

The Alienated-selves in Ted Hughes: A Critical Reading of his Animal Imageries

Prodip Kumar Adhikari

*Assistant Professor, Department of English, Islamic University, Bangladesh
Kushtia -7003, Bangladesh*

Abstract: *This study aims at understanding who the 'alienated selves' in Ted Hughes's poems are, and how they get alienated and what consequences they encounter in such a living. Hughes's characters, especially those who are remaining at the center and power, experience discrepancy, feelings of unease, disowning and displaced and find themselves immediately separated from the others. These persons have been identified here as the 'alienated selves'. Ted Hughes, a Nobel laureate poet of American origin, depicts man's ironical position under the guise of various animals. Imageries drawn from the wild life have been used as the vehicles towards transmitting his meanings to his audiences. Given that, Hughes's characters in his animal poems diagnose numerous human dilemmas: 'being' or 'not-being', virtues or vices, 'living with freedom' or 'loss of freedom' etc., on the backdrop of a war struck European society. The study acknowledges a transformation from 'self' to 'not-self', 'social-self' to 'true-self', or an 'individual-self'. Finally, it suggests harmonious living so that the angst and suffering of the alienated selves can be overcome.*

Key words: *Animal Imagery, Alienation, Alienated-selves, Class, Violence*

Date of Submission: 29-04-2020

Date of Acceptance: 13-05-2020

I. INTRODUCTION

The poems of Ted Hughes evidently embody man's feelings: his acute agonies, egoism, his activism, inanities and sufferings etc., under the veils of the non-human beings. An acclaimed Nobel laureate of American origin, Ted Hughes (August 17, 1930 – October 28, 1998) observes man's condition on the traumatic post-war backdrop of the twentieth century Europe and delineates how he has been surviving in the word. While delineating such a condition of man, he has deployed the voices from the wild creatures. In answer to a question: why did he choose 'to speak through animals so often?' – for 1995 *Paris Review* Hughes's answer reveals his inseparable connection with the animal world as he claims: "... they became a language – a symbolic language which is also the language of my whole life. It was... part of the machinery of my mind from the beginning" (Sagar, K. 2006, p. 39). It is assumed that this lifelong association with the wildlife has also inspired him to draw the animal imageries appropriate for man's present predicaments. The setting of his poems describes the modern urban life in parallel to the untreated non-human habitat and its dwellers. By juxtaposing the lower species of our surroundings he provides the manners and meanings necessary for us now. His attempts require keen observation of the world around and understanding the meanings to the presence of the non-human cosmos among us. His choice of the 'animal imageries' as the vehicle for transmitting meanings to his audience seems to be pertinent. However the animals, which he has been observing from his early pastoral life to his urban living, become the pivotal constituents in this regard, and appear as the persistent visitors in his poems. Nevertheless, he remains very calculative while choosing his imageries so that they can aptly contextualize his thoughts. The dramatizing quality of his 'animal imageries' further shows the potential to grasp the symptoms of modern men's dichotomous living in ailments, which turn its every dweller to be an 'alienated self' and together who constitute a cluster of the 'alienated selves'. For each of the 'alienated self' a sense of feeling unease, disturbance, discrepancy, imprisonment comes out invariably. To get rid of these nightmarish mental and physical torments, Hughes suggests imitating the attitudes for vitality from the wildlife and picking up the aptitudes of 'survival' without rupturing the harmony of living together. Observing the life and living of the 'alienated selves' might bring forth an optimistic revival to consciousness and renewal of life too.

1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.1. Animal Imageries

The imageries that Hughes has extracted from the lower species come out apt and premeditated. They possess all of those properties which make man's plunging into downcasts intelligible to all. Each or every imagery in Ted, does not hint at the particular vice and virtue, good and evil, pains and pleasures etc., of a

particular man only, it also bears an evidence of an overwhelming infectivity to the whole communities living in the mechanized modern era. The word imagery, as it comes to our comprehension, seems to be very arresting and its application remains very succinct here. It refers to either a 'faculty for visualization which promotes visual responses to a reader, or encourages one to view a poem or a text as concrete virtual artifacts' (Peter, C. and Roger, F. 2006, p. 115). That is, it determines a reader's visual response to a poet's creation or his manner of presenting the artifacts, and together they demonstrate very high definitive visual effects upon the readers' thoughts which in turn shape a kind of sensuous image – very akin to human quality (p.115). Maxwell, D. E. S. (1960) observes that 'the unification of the sensibility finds expression in imagery; transcribes one experience in terms of another and reveals for an instance the similarity between the two visuals, or between two aural experiences' (p. 69). Any event that implies man's demonstration of dominance, power, privileged position, habits of consuming more in contrast to promotion of love, compassion, joys for living etc., give rise to violence, tyranny, tortures and so on, upon those who want to lead a life of consistency and coordination. In the animal world, struggles for survival are common and constant. This is why the demonstration of violence or predatory nature does not stand for an offence. Actually violence in Hughes connotes something different, positive in tone, as long as it relates to the norms of the wilderness. For the wildlife, violence means energy, 'The energy-circuit' of the universe, but this universe stands for the unpretentious one (Walder D. 1987, p. 86). In jungle life, animals hunt to satisfy hunger not to enjoy the taste of what they devour, they live to grow and die eventually as a being only, but not to grow and live a rational life like a man, and they breed creatures but not to create creativity. This is how Hughes's imageries seem to be well defined as 'animal imageries' and call for our attention to viewing the day to day life of our own time through them.

1.2. The Alienated selves

Hughes' characters, especially those who are representing men at the center and power, find themselves separated from the others soon. This incident of separating from the others stands for what is known as class distinction. The very idea of *class*, in simple terms, refers to a division within a particular society (Nayar, 2010, p. 122). The concept of class distinction again indicates such a condition where one class rules the others (Longhurst B. and et al., 2011, p. 144). As a result the possibility of harmonious coexisting messes up giving rise to a feeling of alienation for all. The perception of alienation, however, comes to our realization as a subjective feeling of unease, disassociation or exile (Jonathan R. and Urmson, J.O. 2005, p.7). Jary, D. and Julia, J. (2006) observes 'alienation as an individual's feeling of estrangement from a situation, group or culture (pp. 12-13). In addition, the perceptions of existentialism, the Frankfurt school, humanism, and psychoanalysis etc., hold a converging effect upon the idea of alienation which induces certain aptitudes for 'diagnosing numerous maladies of the modern world' (Jonathan R. and Urmson, J.O. 2005, p.7). Ironically enough, not a single persona in Hughes can escape from this dichotomous living in the long run. None can even avoid the feelings of unease, disowning or estranged from others. Considering all these, each and every character in Hughes's animal poems, selected here for this study, identifies him as an 'alienated one'. The fundamental areas of dichotomies which turn Hughes's characters 'alienated selves' can be located as follow:

“the dichotomies of civilization and barbarism, scientism and irrationalism, town and country, mental and manual labour, atheism and religiosity, individualization and massification, banal popular culture and unintelligible high culture, intellect and feeling, masculine and feminine etc. (Jonathan R. and Urmson, J.O. 2005, p.7).

– the worst of these dichotomies engage people to be “the subjects of oppressions – though they may not recognize it – is of their own making” (ibid). Any man or entity living in such a condition locates him removed, or alienated. As a matter of fact, these symptoms of dichotomy postulate such conflicting experiences for man that at any occasion of his submerging into failure or attaining a success he remains aloof from the others. It is because none can share the conflicts within and the resultant agonies with others. This experience is perceived personally at one's individual level. This process of individualization thus gives rise to a sense of a self which might be labeled as an individual-self. Yet the striking point to note that anyone who possesses these dichotomous symptoms of maladies essentially finds him to be an 'alienated self' and the clustering of the 'alienated self' might be labeled as the 'alienated selves'.

It is alleged that the concept of 'alienation' and 'alienated self' connote recurrently with modern men and their maladies. Nevertheless the depiction of the 'alienated self' can be traced even many years prior to modern era. Saint Augustine (13 November 354 to 28 August 430 B.C.) in his *Confessions* has introduced an 'alienated self' who has epitomized man's indulging into sins or accomplishments of offenses and the resultant sufferings. On the other, hand French philosopher Blaise Pascal in his *Pensées* (“Thoughts”) depicted man's condition in inconsistency, weariness, unrest etc., which are to understand as the visible symptoms found in an

‘alienated self’ (Hossain K. Ashraf, 2002, p. 10). Hughes’s ‘alienated selves’ are in no way different from those who have been identified by Saint Augustine and Pascal. In Hughes’s poems a variety of the ‘alienated selves’ can be cited. They might include socio-culturally ‘alienated-self’ to spiritually ‘emptied ones’. But at any case an ‘alienated self’ is desired for an organic living. Hughes’s contemporary poet, T. S. Eliot (1969) implies a way out to shrink the process of turning a self to an alienated one by the cultivation of humility as he observes in this regard:

If humility and purity be not in the heart, they are not in the home: and

If they are not in the home, they are not in the City. (Eliot, T. S. ‘Choruses from ‘the Rock’, p. 158)

– appears captivating as it capitalized ‘City’ conceivably implies the city of God and thus signifies the importance of spiritual harmony too. Hughes’s proposition however solicits a transformative process which let an ‘individual self’ observe and imitate the unadulterated nature and its living bodies, their art of living together, understand the meaning of energy and vitality etc., from a contemplative mode of realization. This is how everybody will understand and find the ‘true-self’ he actually is possessing.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In modern poetry, Hughes’s contemporary poet T. S. Eliot (26 September 1888 – 4 January 1965) probably portrays the archetypal ‘alienated self’ through Prufrock in his poem ‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’ published in the year 1917 under the collection of *PRUFROCK and Other Observations* (Hossain K. Ashraf, 2002, p. 10). Eliot delineates Prufrock’s inescapable sufferings due to his self-imprisonment, a life in dead situation on the backdrop of the modern metropolis reality in London. Prufrock’s irony in fact lies in his suppressed desires or libido which he never can satiate because of his disparity in communication with the others.

Hughes ‘from the very beginning of his writing is searching for a way out towards reconciling human vision with energies, powers, and the presences of the non-human cosmos’ (Sagar K. 1993, p. 130). His resolution seems convincing since the non-human beings hardly waste their energy, enthusiasm, efforts etc., but meet their fundamental requirements i.e., food, shelter, survival etc. Taking pride in power, beauty, splendor and chasing after the whims of desires etc., are actually of human nature. These also find expression through the animals in his poems. Hughes’s investigations and intentions encompass the promotions to these non-human arts of simple living so that mankind can prevent self imprisonment and the resultant sufferings.

Finding a way out for man’s better living from the non-human world however sound ironical, yet maintaining an affirmative correspondence with them might bring some incentives too. Yudi Li (2007) witnesses the relationship between man and animal from three aspects – man’s inclination to acquire animal power, animals reflecting in men and man’s getting enlightened from animals. His accomplishment teaches what man can attain from the wild-creatures (p. 95-98). Opting for an enlightened vision might be an approachable measure to follow for all.

An escalating animality in man and the ensuing cruelty from it cost high for man. Especially man’s perceptions about values and ability to think rationally restrain him from any sort of devaluing and mortifying deeds for the others. Sha (2013) presumes the two devastating wars as compatible motives why violence and animality have been anchored in Hughes’ poetry. He opined that these two great Wars brought about absolute intellectual deadness and loss of human values leaving behind an absolutely conflicting materialistic society for all. This ultimately not only contaminates man’s habits of contemplative thinking but also impedes the possibility of his coming into consciousness.

Any allocation of materialistic pursuits exercised by a man embodies his yielding to superficiality which plunges man into the abyss of disgrace and degeneration. Shiddant (2017) points out the allegorical presentation of the inherent flaws in human nature in Hughes’s animal poems (p. 306-310). Admitting animals as one of the important aspects of creation by God, he compares and contrasts human struggle and destiny with them. His conclusion urges for man’s awakening into consciousness without what the combat between the sanctified elevated living and unsophisticated sensuous feats will never be ransomed.

Reflection of animals in a person as a matter of fact sounds ironical and expresses the inner barrenness of a self. It emerges as an ultimate result of one’s inclusion to the dominant ‘I’, the uncultivated ‘ego’ of a man (Maity, N. 2013, p. 29-32). The more dominant human ‘ego’ comes out, the more destruction it scores. Animals therefore take over humanity; remain timeless and undiminished among us announcing our bankruptcy to the whole universe.

III. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

From his very boyhood, Hughes's sympathetic insight to animals, adventures and enthusiasm for local wild life, keen observation to their manner of living or perishing from the world etc., mark tempting (Christopher, R. 2017, pp. 3-12). His association to all of these enterprises occurs as a habit formation in his entire life. It is assumed that such a habit formation for the lower species accounts for his speaking through animals. It keeps him always closer to the nature and its elements and provides the opportunities to understand them in depth. His acknowledgement to the presence of the non-human beings as parallel to human: "they were there at the beginning" (cited as in Sagar K. 2006, pp. 39-40) hereby becomes very conspicuous and helpful enough for his readers to examine the world of the non-human beings from a distinct point of view.

Hughes decisively found the language of animals suitable for delineating human follies or achievements. His investigation thus asks for detailing the imageries drawn from the jungle living ones. Apart from these his deep concern for connecting human feelings parallel to them registers innumerable questions as regard man's position in the modern world. It is presumed here in this connection that there might be some serious messes what Hughes has encountered otherwise why he will impart such a devaluing comparison of men with those of the wild creatures. Hughes's retrospective submission:

"I suppose, because they were there at the beginning. Like parents. ... They are a way of connecting all of my deepest feelings together. So, when I look for, or get hold of a feeling of that kind, it tends to bring up the image of an animal simply because that's the deepest, earliest language that my imagination learned". (cited as in Sagar K. 2006, pp. 39-40).

– clarifies how important animals are for him and how significant the imageries deployed in his poems from the animal world may occur. It is also important to understand how Hughes's deepest feelings and imagination interact with the intricate life in real around us.

Hughes's habits of observing the animal world, finding an appropriate linguistic interpretation for each of them, capturing their characters and depicting them up to the limits of language with full of vivacity and insight denote that "his animal poems are a network of knowledge he abides by if not concedes to" (Biespiel D. July 28, 2016). He also finds Hughes's 'remaining dutiful to the figurative relationship between humans and animals as one of appearance and magnitude'. One who comes across such an inspection probably will never restrain him from being a part of the network of knowledge Hughes' extends to us. Nevertheless his endeavours remain not equally credible or acknowledging to all. On reviewing *Crow*, how Alvarez has critiqued, grades Hughes less impressive than how the votaries of his poems usually depict him. According to Alvarez Hughes has never shown 'much faith in Human beings' while Daniel Hoffman's observation gets more inflammatory as he determines Hughes 'concerns as narrow, holding no healthy of sensuousness, joy or love, to say nothing of immortality' (cited as in Porter D. ed. Leonard M. Scigaj, 1992, p. 50-51). He further locates Hughes at the very extremity of human isolation as his "response to the conditions of contemporary life. Alvarez and Hoffman's observations at this point sound dispirited; but Alvarez finds something redeeming eventually. His description to 'Hughes's earliest animals with insight' however speaks rejuvenating:

"However violent and unforgiving he made them seem, they had their own special perfection; they falsified nothing and were true to their own blind and predatory laws. So though their lives were alien, they were still redeemed by a certain instinctive grace" (ibid. p. 53).

Alvarez's description credits animals' on their 'special perfection', showing 'no falsification', having 'instinctive grace' etc.; but at the same time it does not overlook how 'their lives were alien'. Since the 'instinctive of grace' and the 'incident of being alien' characterize a common symptom both for men and animals it constitutes one of the fundamental queries of the animal imageries in Hughes's poems.

The poetry of Ted Hughes again mostly sets in the war-struck modern European society. The stories he tells us are of 'Western Man' and the surrounding nature or habitation of each and every man living here. The relationship between man and the nature where he exists is a must to comprehend. Ted Hughes's won thoughts sited in *Winter Pollen* (1994, p. 129):

"The story of the mind exiled from Nature is the story of Western Man. ... It tells 'the story about his spiritual romanticism and heroic technological progress. It is a story of decline... abandoning Nature, losing the touch with its creator ... about an evolutionary dead-end' (qtd., in Sagar, K. 2006, p. 2).

– tenders something very triggering for our further comprehension. His story alludes to the mess of our own contemporary life which has been technologically elevated, yet spiritually deviated due to the romantic inclination to individualism. To tell the truth, the impacts of the two successive World Wars in the same century upon mankind turn out to be so appalling that it goes beyond comparison with any accomplishment of human race. The catastrophe probably occurs more in the psyche than the physical limitations of man. Man sometimes reflects animals as they represent the dark forces lurking inside human sub-consciousness. Human sub-consciousness epitomizes those forces that endanger modern civilization in the name of rationalism and makes civilization illusive to all (Sharma, S. and Vidhusi, S. 2015, p. 7074-88). The idea of civilization always calls for such visions that elevate and foster humanity which again starts at humility. Hughes's poems 'serving as the metaphors for ... particular vision' can turn the prevailing messes into merits (Walder, D. 1987, p. 3). Animals in Hughes therefore tempt us search for the answers to some of fundamental questions, such as:

- i. Who are these animals?
- ii. Why and in what ways do the animal imageries in Hughes represent human accomplishments?
- iii. How do the animals signify the 'alienated selves' around us?
- iv. What restitutions might the animal imageries in Hughes's poems provide for mankind?

Finding the answers to all these questions and comprehending their meanings in depth might bring forth immense possibilities for reconciling the dilemmas, human beings have been infected with. When Walcott, D. (1992, p. 41) opines: "The Width of Hughes's poetry is massive" – it again instigates us to understand why the animals in Hughes's poems are. In fact "it is impossible to understand his works without recognizing that the animals are not there for their own sake, however brilliantly defined they seem to be" (Walder, D. 1987, p. 14). While recognizing the 'alienated selves' in his poems, understanding their daily accomplishments and witnessing the ultimate outcomes they have to confront while living in the modern world, the study of the animal imageries in Hughes therefore might provide the phenomenal resources.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on the four selected poems of Ted Hughes and uses them as primary sources. Hughes' prose works, letters, interviews etc., have been also used in the relevant contexts. Periodicals, journals, and other published books and online sources have been consulted as the secondary sources. This paper comprises a qualitative research work. Texts based content analysis research methodology has been followed. Sources have been cited sincerely.

V. DISCUSSION

Hughes's animals possess "... a powerful individual reality, yet they are always beyond their achievement as image" (Porter D. 1992, p. 53). The savagery of wild creatures or the demonstration of beauty, dynamism, enthusiasm, vitality etc., is of course of their own but underneath this simple picture they capture our attempts 'to survive in this hazardous time'. Porter's examination about their presence in and among us stands for an integral living with the nature. It clarifies why they are, especially when he adds, "They locate for us our beginnings, the incredible being, and the stubbornness our life." Hughes's appraisal to nature in the *Poetry in the Making* (1967) well substantiates Porter's view as he states:

"It is only there that the ancient instincts and feelings in which most of our body lives can feel at home on their own ground... . Those pre-historic feelings, satisfactions we are hardly aware of except as a sensation of pleasure ... these are like blood transfusion to us, and in wild surroundings they rise to the surface and refresh us, renew us" (p. 76).

– animals being the inseparable elements of nature proffer the possibilities and renewals for us even in the narrowing living in our own time. Hughes's animals in fact keep our hopes unbroken. Animals as Hughes has implied probably reflect man only when human consciousness fails to identify his "true self" (Sharma S. and Vidushi S. 2015, p. 7078).

Hughes's first collection of poems *The Hawk in the Rain* (1957) having always been 'a continuing source of metaphors, symbols, and mythical allusions' etc., in turn it reflects human nature significantly (Walder, D. p. 90). It is a portrayal of the modern man declaring his despairs, desolations, fears and frustrations etc., at one hand, and the visions for an elevated life on the contrary. 'The Jaguar' under this collection appears captivating since it displays boisterous activism and will force even if it were caged at the zoo. But what strikes most is its ability to establish stimulating communications with the others conquering its fear and attraction of

the mesmerized zoo crowd. The imprisoned jaguar and the other animals at the zoo metaphorise a distinction between people possessing visionary intents even in extreme antagonism and those who have yielded to exhaustion, inane, indifferent circumstances. Compared with the other cages of animals at the zoo, that of the jaguar stays at the center of attraction to all. Jaguar's prototypical natural beauty and vigour take over the falsified vigour and revolts of the other animals – apes, lions, parrots etc. Their separation from their original habitations i.e., from the forests definitely causes disturbance in their natural way of living. Their feelings of unease and disowning also get visible, yet the jaguar remains free from exhaustion. It helps him struggle against the fundamental difficulties in life and thus keeps him distinct from the others. Hughes narration:

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. (Hughes, Ted. *Selected Poems*, 15)

– here appositely points out two opposing 'selves' concealed in mankind. The animals here overtly reflect people in our surroundings who have lost both of their mental and physical energy and vigour to fight for their survival and renewal of life. This is how they represent the prototypical 'alienated selves' of their own causes; whereas the jaguar emerges out as a 'free self' because of its non-yielding attitude to indifferent situation. The following stanza however exemplifies the others' being 'socially alienated ones'. The similes, metaphors, images etc., Hughes carries out are simply picturing those who have been abandoned totally:

Lie still as the sun. The boa-constrictor's coil
Is a fossil. Cage after cage seems empty, or
Stinks of sleepers from the breathing straw.
It might be painted on a nursery wall. (Hughes, Ted. *Selected Poems*, 15)

On the contrary the jaguar has neither been fossilized nor has it forgotten to demonstrate its dynamism and enthusiasm for life. Unlike the other animals the Jaguar becomes a 'subject to oppression' of the modern society. Its vigor – manner of ignoring the imprisonment, insights to 'seeing no cage' etc., keeps its dignity intact. Hughes' arresting exposure:

On 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. (Hughes, Ted. *Selected Poems*, 15)

– unarguably grasps the jaguar's vision for a world without a boundary. In modern society a boundary is a decisive factor, it endorses some guided rules and regulations to save the interests of the society. Thus the society itself involves in snatching away the rights or freedom of others' choices what Jean-Jacques Rousseau has mentioned as the 'innate freedom man' (Cecile, L. et al, 2011, p.158). The jaguar's visionary activism in fact supports him standing with strong determinism.

Another important thing to notice is that despite of his being deprived of its 'innate freedom' the jaguar remains hopeful for a 'natural (*sauvage*) world full of freedom, empathy and so on' (ibid). This disposition of the jaguar also associates to the *Sartrean* notion of 'freedom of will' which discloses common in human nature. It intensifies our determinism and choice of actions in the long run (Odesanmi, A. C. 2009, p. 45). The dichotomous measures for survival and living in the world distinguish the jaguar from the other animals too. When the other animals start to disown their own real positions the jaguar strides for a change making the world roll under his heel and the horizons come over the cage floor. Hughes's concluding lines:

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 floor the horizons come. (Hughes, Ted. *Selected Poems*, 15)

– despite a tone of blasphemy as exemplified by the hawk in the 'Hawk Roosting': Now I hold the Creation in my foot' – can wipe out the resonant terrors and oppressions by establishing a successful connection with outer world, i.e., the unbound nature. Therefore, the jaguar who once had been displaced and caged at the zoo can establish it to be a 'free self'. This proposition however relies on the basis of some solid standpoints: a) the

jaguar allegorizes an ‘agent of oppression’ where society is the cause of its ‘estrangement’, but its vision helps establish a link with the *Rousseauian* natural world; b) it shows visionary enthusiasm for a boundary free surrounding which is a manifestation of his leadership quality and necessarily helps him to keep the zeal for liberation sustained; c) it never feels unease or disowning the natural world which represents his ‘free self’. Therefore the jaguar being an ‘alienated self’ for the whims of the society at the end of the day it can witness a transformation and confirms its identity to be a ‘free self, a part of the organic whole.

‘The Thought-Fox’ apprises a combat between the ‘self’ and ‘not-self’. The story line of the poem seems to be very simple. It tells a poet’s struggle to write a poem during the midnight when the setting is completely desolate. Underneath this simple storyline, the rising tension and, numbing loneliness in the poet’s thought, the duel between poet’s inanity manifested through the poem’s not into being and apparent activism through the visible movements of the fingers on the blank page, the disharmony between imagination and reality etc., add special dimension. The visualization and detection of these human feelings as a matter of fact encapsulate numerous symptoms of dichotomies, such as: a) a strong feeling of ‘unease or disturbance’ of inanity versus the ‘pleasure of creation or activism’; b) an intent to cohere between the mental work and physical labour; c) the rising tension between existence and non-existence in term of temporal and spatial contexts, and e) the process of bridging between the formlessness imagination and concrete production of a thing as for an example a ‘poem is printed’ in Ted Hughes (O’Connor, D. 2016, pp. 33-35). It would not be an exaggeration to say that all these dichotomies eventually emerge as the deep human realities through Hughes’s figurative meanings ingeniously.

It is noticeable that Hughes’s persona in ‘The Thought-Fox’ propagates the ‘alienated self’ with a positive impression. Here it comes out as a ‘poetic self’, whose objective finds meaning only when its attempts to creating a poem come true. His failure in attaining his objectives turns not only his failure to come into consciousness but also makes him separated from his audience. For a person who possesses a ‘poetic self’, it exemplifies nothing but absurdity, leaving behind the idea of ‘not-self’ solid in us. The conflict in the ‘The Thought-Fox’ might be guessed clearly through Hughes’s own speech:

“It is about a fox, obviously enough, but a fox that is both a fox and not a fox. What sort of a fox is it that can sit right into my head where presumably it still sits... smiling to itself what the dog barks. It is both a fox and a spirit. It is a real fox; as I read the poem I see it move, I see it setting its prints, I see shadow going over the irregular surface of the snow. The words show me all this, bringing nearer and nearer. It is very real to me. The words have made a body for it again given it somewhere to walk. (Hughes, Ted. *The Poetry in the Making*, p. 20)

– reveals the poet’s inner conflict between imagination and reality, where the only possible way of reconciliation finds in the poem printed or the poet’s seeing words that can bring his visual sense back or bring him into the conscious world of reality.

The opening stanza of ‘The Thought-Fox’ marks out a parade of binary oppositions, embedded in human realities. The verb ‘imagine’ opens up a clash between the subconscious and conscious state of the ‘poetic-self’. This clash occurs necessarily to a poet’s life otherwise the process of his creation gets hampered. But the poet’s mental anxieties and distractions lie somewhere else. His imagination sets on ‘this midnight moment’s forest’ brings forth the first impression of his desolation yet it enlists some imaginary alive thing, the clock’s loneliness and the blank page where his fingers move. All these indecisively mirror an imminent tension and dispute between ‘self’ and a ‘not-self’. Hughes aptly registers the tension noticeably when his persona announces:

I imagine this midnight moment’s forest:
Something else is alive
Besides the clock’s loneliness
And this blank page where my fingers move. (Hughes, Ted. *Selected Poems*, p. 13)

This mounting tension is premeditated and inescapable when an imagination is to be transformed into a concrete one. Hughes’s own perception in this regard as stated in the first chapter of *Poetry in the Making* worth citing:

“Imagine what you are writing about. See it and live it. Do not think it up laboriously, as if you were working out mental arithmetic. Just look at it, touch it, smell it, listen to it, turn yourself into it. (1967, p. 18)

– marks paramount significance. His proposition clearly inquires of an evolution from imagination to a concrete world of reality. But making a choice of action with strong determinism necessitates actualizing of the desired accomplishments unarguably.

In ‘The Thought-Fox’ the persona sees no alternatives but accomplish his deeds. A successful completion to his obligations presages emancipation from the abyss of the torments he has been confined in. But during his struggles and sufferings for emancipation he accompanies none. It is he who alone has to complete the journey within his inner self overcoming the recoiling disturbances, mounting feelings of desolation, and uncertainties at the figurative demonic midnight situation. The speaker’s numbing admission:

Through the window I see no star:
Something more near
Though deeper within darkness
Is entering the loneliness. (Hughes, Ted. *Selected Poems*, p. 13)

– probably provides the most piercing precedent of alienation. Its manner of angst however becomes unique and the only comparable note of parallelism to this fits with the condition of one’s grasping to ‘the labour pain’. While giving a child birth or bringing any new ideas or things into existence it is none other than the progenitor who is allotted for his or her distresses.

The images of ‘window’, being a spatial boundary, and the ‘star’, being a heavenly body, however symbolize an attempt to communicating between an individual self, and that of the ‘self’ of the outer world i.e., the organic non-finite universe. Nevertheless the ‘ticking clock’ accompanies the poet and brings him back to the conscious world. He can smell the ‘sharp hot stink of a fox. His ‘dark hole of the head’ starts responding. He becomes able to break the mystery of the midnight and the page gets printed:

Till, with a sudden sharp hot stink of fox
It enters the dark hole of the head.
The window is starless; the clock tick,
The page is printed. (Hughes, Ted. *Selected Poems*, p. 13)

In fact ‘The Thought-Fox’ goes through a cycle of transformations from an apparent starting point to a concrete materialization. The visual presence of the fox printed at the page evolves a parallel effect upon the presence of a real human being abiding in the physical world. Throughout the whole process of the poem being printed, the persona or ‘poetic-self’ remains ‘alienated’. But soon after its completion, a communication with its audience gets established effectively. ‘The Thought-Fox’ thus witnesses its persona to be evolving from a ‘poetic-self’ to an ‘individual-self’ being a part of the audiences of his own poem (O’Connor, D., p. 126). This transformation comes to our better understanding when Hughes’s (1967) own optimistic admission recalls, ‘that long after I am gone, as long as a copy of the poem exists, every time any one reads it, the fox will get up somewhere out of the darkness and come walking towards them’” (*Poetry in the Making*, p. 20). What Hughes recalls here now, ushers a sort of a resolution. Through it the multiplying human intricacies and the resultant angst might be reconciled, since it teaches us how to establish a reciprocal communication between the creator (the poetic-self) and the creation (both poem and its audiences) in the long run.

While ‘The Jaguar’ and ‘The Thought-Fox’ celebrate the energy, vitality and possibility of life and living in the universe, the hawk in the ‘Hawk Roosting’ curdles the conception of ‘degraded souls’. These ‘degraded souls’ are decisively the alienated ones. Hughes’ ‘Hawk Roosting’ under the collection of *Lupercal*, published in 1960, induces an implicit satire on man’s tyrannical dispositions and unambiguously directs a world of partition at its beginning. It separates its inmates in two unequal halves: one stands for the subject of oppression and the other includes the dominant half who works as the agent of oppression. The hawk’s accomplishments, according to Jonathon, R. and Urmson, J. O (2005) determine it to be the creator of distinction and disparity in society at name of class and culture. Man’s inclusion to high culture, manifestation of masculinity, involvement in individualization, desires for power and authority, execution of atheism etc., set the foundation for social distinction by summoning the resultant counter paradigms. The reactions that the society brings forth in this process inevitably exhibit through the embodiments of unleashed barbarism, controversies, disorder and devastation. Therefore when the hawk states:

I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed,
Inaction, no falsified dream

Between my hooked head and hooked feet:

Or in sleep rehearse perfect kills and eat. (Hughes, Ted. *Selected Poems*, p. 43)

– he broadcast his authority over the others. The first person narrative (I, my, me, mine) and the kind of internal monologue recorded in the poem definitely forecast the hawk's conceited attitudes which are common among the people of high birth and high position. The hawk's tone accentuates a god-like arrogance, a political dictator. Its physical gesture manifests a spirited life-force at one hand, and on the contrary it signifies a sniper used in war field as a killing machine. With its high perching, the hawk contemplates and rehearses 'perfect killing'. This killing intent of the hawk illustrates a perfect instance to the notion of absolute power too. Though the hawk finds it limited within the hooked head and hooked feet, he is privileged with 'The convenience of the high trees' that is his high position; 'The air's buoyancy', the supreme energy of 'the sun ray' etc., allude to the power and authority exploited by the upper class people in the society. This is why probably the hawk declares:

I took the whole of Creation

To produce my foot, my each feather:

Now I hold Creation in my foot" (ibid.)

The hawk's Godly declaration implies a testimony to its absolute power in wrath. But the terror it induces really feels conducive to recall the terror hurled in Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*. The blasphemous declaration: 'Now I hold Creation in my foot' perceives the ominous illustration of antagonism. The killing intent of the hawk: "I kill where I please because it is all mine" marks a complete violation to the norms of the animal world. It is because animals kill only to fulfill their basic urgency, any alternation to it as a matter of fact signifies human nature. The tone of possessiveness further exemplifies hawk's inclusion to the person of 'having all'. All these human dispositions do not show any instance of humility and fellow feelings. Therefore any person exercising such disposition identifies him or her soon to be a 'degraded self'. Such a self definitely loses its position from the mass communities.

It is also shocking to notice that hawk's activities as degraded self do not show any quick ending. It urges for his coming back to realization and cultivation of compensation through the replacement of benevolence and submission instead of violence and chaos. Otherwise he receives the equal destiny similar to those who have found them hated and oblivious at the thoughts of the others. The hawk conceited voice bids:

Nothing has changed since I began.

My eyes has permitted no change

I am going to keep things like this. (Hughes, Ted. *Selected Poems*, p. 43)

The hawk's projection unambiguously hints at a man with unbound power, a ruler with *Hitlerian* insight. The hawk can signify any one of us who embodies the symptoms of "paranoia which are the normal condition for the bourgeois soul here and now, locked in a State that allows the members no privacy no authority" (Leonard M. Scigaj, p. 10). Jonathon and Urmson (2005) identify such a personality to be an oppressor. Despite being a member of a society his manner of creating unrest, domination, exploitations etc., not only spoils the social bond but also implants the vices of class distinction. Hughes's hawk possessing the class of the oppressor finally plunges into an 'alienated self' whereas replacing an integrated social condition it could at ease share his identity as a 'social-self'. The hawk thus allegorises that destitute of our society who has to receive such an ironical identity and live an unwelcome and oblivious living at the end of the day.

The demonstration of 'jungle law' and the horrible execution of violence of predatory nature have witnessed a phenomenal implementation in 'Pike'. The persona in the 'Pike' arouses the peak of our awe and disappointment. Its ability to rouse the fears and frustrations also supplies the rations for our thoughts at least from two fundamental points of view. First it raises a substantial contradiction combining together its physical beauty and subtlety along with the lurking ruthless and voracious nature. Its physical appearance hides its ambushing quality which may turn into deadly weapons, usable for killing the fellow aqua creatures perfectly. Next it unfolds numerous conflicts and tensions for the survival of its own when the chain of unadulterated nature gets ruptured at the whims of man. Man's intrusion into the non-human cosmos brings about hazardous incident of displacement in the life of the pike which décor a feeling of alienation in it. The beginning stanza of the 'Pike' definitely echoes the same to hawk in the 'Hawk Roosting' but this time the fixation of anarchy and avidity surpasses any of the previous instances:

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. (Hughes, Ted. *Selected Poems*, p. 59)

Pike's predatory nature is innate. This species characterizes killing 'from the egg'. Killing therefore not only determines intrinsic to it but also becomes its safeguard. This very nature of pike embodies the sickness in the subconscious which is a common symptom in man especially whose insight has not been cultivated enough to live together. But the worst irony it implies is its deceiving intent, an irreparable conflict between appearances versus realities.

The pike carries pike in all parts, looks green tigering the gold etc., and discloses itself as privileged being devised with the high aptitudes for ambushing the others. The detailing of pike by Hughes comes out captivating. It becomes more suggestive when the description concentrate on the 'silhouette of submarine delicacy', 'a hundred feet long in their world', sag belly, jaws' hooked clamp and fangs along with its determinism expressed through its iron eyes and intent for killing even its fellow species etc., indeed shape it to be an appropriate machinery for dominating all the others under its legislative areas. The phrase 'green tigering the gold' again reminds everyone about a highland majestic animal tiger, magnificent in appearance yet fierce in nature. The pike's ferocity best understood when it describes:

The jaw's 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, Ted. *Selected Poems*, p. 59)

– relevantly parallels to the hawk's commanding attitude: Nothing has changed since I began. / My eyes has permitted no change / I am going to keep things like this (Ted Hughes, p. 43). However the pike can rationalize its terror and tyranny with the pretext of its intrinsic. Its brewing anarchy comes to light just immediately after its displacement in an aquarium of a drawing room setting. The weaker ones become a subject to its prey and are devoured by it sequentially in this new place. This incident sets a precedent of anarchy undoubtedly yet man could avoid witnessing it if he would not intrude into its abode and violate of natural law.

Hughes's persona, the fisherman produces an impression in us that it is the fisherman, not the pike, is the real offender. He could neither keep the 'right things in the right place' nor could he 'uphold the norms in the particular way. The drawing room situation therefore does not connote displacement for the pike only, from a different angle of view it insinuates the manners and treatment imposed upon the 'haves-not' class in a modern capitalist society. What the pike does determines its natural identity and can be accepted as the 'survival aesthetic' in the non-human cosmos. Thom Gunn (January 1961) in his 'Certain Traditions', *Poetry*, provides certain amount of compassion for the pike as he writes:

"the harder a living thing resists the opposition of the elements, of other living things, or of death, the finer the quality of its existence. There is in fact a very clear cut-cut antithesis set up in Mr. Hughes's poetry: the pure unthinking energy of life against whatever opposed it" (cited as in Porter D. ed. Leonard M. Scigaj, p. 57).

This is how pike's demonstration of anarchy or savagery cannot resist his identity as a 'true self'. Its motifs of oppressions never allude neither to a dictator ruler nor an intruder from any angle. Yet it becomes alienated, though not in its own communities. The pike, in this connection, has been a source of our learning from where we can realize what happens if the chain of the natural bond of living is not maintained while satiating our whims and unnecessary desires. It can also educate how we can find the remedies for the symptomatic modern sickness and lead an optimistic life. The concluding lines of the 'Pike' get arresting as they illuminate:

Darkness beneath the night's darkness had freed,
That rose slowly towards me, watching. (Hughes, Ted. *Selected Poems*, p. 60)

This optimistic conclusion implies our awakening into consciousness which must accommodate the essence of 'aesthetic of survival' applicable for human race. It will continue transforming our inner bestiality to a beauty and providing the 'true-selves' for our living together.

CONCLUSION

The 'alienated selves' exposed in Hughes's poems remain not far away from our surroundings. They specify the ailing citizens living in the modern capitalized society. Hughes has exposed them under the veils of the wild creatures in his poems. While attaining the materialistic goals man creates numerous incongruities, discrepancies, displacements, imbalances etc., knowingly or unknowingly. Accordingly he finds him isolated from the others soon. Man's alienation gets reprimanded through his feelings of unspeakable unease, disturbance, suffering, sense of disowning and separation from the others. The feelings of sufferings aggravates when everyone has to go through the constant dilemmas comprising of the conflict between a 'self' or a 'not-self', getting metamorphosed to a self of lower species, and finally the fear of losing the identity of a 'true-self'. The remedies for these ailments have been suggested for the admirations of the untreated nature and addressing to an organic living. To observe the wild life and imitate the aesthetic of survival for man comes out ironical yet accepting the animals with a positive insight is a must since their presence is timeless. To restrain the process of turning to be alienated ones might bring forth the highest possibilities in society. Finally it would be wise enough to remain optimistic and uphold a life of empathy and co-ordination for all.

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