UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA

Departamento de Língua e Literatura Estrangeiras

THE "VIOLENT" ART OF TED HUGHES

Tese submetida à Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina
para a obtenção do grau de
MESTRE EM LETRAS

Neise Cunha Rodrigues

1978

Esta Tese foi julgada adequada para a obtenção do título de

M E S T R E E M L E T R A S

Especialidade Língua Inglesa e Literatura Correspondente e aprovada em sua forma final pelo Programa de Pós-graduação em Letras

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AGRADECIMENTOS

ao Professor John Bruce Derrick pela orientação e estímulo recebidos durante a realização deste trabalho.

A B S T R A C T

In his "animal" books Ted Hughes develops a vivid poetic style which is yet not congenial to all tastes. His poetry has been accused of being unnecessarily violent. This dissertation attempts to examine the justice of this often-heard charge by investigating Hughes's violence under three primary aspects: 1. his image of predation, 2. his attitude towards women, and 3. his "wasteland" settings and moods. In book after book Hughes's animal predators get less literal and more human and allegorical. Hughes's attitude towards women is ambivalent. While he seems to adore the archetypal woman-figures, he hates the contemporary, quotidian working-woman. Though Hughes's wasteland is narrow, deep and pessimistic, like Eliot's it offers some hope of purgation to those who do not join the "machine" of industrial society, remaining faithful to their human natures. Thence our conclusion that Hughes is not violent for the sake of violence, but rather as a means to arouse man to the de-humanized, mechanized world in which he became a puppet. In his poetry Ted Hughes communicates all the tension and disorder he finds in the universe.

R E S U M O

Nos seus livros sobre "animais" Ted Hughes desenvolve um estilo poético que, no entanto, não agrada a todos os gostos. A sua poesia tem sido acusada de ser desnecessariamente violenta. Nossa disertação pretende examinar a validade desta acusação tão comum à obra de Hughes investigando sua violência sob três aspectos fundamentais: 1. sua imagem de predatores, 2. sua atitude em relação à mulher e 3. o cenário e o humor de seu mundo árido, gasto, improdutivo. A cada livro seu os predatores se tornam menos ferozes, mais humanos e alegóricos. A atitude de Hughes em relação à mulher é ambivalente. Enquanto ele parece adorar a mulher-arquétipo, ele despreza a mulher contemporânea, comum, que se mantém. Embora o mundo gasto, improdutivo ("wasteland") de Hughes seja fechado, profundo e pessimista, como Eliot ele oferece alguma esperança de purgação para aquele que não adere à sociedade industrial, permanecendo fiel a sua natureza humana. Daí concluirmos que Hughes não é violento por amor à violência. Ele usa a violência como um meio para chamar a atenção dos homens para o mundo desumanizado e mecanizado no qual eles se tornaram simples bonecos. A sua poesia transmite toda a tensão e disordem que ele vê no universo.

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CHAPTER ONE

HUGHES AND THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE

i

The nature of this inquiry

Ted Hughes is one of those poets who has shocked his contemporaries since his first book of poetry was published. Bewilderment and scorn, admiration and anger are displayed by poetry-lovers whenever a new book of Hughes comes out. His themes are the material which makes life itself: love, sex, birth, life and death, among men and animals, in a broken, decaying society. He expresses these themes in a stark, bare, direct, massive language, rather unusual in poetry. Furthermore, there is such intensity of feelings, such concentration of passion that the inner and outer conflicts of a sensitive, intellectual man are irreverently exposed.

Despite all these conflicts, Hughes's poetry is the contemporary poetry of a contemporary poet in the contemporary world. Since it is with his first four books of poetry for adults that Ted Hughes won the reputation of a "violent" poet, I have selected *The Hawk in the Rain*, *Lupercal*, *Wodwo* and *Crow* as foci within which to examine the theme of his poetical "violence".

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The critics' response to the "violent" art of Ted Hughes

Since Ted Hughes's first book of poetry appeared he has been accused of violence. "He is", one critic writes,

> a bruiser who pummels his readers with the harshest, most solid words in order to batter them into submission. [1]

Thus Hughes has been identified with his individualistic, proud hawk who possessively proclaims:

> I kill where I please because it is all mine. [2]

For these critics Ted Hughes is an implacable poet who proclaims the violence in this world.

However, a few critics, especially the more recent, disagree with the "brutal" epithet given to Ted Hughes's art. Bold maintains that Ted Hughes is not violent at all, that he is rather a"man possessed by his subject matter". [3] That is, he is too sensitive, too passionate to write softly of what he feels so intensely. If his poetry is a poetry of conflict, it means that he is too much involved with the world and with men in general. He is just responding to the "spectacle of energy" [4] in the modern world. Bold goes still further when he asserts that if we compare Hughes's and Gunn's poetry (another poet charged with violence) with Shakespeare's art, we will come to the conclusion that their art is "positively pacific" [5]

When we consider the period in which Hughes's first books were published (The Hawk in the Rain in 1957 and Lupercal in 1960), we will understand why they disturbed both critics and readers so much. In the fifties there was a school of poetry in Britain called "The Movement", whose poems were characterized by decorum, sobriety and domesticity of tone and subject matter. Their language was gentle, polished, charming. Poets of "The Movement" such as Larkin, Blackburn, Holloway, Enright, R.S.Thomas, E.Jennings and Tomlinson would restrain their most impetuous feelings to make poems that could be decently read in the drawing-room of any respectable family. It was a domestic, cozy sort of poetry, and though coming after the World War Two, it was full of nostalgia, feelings of hopelessness, of bereavement combined with feelings of comformity, of acceptance with the irremediable. There is a certain analogy with the Georgian poets who preceded the first World War and the innovations of T.S.Eliot:

Home is so Sad

Home is so sad. It stays as it was left,
Shaped to the comfort of the last to go
As if to win them back. Instead, bereft
Of anyone to please, it withers so,
Having no heart to put aside the theft

And turn again to what it started as,
A joyous shot at how things ought to be,
Long fallen wide. You can see how it was:
Look at the picture and the cutlery.
The music in the piano stool. That vase. 6

This elegant little poem by Philip Larkin is full of nostalgia and a longing for something which has been lost: a feeling, a time, a person - something which is not objectively identified. It expresses a sadness which is not bitter, which does not offend. Larkin seems to regret that only the material things have been preserved, thus home has become a picture of a still nature, "bereft of anyone to please". 7

The poets of "The Movement" were careful not to shock. Quite aware that their reading public had already had their share of suffering, of violence in this world, they brought them a kind of poetry which was peaceful, pleasant, compassionate.

It is to this kind of poetry that Ted Hughes responds and reacts against. Instead of domesticating his feelings, his worries, his fears, his joys and frustrations, he releases them, he displays them openly, shamelessly. Harsh, he seems to wish to prick the sensibility of a public deeply settled into an insular Establishment, a public biased to favour old traditions, conventions and prejudices. By exposing his own reality so directly, Hughes elicited strong polar reactions from the critics who either praised or condemned the audacity of his "violent" art.

In 1959, in an article on Ted Hughes, A.E.Dyson wrote:

> He [Ted Hughes] is fascinated by violence of all kinds, in love and in hatred, in the jungle and in the arena, in battle, murder and sudden

> death. Violence, for him, is the occasion not for reflection, but for being. [8]

It seems to me that Dyson, like Hughes, hails this violence since it shows an abrupt, unreflected moment when man is himself, free of any constraint. It is a moment when time does not count, it is so intense, so deep that it becomes immortal. And, at least, for this moment man has the courage to break his personal conventions which have tied him up, to unmask himself and become a man, free, whole, one, himself. So violence is a moment of revelation and as such should be welcome.

On the other hand, C.B.Cox, commenting on "The Violence of Ted Hughes", says that he

> displays ruthlessly and with great accuracy the innate cruelty of all natural things. [9]

For Cox Hughes's world is chaotic, hopeless, unchangeable, fatal. All that is left to the poet is "to celebrate its tragic glory" [10], a meaningless task for the man behind the written page.

J.M.Newton goes further than Cox and says that Hughes's "cult" [11] of violence is just a disguise to conceal his cult of himself, a show-off, a tiring "unpersuasive loud-talking", [12] As a result his poetry turns into "monotony" [13] and "stillness" [14]. Later on, in an article on Wodwo, Newton reviews his interpretation of Hughes's violence stating that, though hard to cope with, it is rather a "mismanaged expression of a large and generous man's zest and relish". [15] Thus it is no longer

self-affirmation, but the unfortunate display of a magnanimous person's enthusiasm for life. Now Mr. Newton interprets Hughes's poetry as "metaphysical" 16, though according to J.Press the metaphysical poets' influence is "microscopically small" 17. He rather

> resembles an early 17th century Malcontent projecting his baffled fury upon the universe at large, 18

as he skillfully shows the violence in this world without ever trying to explain its meaning. In this way he creates a disorderly, incoherent, meaningless universe which is nevertheless stoically accepted by the poet himself and by all of us as well.

All his works, even his children's books, are impregnated with violence, says Rawson, and this violence restricts the scope of his poetry within narrow limits. The poet himself is "trapped" 19 into this world of violence, a world from which we can escape only through death. The attempt to survive is nothing but a brutal "assertion of self" 20.

Asserting oneself is a means to survival, suggest Bedient and other critics, and it is this attempt to survive by all means, this "will to live" 21 which characterize Hughes's poetry, not really violence 22. This world has lost so much of its vigour, beauty, authenticity and naturalness that to survive, man must fight: fight not to die. While he is fighting, he is living.

Writing on the poetry of Czeslaw Milosz, Hughes remarks that Milosz's

> poetry is not equipped for life where people actually do die. [23]

This statement of the poet implies that in contrast, Hughes's poetry is tough, crude, provocative. Life is not sweet, easy, refined, so man should prepare to meet its harshness. There is no point in being gentle in a society which is aggressive.

Sagar, who wrote a book on Ted Hughes's art, thinks that Hughes is not interested in consistency at all and his poems are

> explorations, "reconnaissances", bulletins from an internal internecine battleground. [24]

In his poetry Hughes shows the"destructiveness" [25] of Nature and man's conflicts with himself and with the world he lives in. Sagar maintains that Hughes is a brave and sensitive poet who dares to bring "more and more of the unknown into consciousness" [26] in a concentrated,open and passionate style. He believes that Hughes exaggerates his images on purpose. England has been dormant for such long time that only through exaggeration can one touch man's sensibility and arouse his consciousness to the things and to the persons around him. Mr. Sagar adds that Ted Hughes is a "master of hyperbole" [27], a very effective poetical device, most admiredly used in the 16th and 17th centuries. At present man has become too frail to bear

such audacity of thought, too fearful to face truth and too lazy to analyze himself and the world. What Hughes shows in his poetry is not violence but great energy, so unusual in England nowadays.

In the introduction to The New Poetry Alvarez advocates that the modern poet should "use all his intelligence and skill to make poetic sense" [28] of all his experience in this world and he suggests that this is what Hughes is doing. Comparing Larkin's poem "At Grass" with Hughes's "A Dream of Horses", Mr. Alvarez concludes that Larkin's poem is more elaborate than Hughes's, but his horses are

> social creatures of fashionable race meeting and high style [29],

whereas Hughes's horses have

> a violent, impending presence [30],

that is, they are real creatures with their physical and psychological needs. In this way he interprets Hughes's"violence" as a serious attempt to make "poetic sense" [31] of all the mishmash of this world. Alvarez is of opinion that Hughes combines the "psychological insight and integrity of D.H.Lawrence" with "the technical skill and formal intelligence of T.S.Eliot". [32]

In an interview with the London Magazine Ted Hughes, responding to the charge on violence, classifies the term as a very "tricky" [33] one and he wonders whether

it is used in other countries. He argues:

> One common use of it [the expression "violence"] I fancy occurs where the reviewer type of critic is thinking of his audience ... his English audience. When my Aunt calls my verse "horrible and violent" I know what she means. Because I know what style of life she is defending. And I know she is representative of huge numbers of people in England ... She has an instinct for a kind of poetry that will confirm the values of her way of life ... In a sense, critics who find my poetry violent are in her world, and they are safeguarding her way of life. So to define their use of the word violence any further, you have to work out just why her way of life should find the behaviour of a hawk "horrible" or any reference to violent death "disgusting", just as she finds reference to extreme vehemence of life "frightening somehow". It's a futile quarrel really. 34

He finds that those critics who call his poetry "violent" are reacting against any kind of change. Living in a comfortable past, they refuse to hear the call to see life as it is. They insist on keeping, in appearance, at least, the good old days when beasts lived in the forest and men and women in their sweet homes, content, undisturbed, resignedly happy.

iii

Statement of Purpose

In this dissertation I propose to examine the justice of the widespread critical charge that Ted Hughes's art is "violent", and to determine what forms this violence takes in his poetry. Is Hughes a narrow, obsessed or mannered poet or does he stand at the frontier of contemporary poetry? This examination will leave us in a better position to say if, or how, or where "violence" may be a poetic virtue.

I suppose it is not going too far to assert that Ted Hughes was involved with "violence" since his early life. To begin with he was born and brought up in an area of Britain where the geography itself is "violent": rugged mountains with dark, doomed rocks and flat, barren moors contrasted with forested valleys where animals abound. The sky is usually clouded and the rain comes down quite often. As a child his and his brother's favourite hobby was the pursuit of animals, either hunting them or catching them to bring home as pets.

His favourite stories as a boy were those of war his father loved to tell: violent stories of death and slaughter of men, of decomposition and dilapidation of a world.

When he started to be well-known as a poet he was accused of being the murderer of his first wife, who committed suicide leaving their two babies motherless and alone in a gas-filled flat in London.

With this background it is natural that his art came out strong, insulting, rebellious. Furthermore, his poetry made such a violent contrast with that of the current poets, who set their poetry in a tranquil landscape, far away from social and human conflicts, that it shocked many people.

Ted Hughes selects as poetic topics events that make news in our contemporary world and explores modern man with all his conflicts. And he displays his themes vigorously, in a sort of naked, complex language where grotesque images and symbols puzzle the unaccustomed reader.

In this dissertation I will choose three aspects of his "violent" poetry to investigate his treatment of animals, his attitude toward women and his wasteland, aligning myself with Bold, Dyson, Bedient, Sagar and Alvarez.

In the chapter on animals it is my intention to separate the animals into different categories to witness the chronology of their treatment. In this way I will deal first with the big, predatory animals who kill mercilessly when attacked. Then I will examine the small animals of prey, persecuted and killed by man to satisfy his desire for power and finally I will investigate allegorical animals who really represent man. Thus the violence treated in this chapter is primarily literal and Darwinian.

In the next chapter I will deal with Ted Hughes's ambivalent attitude towards women. At times he is

patronizing towards them, at times he is misogynistic. While he seems to admire the archetypal women figures, he hates the modern woman who competes with man in her work. Thence I will develop some ideas on the "machão" who is exalted by the poet. Also I will consider the way in which the themes of "love" and "marriage" are presented as analogues to war. The "violence" focussed upon in this chapter is psychological.

Last but not least I will move to Ted Hughes's wasteland, where the emphasis on "violence" is social. I will analyze his "social violence" under the aspect of language and metaphor.

Since I have felt that he was influenced by Eliot's "The Waste Land" I will compare some points of his wasteland with Eliot's. It is my intention to investigate the different grounds Ted Hughes built his wasteland upon: sterility, hopelessness, alienation, fragmentation, nothingness, intellectualism, mechanization and war. With the myth of Crow, Ted Hughes gives us a human vision of a non-human cosmos. For Hughes men are destroying the world with their mechanization, their barren intellectuality, their alienation and their murderous wars. But, apparently everything is not lost yet. The poet confides in the few natural men who have managed to survive the barreness of the wasteland and he confides above all in Crow who, with his intelligence and vigour, may be able to recreate a human healthy world. So far, darkness reigns over his wasteland, yet Hughes is still alive and kicking, and light may eventually illuminate it again.

CHAPTER TWO

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Edward James Hughes was born on 17 August, 1930, in Mytholmroyd, West Yorkshire.

Mytholmroyd is one of those small towns situated in the Pennines, a "mere corridor" [1], as Ted Hughes himself put it, between the cotton towns of Lancashire and the woolen towns of West Riding. Like all those small towns in the Pennines, Mytholmroyd is a dark, windy, cold, wet place where "only the rain never tires" [2], with terraced houses, made of dark blocks of stone, lots of small bridges crossing the narrow river, surrounded by gorgeous trees and mountains.

It has produced harsh, strong, unsophisticated people who talk loud, drink heavily, people who had to get used to challenging nature, sturdy people like Ted Hughes's Dick Straightup.

It is also a country whose literary past is associated, as in the work of the Brontës, with images of starkness and violence, wildness and anger, and one suspects there is more than a trace of Heathcliff buried in the back of Ted Hughes's mind.

Leaving the town, in a few minutes, one is in the middle of a forest formed of valleys and mountains. In the valleys, which are dark and shadowy, the river twists and the birds seem to sing in chorus with the music of the water striking on the pebbles. The valleys are quite

unspoiled as the farmers preferred to build their houses and cultivate their lands in the mountains.

The mountains have a most fascinating variegated landscape. Beside the clean, civilized steepy cultivated areas where one can see either cattle, sheep or crops, there are the irregular natural vegetation with some shrubs here and there, big and compact trees, dark rocks and the moors - large platforms at the top of the mountains.

Ted Hughes loved the mountains and he felt that there he escaped from the imprisoned world of the valley. At the same time he felt "fastened into" [3] that place by the "darkening presence" [4] of the Scout Rocks:

> Living beneath it was like living in a house haunted by a disaster that nobody can quite believe ever happened, though it regularly upsets sleep. [5]

For him these were doomed, sinister rocks which both attracted and disturbed him, as Penistone Crags disturbed Cathy in Wuthering Heights. They invite one to die while exhibiting life, they look dark but up there it is bright. Their mysterious appearance makes one speculate about death and life. At the same time they excite man's imagination, they awake his fighting spirit, providing him with means to survive this hostile world.

According to Ted Hughes,

> everything in West Yorkshire is slightly unpleasant. Nothing ever quite escapes into

> happiness. The people are not detached enough from the stone, as if they were only half-born from the earth, and the graves are too near the surface. A disaster seems to hang around in the air there for a long time. I can never escape the impression that the whole region is in mourning for the first world war. The moors don't escape this, but they give the sensation purely. And finally, in spite of it, the mood of moorland is exultant, and this is what I remember of it. 6

In this "exultant" 7 but fatal spot, fish and animals are plentiful and consequently fishing and hunting became the favourite sport of the boy Ted. In Poetry in the Making, a book the poet calls his autobiography, he tells us that when he was a little boy he used to collect toy animals. Somewhat older, he started to model them and later on he acted as a retriever of the animals his brother captured. When he was fifteen he began to look at the animals "from their own point of view" 8 and then began to write poems, that is, from then on he transferred his interest in hunting and fishing to the activity of writing poems. He thus associates the poet with the animals. Both can be prey and predatory, both can be trapped and must be clever to escape from a world set with entrapments. Both have to fight to survive in a universe which no longer belongs to them.

Another entertainment the boy Ted enjoyed was to listen to the stories of World War One which his father used to tell. William Hughes, his father, had been one

of those men chosen to enter the disastrous campaign of the Dardanelles, which finally succeeded after one year of war and filthy weather. William Hughes was one of the seventeen men of his regiment who managed to come back. A carpenter in his native town, he haunted the imagination of his children with stories of horror, slaughter,death and survival mixed with useless heroism and bravery.

When Ted Hughes was about eight his family moved to the industrial town of Mexborough, South Yorkshire, where his parents kept a newsagent's and tobacconist's shop. His brother hated the place and left home to become a gamekeeper. The boy Ted lived a double life, one with the town boys, sons of colliers and railwaymen, and the other, a private one, in the country. He confesses that he "never mixed the two lives up, except once or twice disastrously" 9. Soon he learned to separate his inner world from his public life.

In 1948 he won an Open Exhibition to Cambridge. However, before he went to Cambridge he did two year's duty in the National Service as a ground wireless mechanic in the Royal Air Force, east Yorkshire. He says that as there was nothing to do there, most of the time he read Shakespeare.

In 1951 he went to Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he took English as far as his third year when he shifted to archaeology and anthropology. In Cambridge he saw excellent plays and the only sport he practiced was archery. He kept very much to himself and seldom went to lectures. He disliked the sophistry of Cambridge,

which he found sterile and dead.

In 1954 Ted Hughes graduated, though he never pursued an academic life. Instead, he served as a driver for an uncle of his who was travelling in the Continent and then worked as a rose gardener, a night watchman in a steel works, a zoo attendant and a reader for J.Arthur Rank while he wrote and published poems in the Cambridge magazines. In a letter home, at this time, Sylvia Plath wrote:

> I met the strongest man in the world, ex Cambridge, brilliant poet, whose work I loved before I met him, a large, hulking, healthy Adam, half French, half Irish [and a good deal of Yorkshire farming stock, too] , with the voice like the thunder of God - a singer, storyteller, lion and world wanderer, a vagabond who will never stop... 10

In 1956 Ted Hughes and a group of friends published a poetry magazine, St. Botolph Review and this same year he married Sylvia, an American poet, a Fulbright at Newham College, Cambridge. While she finished her studies Ted Hughes taught English and drama in a secondary school. After her graduation in 1957 they left for the States where they lived for two years.

It may seem that their marriage would have been an ideal partnership. They were both devoted to poetry. Sylvia introduced Ted to American poetry and it was thanks to her that Ted Hughes had his first book published. As there would be a competition for a first book of poems in English sponsored by the Poetry Centre

of Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Society of New York, she carefully typed her husband's poems and sent them off. Among two hundred and eighty-seven entries, The Hawk in the Rain was chosen to receive the prize, which was immediate publication by Harper. In this way Ted Hughes had his first book published in the United States before it was published in his own country.

He speaks about their life together:

> After we'd returned to England and were living in Chalcot Square, near Primrose Hill, we would each write poetry every day. It was all we were interested in, all we ever did. We were like two feet, each one using everything the other did. It was a working partnership and was all-absorbing. We just lived it. There was an unspoken unanimity in every criticism we made. It all fitted in very well. [11]

But this seemingly ideal "working partnership" [12] did not last very long. In 1962 Ted left the cottage they had bought in Devon and went to London, where he lived with another woman. Sylvia stayed in the cottage with their children until December, when she moved to a flat in London, where she committed suicide the next year. Ted Hughes was accused of being responsible for her death despite the fact that she had attempted suicide before. Anyway her death must have been a terrible shock for him. For four years he did not produce any book for adults, but wrote only children's books.

As Anthony Libby writes:

> "Ted" and "Sylvia" threaten to become the Scott and Zelda of our time, though Ted has fewer defenders than Scott. 13

Ted had his privacy invaded and different versions of his life ran freely about in the gossip of poetry circles. He was constantly invited to interviews, where he would not speak of their private life or of his personal feelings. For some people Sylvia had become the victim and he the villain.

Although Sylvia never made any open accusation against Hughes, reading her poems carefully we may glimpse some of her feelings toward her husband. In her well-known poem "Daddy", which we can assume to refer to Ted Hughes, she accuses him of being a "fascist", a "brute" and it appears to me that she first loved him for these qualities:

> Every woman adores a Fascist,
> The boot in the face, the brute
> Brute heart of a brute like you. 14

In his book <u>The Art of Ted Hughes</u>, Sagar maintains that Sylvia once declared that she married Ted because "he was simply the only man I could never boss..." 15 For seven years they lived happy moving from one place to another till they finally settled down in Devon. One year later, however, they separated and Sylvia seemed to resent the "vampire" 16 who "drank [her] blood" 17 for "seven years" 18.

> You do not do, you do not do
> Any more, black shoe
> In which I have lived like a foot
> For thirty years, poor and white,
> Barely daring to breathe or Achoo,
>
> Daddy, I have had to kill you. 19

However, it seems that in exorcizing Ted's fatherly power over her, she was also destroying herself. Exhausted, with one nervous breakdown after another, suffering the cold of the winter without her beloved Ted, she killed herself.

And he survived everything: the pain, the horror, the terrible accusations against him. He was tough. Nurtured on stories of murder, among harsh people, capturing animals and fish in a hostile weather, Ted Hughes could overcome death. Perhaps Sylvia's masochism had the effect of arousing his sadism. His books became more sinister, heavier, but also more mature, more compact, more allegorical because the poet had gone down deep into the bottom of the pit. As David Porter states, for Hughes the function of the contemporary poet is that of a scavenger.

> The litter of his world includes surreal experience: dreams, nightmares, madness, terror, bestiality, automatism ... 20

These constitute the matter for poetry. Thus negative experience has merely provided him with more material to fill in his dark and passionate vision of men and the world at large.

CHAPTER THREE

ANIMALS

Ted Hughes's animal poetry matures with the poet himself. His vision of life, man, animal and the world can be clearly traced if we read his poems chronologically. That is the reason why this chapter will primarily use a chronological criterion as I think that only thus can we impose some logical pattern on the development of Ted Hughes's "violent" art.

With the publication of every new book, Ted Hughes's reputation as an animal poet increased. This is due to the complexity with which he treats animals and to the richer symbolism of successive poems. The animals do not multiply in number as might be expected. On the contrary, they decrease in number, size and strength at the same time that their cosmos becomes inhospitable to them. Then they give place to man, allegorized in animal shape. As a consequence of this change of focus, man - with all his incertitudes, frustrations, ambitions, wishes, meaness and tensions - is turned into the main motif in his last book. And his is a world which is not suited to innocent beings, beings without malice or second thoughts, such as animals and children.

In Ted Hughes's first book, The Hawk in the Rain, the animals are happy and free. They live in a world

which has room enough for them:

> 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 in the sun. 1

These animals, however, will rebel at anyone's attempt to invade their privacy. Violently they preserve their dignity, their right to live undisturbed:

> All day he stares at his furnace
> With eyes red-raw, but when she comes they close
> "Polly. Pretty Poll", she cajoles, and rocks him gently.
> She caresses, whispers kisses. The blue lids stay shut.
> She strikes the cage in a tantrum and swirls out:
> Instantly beak, wings, talons crash
> The bars in conflagration and frenzy,
> And his shriek shakes the house. 2

All the animals in The Hawk in the Rain care about is to live their own life as they like it. In this way, the hawk in the first poem of the book flies higher and higher, relaxed, powerful, challenging the hacking rain:

> His wings hold all creation in a weightless quiet,
> Steady as a hallucination in the streaming air. 3

Regardless of the fact that eventually the hawk, trapped by the horizon, falls down and his "heart's blood"[4] is mixed with the "mire of the land" [5], the hawk's power is envied by man who, impotent and unimaginative, can only watch the bird's "hallucination" [6]. He contemplates the flight of the white bird who does not accept interference of anyone, not even of the weather. While the hawk chooses his own destiny the man, too timorous to dare anything, sticks to earth:

> Bloodily grabbed dazed last-moment-counting
> Morsel in the earth's mouth, strain toward the
> master-
> Fulcrum of violence where the hawk hangs still. [7]

However in a humanized world there is no room for such haughty, brave, daring, solitary being as the hawk. Perhaps that is why when he makes his second appearance, in Lupercal, the hawk looks quite different. Egocentric, proud, boastful, too conscious of being self-sufficient, the hawk worries only about imposing his position in the world:

> I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed.
> Inaction, no falsefying dream
> Between my hooked head and hooked feet:
> Or in sleep rehearse perfect kills and eat. [8]

Since everything has been created for his convenience, the hawk becomes the Creator himself. Everything revolves around him. This emphasis is given by the repetitive use of pronouns of the first person:

It took the whole of Creation
To produce my foot, my each feather:
Now I hold Creation in my foot

Or fly up, and revolve it all slowly -
I kill where I please because it is all mine.[9]

No doubts are shown by this roosting hawk. He is quite sure of his animal power and he wants it to be acknowledged. He will kill, if necessary. No scruples, no fear will stop this bird who feels superior even to the sun. A Machiavelian, he holds everything and everyone around him in contempt. He looks like a totalitarian white god. " [His] flight is direct" [10]. He admits no "falsifying dreams" [11]. This may be the reason why, in spite of the violence displayed by the hawk, he is always related to the sun, the air, the wood. The whiteness of this bird, in both poems, can be a symbol for his authenticity, for the fearlessness to say and to do what he pleases.

In The Hawk in the Rain the animals are instinctive, violent in defense of their freedom and their individuality. They admit no interference in their lives. For instance, "The Jaguar": despite being caged, the jaguar is free. It is the crowd who "stands, stares, mesmerized" [12] at him who is imprisoned. The jaguar is a sturdy, independent animal who does not need to watch man to survive a Sunday or a holiday. Like the hawk, he is lonely, free, genuinely violent:

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

Or 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

More than to the visionary his cell:
His stride is wilderness of freedom:
The world rolls under the long thrust of his heel.
Over the cage the horizons come. 13

Taking a "Second Glance at a Jaguar", in Wodwo, we will find a different kind of beast. Here he has lost his naturalness, he is cautious, self-conscious, malevolent:

At every stride he has to turn a corner
In himself and correct it. His head
Is like the worn down stump of another whole jaguar,
His body is just the engine shoving it forward,
Lifting the air up and shoving on under,
The weight of his fangs hanging the mouth open,
Bottom jaw combing the ground. A gorged look,
Gangster, club-tail lumped along behind gracelessly,
He's wearing himself to heavy ovals,
Muttering some mantrah, some drum-song of murder
To keep his rage brightening, making his skin
Intolerable, spurred by the rosettes, the cain-brands,
Wearing the spots off from the inside,
Rounding some revenge. Going like a prayer-wheel,
The head dragging forward, the body keeping up
The hind legs lagging. He coils, he flourishes
The blackjack tail as if looking for a target,
Hurrying through the underworld, soundless. 14

Though a "Second Glance at a Jaguar" is an excellent poem, we do not feel that here the jaguar is just an animal. It is rather the symbol for man's unconsciousness or man's hidden motives. The second jaguar is careful, suspicious, undemonstrative, mute in his rage while the first one roars aloud displaying all his natural bravery and anger. One may be afraid of the first jaguar when he roars violently, but it is the second jaguar that is dangerous. He is deceitful, a Cain, who would murder his own brother. He cultivates his "rage brightening" 15 to satisfy his murderous instincts, though he only acts slyly, like a gangster.

Once asked if the jaguars should be celebrated as symbols of violence, Ted Hughes replied:

> A jaguar after all can be received in several different aspects ... he is a beautiful, powerful nature spirit, he is a homicidal maniac, he is a supercharged piece of cosmic machinery, he is a symbol of man's baser nature shoved down into the id and growing cannibal murderous with deprivation, he is an ancient symbol of Dionysus since he is a leopard raised to the ninth power, he is a precise historical symbol of the bloody-minded Aztecs and so on. Or he is simply a demon ... a lump of ectoplasm. A lump of astral energy. 16

In The Hawk in the Rain the hawk, the jaguar, the macaw and the horses impose their presence as strong, violent, self-confident animals, separate from man. In this book there are two distinct levels, man and animal: I (who stands for the poet himself or the human ego) and

the hawk; the crowd and the jaguar; I (the poet or human ego) and the horses/ the fox. The animals are the central figures, however. In them there is a longing for liberty, for action, for independence, as there is in man himself.

In Lupercal, by contrast, there is a greater variety of animals, though they are not so big and strong. Reduced to living in a civilized, over-humanized world they begin to miss their natural wildness. Some of them are even victimized, like the dog, the goat and the rat. The line of division between man and animal starts to disappear: this is very clear in the poem "Thrushes", where Ted Hughes opposes the thrushes' straightforwardness to man's dissimulation.

> Terrifying are the attent thrushes on the lawn,
> More coiled steel than living - a poised
> Dark deadly eye, those delicate legs
> Triggered to stirrings beyond sense - with a start,
> a bounce, a stab
> Overtake the instant and drag out some writhing
> thing.
> No indolent procrastinations and no yawning stares,
> No sighs or head-scratchings. Nothing but bounce
> and stab
> And a ravening second.
>
> ...
>
> With a man it is otherwise. Heroisms on horseback,
> Outstripping his desk-diary at a broad desk,
> Carving at a tiny ivory ornament
> For years: his act worships itself - while for him,
> Though he bends to be blent in the prayer, how loud
> and above what

> Furious spaces of fire do the distracting devils
> Orgy and hosannah, under what wilderness
> Of black silent waters weep. [17]

While the thrushes behave naturally following their own wishes and needs, man's attitudes are premeditated, aiming at prestige. Evasively the poet seems to warn us that we should beware man. Only a man of genius, like Mozart, or children still act automatically. It appears to me that Ted Hughes is saying that man has lost his capacity to act instinctively because of his habit of mentalizing everything: thinking either delays or prevents actions and decisions.

This may be the reason why Ted Hughes favours cats. With all their spontaneousness, sensuousness and mischievousness they have "outwitted our nimblest wits" [18] and with their "fully nine lives" [19] they are wiser than man. In the tom-cat we have the picture of the "machão" and we feel that the poet does appreciate this "machão", as he appreciates the bull Moses' conduct, which is very different from the cats' - serene, modest, quiet, but firm and imposing as "machões" ' attitudes are supposed to be.

Though the bull Moses is obedient to the farmer as Moses, his predecessor, had been to his Lord, he is quite conscious of his masculinity. He does not have to boast as the hawk does, because deep inside he knows that his eternity will be preserved through his descendents. Indifferent to the world around him and to men, he self-confidently lives his own life, modest-

ly but imposingly:

> Something come up there onto the brink of the gulf,
> Hadn't heard of the world, too deep in itself to be
> called to,
> Stood in sleep. He would swing his muzzle at a fly
> But the square of sky where I hung, shouting,waving,
> Was nothing to him; nothing of our light
> Found any reflection in him. 20

Mature, he has already reached the state of fulfilment, which is timeless. He is whole and quite aware that we are living in a

> Time and a world
> Too old to alter. 21

Opposing the tranquillity of the bull Moses there come the pike, who look demonic, possessed, in their sensuous movement of colour and life. They figure forth very well the instability and consequent dissatistaction of man in this world:

> Pike, three inches long, perfect
> Pike in all parts, green tigering the gold.
> Killers from the egg: the malevolent aged grin.
> They dance on the surface among the flies.
>
> Or move, stunned by their own grandeur,
> Over a bed of emerald, silhouette
> Of submarine delicacy and horror.
> A hundred feet long in their world.
>
> In ponds, under the heat-struck lily pads -
> Gloom of their stillness:
> Logged on last year's black leaves, watching upwards.
> Or hung in an amber cavern of weeds

> The jaws' hooked clamp and fangs
> Not to be changed at this date;
> A life subdued to its instrument;
> The gills kneading quietly, and the pectorals. [22]

The pike grow bigger and bigger, older and older. Yet they decrease in number as one eats the other in a kind of competition which destroys ruthlessly whoever comes in their way. Unscrupulously they search for a place in this world. At last the pike become so huge that the poet in desperation fishes "for what might move, for what eye might move"[23], but he loses control of the pike as the Creator seems to have lost control of man. Here there is an implication that the pike is in man, too. It could be the symbol for man's desire to survive and to dominate and this desire seems insatiable. When we realize that the pike are one of the most vicious and voracious freshwater fish in Britain, the violence of this symbol shocks us. Though we are told at the beginning that the pike are innate assassins ("killers from the egg"[24]), they become more and more frightening since their one objective in life seems to be to smash each other. In fact, this poem gives a terrifying picture of man and our modern society.

Another poem in Lupercal which portrays the modern man is "An Otter", which is "neither fish nor beast"[25], living in the sea and on the earth, without any definite characteristic. The otter is a Proteus, sans any fixed identity and as such it:

Wanders, cries;
Gallops along land he no longer belongs to;
Re-enters the water by melting. 26

Thus it is like one of those never-satisfied human beings, going from one place to another, attempting to settle down, but always failing because they lack a definition and so cannot be identified. The otter is everything: a prey and a predator, a seeker and a searcher, a loser and a winner. That is, the otter is everything and nothing. In death, finally, the otter becomes something, "a long pelt over the back of a chair" 27.

Similarly, the pig's, the goat's and the dog's "dignity" 28 and "mindless pride" 29 are"entirely gone"30 in death. All their individuality vanishes. Poor animals, so "fast" 31, "nimble" 32, "hot-blooded" 33, cruelly sacrificed to satisfy man's appetite!... These animals are victims of man, who kill them because they do not "seem able to accuse" 34.

In Lupercal man and animal start to merge into one and it starts to be difficult to tell one from the other. Thus instead of two levels, man versus animal, we have just one which we could call of "humanized animals".

In Wodwo Ted Hughes's animal heroes are no longer predatory. They are rather prey, like the rat and the gnat. The big animals cease to be heroes of the poems and function rather as images, symbols for human feelings.

Let us illustrate this statement by taking as example a big animal who has already made his presence in his previous books: the horse. In The Hawk in the Rain the horses appear as large, powerful animals in their own world, segregated from man. It is man who goes to their world in search of a truth, of consciousness. In fact, the shock of the encounter seems to bring a kind of revelation to man, which is later on recollected as a means to endure life in the big city:

> And I saw the horses:
>
> Huge in the dense grey - ten together -
> Megalith-still. They breathed, making no move,
>
> With draped manes and tilted hind-hooves,
> Making no sound.
>
> I passed: not one snorted or jerked its head.
> Grey silent fragments
>
> Of a grey silent world.
>
> ...
>
> In din of the crowded streets, going among the years, the faces,
> May I still meet my memory in so lonely a place
>
> Between the streams and the red clouds, hearing curlews,
> Hearing the horizons endure. 35

In Lupercal the horses appear in a dream as symbols of man's primitive desires, which he tries to repress. In consequence, they come as violently as an avalanche:

Out of the night that gulfed beyond the palace-gate
There shook hooves and hooves and hooves of horses:
Our horses battered their stalls; their eyes jerked
white.

And we ran out, mice in our pockets and straw in
our hair,
Into darkness that was avalaching to horses
And a quake of hooves. Our lantern's little orange
flare

Made a round mask of our each sleep-dazed face,
Bodiless, or else bodied by horses
That whinnied and bit and cannoned the world from
its place.

The tall palace was so white, the moon was so round,
Everything else this plunging of horses
To the rim of our eyes that strove for the shapes
of the sound. 36

The violent appearance of the horses does man good. The heavy hooves of the horses satisfy man's desires and make him sleep. In this way the human response to violence seems to be masochistic:

And we longed for a death trampled by such horses
As every grain of the earth had hooves and mane.

We must have fallen like drunkards into a dream
Of listening, lulled by the thunder of the horses.
We awoke stiff; broad day had come. 37

This longing for the "horses" has become an obsession to man and the poet uses an interesting technique to point it out. Every second line of the first eight stanzas is closed with the word "horses" and the three lines of the last stanza are also ended

up with the word "horses".

In "The Rain Horse" (Wodwo) a young man comes back to his native place to find out that in twelve years nothing had changed there. Nevertheless:

> Twelve years had changed him. This land no longer recognized him, and he looked back at it coldly, as at a finally visited home-country, known only through the stories of a grandfather; felt nothing but the dullness of feeling nothing. Boredom. Then, suddenly, impatience, with a whole exasperated swarm of little anxieties about his shoes, and the spitting rain and his new suit and that sky and the two-mile trudge through the mud back to the road. 38

The young man, in the new suit, worried about the damage the rain will do to his shoes, wants to have all the ties with the earth broken up. He does not want to belong to that land any more, that land which makes him "feel so outcast, so old and stiff and stupid" 39. He wants to be a refined man of the town. The author cleverly presents the land as a kind of mirror to the reality the man wants to hide from himself.

To bring the man back to reality Hughes introduces a horse into the story, a "black horse" 40 who runs

> across the ploughland towards the hill, its head down, neck stretched out. It seemed to be running on its toes like a cat, like a dog up to no good. 41

From then on the pace of the narrative goes faster and

faster. We read the story as if we were watching a terror film.

The "black horse" looks demonic in his determination to persecute the young man who wants to uproot himself from his native place. Wherever he goes, there the "black horse" is, "tall as a statue" 42, threatening him. The young man tries to run away from him, but the horse is so develish that he cannot escape him, not even can he make friends with him:

> He took control of himself and turned back deliberately, determined not to give the horse one more thought. If it wanted to share the wood with him, let it. If it wanted to stare at him, let it. He was nestling firmly into these resolutions when the ground shook and he heard the crash of a heavy body coming down the wood. Like lightning his legs bounded him upright and about face. The horse was almost on top of him, its head stretching forwards, ears flattened and lips lifted back from the long yellow teeth. He got one snapshot glimpse of the red-veined eye-ball as he flung himself backwards around the tree. Then he was away up the slope, whipped by oak twigs as he leapt the brambles and brush-wood, twisting between the close trees till he tripped and sprawled. As he fell the warning flashed through his head that he must at all costs keep his suit out of the leaf-mould, but a more urgent instinct was already rolling him violently sideways. He spun around, sat up and looked back, ready to scramble off in a flash to one side. He was panting from the sudden excitement and effort. The horse had disappeared.43

But the horse is inexhaustible. He returns and the youngster starts a "bombardment" 44 of stones at the animal till he gets tired with the "unaccustomed exercise", 45 just to find the horse there staring at him.

The author gives such a vivid description of the fight that we wonder whether the horse is real or an image of the "otherness" of man. To me it seems that by persecuting the animal, the man is persecuting "the other" that tries to possess him. When we consider that, like man, the horse is a domestic animal we realize how great man's rebellion is. He has become so sophisticated that he wants to ignore nature. Thence the violence of the fight when man is forced to come back to his origins.

The exhausting fight, in which man has the opportunity to release his "savage energy" 46, reconciles man with himself and he becomes whole again. It brings him some peace or, at least, resignation:

> Piece by piece he began to take off his clothes, wringing the grey water out of them, but soon he stopped that and just sat staring at the ground, as if some important part had been cut out of his brain. 47

Not only big animals become symbols in Wodwo, but small animals also do. Ted Hughes makes use of the crabs to show how man has been dehumanized. Gigantic, but empty-minded, the crabs act mechanically like the efficient machines man has invented and to which he finally became a slave:

These crabs own this world.
All night, around us or through us,
They stalk each other, they fasten on to each other,
They mount each other, they tear each other to pieces,
They utterly exhaust each other.
They are the powers of this world. 48

In a world which whirls quicker and quicker the crabs, like men, have no time to stop and reconsider things, make friends, help. Every day they resume the same activities they had done the day before, soulessly but efficiently. Their day is lived to exhaustion, while man lives only the time which is left from their work:

We are their bacteria,
Dying their lives and living their deaths. 49

Man has become so mechanized, so boring, so alike that he has even wearied God. In his possession-mania man is only interested in accumulating things, which come to mean nothing since he has not learned how to enjoy them. He has become blind, dumb:

Or we jerk awake to the world of our possessions
With a gasp,in a sweat burst,brains jamming blind
Into the bulb-light. Sometimes,for minutes,a sliding
Staring
Thickness of silence
Presses between us. 50

Instead of helping man to live a full life, the crabs, who stand for modern machinery, have monopolized him. He no longer can do without them. Here lies the irony of the problem: invented to serve man, they have

become man's masters.

This may be the reason why in "Skylarks" Ted Hughes suggests that the values of this world should be changed:

> To supplant
> Life from its centre. 51

But the skylarks, though sensitive, lack creative power to make such a change. This is a point Ted Hughes batters home repeatedly. Like soldiers they can only follow orders. Commanded to climb on and on and to sing they obediently do so. Thus they sing "Joy!" in their capacity to rise, weightless, alert and with clear conscience, but they also call for help. "Help!" for this uneasy globe, for the cruelty the world has been immersed into, for the creatures who have been enslaved, for all the soldiers of this world who are commanded to struggle and to die without ever knowing why. And the skylarks can do nothing effective, as they are just "the mad earth's missionaries" 52. Like the poet they can only sing and cry.

Sensitivity is not enough, Ted Hughes seems to say. One has to be daring, fearless, challenging like the gnats, who are identified with God in "Gnat Psalm". We can feel the poet's admiration for the gnats, the same admiration he displayed for the first hawk and jaguar. The gnats will never let themselves be slaves, as "they are their own sun" 53. Conscious of their strength they will do whatever pleases them, bravely.

God-like, they will rather die than give in. The gnats stand for the independent but detached thinkers of our days and as such the poet salutes them:

> O little Hasids
> Ridden to death by your own bodies
> Riding your bodies to death
> You are the angels of the only heaven! 54

Nonetheless if one is too small one has to yield to the strength of the stronger. Ted Hughes seems to manifest this opinion in the short story "Sunday". A rat fights desperately for its liberty, but he cannot cope with man, who takes advantage of the rat's smallness to impose his superiority. Besides, the man, the rat-catcher, does not act alone. He is helped by other men in the pursuit of the poor animal. This man has lost all human dignity and not gained the dignity of the rat he persecutes:

> Scarecrowish, tawny to colourless, exhausted, this was Billy Red, the rat-catcher. As a sideline he kept hens and he had something of the raw, flea-bitten look of a red hen, with his small, sunken features and gingery hair! ... His voice was not strong - lungless, a shaky wisp, full of hen-fluff and dust. 55

All this man wants is some free pints of beer. After fighting in vain for its freedom, the rat understands and gives in:

> The caught rat, not quite convinced before but

> now understanding the whole situation, doubled round like a thing without bones, and bit and shook the bars and forced its nose out between them to get at the string that held its buttocks tight to the cage side. ... Then the rat startled everybody. Squeezing still farther into its corner, it opened its mouth wide and began to scream - a harsh, ripping, wavering scream travelling out over the yard like some thin, metallic, dazzling substance that decomposed instantly. As one scream died the rat started another, its mouth wide. ...All at once it crouched in a corner, silent. ...The freed rat pulled its tail in delicately and sniffed at the noose round it, ignoring the wide-open door. 56

In this story Ted Hughes draws an excellent contrast between man's violence and the animal's. The animal, he suggests, only kills to protect himself and his breed whereas man kills for any sort of prize. Furthermore, as man possesses the knowledge of good and evil, his violence is perverse - he goes against nature. An animal never over-kills as man does. The animal's violence is instinctive, natural. It means self-preservation, love, life. The violence of over-civilized man, however, is a blood-lust, a desire to kill for the sake of killing.

Roles have been changed in this short story. While the rat becomes more human in his capacity to understand and to suffer, man becomes more inhuman in his wish to survive no matter how. In my opinion, this inversion of values is the principal innovation

in the animal-images of Wodwo.

In book after book the animals dwarf down in beauty, size, vigour and elegance till they are reduced to a black, filthy, sensuous, cynical bird: the crow. As should be expected, this reduction and the violence of Hughes's metaphor, roused much protest.

Called to explain his creation, Ted Hughes wrote:

> No-body knows quite how he was created, or how he appeared. He was created by God's nightmare ... He is a man to correct man, but of course he's not a man, he's a crow: he never does quite become a man ... The crow is the most intelligent of the birds. He lives in just about every piece of land on earth ... No carrion will kill a crow. The crow is the indestructible bird who suffers everything, suffers nothing - like Horatio. 57

Crow was hatched in "a black rainbow/ Bent in emptiness/ over emptiness" 58. His first scream was for "Blood/ Grubs, crusts/ Anything 59. Incidentally, it is significant that words like "black", "blood", "grubs", "crusts" are recurring images used in reference to Crow.

Having had such a beginning Crow becomes invulnerable to any kind of finesse. He is physical, "earthy" 60, he can enjoy sex, but not love. His world is different from the other birds'. While the eagle, the curlew, the swallow, the swift, the owl, the sparrow, the heron, the bluetit, the woodpecker, the peewit, the bullfinch, the goldfinch, the wryneck and

the dipper remain in their own world, which is clean and pure, Crow comes down to the world of men "spraddled head-down in the beach-garbage, guzzling a dropped ice-cream" 61.

Crow is an outcast in the world of birds and an outcast in the world of men as well. Unable to understand the world's infinitude, he is content in merely existing. He does not try to improve anything in himself or in the world. He watches everything rather cynically, receives what is his due, takes profit of whatever he can, but never gives anything in exchange. It is this brutal, selfish attitude of Crow, which makes him so man-like, that has shocked lots of critics and poetry-readers.

In his attempt to survive, he gives up any metaphysical speculation and searches for something to eat. In this way he becomes more and more insensitive. Insensitive to tears, war, murder, death:

> Then everybody wept,
> Or sat,too exhausted to weep,
> Or lay,too hurt to weep.
> And when the smoke cleared it became clear
> This had happened too often before
> And was going to happen too often in future
> And happened too easily
> Bones were too like lath and twigs
> Blood was too like water
> Cries were too like silence
> The most terrible grimaces too like footprints in mud
> And shooting somebody through the midriff
> Was too like striking a match

Too like potting a snooker ball
Too like tearing up a bill
Blasting the whole world to bits
Was too like slamming a door
Too like dropping in a chair
Exhausted with rage
Too like being blown to bits yourself
Which happened too easily
With too like no consequences.

So the survivors stayed. 62

And Crow is nothing but a survivor, a survivor in this world where words are voluminous but meaningless, where happy moments last only seconds, where man is unable to smile.

Dissatisfied with the things around him, he tries to correct them. Yet his efforts serve only to make people more confused, trees older, things obscure - "charred black" 63 - and the world more chaotic:

When God, disgusted with man,
Turned towards heaven.
And man, disgusted with God,
Turned towards Eve,
Things looked like falling apart.

But Crow Crow
Crow nailed them together,
Nailing Heaven and earth together -

So man cried, but with God's voice.
And God bled, but with man's blood. 64

There is nothing he can do because the root of the evil is inside himself, not in the external world,

where he looks for it:

> Where is the Black Beast?
> Crow sat in its chair, telling loud lies against
> the Black Beast.
> Where is it?
> Crow shouted after midnight, pounding the wall
> with a last.
> Where is the Black Beast?
> Crow split his enemy's skull to the pineal gland. 65

Questions are put, but no answers are given. In a world where everyone wants to evade it is wiser not to respond directly to any question. Actually no-one seems prepared to face truth.

Crow is brave enough to interfere in other people's lives, but not to go deep inside himself and try to eradicate a most disconcerting feeling of inner guilt:

> How can he fly from his feathers?
> And why have they homed on him?
>
> ...
>
> His prison is the earth. 66

As an unwilling participant in this universe, he cannot be of any use:

> He knew he was the wrong listener unwanted
> To understand or help - 67

He is a prisoner of himself, like we all are, prisoners of our limitations, prejudices, fears:

> So he gazes into the quag of the past
> Like a gypsy into the crystal of the future, 68

And he sees no changes. Crow tries religion, science, philosophy, yet they are of no avail to him. The only "leftover" [69] in this "deathless greatness/ Lonelier than ever" [70], Crow is the hero of our modern world, the anti-hero: small, callous, greedy, unstable, uneasy, inconsistent, unreliable, insatiable, omnipresent without the omniscience and the omnipotence of God.

In contrast with the predatory heroic hawk, Crow is anti-heroic. The violence around him is the violence of the over-civilized man who does not kill directly, who does not speak plainly, who does not behave instinctively, who does not roar with laughter or tears when he is too happy or too sad. It is the violence which comes wrapped up in lovely packets. It hurts more than the jaguar's because it takes one unawares. It may kill, but if it does, it kills slowly, cautiously, scientifically.

With the figure of this vicious, ugly, ill-omen bird, Ted Hughes drew the picture of modern man, disensitized by the over-humanization and mechanization of highly-civilized countries, like England, for example. Crow is the "animalized human" which comes to contrast with the "humanized animals" of Lupercal and Wodwo.

As a summary of this discussion on the animals I believe we could separate them into three categories:

1. animals as animals, i.e., irrational, instinctive, such as, the first hawk, the first jaguar, the cats, the dog, the thrushes, the goat. To the spectacle

of violence, they will respond with violence;

2. humanized animals, i.e., animals who keep their physical shape and still they are sensitive enough to suffer like any human being: the rat, the skylarks, the gnats. Victims of the violence of man and the world;

3. animalized human , i.e., an animal physically speaking yet with all the psychological and mental characteristics of man. He has become so harsh, so callous that he can even enjoy the violence of the universe. He is rather ironical towards it.

Also I found that Ted Hughes presents us with a dual hero: the hawk and the crow.

The hawk (white, authentic, literally violent) dominates Hughes's early work. He is Hughes's animal hero. The crow (black, mischievous, figuratively violent) dominates his late work. The crow is Hughes's animalized anti-hero, a human allegorized as bird. The supplanting of the feudal hawk by the proletarian crow has been a natural process of evolution. When animal automatism gave way to man's self-consciousness, the whiteness of the hawk had to yield to the blackness of the crow.

CHAPTER FOUR

ATTITUDE TO WOMEN

When the present writer was in Edinburgh, in 1977, a stranger asked me what I was doing in Britain. As I replied that I was working on the poetry of Ted Hughes, he questioned again: "Ted Hughes, the poet who was involved in the murder of Sylvia Plath?"

And this is how Ted Hughes's reputation runs: as a lady-killer. The questioner confessed that he had never read any of Hughes's poems, that this fact was all he knew about Ted Hughes.

Of course, Hughes did not kill his first wife. At the time Sylvia Plath committed suicide, Ted Hughes and Sylvia were separated, living in different parts of Britain. Besides, Sylvia had attempted suicide several times before she finally succeeded. Her poetry is haunted with the presence of death.

In this chapter I will consider"violence" primarily under the aspect of misogyny: in Plath's poetry grounds have often been found for this accusation. Subtly she portrays Hughes as a sort of tyrant, a man in "black coat, black shoes and black hair" [1], a patriarchal, impenetrable,"inscrutable" [2] man, a god from whose "kingdom" [3] she feels " exiled to no good" [4]. He looks like the god possessed by divinus furor and she the victim trapped in his nets. For years she tried hard to understand him, to fit together every small piece of that enormous man

who was a giant to her, to make sense of the Colossus he was, but all her efforts were in vain:

> Scaling little ladders with gluepots and pails
> of lysol
> I crawl like an ant in mourning
> Over the weedy acres of your brow
> To mend the immense skull plates and clear
> The bald white tumuli of your eyes. 5

In her letters home Sylvia always stressed the admiration she felt for Ted Hughes's health, vigour and "hugeness" 6. For his strong male qualities she identified him with the father who died in her early infancy:

> It is heaven to have someone like Ted who is so kind and honest and brilliant - always stimulating me to study, think, draw and write. He is better than any teacher, even fills somehow that huge, sad hole I felt in having no father. 7

In his poetry, too, Hughes's attitude towards women is disconcerting. We have to go on reading one book after the other, paying special attention to the treatment he gives to women to be able to understand his ambivalent attitude.

In the lyric "Song", one of his first poems to be printed (it was published in the St. Botolph Review, Cambridge, 1956), he addresses himself to a "lady" who is an unreachable, beloved goddess. For a full appreciation of the poem I will quote it in full:

O lady, when the tipped cup of the moon blessed you
You became soft fire with a cloud's grace;
The difficult stars swam for eyes in your face;
You stood, and your shadow was my place:
You turned, your shadow turned to ice
O my lady.

O lady, when the sea caressed you
You were a marble of foam, but dumb.
When will the stone open its tomb?
When will the waves give over their foam?
You will not die, nor come home,
O my lady.

O lady, when the wind kissed you
You made him music for you were a shaped shell.
I follow the waters and the wind still
Since my heart heard it and all to pieces fell
Which your lovers stole, meaning ill,
O my lady.

O lady, consider when I shall have lost you
The moon's full hands, scattering waste,
The sea's hands, dark from the world's breast,
The world's decay where the wind's hands have passed,
And my head, worn out with love, at rest
In my hands, and my hands full of dust,
O my lady. [8]

By the gentle language, the nostalgic tone , the Petrarchan treatment of the theme, we might assign this song to the romantic or even to an earlier period. The language is highly respectful. Abstract terms and imagery abound in this poem: "blessed", "soft", "grace", "shadow", "love", "the difficult stars swam for eyes in your face", "a marble of foam", "my head worn out with love". The

lady is compared to the distant "moon" and is worshipped as an enigmatic madonna set on a pedestal.

The same admiration he devotes to this "lady" in The Hawk in the Rain is devoted to the "Mountains" in a later book, Wodwo. The mountains are also distant, solid, unattainable, content in their eternity:

> They were there yesterday and the world before yesterday,
> Content with the inheritance,
>
> Having no need to labour, only to possess the days,
> Only to possess their power and their presence,
>
> Smiling on the distance, their faces lit with the peace
> Of the father's will and testament,
>
> Wearing flowers in their hair, decorating their limbs
> With the agony of love and the agony of fear and the agony of death. 9

In spite of the formal and heiratic terms: "content", "peace", "agony of love", "agony of fear", "agony of death", the language in this poem is more domestic: "I am a fly if these are not stones", "wearing flowers in their hair, decorating their limbs", "having no need to labour". But the beloved one is still an archetypal, supernatural figure of a woman symbolized by the mountains.

In Crow "She" comes back in the form of an anonymous woman. Coming back "She" brings perpetuity to the race, "She" brings hope, love and above all "She"brings realization in love. No longer untouchable, faultless or eternal, "She" brings life to this world. An

adorable mixture of woman and goddess, "She" lives the life that is offered her, is content and brings contentment. "She" is perfect within her limitations. "She" is still a goddess, but a goddess of the modern world, no longer symbolized by the "moon", but by the "city", which is an up-to-date symbol for the Mother-goddess. She creates her own destiny and accepts it. Thus her agony passes into affirmation:

> She has come amorous it is all she has come for
> If there had been no hope she would not have come
> And there would have been no crying in the city
> (There would have been no city) 10

In this poem the language is harsh, rather sensuous and proletarian: "She comes with the birth push", "She comes too cold afraid of clothes", "She comes dumb she cannot manage words". The punctuation is broken up and the verses are laid out on the paper quite arbitrarily. That is, their length varies according to the intensity of feeling the author wants to express.

However, the woman is not always raised to the level of an archetype. She is sometimes even rudely brought down to earth. "The Secretary" (The Hawk in the Rain) is despised by the poet. He admits that she is a nice, virtuous girl, attached to the family, but there is a sort of reserve in her that he cannot stand. If she wants to preserve her chastity, she should not have come down to the world of men, he seems to assert:

If I should touch her she would shriek and weeping
Crawl off to nurse the terrible wound: all
Day like a starling under the bellies of bulls
She hurries among men, ducking, peeping,

Off in a whirl at the first move of a horn.
At dusk she scuttles down the gauntlet of lust
Like a clockwork mouse. Safe home at last
She mends socks with holes, shirts that are torn,

For father and brother, and a delicate supper cooks:
Goes to bed early, shuts out with the light
Her thirty years, and lies with buttocks tight,
Hiding her lovely eyes until day break. 11

Certainly Ted Hughes displays misogyny in this poem. He ironically criticizes the Secretary who, with the excuse of devotion to her father and brother, shuts up her life at home, repressing her own nature.

Society has given her masculine ability: she is efficient, rational, methodical like a man. Yet for Ted Hughes she is as contemptible as the Vegetarian, who is too inefficient, too reluctant to be a man. Like the rat and the rat-catcher they seem to have changed roles, too:

Fearful of the hare with the manners of a lady,
Of the sow's loaded side and the boar's brown fang,

Fearful of the bull's tongue snaring and rending,
And of the sheep's jaw moving without mercy,

Tripped on Eternity's stone threshold.

Staring into the emptiness,
Unable to move, he hears the hounds of the grass.12

It appears to me that Ted Hughes is suggesting that modern society is devitalizing both man and woman, and in this way woman is losing her femininity and man his masculinity. Both are losing contact with their natural energies.

For Ted Hughes, men worthy of admiration are those lonely, tough individuals of Lupercal, individuals such as Dick Straightup and the Retired Colonel. They have never refused a battle and have profited out of all the good things life offers. They have survived everything and most of their contemporaries. Age may have "stiffened" 13 them, but it has not killed any of their masculine characteristics. Like the animals of The Hawk in the Rain they have remained strong, independent, free, and are quite aware of their excellence:

> He sits in the bar-room seat he has been
> Polishing with his backside sixty-odd years
> Where nobody else sits. White is his head,
> But his cheek high, hale as when he emptied
> Every Saturday the twelve-pint tankard at a tilt,
> Swallowed the whole serving of thirty eggs,
> And banged the big bass drum for Heptonstall -
> With a hundred other great works, still talked of. 14

These supermen would surely match wonderfully with the archetypal women, goddess-figures!... Somehow, in their roughness, their masochism and in their legendary aspect, they resemble the poet's father.

Men should be predatory and women, Hughes seems to say, should be either goddesses or witches. As

witches they can do whatever they like, "proprietary" as they are of their own destinies. Like witches, women are so unpredictable, irreverent, inconstant and sensuous that men are easily "devilled" by them.[15][16] The witch-women are symbolized by the snake, whose bite can be fatal. Yet they are so interesting, so tempting that men will come back to them as Mark Antony came back to Cleopatra.

No matter how violent, how disrespectful such women must be, when their pride is at stake, they will impose themselves as women with the right to live their own lives, as the girl from the poem "The Conversion of the Reverend Skinner" did. It was she, the "sinner" who violently put down the authoritarian Reverend with a slap on his cheek and a prompt, crude answer to his reprimand:

> "Dare you reach so high,girl,from the gutter of the street?"
> She slapped his cheek and turned his tongue right over:
> "Your church has cursed me till I am black as it:
> The devil has my preference forever."
> She spoke. An upstart gentleman
> Flashed his golden palm to her and she ran.
>
> But he lay there stretched full length in the gutter.
> He swore to live on dog-licks for ten years.
> "My pride has been the rotten heart of the matter".
> His eyes dwelt with the quick ankles of whores.
> To mortify pride he hailed each one:
> "This is the ditch to pitch abortions in". [17]

This poem of Ted Hughes's brings to my mind another one, written by W.B.Yeats, where the Irish poet defends the independent, brutal and irreverently proud attitude of a whore called Jane:

I met the Bishop on the road
And much said he and I.
"Those breasts are flat and fallen now,
Those veins must soon be dry;
Live in a heavenly mansion,
Not in some foul sty".

"Fast and foul are near of kin,
And fair needs foul", I cried.
"My friends are gone, but that's a truth
Nor grave nor bed denied,
Learned in bodily lowliness
And in the heart's pride".

"A woman can be proud and stiff
When in love intent;
But Love has pitched his mansion in
The place of excrement;
For nothing can be sole or whole
That has not been rent". 18

"When in love intent" 19 no considerations of "foul" and "fair" are valid - apparently this is the philosophy of both Yeats and Hughes, as a strong passion lifts woman above good and evil. This may be the reason why in the short story "Suitor" (Wodwo) nothing is said against the inconstancy of the young girl of the "dull sooted green-house" 20 who makes fools of her suitors. Romantically they stand in front

of her house hoping to have a distant glimpse of their beloved one. And she bewitches them all. It is the timidity of her suitors that the poet ridicules, not the girl's daring. Obviously, Ted Hughes's favourite heroine is not the innocent, pure Juliet our parents used to admire; it is rather the unconventional Juliet Fellini created.

Man needs the witch-woman who may kill him at the end, although in the meantime she revitalizes him. So he goes to her as a willing victim, as Ted Hughes tells us in the poem "Theology":

> No, the serpent did not
> Seduce Eve to the apple.
> All that's simply
> Corruption of the facts.
>
> Adam ate the apple.
> Eve ate Adam.
> The serpent ate Eve.
> This is the dark intestine. 21

In the new theology contrived by Ted Hughes Eve is identified with the "serpent" and Adam is the first "machão" victimizer. Aware of Eve's power he made the choice to fall into her nets.

Undoubtedly Ted Hughes's attitude to women goes from one extreme pole to another. While he seems to adore the supernatural woman-figures, either goddesses or witches, he despises the individualized women, like the old lady and the young girl from "Macaw and Little Miss" and the "Secretary". This is how his misogyny

goes: he idolizes the archetype and rejects the particular. Seemingly his ideal woman should be totally good or totally evil.

Apparently Ted Hughes believes that only by not sparing herself can a woman fully realize her nature. And hers, Hughes implies, is either a sadistic nature, like the witch-women's, or masochistic. If she is masochistic she must suffer. It is for the masochistic women that he advocates the revival of the ancient Roman festival, "Lupercalia", where a goat and a dog were sacrificed, and thongs were cut from their skins to whip the barren women. With the thongs priests would run in two bands round the city and whip women to cure them of sterility. It is significant that Ted Hughes entitles one of his books after this festival, Lupercal.

In the poem "Lupercalia" Ted Hughes says that the barren woman has "The past killed in her, the future plucked out" [22]. She is just another "living dead" [23]. As a result of this, the woman yearns for the arrival of those "powerful" [24], inflammable "racers" [25], who with "fresh thongs of goat-skin in their hands" [26] and "deliberate welts" [27] will lash her ruthlessly and brutally. Regardless of the pain they inflict on her, she welcomes them as her body will be warmed by their punishment and revitalized. In this poem Hughes makes deliberate use of short, ugly words, such as: "churlish", "scraps", "thefts", "bitch", "stripped", "stamp", "thongs", "welps", "stink", "thudding" and of alliteration: "Though that has stripped her stark",

st<u>are</u>/ st<u>artle</u>/ st<u>ink</u>; bl<u>ood</u>/ bl<u>essed</u>. The sound of these words echoes like the racers' violent whip strokes on the sterile woman.

Nonetheless, at times, the woman resents the brutality and insensibility of man, though the suffering he causes her brings her life:

> He gave her eyes and a mouth, in exchange for the song.
> She wept blood, she cried pain.
>
> The pain and the blood were life. But the man laughed -
>
> The song was worth it.
>
> The woman felt cheated. [28]

Here it is woman who is man's willing victim, and man is pictured as a Bluebeard: sensuous, cruel, insensitive. He makes use of the woman for his own purpose. Satiated and tired of her, he throws her away or pokes fun at her. Vulnerable, the woman suffers from man's callousness. Yet still she wants him, masochist that she is.

Also it is through suffering that the woman bestows life on man, but this suffering is self-fulfilment for her. Yet by sheltering man in her womb and by giving him birth, man becomes emotionally dependent on the woman who is his mother. She is man's first love, and this primal love is a difficult feeling to get rid of. In "Revenge Fable" Ted

Hughes describes the agony of a brilliant man (I wonder whether he is not the poet himself) obsessed with ridding himself from the love he nourishes for his mother. Quite aware that this feeling can annihilate both, mother and son, he tries by all means to escape from it. Yet escape seems impossible, no matter how clever he is:

> There was a person
> Could not get rid of his mother
> As if he were her topmost twig.
> So he pounded and hacked at her
> With numbers and equations and laws
> Which he invented and called truth.
> He investigated, incriminated
> And penalized her, like Tolstoy,
> Forbidding,screaming and condemning,
> Going for her with a knife,
> Obliterating her with disgusts
> Bulldozers and detergents
> Requisitions and central heating
> Rifles and whisky and bored sleep.
>
> With all her babes in her arms,in ghostly weepings,
> She died.
>
> His head fell off like a leaf. [29]

This is a recurrent theme in Ted Hughes's poetry. In "Crow and Mamma" Crow takes a rocket and climbs up to the moon in an attempt to fly away from his mother. Relieved, he manages to sleep peacefully just to awake in his mother's lap:

He jumped into the rocket and its trajectory
Drilled clean through her heart he kept on

And it was cosy in the rocket,he could not see much
But he peered out through the portholes at Creation

And saw the stars millions of miles away
And saw the future and the universe

Opening and opening
And kept on and slept and at last

Crashed on the moon awoke and crawled out

Under his mother's buttocks. 30

We can discern violence toward woman contained in an ironic parenthesis: "Drilled clean through her heart".

I wonder whether this violence toward women displayed by Ted Hughes could not be explained by the "S curve theory" which critics like George Ford, H.M. Daleski and R. Pritchard applied to D.H. Lawrence. That is, Hughes, like Lawrence, in his early life, must have had a strong attachment to his mother, a lady who led a secluded life in the small villages of West Yorkshire. Later on, he developed a reaction against her and tended to favour his father, a crude, extroverted man, who nourished his children with violent stories of war. By the reading of his books I think we can also assume that Ted Hughes is self-conscious about his Oedipus complex. Furthermore, since he returns again and again to this theme, it is quite possible that his poems function as catharsis to relieve him

from the annoying weight of this guilt complex.

In an interview with the London Magazine Ted Hughes complains that after the Puritan victory in the Civil War, England lacked the "figure of Mary" [31], the suffering, passive, dispossessed Mother. Since then the image of woman has altered. Now Englishmen confront a woman conscious not only of her duties, but above all of her rights. In the poem "Her Husband" (Wodwo) Hughes portrays an efficient, haughty housewife. Married to a "machão" who wants to impose upon her, she ignores him. He will have his meals ready when he gets home, but not her soul:

Her Husband

Comes home dull with coal-dust deliberately
To grime the sink and foul towels and let her
Learn with scrubbing brush and scrubbing board
The stubborn character of money.

And let her learn through what kind of dust
He has earned his thirst and the right to quench it
And what sweat he has exchanged for his money
And the blood-weight of money. He'll humble her

With new light on her obligations.
The fried, woody chips, kept warm two hours in the oven,
Are only part of her answer.
Hearing the rest, he slams them to the fire back

And is away round the house-end singing
"Come back to Sorrento" in a voice
Of resounding corrugated iron.
Her back has bunched into a hump as an insult.

> For they will have their rights.
> Their jurors are to be assembled
> From the little crumbs of soot. Their brief
> Goes straight up to heaven and nothing more is heard of it. 32

The man cannot complain. She performs her obligations dutifully, though she gives no love to the man she cooks for and he resents it. Marriage is presented as a war. The husband is rude, crude and unpleasant; and the wife is cold, insolent and proud. To his "resounding corrugated iron" 33 voice she responds with a "hump" 34. He speaks louder, but she looks stronger in her mutism. Maybe it is their hard, poor life that has made them such warriors. Though the man and the woman's life is drawn along such rough lines, there is no animosity to either of them. The poet even proposes to be their "juror" 35 and promises them justice.

This description of the cold war between a husband and a wife suggests a passage in Sons and Lovers by another writer of the Northwestern part of England, D.H. Lawrence. Ted Hughes's"wife" can be compared to Lawrence's Mrs. Morel and the"husband" to Mr. Morel:

> Sunday was the same: bed till noon, the Palmerston Arms till 2.30, dinner, and bed; scarcely a word spoken. When Mrs. Morel went upstairs, towards four o'clock, to put on her Sunday dress, he was fast asleep. She would have felt sorry for him, if he had once said,

> "Wife, I'm sorry". But no; he insisted to himself it was her fault. And so he broke himself. So she merely left him alone. There was this deadlock of passion between them, and she was stronger. [36]

It is the recognition of woman's strength, of her power over man that both Lawrence and Hughes cannot bear. Consciously they refuse to submit to the female being. Consciously they refuse to depend on her. They are the "machões" and they insist on having their masculinity acknowledged. So there is a "war" inside themselves as well.

Love between a man and a woman is also presented as a war in "Parlour-Piece" (The Hawk in the Rain). It is "fire" and "flood" [37] disguised in cups of tea. "Love struck" [38] the dove breeder "like a hawk into a dovecote" [39]. Since then he no longer won prizes "with fantails or pouters" [40]. Firstly love brought him suffering and later on callousness. In "Lovesong" (Crow) the obsessive love of a man and a woman is shown as a stubborn war:

> His words were occupying armies
> Her laughs were an assassin's attempts
> His looks were bullets daggers of revenge
> Her glances were ghosts in the corner with horrible secrets
> His whispers were whips and jackboots
> Her kisses were lawyers steadily writing
> His caresses were the last hooks of a castaway
> Her love-tricks were the grinding of locks [41]

It is interesting to notice the images: all of them related to war, fights, battles.

Most of the time Ted Hughes presents only physical love, though he says that "desire's a vicious separator" [42]. Yet man looks for the woman, holds her tight and strangely enough asks her to "show [him] no home" [43]. I think this attitude could be explained in the light of the man's realization of his inability to escape a mother complex. Anyway it is a contradictory attitude which renders it difficult for man (and the poet himself) to be long pleased by any woman, since man must deny himself the very thing he wants.

Summing up this chapter we can distinguish three main conflicting attitudes of the poet toward women:

1. Worship for the unattainable woman, symbolized by the moon.
2. Respect, fear and a kind of gusto felt for the archetypal witch-woman, who is dangerous for man, though interesting.
3. Scorn for the contemporary, quotidian woman who has lost her feminine vitality through submission to a mechanized (and man-created) society.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE WASTELAND

In this chapter I will investigate violence in its aspect as the shock-effect of diction and metaphor, since it is by taking language to "extremity" that Ted Hughes manages to create his poetic wasteland. By making use of crude and Saxon words, "Eliotic" and existential images, loud, explosive and, at times, tuneless rhythm, Ted Hughes narrows and, at the same time, deepens his vision of the cosmos, leading us to a blacker world, apparently, than even T.S. Eliot could imagine.

Though Hughes favours "violent" characters in his first books (The Hawk in the Rain and Lupercal), nowhere does his cosmos look so dark and pessimistic as it does in his last "animal" books, mainly in Crow. There is light in them, there is even some kind of joy and love. Their air is breathable and, at times, even pleasant. Although there are some people trying to ruin this world with their sterility, their barren intellectuality and their wars, they have not succeeded yet. And we may hope that they will never do so.

However, when Crow appeared this hope seemed groundless. At a first reading of the book, Crow's universe seems so fragmented, meaningless, dry and mechanized that we wonder: "Will Hughes be able to

find a way out of this narrow, suffocating world he has stuffed himself into?"

In his review of Crow for The Times Literary Supplement Mr. Ian Hamilton complains that Ted Hughes is so "eager" in "his pursuit of blood and thunder" that he neglects "poetic caution" [1].

Reviewing Crow for The Black Rainbow Mr. David Holbrook commented that Hughes created a hostile,

> unintelligible and alien cosmos, in which man is not at home, and which is but designed to torment him with his nothingness. [2]

We may agree that Ted Hughes's world is narrow and pessimistic, that his language is brutal and rugged. Nonetheless, I think that Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Holbrook have been too partial in their criticism of Hughes. They have missed the positiveness of Hughes's use of "violence". It appears to me that he consciously goes against the traditional patterning of verse; thus he does not miss "poetic caution", he just chooses to follow a different direction. He wants his poetry to be energetic, strong, shocking. Furthermore, it is in his images and mainly in the myth of Crow that we are going to find the solution for the problem of the wasteland. And, it seems to me, there is a solution.

Of course, this line of image is no novelty. Contemporary poetry's use of the symbolism and mythology of a barren and infertile land to character-

ize the modern experience derives largely from T.S.Eliot's long and obscure poem "The Waste Land" (1922).

Children are not born, plants do not grow, flowers do not bloom, birds do not sing in Eliot's denatured and secularized world. Man has gone blind or half blind. He has lost his vigour. His living consists in merely watching everything which is going on around him. Eliot ironically displays this world to us, a dry, plain, fragmented world. It is a world which is no longer real, therefore its inhabitants have also become unreal.

Living in a world which is being wasted away and threatened with extinction, Tiresias (who stands for everyman) asks questions, looks for salvation, consults the cards and the horoscope, but no answers are given him. He does not find anyone to talk to. As a consequence he also becomes dumb or incoherent. The hopelessness, the aridity around him are so great that they enter and paralyze him as well.

Exhausted, seeing no purpose in life or in death, like Ted Hughes's Crow, Tiresias contemplates the death of the cosmos. He can do nothing since there is nothing or no-one he cares for. Without expecting anything he continues to populate this "Unreal City" [3] with a remote hope that sometime, somewhere, something will turn up and then he will be able "to set [his] land in order" [4]. Meanwhile everything is "falling down, falling down, falling down" [5].

To express the ideas of aimlessness, hopelessness, emptiness, isolation, fragmentation and sterility,

T.S. Eliot makes use of images of "dull roots", "broken images", "rock", "dust", "shadow", "marble", "synthetic perfumes", "frost", "desert", "bones", "ruins" and the like.

Like most of the modern writers, Ted Hughes was influenced by T.S. Eliot. We know he was acquainted with T.S. Eliot's work and with the author himself. In her letters Sylvia Plath points up the early encouragement Eliot gave to Hughes:

> ... Faber § Faber, the British publishing house, has just written to accept Ted's poetry for publication in England. Not only that, but Mr. Eliot (who is on their staff) read the book, and the publisher writes: "Mr. Eliot has asked me to tell you how much he personally enjoyed the poems and to pass on his congratulations on them"...[6]

> ... Last night at Eliot's was magnificent. The Eliots live in a surprisingly drab brick building on the first floor - yet a comfortable, lavish apartment. His Yorkshire wife, Valerie, is handsome, blonde and rosy. He was marvellous. Put us immediately at ease. ... Talk was intimate gossip about Stravinsky, Auden, Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence. I was fascinated. Floated in to dinner, sat between Eliot and Spender, rapturously, and got along very well. Both of them, of course, were instrumental in Ted's getting his Guggenheim and his book printed.[7]

> ... Eliot has offered to read and discuss any plays in verse Ted does, which is highly kind of him.[8]

In this chapter I will examine several aspects of Hughes's wasteland, such as: sterility, hopelessness, exhaustion, lack of communication, fragmentation, nothingness, intellectualism, mechanization and war. As the influence of T.S. Eliot on Hughes's wasteland is so obvious, I will refer back to him quite often in the development of this chapter.

Let us start with the theme of "sterility".

In Eliot's "The Waste Land" two women talk about abortion, contraception and femininity. One of them is reprimanded for her carelessness, for looking"so antique"[9] when she is only thirty-one. The first blames the pills she takes. And then comes the question which could be the author's as well:

> Why you get married for if you don't want children?[10]

Ted Hughes also worries about this problem as we saw in the previous chapter. He cannot stand women who run away from sex, repressing their innermost primitive emotions and their femininity. At the same time he glories in the attitude of whores, of inconstant girls who make love promiscuously.

Ted Hughes is sarcastic towards women who live independently from men, though they work with them and are attactive to them, as his Secretary is. She does not yield to man's physical desires. Because she chooses to devote her life to her work, her home, her father and brother, her chastity is ridiculed by the poet. By means of an ironical tone and the choice of

words like "touch", "weeping", "crawl off", "wound", "ducking" or "gauntlet", he seems to want to whip her as the Luperci whipped the barren women in the Roman festivals.

In "The Waste Land" Eliot also satirizes an independent woman who is a typist. She is a different sort, though. While Ted Hughes's Secretary cooks a "delicate supper" [11] for her father and brother, T.S. Eliot's typist "lays out food in tins" [12] for herself and an "expected guest" [13] who is looked down on by the poet as a "young man carbuncular" [14] working for a small agency. Without any feeling for him she accepts his assaults, and, indifferent to each other, they make love. Apparently their poor, mechanized life has stupefied and brutalized both of them.

After all, which woman is more barren, Eliot's typist or Hughes's secretary? To me, Eliot's typist is. Some strength is left Hughes's Secretary to refuse "the thing" she is not prepared to take. Besides she preserves some finesse: she herself carefully prepares the food at home, while Eliot's typist gets it ready-made in tins, and just heats it. She is too "tired and bored" [15] to do anything or to refuse anything. That is the reason why she accepts the "young man carbuncular's" [16] love-making.

However, both violate their natures: Hughes's secretary, her animal nature and Eliot's typist, her human nature.

In T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" images of

fertility alternate with images of sterility, one coming immediately after the other, as if they were fighting. In this seeming fight we feel that the poet is searching for a solution, for some kind of order in the chaotic universe he finds himself in. He is looking for some fertile land to farm or some fresh water to fish. In his quest, in his fishing, he may eventually encounter some answer, some sympathy, some peace.

Ted Hughes also seems to be looking for some order, some meaning to life. Since for him the poet is a kind of "witch-doctor, a medicine man among primitive peoples" [17], a Shaman, he searches for it in the cult of flora and fauna, as it can be seen in a poem where he deletes all signs of punctuation but the interrogation mark: "Wodwo". In this restless, feverish search, "turning leaves over" [18] and inspecting "the most secret interior" [19] of a frog, he apparently hopes to find some solution, some tonic for the infertility which dominates this universe. In "Wodwo" we are led to think that he is moving in a positive direction for he finds roots and water, and declares his intention "to go on looking".[20]

However, when Crow came out it astonished all his readers. "Go(ing) on looking" [21] took him back, though, still deeper, into the land he seemed to be escaping from: a blacker, more hopeless and yet more barren wasteland. He found himself in the violent world where Crow is, so to speak, the host and presiding spirit.

According to the Bible, when the world was created, light was made. Nevertheless when Crow was hatched, darkness was made to give birth to an indestructible, tough bird, a bird who could survive the darkness , the barreness and the death of the world.

Crow never tries to improve his conditions or the conditions of the world. He even refuses to learn the word "love". Just existing is the only concern of this egocentri , lonely bird. He watches everything and nothing disturbs him:

> Cars collide and erupt luggage and babies
> In laughter
> The steamer upends and goes under saluting like
> a stuntman
> In laughter
> The nosediving aircraft concludes with a boom
> In laughter
> People's arms and legs fly off and fly on again
> In laughter
> The haggard mask on the bed rediscovers its pang
> In laughter, in laughter
> The meteorite crashes
> With extraordinary ill-luck on the pram
>
> The ears and eyes are bundled up
> Are folded up in the hair,
> Wrapped in the carpet, the wallpaper, tied with
> the lampflex
> Only the teeth work on
> And the heart, dancing on in its open cave
> Helpless on the strings of laughter [22]

The images of collision, crash, boom, pang, ill-luck and destruction make the resistance of Crow look

devilish, brutal. As he does not hope for any vital change, he responds with stoical laughter to the violence of this worn-out world.

Hopelessness and exhaustion are themes of Ted Hughes's wasteland, too. Constant references to "wind", "stone", "pebbles", "straw", "fossils", "ashes", "skull", "shadow", "fumes", "mummies" and "melting" drive home the idea that we are living in a dreary expiring universe. In the poem "Out" (Wodwo) the poet bids farewell to the poppy, the first flower to regrow in the devastated fields of war.

Nothing grows in this world. Nothing lasts and what is worse nothing matters. Nothing can be realized in a world which has become dry. In "Heptonstall" Hughes develops this idea:

> Black village of gravestone.
> The hill's collapsed skull
> Whose dreams die back
> Where they were born.
>
> ...
>
> Life tries.
>
> Death tries.
>
> The stone tries.
>
> Only the rain never tires. [23]

It appears to me that like T.S. Eliot, Ted Hughes is suggesting that living in such a wasteland, in a world which has been so exhausted, man has no longer the

capacity to create anything new. Man no longer dares anything. Impotent, fearful, hollow, he just accepts what is given him and as such, he and his world have become colourless, meaningless, formless:

> We are the hollow men
> We are the stuffed men
> Leaning together
> Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
> Our dried voices, when
> We whisper together
> Are quiet and meaningless
> As wind in dry grass
> Or rats' feet over broken glass
> In our dry cellar
>
> Shape without form, shade without colour,
> Paralysed force, gesture without motion; [24]

Man's inertia, exhaustion, hopelessness, timorousness have made the world decadent. Ted Hughes makes use of the elements of nature to show that English society is a decaying society. Like the thistles, men grow, get old, die and their sons start a new cycle again dully, "fighting back over the same ground" [25]. The daring Vikings seem to have lost their force, they have become tired of fighting; the new territories have already been conquered and as a result of their inactivity men have become barren. Without the violence of the combat, man weakens physically, psychologically and mentally.

Everything is finished, everybody is tired out. Consequently conformity has become the prevalent feeling

among men:

> Where are you heading? Everything is already here.
> Your hardest look cannot anchor out among these rocks,
> your coming days cannot anchor among these torn
> clouds that cannot anchor.
>
> Your destination waits where you left it. [26]

Apparently everything one does is just "driv(ing) in a circle". [27]

In "The Waste Land" T.S. Eliot uses the image of the "wheel" to express the same idea, that we are "walking round in a ring" [28]. Thus, seemingly, neither poet see a way out for men.

Thus one of the aspects of the wasteland is that it moves in a vicious circle. Wherever you start, you go back to the same point. In this way whenever an attempt to move is made, it only generates misunderstanding and consequent despair. In such a world words seem to have lost their function. They do not communicate anything. Lack of communication is thus another characteristic of the wasteland.

Words are alluring since they came with "Aladdin's lamp" [29] to deceive man. "A lovely pack" [30] they are, "clear-eyed, resounding, well-trained" [31], valid for their sounds alone. Nonetheless man is at their mercy. The impact of words, Ted Hughes asserts, is "A Disaster":

> There came news of a word.
> Crow saw it killing men. He ate well.
> He saw it bulldozing

Whole cities to rubble. Again he ate well.
He saw its excreta poisoning seas.
He became watchful.
He saw its breath burning whole lands
To dusty char.
He flew clear and peered.

The word oozed its way, all mouth,
Earless, eyeless.
He saw it sucking the cities
Like the nipples of a sow
Drinking out all the people
Till there were none left,
All digested inside the word. [32]

Most of the verbs in this poem are related to sensory activities: "see", "eat", "peer", "suck", "drink", "digest". The nouns are likewise physical, concrete: "mouth", "cities", "nipples", "sow", "seas", "lands", "char". Together they form images which are very crude, like this one: "He saw it sucking the cities/ Like the nipples of a sow". Ted Hughes makes purposive use of explosive words and images, which create the effect of a disaster. In this way words are proved to do harm.

Only someone like Crow, hardened by their effect, is insensitive to them. He hears their sounds, but he does not care to grasp their meaning, if there is any. He is indifferent to them. They do not communicate anything to him, so desensitized has he become.

Not even tears or laughter can communicate.

They are automatic, they do not express any feeling. Sometimes man "makes a noise suspiciously like laughter",[33] but laugh genuinely he cannot. He cannot even smile, since the smile is just "illusion" [34], as Hughes puts it in "Gog", Wodwo. All man can do is weep. He weeps for everything he has lost. He weeps because he lives in a world he no longer recognizes. He weeps for his lost identity, his lost individuality, his lost world. He weeps because he is destitute:

> Grubs grubs He stabbed he stabbed
> Weeping
> Weeping
>
> Weeping he walked and stabbed
>
> Thus came the eye's
> roundness
> the ear's
> deafness. [35]

Weeping does not bring any relief, though. It is just an emotional manifestation of someone who is lost. To imply this idea the verses do not follow any logical pattern, they are collocated on the paper quite arbitrarily as if they were looking for some reason for the weeping, some reason to go on living in such a voracious and meaningless world.

But does the lack of communication derive from man's emptiness and insulation or is it the other way around?

Let us examine part III of the poem "Stations", Wodwo to answer this question:

> You are a wild look - out of an egg
> Laid by your absence.
>
> In the great Emptiness you sit complacent,
> Blackbird in wet snow.
>
> If you could make only one comparison -
> Your condition is miserable, you would give up.
>
> But you, from the start, surrender to total Emptiness,
> Then leave everything to it.
>
> Absence. It is your own
> Absence
>
> Weeps its respite through your accomplished music,
> Wraps its cloak dark about your feeding. [36]

From these lines we can conclude that Ted Hughes finds man guilty for the emptiness and consequent silence that reigns all over the world. Man has done nothing to react against this emptiness. On the contrary, he has surrendered to it. Too lazy to react, he chose the easiest road, that is, to do nothing at all. In "The Rescue" (Wodwo), Ted Hughes displays his anger at man's compromise more openly, comparing man to mummies bandaged up. To convey the idea of emptiness in the poem "Gog" (Wodwo), he uses images of a "bubble", "dust" and "swollen atoms":

> The atoms of saints' brains are swollen with the
> vast bubble of nothing.
> Everywhere the dust is in power. [37]

Sylvia Plath tells us Ted's feelings about this problem:

> As Ted says, most people's problems is lack of ideas, while his is that he has so many ideas and no really settled quiet place to write them. [38]

It appears to me that T.S. Eliot has the same conception about this matter. In "The Waste Land" the rich woman of "A Game of Chess" feels nervous and isolated because of the silence around her:

> "My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
> "Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.
> "What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
> "I never know what you are thinking. Think." [39]

Her partner does not speak because he does not have anything to say. Since man has lost interest in other human beings and in the world, his mind has gone blank.

As a result of this lack of communication, of man's insulation and alienation, there arise the feelings of disconnection and fragmentation of the world.

Like a jellyfish, man is disconnected, disconnected with himself and with the world he lives in. One person does not relate to another. Hands do not meet. Shoes are soleless, tins are bottomless, coats are left aside and the face of man never receives any human touch. It is an absurd crazy world:

In the hallucination of the horror
He saw this shoe, with no sole, rain-sodden,
Lying on a moor.
And there was this garbage can, bottom rusted away,
A playing place for the wind, in a waste of puddles.

There was this coat, in the dark cupboard, in the room, in the silent house.
There was this face, smoking its cigarette between the dusk window and the fire's embers.

Near the face, this hand, motionless.

Near the hand, this cup. [40]

Compare the shock effect of Hughes's lines with Eliot's violently disconnected world:

I can connect
Nothing with nothing.
The broken fingernails of dirty hands.
My people humble who expect
Nothing. [41]

In consequence of this fragmentation there comes the devaluation of once-important things which eventually come to be reduced to a brutal nothing. Ted Hughes seems to have come to the conclusion Macbeth arrived at when he lost everything: power, wife, friends. Life turns into nothing but an idiotic, noisy and furious tale without any meaning at all, since nothing versus nothing is nothing:

So finally there was nothing.
It was put inside nothing.
Nothing was added to it
And to prove it didn't exist
Squashed flat as nothing with nothing. [42]

Not even intellectual activities can redeem man from the meaninglessness of this world. Pure intellectualism is regarded as a barren activity by the poet. Ted Hughes has repeatedly refused to pursue an academic life. In one of her letters to her mother Sylvia Plath wrote:

> ... What you must understand is that Ted does not want to be a university professor for a career. He wants to write now and for the rest of his life. And in marrying a writer, I accept his life... Writing comes first with both of us, and although Wilbur and other writers find their plums in the academic world, Ted just doesn't want to spend years getting necessary degree qualifications when he should be writing hardest. And my faith in him and the way we want to live [travelling, meeting people, having the leisure to enjoy nature and life, writing] understands this...[43]

In his intellectual poems Ted Hughes suggests that in their pursuit of knowledge, the intellectuals shut up life in limits alienating themselves from other men and from the true sources of life.

In "Famous Poet" (The Hawk in the Rain) Ted Hughes displays the miserable life of a man who succeeded in life. Through hard work he managed to

win prizes, money and the parent's approval. Yet success did not bring him happiness as well. Instead he feels "wrecked and monstrous" [44].

The intellectual of "Meeting" (The Hawk in the Rain), in his attempt to be precise, has become so "slow, cold and ferocious" [45] that natural beings, like a goat, run away from him. In this way Ted Hughes manifests his opinion that he does not look like a man any more. He is rather one of those sacred monsters, dead before their time.

"Nothing of profit" [46] did the hermit of "The Good Life" (Lupercal) get from a higher education. That is, he has got plump and is well-dressed and comfortable, but his naturalness and his spontaneity are gone:

> Loud he prayed then; but late or early
> Never a murmur came to his need
> Save "I'd be delighted!" and "Yours sincerely",
> And "Thank you very much indeed!" [47]

Like Tiresias he has become rather a spectator of life than a participant in it. He is dead in life.

Talking to The Guardian Ted Hughes criticizes the intellectual sophistry of Cambridge which kills natural, spontaneous self-expression in man:

> Cambridge is the ordeal for initiation into English society and it's a pity there's not another one. It's a most destructive experience and only tough poets like Peter Redgrove ever survive ... In effect university is a prison life in your last three or four most formative years. It's

> a most deadly institution unless you're aiming to be either a scholar or a gentleman. [48]

And, certainly, Hughes hates both: scholar and gentleman. For him they represent a denial of life. In Wodwo he uses images of "broken wings", "shadows", "graves", "fumes", "extinct eyeballs", "cages", "masks" and "spectres" to refer to such academics. What he seems to regret is that their devotion to work is so great that they neglect themselves as men, as human beings. They become strangers to life:

> Humped, at his huge broken wing of shadow,
> He regrows the world inside his skull, like the spectre of a flower. [49]

I have the impression that for Ted Hughes this blind devotion to abstract work is mere wastage as it destroys the natural passions of man. For instance, he sees Einstein as a desolate man, fettered to his own learning:

> The tired mask of folds, the eyes in mourning,
> The sadness of the monkeys in their cage -
> Star peering at star through the walls
> Of a cage full of nothing.
>
> And no quails tumbling
> From the cloud. And no manna
> For angels.
> Only the pillar of fire contracting its strength
> into a star-mote.

Now the sargasso of a single sandgrain
Would come sweeter than the brook from the rock
To a mouth
Blasted with star-vapour.

....

"Mother! Mother!
O mother

Send me love"

But the flies

The flies rise in a cloud. [50]

Einstein misses what he really wants. This may be the reason why he sinks into work: to compensate for the thing which is denied him - love.

T.S. Eliot also seems to say that immersion in work will not bring man satisfaction, for he gets to "know only a heap of broken images" [51]. He does not get to know himself, his inner needs, his inner desires. The knowledge he acquires is thus fragmentary and unsatisfactory.

However, in his anti-intellectualism Hughes goes further than Eliot. Apparently in him there is the same struggle there is in Lawrence, of blood consciousness versus mind consciousness and one cannot yield to the latter exclusively without destroying oneself.

Perhaps Hughes's violent anti-intellectualism derives from the fact that he finds intellectuals responsible for the arid mechanization of the modern

world. In the poem "Fourth of July" (Lupercal) the poet regrets that animals have been killed to make way for a mechanized society, where empty men live isolated from each other:

> Unapproachable islands,
> From their heavens and their burning underworld
> Wait dully at the traffic crossing,
> Or lean over headlines, taking nothing in. [52]

Again in his anti-mechanization attitude, Hughes reminds us of Lawrence. In his angry rebellion we seem to hear the Lawrencian appeal: "For God's sake, let us be men/ Not monkeys minding machines" [53].

In the poem "The Casualty" (The Hawk in the Rain) people coldly watch an aircraft fall and burn down, without showing any concern for the victim of the disaster. Despite having seen the accident with their naked eyes they still "wait with interest for the evening news" [54].

Apparently men have become so brutalized by the everyday terror of our civilization that they are unable to show sympathy or mercy. They seem to take a sadistic pleasure in sitting in front of their television sets watching the horror films reel off in front of their eyes. Going to a pub they prefer to "appreciate" yet another film of devastation, which Hughes describes in the poem "Public Bar TV" (Wodwo):

On a flaked ridge of the desert

Outriders have found foul water. They say nothing;
With the cactus and the petrified tree
Crouch numbed by a wind howling all
Visible horizons equally empty.

The wind brings dust and nothing
Of the wives, the children, the grandmothers
With the ancestral bones, who months ago
Left the last river,

Coming at the pace of oxen. [55]

Ted Hughes seems to suggest that the effects of civilization are catastrophic. In "Crow's Vanity" (Crow) Crow looks "in the evil mirror" [56] at the works of civilization: prisons, wars, skyscrapers, overcrowded cities, pollution, prostitution and he finds all this "eerie" [57].

In "Magical Dangers" (Crow) Ted Hughes pushes this idea still further. Man only values physical and material things, such as a big house, a fast car, money, sex. Attractive and easily reachable, such prizes are the "magical dangers" [58] of this world. Things seemed to have turned the other way round: devices intended to serve man now are his masters. [59]

These "magical dangers" are likewise identified by T.S. Eliot in his "The Waste Land". There the rich lady is highly pleased with her "burnished throne" "wrought with fruited vines" [60], with her precious jewels and her "strange synthetic perfumes" [61]. In the diction

used, the rich detail and by the subtle irony of his description, T.S. Eliot reminds us of Pope's "The Rape of the Lock". Unfortunately Ted Hughes does not possess his predesessors' subtle irony in his ridicule of modern man or woman. He is the angry man controlled by his passionate subject-matter.

In his obsession to be genuine, to be a man of the land, to keep his own roots, Ted Hughes flatters himself on the fact that he has been able to preserve the West Yorkshire dialect, despite Cambridge:

> You know you can hear the language under the language when you speak. The minute you've lost that feeling it has gone dead on you. Well, I was lucky the West Yorkshire dialect is both eloquent and emphatic, there are no parts of it formal or dehumanized. It gets in whatever I write and that in turn limits what I write to form a single point of view.[62]

Here again the "blood consciousnessness" sentiment is powerfully exhibited by Ted Hughes. T.S. Eliot, on the other hand, is so mind-conscious that he plays tricks with the language. He alternates a highly cultural, pedantic language with a vulgar dialect and mingles quotations by different authors in different languages to expose a decadent society.

To finish this exploration on Ted Hughes's wasteland, let us finally treat the theme of war.

Hughes appears to tell us that, dissatisfied with himself, man makes war and projects his inner

wasteland into the outer world. Thus violence is primarily inside man, but civilized man has become alienated from the sources of his own violence. And it is this that makes him sinister for Hughes.

Examining Hughes's war poems we might wonder why he only writes about World War One, since as a boy he must have heard the sounds of bombs of World War Two over England and must have seen some of their devastation. I suppose that this paradox can be explained if we take two facts into account:

1. As a child he was nurtured by stories of World War One which his father used to tell. Though frightened by its violence and death, he was fascinated by them, as he says in the poem "Out" (Wodwo):

> My father sat in his chair recovering
> From the four-year mastication by gunfire and mud,
> Body buffeted wordless, estranged by long soaking
> In the colours of mutilation.
> ...
> He felt his limbs clearing
> With every slight, gingerish movement. While I, small and four,
> Lay on the carpet as his luckless double,
> His memory's buried, immovable anchor,
> Among jawbones and blown-off boots, tree-stumps, shell-cases and craters,
> Under rain that goes on drumming its rods and thickening
> Its kingdom, which the sun has abandoned, and where nobody
> Can ever again move from shelter.[63]

2. In World War One, at least in the air war, the combatant could initially maintain the sense of their separate chivalry, while in World War Two the soldier was just a number in a regiment. There was no place for chivalric, individual heroism. The hero of the second world war was the atomic bomb. As a highly individualistic man, Ted Hughes sees nothing to celebrate in a mass war.

The repeated charge against Hughes is that of "violence". And, certainly, the theme of war would be a proper sphere within which to exercise this proclivity. The question is: if he is so "violent" is Hughes pro-aggression and pro-war as well?

Let us answer this question by parts.

For Hughes man should be an individual, free, whole, with his own aspirations, his own dreams, hopes, frustrations and above all with his own courage and his own fear. In self-defense or for survival, the individual naturally resorts to violence, but he can also feel a natural aversion to violence.

In his war poems Hughes commemorates the individual free of social inhibition, the Rousseauesque natural man who comes up in the figures of those rugged individualists like the Retired Colonel and Dick Straightup. Now they are old and solitary, but are still upright, brave and "full of legend and life" [64]. They lived a full life, drank a lot, fought their wars and survived them. Reactionaries they have never bent to anyone or to any circumstance. Cornered, they

would attack blindly and violently like any predator. Because of their prompt instinctive reactions to life they are admired by the young people and by the poet himself who look at them as a species in extinction. In this way we could answer affirmatively the first part of the question: "Is Hughes pro-aggression?"

To answer the second part of the question ("Is Hughes pro-war?) let us consider the poem "Six Young Men" (The Hawk in the Rain)

Looking at the photograph of six young men who went to the war, the poet sees them individually: one with "an intimate smile" [65], the other "chew(ing)a grass", [66] a third one "bashful" [67] and still another one "ridiculous with cocky pride" [68]. They had been friends and as friends they died in the war:

> This one was shot in an attack and lay
> Calling in the wire, then this one, his best friend,
> Went out to bring him in and was shot too;
> And this one,the very moment he was warned
> From potting at tin-cans in no-man's-land,
> Fell back dead with his rifle-sights shot away.
> The rest,nobody knows what they came to,
> But come to the worst they must have done,and held it
> Closer than their hope;all were killed. [69]

There is a feeling of regret for their stupid, meaningless deaths. In the last stanza Hughes laments that the brutality of the war has made so many innocent victims to no end at all. And it has made not only literal victims, since modern men look dead as well.

They are the "living dead" [70] of our contemporary wasteland:

> That man's not more alive whom you confront
> And shake by the hand, see hale, hear speak loud,
> Than any of these six celluloid smiles are,
> Nor prehistoric or fabulous beast more dead;
> No thought so vivid as their smoking blood:
> To regard this photograph might well dement,
> Such contradictory permanent horrors here
> Smile from the single exposure and shoulder out
> One's own body from its instant and heat. [71]

Thus Ted Hughes is both pro-aggression and anti-war. While he detests mechanized, de-individualized modern war which is death-in-life, he yet admires the genuine, individualistic expression of aggression which is basically a life instinct.

The poem "Bayonet Charge" (The Hawk in the Rain) illustrates very well this ambivalence of Hughes. He has no word of reprobation for the soldier who deserts the war. On the contrary, he seems to take delight in his flight. The soldier had the courage to flee that deadly "thing" which frightened him, which could kill him and in which he saw no purpose at all. His fear gave him the courage to dare "king, honour, human dignity, etcetera" [72]:

> He was running
> Like a man who has jumped up in the dark and runs
> Listening between his footfalls for the reason
> Of his still running, and his foot hung like
> Statuary in mid-stride. Then the shot-slashed furrows

Threw up a yellow hare that rolled like a flame
And crawled in a threshing circle,its mouth wide
Open silent,its eyes standing out.
He plunged past with his bayonet toward the green
hedge.
King, honour, human dignity, etcetera
Dropped like luxuries in a yelling alarm
To get out of that blue crackling air
His terror's touchy dynamite. [73]

Though the explicit analogy is that of a rabbit, this soldier also reminds me of the jaguar. Whereas the jaguar roars violently to dispell the crowd, this soldier challenges everything in his way to be free of war. His genuine fear made of him a hero, too, though an upside-down hero. For Hughes his flight is a kind of heroism. [74]

Although anti-war, it is my opinion that Ted Hughes accepts "violence". That is, he favours the individual "violent" acts in which man releases his energy in genuine, personal display of anger and in this way he becomes one with himself. But he hates the brutality, the mechanization, the anonymity of the modern war. Through small acts of individual bravery man forges his masculinity. And for Hughes man should be above all a "machão". In this way he favours the absolute, free, brutal, violent "machismo", which is natural and instinctive in man as it is natural and instinctive in the animals.

At the beginning of the chapter we raised the question whether Ted Hughes's wasteland, evidently blacker than Eliot's, did not nevertheless contain

some redeeming element. In the fallen world of Crow, is there no catharsis, in tragic wisdom or transcendence to be gleamed from the experience of soul-death?

In "Crow's Elephant Totem Song" (Crow) the elephant is characterized by words such as "loveliness", "beauty", "innocence", "kindliness" and "grace". In a book where the usual images have been "blood", "black", "furnace", "grubs", "gall, "death", shattering", "stabbing", "smashing", "screaming", "writhing" and the like, those positive images may seem even out of place. Apparently Ted Hughes wants to mean that the elephant being entirely good and beautiful was not complete. He was one-sided. After the conflict with the mischievous hyenas he became whole since he gained both wisdom and evil, which made him fit to survive in this world:

> At the Resurrection
> The Elephant got himself together with correction
> Deadfall feet and toothproof body and bulldozing bones
> And completely altered brains
> Behind aged eyes, that were wicked and wise.
>
> So through the orange blaze and blue shadow
> Of the afterlife, effortless and immense,
> The Elephant goes his own way, a walking sixth sense,
> And opposite and parallel
> The sleepless Hyenas go
> Along a leafless skyline trembling like an oven roof
> With a whipped run
> Their shame-flags tucked hard down

Over the gutsacks
Crammed with putrefying laughter [75]

"Crow's Undersong" is still more positive. Ted Hughes brings the figure of the Mother to his wasteland. In the shape of a proletarian, vulgar woman she comes "amorous"[76] and brings life and love. Like Crow himself she represents the principle of survival in a cruel, barren world. If she had not come "there would have been no city" [77]. Images of fertility prevail in this poem: "water", "birth", "nipples", "petals", "nectar fruits" and "rainbow".

In "Examination at the Womb-door" (Crow) Crow is put to the examination-desk and he passes his test successfully. He recognizes that Death possesses his "scrawny little feet", his "bristly scorched-looking face", his "still-working lungs", his "utility coat of muscles" , his "unspeakable guts", his "questionable brains", his "messy blood", his "minimum-efficiency eyes", his "wicked little tongue" and his "occasional wakefulness" [78]. Death is stronger than love and life, but he, Crow, is stronger than Death. He was born to contemplate death and it, on the other hand, gives him life. In this way death is food to him. Out of this deathly world Crow, like the poet, creates life. It may not be a beautiful, pleasant, easy one, it is rather a difficult, strong, violent life, but anyway Crow survives it. Apparently it is this bird fed by death and all the mishmash of this world who will resolve the problem of the wasteland.

Contrarily to Ted Hughes's Crow, T.S. Eliot's characters are too faint-hearted to live in reality. Consequently they remain in a state which is neither life nor death, rather unconscious. Tiresias confesses that he "was neither/Living nor dead and he knew nothing" [79]. Crow, on the contrary, knows everything. He has developed a rude plumage which has toughened him and made him untouchable and invulnerable.

Crow became so tough with the everyday experience that not even the sun could burn him up, as Ted Hughes tells us in "Crow's Last Stand" (Crow). It seems that by experiencing the negative truths of this abnormal world he went beyond nihilism. His energy, vitality and intelligence helped him to see further than the other birds and other men. Crow is the medium Hughes found to express what he had to say. Thus we can conclude that Crow is the alter-ego to the poet who, though living in a junk-yard transcends the decay and destructiveness of mechanical society:

Burning
burning
burning
there was finally something
The sun could not burn, that it had rendered
Everything down to - a final obstacle
Against which it raged and charred

And rages and chars

Limpid among the glaring furnace clinkers
The pulsing blue tongues and the red and the yellow
The green lickings of the conflagration

Limpid and black -

Crow's eye-pupil,in the tower of its scorched fort.[80]

This image of "burning" is a direct echo of T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land". Yet in Eliot even the penitential fire seems to have been sterile to purge man's lust or to free the world from its fragmentation. It appears that Hughes goes beyond Eliot since Crow's eye, which is the symbol for the poet's intelligence, was salvaged from the burning and purified. Now Crow, the poet, can see himself and deepen his vision of the phenomenal and nomenal world to resolve the problem of the wasteland. If we cannot say that Crow is the wasteland's redeemer he is, at least, its survivor.

Summing up this chapter we can distinguish four main points:

1. In Ted Hughes's wasteland the "violence" lies mainly in the poet's proletarian, stark diction and in crude, shocking imagery. Yet the foundation for such a dissenting vision is to be found in Eliot's poetry of the twenties.
2. The world has become brutal, more destructive than the jungle. So a rugged aggressiveness is not only necessary, but also a means to reclaim man's potentialities.
3. Though Ted Hughes's pessimism is more extreme than Eliot's, it has a cathartic function. That is, Hughes endorses violence as an assertion of the natural, individual being in his totality, but

condemns the mechanized violence of mass society (war) which reduces man to a fragment. Thus one might argue that his pessimism is healthy.

4. It is in the myth of Crow, the alter-ego to the poet, that the solution for the problems of the wasteland lies. Ugly, but intelligent and creative he finds out resources to make this stifling world inhabitable.

CONCLUSION

> I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
> Whatever I see I swallow immediately
> Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
> I am not cruel, only truthful. [1]

Although these lines were written by Sylvia Plath, they could as well be attributed to Ted Hughes: they suggest his line of self-defense against those critics who charge him with violence for violence' sake.

We agree that there is "violence" in his poetry. His diction and metaphors are often so brutal that they shock us. But at the same time they are so forceful, so passionate, so contemporary that they take us into a world we prefer to ignore. This may be the reason why they shock.

It is not the world of the poor with its material and economic needs, but the modern over-civilized world where man is oppressed by the very progress he has aspired to create. And Ted Hughes portrays man as if he were a button pressed to perform functions which have no meaning for him at all. Yet, no matter how meaningless these duties are, man goes on. They bring him money, material comfort, physical rest, but also uneasiness, dissatisfaction and frustration. Everything is apparently so easy that mechanical man does not dare to rebel against those devices which make him less and less human.

In Hughes's poetry man and woman live "without

souls" [2] and the earth is "shrunk to the size of a hand grenade" [3]. As Mr. David Lodge pointed out "indecorum reigns, as it does in cartoons" [4].

In his poetry Ted Hughes pictures a world which is losing its qualities, an absurd, incomprehensible, dark and frantic world. However, by giving us a negative vision of the universe by means of a "violent" language he seems to want to awake other men to the ugliness, the destructiveness mechanization has made. Furthermore, it seems he wants us to share this sinister vision with him not for a sadistic pleasure in enjoying the world's nothingness, but rather as an assertion that man may rise from the nihilism he has walled himself into and construct a more healthy and fruitful world. It is with the myth of Crow that he transmits this positive message.

When The Hawk in the Rain and Lupercal appeared, most critics approved of the "violence" contained in these books. In them Ted Hughes focuses on the violence of the big, predatory animals and the "violence" of the World War One. This literal "violence" of the animals and of a distant war was then appreciated, though a few critics complained of some of the "violent" linguistic devices used by Hughes.

Yet when Wodwo and mainly Crow were published, Ted Hughes became the target of the attacks of more traditional critics who condemned the use he made of a figurative violence. In Wodwo Hughes no longer used predators as his heroes. He chose small animals of

prey to represent the victims of man and society. In Crow he chose this very bird which is not beautiful, "decent" or innocent to represent modern man. However, maybe because Crow lacks those "virtues" which characterize the predators and make them admirable, he developed other "virtues" which made him fit to cope with the negativeness of the modern world, "virtues" such as toughness, intelligence, vitality, ruggedness.

In the seventeenth century when Swift, disgusted with men, made the horses the heroes of his book, he raised a lot of protest. And horses have dignity! But the crow, a black, ugly bird, always associated with death, has no dignity at all. So, we can understand the disgust and shock Hughes's anti-hero caused.

His previous hero, the hawk, was white, pure, beautiful, straightforward, too positive for a negative cosmos. Consequently he could not survive and was "smashed"[5] into the mud of the earth. Crow, dark, unpleasant, ugly, but intelligent and tough is burned in the refuse of the world and ascends to the level of hero. It appears to me that Ted Hughes wants to imply that it is not the purest and most beautiful who are the fittest to survive, but the toughest and cleverest. Thus we can conclude that despite the pessimism of his world Hughes still believes in man, if man is intelligent enough to outlast the dirt and the meaness of a barren cosmos.

Perhaps one of the facts that shocks most readers is the contrast Hughes draws between the animal

violence which is direct, honest, without "indolent procrastinations"[6] and man's violence, which is indirect, treacherous, simulated. The animal's violence is a flexible and spontaneous instinct to survive, whereas man's violence is the monomaniacal wish to annihilate, to smash, to kill.

Ted Hughes (despite his violence) tends to favour those who struggle for life. In this way he brings the figure of the Mother to his poetry. He makes her descend from the moon to the earth. Thence she is not perfect, immaculate or ethereal. She is physical, plain, touchable, suffering, though she is also eternal in the sense the bull Moses is. She will live through her descendents. Like a city she shelters men and provides them with means to build their own lives as long as they become independent from her. On the other hand, she can be fatal to men who are too tied to her. She may look hard, callous, like the wife of the poem "Her Husband" (Wodwo), but somehow she will overcome the limitations of life and will impose her destiny as woman, wife and mother.

It seems to me that Ted Hughes maintains that life involves intrinsic conflict, another "violent" characteristic in his poetry. Even love is presented as two antagonistic forces: male and female, body and spirit, fire and air, joy and sadness, ecstasy and hate. Man should be prepared to live these conflicts, as only by fighting them through courageously can he release himself from the artificiality that over-

developed civilization has made him a victim of. In the fight, man comes back to his origins and becomes whole again.

Ted Hughes himself is a man torn by conflicts: rejecting individualized women, he yet favours the moon-goddess; being himself an intellectual, he rejects intellectuals; being anti-war, he is nevertheless pro-aggression; being a writer, he complains of man's incapacity to communicate.

Ted Hughes is also criticized for making the world too narrow, dark and pessimistic. I agree that his world is all that. Yet I should say that the narrowness of his world is compensated by the depth with which he explores it. He goes deep into the world to find man small, baffled, thirsty for air, water, light. By passing through such purgatorial experiences, man gets ready to come back to nature, to a saner world and to himself. That is why I asserted Hughes's pessimism is a healthy one in the chapter on his wasteland.

I believe Ted Hughes's art is violent in the sense the modern world is, with all its kidnappings, rapes, terrorism, wars, revolutions, insecurity. It is because Hughes belongs too much to his age and place that he writes this kind of poetry: energetic, strong, "violent", hyperbolical. In his world, however, there is opportunity for man to go beyond destructiveness, if he is clever enough to see beyond the confines of mechanized civilization.

His poetry is the "truthful" expression of a man faithful to the values he believes in. Hughes is a man who never tries to minimize his emotions, feelings and thoughts. He presents the world and man as he sees and feels them. And Hughes is a tough, complex man who rejects any form of compromise. To me he is doing in poetry what the vorticists did in painting, that is, presenting the inner world as a reflection of an unbalanced, violent, outer world.

Where Ted Hughes is going from here is difficult to say. He is still young, producing not only poetry, but also prose and at present mostly interested in theatre. He does not look quite reconciled with the world, though, and only the future will tell whether he will fall into the mannered imitation of his own pessimism or strike off from his wasteland in some new direction.

N O T E S

Chapter 1

1. J.Press, Rule and Energy, p.182
2. T.Hughes, "Hawk Roosting", Lupercal, p. 26
3. A.Bold, Thom Gunn & Ted Hughes, p. 6
4. _____ , Thom Gunn & Ted Hughes, p. 2
5. _____ , Thom Gunn & Ted Hughes, p. 2
6. P.Larkin, "Home is so Sad", The Whitsun Weddings, p. 17
7. _____ , "Home is so Sad", The Whitsun Weddings, p. 17
8. A.E.Dyson, "Ted Hughes", The Critical Quarterly
9. C.B.Cox, "The Violence of Ted Hughes", John London's.
10. _____ , "The Violence of Ted Hughes", John London's.
11. J.M.Newton, "Mr. Hughes's Poetry", Delta.
12. _____ , "Mr. Hughes's Poetry", Delta.
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15. _____ , "Ted Hughes's Metaphysical Poems", Cambridge Quarterly.
16. _____ , "Ted Hughes's Metaphysical Poems", Cambridge Quarterly.
17. J.Press, Rule and Energy, p. 181
18. _____ , Rule and Energy, p. 181
19. C.J.Rawson, "Ted Hughes: A Reappraisal", Essays in Criticism.
20. _____ , "Ted Hughes: A Reappraisal", Essays in Criticism.
21. C.Bedient, Eight Contemporary Poets, p. 97
22. According to Schopenhauer only through experience can man get acquainted with himself. Since he is

led to action by an irrational drive, only acting can he know what he is in this world. Therefore a fight gives birth to a BEING, that is why conflict deserves being celebrated. Whether it produces a loser or a winner it does not matter, because above all it makes one conscious of what he is. Violence brings self-knowledge, awareness, consciousness. And Schopenhauer was the only philosopher Ted Hughes "ever read", as he himself reports in an interview with The Guardian.

23. D.Porter, "The Contemporary Aesthetics of Ted Hughes", Boston University Journal.
24. K.Sagar, The Art of Ted Hughes, p. 2
25. ____ , The Art of Ted Hughes, p. 4
26. ____ , The Art of Ted Hughes, p. 2
27. ____ , The Art of Ted Hughes, p. 14
28. A. Alvarez, The New Poetry, p. 28
29. ____, The New Poetry, p. 30
30. ____ , The New Poetry, p. 31
31. ____ , The New Poetry, p. 28
32. ____ , The New Poetry, p. 32
33. T.Hughes, an interview with the London Magazine, 1971.
34. ____, an interview with the London Magazine, 1971.

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1. T.Hughes, "The Rock", Worlds, p. 122
2. _____ , "Heptonstall", Wodwo, p. 165
3. _____ , "The Rock", Worlds, p. 122
4. _____ , "The Rock", Worlds, p. 124

5. T.Hughes, "The Rock", Worlds, p. 124

6. _____ , "The Rock", Worlds, p. 126

7. _____ , "The Rock", Worlds, p. 126

8. _____ , Poetry in the Making, p. 16

9. _____ , Poetry in the Making, p. 16

10. S.Plath, Letters Home, April 17, 1956

11. T.Hughes, an interview with The Guardian, 1965

12. _____ , an interview with The Guardian, 1965

13. A.Libby, "God's Lioness and the Priest of Sycorax", Contemporary Literature XV,3.

14. S.Plath, "Daddy", The New Poetry, p. 65

15. K.Sagar, The Art of Ted Hughes, p. 10

16. S.Plath, "Daddy", The New Poetry, p. 66

17. _____ , "Daddy", The New Poetry, p. 66

18. _____ , "Daddy", The New Poetry, p. 66

19. _____ , "Daddy", The New Poetry, p. 64

20. D.Porter, "Beasts/ Shamans/ Baskin: The Contemporary Aesthetics of Ted Hughes", Boston University Journal.

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1. T.Hughes, "The Jaguar", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 12

2. _____ ,"Macaw and Little Miss", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 13

3. _____ , "The Hawk in the Rain", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 11

4. _____, "The Hawk in the Rain", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 11

6. _____, "The Hawk in the Rain", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 11

7. _____, "The Hawk in the Rain", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 11

8. _____, "Hawk Roosting", Lupercal, p. 26

9. _____, "Hawk Roosting", Lupercal, p. 26

10. T. Hughes, "Hawk Roosting", Lupercal, p. 26

11. ____ , "Hawk Roosting", Lupercal, p. 26

12. ____, "The Jaguar", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 12

13. ____ , "The Jaguar", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 12

14. ____ , "Second Glance at a Jaguar", Wodwo, p. 25

15. ____ , "Second Glance at a Jaguar", Wodwo, p. 25

16. ____ , an interview with the London Magazine, 1971

17. ____ , "Thrushes", Lupercal, p. 52

18. ____ , "Of Cats", Lupercal, p. 32

19. ____ , "Of Cats", Lupercal, p. 32

20. ____ , "The Bull Moses", Lupercal, p. 37

21. ____ , "Cat and Mouse", Lupercal, p. 39

22. ____ , "Pike", Lupercal, p. 56

23. ____ , "Pike", Lupercal, p. 57

24. ____ , "Pike", Lupercal, p. 56

25. ____ , "An Otter", Lupercal, p. 46

26. ____ , "An Otter", Lupercal, p. 46

27. ____ , "An Otter", Lupercal, p. 47

28. ____ , "View of a Pig", Lupercal, p. 40

29. ____ , "Lupercalia", Lupercal, p. 61

30. ____ , "View of a Pig", Lupercal, p. 40

31. ____ , "View of a Pig", Lupercal, p. 41

32. ____ , "View of a Pig", Lupercal, p. 41

33. ____ , "View of a Pig", Lupercal, p. 41

34. ____ , "View of a Pig", Lupercal, p. 40

35. ____ , "The Horses", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 15,16

36. ____ , "A Dream of Horses", Lupercal, p. 21

37. ____ , "A Dream of Horses", Lupercal, p. 21

38. ____ , "The Rain Horse", Wodwo, p. 46

39. T.Hughes, "The Rain Horse", Wodwo, p. 46
40. ____ , "The Rain Horse", Wodwo, p. 46
41. ____ , "The Rain Horse", Wodwo, p. 46
42. ____ , "The Rain Horse", Wodwo, p. 50
43. ____ , "The Rain Horse", Wodwo, p. 49
44. ____ , "The Rain Horse", Wodwo, p. 53
45. ____ , "The Rain Horse", Wodwo, p. 53
46. ____ , "The Rain Horse", Wodwo, p. 53
47. ____ , "The Rain Horse", Wodwo, p. 55
48. ____ , "Ghost Crabs", Wodwo, p. 21,22
49. ____ , "Ghost Crabs", Wodwo, p. 22
50. ____ , "Chost Crabs", Wodwo, p. 21
51. ____ , "Skylarks", Wodwo, p. 168
52. ____ , "Skylarks", Wodwo, p. 170
53. ____ , "Gnat-Psalm", Wodwo, p. 179
54. ____ , "Gnat-Psalm", Wodwo, p. 180
55. ____ , "Sunday", Wodwo, p. 62,63
56. ____ , " Sunday", Wodwo, p. 66,67
57. ____ , an interview with The Listener, 1970.
58. ____ , "Two Legends", Crow, p. 13
59. ____ , "Lineage", Crow, p. 14
60. ____ , "The Door", Crow, p. 18
61. ____ , "Crow and the Birds", Crow, p. 37
62. ____ , "Crow's Account of the Battle", Crow, p. 27
63. ____ , "Crow's Fall", Crow, p. 36
64. ____ , "Crow Blacker than ever", Crow, p. 69
65. ____ , "The Black Beast", Crow, p. 28
66. ____ , "Crow's Nerve Fails", Crow, p. 47
67. ____ , " Crow on the Beach", Crow, p. 40

68. T.Hughes, "Crowego", Crow, p. 61

69. ____ , "Crow's Playmates", Crow, p. 60

70. ____ , "Crow's Playmates," Crow, p. 60

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1. S.Plath, "Man in Black", The Colossus, p. 52,53

2. _____ ,"Full Fathom Five", The Colossus, p. 48

3. _____ , "Full Fathom Five", The Colossus, p. 48

4. _____ , "Full Fathom Five", The Colossus, p. 48

5. _____ , "The Colossus", The Colossus, p. 20

6. _____ , Letters Home, April 19, 1956

7. _____ , Letters Home, April 17, 1956

8. T.Hughes, "Song", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 19

9. _____ , "Mountains", Wodwo, p. 172

10. _____ , "Crow"s Undersong", Crow, p. 56

11. ____ , "Secretary", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 21

12. _____ , "A Vegetarian", Wodwo, p. 30

13. _____ , "Dick Straightup", Lupercal, p. 17

14. ____ , "Dick Straightup", Lupercal, p. 17

15. ____ , "Witches", Lupercal, p. 48

16. _____ , "Witches", Lupercal, p. 48

17. ____ , "The Conversion of the Reverend Skinner", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 32

18. W.B.Yeats, "Crazy Jane Talks to the Bishop", Selected Poetry, p. 161

19. ____ , "Crazy Jane Talks to the Bishop", Selected Poetry, p. 161

20. T.Hughes, "Suitor", Wodwo, p. 94

21. T.Hughes, "Theology", Wodwo. p. 149
22. ____, "Lupercalia", Lupercal, p. 61
23. ____, "Crow's Nerve Fails", Crow, p. 47
24. ____, "Lupercalia", Lupercal, p. 62
25. ____, "Lupercalia", Lupercal, p. 63
26. ____, "Lupercalia", Lupercal, p. 62
27. ____, "Lupercalia", Lupercal, p. 62
28. ____, "Two Eskimo Songs" - 1."Fleeing from Eternity", Crow, p. 92,93
29. ____, "Revenge Fable", Crow, p. 70
30. ____, "Crow and Mama", Crow, p. 17
31. ____, an interview with the London Magazine, 1971
32. ____, "Her Husband", Wodwo, p. 19
33. ____, "Her Husband", Wodwo, p. 19
34. ____, "Her Husband", Wodwo, p. 19
35. ____, "Her Husband", Wodwo, p. 19
36. D.H.Lawrence, Sons and Lovers, p. 55,56
37. T.Hughes, "Parlour-Piece", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 20
38. ____, "The Dove Breeder", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 23
39. ____, "The Dove Breeder", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 23
40. ____, "The Dove Breeder", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 23
41. ____, "Lovesong", Crow, p. 88
42. ____, "Incompatibilities", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 26
43. ____, "Billet-Doux", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 24

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1. I.Hamilton, "A Mouthful of Blood", The Times Literary Supplement
2. D.Holbrook, "Ted Hughes's Crow and the Longing for Non-Being", The Black Rainbow

3. T.S.Eliot,"The Waste Land", Selected Poems, p. 59

4. _____ , "The Waste Land", Selected Poems, p. 67

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6. S. Plath, Letters Home, p. 358, 359

7. _____ , Letters Home, May 5, 1960

8. _____ , Letters Home, July 9, 1960

9.T.S.Eliot, "The Waste Land", Selected Poems, p. 56

10. _____ ,"The Waste Land", Selected Poems, p. 57

11. T.Hughes, "Secretary", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 21

12. T.S.Eliot,"The Waste Land", Selected Poems, p. 59

13. _____ , "The Waste Land", Selected Poems, p. 60

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15. _____ , "The Waste Land", Selected Poems, p. 60

16. _____ , "The Waste Land", Selected Poems, p. 60

17. T.Hughes, an interview with the London Magazine, 1971.

18. _____, "Wodwo", Wodwo, p. 183

19. _____, "Wodwo", Wodwo, p. 183

20. _____, "Wodwo", Wodwo, p. 183

21. _____, "Wodwo", Wodwo, p. 183

22. _____, "In Laughter", Crow, p. 48

23. _____, "Heptonstall", Wodwo, p. 165

24. T.S.Eliot,"The Hollow Men", Selected Poems, p. 77

25. T.Hughes, "Thistles", Wodwo, p. 17

26. _____, "You Drive in a Circle", Wodwo, p. 173

27. _____, "You Drive in a Circle", Wodwo, p. 173

28. T.S.Eliot, "The Waste Land", Selected Poems, p. 52

29. T.Hughes, "The Battle of Osfrontalis", Crow, p. 34

30. _____ , "Crow Goes Hunting", Crow, p. 54

31. _____ , "Crow Goes Hunting", Crow, p. 54

32. T.Hughes, "A Disaster", Crow, p. 33
33. ____, "Crow's Battle Fury, Crow, p. 67
34. ____ , "Gog", Wodwo, p. 153
35. ____ , "Crow Tyrannosaurus", Crow, p. 25
36. ____ , "Stations", Wodwo, p. 38,39
37. ____ , "Gog", Wodwo, p. 151
38. S.Plath, Letters Home, August 27, 1960
39. T.S.Eliot, "The Waste Land", Selected Poems, p. 55
40. T.Hughes, "Crow Alights", Crow, p. 21
41. T.S.Eliot, "The Waste Land", Selected Poems, p. 62
42. T.Hughes, "Conjuring in Heaven", Crow, p. 53
43. S.Plath, Letters Home, p. 332
44. T.Hughes, "Famous Poet", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 18
45. ____ , "Meeting", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 39
46. ____ , "The Good Life", Lupercal, p. 36
47. ____ , "The Good Life", Lupercal, p. 36
48. ____ , an interview with The Guardian, 1965
49. ____ , "Wings", Wodwo, p. 174
50. ____ , "Wings", Wodwo, p. 175,176
51. T.S.Eliot, "The Waste Land", Selected Poems, p. 51
52. T.Hughes, "Fourth of July", Lupercal, p. 20
53. D.H.Lawrence, "Let Us Be Men", Selected Poems
54. T.Hughes, "The Casualty, The Hawk in the Rain, p. 49
55. ____ , "Public Bar TV", Wodwo, p. 27
56. ____ , "Crow's Vanity", Crow, p. 44
57. ____ , "Crow's Vanity", Crow, p. 44
58. ____ , "Magical Dangers", Crow, p. 51
59. S.Plath, Letters Home, p. 360, 361

Note how Sylvia tells her mother how Ted mocks her for

being an excellent typist and a poor handwriter:

> "I have honestly never undergone such physical torture as writing furiously from 6 to 7 hours a day (for the last two days) with my unpracticed pen-hand. Every night I come home and lie in a hot tub, massaging it back to action. Ted says I'm a victim of evolution and have adapted to the higher stage of typing and am at a disadvantage when forced to compete on a lower stage of handwriting!"

60. T.S.Eliot, "The Waste Land", Selected Poems, p.54

61. ____ , "The Waste Land", Selected Poems, p. 54

62. T.Hughes, an interview with The Guardian, 1965

63. ____ , "Out", Wodwo, p. 155

64. ____ , "Dick Straightup", Lupercal, p. 18

65. ____ , "Six Young Men", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 54

66. ____ , "Six Young Men", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 54

67. ____ , "Six Young Men", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 54

68. ____ , "Six Young Men", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 54

69. ____ , "Six Young Men", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 54

70. ____ , "Crow's Nerve Fails", Crow, p. 47

71. ____ , "Six Young Men", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 55

72. ____ ,"Bayonet Charge", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 51

73. ____ , "Bayonet Charge", The Hawk in the Rain, p. 51

74. S.Plath, Letters Home, p. 322,323

In this letter Sylvia wrote about the shock that Britain's war on Egypt caused to her and Ted. From then on she started to regard Britain as a dead, amoral, sterile wasteland from where she wanted to free her husband:

> "Well, between my private crisis and the huge crisis aroused by Britain's incredible and insane bombing of Egypt, the universe is in

> a state of chaos! You have no idea what a shock this bombing caused us [she and Ted] here.
>
> ... Even Budapest has been thrust to the back page by this; the Russians are leaving. What a world! I remember that Persian diplomat who interviewed me about the job teaching in Africa saying that the western powers were like children in their ignorance about the immense force and manpower on tap in Arabia and Africa. The editorial in the Manchester Guardian was superb: this attack is a disaster from every angle - moral, military, political. Britain is dead; the literary and critical sterility and amorality which I long to take Ted away from is permeating everything."

75. T.Hughes,"Crow's Elephant Totem Song", Crow, p. 58

76. _____ , "Crow's Undersong", Crow, p.56

77. _____ , "Crow's Undersong", Crow, p.56

78. _____ , "Examination at the Womb-door", Crow, p. 15

79. T.S.Eliot, "The Waste Land", Selected Poems, p. 52

80. T.Hughes, "Crow's Last Stand", Crow, p. 31

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1. S.Plath, "Mirror", Crossing the Water, p. 34

2. T.Hughes, "A Childish Prank", Crow, p. 19

3. _____ , "Truth Kills Everybody", Crow, p. 83

4. D.Lodge, "Crow and the Cartoons", The Critical Quarterly

5. T.Hughes, "The Hawk in the Rain, The Hawk in the Rain,p.11

6. _____ , "Thrushes", Lupercal, p. 52

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