

# A Critical Study of Early Poetry of Ted Hughes Vision of the Goddess

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**Abstract – Ted Hughes is a significant twentieth century English artist, pundit, producer and short story author. The world where he grew up profoundly affected his beautiful reasonableness. The thrilling normal surroundings of his developmental years affected his poetry as it were. The common world figures in an overwhelming manner in his writings. Hughes' distraction with the universe of Nature is planned for demonstrating his doubt for the unnatural methods for the objective and good request of the Western world as a rule and Western Europe specifically. His exertion is to resuscitate the normal and instinctual lifestyle since Christianity not any more satisfied the otherworldly needs of the age. Hughes' point, as an artist, is to offer elective power. Therefore, his poetry modifies the male-oriented power of Western human advancement when all is said in done and puts forth an attempt to resuscitate the Goddess love of the agnostic religions. Hughes accepts, as is obvious in his poetry, that Goddess love, which was at the focal point of crude religions, got stifled after the rise of male-oriented religions especially Christianity. It was not just the strict convictions and practices which were to a great extent adjusted after the development of Christianity yet additionally one's way to deal with life.**

**Key Words: Early Poetry, Ted Hughes, Goddess**

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## INTRODUCTION

Ted Hughes the English artist, playwright, pundit, and short-story author of the twentieth century was conceived on seventeenth August, 1930 in Mytholmroyd, the valley of Yorkshire Pennines. He experienced childhood amidst invigorating common environment. Accordingly, since youth, his wonderful creative mind was formed, as it were, by this universe of Nature and his response to it, in the long run as he developed and created, prompting a more noteworthy powerful affirmation molding his bound together idyllic vision. His dad's First World War encounters and the war-hit air of the valley further educated his standpoint. Hughes himself brings up, how the tragic and miserable scene of the area helped him to remember the demise and pulverization achieved by the First World War, and yet he really wanted to recognize an "exultant"<sup>1</sup> life which he felt in the realm of Nature that decreased, somewhat the harsh state of mind of the valley and asserted the positive parts of life:

*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.<sup>2</sup>*

The scene to him was additionally a sort of break from the stifling impacts of industrialized towns, man-made principles and good codes. Ted Hughes is frequently called a "Zoo Laureate" on account of the copious utilization of creature symbolism in his poetry. His enthusiasm for creatures started at an early age about which he himself composes: ". . . my enthusiasm for creatures started when I started." His distraction with creatures was not limited to indoor exercises alone; he wandered about the slopes, going with his senior sibling, chasing and catching creatures. At the point when he was eight, his family went to live in a modern town Yorkshire where Hughes was blessed to discover enough "woods and lakes" to sustain his creative mind. There he carried on with a double life: one with the town young men and the other with the universe of Nature. At the point when he arrived at fifteen, his frame of mind towards creatures generally changed, and he censured himself for "upsetting their lives. He composes: ". . . at around fifteen my life developed increasingly complicated and my frame of mind to creatures changed. I started to take a gander at them from their very own perspective." Hughes joined Cambridge in 1951 to examine English yet disappointed with writing

papers, went to Anthropology and Archeology. He got engaged in the antiquated universe of fantasies and customs. This world was additionally instrumental in molding his inventive creative mind which is later manifested in his poetry. Hughes himself certifies: ". . . my supported enthusiasm for the legends and fables of the world.

Gone before my enthusiasm for poetry and had in a manner driven me to poetry." The post-World War II abstract universe of England created numerous eminent writers like Robert Conquest, Elizabeth Jennings, Kingsley Amis, John Holloway, Thom Gunn, Philip Larkin, John Wain, Donald Davie, Philip Hobsbaum, Peter Redgrove, Christopher Levenson and Ted Hughes. A portion of these writers, similar to Robert Conquest, Elizabeth Jennings, Kingsley Amis, John Holloway, Thom Gunn, Philip Larkin, John Wain, and Donald Davie are alluded to as 'Development' artists. The Movement artists are known for speaking to a non-reactant and uninvolved "white collar class frame of mind." 9 An outstanding pundit of the time Alfred Alvarez censured the Movement writers for "being 'genteel'." 10 Fraser calls attention to that Movement poetry is "controlled, clear, worried about coaxing out plainly little or if nothing else reasonable good issues, rather separate, generally formal . . . monitoring its feelings well, given to removing and incongruity."

This pointless humility, poise and control prevented Movement poetry from mirroring the emergency of the time in an intense way. As indicated by Fraser, "Alvarez . . . feels that the Movement experienced acting naturally controlled and limited . . ." 12 The unnatural avoiding viciousness in a world turning out to be increasingly more savage with the progression of time made Movement poetry "pallid." This poetry needed vitality and essentialness and it didn't concentrate on the main problems of life. The Movement writers attempted to dodge the ignoble truth of life and took shelter in 3 the good and strict claims favoring request and congruity on the planet. A vainglorious adherence to the strict request is suitably uncovered in Philip Larkin's notable lyric 'Church Going.' The ballad "is about a skeptic's hesitant acknowledgment of what the Church has implied." In a response to the refinement, exhibited by Movement poetry, there rose what came to be known as Group poetry, which had an alternate state of mind and an alternate taste. Philip Hobsbaum, Peter Redgrove, Christopher Levenson and Ted Hughes were its significant examples. The Group writers, as opposed to the Movement artists, were attracted to brutality and put stock in "investigating, and maybe abusing" it.

They exhibited "a positive taste for passionate brutality as well as for the revolting, the peculiar, and here and there without a doubt for the barbarous." A tone of rot and demise, heartlessness and mercilessness stamped Group poetry all in all. The abhorrences of the Second World War still appeared

to frequent their creative mind. Gathering poetry focuses on a "general break-down" towards which the world appeared to be heaved. Ted Hughes is delegated a Group writer and the distribution of his first assortment of poetry *A Hawk in the Rain* reported a break from the refined poetry of the Movement artists. Hughes, in his poetry, dismisses the deceptive frame of mind of the Movement writers. He "enters domains of experience which the 'Development' writers could never set out to take up" and centers around the viciousness that man executes and the savagery that is inborn in Nature. Development poetry portrays Nature as a power that can be bridled and restrained. Hughes' treatment of Nature, despite what might be expected, is a festival of Nature in her excessive ferocity and choppiness. His poetry, mirroring the soul of the time, dismisses the respectable custom of the past on which the poetry of the Movement encouraged and was roused with. The rough environment of his poetry voices another power of life instead of the affectedly refined state of mind of Movement poetry.

So as to recognize Hughes' place in the post-present day age, it gets important to contemplate his poetry in the light of some significant impacts of his time. Fitting in with the post-current frame of mind, Hughes was principally impacted by Schopenhauer's agnostic perspective on life. Hughes himself talks about his partiality with the German logician in the 1970 meeting with Ekbert Faas:

*The only philosophy I ever really read was Schopenhauer's. He impressed me all right. You see very well where Nietzsche got his Dionysus. It was a genuine vision of something on its way back to the surface. The rough beast in Yeats' poem. Each nation sees it through different spectacles.*

The writer's distraction with viciousness could best be comprehended in the light of Schopenhauer's induction of the world as a total reflection of "a visually impaired ceaseless motivation." This perspective on the world rejects the plausibility of any outside source as the premise of truth; and consequently denies all strict and discerning grounds. "Life, the obvious world, the marvel reflects "the will to live" showing a consistent battle to keep on existing regardless of the way that demise anticipates out of sight. Hughes compares war and viciousness with this battle forever. The Will chiefly revolves around the dietary patterns of creatures as well as of all life – vivify and lifeless. Man, similar to the entire universe of Nature, shows the Will to Live and his inward "nature battles against death however contrasting from the animal, man attempts to deny his fundamental savage driving forces under the weight of awareness. Man, being more often than not aware of death, closes his eyes to the truth of

oneself. The inward truth of each individual is a "steady endeavoring without end and without rest," however he intentionally looks to overlook his internal motivation. Hughes' impression of savagery in the realm of Nature and in the life of man has all the earmarks of being an impression of Schopenhauer's thought of the Will. Man's activities are in this manner basically molded by his internal drive not by any strict and good standards. Hughes' poetry, showing up in the post-current period, with an inspirational frame of mind towards savagery accentuates that life must be confronted everything being equal, in this manner carrying force and imperativeness to the demise ridden climate of the post-war period.

Schopenhauer's completely agnostic perspective on the world, contrary to the objective viewpoint, got a lift with the development of the Existential school of reasoning and later with the approach of the post-present day creative mind. The rise of Schopenhauer a way of thinking had just undermined the balanced thinking about the eighteenth century which is primarily alluded to as the Enlightenment or the Age of Reason. Be that as it may, an increasingly extraordinary breakaway was reported by the school of Existentialism which showed up as a response to the good and sound suppositions which were key to the Enlightenment thinking. Kierkegaard was the significant example of Existentialism. It developed to full development during the 1940s and 50s in the hands of French scholars like Jean-Paul-Sartre and Albert Camus. They repudiated the presumption that man is equipped for arriving at the last truth by utilizing reason and rationale. Prior, it was the Schopenhauer an idea of the Will, framing the inward truth of all life, which precluded the accomplishment from securing truth through explanation and insight. Afterward, the Existentialists prevented the supremacy from securing any ethical, strict and balanced resources as the premise of information and truth.

As per the Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Nietzsche has drawn a complexity between two frames of mind – the Apollonian and Dionysian. These two mentalities can be related to Movement and Group poetry. The Apollonian frame of mind underscored "restriction, harmony"<sup>25</sup> and battled against silly and clamorous powers. The Dionysian power, in actuality, concentrated on unreasonable and confused motivations upholding "a savage aching to surpass all standards."<sup>26</sup> The Dionysian method for furious investment throughout everyday life and reliable establishment of, what Schopenhauer calls, the Will to Live makes human endurance conceivable. The Existentialists were accused for featuring the darker side of life, yet they indicated how life gets by notwithstanding war and viciousness. They articulated life's supremacy over death. A comparable view is advanced by Baudrillard's work on Post modern material science in which "everything become fake, harmful, bringing about a Schizophrenia. Baudrillard's Pataphysics is likewise

a break from the logo driven universe of rationale and request. Another social development which is pertinent here is Dadaism which appeared during the hour of the First World War. Dadaism, which established the framework of Surrealism, fundamentally reacted against the average's adjustment to reason and rationale and grasped silly disorganized powers. The Surrealist development which showed up during the 1920s too dismissed "rationale and customary structure." G. S Fraser opines:

*For the true Surrealist, 'aesthetic' or 'formalist' demands were just another bourgeois superstition; a Surrealist text or picture has not the purpose of being a beautiful object to be contemplated or a psychologically harmonious whole. On the contrary, it aims at disruption.*<sup>29</sup>

Fraser points out an apparent connection between Surrealism and the psychoanalytic theory as propagated by Sigmund Freud. According to the Freudian theory, the "suppressed sexual and homicidal desires, based on the archetypal Oedipus situation, force an awareness of their presence, in a disguised form, on the conscious mind"<sup>30</sup> and threaten the rational processes like logic, order and harmony. The Surrealists did not agree with Freud on the ground that.

*... he wanted the rational part of the mind, the Ego, to keep the Super-ego, the punisher, and the Id, the criminal, in so far as possible in control. The ideal of the Surrealists was something like a fusion or mating of Id and Super-ego, what Blake called a 'marriage of Heaven and Hell', and a total disappearance of the rational Ego.*<sup>31</sup>

The focal thought of post-innovation, in the last 50% of the twentieth century, adjusts to an enormous degree to the Surrealist mode. The writers of the time, for example, Eugene Ionesco and Samuel Beckett, who structure the Theater of the Absurd, imparted qualities to Surrealism. The Theater of the Absurd essentially centers around the states of the time; it portrays a baffled post-war world. Confidence in all good, social and strict conventions was to a great extent cleared away. Man was depicted living in a world totally out of request and thus it was crazy. Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot* strikes at the very base of Christianity. In the play, Beckett features the vulnerability and unconventionality of the desire for salvation. The premise of the division among great and underhandedness has likewise been respected silly. Beckett's play *Endgame* is a profound dramatization which happens inside man, uncovering a contention between man's objective and silly self. The nonsensical self desires the hero to surrender his good and judicious life and rather live based on his senses. Along these lines, the Theater of the Absurd reported the crumbling of any unmistakable significance connected to the Christian God and

other good and social mainstays of Western culture. Beckett's play introduces a sort of profound excursion looking for otherworldly truth. The existential tension is additionally splendidly represented by Arthur Adamov in his self-impactful book *L'Aveu* (The Confession):

*What is there? I know first of all that I am. But who am I? All I know of myself is that I suffer. And if I suffer it is because at the origin of myself there is mutilation, separation. I am separated. What I am separated from - I cannot name it. But I am separated.*<sup>32</sup>

Adamov further adds in the footnote that: "Formerly it was called God. To-day it no longer has any name." He also denies that the Christian God can be the basis of any metaphysical truth. Hughes is primarily influenced by the post-modern outlook which rejects Western religious and moral beliefs and has a nihilistic approach towards life. The post-modern thought stands in reaction to the Western enlightenment thinking which advocated the rational and scientific methods used to define truth. Man in the Western Enlightenment world regarded himself as a coherent and rational entity, but post-modernism seeks to fragment that very assumption by "denying that the self is either stable or coherent." To render the utterly nihilistic outlook, Hughes chiefly draws on Sigmund Freud's insights of psychoanalysis and the post-modern linguistic theory propagated by Lacan. The presence of psychoanalytic vision in Hughes' poetry is also pointed out by Paul Bentley:

*In contrast to the rational, comprehensible language . . . Hughes's language is a slippery, makeshift, unstable thing; with it Hughes distances himself from the rational voice of the Movement (inherited from liberal humanism) to delineate a self split between a centripetal contract of linguistic, social and cultural norms and taboos and the centrifugal pull of pre-linguistic, unconscious drives inherited from the infant's world of maternal dependency.*<sup>35</sup>

What Hughes mainly took from Lacan's etymological hypothesis, which additionally drew the consideration of the numerous women's activists of the time, is a comprehension of the sexual orientation predisposition in the emblematic request. Lacan's idea of the representative request alludes to the sensibly constructed progressive systems in Western culture which are "constructed by language." According to Lacanian observation, kid and young lady are so situated in the emblematic request that it shaped the man centric chain of command which constrained lady to be underestimated. The male delighted in force and authority for being in control of what Lacan calls the "phallus, the social indication of manliness." To know how this man centric set-up is shaped, one needs to comprehend Freud's idea of the Oedipus mind boggling, as per which a male youngster is explicitly disposed towards its mom and

takes "its dad as an opponent for the mother's expressions of love." <sup>38</sup> As the kid develops, it step by step gets his wants stifled under the phallic risk and starts relating to the dad so as to get a socialized socially worthy self. As indicated by Julia Kristeva, these smothered wants live in a subdued state in the chora or container and return at some minute causing "interruption of the balanced, emblematic flow" of the Western man centric set-up. Freud also stated: "There is constantly an arrival of the curbed." An investigation of Ted Hughes' poetry clarifies that he is affected by Freud's idea of the Oedipus complex and has faith in an arrival of the stifled instinctual wants. Other Freudian ideas which affected Hughes' poetry are those of the charisma or Eros (love or life impulse) and the Thanatos or passing intuition. The terms Eros and Thanatos can likewise be associated with Dionysian and Apollinian powers individually. The Apollinian power can be associated with Lacan's thought of the emblematic request which smothers the youngster's affection for its mom. The Dionysian power, in actuality, might be associated with the youngster's silly motivations or charisma (life nature) or Schopenhauer's thought of the Will to Live. The post-pioneers try to deconstruct the emblematic or phallic request (culture), and attempt to restore man's reliable connection with the mother figure or the charisma which comprises of nonsensical powers rather than reason and rationale.

Ted Hughes, as a post-innovator, attempts to redesign ladylike force which has been denied its legitimate submit in the phallic request; henceforth there exists a women's activist strand in his writings. Legends and ceremonies are utilized broadly by Hughes to convey his thoughts. Paul Bentley composes: ". . . Hughes is mindful so as to face up his perusing of legend as an ad libbed image framework or language for oblivious substance." He includes: ". . . Hughes utilizes fantasy in the full information that he is handling the equivalent psychical space and components that therapy 'deciphers' inside its very own terms." In resistance to the male Christian God that dominated the Western personality for quite a while, the artist as a postmodernist introduced the idea of the female Goddess. God in Hughes' poetry is alluded to as a backer of judiciousness, man centric society, request and concordance. The Goddess, despite what might be expected, represents nonsensicalness, disorder, Eros, drive, Dionysian power and Schopenhauer an idea of the Will to Live. This post-present day idea of the ladylike god goes back to pre-Christian agnostic religions which concentrated on Goddess adore. Helen A. Berger keeps up that.

*pre-Christian communities lived in balance with nature because they revered it, seeing it as a manifestation of the goddess. Similarly, the worship in old Pagan communities of goddesses*

as well as gods is believed to have resulted in women being considered equal, if not superior to men.

## VISION OF THE GODDESS

Ted Hughes' Nature poetry advocates a pagan life in complete harmony with the world of Nature, and hence with the Goddess who is at the centre of pagan religions. The Goddess, in pagan religions, is believed to manifest herself primarily through the world of Nature. God in pagan religions shared a true and faithful relationship with the Goddess, but after the emergence of Christianity (male-oriented religion), God abandoned the Goddess. She has long been suppressed due to the reign of patriarchy. All the dictates of the logos like logic, order and harmony replaced the life of instinct and blood with which the Goddess was primarily associated. The dominance of rational and scientific behaviour destroyed man's spiritual and truthful relationship with the world of Nature and hence with the Goddess. The Goddess after a long time of repression makes a violent return through different channels. The coming back of the Goddess has been announced in Robert Graves' poetry which greatly influenced Hughes. Hughes' poetry marks the violent resurrection of the Goddess through the forces of life and death, creation and destruction as exemplified in the predatory and savage instincts of the animals and other ravaging forces of Nature. She appears as the mother and the muse affecting one's creation, fulfillment, and renewal of life. She also appears as the Goddess of death and destruction. Hence, the Goddess is associated simultaneously with life and death, pleasure and pain, creation and destruction. The feminine character emerging in Hughes' poetry is, in one way or the other, an image of the Goddess and female sexuality is an incarnation of the Goddess in a state of fertility and procreation. In primitive fertility myths, the sexual love of the Goddess for god affects the destruction and rebirth of god. Hughes deals with this creative-destructive love of the Goddess in his love poems which include 'Song,' 'Parlour-Piece,' 'Secretary,' 'The Dove Breeder,' 'Billet-Doux,' 'A Modest Proposal,' and 'Incompatibilities.'

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Hughes (2015) The fourth book entitled Crow: From the Life and Songs of the Crow<sup>1</sup>, which appeared in 1970, faced harsh criticism for depicting a world which is extremely violent, grotesque and wicked. The idea of Crow, which carries the burden of Hughes' metaphysical vision, originated when Leonard Baskin, an American sculptor, invited the poet to write poems for his engravings. Hughes' awareness of world mythologies and folklores enables him to present the Crow not as an ordinary bird, but as one who is mythical and mystical. The bird emerges as a symbol of the life-force in a world haunted by the violent elemental forces of Nature where survival seems almost impossible. Edward

Larrissy(2016)points out that the Crow "is very much the Life-Force in all the squalor, ruthlessness, power and vitality Hughes had come to attribute to it." Hughes adopts a quasi-human Crow-masque and goes on a metaphysical journey to explore the themes of life, death and rebirth. He also acts as a shaman and undertakes a symbolic journey to the underworld, that is, to his own unconscious self or the collective unconscious of mankind. The purpose is to enquire about man's place and the possibility of his survival in the creative-destructive universe. Moortown (2013) The Crow, like the woad, tries to understand life, and to identify his place in the universe. Partly he shares the attributes of man and partly those of animals. Like animals, he possesses voluntarism and an instinctive urge for life, but at the same time he shares human consciousness because of which he falls prey to human pretensions and illusions. Ted (2012) Adopting the Crow-masque, Hughes also acts as a Trickster in order to subvert traditional theologies. He aims to invert the male-oriented religions which have come into existence after suppressing the primitive cults in which Goddess worship was a central tenet. Gaudete (2016) The whole Crow-sequence is written in "super-simple and super-ugly language"<sup>3</sup> and is full of irony and satire, and is therefore "grimly reductive, or horrifically nihilists, as satire can be.

## OBJECTIVE

1. To study the objective of Hughes, as a poet, is to reject the metaphysical truth presented by the Western phallic culture and to take a shamanic flight in search of the real.
2. To Study of Early Poetry of Ted Hughes Vision of the Goddess

## CONCLUSION

Ted Hughes' quality as an artist to a great extent lays on his otherworldly vision, which is rooted in the realm of Nature as exemplified by the subjects, language, symbolism, inferences and fantasies utilized by him. The canvas of his poetry is tremendous and isn't limited to the depiction of a particular class in a specific period. Issues that emerged as an outcome of the two universal wars profoundly affected his poetry. Hughes' poetry incorporates astuteness drawn from such different fields as brain research, reasoning, woman's rights, phonetic, Surrealism, shamanism, human sciences, hermetism, soothsaying and the mysterious. Subsequently, it stands separated from the predominant idyllic patterns of his time and effectively removes itself from the "center class"<sup>1</sup> mentality for the most part found in the poetry of Larkin, Eliot, and Auden. Hughes' poetry is about force and viciousness and along these lines it is not quite the same as the poetry of his peers. Hughes presents Nature as a lovely nurturing power as well as brutal and savage

which envelops the unreasonable and instinctual powers that administer life. He splendidly joins in his poetry the frames of mind of both Wordsworth and Tennyson towards Nature. Further, his universe of Nature is sustaining just as compromising, nurturing and simultaneously life denying. Nature, in his poetry, is amazingly savage and disordered in light of the ever-present truth of the opposing powers of creation and demolition which coincide known to mankind.

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