



Victoria University
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FINAL ASSIGNMENT

NAME: Zannatul Fatema

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**2. 'The poem Pike by Ted Hughes represents the danger lying in the beauty of nature'-
Do you agree? Elaborate your answer with proper reference from the text.**

Answer: I agree that "Pike" is a poem by Ted Hughes which depicts the violence and danger that is lying in the beauty of nature. In this poem the pike in concern is a three inches long fish. Pike from its very birth is a killer of its own kind. The pike is born with a spiteful grin in its mouth which signifies its murderous nature. Flies hover around them while the pike dances in the surface of the water. The Pike is fully aware of its impressive nature and self-importance. The pike is very large in the world it belongs to despite appearing to be small in our eyes. Pike blends in with the darkness beneath the surface of the water where fallen leaves sink. It hides itself from the unsuspecting eye and stalks its pray while staying very still.

Ted Hughes shares some experiences with Pike in this poem. When he was young, he with his companion did a study keeping three pikes in a single glass jar and provided it with weeds of large quantity for the pikes to feel comfortable. The pikes were of different sizes. The largest one was four and half inches long, the second one was four inches long and the smallest one was three inches long. Then suddenly one day one of the fishes were missing and there were only two pikes. One of the pikes had a sluggish belly and had a spiteful grin. Soon after there was only one pike left in the glass jar. The strongest pike satisfied its hunger by eating the other two. Ted Hughes' partner found that pike plunging its teeth into another's throat on one occasion mercilessly killing the other and slowly devoured it. This poem depicts the fierce nature of pike which even kills its own species to satisfy its hunger.

The last four stanzas of this poem introduce an effect of horror. The pond in which Ted Hughes went for fishing is said to be as deep as England. He did not have the courage to continue fishing after the time of evening. Pikes are destructive in nature. Even when their body is motionless their jaws never stop moving. Two of the most distinct characteristics of them are too much eating and excessive reproducing. Pike is somehow conscious of its superiority and malevolent nature as this is the law of nature to think of oneself superior to the other. The comparison of the depth of the pond with England where the speaker goes fishing could be indicating that England is filled with pike like cruel people who thinks themselves above the rest of the people and devour even their own kind to satisfy their endless hunger. For Ted Hughes the nature filled with danger as it is beautiful. That's the message conveyed by the poem Pike.

Ted Hughes in his poem Pike starts with describing pike and their natural habitat. Then he proceeds to describe its cannibalistic and predatory nature. He has good knowledge of this species and shows admiration for it while describing it. When he mentions the color of pike, he uses the word 'tigering' instead of just stripes of gold and green to hint at its predatory nature. The writer admires pike's killer instinct and its natural grin which hints at the wickedness of this particular species. He describes how it moves along the surface of water in harmony with the flies above the surface. And when it moves it is as though they are shocked

and awed by their own presence. The writer shows great admiration for pikes. The writer describes the bed of pond as an Emerald which is a valuable stone of green color, which seems to the writer like a shadow of horror which is related to the presence of this dangerous species. The natural habitat for the pike is formed by the water lily pads of the ponds. Pike absorbs the warmth from the leaves that are exposed to the sun. They latch onto the leaves while simultaneously stalk their prey. Pike has jaws like clamp which can lock its prey down and devour almost anything in their path. Despite pike being small they tower over those who are smaller. The pike has outlasted any other rival species in their habitat with their strength and brutality. Without knowing the nature of the pikes, they might appear as harmless as any other species in the ecological system.

Ted Hughes proceeds to share his experience with this species. There was time when he kept three pikes in glass tank. He created the tank then filled it with natural weed to make it comfortable for the pikes. The pikes he kept in the tank were of different sizes. The smallest one was three inches, the biggest was four and half inches and the last one was four inches long. He used to feed them smaller fish. The writer starts with the example of small fishes to signify that the killing nature of this species is by born. These fishes are very young and they were fed small fishes regularly. Still, their killing nature got the best of them where they didn't even spare their own species. Then he mentions how three pikes became two and then became only one. This puts contrast on the cannibalistic nature of the pike. The one that remained had a wicked grin on its face and a bulging belly which complimented the predatory nature of the species. Pike spare no species in their habitat. To them all living creatures in their habitat are their prey. Although this event took place when he was only a boy, this event stuck with Hughes into his adulthood.

One day while fishing in the pond he notices two pikes and they were over two feet long and weighed over 6 pounds each. When he went to look closely, he witnessed one pike was devouring the other. Both the fish had a blank stare and after some time one of the pike's eyes started to shut in death. He then proceeds to share an experience which has huge impact on him. He tells about a time when he used to go fish at a pond for extended periods of time. That pond was home for pikes. He mentions that those who created this pond the monks of the monastery have gone extinct yet the pikes in the pond lives on. The pond itself is legendary just like the pikes living in it. The depth of the pond is immeasurable like the agelessness of the England. And the presence of the pike at night instilled a fear in him while he was fishing. Still, he fished silently in the darkness while his hair froze in the cold night. He felt like he was being watched silently by the predatory pikes lurking beneath the surface of the water. This feeling filled him with a sense of dread. Every single disturbance in the water reminded him of the predatory pikes in the water. To the writer it felt like a giant walking like threatening destruction and death. The violence caused by the pike turns into the horror of destruction in nature.

The poem 'Pike' is categorized as an animal poem depicting violence. The major theme of the poem 'Pike' is brutality and the beauty of nature. Tom Hughes admires pike for its beauty and at the same time its brutal nature of killing for survival. It signifies that the dangers that can lurk around behind the beauty of the nature. The image the poet creates of the destructive

nature of pike helps convey the theme of violence and horror behind the beauty of nature. Here, his reminiscence of childhood about pike is also mentioned when he put three pikes in a glass tank. And with their inborn instincts of survival one of the pike killed and devoured the other two pikes. And the metaphorical use of England also implies that like the pikes in the pond many violent and dangerous people walk the streets without anyone's knowledge. Some people of England with the killer instinct tend to survive and grow bigger at the expenses of other human beings.