,
With Welsh and reverent rook,
Coo rooning the wood’s praise,
Who moons her blue notes from her nest
Down to the curlew herd!
Ho, hulaballoing clan,
Agape, with woe
In your beaks, on the gabbing capes!
Heigh, on horseback hill, jack
Whisking hare!⁸³

Further, Dylan even expresses the love and kinship between humans and animals: “I build my bellowing ark to the best of my love.”⁸⁴ In this part, animals left their manmade homes “hollow farms,” and barns to join Noah’s arch. He goes on and describes the animas as the “neighbours he succours.”⁸⁵

But animals thick as thieves
On God’s rough tumbling grounds
(Hail to His beasthood!).
Beasts who sleep good and thin,
Hist, in hogback woods! The haystacked

O kingdom of neighbours finned
Felled and quilled, flash to my patch
Work ark and the moonshine
Drinking Noah of the bay,
With pelt, and scale, and fleece.⁸⁶

⁸²Ackerman, John. *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work*. 143

⁸³Ackerman, John. *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work*. 143

⁸⁴Ackerman, John. *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work*. 143

⁸⁵Ackerman, John. *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work*. 143

⁸⁶Thomas, Dylan. *Dylan Thomas: Collected poems* 5

In the following lines, Ackerman sees Dylan's "strong animistic vision. Surviving the apocalyptic flood 'when dark shoals every holy field' the ark rides out, the poet and nature's creatures securely united."⁸⁷

Poor peace as the sun sets
And dark shoals every holy field.
We will ride out alone, and then,
Under the stars of Wales,
Cry, Multiudes or arks!
Huloo, my prowd dove with a flute!
Ahoy, old, sea-legged fox,
Tom tit and Dai mouse!
May ark signs in the sun
At God speeded summer's end
And the flood flowers now.⁸⁸

This poem is influenced by Thomas's Welsh roots for the Welsh used to describe animals as intelligent beings:

Maybe, too, Dylan Thomas inherited something of the spirit of The Mabinogion, a collection of mediaeval Welsh tales where animals, birds and fishes play vital, often magical roles, and anticipated our contemporary concern with the world of nature and its protection.⁸⁹

3.3 DEPICTION OF BIRDS AS A COMMON FEATURE

Symbolism of birds is very often used not only in the poetry of Dylan Thomas. We can read about a white dove that brings love and peace. Edgar Allan Poe describes his raven as a horror animal, very dark and dreary, as Poe's soul itself. We can also read stories about seagulls and how they want to differ from their flock.

Hughes was always interested in the world of birds. Hawks, sparrows, eagles and crows appear in his poetry very often. One of his most famous and influential collection of poetry, concerning the topic of birds, is called *Crow*. Hughes wrote this collection between years 1966 and 1969, when he was strongly influenced by Sylvia Plath's suicide. As the result of Plath's

⁸⁷Ackerman, John. *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work* 43

⁸⁸Thomas, Dylan. *Dylan Thomas: Collected poems* 5

⁸⁹Ackerman, John. *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work* 144

death, Hughes became concerned with the destruction of humankind more than ever before. In *Crow*, he calls the nature destruction “a defect” in the genetic code of the species. But he also points out that we are well aware of this defect, therefore we should be able to stop this kind of behaviour.⁹⁰ Why Hughes chose a crow as the main character of his collection of poetry is not clear. He himself stated that firstly his idea of the main protagonist would be an eagle. But later he decided that a crow would be a more suitable representative. According to Sagar, Hughes’s choice might have been based on the fact that crows are very intelligent birds and therefore their thinking is more similar to the human thoughts. Moreover, the black colour of this bird underlines Hughes’s negative mood and contempt for the humankind as well as a symbol of upcoming destruction and death.⁹¹

The collection describes a crow, which is supposed to be perceived as an antagonist, from its creation by God to the bitter and evil destructive victory of crow’s arrogant behaviour.⁹²

In his poem “Crow’s first lesson”, Hughes doubts the power of almighty God described in the Bible, as he failed to teach the crow the word love. In other words, this poem reveals that God was not able to make the perfect world and depicts the egocentric thinking of the humans, which is demonstrated on the character of a crow and Hughes rather promotes the idea of Darwinism. Sagar notices that the crow’s negative reaction scares other animals.⁹³ “The white shark crashed into the sea” and in the second stanza “a bluefly, a tsetse, a mosquito zoomed out and down to their sundry flesh-pots.”⁹⁴

God tried to teach Crow how to talk.
‘Love,’ said God. ‘Say, Love.’
Crow gaped, and the white shark crashed into the sea
And went rolling downwards, discovering its own depth⁹⁵

In the third stanza, the author clearly stated the fact that it is not a disability or a lack of intelligence to learn the word love. Simply, the crow refuses to learn it. In the result, it is God, who failed to teach the crow how to love. The lines “man’s bodiless prodigious head” and “bulbed out onto the earth, with swivelling eyes” seem to express the destructive consequences of the crow’s refusal to cooperate with nature.⁹⁶

⁹⁰ Sagar, Keith M. *Laughter of Foxes*. 18

⁹¹ Sagar, Keith M. *Laughter of Foxes*. 134

⁹² Sagar, Keith M. *Laughter of Foxes*.175

⁹³ Sagar, Keith M. *Laughter of Foxes*.144

⁹⁴ Hughes, Ted, and Paul Keegan. *Ted Hughes: Collected poems*.78

⁹⁵ Hughes, Ted, and Paul Keegan. *Ted Hughes: Collected poems*.80

⁹⁶ Hughes, Ted, and Paul Keegan. *Ted Hughes: Collected poems*.80

‘A final try,’ said God. ‘Now, LOVE.’
Crow convulsed, gaped, retched and
Man’s bodiless prodigious head
Bulbed out onto the earth, with swivelling eyes,
Jabbering protest - ⁹⁷

The last line, however, confirms the idea of Hughes that humans can realize their destructive behaviour as the crow feels guilty for his arrogant attitude. Although the crow realizes that his attitude and behaviour are against nature, it does not stop him and he is not willing to change his principles.

Although Dylan Thomas and Ted Hughes differ in their approach and apprehension of nature and animals, there is still one common feature that they use in their work very often. When reading the poems of both authors, it is almost impossible not to notice their interest in birds. In his poetry “Over Sir John’s hill,” Dylan Thomas demonstrates two great counter-poles – life and death.

In the first stanza we can see a motif of a hawk. “The hawk on fire hangs still/in a hoisted cloud, at drop of dusk, he pulls to his claws.”⁹⁸ The bird is waiting and looking for his prey. The reader perceives the hawk rather in a negative way. According to Ackerman, the phrase “it is ‘on fire’”, suggests the process of destruction and the sunlight on its wings.”⁹⁹ Thomas seems to blame the hawk for his wildness and judges it for waiting for the small innocent birds to kill them. Moreover, the line: “Of the sparrows and such who swansing/dusk in wrangling hedges,” refers to Thomas’s very common topic and it is death.¹⁰⁰ Ackerman also adds that “noosed hawk” refers to guilt or punishment.¹⁰¹ When reading this poem, the reader cannot look for the similar meanings as in Hughes’s poetry. Although Thomas describes life and death in his work, he just compares the world of birds to the world of humans. He points out that also in the empire of animals we can find those who are stronger and the weaker individuals are the victims of the fittest and although Thomas was a deeply religious man, in this poem, he shows the sympathy with Darwin. Last two lines of the first stanza introduce a heron. In Ackerman opinion, the figure of the heron has always been associated with holiness.

⁹⁷ Hughes, Ted, and Paul Keegan. *Ted Hughes: Collected poems*.80

⁹⁸Thomas, Dylan. Dylan Thomas: Collected poems 43

⁹⁹Ackerman, John. Dylan Thomas: *His Life and Work* 139

¹⁰⁰Ackerman, John. Dylan Thomas: *His Life and Work* 139

¹⁰¹ Ackerman, John. Dylan Thomas: *His Life and Work* 141

Over Sir John's hill,
 The hawk on fire hangs still;
 In a hoisted cloud, at drop of dusk, he pulls to his claws
 And gallows, up the rays of his eyes the small birds of the bay
 And the shrill child's play Wars
 Of the sparrows and such who swansing, dusk in wrangling hedges.
 And blithely they squawk
 To fiery tyburn over the wrestle of elms until
 The flash the noosed hawk
 Caches, and slowly the fishing holy stalking heron
 In the river Towy below bows his tilted headstone.¹⁰²

In the second stanza, we can also see the figure of heron. In this case, the heron is called "fisherbird". Ackerman believes that this stanza "is associated with birth and with the concept of existence as a state of flux. Life does not end, but changes its form."¹⁰³ And again, we can see a figure of the hawk that is ready to kill. In this stanza, the narrator is unable to stop "the act of killing" although he knows very well that the action is inevitable.¹⁰⁴ The hawk cannot fight with its own wild instincts and the opportunity calls him to kill.

Flash, and the plumes crack,
 And a black cap of jack-
 Daws Sir John's just hill dons, and again the gulled birds hare
 To the hawk on fire, the halter height, over Towy's fins,
 In a whack of wind.
 There were the elegiac fisherbird stabs and paddles
 In the pebbly dab-filled
 Shallow and sedge and 'dilly dilly,' calls the loft hawk,
 'Come on and be killed,'
 I open the leaves of the water at a passage
 Of psalms and shadow among the pincer sandcrabs prancing¹⁰⁵

The third stanza is devoted to death. Everything is ready for death and the hawk is ready to kill: "All praise of the hawk on fire in hawk-eyed dusk be sung."¹⁰⁶ The hawk sees its prey and the

¹⁰² Thomas, Dylan. *Dylan Thomas: Collected poems* 43

¹⁰³ Ackerman, John. *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work* 141

¹⁰⁴ Ackerman, John. *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work* 142

¹⁰⁵ Thomas, Dylan. *Dylan Thomas: Collected poems* 43

¹⁰⁶ Thomas, Dylan. *Dylan Thomas: Collected poems*. 43

author makes clear that now is the time to die: “Green chickens of the bay and bushes cluck, dilly dilly, come let us die.”¹⁰⁷

Ackerman adds: “A shell, the husk of a once-living creature, speaks of morality: one, literary, listens to it, so too, the sea-sound of the buoy’s bell at this moment suggests a funeral bell. The birds are, however, in their morality.”¹⁰⁸ But Thomas appraises the hawk for his instincts and its natural will to live. Nevertheless, the poet also emphasises the fact that there is no life without death and therefore we must accept the fact that life and death go hand in hand and will co-exist together.¹⁰⁹

And read, in a shell
Death clear as a bouy’s bell:
All praise of the hawk on fire in hawk-eyed dusk be sung;
When his viperfish fuse hangs looped with flames under the brand
Wing, and blest shall
Young
Green chickens of the bay and bushes cluck,
‘dilly, dilly,
Come let us die.’
We grieve as the blithe birds, never again leave shingle and elm,
The heron and I,
I young Aesop fabling to the near night by the dingle
Of eels, saint heron hymning in the shell-hung distan

The last stanza shows that the narrator plays just a role of a mediator who stands aside from morality. His companion is the heron that observes the action but does not interrupt the natural behaviour of nature and the birds.¹¹⁰ Everything goes back to normal although Thomas expresses certain kind of sadness for the dead birds: “Stone for the sake of the souls of the slain birds sailing.”¹¹¹

Hero, mirrored, go,
As the snapt featers snow,
Fishing in the tear of the Towy. Only a hoot owl
Hollow, a grassblade blown in cupped hands, in the looted emlms
And no green cocks or hens
Shout
Now on Sir John’s hill. The heron, ankling the scaly
Lowlands of the waves,
Makes all the music;
And I who hear the tune of the slow,

¹⁰⁷ Thomas, Dylan. *Dylan Thomas: Collected poems* 43

¹⁰⁸ Ackerman, John. *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work*. 142-143

¹⁰⁹ Ackerman, John. *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work*. 145

¹¹⁰ Ackerman, John. *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work*. 145

¹¹¹ Thomas, Dylan. *Dylan Thomas: Collected poems*. 43

Wear-willow river, grave,
Before the lunge of the night, the notes on this time-shaken
Stone for the sake of the souls of the slain
Birds sailing

As we can see both authors uses the symbol of a hawk differently. In case of Dylan Thomas, the hawk is a symbol of a death that can wait anywhere. Although he is accompanied by a heron that is the exact opposite of the hawk, the bird still seems to be dreadful creature.

Hughes's hawk is in comparison to Thomas's hawk even greater threat for his environmental. This hawk sees itself as almighty creature that is able to kill and ignores other inhabitants.

Conclusion

This bachelor thesis was focused on studying Ted Hughes's and Dylan Thomas's attitude towards human and non-human nature.

The first two chapters describe the theoretical background for this thesis. They are dealing with the issue of ecocentric thinking and disciplines such as anthropocentrism, anthropomorphism and pathetic fallacy, which are closely connected to this issue. Given that Hughes's and Thomas's poems are a reaction to the changes in nature as the consequences of the environmental crisis. Both authors feel very concerned about the future of our planet and they are

The first part of the analysis includes the relationship of the authors with the environment. Poem "Wind" by Ted Hughes is a cruel description of the natural powers and vulnerability of humans. Hughes wants to emphasize the fact that although humans think of themselves as of the most sophisticated creations, when it comes to natural disasters such as rain, wind or flood, they are helpless and they can only wait what this mighty force is going to cause. Although they should feel safe in their homes that they built, they feel very restless and cannot focus on their human daily routine. It is said that this poem is very cruel and Hughes is often being judged for such cruelty. However, Hughes himself argues that he does not exaggerate but that he only tries to show the mighty natural powers and warn people that the consequences of such powers can be, and in his opinion, will be fatal.

"The force that through the green fuse drives the flower" by Dylan Thomas is the real opposite of "Wind." Thomas considers nature and the environment as a part of humans and therefore, he looks for the connection between the nature and himself. He considers his blood to be the blood of the trees and believes that humans will be united with nature during their lives and also after the death when the humans become the part of the ground they came from. He enjoys the natural processes of nature and believes that we should dedicate our life to nature and our aim should be to fuse with nature and all its parts and live in harmony together.

The second part of the analysis deals with the authors' attitude towards non-human nature. The poem "The Jaguar" and "Second glance at the jaguar" by Ted Hughes is analyzed. Hughes describes how cruel is to keep animals in the zoo and how lethargic and bored their behaviour is. He notices how many animals just adjust to the boring life in the zoo and they do not use their natural instincts. But the jaguar stands in the opposition to other animals. Hughes comments on his wildness that cannot be removed from his temperament. Unlike Thomas he considers humans to be those who are responsible for animal suffering and urge them to change

their behaviour towards nature and help the poor animals to place them back to their natural environment. Further, Thomas's poem "Prologue" shows that Dylan does not think of animals as of the creatures to be saved by humans but he wants animals, nature and humans to be connected with the universe and omniscient God. He sees animals as part of humans' life and therefore Noah in this poetry invites all the animals to join him on his ark when the big flood comes and they do so willingly with the aim to become the part of the man, nature and God unity. Thomas probably considers himself to be a new kind of Noah – the first biblical drunk.

The final chapter of the practical part deals with the common motives that often appear in the poetry of both poets. This topic is birds. Thomas depicts birds, especially hawk, sparrows and herons in his poem "Over Sir John's hill". It is very colourful description of the hawk's power over the other birds. Hawk symbolizes the darkness of death and heron is the symbol for life. Both poets describe the life of birds in a very enthusiastic way. On the other hand, their attitude towards birds and their role in their poems could not be more different. While Hughes demonstrates the destructive behaviour of humans on a crow and shows how arrogant and irresponsible the humankind might be, Thomas stays in a role of a mediator who watches the natural process of life and death. Hughes's poem "Crow's first lesson" is a lament about the crow's unwillingness to learn and be a better being and he himself is concerned in the poetry and expresses his very strong feelings. He is angry with the crow because it is not able to learn how to love and help the nature.

Dylan Thomas and Ted Hughes are great poets with a great interest in the environment. Although their attitude toward nature differs in many aspects, their aim is the same – to care about our nature and preserve it and educate people about the consequences of their destructive behaviour.

RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská se zaměřuje na vybranou poezii Teda Hughese a Dylana Thomase. Především se soustředí na zobrazování vztahu člověka k přírodě – a to jak živé, tak neživé. Cílem této práce je zhotovení komparativních analýz obou básníků. Analýza je zaměřena na pocity obou básníků, které se týkají ekologické krize, a to s velkým důrazem na zobrazení vztahu člověka k přírodě a jejím součástí.

Oba autoři byli jedni z nejvýznamnějších anglických básníků druhé poloviny 20. století. Dylan Thomas bývá často nepochopen a odsuzován jako alkoholik s oidipovským komplexem. Poezie Teda Hughese bývá naopak považována za přehnaně krutou, s násilným popisem týrání zvířat a kruté zacházení s nimi. Oba autoři se ve svých dílech věnují tématu jak živé tak i neživé přírody. Avšak jejich vnímání a přístup k tomuto tématu je odlišný. Zatímco Ted Hughes je až posedlý tématem zvířat a kritikou lidské krutosti, Dylan Thomas věří, že člověk by měl žít v harmonii nejen s živou přírodou, ale dokonce nachází spojení neživé přírody a lidských bytostí.

První a druhá kapitola shrnují ekokritické smýšlení a podstatu této disciplíny. Úvod první kapitoly se zaměřuje na počátek ekologické krize, kdy zásahy člověka v přírodě začaly být znatelné a to už od dob Římanů. Tyto změny postupně pokračovaly a přeměňovaly přírodu, až v šedesátých letech osmnáctého století vyústily v industriální revoluci. Tato kapitola má tak za cíl seznámit čtenáře s historickými faktory, které vedly k vyústění současné situace a ekologické krizi. Podle Alduse Huxleyho má na této situaci převážnou vinu člověk a jeho nezodpovědné chování k přírodě a jejím součástí. I přesto, že také poukazuje na to, že toto chování nemusí být úmyslné, faktem zůstává, že člověk svým chováním, rozšiřováním měst a stavbou továren přírodu ničí a mění ji do podoby dle obrazu svého.

Ačkoli ekokritika je relativně nová disciplína, v dnešní době nachází stále více příznivců. Více a více autorů se zajímá o toto téma a to především ve Velké Británii a Severní Americe. V další části této kapitoly následují definice ekokritiky a různé přístupy k literární ekokritické analýze. V druhé podkapitole je ekokritická disciplína rozdělena na dvě vlny. Toto dělení pochází od Lawrence Buella, který se ekokritikou zabývá. První vlna je zaměřena na dřívější vnímání přírody. Zahrnuje tak romantické básníky, kteří měli tendenci přírodu opěvovat, hledat v ní krásu a kritizovat vzrůstající počet měst. Druhá vlna ekokritiky se již zaměřuje na současné vnímání celé ekologické situace. Autoři si začínají uvědomovat, že živá i neživá příroda je nedílnou součástí lidského světa a vznikají obavy, jaké důsledky by

nezodpovědné chování lidí mohlo mít nejen na naši planetu, ale především na příští generace našich dětí. Literatura s ekologickou tematikou se začíná dostávat do popředí a začíná stoupat její důležitost. Lidé si začínají uvědomovat, že i přesto, že v poezii není možné najít vědecké důkazy a ověřené teorie, poezie má svůj význam a důležité sdělení

Dále se kapitola zaměřuje na propojení ekokritické disciplíny s disciplínou antropocentrickou. Popisuje vztah zvířat k lidem, a to nejen v literatuře, ale i v běžném životě. Zvířata byla a jsou nedílnou součástí literatury a antropocentrismus se zabývá chováním zvířat a především jejich zobrazení v literatuře. Zvířata jsou zobrazována v literatuře už od dob Ezopa a jeho bajek, kde slouží k morálnímu poučení čtenáře. Také v křesťanské literatuře můžeme najít obrazy zvířat, a to například hada nebo nevinné jehně. Tato kapitola dále popisuje, jak nás stará náboženství, například křesťanství a židovství přiměla přemýšlet o zvířatech jako o něčem podřadném a přistupovat k nim jako k věcem, protože zvířata podle křesťanských tradic, byla stvořena pro nás a našim právem je využívat je. V další části projevuje svůj názor Greg Garrard, který tvrdí, že mezi zvířaty a lidmi vlastně žádný rozdíl není. Svůj názor obhajuje myšlenkou, že pokud zvířata cítí tu samou bolest, jako my lidé, není možné je vnímat jako součást neživé přírody, a je proto nutné, se podle toho k nim také tak chovat. Je velmi smutné, že v současné době ekokritici zaměřují svoji pozornost z velké části na divoká zvířata a roli domácích zvířat berou jako jejich úděl a není nutné se tak nad jejich utrpením pozastavovat. S tím ovšem nesouhlasí Mary Austin, která tvrdí, že přirozenou divokost můžeme najít jak ve zvířatech domácích, tak ve zvířatech divokých. Fakt, že zvířata byla domestikována, neznamená, že v nich nemůžeme probudit divokost. I býk, který je vychovaný v zajetí, může projevit své přirozené pudy – svoji divokost a ukázat tak člověku, že nad ním nemá moc. Tento názor také potvrzuje Garrard, který dodává, že ta samá zvířata, která jsou nyní zdomácnělá, byla úspěšně navracena do přírody a znovu se adaptovala na jejich přirozené prostředí. Navíc dodává, že zvířata uvězněná v zoo musela v minulosti projít stejnými překážkami, jako jejich divocí předci a že i nadále v nich jejich divoký pud zůstává.

Na co tato kapitola však upozorňuje, je fakt, že antropocentrismus je vnímán z pohledu vědy velmi negativně. Vědci se ze všech sil snaží dokázat, že zvířata nemohou mít stejné emoce jako lidé. Proto je důležité upozornit, že pro tuto bakalářskou práci je termín antropomorfismus používán pouze z hlediska literatury.

Poslední pojem, který se vyskytuje v této kapitole je pojem „pathetic fallacy.“ Tento termín byl uveden viktoriánským literárním kritikem Johnem Ruskinem v roce 1856. Tento termín je parafrázován jako připisování lidských emocí neživým věcem a zvířatům. Je to také

určitý druh formy personifikace a velmi často je využíván právě v poezii s environmentálním zaměřením. Ruskin však „pathetic fallacy“ odsuzuje s tím, že nejdůležitější, co v literatuře můžeme najít je pravda a pravdivé informace. Jako příklad uvádí termín „list, který tančí.“

Ruskin uznává, že toto slovní spojení je sice velmi poetické, avšak velmi nepravdivé, a proto mohou být čtenáři této básně velmi zmateni. Také ovšem dodává, že chápe důvod, proč je pro čtenáře mnohem zábavnější čistá literatura, obsahující tento druh personifikace, než literaturu, která obsahuje pouze holá fakta.

Druhá teoretická kapitola se hned v úvodu věnuje tématu antropocentrismu, což je pravděpodobně nejvýraznější protipól antropomorfismu. Tato egocentricky zaměřená disciplína je definována jako potřeba člověka zaměřovat se pouze na svoji existenci a ignorovat potřeby jak živé, tak neživé přírody. Glotfelty a Fromm tvrdí, že důvod, proč je naše lidstvo tak antropocentricky zaměřené, tkví už v historii křesťanského a židovského náboženství, které klade hlavní důraz na potřeby člověka a zvířata i příroda jsou mu tím pádem podřízené. Avšak americký filozof Paul Taylor tvrdí, že člověk může potřebu zachovat přírodu vnímat jako svoji povinnost. Také však tvrdí, že tato potřeba nevyplývá z ekocentrického myšlení, ale z potřeby zachovat přírodu pro budoucí generace a tím své potomky chránit.

Třetí kapitola se zabývá analýzou autorů Teda Hughese a Dylana Thomase. Zabývá se především tím, jak tito básníci vnímají přírodu a její součásti. Tato kapitola je rozdělena na tři podkapitoly. První kapitola se zabývá vztahem autorů k neživé přírodě a životnímu prostředí. Analyzuje, jak se jejich vnímání přírody odráží v jejich básních.

Ted Hughes v jeho básni *Wind* popisuje, jak mohou být přírodní živly ničivě a negativně ovlivnit lidské životy. Básník zdůrazňuje bezmoc lidí, kteří žijí ve svém domě s vědomím, že mají přírodní síly pod kontrolou. Nicméně když se dostaví ničivý vítr, Hughes ve své básni ukazuje, jak moc bezmocní jsou lidé i přesto, že by se měli cítit ve svých domech bezpečně. Díky silnému větru, který se k nim blíží, obyvatelé domu se cítí vyděšení, nedokážou se zabavit ani knihou a ani teplý oheň v krbu nevzbuzuje pocit bezpečí. Jsou necháni napospas ničivé přírodní síle a jedině, co jim zbývá, je čekat na to, jak se k nim vítr zachová.

Druhá báseň, která je zde rozebrána, je báseň *The force that through the green fuse drives the flower*. V této básni se Thomas zabývá spojením člověka a přírody. Celkově ve všech svých básních, Thomas vnímá přírodu jako součást lidských bytostí. Tato báseň je inspirována panteismem, který Thomas ve svých básních občas využívá. Ztotožňuje se s přírodními cykly a věří, že tak by to mělo být i lidské populace. Ve většině svých básní Thomas touží splynout

s přírodou, protože věří, že je přirozené být její součástí a že tekutina, která obíhá v jeho žilách, je ta samá tekutina, která obíhá ve větvích a kmenech stromů.

Druhá podkapitola se zabývá vztahem obou autorů ke zvířatům. V této části je jen lehce připomenuta důležitost antropomorfismu a situace, která vede k tomu, že zvířata jsou vytlačována z jejich přirozeného území.

V úvodu je také popsán rozdíl mezi současníky obou autorů, kteří byli spíše ovlivněni důsledky války, a proto tématem jejich děl je spíše rozladění z tehdejší situace a deprese z neisté budoucnosti. Nicméně, v poezii Teda Hughese ani Dylana Thomase se tato témata skoro neobjevují. Raději zasvětili svoje dílo vztahu mezi zvířetem a člověkem.

Ve své básni *The Jaguar*, Ted Hughes popisuje krásu divokého zvířete uvězněného v kleci s ostatními zvířaty, se kterými je uvězněný v zoo. V této básni většina zvířat jen tak polehává a už si zvykla na svůj život v umělém prostředí. Opice i papouškové, které Hughes popisuje, si našli jinou zábavu a nudně se povalují ve svých klecích. Jaguár je však zvíře, které se nedalo zkrotit ani životem v kleci. Jeho divoký temperament čiší z každého slova, kterým Hughes jaguára důkladně popisuje. Jeho divokost je tak úchvatná, že přitahuje veškeré návštěvníky zoo. Jaguár se neklidně prochází klecí tam a zpátky a v jeho očích může čtenář vidět jeho divokost. Hughes prakticky vyzívá čtenáře, aby si představili, co by se mohlo stát, kdyby jaguár získal svobodu a jak bezmocní by byli lidé, kteří jsou jím tak okouzleni. Hughes také poukazuje na to, že i přesto, že jaguár je v kleci a pod nadvládou lidí, nikdy nebude zkrocen a jeho divokost přetrvá.

Na rozbor této básně navazuje báseň Thomase *Prologue*. Tato báseň je silně ovlivněna tím, že Thomas vyrůstal ve Walesu v náboženském prostředí. Toto dílo je inspirováno biblickým příběhem Noa a jeho archy. Thomas popisuje, jak Noe zve zvířata na svou archu. Zde můžeme vidět popis různých druhů zvířat, kteří se dobrovolně vydávají k Noovi, aby tak mohli dokončit splynutí člověka a přírody. Noe je zachráněn před velkou povodní a tím dosáhne splynutí nejen s přírodou, všemi zvířaty, ale také bohem. V této básni jsou zvířata popsána jako inteligentní bytosti, které vědomě opouštějí své domovy a stahují se na archu. Thomas však neoslavuje Noa, jako toho, který chce zachránit zvířata před jejich utonutím. Thomas naopak opěvuje inteligenci zvířat, která dobrovolně přicházejí.

Poslední část této kapitoly zkoumá, zda Thomas a Hughes měli nějaké společné téma, které by bylo možné najít v jejich dílech. Tímto tématem se nakonec ukázal být motiv ptáků. *Over Sir John's hill* od Thomase a *Crow's first lesson* od Hughese. Thomas popisuje jestřába sedícího v korunách stromů, kde může pozorovat své kořisti a v tom tkví jeho proradnost a

nebezpečnost. Zatímco ostatní ptáci netuší, že jsou pod bedlivým dohledem, jestřáb si vybírá svoji oběť. Thomas v této básni vystupuje pouze jako pozorovatel, který v přítomnosti volavky obdivuje přírodní procesy. Jeho báseň ukazuje, že život a smrt jsou neoddělitelnou součástí přírodních cyklů, a my, lidé, bychom jim neměli bránit v jejich přirozeném chování. Lidstvo by mělo oslavovat smrt stejně tak, jako oslavuje život. Vypravěč s obdivem pozoruje jestřába a jeho přirozené instinkty, které si uchoval i přes značný zásah člověka do přírody. Zároveň také cítí soucit se smrtí nevinných ptáků, kteří netušili, jak rychle se jejich smrt blíží. Ale na konci básně opět zdůrazňuje, jak důležité je ctít jak život, tak i smrt. Hughes popisuje vránu, která byla stvořena bohem a představuje lidské vlastnosti a chování. Tato báseň je součástí básnické sbírky *Crow*, ve které se Hughes věnuje pouze tématu vrány a přisuzuje jí lidské vlastnosti. Vránu stvořil bůh, aby napravil lidské chování a lidem ukázal, že je možné uvědomit si vlastní chybu a díky tomu ji napravit. Báseň ukazuje vránu jako sobeckou bytost, která nebere ohledy na nikoho jiného, jen sama na sebe. Důkazem je i to, že sám bůh nezvládl vránu naučit lásce. Vrána se snaží ovládat nejen přírodu a zvířata kolem sebe, ale i

Závěrem celé práce je tedy zjištění, že se oba autoři ve své práci věnují podobným tématům. Oba se zájmem popisují přírodu a její součásti. Jak Thomas, tak Hughes nahlíží na svět ekokritickým pohledem. Hughes však viní lidi z devastování přírody. Dává jim za vinu utrpení zvířat, která jsou díky rozrůstajícím se městům připravována o jejich přirozené prostředí. Svůj možná až někdy krutý popis devastování neživé i živé přírody používá jako varování pro budoucí generace a doufá, že čtenář si z jeho děl vezme ponaučení.

Dylan Thomas přistupuje k přírodě jiným stylem. Věří, že příroda je součástí každého člověka. Jeho víra, že člověk, zvíře a vesmír by měl žít v harmonii je častým tématem jeho básní. Věří, že jsme nedílnou součástí přírody a v jeho básních nacházíme naději, že pokud přežije příroda, přežijeme i my.

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