

A COMPARATIVE STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF POETIC VOICE, NATURE, AND NATIONHOOD IN THE POETRY OF DAUD KAMAL AND TED HUGHES

Adil Naeem ,

M.phil English Literature Scholar , Department of English Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak.

adilnaeem085@gmail.com

Chahat Shahzeb

Mphil Graguate, Lecturer department of English UST-Bannu

Email: Chahatshahzaib@gmail.com

Danish Ayub

M.phil English literature,

Department of English Gomal University

danishayub9900@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study presents a comparative stylistic analysis of three poems by Daud Kamal ("The Rebel," "Kingfisher," and "An Ode to Death") alongside three by Ted Hughes ("Hawk Roosting," "Pike," and "Thistles") to investigate how diction, imagery, syntax, and sound devices construct distinctive poetic voices and reflect divergent cultural and historical contexts. Drawing on Leech and Short's four-level model of stylistics lexical, grammatical, graphological, and phonological and Simpson's concept of foregrounding, the research examines how Kamal's sparse, meditative language evokes postcolonial exile, spiritual inquiry, and collective mourning, while Hughes's blunt, forceful diction and rhythm assert elemental power, survival, and mythic English identity. The analysis reveals that Kamal's nature imagery internalises loss and contemplation, whereas Hughes's natural symbols externalise conflict and dominance. Syntactic fragmentation in Kamal signifies cultural rupture; in Hughes, it mirrors cyclical violence. Soft phonology deepens Kamal's elegy, while harsh sounds amplify Hughes's brutality. These findings conclude that stylistic form is inseparable from socio-historical experience, showing how both poets' language archives cultural trauma, national myth, and human engagement with nature. This research bridges a critical gap in cross-cultural stylistics, highlighting Kamal's innovation within Pakistani English poetry and situating Hughes within a broader global discourse.

Keywords: comparative stylistics, Leech and Short framework, Daud Kamal, Ted Hughes, poetic voice and nature.

1. INTRODUCTION

Poetic style is a field of study that provides deep insight into form, language, and thematic expression. In modern poetry, the distinctive voice of a poet often functions as a vehicle by which complex ideas, such as identity, nature, and nationhood, are presented aesthetically. The research is a comparative stylistic analysis of the poetry of Daud Kamal, a prominent Pakistani English poet, and Ted Hughes, arguably the most popular and extensively read British poet of the twentieth century. Both poets, as they emerge from distinct socio-cultural and historical contexts, are acutely concerned with nature, death, and trying to find meaning within national and existential contexts.

A musing tone, introspective philosophy, and unobtrusive natural imagery characterise Daud Kamal's poetry. His poems are generally expressive of loss and religious yearning, characteristic of the postcolonial awareness of Pakistan (Mansoor, 2012). Ted Hughes's poetic voice is forceful and instinctual, depicting nature in its bare, often brutal form. Hughes uses nature as a metaphor for primal truth and psychological depth, evoking the trauma and transformation of post-war British identity (Salama, 2015). Kamal's nature is introspective and muted, while Hughes's nature is brutal and representative of primal forces.

The development of Pakistani English poetry has established a distinctive voice in postcolonial literary terms, articulating a deep understanding of national identity and dialogue

with global literary movements. One of the most significant of these authors is Daud Kamal, whose poetry displays a modernist sensitivity to precise imagery, fragmented syntax, and philosophical depth. Kamal's poetry often recurs to Sufi mystic themes, classical conventions, and rural landscapes, demonstrating hybrid cultural awareness shaped by postcolonial conditions (Mansoor, 2012). Scholarly analyses of such poems as *Stone Bridge* and *Plough & Oxen* highlight Kamal's use of phonological, graphological, and lexico-syntactic resources to create mood and thematic intent, basing his stylistic procedures on broader paradigms of postcolonial aesthetic and identity construction (Arooj & Abbas, 2025).

In contrast, Ted Hughes, the British poetry classic, is renowned for his brutal and raw descriptions of nature. Nature in Hughes's poetry is inhabited by predator-prey matrices and archetypal forces, which are metaphors for psychological struggle, national trauma, and human nature. His poetry, influenced by post-war disillusionment, reinvents nature as a metaphor for both chaos and spiritual truth, expressed in elaborate metaphorical language and raw physical imagery, conveying existential and national tension.

This study undertakes comparative stylistic analysis of certain poems by Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes, an exploration of how each of these poets develops a distinctive poetic voice in order to articulate ideas of nature and nationhood. Through detailed close reading of diction, imagery, syntax, tone, and metaphor, the study attempts to map stylistic convergences and divergences in their creation of the natural world and national consciousness. Kamal's poetry, with its broken but musical free verse and reflective tone, records the spiritual and cultural subtleties of Pakistani identity. Hughes's, on the other hand, is marked by iconoclastic linguistic choices and mythic imagery, reacting to his interrogating of modern British identity from the perspective of natural violence and internal turmoil.

By bringing together modern critical analyses of Kamal's stylistic innovation and juxtaposing them with Hughes's poetic skill, this research contributes to the richness of an understanding of how two geographically and culturally disparate poets meet in their artistic expression of universal human concerns. This comparative critique not only illuminates the literary works of Daud Kamal within the framework of Pakistani English literature but also generates more cross-cultural discourse between postcolonial and British literatures.

1.1. Significance of the Research

It is valuable for academics because it compares the poetic techniques of Pakistani and British poets with an aim of deeper cross-cultural understanding, providing the potential for more multi-layered comparative stylistic studies, such as this. This study adds weight to the now burgeoning field of comparative stylistic and postcolonial literary study, by examining the aspects of Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes that reveal how two poets who, it turns out, are coming from very different national, cultural and historical backgrounds, are aligned in their considerations of nature, nation, and identity through different, but similar, stylistic innovations. This work also considers the wider international implications and while deepening aspects of Kamal's previously unconsidered value to Pakistani English poetry, Hughes's poetics are contemporaneously centred in an imagined space. More importantly, this study suggests further research into just how poetic voice and linguistic creativity function as measures of cultural consciousness in a global space. As such, this is an important study for all politeness, stylistic or postcolonial scholars.

1.2. Research Objectives

1. To analyse and compare the stylistic features, such as diction, imagery, syntax, and tone used by Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes in their poetic representations of nature and nationhood.
2. To explore how the poetic voices of both poets reflect their respective cultural, historical, and national contexts through stylistic choices.

1.3. Research Questions

1. How do Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes use stylistic features such as diction, imagery, syntax, and tone to construct their poetic voices?
2. How do the representations of nature and nationhood reflect the distinct cultural and historical contexts of Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The investigation of poetic style, most notably through the perspectives of stylistics, offers a rich approach to analysing how poets build meaning, identity, and voice. In this chapter, we discuss earlier work on the poetic and stylistic styles of two prominent poets: Ted Hughes, a British poet whose visceral depictions of nature and national mythology have been a hallmark of his style, and Daud Kamal, a Pakistani poet who represents themes of alienation, history, and roots through his minimalist and yet richly evocative style. Although the two poets vary in their cultural contexts of culture, they both possess a poetic sensitivity to nature and existential thinking and are hence well-suited for comparative stylistic analysis.

2.1. Stylistic Studies on Daud Kamal

The poetry of Daud Kamal, characterised by contemplative calm, dense imagery, and religious connotations, has been critically engaged with mainly from Pakistani literary discourse. Critics have identified Kamal's stylistic simplicity as a reflection of the imagist influence that it bears, but with specific postcolonial undertones. Ayaz and Malik (2019) assert that Kamal's poetic voice is "deceptively simple" and tends to create a multilayered sense of place and dislocation. They contend that his stylistic simplicity allows a reflective voice that is both personal and national.

In a thematic analysis of Kamal's nature poems, Khan and Shabbir (2021) note how Kamal builds "inner landscapes" using images from outside—autumn leaves, dusk, or silence, for instance, metaphors for spiritual yearning and historical consciousness. Stylistically, he tends to use brief, condensed lines and eschews elaborate language, letting tone and imagery unfold slowly with subtle effects.

Ahmed (2022) used a stylistic method in Kamal's *The Solitary Owl* to consider how sound, enjambment, and visual spacing achieve poetic tension and support the speaker's alienation from contemporary society and nostalgic history. Kamal's poetry as such appears as a distinct combination of lyrical minimalism and national consciousness, but in terms of stylistic features, it has seldom been used in comparison to other poets, particularly from non-South Asian backgrounds.

2.2. Stylistic Analysis of Ted Hughes

Ted Hughes has been extensively analysed for his style and themes. Described as an elemental portrayal of nature and mythic connotation, Hughes' poems frequently break conventional meter and syntax to achieve a powerful poetic voice. His style fused graphological innovation, phonological emphasis, and lexical defiance to represent the raw, occasionally brutal, power of nature.

Mukhtar (2017) performed a multi-level stylistic analysis of Hughes's "The Casualty," determining how dislocated syntax and punctuation reflect the emotional disintegration of war and bereavement. The research underlined Hughes's exploitation of visual spacing, hyphens, and ellipses to bring to the foreground psychological trauma and national mourning. Ali, Shah, and Masood (2020) investigated stylistic aspects in Hughes's "The Wind," highlighting the cohesion and foregrounding of energetic verbs such as "bang" and "stamp." The research suggests that Hughes's words capture the ferocity of nature and convey an underlying existential violence. His figurative language tends to merge the division between

the human and the non-human, employing sound patterns and metaphors to imply a primaeval, near-mythic ecology.

Aftab et al. (2022) also explored graphological and lexical features in poems such as "Hawk Roosting" and "Pike," contending that Hughes presents the image of nature as a callous, on occasion malevolent force. According to them, the stylistic application of monosyllables enhances the tension between man and nature, as does enjambment and sonic harshness. This technique, they contend, allows for the development of a British poetic voice in which land, instinct, and national myth are embedded.

Whereas Hughes is often studied for his representation of animals and myth, his contribution to defining national identity in terms of stylistic choice—specifically with nature—is not adequately contrasted with non-Western poets writing on similar topics.

2.3. Comparative Approaches and Unexplored Dimensions

Although both poets have been individually studied for their stylistic brilliance, there is a noticeable lack of comparative stylistic work examining Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes together, especially in terms of how they use linguistic devices to construct poetic voice, depict nature, and engage with notions of national identity. All existing scholarship on Hughes is concerned with aggression, power, and myth in the English environment, and Kamal tends to be read within memory, solitude, and displacement in South Asian poetics. Yet they both contain stylistic minimalism that requires fuller cross-cultural interrogation.

Additionally, whereas stylistic analyses of Hughes identify graphological and syntactic fragmentation, they tend to avoid discussions on the philosophical resonance of his voice, something hinted at but not established by Kamal scholars as well. Likewise, whereas Kamal's poetic nationalism is suggested by themes of exile and cultural history, few stylistic studies have demonstrated how his language techniques build such meanings in the first place.

2.4. Research Gap

The above-reviewed literature indicates a critical lacuna: no thorough stylistic contrast between Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes exists to analyse how the two poets employ language to build voice, describe nature, and negotiate national identity. Although each of these poets has been analysed stylistically in isolation, a cross-cultural, comparative approach is missing. This research bridges that gap by using stylistic methods such as foregrounding, graphology, lexico-syntax, and thematic codification to compare poems by Kamal and Hughes alongside each other. The purpose here is to identify not just similarities and differences of style but also how poetic language can be used as a medium for national and cultural expression across traditions.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methodology employed in carrying out a comparative stylistic analysis of Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes' poetry. It consists of the research design, data collection procedures, analytical framework, and reasons for the texts and stylistic devices chosen. The purpose is to investigate how both poets employ language in building poetic voice, describing nature, and tackling national and cultural identity.

3.1. Research Design

The research in this work uses a qualitative comparative design with a stylistic focus. Stylistics is the middle ground between linguistics and literary criticism in that linguistic methods are used in literary texts to determine underlying meaning. The design is descriptive and interpretive, which allows for close textual examination that points out similarities and differences in the poets' thematic and linguistic options.

The research is based on a comparative stylistic model, with emphasis on:

1. Lexical option and diction

2. Syntactic patterns
3. Phonological and sound devices
4. Figurative and rhetorical device

3.2. Collection of Data

The three poems from each of Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes are the major data.

The purposive selection is made according to their thematic and stylistic significance.

Ted Hughes' poems:

1. *Hawk Roosting*
2. *Pike*
3. *Thistles*

Daud Kamal's poems:

1. *The Rebel*
2. *Ode to the death*
3. *Kingfisher*

These are poems from original, published volumes, including Selected Poems of Ted Hughes and The Best of Daud Kamal. Only English-language poems are considered in the study.

3.3. Analytical Framework

The study's analytical framework is based on the stylistic model developed by Leech and Short (1981) in their ground-breaking book *Style in Fiction*, which divides stylistic features into four levels of language: lexical, grammatical, graphological, and phonological. At the lexical level, the examination considers word selection, such as connotative meaning, repetition, use of archaic language, and lexical density to reveal the tone, attitude, and thematic concerns of the poet. The grammatical level covers sentence forms, verb use, tenses, and syntactic patterns to determine the rhythm and narrative flow of the poems. The graphological level examines the visual arrangement of the text, i.e., punctuation, capitalisation, lineation, stanza divisions, and spatial distribution, commonly used as a stylistic tool to produce emphasis or fragmentation. The phonological level examines sound devices such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, internal rhyme, and meter that contribute to the musicality and emotional charge of the poetry.

Besides Leech and Short's model, the system is also upheld by Simpson's (2004) theory of foregrounding, which recognises how poetic language departs from normal norms to attract attention. Foregrounding can be achieved through deviation (novelty of language or innovative use) or parallelism (repetition of form or sounds). Through the employment of these stylistic devices, the research will try to stress how Ted Hughes and Daud Kamal utilise conscious linguistic means to empower such salient themes as identity, nature, loneliness, and cultural identity. This blended approach allows for a subtle and unbiased comparison of the poets' stylistic imprints and thematic echoes.

3.4. Method of Analysis

The selected poems are analysed through a multi-step process. First, close reading is employed to identify key themes and tones in each poem. Then, stylistic labelling is applied at the four linguistic levels: lexical, grammatical, graphological, and phonological to categorise significant language features. A comparative analysis follows, highlighting stylistic similarities or differences between Ted Hughes and Daud Kamal. Finally, thematic coding is used to connect these stylistic elements to the poets' treatment of voice, identity, and nature. Tables, charts, and poetic excerpts are used in the findings chapter to support and visualise the comparative insights.

3.5. Delimitation

Three poems only from each poet are examined to maintain a concentrated, in-depth analysis. The research is limited to English-language works. Analysis is limited to stylistic aspects, rejecting psychoanalytic, feminist, and postcolonial theoretical categories.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter provides a close stylistic analysis of the chosen poems of Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes. The stylistic analysis is informed by Leech and Short's (1981) multi-level stylistic model, with attention to lexical, grammatical, phonological, and figurative features. The poems are individually scrutinised to understand how diction, syntax, imagery, and sound feature in the poetic voice, nature, and nationhood. The results are further analysed in a comparative context to present an overview of the similarities and differences between the stylistic approaches of both poets.

4.1.Diction (Word Choice) in Ted Hughes's Selected Poems

In "*Pike*," Hughes uses diction that combines elegance with menace. Phrases like "green tigering the gold," "submarine delicacy and horror," and "grin it was born with" suggest a duality of beauty and terror. Words such as "grin," "fangs," "vice," "clamp," "gullet," and "death" are carefully selected to illustrate the violent biology and primordial instinct of the fish. The poet's use of verbs like "kneading," "hung," "jammed," and "froze" reinforces the tense stillness of the underwater world, portraying pike as timeless and predatory. The diction evokes fear and awe, aligning with Hughes's consistent theme of nature as ancient, mythic, and brutal (Hughes, 1960/2003a).

In "*Thistles*," the diction is harsh, sharp, and militaristic, evoking the violence and resilience of nature. Words like "spike," "splintered weapons," "plume of blood," "Viking," "feud," and "fighting" highlight Hughes's portrayal of plants as warriors in an eternal ancestral conflict. The choice of "resurrection," "vengeful," "burst," and "frost" infuses the poem with historical and mythical associations, reinforcing nature's cyclical violence. Hughes's diction blurs boundaries between natural and human histories, transforming the thistles into symbols of generational defiance and resistance (Hughes, 1960/2003b).

The diction in "*Hawk Roosting*" is precise, declarative, and egoistic. Hughes chooses direct, physical, and brutal language—"hooked head," "tearing off heads," "kill where I please," and "bones of the living"—to present the hawk as a symbol of natural authority and domination. The repetition of the pronoun "I" emphasises the hawk's self-contained power. The words "Creation," "no arguments," "allotment of death," and "nothing has changed" suggest timeless instinct and a rejection of moral or philosophical justification. This diction reinforces the hawk as both a biological predator and a metaphor for unchecked authoritarian power (Hughes, 1960/2003c).

4.2.Diction (Word Choice) in Daud Kamal's Selected Poems

Kamal's diction in "*The Rebel*" is deliberately spare and concrete, with words like "shot," "dawn," "crows," and "empty horizon" evoking the stark aftermath of a political execution (Kamal, n.d.; *The Rebel*). The repetition of simple nouns reflects the brutal finality of death. Spiritual language "kneels in prayer," "ignorance of prayer" introduces a layer of ironic solemnity, highlighting the disconnect between ritual and reality. The closing phrase, "the blind earth must be fed," uses natural imagery in a human context, linking violence to both cosmic indifference and collective history (Kamal, n.d.; *The Rebel*).

In "*Kingfisher*," Kamal's word choice is lyrical and symbolic, blending sensory imagery with emotional resonance. The metaphor "April is the kingfisher's beak which pierces the river's glad torment" fuses natural wonder with themes of pain and beauty (Kamal, n.d.; *Kingfisher*). Harsh words "pierce," "carnage," "wounds" contrast with softer imagery like "clouds detach themselves" and "tongues of water cradle our dreams," creating a tension between violence

and vulnerability. Emotive diction leads to an evocative conclusion: “The stars burn fiercely. They tell us what we are,” linking the cosmic to the personal (Kamal, n.d.; Kingfisher). In “*An Ode to Death*”, Kamal’s diction is philosophical and sensory, merging existential reflection with vivid imagery. Phrases like “carbon dust,” “diamond dream,” and “burned-out match stick” contrast the mundane with the ethereal, illustrating life and death’s close proximity (Kamal, n.d.; *An Ode to Death*). The metaphor “archipelago of naked rocks / Only sleep and silence” evokes emotional barrenness, while “forest of symbols,” “stars plummet to their dark addresses” introduces a mystical and existential weight. The final questions—“Who was the deceiver and who the deceived? Was I on a floating island?”—Kamal’s use of simple but impactful diction to convey uncertainty and self-examination (Kamal, n.d.; *An Ode to Death*).

4.3. Syntactic pattern in Hughes' selected poems

In “*Hawk Roosting*,” Hughes uses brief, statement-like sentences that imitate the hawk’s assertive and authoritative voice. Phrases like “I sit in the top of the wood,” and “I kill where I please because it is all mine” are structurally plain and grammatically active, communicating the hawk’s authority and unyielding confidence (Hughes, 1960/2003a). The frequent use of the first-person pronoun “I” underscores the hawk’s egocentric perspective. Hughes’s use of the present tense places the hawk in a state of permanent power and constant control. The lack of subordinate clauses in much of the lines enhances a tone of inevitability and certainty, equating the syntax with the hawk’s instinctive outlook and natural dominance. In “*Pike*,” Hughes moves to longer, more complicated sentence forms that mirror the sombre and motionless environment of the underwater landscape. He often employs compound-complex sentences, appositives, and enjambment to create suspense and a feeling of impending danger (Hughes, 1960/2003b). For instance, the phrase “*Pike*, three inches long, perfect *Pike* in all parts, green tigering the gold. Killers from the egg: the malevolent aged grin” builds up several descriptive phrases to make the image of the *pike* more intense. Participial constructions like “Logged on last year’s black leaves, watching upwards” establish a slow, submerged rhythm that imitates the still but menacing presence of the predator. The tight syntactic arrangement helps to create the sense of concealed menace and the intricacy of the poem’s natural world.

In contrast, “*Thistles*” has compact and splintered syntax, imitating the spiky, eruptive character of the plant itself. The poem employs brief, fractured sentences and line breaks that provide it with a harsh, rhythmic rhythm. Phrases such as “Every one a revengeful burst / Of resurrection, a grasped fistful / Of splintered weapons” (Hughes, 1960/2003c) capture an explosive energy both in sound and form. Hughes frequently omits verbs or employs fronted noun phrases, adding to the feeling of sudden movement and assault. Enjambment helps to achieve this effect by pushing the reader along one line at a time, implying the thistles, like forebears of warriors, are perpetually recurring powers of nature. The syntax hence supports the repeated and combative motif in the poem, with flashes of grammatical force approximating the plant’s violent resurgence.

4.4. Syntactic pattern in Daud Kamal's selected poems

In “*The Rebel*,” Daud Kamal uses a strongly fractured and efficient syntactic structure that reflects the suddenness and cruelty of political violence. The short, staccato-like lines of the poem, like “They / stood him up / against an orchard wall and shot him / at dawn”, insist upon emotional detachment and finality of execution (Kamal, n.d.-a). Kamal frequently drops articles and conjunctions, stripping the syntax of any adornment, which serves to add to the austerity and sparseness of the poem. The heavy use of the past tense grounds the scene in a specific historical moment, contributing to the sense of irreversibility of loss. This minimal

syntactic structure heightens the haunting simplicity of the scene and is a reflection of Kamal's stylistic restraint.

"*Kingfisher*," on the other hand, shows a more lyrical and enjambed syntactic form. Kamal's lines stream over line breaks and are packed with phrase after phrase of symbol-charged words, and they achieve a fluid, meditative cadence. A line such as "April is the kingfisher's beak which pierces the river's glad torment" illustrates how syntax and metaphor combined function to slow down reading and invite reflection (Kamal, n.d.-b). The poem is written mostly in the present tense, creating an eternal mood that is appropriate to its themes of emotional openness and nature symbolism. Most lines are noun phrases or metaphoric fragments instead of full grammatical sentences, inviting interpretive reading. This is a stylistic device that recreates emotional complexity and philosophical richness and makes it possible for Kamal to combine introspection with the beauty of expression.

At the same time, "*An Ode to Death*" showcases Kamal's syntactic range with lengthy, introspective sentences interspersed by fragmentary reflections. The very first line, "Death is more than certain, says i.e. Cummings, but the clocks go on ticking as before—sets a dialogic and philosophical tone that pervades the poem (Kamal, n.d.-c). Kamal integrates independent and dependent clauses, breaks in with rhetorical questions, and employs punctuation such as colons and dashes to construct complexity. The syntactic oscillations between abstract imagery like "the archipelago of naked rocks" and personal admissions like "Was I on a floating island and were you on the shore?" reveal a modulation from symbolic contemplation to open emotional questioning.

This blend of declarative and interrogative forms mirrors the poet's mental rambling and emotional richness, creating a rhythm that approximates internal monologue and spiritual reflection.

4.5. Phonological pattern in Hauge's selected poems

In Ted Hughes's poetry, sound exerts a strong influence on the thematic and emotional impact of his verse. In "*Hawk Roosting*," Hughes employs forceful consonance, especially harsh plosive sounds like /k/, /t/, and /d/, to describe the hawk's violence and dominance. Words like "hooked head and hooked feet" and "I kill where I please" underscore the hawk's predatory mastery through repeated hard consonants (Hughes, 1960/2003a). The alliteration of words like "perfect kills" and "tearing off heads" serves to emphasise the hawk's mechanical, automatic ferocity. This is complemented by a consistent, powerful rhythm composed mainly of monosyllabic or disyllabic words that echo the bird's systematic, relentless way. There is not much musicality or gentleness in the soundscape of the poem, which emphasises the tone of calculated supremacy and chill, natural logic.

Another sound environment is created in "*Pike*," where Hughes builds a sense of tension and submerged danger. Hughes employs widespread sibilance—repeated /s/ sounds in such phrasings as "still splashes," "submarine delicacy and horror," and "glass. Jungled in weed"—to suggest the whispered motion of fish and the soft silence of deep water (Hughes, 1960/2003b). The sibilance works to create a soundscape of otherworldly quiet and imminent danger. Furthermore, Hughes uses assonance by means of long vowel sounds in such words as "deep," "dream," and "gleam," where they stretch the rhythm and prolong time, echoing the ageless and haunted environment of being underwater. The soft musicality of the last stanza, especially in repeating "what might move, for what eye might move," slows down the rhythm and makes the psychological uneasiness that characterises the closing picture of the poem more pronounced.

Conversely, the sound world of "*Thistles*" is explosive and serrated, which matches the poem's motifs of violence and renewal. Hughes employs alliteration with hard consonants "splintered weapons," "fistful of frost," and "feud...fighting...fathers" to simulate the

physical violence and explosive power of the thistle plant (Hughes, 1960/2003c). The rhythm of the poem is staccato and aggressive, achieved through brief, encamped lines and regular stress patterns that give the poem a militant tempo. Guttural sounds are also used in words such as "crackle," "grasped," "grey," and "gutturals of dialects," building an abrasive sound texture that brings to mind primitive violence and intergenerational conflict. The overall impression is one of staccato rhythm and sound-based intensity, whereby language itself emulates the action of breaking through earth and history.

4.6. Phonological pattern in Daud Kamal selected poems

In the poetry of Daud Kamal, sound is played subtly but effectively, used to create tone, mood, and spiritual nuance. In "The Rebel," the soundscape is subdued and austere, consonant with the poem's spare language and lamenting theme. Kamal eschews lyrical excess in favour of terse, clipped lines like "They stood him up against an orchard wall and shot him at dawn," using hard consonants like /t/ and /d/ to imitate the brusqueness and ferocity of execution (Kamal, n.d.-a). Musicality and rhythm are absent by design—it's a world stripped of emotion, where death comes quickly and with no fanfare. This sound austerity parallels the bareness of syntax and theme in the poem, enhancing its emotional quiet.

"*Kingfisher*" is contrasted with a more lyrical employment of sound, with skillfully selected phonemes to reflect natural beauty as well as emotional turmoil. The initial metaphor, "April is the kingfisher's beak which pierces the river's glad torment," combines soft sibilance (/s/, /sh/) and harsher plosives (/p/, /k/), thus representing both the calmness and pungency of nature's cruelty (Kamal, n.d.-b). The line "tongues of water cradle our startled dreams" employs smooth alliteration and liquid consonants (/w/, /r/, /l/) to produce a calm, wave-like rhythm contrasting with previous harsher ones. These phonological changes mirror the poem's implied emotional duality: the attractiveness of nature as both calming and hurting. Kamal's employment of vowel assonance, particularly in terms such as "stars burn fiercely," adds to the sonic depth of the poem and ties inner feeling to celestial innuendo.

Lastly, in "*An Ode to Death*," Kamal produces a reflective and philosophical atmosphere through the use of soft consonants and extended vowel sounds that pitch the pace of the poem and encourage contemplation. The phrase "Between the eye and the tear / There is the archipelago of naked rocks" employs open vowels (/a/, /o/, /e/) and soft fricatives to prolong the rhythm, imparting dreaminess to the stanza (Kamal, n.d.-c). This is opposed to harsher phrases such as "pine tree shattered by last year's thunderbolt," in which plosive and explosive sounds (/b/, /t/) break into the calm, symbolising the disruption of violence or trauma into memory. Kamal's sound devices are restrained throughout the poem, but they successfully enhance the internal rhythm of mourning and spiritual inquiry. The tonal movement of the poem—between the piercing and the muted—echoes the existential tension at its centre.

4.7. Figurative and rhetorical devices in Hughes' selected poems

In "*Hawk Roosting*," Ted Hughes builds an extended metaphor to examine the themes of power and natural tyranny. The hawk is brought to life as the very symbol of instinctual mastery and complete authority. Through the narration in the first person by the bird, Hughes builds a rhetorical monologue that not only symbolises the state of mind of the hawk but also a representation of amoral control. The phrase "I kill where I please because it is all mine" expresses the hawk's confident assertion of its mastery, recalling natural despotism (Hughes, 1960/2003a). Irony is quietly incorporated into this voice of assurance, in the form especially of the hawk's assertion that "My eye has permitted no change," suggesting divine omnipotence, yet voiced only for an instinctual animal. The poem's simplicity of language stands in stark contrast to the seriousness of its meaning, and so the hawk becomes a

symbolic representative of unobstructed, indifferent power, the allegory of nature's cruel order devoid of moral excuse.

In "*Pike*," Hughes uses sombre symbolism and gothic imagery to depict the pike as a gracious and terrifying figure in the landscape. Terminologies like "Killers from the egg: the malevolent aged grin" and "submarine delicacy and horror" fuse the pike with danger and beauty, projecting the pike as an eternal symbol of predation (Hughes, 1960/2003b). The figurative language in the poem highlights the role of the fish as an archetype of instinctive violence, passed through generations. The rhetorical positioning of the poem throughout becomes less of an outward observation and more of an inward discomfort. The motionless pond is turned into an underworld metaphor, and the gigantic, stationary pike is mythic or psychologically terrifying. This symbolic plunge uncovers the fear of the speaker for what lies beneath the surface as well as in the subconscious. Hughes's figurative build-up, laden with gothic atmosphere and foreshadowing symbolism, identifies the pike with deeper tensions of existence.

In "*Thistles*," Hughes transmutes what appears to be a dull plant into a power of ancestral and historical revenge through allegory and militaristic imagery. The thistles are conceived as risen warriors, with terms such as "splintered weapons," "revengeful burst," and "sons appear / stiff with weapons" evoking pictures of endless violence and inherited conflict (Hughes, 1960/2003c). Personification heightens this theme, ascribing the plants' volition and anger, and hyperbolic language amplifies their natural recovery to mythic dimensions. In this figurative perspective, Hughes portrays nature neither passive nor maternal but as actively warlike and tied to the perpetuation of tribal affiliation. Rhetorical forcefulness of the poem underscores conflict as etched into both terrain and heritage. The thistles, therefore, are metaphors for shared memory, traumatic history, and the certainty of resistance "over the same ground."

4.8. Figurative and rhetorical devices: Daud Kamal selected poems

In "*The Rebel*," Daud Kamal employs sparse but forceful figurative language to represent the nameless sacrifices of political resistance. The act of execution—quoted in the bare line "They / stood him up / against an orchard wall / and shot him / at dawn"—is not metaphorical but becomes symbolic through its emptiness and arrangement (Kamal, n.d.-a). The wall of the orchard is a silent metaphor for civilisation and death, fertile and violent at the same time. The "pandemonium of crows" indicates an explosion of chaos or grief, and the "empty horizon" implies absence and emptiness that memory will strain to fill. Kamal uses metonymy in "the blind earth must be fed," converting the landscape into a sinister symbol of history that devours bodies to live. While restrained in overt rhetorical display, the structure of the poem becomes rhetorical itself and sets out an unstated case for the price of resistance and the continued silence surrounding nameless martyrs.

In "*Kingfisher*," Kamal's metaphorical language is more symbolic and layered, employing nature as a reflection of emotional violence and beauty. The simile "April is the kingfisher's beak which pierces the river's glad torment" combines the physical and the abstract to form a paradoxical image of glad pain (Kamal, n.d.-b). The kingfisher in this case is not merely a bird but a poetic substitute for abrupt love, change, or invasion of emotions. Kamal employs personification and symbolic images of nature throughout the poem to represent changing emotional states—clouds that "detach themselves" from trees and "tongues of water" that "cradle our startled dreams" are evocative of vulnerability and motion. The last line—"The stars burn fiercely. They tell us what we are"—serves both as a metaphor and cosmic reference, pointing toward an existential consideration of identity. Kamal's rhetorical approach in this poem depends on imagery that disturbs the reader, compelling them to balance tenderness with disturbance.

In "*An Ode to Death*," Kamal indulges in philosophical and rhetorical reflection, employing figurative tools to grapple with mortality. The poem combines intertextual allusion—as in the initial lines, which quote Cummings and Conrad Aiken—with an introspective inner monologue about questioning the nature of permanence in life and the significance of memory (Kamal, n.d.). Symbolic items such as the "pine tree that last year's thunderbolt has blown from the soil" and the "burnt-out match stick" symbolise the decay of life and vitality, and the "archipelago of naked rocks" that lies between the eye and the tear is a symbolic terrain of loss and spiritual remove. Kamal's employment of rhetorical questions like "Was I on a floating island / and were you on the shore?" introduces an emotionality of ambiguity, in which the speaker laments and reflects on the division of life and death.

The figurative language of the poem, underpinned by philosophical questioning and spiritual symbolism, raises its elegiac tone to one of global consideration of the inevitability of loss.

4.9. Cultural and Historical Contexts Reflected in the Representation of Nature and Nationhood

Table 4.1

Representation of Cultural Identity in the Poetry of Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes

Aspect	Daud Kamal	Ted Hughes
Cultural Context	Postcolonial Pakistani setting, influenced by Islamic mysticism, history, and a sense of national loss.	Post-war British context, rooted in rural English heritage, myth, and pagan naturalism.
Identity Focus	Emphasis on displacement, spiritual searching, and silenced resistance.	Emphasis on primal instinct, masculinity, and national continuity.
Tone Toward Culture	Reflective, mournful, often nostalgic.	Confrontational, mythic, and often brutal.
Symbolism	Uses natural imagery (e.g., kingfisher, rivers, pine tree) as metaphors for cultural fragility and internal exile.	Uses animals (e.g., hawk, pike, thistle) as symbols of inherited violence, strength, and survival.
Stylistic Features	Subtle diction, elliptical syntax, and philosophical tone.	Blunt diction, strong rhythm, aggressive tone.
Cultural Markers	References to prayer, memory, mystical symbolism, and death as sacrifice.	References to Anglo-Saxon ancestry, English soil, and elemental violence.
Voice	Quiet, introspective, elegiac.	Assertive, elemental, authoritative.
Rhetorical Purpose	To explore the individual's fractured place in a disrupted national narrative.	To restore a mythic sense of Englishness through confrontation with nature.

Note. This table compares how the theme of cultural identity is presented in selected poems by Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes, focusing on tone, style, symbolism, and historical context. Both Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes use themes driven by nature in their poems, along with different voices that explore cultural identity, but these voices represent their respective socio-historical contexts. Kamal's poetry reflects Pakistan's postcolonial condition, while conveying a quiet, self-reflective voice focused on the themes of spiritual exile, cultural dislocation, and muted resistance. Kamal often works with subtle diction and uses elliptical syntax with natural images to accentuate themes of loss, memory, fragility of identity, and, in works such as "*The Kingfisher*", Kamal combines themes of identity and nature. Hughes's poetry references an elemental identity based on instinct and abstract continuity that has roots

in an older, deeper past focused on England's rural, pagan, and mythic past. Hughes establishes this identity through bold rhythms and fresh examples of symbolic animals such as the hawk or pike that enshrine a national character rooted in stamina, survival instincts and confrontation. In essence, Kamal welcomes and laments the erasures of identity while Hughes resurrects and establishes an identity through the metaphor of nature, both in the natural form and the nature of cultures.

Table 4.2

Comparative Representation of Nature in the Poetry of Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes

Aspect	Daud Kamal	Ted Hughes
Philosophical Lens	Nature is a space for reflection, mourning, and spiritual insight.	Nature as a force of instinct, violence, and ancestral memory.
Tone	Contemplative, melancholic, mystical.	Brutal, elemental, authoritative.
Symbolic Function	Nature represents loss, longing, exile, and transcendence.	Nature symbolises power, survival, masculinity, and violence.
Imagery Style	Subtle, lyrical imagery: rivers, birds (kingfisher), stars, trees.	Vivid, often harsh imagery: animals (hawk, pike), thistles, bones.
Human-Nature Link	The self is absorbed into or reflected by nature; often a metaphor for inner struggle.	Nature acts as a mirror and amplifier of human instinct, especially aggression and control.
Cultural Influence	Postcolonial and Sufi undertones; nature as a spiritual witness to identity and silence.	English myth, pagan legacy, Darwinian survival; nature as mythic battleground.
Purpose in Poems	To express emotional fragmentation, death, and spiritual yearning.	To assert national essence, ancestral continuity, and natural dominance.

Note. This table compares how nature is thematically constructed in the selected poems of Daud Kamal (*Kingfisher, An Ode to Death*) and Ted Hughes (*Hawk Roosting, Pike, Thistles*), reflecting their differing philosophical and cultural frameworks.

Both Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes place nature at the centre of their poetic vision, yet they represent it through distinct thematic lenses shaped by their cultural and historical backgrounds. For Ted Hughes, nature is a raw, violent, and autonomous force, often depicted through symbolic animals like the hawk, the pike, and the thistle. His representation emphasises nature's brutality, predatory behaviour, and nature as a mirror to base human psychology and national identity. In poems like "Hawk Roosting" and "Pike," nature is not tranquil or passive, but aggressive, dominating, and morally neutral. Alternatively, Daud Kamal's nature is reflective, sad, and spiritual, as evident in poems like "*Kingfisher*" and "*An Ode to Death*," where natural imagery, such as rivers, stars, birds, and trees, symbolises emotional states, memory, and contemplation on existence. Kamal's poetic voice is not dominant over nature but instead finds identity, meaning, or peace in it. Let us consider that Hughes views nature as an agent of power and ancestral connection beyond Kamal, who mines nature as a subtly defined landscape of individual struggle, cultural loss, and spiritual inquiry.

Table 4.3

Comparative Representation of Loneliness in the Poetry of Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes

Aspect	Daud Kamal	Ted Hughes
Nature of Loneliness	Deeply existential , rooted in personal loss, disconnection, and postcolonial silence .	Instinctive and cosmic , often framed as the isolation of power or natural dominance .
Emotional	Quiet sorrow, spiritual detachment,	Cold certainty, emotional

Tone	inwardness.	detachment, autonomy.
Poetic Voice	A solitary observer meditating on death, memory, and exile.	A commanding speaker embracing solitude as strength and purpose.
Symbolic Devices	Birds, fading stars, rain, and landscapes suggest inner solitude and alienation.	Predatory animals (hawk, pike) symbolise the self-contained and often ruthless individual.
Rhetorical Strategy	Uses rhetorical questions , reflective statements, and meditative tone to express emotional distance.	Uses declarative monologue and controlling imagery to reinforce solitary dominance .
Cultural Roots	Loneliness reflects postcolonial fragmentation and spiritual exile .	Solitude is tied to primordial instinct and mythic individualism .
Purpose in Theme	To explore displacement, emotional vulnerability, and the cost of introspection .	To celebrate autonomy, instinctual strength , and the clarity of being alone .

Note. This table illustrates how loneliness is thematically represented in Daud Kamal's reflective meditations (*The Rebel, An Ode to Death*) and Ted Hughes's confrontational voices (*Hawk Roosting, Pike*), showing their contrasting emotional and cultural positions.

While loneliness is a dominant feature of both Daud Kamal's and Ted Hughes's poetry, the two poets convey an emotion indicative of a disposition of loneliness from different emotional and cultural perspectives. Kamal depicts loneliness as a type of filiation, an existential (and high spiritual) exile, but one shaped, in part, by postcolonial dislocation and emotional severance. The voice in Kamal's poetry is contemplative, wistful, and melancholic from the muted imagery of birds, stars, and other faded scenes that evoke the sensation of solitude and division in an expansive universe. Hughes, on the other hand, casts loneliness as a source of instinctual power and freedom. For Hughes, the lonely figures he embodied, such as the hawk or the pike, served unquestionable pre-possessive figures, wherein aloneness is an observation of power, not dismay (fear). If Kamal mocks separation and silence in his poetry, Hughes defogged it, situating solitude as an imposition but a critical necessity for the primal clarity for survival.

5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The thematic and stylistic characterisation of the selected poems by Daud Kamal (*The Rebel, Kingfisher, An Ode to Death*) and Ted Hughes (*Hawk Roosting, Pike, Thistles*) testifies to an absolute poetical worldview through dissimilar cultural, historical, and philosophical dispositions. Daud Kamal's poetry is defined by linguistic prudence, philosophical musing, and emotional nuance. His diction is often metaphorical, spiritual, and lyrical, fraught with metaphors that invoke exile, death, and inner collapse. Kamal employs elliptical sentence structure and enjambment to create meditative rhythm, but his phonological choices are muted and muffled, promoting the mood of mourning and reflection. Poems like *The Rebel* and *An Ode to Death* illustrate the way Kamal reflects on nature as a silent witness, a place where memory, loss, and contemplation exist together. His metaphors, for example, "tongues of water cradle our dreams" or "archipelago of naked rocks," suggest a fragile human consciousness attempting to confer meaning onto a displaced world. His solitude is existential, rooted in cultural alienation and spiritual exile, and habitually conveyed through an isolated poetic voice speaking to unseen others or unposed questions.

Ted Hughes's style, on the other hand, is forceful, visceral, and rhythmically powerful. His lexicon centres on body, violence, and nature, and words such as "kill," "hooked," "burst," and "fangs" conjure an elemental physical world. Hughes uses declarative syntax, occasionally in the first person, to assert control and mastery over the world, as in *Hawk Roosting* and *Thistles*. His phonological tendencies include curt plosives, alliteration, and

guttural consonants, lending him a sound power matching his themes of power, survival, and ancestral continuity. Nature, for Hughes, is not a fragile sanctuary but a mythic landscape, full of predators and ruled by the laws of instinct. The hawk, the pike, and the thistle are not images in themselves—aloneness, brutality, and cultural memory are what they signify. His solitude is not sadistic but pragmatic, meaning self-reliance and reversion to primal identity. This stylistic contrast has revealed profound convergences and divergences in the means Daud Kamal and Ted Hughes construct poetic voice, speak on behalf of nature, and negotiate nationhood, with the evidence being that stylistic choices are necessarily informed by and reactive to particular cultural, historical, and existential arrangements. While both poets engage with existential questions of existence, identity, and nature, their stylistic markers emerge from incommensurably different sensibilities, tracing personal aesthetic paths to articulate their visions.

Kamal's voice, constructed around linguistic sobriety, elliptical syntax, and restrained phonology, is the voice of the postcolonial Pakistani consciousness, constituted by spiritual exile, historical dislocation, and repressed resistance. His lexicon (e.g., "blind earth," "glad torment," "carbon dust") combines the material with the metaphysical, co-opting nature as a site for reflection, grieving, recollection, and existential questioning. Syntactic fragmentation in poems like *The Rebel* is an echo of political violence's terminal rawness, while enjambed streams in *Kingfisher* connote free-ranging thought. Metaphorically, Kamal's imagery (kingfishers, rivers, stars) metaphorizes cultural vulnerability and inner exile, transforming nature into a spiritual reckoning landscape rather than domination. His solitude is existential and elegiac, founded on displacement and search for meaning in erasure.

In opposition, Hughes's style is one of visceral intensity, syntactic power, and abrasive soundscapes. His lexicon ("hooked head," "splintered weapons," "kill where I please") equips nature with arms, positioning it as an amorality, uncivilised force that reflects postwar Britain's pathology and mythic ancestral self. Assertive declarative syntaxes and affective monologues in the first person (*Hawk Roosting*) assert mastery, since fractured lines in *Thistles* signify violent resurgence. Phonologically, plosives (/k/, /t/, /d/) and gutturals call up predation and violence. Hughes's animals (hawk, pike, thistle) are primal archetypes, transforming nature into Darwinian struggle in which isolation means independent mastery, not weakness. His isolation is robust and primal, affirming solitude as purity and strength.

Three fundamental points arise from this contrast:

1. Nature as Cultural Mirror: Kamal's nature internalises loss and spiritual longing, replicating Pakistan's postcolonial displacements. Hughes's nature externalises primal conflict and resilience, echoing Britain's mythic, martial history.
2. Voice as Embodied Context: Kamal's gentle, questioning voice instantiates repressed histories and Sufi introspection. Hughes's authoritative voice returns an unbroken tradition of nature and conquest.
3. Stylistic Form as Thematic Substance: Fragmentation in Kamal is an irretrievable cultural fissure; in Hughes, it becomes repetition of violence. Sonic austerity in Kamal heightens lament; in Hughes, it intensifies cruelty.

This work responds to an essential gap in comparative stylistics, examining how two poets from quite distinct worlds—Pakistan's postcolonial fragility and Britain's mythic pastoralism—engage with language in order to negotiate identity. It verifies Kamal's significance in Pakistani Anglophone poetry, demonstrating his stylistic innovation in representing repressed histories. Simultaneously, it places Hughes within a world discourse, demonstrating how his "Englishness" sounds—and diverges from—postcolonial representations of nation. Lastly, the research underscores that style is not solely aesthetic but also historiographical: poetic voice accumulates cultural trauma, national myth, and the long

human dialogue with nature, death, and home. A further study can utilise this model to explore how gender, ecology, or multilingualism further condition such stylistic negotiations in literary traditions.

References

- Ahmed, F. (2022). *A stylistic analysis of The Solitary Owl by Daud Kamal*. *Journal of Pakistani Literature*, 8(1), 45–60.
- Ali, F., Shah, A., & Masood, M. (2020). A stylistic exploration of Ted Hughes' poem *The Wind*. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 10(4), 30–40. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v10n4p30>
- Arooj, N., & Abbas, H. (2025). Imagery and silence: Stylistic tendencies in Daud Kamal's nature poems. *Pakistani Journal of Modern Poetics*, 3(2), 61–78.
- Ayaz, A., & Malik, Z. (2019). Poetic minimalism and national voice in Daud Kamal's poetry. *South Asian Literary Review*, 5(1), 88–101.
- Hughes, T. (2003a). *Hawk Roosting*. In *Selected poems: 1957–1994* (p. 56). Faber & Faber. (Original work published 1960)
- Hughes, T. (2003b). *Pike*. In *Selected poems: 1957–1994* (pp. 112–114). Faber & Faber. (Original work published 1960)
- Hughes, T. (2003c). *Thistles*. In *Selected poems: 1957–1994* (p. 63). Faber & Faber. (Original work published 1960)
- Kamal, D. (n.d.-a). *The Rebel*. In *Selected Daud Kamal poems and afterword* [PDF]. Retrieved from <https://www.scribd.com/document/684418759/Daud-Kamal-1935-1987>
- Kamal, D. (n.d.-b). *Kingfisher*. In *Selected Daud Kamal poems and afterword* [PDF]. Retrieved from <https://www.scribd.com/document/684418759/Daud-Kamal-1935-1987>
- Kamal, D. (n.d.-c). *An Ode to Death*. In *Selected Daud Kamal poems and afterword* [PDF]. Retrieved from <https://www.scribd.com/document/684418759/Daud-Kamal-1935-1987>
- Khan, S., & Shabbir, T. (2021). Silence and exile: Inner landscapes in Daud Kamal's verse. *Pakistani Literary Review*, 7(3), 120–133.
- Leech, G., & Short, M. (1981). *Style in fiction: A linguistic introduction to English fictional prose*. Longman.
- Mansoor, H. (2012). Nature and nostalgia in Daud Kamal's poetry. *Pakistani Journal of Language and Literature*, 4(2), 102–115.
- Mukhtar, I. (2017). Syntax and silence: A stylistic study of Ted Hughes' *The Casualty*. *English Studies in Pakistan*, 6(1), 33–47.
- Salama, A. (2015). Myth, violence, and survival: Reading Ted Hughes's poetic vision. *British Poetry Studies*, 11(1), 89–101.
- Simpson, P. (2004). *Stylistics: A resource book for students*. London, England: Psychology Press.