

Ain Shams University
Faculty of Education
Department of English

**THE THEME OF VIOLENCE IN THE ANIMAL POEMS OF
TED HUGHES**

Submitted by

BAHAA EL DIN MOHAMED ABD EL ME'GID

for the Degree of Master of Arts

in

Teacher Preparation in Literature

Supervised by

Dr. Kamal A. Gad

Prof. Dr. Mona S. Z. Abousenna

Associate Prof. of English Literature

Head of the Department of English

Faculty of Education

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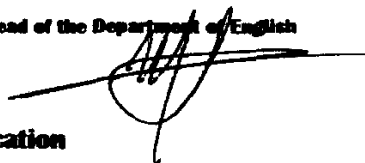
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**THE THEME OF VIOLENCE IN THE ANIMAL
POEMS OF TED HUGHES**

Thesis Advisors

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*To My Mother and My Father
Who Taught me the Meaning
of Love and Tolerance.*

**This is my letter to the World
That never wrote to Me_
The simple News that Nature told_
With tender Majesty
Her Message is committed
To hands I cannot see_
For lover of Her-sweet-countrymen_
Judge tenderly_of Me
(441; Emily Dickinson, 1830-1886)**

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Bahaa El Din Mohamed Abd El Megid
The Theme of Violence in the Animal Poems of Ted Hughes
Department of English, Faculty of Education, Ain Shams University

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the theme of violence in the animal poems of Ted Hughes (1930-) Hughes uses animals as dramatic personas in his poem to avoid the accusation of the critics of being insensitive Violence for Hughes is inherent in all aspects of nature, whether in man or animal, but in the kingdom of man the issue of violence is more complex and sophisticated

The thesis is divided into three chapters Chapter One discusses the issue of violence from a psychological, historical and archetypal point of view Psychologically, the definitions of violence are presented and the issue is discussed from the psychologists' points of view Historically, the chapter presents a historical survey of the incidents which led man to be an aggressive creature, such as the First and Second World Wars The archetypal approach, on the other hand, concentrates on the myths which influenced Hughes while he was writing his poems.

Chapter Two is devoted to the relationship of Hughes with animals, it discusses the philosophical issues which stand behind using animals as persona in his poems.

The last Chapter, is a critical appreciation of twelve poems, all of which are about animals. It seems that animals in Hughes's poems are used metaphorically, that is, as symbols of human beings.

The thesis ends with a conclusion, a summary of the findings of the study and some suggestions for further research.

Key Words

1. Shamanism

It is a belief in North and South America, where people believe that by identifying with animal spirits, man can attain a healing power. The shaman goes in initiation dreams, in which, the shaman dies, and then he is resurrected. The result is that the Shaman returns to living, displaying some healing power, or clairvoyance.

(Mircea, Eliade Shamanism, Princeton University Press, New York, 1964)

2. Lupercal

Luperc means "wolf" and Lupercalia Festival is a ceremony which was held in ancient Rome. Lupercal is a place for wolves, a cave on the palatine where Romulus and Remus were supposed to have been suckled by a she-wolf.

(Rose, J.H. Ancient Roman Religion, Macmillan, London, 1948).

3. Wodwo:

Hughes described the wodwo as a half-man half-animal spirit. He is like Caliban in Shakespeare's The Tempest.

4. Aztec:

They are known as aggressive tribes or as cannibals. They used to live in South and Central America.

(Frazer, James George. The Golden Bough, Macmillan, London, 1963).

Table of Contents

Title	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter One	
Ted Hughes and Violence: A Historical and Theoretical Survey	4
Chapter Two	
Hughes As A Shaman	
Biographical and Philosophical Relation to Animals	41
Chapter Three	
Critical Appreciation	
The aspects of Violence in Hughes's Animal Poems	65
(1) Jaguar (Hawk in the Rain)	68
(2) Hawk in the Rain (Hawk in the Rain)	74
(3) The Thought - Fox (Hawk in the Rain)	82
(4) Hawk Roosting (<u>Lupercal</u>)	86
(5) View of a Pig (<u>Lupercal</u>)	94
(6) Thrushes (<u>Lupercal</u>)	100
(7) Lupercalia (<u>Lupercal</u>)	107
(8) Pike (<u>Lupercal</u>)	116
(9) <u>Second Glance At a Jaguar</u> (<u>Wodwo</u>)	124
(10) Wodwo (<u>Wodwo</u>)	134
(11) The Rat's Dance	142
(12) Howling of the Wolves	147
CONCLUSION	157
Bibliography	162
SUMMARY	168
ARABIC SUMMARY	

INTRODUCTION

Ted Hughes (1930-) is considered by many critics as a poet of violence. Many readers find his poetry difficult and tough. The theme of violence was clearly manifested in his writing about predators and animals. He was accused of celebrating and invoking violence in society through his poetry. This is an attempt to explore the issue of violence in this thesis, and how it is problematic and controversial in our modern times. The reasons behind Hughes's choice of writing about violence in the animal kingdom are revealed, and why he chose to write about animals rather than human figures in his poems. It is apparent that Hughes used animals as metaphors and symbols for human beings. The thesis tries to reflect the philosophy and the significance of using animals and the interpretations of these metaphors in the realm of human beings.

Hughes tackles the theme of violence because he believes that violence is inherent in all aspects of nature and life. Wars have proved that man is capable of inflicting harm by inventing lethal weapons to destroy himself and his fellowspacemen. Movies, T.V. serials and news indicate how man is living in a violent age and how man has become violent as well. The thesis tries to find answers for the problematic issue of violence. The thesis also tries to answer the question why Hughes uses animals as dramatic personas, and how violence is reflected in his poems, through a thematic and critical analysis.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter One deals with "Ted Hughes and Violence: a Historical and Theoretical Survey". Chapter Two deals with "Hughes as a Shaman and his Relation to Animals". Chapter Three is a critical appreciation of the aspects of violence in Hughes's animal poems.

Chapter One is a thematic and historical survey of the issue of violence and it tries to investigate the problem of violence in the poetry of Ted Hughes. It traces the philosophical implications behind writing about violence, and the poet's defence against critics, who accused him of propagating violence through his poetry. In addition, the Chapter states the historical and social backgrounds which led Hughes to write about this critical issue and how World War II (1939-1945) had its effect on Hughes's attitude towards life and human nature in general. This Chapter presents many definitions of violence. Most of these definitions admit the violent and aggressive nature of man. Lorenz, Freud and Hughes believe that man acts violently as an outcome of innate instinctive impulse, and due to a violent social environment as well. Man has got the seeds of violence inside himself and society pushes him to act violently as well. Chapter One goes deep into the nature of man with reference to Hughes's ideas about human nature.

In Chapter Two, the relationship between Hughes and animals is investigated from autobiographical, psychological and historical perspectives and the chapter traces the relationship between Hughes and animals since the period of childhood till he became a famous poet. This chapter deals with the idea of Hughes as a shaman. Hughes believes that by invoking the spirit of animals and identifying himself with them, animal spirit can inspire him of a secret language which enables him to heal the wounds of his society. This secret language is exemplified in writing poems about animals. Hughes believes that these animals are used as metaphors for human beings. They are used by Hughes to avoid any criticism of ruthfulness by the critics and the neo-humanists.

Chapter Three is devoted to a critical appreciation of some of Ted Hughes's poems. These poems are:

- (1) Jaguar [Hawk in the Rain (1957)].
- (2) The Thought - Fox [Hawk in the Rain (1957)].
- (3) Hawk in the Rain [Hawk in the Rain (1957)].
- (4) Hawk Roosting [Lupercal (1960)].
- (5) View of a Pig [Lupercal (1960)].

- (6) Thrushes [Lupercal (1960)]
- (7) Pike [Lupercal (1960)]
- (8) Lupercals [Lupercal (1960)]
- (9) A Second Glance At A Jaguar [Wodwo (1967)]
- (10) Wodwo [Wodwo (1967)]
- (11) Rat's Dance [Wodwo 1967]
- (12) Howling of The Wolves [Wodwo 1967]

The Chapter investigates the aspects of violence manifested in the animal poems. The critical appreciation stresses the theme of violence in the animals poems and how they are used as metaphors for human beings. The analysis focuses on the images, vocabulary and juxtaposition between man and animal to indicate how Hughes portrays the violent nature of man and animals.

The interpretation of the poems will focus on the theme and its relation to the realm of human beings. The last part is a conclusion, stating all the ideas discussed in the thesis.

Two approaches are followed in this study, one is historical and the other is thematic. The historical approach traces the period in which the poet lives. It investigates his biography and his childhood memories in an attempt to shed light on his childhood and his relation to animals. It also traces the historical events such as the First and Second World War and how the violence committed during these wars has got its impact upon the poet's look at human nature. The thematic approach investigates the theme of violence in Hughes's animal poems and how the historical events and his philosophy about life, nature, animals and human beings are reflected in these poems. Also, the analysis of the poems will try to investigate the mythological background behind using these animals. The researcher in his analysis will resort to the use of archetypal criticism with special reference to (Northrop Fry, Anatomy of Criticism, 1963). By doing so there is an attempt to investigate the archetypes and symbols which connect one poem to another in a unifying and comprehensive way. This approach reveals that Hughes follows the tradition of western literature, in both style and content.

CHAPTER ONE

RUGGERS AND VIOLENCE :

& HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL

SURVEY