



# Modern Research Studies

**Editor-in-Chief**  
**Gyanabati Khuraijam**

**An International  
Journal of  
Humanities and Social  
Sciences**

*An Indexed & Refereed e-Journal*

[www.modernresearch.in](http://www.modernresearch.in)

**Title: The Question of Violence and Vitality in the  
Poetry of Ted Hughes**

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**Volume 1, Issue 3  
December 2014**

**pp. 474–490.**

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## **The Question of Violence and Vitality in the Poetry of Ted Hughes**

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**ABSTRACT:** The most prominent feature of Ted Hughes's poetry that draws average readers' attention is violence. But the poet equates instances of violence in his Hawk, Jaguar and Crow poems with the emission of cosmic energy in the raw stratum of animal life. Beneath the surface of violent animal poetry a dissatisfaction with contemporary civilization can be discerned which is densified, somewhat equivocally, with the poet's venture in the reincarnation of lively vigour. Similarly, his war poems, like "Six Young Men" and "Bayonet Charge" are exemplification in the power of endurance and will to live in the precinct of lurking death. Violence is not the sole preoccupation of the poet; rather he is concerned with vitality of life that resonates with the indomitable life-force. This article is an attempt to scrutinize Hughes's fabled concern with violence and to examine how far Hughes becomes successful in proclaiming the dominance of vitality over violence.

**KEYWORDS:** Ted Hughes, brutality, power, life-force, vitality.

Ted Hughes, generally considered as a poet of violence, nevertheless turns down the charge of being preoccupied merely with violence in his poetry. His oft-quoted poem "Hawk Roosting" is a cult of that violent passion which awaits us in his best poems. A time

bearing the scars of World War II parallels the hawk to an almost Hitler-figure with its ferocity and coarseness. Hughes, however, rejects to equate his hawk with a Fascist dictator; he says instead his purpose in this poem was to depict nature as a “thinking” entity (Hughes 1990, 102). We come across violence not in the ambit of history alone but, as Ted Hughes says in his interview with Ekbart Faas, it is inseparably intertwined with poetry, and a brief glance at the terrain of his famous poetry illustrates that an estrangement of poetry from violence is nearly impossible:

If one were to answer that exam question: Who are the poets of violence? you wouldn't get far if you began with Thom Gunn . . . No, you'd have to begin with Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, etc., author of Job, the various epics, the Tains, the Beowulfs, Dante, Shakespeare, Blake. When is violence 'violence' and when is it great poetry? Can the critic distinguish? I would say that most critics cannot distinguish . . . he is incapable of judging poetry . . . because poetry is nothing if not that, the record of just how the forces of the Universe try to redress some balance distributed by human error. (Hughes 1990, 101)

Violence as a “passion” accompanies man from the earliest time known even if he is unaware of its machination under which he operates. The very act of violence that is seen in the Christian myth of Cain's slaying his own brother Abel out of jealousy doesn't end in Christ's sacrifice for the cause of greater benefit of humanity. The blood-stained figure of Christ as a means of salvation, serves as the perpetual reminder of the extent of brutality man can indulge in and the necessity to subdue that bloody “passion.”

Men in every culture and every era have witnessed the ugly face of violence unleashed by either the war fought on a massive scale or unrestrained ‘passions’ in domestic space. The desire to make others subservient takes hold of the better in him, and power-hunger that emanates out of it exposes the unabashed nature of man turning down

the religious morals. Man has seen the cruel, sadistic temperament of its fellow creature which takes its analogy to that in the animal world, and in fact, often excels it. Notwithstanding the warning of the saints and philanthropists, the wars continue and so is the march of violence. Apart from the legendary wars that meet us with astonishment, history has been precisely a record of the changing nature of violence in succeeding generations. Ted Hughes shows interest in warfare in such poems as “Six Young Men” and “Bayonet Charge.” He confirms the growing technological skills imparted to the invention of more brutal weapons which bring death and injury swifter and more violent. But Hughes, although writing at the post-World War II period, is preoccupied with World War I warfare, like the use of bayonet. However, it is difficult to reach to the core of this violence in human nature. The possible causes of violence may be man’s will to power over the less powerful, sadistic pleasures in hurting others, or to save himself at the face of oddities. Man’s atrocity is never tamed but is seen escalating in modern times. Stuart Carroll cites in this connection:

During the professionalization of the discipline in the nineteenth century, history was essentially the story of the progress of humanity, and violence was an impediment to progress. But there is more at stake; for the founding fathers of professional history and, indeed of psychology, the control of violence that is, the move from expressive violence, derived from passion, to instrumental violence, based on reason, is ineluctably tied to the concept of ‘modernity’, and therefore linked to the creation of civil society and the rise of the West. During the nineteenth century, thinkers and historians preoccupied with the origins of modern civilization began to periodize history according to their concept of human progress, giving prominence to periods they termed ‘the Renaissance’ and ‘the Enlightenment’ in order to distinguish the new age of the discovery, of the world and of man, from the darkness of the ‘middle ages’ that had preceded it. In the onward

march of civilization, medieval man is much farther back down the road in his development than we; a man of extremes, he is more prone to passion; his propensity for vengeance a sign of his innate barbarity. (Carroll 3)

Establishing his reputation with the publication of *The Hawk in the Rain*, Ted Hughes continues to write poems about animal and warfare which depict his interest in the violent activities rampant in Nature. His interest in violence verging on abnormal, sometimes sadistic, impulses is one of the conspicuous characteristics of his poetry. But there is much dissent centering on his obsession with violence and somewhat ambiguous reaction to the mechanism under which it ensnares broader issues that include human behaviour and his civilization. Violence not as a surface reality but also as residing in the psyche is what fascinates Hughes. He does not anathemize violence as a detestable element feeding on the best in men and Nature; rather, he exposes the “raw energy” underlying violence that characterizes the essential animal as well as human behaviour. In the same interview as referred to above, Hughes accounts for the flow of energy that is associated with violence:

Any form of violence—any form of vehement activity—invokes the bigger energy, the elemental power circuit of the Universe. Once the contact has been made—it becomes difficult to control. Something from beyond human activity enters . . . In the old world God and divine power were invoked at any cost—life seemed worthless without them. In the present world we dare not invoke them—we wouldn’t know how to use them or stop them destroying us. We have settled for the minimum practical energy and illumination—anything bigger introduces problems, the demons get hold of it. (Hughes 1990, 103)

The fatal curiosity to yield this energy is what Hughes describes as “psychological stupidity” which brings about our “hubris” which

again in turn can compel us to accept our doom. Although this energy, continues Hughes, is necessary because it is partly the life force that keeps us enlivened—without it nothing remains but “a kind of death”—but the total consumption of this energy would also be fatal. He solves this paradox with the help of the old rituals of various religions which is believed to incorporate the magical power of channelizing the flow of energy in directions to achieve betterment of mankind:

If you refuse the energy, you are living a kind of death. If you accept the energy, it destroys you. What is the alternative? To accept the energy, and find methods of turning it to good, of keeping it under control—rituals, the machinery of religion. The old method is the only one. (Hughes 1990, 104)

Hughes does not portray violence in his poetry merely because of his obsession with violence but for the energy it ingrains, the energy that encapsulates the essential vitality of being. The title poem of his first major collection of poems *The Hawk in the Rain* depicts the enduring power of the hawk in torrential rain which renders a human being outwitted. While the speaker struggles with the ankle-deep clay that seeks to swallow him the hawk “[e]ffortlessly at height hangs his still eye” (Hughes 1957, 1). The unruly wind afflicts the speaker with lashes of rain but the hawk hangs quietly even at the face of the “master-/ Fulcrum of violence,” i.e., storm. Although the hawk has to meet his end at last, its heroic fall does not diminish his stature. What Hughes celebrates in this poem is the essential vitality, the life force or “[t]he diamond point of will” that provides the hawk a better power of endurance than human beings (Hughes 1957, 1). The poem, in the words of M. L. Rosenthal, “reflects better than any other (poem) in the book, the obsession of the poet with one aspect of nature—the power and the gift of animals to make the kill, and behind that the intransigent force of being itself that is so indifferent to suffering and weakness” (Rosenthal 124).

Another poem in the volume is “The Jaguar” celebrating the essential vitality of life not battered by any adversity of tragic plight. While the so-called vicious animals—ape, tiger, lion, boa-constrictor—

suffer from idleness and fatigue within the cages in zoo, the jaguar retains its indomitable spirit as if totally unmindful of its confinement. The visitors watch the jaguar “mesmerized/As a child at a dream”—the beast is, in fact, the manifestation of the suppressed animal spirit residing in the core of human unconscious that gets released in dream. It is that confrontation with the dream-projection that renders the visitors mesmerized. Hughes seeks to reach the core of hidden, suppressed life-force that the jaguar embodies:

He spins from the bars, but there’s no cage to him  
More than to the visionary his cell:  
His stride is wildernesses of freedom. (Hughes 1957, 2)

Another jaguar poem of Hughes “Second Glance at a Jaguar,” unlike the former one, brings out the affliction of the caged animal whose sense of imprisonment has forced suffering on it. While the jaguar in the former poem is unaffected by its imprisonment, a “second glance” at the jaguar reveals the decrease of its vigour. Nonetheless, the aged animal retains its stature which is undamaged. This jaguar whose head is “like a brazier of spilling ambers” exposes its anger at the visitors which its confinement detracts, but it achieves a strange shamanic power which is beyond the comprehension of common people and which becomes his means of revenge:

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 from the inside,  
Rounding some revenge. (Hughes 1967)

Not only in these poems alone but what meets us as the dominant spirit of all major poems of Hughes is “power thought of absolutely.” Hughes is not satisfied with the mediocrity of representing animals in his verse. His animals are endowed with energetic life-force, an all-encompassing verve not restrained by sentiments like “sophistry.” Hughes’s representation of the animal world whose activities so often unleash violence is a guarantor of that life-force which motivates its essence. In the words of A. E. Dyson,

The major theme in the poems is power; and power thought of not morally, or in time, but absolutely—in a present which is often violent and self-destructive; but isolated from motive and consequence, and so unmodified by the irony which time confer. For Ted Hughes power and violence go together. [...] Violence, for him, is the occasion not for reflection, but for *being*; it is a guarantee of energy, of life, and most so, paradoxically, when it knows itself in moments of captivity, pain or death. (Dyson 116)

Thus, to Hughes, power is “the unexhausted, procreating life-will” in a Nietzschean sense. The German philosopher developed his idea of “Will to Power” in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* where he adopts a perspective of life beyond good and evil, a life motivated by the will to power over others:

Wherever I found a living thing, there found I Will  
to Power; and even in the will of the servant found  
I the will to be master.

That to the stronger the weaker shall serve—  
thereto persuadeth he his will who would be  
master over a still weaker one. That delight alone  
he is unwilling to forego.

And as the lesser surrendereth himself to the  
greater that he may have delight and power over  
the least of all, so doth even the greatest surrender  
himself, and staketh—life, for the sake of power.  
(Nietzsche XXXIV)

Hughes’s hawk in “Hawk Roosting” can be seen as conforming to this view of will to power when it says, “the one path of my flight is direct/ Through the bones of the living./ No arguments assert my right” (Hughes 1960, 24). Nietzsche’s doctrine of will to power is not simply put in anthropomorphic terms but seen as producer of consciousness as its effect. The entire nature can be seen as a continuum created by a



violent will to power while the hawk is one form of being identified with one force desiring to master over the other forces or animals. The hawk considers himself all powerful finding a grim satisfaction in his “manners” of “tearing off heads”; but too much pride in his self-said omnipotence makes himself blind to other forces of nature more powerful than him. In that dangerous quest for supremacy he unwittingly brings down doom on himself as is depicted in “The Hawk in the Rain”:

That maybe in his own time meets the weather

Coming the wrong way, suffers the air, hurled upside-down,  
Fall from his eye, the ponderous shires crash on him,

The horizon trap him; the round angelic eye

Smashed, mix his heart's blood with the mire of the land.

(Hughes 1957, 1)

Hughes furthers this theme in his Crow poems where he develops an alternative myth which is inspired by Hughes’s extensive reading of world mythology, folklores and classical legends. According to Hughes’s “anti-myth” of Creation, crow and not God is the real Creator of this world and initiator of the life-force in human beings. In “A Childish Prank” God is portrayed as an inadequate Creator who falls asleep brooding over the issue of how to instill life in the soulless bodies of men and women while crow gives life to man and woman by inserting each of the two halves of the Worm, “God’s only son,” into them. It is crow who invented sexual desire for the half within woman calls out the other half in man to join it “Because O it was painful” (Hughes 1972, 19). In “Crow Blacker Than Ever,” the crow who had given life to men and women and invented sexual urge challenges God’s authority in a defiantly rough manner by perpetrating a violent estrangement of God from man:

So man cried, but with God’s voice.

And God bled, but with man’s blood.

Then heaven and earth creaked at the joint

Which became gangrenous and stank-

A horror beyond redemption. (Hughes 1972, 69)

Susan Bassnett cites “Crow Tyrannosaurus” as a good example of Hughes’s use of “black humour.” The poem abounds in the image of violent death but here death is rather a necessity—one creature kills another in order to eat and survive. Although crow realizes the brutality associated with killing and becomes meditative, he wonders whether he should find out another way: “To stop eating? And try to become the light” (Hughes 1972, 24). But as soon as he saw a grub, a source of food, he throws into the air his momentary determination not to kill and starts stabbing it. He may not have cast off all his scruples for he starts weeping (“Weeping he walked and stabbed”) but nevertheless realizes the harsh truth that “[h]e can do nothing else, and the grim laughter comes in the contrast between his realization that this is what he must do and the act of killing” (Bassnett 43).

Crow is also represented in a number of poems as a harbinger of violence, but in this series Hughes does not opt for purposeless violence. In fact, as mentioned by Hughes himself, the crow is a “trickster” figure which recurrently appears in mythologies around the globe, and “Loki, the Norse God is one example of the trickster character, a figure that appears in North American myth, in animal form as a black bird such as a raven” (Bassnett 38). The trickster is like a clown who often creates mischief on any occasion wherever he appears. He is devoid of any moral code and as such, in Nietzschean sense, beyond good and evil, and “he continually tricks gods, men and animals, but at the same time is often tricked himself, for though cunning and wily, he is not necessarily intelligent” (Bassnett 38). Time and again, crow tries to outmaneuver God, and often succeeds to our amusement, but his power-hunger has to meet a tragic end. Such poem as “Crow’s Fall” delineates crow’s fatal arrogance out of which he attacks the sun because he decides it is too much whiter than him, and that “it glared much too whitely.” As a consequence, the sun “brightened, and Crow returned charred black.” In “Truth Kills Everybody” crow is exploded as he confronts with the object of his deadly quest—“the spirit-link with his creator”, which is excellently analyzed by Hughes himself:

The hostility and energy of the confrontation are the measures of a gap—the difference in electrical potential between the limited, benighted-with-expectations-and-preconceptions ego of crow at this point, and the thing he seeks to unite himself with. ... Crow can neither give up, and escape back into his limited self-conceit, or he can pass on till he breaks through to what he wants. But since what he wants—to lose himself in that spirit link with his creator—means the end of his ego-shell, then the breakthrough will destroy him as the crow he is. (Hughes 1990, 112)

Unlike crow, modern man appears to Hughes as “imprisoned in single vision as in his own body, looking out through the windows of his eyes at the surrounding energies,” but he is smugly indifferent to assimilate the energies within himself “as though that were unthinkable;” he only “cowers, hides, peeps through his fingers, grips his own heart, runs for dear life” (Sagar 105). Hughes’ poetry can be read as an implied revulsion against that complacency whose other name is cowardice. In such poems as “Bayonet Charge”, “Six Young Men” and “The Martyrdom of Bishop Ferrar” he depicts the horror of death whose sudden occurrence apprehends common men but the inevitability of death is nevertheless a universal truth. Hughes’ fascination with death which dominates his poetry of the fifties and sixties owes much to the stories of trench warfare and bomb-raids of the First World War which he heard from his uncles and his father. It is out of this inspiration that Hughes depicts violence in battlefield in its crudest form which apparently lacks any sense of decency of death.

In “Bayonet Charge” the soldier, overwhelmed by the suddenness of enemy attack, runs away from the firing zone in order to save his life “with his bayonet towards the green hedge.” His rationality is almost crumbled down because of his desperate attempt to save his life. At that moment, all the abstract ideas of “[k]ing, honour, human dignity, etcetera/ Dropped like luxuries in a yelling alarm” (Hughes 1957, 41). Again, in “Six Young Men” Hughes develops on an old photograph of six men on whom, six months after the photo was taken,

befell a tragedy of sudden, unexpected and violent death. On a certain Sunday, they went to an outing near a border-area when firing started from the other side all of a sudden. Hughes's depiction of the unpredicted and most violent death-toll is hair-raising:

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.

(Hughes 1957, 54)

Such description of war and death envisages an almost sadistic impulse in Hughes, as Dyson says, "he should write of the first rather than the Second World War, and be obsessed by such types of warfare (bayonet charges, trench fighting) as belonging to the pre-hydrogen age" (Dyson 121). However, in "Six Young Men" Hughes has skillfully juxtaposed the horror of death and smiling vitality of life caught in camera. The photo of the six young men perpetuating their smiling countenance which "have not wrinkled the faces or the hands" negates the supremacy of death over life:

To regard this photograph might well dement,  
Such contradictory permanent horrors here  
A mile from the single exposure and shoulder out  
One's own body from its instant and heat.

(Hughes 1957, 55)

The poem "The Martyrdom of Bishop of Ferrar" bears evidence to the fact that Hughes, apart from depicting violence rampant in nature and battlefields, is interested in portraying violence unleashed in the name of religion too. But this is not simply brutal murder that he dwells upon; rather, the poet promulgates the victory of religious virtues against the bleakest contrivance of devilish activities. Hughes's Bishop Ferrar can be identified with Eliot's Archbishop Beckett—both sacrificed their lives for the sake of religion, the principles they cherished and preached. Bishop Ferrar was set on fire by the notorious group called "Bloody Mary" on fallaciously concocted charge of

“blasphemy.” The Welsh folk watched their priest burning alive in fire and the fiendish brutality of the incident rendered them spellbound. But the Bishop, indomitable in spirit, did not flinch from pain that fire inflicted on his sinews. According to Hughes, he told his disciples: “If I flinch from the pain of the burning, believe not the doctrine that I have preached” (Hughes 1957, 59). The Bishop, who is referred to as “shepherd” of the Welsh-people, here attains almost the stature of Christ who sacrificed His life as an expiation of men’s vices. The fire that burns the flesh of Bishop Ferrar, says the poet, came from Hell but achieves a divine form as it burns the desire of flesh and infuses in him the strength to withstand terrific agony. What, then, comes out to be finally victorious is not the men of “Bloody Mary”, not even Bishop Ferrar, but the vitality of divine life not battered by the assault of infernal violence:

His body’s cold kept—miserdom of shrieks  
He gave uncouth while out of his eyes,  
Out of his mouth, fire like a glory broke,  
And smoke burned his sermon into the skies.

(Hughes 1957, 59)

“November” is a study in the power of endurance best exemplified in most hostile circumstances. It portrays a tramp being drenched in heavy rain while the speaker seeks out a safe shelter nearby. It is a hunter’s abode where the speaker sees dead bodies of birds and animals hanging with their chin on breast. Although dead, they still continue with their physical stature, not deformed by death. The poem embodies in its scope to map the vague and obscure realm between life and death to which neither life nor death surrenders easily. The tramp has nothing to lose except his life but his struggle to get rid of cold is an evaluation of his stamina and a will to snatch away from life what it is miser of offering, which turns out to be Hughes’s own quest, as Dyson observes, “it is sheer bitter endurance and the devouring ferocity lurking in every depth and crevice of life that obsess him” (Dyson 126).

Two symbolic poems, “Pike” and “View of a Pig” are perhaps written close in time which furthers the note of violence that “Hawk

Roosting” instigates. Unlike that of Wordsworth, nature in Ted Hughes is not calm and benevolent entity worthy to worship but is intimidating in its violently malevolent quality. “Pike” depicts two different kinds of violence rampant in nature—*intra-species* violence where one pike kills and eats another; and *inter-species* violence where man kills pike but is nevertheless intimidated by the ferocity of the fish. The poet recalls his own experience of keeping three pike fish in a tank at his home and how one pike killed another. Hughes utilizes in this poem his childhood passion of catching fishes and its description of pike is subliminally horrific:

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.

(Hughes 1960, 54)

Hughes is unnerved by the inherent violence of pike fishes which are “[k]illers from the egg,” but feels an eerie interest in catching them. In the last part of the poem, he depicts a scene of his catching gigantic old pikes which move slowly at the “legendary depth” of dark water with “the implication [...] that dark forces lurk beneath the veneer of civilization” (Bassnett 19).

“View of a Pig” is a disturbing poem which presents the butcher’s indifference to the slaughter of a pig. The “weight and thick pink bulk” of the pig is meant to satisfy the gustatory lust of men. The butcher thumps the giant pig in a surprisingly calm manner as if it was never alive. Insulting a dead man is disgraceful activity but the pig “[d]oes not seem able to accuse” because it is “too dead” to retain its dignity. It has no other purpose than serving as food of man:

It was too dead. Just so much  
A poundage of lard and pork.

Its last dignity had entirely gone. (Hughes 1960, 38)

The weight of the dead pig which is “as much as three men” disturbs the butcher’s poise in its oppressive bulk. The butcher does not suffer from any sense of remorse for killing the animal but dwells on “the trouble of cutting it up.” His disdain for the dead beast is expressed in the following lines:

Pigs must have hot blood, they feel like ovens.  
Their bite is worse than a horse’s—  
They chop a half-moon clean out.  
They eat cinders, dead cats. (Hughes 1960, 38)

Apart from the violence and ruthlessness presented in the poem, what is unmistakable in it is the symbolic nuance that suggests Nazi oppression in the concentration camps during the World War II. The Nazi oppression on the innocent Jews is a shame of Mankind which is not finished with the War, but a strain of Fascism sustains itself in disguised form. The Italian thinker Umberto Eco observes in this connection:

Ur-Fascism [a term meaning ‘eternal fascism’] is still around us, sometimes in plainclothes. It would be so much easier for us, if there appeared on the scene somebody saying, ‘I want to reopen Auschwitz, I want the Blackshirts to parade again in the Italian squares’. Life is not that simple. Ur-Fascism can come back under the most innocent of disguises. Our duty is to uncover it and point the finger at any of its new instances – every day and in every part of the world. (Eco, qtd. in Passmore 88)

The butcher can be easily identified with a Nazi ruler engrossed in his bloody passion to strike, smite and kill. He is ruthless and without any pity or respect for the dead. On the other hand, the pig is a Jew-figure who must be exterminated for his lack of “hot blood” that characterizes the Aryans. The cruel slaughter of the pig and subsequent humiliation of its dead bulk remind a reader of the historical black-data

of brutal torture on the Jews and their mass-murder without proper funeral at Auschwitz.

Man and his civilization do not seem to Hughes an optimistic venture decked with positive yearning. It is a diseased civilization dominated by ominous, inhuman forces indulging in animosity towards each other. Geoffrey Thurley attempts to reach the inner psyche of Hughes to find out the possible causes of the poet's dissatisfaction with his contemporary poetry as well as civilization as a whole:

[...] the admiration for and kinship with a primitive and barbaric strain in the animal world has led Hughes to a contempt for 'mere' civilization and, even more, for the particular configuration of values and attitudes that has strangled man's native energy and perverted his force. [...] Hughes's radical disalignment with the attitudes of the current poetry goes deeper than a contempt for its namby-pamby techniques and automatic ironies: it reflects a profound philosophical negation of the complex of attitudes underlying it. It is a negation of the entire quiescence pattern of contemporary society, and a rejection of facile political orthodoxy in favour of a re-discovery of more fundamental layers of passion and experience. (Thurley 157)

Hughes's poetry probes deep into that hidden psyche of heart where looms large the dark forces. Viewed from an Indian perspective, his poetry of violence can be read as a continuation of his British heritage of imperialism whose legacy it reflects, for example, in the Hawk's or Crow's spirit of "Will to Power." Those animals have found aggressive pleasure in nailing down those less powerful to them but an inevitable ramification faces subsequent downfall. Even if we don't go that far, Hughes's verse incorporates an essentially "masculine energy," as Thurley observes, which owes much to the "containment of force, not from the release or indulgence of it" (Thurley 159-160). This force is what he tries to channelize in an attempt to revitalization of the



contemporary poetry suffering from self-content stupor just as the civilization as a whole. Hughes's demonstration of violence paradoxically leads us to the façade of human civilization which is devoid of religious principles, and as such, leads inevitably to the regression of soul to dehumanizing symptom. "The whole inner world," says Hughes, "has become elemental, chaotic, continually more primitive and beyond our control. It has become a place of demons." His poetry is a warning against the tantalizing inclination of the soul lest we are hurled into the torrent as "animal crawling and decomposing in a hell" (Hughes 1992, 265).

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