

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Function of Animal Imagery in the Poetry of Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts in English

By

Jhalak Sharma Sapkota

Department of English

Universal College

Maitidevi, Kathmandu

17 May 2010

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Department of English

Universal College

Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Jhalak Sharma Sapkota has completed his Dissertation entitled "Function of Animal imagery in the Poetry of Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath" under my supervision. He dealt with this research from August 2008 to May 2010. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted to viva voce.

Mr. Mahesh Poudel

Supervisor

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

The dissertation entitled "Function of Animal imagery in the Poetry of Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath" submitted to Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu by Mr. Jhalak Sharma Sapkota has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

Members of Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Department of English

Universal College

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Mr. Mahesh Poudel for his valuable guidance, genuine suggestions, essential materials and fruitful encouragements for the existence of this dissertation in its present form. I take great pleasure in extending my sincere gratitude to Prof. Dr. Shreedhar Prasad Lohani, for his invaluable guidance and suggestions in selecting suitable topic for the research. I owe my heartfelt gratitude to Prof. Dr. Padma Prasad Devkota for his scholarly guidance and indispensable comments. His in-depth knowledge and innovative intellectuality have enabled me to prepare this thesis. I am deeply indebted to him. My sincere gratitude goes to my former supervisor Mr. Srijon Chhetri for providing detail framework of this research. I am also grateful to Mr. Diwakar Upadhaya, the Head of Department of English, Universal College, for approving the topic to prepare this thesis.

I would also like to thank my respected teachers Dr. Shiba Thapa, Mr. Laxman Gautam, Mr. Shuv Raj Ranabhat, Mr. Rajendra Panthi and Mr. Jawahar Lal Maharjan for their suggestions in course of preparation of this thesis. Dr. Shiva Datt Gyanwali, the Collage Principle, and Prof. Khagendra Prasad Bhattarai are the important sources of inspiration and co-operation for me.

I would like to express my deep sense of gratitude to my parents Mr. Chudamani Sapkota and Mrs. Rewati Sapkota who have made a lot of sacrifice for my study and career. I thank my wife Mrs. Nira Sapkota, brother Shovakanta Sapkota and sister Laxmi Sharma for their continuous support and creation of conducive environment for study in my home. I also thank Mr. Roshan Dhital, Mr. Kishor Sapkota and Mr. Shyam Lal Neupane for dedicating their invaluable time to type my thesis in its present form. I am also grateful to all who helped me directly or indirectly to prepare this dissertation.

Abstract

The dissertation entitled "Function of Animal Imagery in the Poetry of Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath" is a comparative study of animal imageries found in the poetry of British poet Ted Hughes and America poet Sylvia Plath. Though both of them employ a variety of animal imageries in their poetry and express their emotions, feelings, sentiments and attitudes by selecting suitable animals or animal imageries. the poems of Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath differ in that Hughes employs strong, fierce and aggressive animals like hawks, pikes, thrushes and jaguars whereas Plath uses fragile and docile animals or insects like horses, goats, sheep and bees. Most of the animals used in Hughes's poems are predators but almost all animals found in Plath's poems are victims or preys. Hughes celebrates energy, vitality and violence of animals in his poems to render his "domineering" attitude towards other people including his wife Sylvia Plath. But, by employing weak, fragile and docile animals in her poetry and showing them attacked, captured or victimized by other predatory animals or by unavoidable circumstances, Sylvia Plath expresses her deep sorrows, pains and troubles created by male-chauvinism. Thus, Hughes's poems are written from the perspective of "dominator" whereas Plath's poems are written from "being dominated" perspective.

Contents

Chapter I: Introduction	1-13
Ted Hughes, Sylvia Plath and Animal Imagery	1-13
Ted Hughes and His Poetry	1-7
Sylvia Plath and Her Poetry	7-13
Chapter II: Imagery and Animal Imagery	14-23
Imagery	14-17
Animal Imagery and English Literature	17-23
Chapter III: Textual Analysis	24-54
Animal Imagery in Hughes and Plath's Poetry	24-54
Animal Imagery in Ted Hughes's Poems	24-38
Hawk Roosting	24-27
The Jaguar	27-29
Pike	29-32
Thrushes	32-35
Relic	35-38
Animal Imagery in Sylvia Plath's Poems	38-54
Ariel	38-40
Lady Lazarus	40-44
The Eye-Mote	44-47
The Bee Meeting	47-50
Black Rook in Rainy Weather	50-54
Chapter IV: Conclusion	55-56
Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath's Animal Imagery: The Aggressive and the Docile	55-56
Works Cited	57-59

Chapter I: Introduction

Ted Hughes, Sylvia Plath and Animal Imagery

This research is a comparative study of animal imageries found in the poetry of British poet Ted Hughes and American poet Sylvia Plath. Hughes uses the imageries of strong and fierce animals like hawk, pike, jaguar, etc. but Sylvia Plath uses the imageries of fragile and demure animals or insects like horse, dog, goat, bee, etc. Most of the animals used in Hughes's poem are predators whereas almost all animals found in Plath's poetry are victims or preys. So, through animal imageries, the poems of Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath, who are husband and wife, speak about their relationship with each other as "dominator" and "being dominated" respectively.

Ted Hughes and His Poetry

Ted Hughes, by the name of Edward James Hughes, was born on August 17, 1930 in Mytholmroyd, a mill town in West Yorkshire, England to parents, William Henry Hughes and Edith Hughes. Ted moved with his family to Mexborough, Yorkshire, at the age of seven. and he began to write poetry at Mexborough Grammar School. He won a scholarship to Pembroke College, Cambridge to study English literature. In his last year, he changed his course of study from English to Archaeology and Anthropology, subjects that helped bring mythic structures in his poetry. Perhaps, the most famous of his subjects is "crow", an amalgam of God, bird and man, whose existence seems pivotal to the knowledge of good and evil.

Hughes met and married American poet Sylvia Plath at Cambridge in 1956. The couple lived in both England and the United States teaching and writing poetry. Hughes left his wife for another woman Assia Wevill in 1963 and Plath committed suicide that same year. Ironically, Wevill also killed herself and their two-year old daughter by carbon monoxide poisoning, the same method Sylvia Plath used. For the rest of his life, Hughes was heavily criticized by Plath scholars and fans, many of whom blamed him for her death. He married Carol Orchard in 1970

and remained with his third wife rest of his life. He was appointed the poet laureate of England in 1984 and remained so up to his death in 1998.

As a multidisciplinary person, Hughes wrote poems, plays, non-fictional works and books for children. His subject matters derive from diverse fields of mythologies, natural and animal world. Animals appear frequently throughout his work as deity, metaphor, persona and icon. He has published several series of volumes of poetry: *The Hawk in the Rain* (1957), *Lupercal* (1960), *Selected Poems* (1962, with Thom Gunn), *Wodwo* (1967), *Crow* (1970), *Selected Poems 1957-1967* (1972), *Season Songs* (1976), *Gaudete* (1977), *Moortown* (1979), *Wolfwatching* (1989), *New Selected Poems 1957-1994* (1995) and *Birthday Letters* (1998). He wrote many books for children notably *The Iron Man* (1968, also published as *The Iron Giant*) and *Remains of Elnet* (1979). His works also include plays such as an adaptation of Seneca's *Oedipus* (1968), non-fiction (*Winter Pollen*, 1994) and translations. He edited many collections of poetry such as *The Battle Bag* (1982, with Seamus Heaney). Critics praise Hughes's "depiction of the violence and vitality of the natural world and its affinity with human life" (Encyclopedia Britannica). He is also known as a member of the Movement Poets who came to influence after Dylan Thomas.

Ted Hughes is best known for writing powerful poems that depict myths and animal imagery. D.H. Lawrence introduced animal joy as a subject matter of literature. Robinson Jeffers picked up the topic occasionally but could not master it. Hughes mastered the subject and became the lord of it. Calvin Bedient writes about the gradual progression of the subject:

Lawrence wrote of animal joy a lighter perhaps more fanciful thing. Robinson Jeffers picked up the topic occasionally, a hawk on his wrist, but was too eager, too clumsy to master it. Hughes is its master and at the same time is mastered by it. The subject owns him, he is lord of subject. (103)

In a radio play prepared for children *Poetry in the Making* (1967), Hughes recounts how as a boy brought up in Yorkshire he had a passion for capturing animals, fishes and birds. At Mexborough Grammar School, his friends were town boys, sons of colliers, and railwaymen and with them he had one life; but all the time he lived a quite different solitary existence pursuing wild creatures in the countryside. He explained that for him capturing animals and writing poems have much in common.

[. . .] I think of poems as a sort of animal They have their own life, like animals by which I mean that they seem quite separate from any person even from their author, and nothing can be added to them or taken away without maiming and perhaps even killing them. And they have certain wisdom. They know something special [. . .] something perhaps we are very curious to learn. May be my concern has been to capture not animals particularly and not poems, but simply things which have a vivid life of their own, outside mine. (qtd. in Cox 33)

He often presents the primal forces of nature through ferocious and violent animals such as jaguar, pike, hawk, crow, etc. He uses the "qualities connected with them in traditional stories as well as observation of how they act in real life [. . .]" (Thorny and Gwyneth 193). In the poems, they are presented not as playthings but as a lord of life and death. As a lord of death, hawk says in "Hawk Roosting":

I kill where I please because it is all mine.

There is no sophistry in my body;

My manners are tearing off heads—

The allotment of death. (Hughes 8)

Hughes's first collection of poems *The Hawk in the Rain* (1957) "established his style of rugged naturalism and animal imagery" (Encyclopedia Britannica). It contains individual poetic statements on the nature of the created world, focusing on particular animals, plants, people and

seasons. It is an interesting book in which "formality of stanzas barely concealed a fiercely unremitting of raw power at the heart of the things, the vengeful energy of a Calvinist confronting a world of tooth and claw from which God is absent" (Hoffman 501). The major theme in the poems is violence and power though not morally or in time but absolutely in a present which is often violent and self-destructive but isolated from motive or consequences because for Hughes power and violence go together and his own dark Gods are makers of the Tiger not the Lamb.

In his second book *Lupercal* (1960), having been thrown up against a subject and having learned to see and hear it where it lives most purely in animals, Hughes becomes a poet. In it, imagination and strict observation are merged so subtly that it would be arbitrary to separate them. For instance, he has seen pike more boldly, fully and simply than anyone else is ever likely to do: "Pike, three inches long / Pike in all parts green tigering the gold / Killers from the egg; the malevolent aged grin" (Hughes 424).

The richest poems in *Lupercal* "An Otter", "Pike" and "November" shares an unusual and bold type of organization. Seemingly random, in fact, they possess a delicate, contingent unity, each impression facing the same way an arrow pointing to the same fountain head of miraculous adaptation, horror or existence. However, in his both volumes *The Hawk in the Rain* (1957) and *Lupercal* (1960), his words capture with a vivid immediacy the essence of a thrush, a pike, an otter or a hawk. In these creatures, he found a dynamic energy which he thought lacking in most human beings, a mysterious, spontaneous power which he found deep attractive.

Hughes tightens himself like a spring in *Lupercal*, but in his third volume *Wodwo* (1976), he lets the spring go. The poems of *Lupercal* look neat on the page; many of those in *Wodwo* sprawl over and leap down it. He surrenders distance for energy. His imaginative awe is now more dramatic and less contemplative than it was. The poems depend in large part on their surge and brilliance of conception; they must come down as wholes if they are to move us at all. The

exceptions are short pieces similar to the *Lupercal* poems — "Thistles", "Still Life", "Wino" and "Full Moon and Little Frieda"— being perhaps the best of them. Still, the longer poems, except lacking in exquisiteness, are unlooked for and compelling adventures. Moreover, he does not alter his truths but his relation to them; he throws himself on universal will, riding not simply observing, and the energy of the world.

Crow (1970) is a "sequence of poems introducing the central symbol of crow. Hughes retells the legends of creation and birth through the dark vision of predatory, mocking, indestructible crow" (Drabble and Stringer 39). Hughes, in crow poems, writes songs which the crow would sing. The world of *Crow* inverts the hierarchy of Being established in Genesis, where an external male God gives man dominion "over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth" (Genesis I: 26). In *Crow*, the divine source of creation is nature herself symbolically represented as an earth goddess; "the external Christian God is an invention of man who usurps her throne" (Hibbet 19).

The tension between humanity and nature becomes more antagonistic in *Crow*. The world in which crow lives appears as young and fragile as himself: it is a world simultaneously put together and blown apart. Similarly, crow appears caught between two worlds—the world of nature and the world of humanity—as he experiences not only the 'horror of creation' but also the 'horror of destruction'.

Crow shares on one hand the suffering and confusion of humanity, while on the other he plays the "impartial role of detective, examining through scrupulous vision the leftovers for human activity, making sure nothing escapes his attention" (22). As a "violent monster-like animal", and an "intruder upon sacred mythologies", he appears both "alien and threatening to humanity: a manifestation of the repressed unconscious, an avenger of the Goddess" (22).

Cave Birds is a repository of finest poems of Ted Hughes and visual drawings of American graphic artist and sculptor Leonard Baskin. As a didactic book *Cave Birds* is, in part, about the process of its own making. And both the individual poems and the narrative as a whole self-reflexively comment on words and images. On seeing and saying, it begins with a kind of psychic trauma in which the hero's complacent view of the world and his place in it is shattered by the visitations of various terrifying birds. The opening poem, "The Scream" sets out the problem as manifested in the main character, the cockerel, who has led a life complacent self-satisfaction.

Hughes permits a much greater richness and seriousness of language in *Cave Birds* than in *Crow*, yet the poems are more disciplined than many in earlier sequence. Created in the 1970s, *Cave Birds* belongs to the controversial period of Hughes's career following Plath's suicide in 1963 and the death of Assia Wevill and their daughter Shura in 1967. Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux writes:

In its fullest elaboration, *Cave Birds* is a series of narratively linked poems and black-and-white drawings that tells the tale of a guilty and suffering hero (sometimes cockerel, sometimes crow) who is judged, sentenced, sacrificed and reborn. The poems are complex and allusive, an inter-weaving of pre-Christian (especially Egyptian) mythology with alchemy, shamanism, Blake, and Jung. Together the poems and pictures chart the hero's quest: after judgment in this world and purgation in the next the disintegrated parts of the hero's being are in a Lawrentian vision united in an exchange with the neglected female and given new life. (25)

Birthday Letters (1998), the last volume of his verse, is a collection of 88 poems in which Hughes addresses Plath directly in almost all poems. The book generated much

controversy and the debate whether he is responsible or not for her suicide started again. As a result, public opinion divided into two sides. Sarah Lyall writes in *The New York Times*:

On one side, led by feminist critics at American Universities, are those who believe Hughes wronged Plath in life by abandoning her, and in death by too carefully controlling publication of her work. On the other side, led by a coterie of extremely protective fellow poets in Britain are those who believe he has been vilified by hostile strangers picking over the details of his life. (n. pag.)

However, the poems of *Birthday Letters* form a comprehensive narrative of Plath's relationship with Hughes, after they met at Cambridge where she was studying on a Fulbright Scholarship. He describes their wedding in 1956 — "you were transfigured / So slender and new and naked (A nodding spray of wet lilac)" — and their honeymoon in which "Spain frightened you. Spain/ where I felt at home". Moreover, many of the poems read like short stories and describe day-to-day events that reveal the tangled threads of the couple's relationship.

Sylvia Plath and Her Poetry

Born on October 27, 1932 in Boston, Massachusetts, Sylvia Plath was the only daughter of Otto Emil Plath, a German immigrant professor of biology and bee specialist and Aurelia Schober, a teacher. Otto died in 1940 after a long illness when she was only eight; she remembered him throughout her life as a male-chauvinist who left her a destitute, poor and exposed to intense suffering and trauma. His untimely demise also affected her poetry. She published her first poem in the *Boston Traveler* at the age of eight: she sold her first short story to *Seventeen* magazines while she was still in high school.

Plath entered Smith College on a scholarship in 1951 and became a co-winner of the *Mademoiselle* Magazine fiction contest in 1952. In spite of her artistic, academic and social success at Smith, she suffered from severe depression, attempted suicide and was hospitalized for six months in 1953. Plath graduated from Smith with highest honors in 1955 and went to study

at Cambridge University on a Fulbright Scholarship. In 1956, she met and married English poet Ted Hughes. She attended Robert Lowell's poetry writing classes occasionally in 1958 and met most of the confessional poets of the time including Anne Sexton. Plath's first book *The Colossus* (1960), the only collection of her poetry published during her lifetime, revealed her meticulously crafted and self-analytical style. Her second book *The Bell Jar*, an autobiographical novel, was published in 1963 under the pseudonym "Victoria Lucas". The book is a "first person account of a young woman's mental breakdown and suicide attempt, closely mirroring Plath's own experience" (Encyclopedia Encarta)

Ted Hughes left Plath for Assia Gutmann Wevill in 1962. In a deep depression, Plath wrote most of the poems that would comprise her most famous book *Ariel*. On February 11, 1963, during one of the worst English winters on record, Plath committed suicide using her gas oven.

Although only *The colossus* was published during her lifetime, Plath was a prolific writer. Her other poetry works published posthumously are *Ariel* (1965), *Crossing the Waters* (1971), *Winter Trees* (1972) and *The Collected Poems* (1981). Her prose works include *The Bell Jar* (1963), *Letters Home* (1975, to and edited by her mother), *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams* (1977), *The Journals of Sylvia Plath* (1972) and *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath* (2000, edited by Karen V. Kukil). Besides, her books for young readers consist *The Bed Book* (1976), *The It-Doesn't Matter Suit* (1996), *Collected Children Stories* (2001) and *Mrs. Cherry Kitchen* (2002). Her Poetry is often associated with the confessional, and compared to poets such as her teacher Robert Lowell, and fellow student Anne Sexton. Often her work is notable for the intense coupling of its violent or disturbed imagery and its playful use of alliteration and rhyme.

Sylvia Plath transmutes personal experience and issues into a representative agony as a female and human being, and presents herself as a victim of male-chauvinism in her poetic

creations. Her poetic expression is so touching and moving that she has been successful enough to gather up a large number of criticisms. So brilliantly does she use the metaphors that are "unexpected, startling, often upsetting but always dead right" (Smith 324). According to Edward Albert, "amid violence, she [Sylvia Plath] appreciated the richness of everyday life, especially the world of nature. Yet all in a context of mental imbalance that eventually brought her suicide" (588). For him, her personal problem of mental imbalance is the root cause of her suicide.

Literary critic Jon Rosenblatt holds the view that through the emotional outpouring of self-pity and grief, Sylvia Plath shows up a dramatic conflict between self and body. Life and death operate as tangible power in Plath's poetry. Her dramatic agents are people, trees, houses, colors and animals. She focused on the dramatic conflict of life and death in the form of ritual and magical means to free her. In "Lady Lazarus", she takes dying as an art and she does it exceptionally well: "Dying / Is an art, like everything else / I do it exceptionally well" (Plath 432)

Thus, the death is not perceived as suicidal ending but as the art and the path to gain a transformed identity. Plath sees death as something perfected and achieved. Her desire for death is her temptation to gain perfection, which is, never found in temporal (human) world. Definitely the fascination to death is her spiritual fascination.

Plath's poems are the poems of suffering and pain. Poems like "Daddy", "Ariel", "Lady Lazarus" and "The colossus" are self revealing works in which the persona always appears to be suffering from deep-rooted insecurity and anxiety. Plath's voice struggles with low self-confidence and moves around with imageries of holocaust, mental breakdowns and psychiatric disorders.

Ted Hughes, her husband, has commented that Plath's early poetry is "highly intellectual and highly disciplined due to the study of thesaurus" (qtd. in Axelrod 76). But Wagner in Axelrod claims that Ted Hughes has deliberately neglected that the thesaurus once belonged to

Plath's father. Indeed her father has become a part of her life. But his abandonment in the form of his death has shocked her. Therefore the father is both a source of love and hatred for Plath. The same father-daughter relationship is the subject matter of many poems such as "The Colossus", "Daddy", etc. Moreover, her early and later poems have a single metapoem: "the imaginative struggle that generates power and forces that impede stifle, paralyze and silence that power (Axelrod 78).

Literary critic Stephen Matterson complains that significant aspects have sometimes been overlooked by approaches that treat the poems as if they were "transparent and unambiguous expression of personal anguish leading up to her suicide" (167). Her highly formal carefully organized poems indicated a significant talent, but it was when she began to develop autobiographical persona in her work that her qualities as a major poet became most apparent. Matterson valorizes her as a major lyric poet of the century: "she [Plath] is a lyric poet of great linguistic and formal control who uses female archetype and myths to explore public concerns and uses a complex range of personae to examine aspects of self " (167).

Thus, using autobiography and psychoanalysis, Plath's poetry has a directness and power matched by few of her contemporaries. Though her poems have a raw, wounded quality, their success depend on Plath's sure control of emotion and form.

Though Stephen Matterson valorizes Plath's achievement, some literary critics like Edward Butscher defines her in a negative way. In his opinion, Plath is nothing more than a woman poet who turns out to be a narcissist bitch. Likewise, Mary Kinzie explains that it is unnecessary to deal with extensively with Plath's poems because her aesthetic, after all, is nothing more than the chronicle of a nervous breakdown (Bundtzen 2). Not only that, David Holbrook describes Plath and her poetry as "dangerously schizoid" (3). She has unusual insight into the state of the mother, but in her awareness these insights are so disturbed by her schizoid perspective what she largely conveys is fear and hatred of female creativity.

However, Suzanne Juhasz says that it is not the issue whether Plath was the Christopher or Yeats of the early Sixties, but her position as a woman poet. She is the woman of deep insight who sees the problem, the situation of trying to be a woman poet with the coldest. The problem is a predominately male lyric tradition which puts woman in a double bind. Suzanne explains:

Since poets, in western society are traditionally white and male, a person who is black or brown or female: of necessity brings qualities different from the norm to the poetry that she or he makes. How then to succeed as a good "poet"? If the woman poet unlike a "man" she denies her own experience, if she writes as a woman her subject matter is trivial. (22)

Similarly, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that the woman author experiences an "anxiety of authorship" for woman writer is threatened with madness, loss of feminine identity and various forms of punishment: death, social ostracism. They further argue that:

Like lilith cast out of Eden by God for refusing to lie beneath Adam and doomed to child-murder and the company of demons woman writers like Plath suffers the most anxiety, a mental world of demons for offending the vision of her master father. She escapes his authority, but inevitably returns to abuse herself. Anguish over during to take father's place cripples the woman artist like Plath. Their anxiety is different from male's anxiety. The difference seems to be result of our culture, historical confusion of literary authorship with patriarchal authority. (1165)

So, Plath's poetry has become a touchstone for the women's movement. She represents a poetic current that is central to the cultural identity of the first phase of the movement. Moreover, she uses personal materials, which is at once the stuff of daily life and the expression of despair and dislocation.

Plath feels herself sharing the era of victimhood and she is herself victimized by her father, husband and the modern life as well. The event of Holocaust is the one that is strongly present in her poems. Plath's personalized moment of Holocaust stems from two motives. In this connection Strangeways remarks that "her sense of events and her desire to combine the public with personal so as to shock the contemporary conformist Cold War America (375-6).

Strangeways means to express that the poems are not strictly about the Holocaust only, nor as they extremely private as they appear. Rather, Plath combines her "myth" and "history" relating Nazi persecution to Jews. In the controversial lines in "Daddy", "every woman adores a fascist / Boot in face, the brute / Brute heart of a brute like you" she asserts the archetypal male figure whereas it connotes an escape from freedom through sadistic masochistic strivings (372).

Plath's *Ariel* (1965) is highly appreciated book which was published posthumously by her husband Ted Hughes. The poems of this book are highly sophisticated in formal terms and are imaginatively connected through recurrent imagery and through reference Shakespeare's Ariel from *The Tempest*. *Ariel's* popularity did much to influence and define confessional poetry.

Daniel Hoffman writes:

In that book [Ariel] as Lowell wrote, "Everything [. . .] is personal, confessional, felt, but the manner of feeling is controlled hallucination, the autobiography of a fever [. . .] suicide, father-hatred, self-loathing—nothing is too much for the macabre gaiety of her control. Yet it is too much; her art's immortality is life's disintegration". (500)

Although *Ariel* helped her to establish an important confessional poet in English literature, her first volume of verse is *The Colossus*. She exhibited her meticulously crafted and self-analytical style. Her only novel *The Bell Jar* is a first-person account of a young woman's mental breakdown and suicide attempt, closely mirroring Plath's own experiences.

Reading all these critics we can state that Plath is a poet of her wound and her self realization. In most of her poems, she found a strong voice, often fierce and joyous at the same

time, to test the "private and taboo subjects" of her family tensions and mental breakdowns. Her painful experiences more or less allegorize the pains of all in the United States of her time.

In this manner, the poems of both Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath have been analyzed from different perspectives. The present study will attempt to illustrate what types of animal imageries are used in their poetry; whether they are similar or different in their nature and kind, and why? The detail study of animal imagery and the tradition of its use in English literature from Anglo-Saxon period to twentieth century is required to understand their poetry. That is why, the discourse on animal imagery will form the theoretical tools to facilitate the textual analysis in the present study.

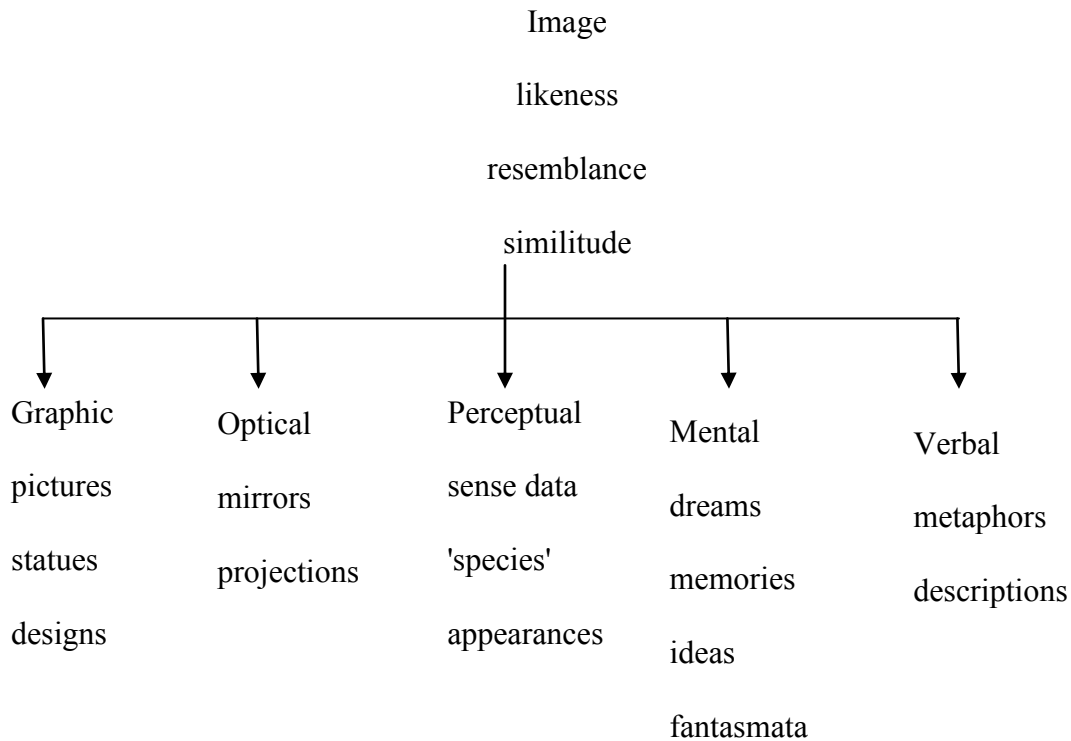
Chapter II: Imagery and Animal Imagery

Imagery

The set of descriptive details in a poem or other works of literature which create a kind of picture in the mind (at the time of reading) is called imagery. The poets or literary artists prefer knowingly or unknowingly employing certain type of images in their works to others because of their diverse experience and positive or negative orientation towards (their) life. In other words, some hints about their biography, their relation to other people and their orientation towards (their) life can be traced out by minutely studying images used in their poetry or other literary texts.

The word 'imagery' is the derivation of the word 'image'. Although there is a significant difference between an 'image' and 'imagery', it would be better to know first what an 'image' is. The word 'image' has many connotations, and it is used in the fields like art, philosophy, optics, photography, architecture, theology, etc. Our main concern of the term 'image' is to know how and from where the word originated especially in the literary field and find what it generally means or stands for from various interpretations. The word 'image' comes from the Latin 'imago' meaning picture. Image implies a representation of any person or thing sculptured, painted or otherwise made visible.

Ezra Pound defines an image as "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" (qtd. in Manghani 169). In his opinion, an image has the power to touch human beings' heart as well as give some kind of intellectual tunic to our brain. W.J.T Mitchell proposes a family tree of images:



(Manghani 297)

Likewise, Princeton Encyclopedia defines 'imagery' as "the reproduction in the mind of a sensation produced by a physical perception" (363). If human beings' eyes perceive a certain color, they will register an image of that color in their mind (image) because the subjective sensation he experiences will be an ostensible copy or replica of the objective color itself. The mind may also produce images when not receiving direct perceptions as in an attempt to remember something once perceived in the undirected drifting of the mind over experiences but no longer present or in the combinations brought out perception by the imagination or in the hallucinations or in the dreams. In poetry or story, it implies the mental picture drawn by the descriptive wording ("image").

According to C. Day Lewis, quoted by Abrams and Harpham, an 'image' "is a picture made out of words", and "a poem may itself be an image composed from a [. . .] multiplicity of images" (129). Abrams and Harpham discover at least three distinct usage of the word which is very frequent. Firstly, imagery (that is, images taken collectively), is used "to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in a poem or other works of literature, whether by literal description, by allusion or in the vehicles (the secondary references) of its similes and metaphors". Secondly, it is used more narrowly, "to signify only specific descriptions of visible objects and scenes, if the description is vivid and particularized". And lastly, it "signifies figurative language especially the vehicles of metaphors and similes".

In poetry, the image is presented through imaginative description of comparisons that stands for something and that produces a picture in the mind of the person reading or listening. It may be defined as the word pictures exhibited in the written work. 'Imagery' is the equivalent of imageries. The images in general or taken collectively are "imagery" ("image"). The image may be animate or inanimate. "Imagery" as a general term "covers the use of languages to represent objects, actions, feelings, thoughts, ideas, states of mind and any sensory or extra sensory experience" (Cudden 413). The use of imagery helps to bring pictures to the reader's mind. The pictures, objects, sounds which occur in poet's work are one of the marks of his or her individuality.

The images are categorized according to the use of language, way of presentation and signification. The images can be generally "divided into three groups: literal, perceptual and conceptual" (413). The literal images are presented without the use of figurative language. The perceptual and conceptual images are expressed through figurative languages. The perceptual images can be perceived through senses. For conceptual image, one should have the idea of it through imagination or thought to know it.

Imagery involves the sense qualities like visual (see), auditory (hear), tactile (touch), thermal (heat and cold), olfactory (smell), gustatory (taste) and kinesthetic (sensations of movement).

Imagery is used to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in a work of art, to describe the visible objects and senses, and to present the objects through figurative language. The usage of imagery to signify visual objects concerns the vivid description in the work of art. The usage of figurative language includes the linguistic devices like simile, metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy, allusion and personification.

Animal Imagery and English Literature

The sets of descriptive details about particular animals in a poem or any work of art which help to create a kind of mental picture of animal (at the time of reading) are called animal imagery. Animal imageries are basically used to impart specific meaning in the poem through the use of chosen animals. For example, William Blake's juxtaposition of lamb and tiger points not merely power and domination but it transcends human good and evil.

Employing animal imageries in literature is not a recent phenomenon in western world. The roots of its use can be traced out in the Bible and in ancient Greece. According to the Bible, God provided a ram to Abraham in order to offer him in stead of his only one son Issac. When he was ready to obey his command in the land of Moriah, lamb imagery is used to represent Jesus Christ and the sacrifice of a ram indicates the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in future for the sake of human beings. Likewise, images of serpent are used to symbolize evil force (Satan). In short, lamb represents innocence, purity and divinity but the serpent is employed to show deception, cunningness and destruction. Similarly, Aesop's fables became very popular after sixth century BC. They are still popular among children as a source of important moral lesson. In the familiar fable of the fox and the grapes, the fox after jumping several times to catch the grapes beyond his reach but in vain, concludes that they are probably sour. The moral of this beast fable is that

human beings belittle what they cannot get. The modern expression "sour grapes" derives from this fable (Abrams and Harpham 7).

The tradition of using animal imageries in literature continued in Germanic literature though the Germanic people were not Christians. Grendel, the man-eating monster, is shown slain by Beowulf in the Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf*, indicating human beings' victory over animal world. *Beowulf* sheds lights on the condition of contemporary Denmark where great warriors were highly appreciated by people and even by the kings through animal imageries.

Chaucer's beast fables and tales are the most famous beast fables and tales of middle English literature. He employs real animals like fox, crow, cock, hen, etc. who talk and act like human beings to provide some sort of moral lesson. For instance, the fox, cock and hen act and talk like human beings in his "The Nun's Priest's Tale" to provide a good moral lesson; "one should not be overjoyed in flattery".

The tradition of employing animal imagery in English literature reached in new height when Spenser used animal imageries in *The Faerie Queene* and Shakespeare in *King Lear*. Chaucer used only real animal in his fables and beast tales but Spenser used both real animals like lion, lamb, horse, etc. and unreal or fabulous creatures like dragon in his poetry. In *The Faerie Queene*, "excluding mere reference, there are two hundred and thirty carefully wrought images drawn from animal life" (Cosmos 85). Virtually, each character is linked with an animal —is chased by, battles with, is transformed into or compare to some member of animal kingdom. The lion is the most frequently mentioned and portrayed in many guises, both in its natural habits, such as pursuit of prey and with the attributes of personality men ascribe to it, such as pride. Similarly, Una is compared to white lamb to describe her purity and innocence. The array of animal images range from mammals, birds, reptiles, fish to fabulous creatures like dragons.

According to Audrey Yodor, Shakespeare's *King Lear* "contains 171 references to animal, including 98 animal comparisons" (qtd. in Kane 147). In this play, Shakespeare employs

images from padding, stalking, creeping and crawling world of animals to express or intensify Lear's anger, rejection, indignation, wrath and vengeance.

Noble animals are associated with the personage of the king frequently called upon for rescue in the times of trouble: "saddle my horses" (1.4.243), "prepare my horses" (1.4.239), "how now are the horses ready?" (1.5.42) and so forth. The lower animals like dogs, serpents or foxes are employed for evil and low status people: Edgar speaks of himself in the role of poor Tom as having "semblance / That the very dog disdained" (5.3.188-99). Just as Goneril has been reduced in the area of animals that sting, bite and destroy so her servant Oswald is dehumanized as a rat, a dog or a goose. The image of blood-sucking louse is apt enough to comprehend Lear's two elder daughters who have taken all from their father and draining his blood seek his death. Not only that, Goneril and her sister Regan are likened to foxes, vultures, serpents, sea-monsters, wild-geese, pelicans, wolves, dogs and so on. "Although seemingly various, these images share connotations of sharp-toothed, predatoriness and treachery" (149). To sum up, Shakespeare employs such vast amount of animal imagery in *King Lear* "to reinforce the theme of human beings reverting to beasts", says Caroline Spurgeon, and "to intensify the dark and painful atmosphere of the work" (150).

Since the subject matter of his epic is Biblical, John Milton employs legendary animals like serpent and dragon in *The Paradise Lost*. Yet he does not forget to consider the nature and habit of animal he is employing. For instance, Satan considered every creature; debated about the suitability of the serpent for a long time; many thoughts and doubts came to his mind and finally he chose to use the serpent as his instrument since it was the fittest craft of fraud. He also decided to enter into the serpent's shape so that he could hide his scheming from the sharpest sight of the angels. In the form of the serpent, his subtle scheme could not be detected because a serpent is by nature swift and cunning, a character which is not found in any other animal.

The tradition of employing animal imagery appeared in prose form in eighteenth century with the publication of Jonathan Swift's essay "A Modest Proposal". He treats children of human beings as pigs, sheep or goats to satirize and make fun of the British rulers who were ruling Irish people at that time: "twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one fourth part to be males, which is more than we allow to sheep, back-cattle or swine [. . .] one male will be sufficient four females" (Swift 44). For this purpose, he proposes to use one-year Irish child for meat: "a young healthy child well nursed at a year old a most delicious and wholesome food whether stewed, roasted, baked or boiled"(44). Not only that, he proposes to make "admirable gloves for ladies and summer boots for fine gentlemen" from their skin (45). Thus, Jonathan Swift equates human being with animals to satirize contemporary British rulers.

The tradition of employing animal imagery in English literature again appeared in verse form in Romantic Period. William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats wrote fine odes in praise of birds like skylark and nightingale. The romantics take animals and birds as integral parts of Nature and regard them as their guide and source of poetic inspiration. In "To A Skylark", addressing the skylark, Wordsworth asks it to lift him from the ground and guide him where it likes: "Lift me, guide me till I find / That spot which seems so to thy mind". The poet finds the world of skylark better than his own world and says that his journey is " rugged and uneven". However, the skylark brings pleasure and gladness in his troublesome world: "but hearing thee and others of thy kind. / As full of gladness and free of heaven".

In Shelley's "Ode to a Skylark", the poet praises the skylark by calling it a "blithe spirit" rather than a bird because its song comes from heaven and from its full heart pours "profuse strains of unpremeditated art." He also compares the bird with " a poet / hidden in the light of thought "able to make the world experience "sympathy with hopes and fears it headed not". So, the skylark is Shelley's greatest natural metaphor for pure poetic expression which is unmixed

with any hint of melancholy or bitter sweet. In short, it is not a mortal bird at all but a "blithe spirit" or a "sprite".

Similarly, in Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale", the poet, listening to a nightingale sing on a spring evening, finds himself imaginatively transported into a green world where he loses his ordinary power of senses. He immortalizes the nightingale by thinking of the race of it as the symbol of the universal and undying musical voice of nature. Its song is immortal but the poet himself is mortal because it has been heard for untold generations by all kinds of people ("emperor and clown"), and even the characters in the Bible. Like Shelley's skylark, Keats's nightingale "wast not born for death". To sum up, romantic poets take animals as integral parts of Nature and write poems in praise of them.

The tendency of employing animals or birds in English poetry somehow decreased in Victorian Period. Gerald Manley Hopkins wrote some poems containing animal (bird) imagery in this period. "The Nightingale", "The Woodlark", "The Caged Skylark", and "The Windhover" are Hopkins's bird poems in which he regarded "The Windhover" as "the best thing I ever wrote" (qtd. in Harrison 457). Since he was a pious christian poet, he employs bird imagery in his poetry to provide religious message to his readers.

In "The Windhover", a poem dedicated to "To Christ Our Lord", the speaker watches a kestrel ("falcon") flying through the sky and finds traces of Christ in its flight path. The beauty of the bird causes the speaker to reflect on the beauty of the Christ because the speaker sees a divine imprint on all living beings. The poet describes how he saw (or "caught") one of these kestrels in the midst of its hovering and how his heart got inspirations from its perfectly self-contained and self-reflecting action. Just as the hovering is the most distinctive for the windhover, so spiritual striving is man's most essential endeavor. But the greatness of this spiritual striving is pales in comparisons with the act of self-sacrifice performed by Christ. The poet calls "morning's

minion", "daylight's dauphin", "oh my chevalier!" and "oh my dear" to Christ who is hovering in the form of "falcon" to glorify his sacrifice ("gash gold vermillion").

Imagism, the poetic vogue that flourished in Britain and America in the second decade of twentieth century, influenced the tradition of using animal imagery in English literature indirectly because of its emphasis on the use of "image (vivid sensory description) that is hard, clear and concentrated" (Abrams and Harpham 130). Influenced by the poetic theory of T. E. Hulme and by Chinese and Japanese poetry, it was a "revolt against the exuberant imagery and diffuse sentimentality of 19th century poetry (Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia n pag). As the leader of the movement, the term "imagist" was "conjured by Ezra Pound to characterize the style of recent work by his friends and collaborators the American Hilda Doolittle (H. D.) and the Englishman Richard Aldington" (Ayers 2). Later Amy Lowell succeeded Pound so Pound sometimes referred to the movement as "Amygism". Other leading participants of the movement were D. H. Lawrence, William Carlos Williams and John Gould Fletcher. It helped to establish literary Modernism and rejected the late Victorian style which it considered verbose.

The typical imagist poem is written in "Vers Libre" abandoning conventional limits of poetic material and versifications. The poet is free to choose any subject and to create own rhythms and he uses common speech. The poetic idea is rendered by means of metaphor or by juxtaposing objects directly without mentioning an relationship between them. "Exemplary imagist poems include H. D.'s "Hermes of the ways" (1913), "Oread" (1915) and "Sea Rose" (1918), and Pound's "The Return " (1912) and "In a Station of the Metro" (1913) " (Merek n. pag.), In short, imagists experimented with the presentation of precise and clear images that are juxtaposed without specifying their interrelations. The poets Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath who are also husband and wife employed numerous animal imageries in their poems in the second half of twentieth century.

In this manner, the above theoretical discussion over the animal imagery and its implication in English literature has laid the foundation for the analysis of the text in concern. It defines what imagery is and mentions its essential components. Likewise, it briefly summarizes what types of animals are used in English literature to render what kind of meaning. In this study, the textual analysis of the poems is concerned with mainly animal imagery and its implication in poetry. The textual analysis will attempt to prove Hughes's poems are written from the perspective of "dominator" but Plath's poems are written from "being dominated" perspective.

Chapter III: Textual Analysis

Animal Imagery in Hughes and Plath's Poetry

Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath use a variety of animal imageries in their poems. Ted uses the animal imageries of violent and fierce animals like hawk, jaguar, pike, thrushes, etc. but his wife Sylvia Plath uses the animal imageries of demure and weak animals or insects such as horse, goat, dog, bee, etc. Through animal imageries, Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath who are husband and wife speak about their relationship with each other as "dominator" and "being dominated" respectively.

The "Jaguar", "Hawk Roosting", "Pike", "Relic", and "Thrushes" by Ted Hughes and "Ariel", "Lady Lazarus", "Black Rook in Rainy Weather", "The Bee Meeting" and "The Eye-Mote" are among a few chosen poems for textual analysis to claim the abovementioned propositions.

Animal Imagery in Ted Hughes's Poems

Hawk Roosting

"Hawk Roosting" is a dramatic monologue in which a predatory bird hawk thinks himself as the creator, controller and dominator of the whole world. "Hawk" is one of the best animal imageries of power, ruthlessness and domination unsupported by any kind of legality or morality and devoid of any mercy or humanity. He claims that he can control the whole creation under his feet. He can dominate the whole world by applying his own rules and logic.

"Top" and "perfect" are dominant images to signify strength of the hawk in the first stanza. The hawk is at the top of the universe. There is nothing above him. In terms of power, hawk is perfect and he can achieve whatever he dreams. The poet gives the images of night and death. "Eyes closed," "wood", "dreams" and "sleep rehearse" give the picture of dark and boastful altitude towards other creatures and things. As the following stanza reveals, "hooked

head", "hooked feet" and "kill and eat" are other instances of his ruthlessness, domination and feeling of supremacy over other living beings:

I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed,
 Inaction, no falsifying dream
 Between my hooked head and hooked feet;
 Or in sleep rehearse perfect kills and eat. (Hughes 8)

Here, sitting at the top of the wood, the hawk makes clear about his power hierarchy and status quo. Since his eyes are closed, he cannot see other ways of living except killing and eating. The hawk wants to "kill and eat" all creatures irrespective of size and kinds.

The hawk's pride expands in the second stanza: he is pleased with himself being perfect and remaining at the top of "high trees." In his opinion, he became perfect because of back force of air and sun's ray. He can see all activities of all creatures due to his capacity to see earth face. Here, earth and air are personified. The attitudes of poet towards other people especially towards his wife Plath are expressed through hawk. High trees, air, and Sun are symbols of his superiority and supremacy over other people. All else, he believes, exists for his delight: "The convenience of the high tree / The air's buoyancy and the sun's rays are of advantage to me" (8).

In the third stanza, the hawk claims that his hooked feet tightly grapple with the branch which signifies its absolute power over the whole creation. He assumes himself the lord of creation, being omnipotent ("I hold creation in my foot / Or fly up, and revolve it all slowly"), and flawless, capable of "perfect kills" (8).

Here, "foot" and "feather" are animal imageries of power that display hawk's confidence of his feet and each of his feathers. "My foot" and "my each feather" manifest hawk's consciousness and confidence of whole body. He boastfully claims that it took the whole of creation to produce his feet and feathers in order to make his foot capable to hold the whole creation.

The hawk tells the readers how he deals with other animals or creatures in the fourth and fifth stanzas. He assumes that he holds the whole creation in his foot or flies up, and revolves it all slowly. He attacks and kills whenever and whatever animals he likes because whole creatures are under his possession. There is no fault in his argument and his "manners are tearing of heads". He is "the allotment of death"; he attacks other animals directly and goes through their bones. Killing other creatures is his right and no argument can deprive from using this right.

So the sense of ownership of the creation is repeatedly presented. There is no sophistry, no discussion, no deliberation, no dispute of what is wrong or right, no question of truth or justice of any action. His "manners" referring to his habits go farther than ruthless "tearing of heads". "Kill" and "tearing of heads" are imageries of dark side of human conduct and behavior. On the other hand, "mine", "manners" and "please" are imageries to indicate selfish modern human manners and habits.

In the last stanza, the hawk claims that his source of strength is the sun or the sun supports and encourages him to hold the creation. Sun, the life giving force, is behind him and the hawk does not find any changes in his habits and manners. The hawk wants to continue his killing until the earth revolves around the sun: "My eyes have permitted no change / I am going to keep things like this" (8). In this last stanza too, through hawk, Ted Hughes wants to say that he will not forsake his dominating habit throughout his life.

The images used in the poem are "top", "wood", "eyes", "hooked head", "hooked feet", "sleep", "kill", "eat", "ray", "trees", "earth", "lock", "rough bark", "feather", "revolve", "flight", "bones" and the like. "Eat", "sleep", "fly", "rough", "hooked" and "tearing off" produce the sensuous effect especially physiological. Most of the images are metaphorically presented.

The imagery in this poem concerning is the homogeneous grouping of images of physiological, aerial and Biblical. "kill", "eat", "tearing off", "flight", "lock" and "hooked" are physiological imageries used to indicate hawk's strength and power. Hawk is omnipotent ("I hold

creation in my foot/ Or fly up, and revolve it all slowly-"), and flawless, capable of perfect kills. In "Hawk's Roosting", Sanders argues, "Hughes represents the consciousness of animal, the hawk expresses its animal single mindedness with an unmistakably human arrogance" (606). This combination of beast fable and dramatic monologue presents complex insight into the relationship between mind and nature, consciousness and unconsciousness, and the limits and advantage of each state.

The Jaguar

In "The Jaguar", the speaker talks about many animals, dismisses them as unworthy and at last arrives at the jaguar. The jaguar is the apotheosis or idealization of a free condition. The poet also exalts his language while talking about the jaguar. Employing numerous animal imageries, Ted Hughes celebrates the power, strength and gracefulness of the jaguar which is the celebration of power, strength and charm of the poet himself.

The poem begins with the description of zoo animals. Zoo gives the idea of imposing human laws and control over wild animals inside boundary ignoring their natural habitat. The apes yawn and gleefully pluck out fleas infesting their body. The parrots behave in two different ways: some of them shriek as if they are being roasted alive in the fire, and others strut as cheap tarts do to attract the hawkers with nut. The tiger and lion seem extremely exhausted and hence lazy. They are lying still as the sun. The box constrictor has coiled like a fossil. The cages are either empty or they stink of the urine, stool and rotten food of the animals that are sleeping there-in. The zoo presents such a scene that might be painted on a nursery wall.

In this first part of the poem, the speaker presents the disgusting image of the zoo and caged animals through animal imageries. The "apes", "yawn", "fleas", "parrots", "shriek", "fatigued", "tiger" and "lion" are animal images indicating laziness, inaction and ugliness. The tiger and lion are supposed to be ferocious, active and graceful animals but they seem extremely

fatigued and hence lazy. In order to valorize the jaguar, the speaker dismisses other animals as unworthy. The poet dismisses other people to show himself superior in this part of the poem.

In the next part of the poem, the visitors (crowd) rush towards only one cage. The people who have crowded the cage, stare and mesmerize as a child at a dream at a jaguar hurrying to and fro in anger. In the darkness of prison-like cage, the jaguar's eyes, manifesting his flaming anger, produce a bomb-igniting spark.

The jaguar does not feel boredom because it has revolutionary power. "Fierce fuse", "blind in fire", "bang of blood", "deaf the ear" and "no cage to him" are main phrases to associate the feelings of jaguar towards other animals, people or the society. There is a contrast between fatigued indolence of other animals with fierce fuse on the drills of eyes of the jaguar:

On a short fierce fuse. Not in boredom—

The eyes satisfied to be blind in fire.

By the bang of blood in the brain deaf the ear—

He spins from the bars, but there is no cage to him. (Hughes 193)

The jaguar has so much strength and will that man made bars can not control his desire of freedom. His eyes seem to be satisfied with having been blinded by the fire of anger. His blood moves vigorously and collides violently and noisily against the brain, thereby deafening the ear. So he spins from the bars and dam cares the cage. In these lines, through jaguar, the poet identifies himself and believes that the rules, regulations and value system of the society can not control his desire of freedom. He is free to do whatever he likes and he is not dominated by other people or society.

The last stanza of the poem contrasts with the beginning lines and it turns up side down of the readers' expectation about jaguar. The jaguar inside the cage is supposed to be dead living but he rolls the world under his feet and the horizons seem crasing down on the cage floor:

More than 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. (193)

Here, the jaguar challenges the system of norms, values and rules set by the crowd (society). The poet in some sense identifies himself with the jaguar. According to A. E. Dyson, "the poet looks jaguar, as it hurries enraged through the prison darkness after the drills of his eyes and find victory in its untamed will" (117). The poet wants to roll the world and dominate other people and society. His ambition of domination over the whole world can be observed with his style and use of alliteration and assonance.

The images "apes", "lion", "tiger", "cage", "eat", "blood", "cell" and "hell" are related to animal and physiological. They indicate the poet's power, strength and charm by which he dominated fellow people, society or the whole world.

Pike

It is one of the famous and much anthologized poems of Ted Hughes on the theme of violence and killing in the animal world. The poet uses numerous images of killing which suggest hunger, horror, gloom, stillness, pain and death that are taken from nature and animal world. For Hughes, killing and violence is right in the world of animals where nothing of 'human' perspective and understanding can apply.

The poem can be divided into three distinct parts. In the first part (stanza 1 and 2), the speaker describes the voracious, ruthless nature of pike and its green water habitat. In the first stanza of the poem, the poet presents the physical perfection of the pike. The perfect "pike" in all parts can do whatever it likes. "Pike" possesses derivative killing instinct from long ancestry which can not be eradicated.

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 424)

"Killers from the egg", "dance on the surface" and "flies" are animal imageries employed to present death and violence. The poet glorifies the pike and says that though it is only three inches long and surrounded by flies, it is a perfect killer. This stanza indicates the poet's love for domination, violence and death.

In the second stanza, the long history of submarine world is depicted. The images of "bed of emerald", "silhouette", "a hundred feet long" and "submarine delicacy and horror" presents pike's grandeur history of power which is used to kill and eat other creatures weaker than it. Silhouette represents uncovered territory of human mind, too, where subconscious mind rules. According to M. L. Rosenthal, "Pike" is "Hughes supreme construct a series of descriptions anecdotes, impressions building up the single theme [. . .]" (127).

The next part (stanza 3-7) begins with a consideration of the predatory nature of the pike and describes it as it moves through a green, gold shadowy habitat. Hughes vividly describes the fish's "jaws" "hooked clamp and fangs" and makes the reader almost terrified as he describes the pike's ruthless nature as it lurks silently waiting in the weed for its prey. "Ponds", "heat-struck lily pads", "black leaves", "amber cavern", "weeds", "jaws", "hooked", "clamp and fangs" and "gills" are dominant images of death and painful situation. "Jaws", "hooked", "clamp and fangs" and "gills" are animal imageries of violence. These images subordinate life, love and protection. The world of pike can neither be changed nor controlled under moral order.

In the fifth stanza, Hughes tells his own story about pikes. When he kept three small pikes captive in an a aquarium, one pike killed another pike and finally only one "with a sag belly" remained.

Three we kept behind glass,

Jungled in weed three inches, four,

And four and a half fed fry to them--

Suddenly there two. Finally one

With a sag belly and the grin it was born with. (425)

These lines show the predatory nature of the pike. The pike continues to kill other fellow pikes. At first there were three in the aquarium but finally there is only one means that other two are eaten "Sag belly" is a killing imagery which shows that pikes are born with the killing instinct, and killing and eating other pikes is their habit.

Hughes juxtaposes a second scene of the pike as unstoppable predator concluding this section with the image of two dead, six-pound, two-foot long pikes lying on a river bank, one jammed down the gullet of the other. Even in death, these fish are portrayed grimly determined. "Dry", "dead", "shrank in death" and "fished" are death imagery through which Hughes says that pikes are good-for-nothing killers. malignant and malicious murderers.

In the final section of the poem (stanza 8-11), the speaker establishes direct contact with the pikes. Hughes describes the evening encounter he had while fishing for pike on an ancient, quiet monastery pond. By equating the pike with the legendary nature of the monastery pond, the poet makes it a mythic creature like the dragon: powerful, naughty and perilous to human beings.

Stilled legendary depth:

It was as deep as England. It held

Pike too immense to stir, so immense and old

That past nightfall I dared not cast (425)

Here, "legendary depth", "as deep as England", "immense to stir", "immense and old" and "dared not cast" are imageries of power and strength. The poet celebrates the power, strength, ruthlessness and predatory nature of pikes.

In this section, the poet recapitulates the skulking, waiting nature of the submarine world and makes readers experience the fear that the pike engenders even in the man standing safely on the bank—afraid to fish for what he imagines to be monstrous pike. In the last stanza of the "Pike", the speaker concludes with an image of the silent fish slowly surfacing to consider the fisherman who has dared to disturb its nighttime lair with his puny fly-casting.

"Hair frozen", "dark pond" and "night's darkness" are the images of life and love. The juxtaposition of natural and human world pairing the images of fish floating patiently in its natural and artificial world that the fish presents the human desire to dominate and control. At the end, the narrator fishes in terror at night. He is no longer fishing for pike, but for the nameless horror which night's darkness tries to rise up from the legendary depth of his dream.

In this poem, the poet uses the homogeneous images of death and decay. The images are mostly animal and violent in nature. The images such as "killers from the egg", "flies", "silhouette", "jaws", "hooked clamp and fangs", "sag belly", "shrank in death", "immense" and "fished" present animal instinct of killing and to be killed. These images are compared with the real incidents of his life. His two wives—Sylvia Plath and Assia Wevill along with their two year old daughter—killed themselves. These images also indicate Hughes's desire to control Plath's estate and publication of her works.

To sum up, pike is a highly visual poem; full of animal imageries of violence and decay, One can see "water", "weeds", "aquarium", "weeds", "fish", "belly", "pond", "lilies" and the like.

Thrushes

"Thrushes" is Hughes's another famous poem on the theme of terror, violence and domination in the bird world. In this poem, the speaker minutely observes the predatory thrushes walking on the lawn in order to search and eat insects or worms. The speaker glorifies the thrushes and their act of killing and eating through a number of animal imageries.

In the first stanza of the poem, Hughes describes what thrushes look like, and how they drag out and attack small insects and worms living on the lawn. Hughes finds thrushes terrifying:

Terrifying are the attent sleek thrushes on the lawn
 More coiled steel than living—a poised
 Dark deadly eye, those delicate legs
 Triggered to stirrings beyond sense—with a start, a bounce, a stab
 Overtake the instant and drag out some writhing thing.
 No indolent procrastinations and no yawning states,
 No sighs or head-scratching. Nothing but bounce and stab
 And a ravening second. (Hughes 22)

Hughes begins the poem "Thrushes" with the word "terrifying" to evoke horror in reader's mind. "Coiled steel", "dark deadly eye", "triggered to stirrings", "overtake", "drag out", "bounce and stab" and "ravening second" are the imageries that are used to show thrushes as predatory. Thrushes attack their preys without any procrastination ignoring their emotions and feelings. By glorifying violent activities of the thrushes, Hughes shows his inclination towards violence, terror and domination. The phrase "nothing but bounce and stab" indicates that like thrushes Hughes does not know other than exploitation and domination.

In the second stanza, the speaker shows his astonishment about the source of the thrushes' art of killing and eating. The speaker asks rhetorical question about the source of the strength and art of the killing acquired by the thrushes. For him, they acquired such kind of violent and dominating art either from "skulls" or "genius" or "brats." Hughes unconvincingly compares Mozart's brain with shark's mouth in the middle of the second stanza: "Mozart's brain had it, and the shark's mouth"(22). By suddenly comparing Mozart's brain with shark's mouth, Hughes says that logic and reasoning does not work in killing and eating. The killers can kill their preys at any time and at any rate whatsoever the preys are doing or thinking.

The poet talks about how thrushes' hunger wipes out in the rest of the second stanza. The thrushes' hunger goes down when they smell the blood of the prey. Their hunger is wiped out when they devour the insects and worms. They pluck out the worms or insects and devour without any delay making themselves more and more powerful.

This stanza is also full of animal imageries used to portray the predatory nature of thrushes. "Skulls", "body", "shark's mouth", "devour", "strike" and "pluck" are physiological animal imageries that produce sensuous effect. The imagery of "bullet" and "automatic" indicate that the source of killing and violence comes from their instinct and nobody can stop their habit of attacking and devouring the insects or worms. Thrushes become more powerful by killing and eating smaller insects and worms day after day.

In the last stanza, Hughes compares world of thrushes with human world. The speaker says that if man had done all the activities performed by thrushes, he would sit on horseback to advertise his heroism. Moreover, he will write those activities of automatic bouncing and stabbing on his diary, and exhibit his diary on the broad-desk. Not only that, he will carve all the activities on tiny ivory ornament and worship his power and ruthlessness by himself.

With a man it is otherwise. Heroisms on horseback,
 Outstripping his desk-diary at a broad desk,
 Carving at a tiny ivory ornament
 For years: his act worships itself [. . .]. (22)

Hughes says that it is absurd to judge world of thrushes from human perspective. Killing, violence and domination are as natural as human beings' eating food in the world of thrushes. The imageries "horseback", "fire", "devils" and "orgy" are mainly related to physiology and terror. Through these imageries, Hughes glorifies violence, killing, domination and other devilish activities such as wild parties.

The poem "Thrushes" is highly visual. "Thrushes on the lawn", "coiled steel", "dark deadly eye", "delicate legs", "writhing thing", "skulls", "bullet", "desk-diary", "broad desk" and "spaces of fire" are highly visual images describing violent activities of thrushes or activities of human beings that are comparable to the actions of thrushes. The images "start", "bounce", "stab", "drag out", "ravaging second", "bullet", "devouring" and "devils" are related to murder and death. The domination of such kinds of imagery in this poem shows Hughes's inclination towards domination, violence and death. The imagery of "weep" used in the last line of the poem also supports Hughes's love for domination and violence. To sum up, in Hughes's opinion, the violence, killing and domination done by the thrushes is natural in the world of thrushes and human beings should not apply their perspective to judge thrushes and their violent activities.

Relic

The poem "Relic" talks about cruelty, savagery, violence and death all pervasive in the submarine world through a number of animal imageries. The title itself "Relic" is an animal imagery that indicates a remaining part of predatory fish like shark. "Jawbone", "crabs", "dogfish", "clutching", "devour", "jaws", "claws", "skulls" and the like are some of the pressing animal imageries employed in the poem to describe the death, cruelty and violence prevalent in the sea.

The poem "Relic" begins when the speaker finds the jawbone at the edge of the sea and meditates upon it. The speaker thinks that the "crabs" and "dogfish" are moved by waves. They make noise due to the attack of the big fish and turn to a crust. It means that only their hard surface is left by the fish. Here, "crabs" and "dogfish" are animal imageries that signify savagery, cruelty and violence in the sea world. The jawbone had eaten these "crabs" and "dogfish" and turned them to a crust. The term "continue the beginning" indicates that the tradition of murdering weaker animals by bigger ones had begun from the very beginning and will remain as it is till the earth revolves round the sun. The metaphor "the deeps are cold" has at least two

connotations. The first one is denotative which says the temperature of the deep sea is very low or it is extremely cold in the deep sea. The second one is underlying meaning and very important for our purpose. It also helps to convey the underlying meaning of the poem." "The deeps are cold" means the feeling of friendship, sympathy and cooperation is absent in the marine world. In the darkness of the sea, sympathy, empathy, friendship and cooperation does not exist rather it is full of hostility, violence and competition to kill and eat weaker animals by stronger ones. Any animal can be killed and eaten any time in the sea. Such kind of dangerous environment is prevalent in the sea.

The animal imageries of "clutching" and "devour" are very dominant in this stanza. The speaker says that no one or nothing can stop sea animals clutching other animals and devouring them. The big, violent, cruel or merciless animals capture weaker animals by their sharp clutches, tear their bodies and swallow them immediately. Hughes describes the function of the jaws in quite interesting way in this stanza:

Jaws

Eat and are finished and the jawbone comes to the beach:

This is the sea's achievement; with shells,

Vertebrae, claws, carapaces, skulls (Hughes 44)

The above extracted lines are also full of animal imageries related to violence, ruthlessness and death. "Jaws", "eat", "jawbone", "vertebrae", "claws", "carapaces" and "skulls" are very dominant animal imageries used in abovementioned lines. Through these animal imageries, Hughes describes two interesting phenomena of the jawbone. In the first place, the jaws eat sea animals weaker than him. As the jaws eat those animals, they don't eat the "jaws" of them (weaker animals). As a result, the jaws of the eaten animals come to the beach. Thus, producing other "jawbones" by the "jaws" is the sea's achievement. As a result of continuous violence and killing in the sea, it has become full of "vertebrae", "carapaces", "claws" and

"skulls". The image of "skulls" is related to death. This image also signifies that the sea world is full of violence, cruelty, ruthlessness and death. The imagery of "claws" indicates the capturing and tearing of weaker animals by bigger ones. Similarly, the animal imageries of "vertebrae" and "carapaces" are used to signify the hard and menacing life of sea world. "The survival of the fittest" is the most applicable theory working in the sea world.

The last stanza of the poem "Relic" is also full of animal imageries related to violence, savagery, cruelty and death. "Eat", "tail", "cast", "curved jawbone", and "gripped" are major animal imageries of this stanza, Hughes also personifies time and says that the time cannot stop pervasive violence in the submarine world. Days, months and years come and go but the savagery, killing and death remains as it is in the sea. The efforts to stop the violence of the sea made so far have been failed. No one who has applied violence as a means of survival has become rich. Finally, the poet says that the curved jawbone did not laugh but took killing and violence as its strong supporter of survival. In Hughes's opinion, the jawbone has become monument to the dead. In other words, the "curved jawbone" has become the epitome of violence, killing and death.

The animal imageries employed in this poem strongly support the theme of the poem; the prevalence of violence, cruelty and murder in the marine world. The imageries of "jawbone", "dogfish", "clutching" and "devour" indicate the predatory nature of animals living in the sea world. The animal imagery of "jaws" is kept everywhere in the poem to signify the prevalence of killing, violence and cruelty in the sea world. Likewise, the animal imageries of "claws" and "skulls" also intensify the killing instinct all pervasive in the sea world. The animal imageries of "eat" and "cast" are related to the pains and sorrows of the victims. Finally, Hughes compares the jawbone with the cenotaph and says that the curved jawbone has become cenotaph now. He means to say that the jawbone has killed so many animals that now-a-days it is known as a monument to the dead. Thus, by using a number of animal imageries, Hughes has become

successful to portray the cruelty, violence, ruthlessness and murder in the marine world. In this way, Hughes writes this poem "Relic" from the perspective of "dominator" the jawbone.

Animal Imagery in Sylvia Plath's Poems

Ariel

Sylvia Plath's poem "Ariel" contains a number of animal imageries related to suppression, confinement and her attempt to escape from male-domination. "Ariel", "hells and knees", "arc", "hooks", "blood", "thighs", "hair", "hands", "lioness" and the like are some of the animal imageries that indicate Plath's feeling of oppression, domination, anger and her attempt to get liberty from male-chauvinism. The very title of the poem "Ariel" symbolizes the master-servant relationship prevalent in our society.

Since Sylvia Plath writes poems from the perspective of "being dominated", the title of the poem "Ariel" is a symbol of being colonized, dominated and suppressed people. The name "Ariel" comes from Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* in which Ariel is a sexless spirit that serves the (colonizer) king Prospero always seeking liberation. Moreover, Ariel was the name of the horse that Plath used to ride as a girl and use it according to her will. So, the animal imagery of Ariel indicates master-servant relationship and symbolizes service, domination, and oppression. Like the horse Ariel, Sylvia Plath wants to get liberation from her masters which are males.

Similarly, Sylvia Plath uses animal imagery of "God's lioness" in this poem "Ariel". God's lioness is like Blake's "Tyger" angry and full of rebellious strength. God's lioness is showing the strength of the God, his energy and his anger. This kind of rebellious strength and anger is the product of the domination she had to face for a long time by her father Otto Emil Plath and her husband Ted Hughes.

The occasion of this poem is that of one traumatic experience of her attempt to ride Ariel early one morning. Probably, the rider has gone to the horse stable and while just trying to ride, the horse scampers with the girl clinging on to its neck. It is all static; there is no sense of

movement. Next follows a "substanceless" pouring of sights of blue hills in the dawn. She becomes gradually aware of the distance being traversed. The term "distances" indicates that the speaker wants to distance away from domination and exploitation of males.

In stanza 2 to 5, the speaker presents the impressionistic images of the countryside as the horse gallops by. In stanza 3, she sees the horizon (brown arc) made brighter by the coming sun. The animal imagery of brown arc shows that the speaker is confined in her household acts and the horse neck made brighter by coming sun hints that she may get freedom from her household duties very soon. But the speaker's inability to catch horse's neck indicates that she will not get emancipation from confinement and domination.

In the fourth stanza, the speaker seems to catch glimpses of the people while galloping on horse: "nigger eye" and "hooks". "Hooks" is again an animal imagery that is used to describe "social boundary" or "social restriction" imposed upon her. The word "dark" is used to mean darkness of her life. In her opinion, her life is surrounded by darkness because of lack of freedom from her household activities. She also sees berries with thorns while riding on horse.

The speaker describes her experience while galloping on horse in the fifth and sixth stanza. All of a sudden, she feels that she is pulled through air. The animal imagery of "blood" is used to present herself as a victim of male-chauvinism. She feels that her thigh hair flakes from her heels. "Heels" is an animal imagery used to indicate burden and responsibility. In the seventh stanza, she identifies herself with lady Godiva:

White

Godiva,

I unpeel—

Dead hands, dead stringencies. (Plath 430)

In this stanza, Plath identifies herself with lady Godiva, a rebellious Irish woman who rode naked through the streets in protest of her husband's too high tax on the people. More

importantly, she makes it symbolize the female protest against the "dead hands, dead stringencies" of the male-domination by identifying herself with lady Godiva, a similar female rebel. Further, she wants to pack dead social norms and values which obstruct her freedom. By unpeeling "dead hands" and "dead stringencies", she wants to create more equitable society in which males cannot dominate females. In the last section of the poem, Plath compares herself with the arrow being shot towards sun and evaporating dew:

And I
Am the arrow,
The dew that flies
Suicidal, at one with the drive
Into the red
Eye, the cauldron of morning. (430)

So, at the end of the poem, she feels as if she is evaporating like the morning dew and dissolving into the elements; she says that she is an arrow being shot into the face of the sun (red eye, cauldron of morning). The sun is the symbol of male traditions which she wants to protest and avenge.

Instead of Hughes's jaguar, thrushes or pike, Plath selects horse, a carnivorous weak creature, as a subject matter of her poem. Moreover, she uses animal imageries like "hooks", "arc", "blood", "hair" which are related to confinement, constraints, domination and victimization. To sum up, by using a number of animal imageries related to confinement, suppression and hindrances, she presents herself a victim of male-chauvinism and wants to get freedom from inhumanities like Ariel in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

Lady Lazarus

"Lady Lazarus" is a poignant expression of Sylvia Plath's resentment, even vengeance against the male-dominated society, for all the oppression upon women like the speaker of the

poem and also the many kinds of violence for which man is responsible. The physical setting of the poem can be imagined to be the deathbed of the Plath herself when she was nervously broken and bedridden after the unsuccessful suicide attempt. With the help of numerous animal imageries, the speaker expresses her rage against everyone around her because of the suppression she had to face before and after her marriage. "Skin", "right foot", "face", "nose", "eye pits", "full set of teeth", "flesh", "cat", "hands", "skin and bone", "scars", "a bit of blood" and "red hair" are some of the animal imageries through which Plath presents herself a victim of male-dominated patriarchal society.

The poem begins on the real statement; "I have done it again"(Plath 431). Sylvia Plath had made another attempt at suicide after ten years of a previous one. In the second and third tercet, she uses animal imageries of "skin" and "face" respectively to show her concern for the torture of the Jews:

A sort of walking miracle, my skin

Bright as a Nazi lampshade.

My right foot

A paperweight

My face a featureless, fine

Jew linen. (431)

Plath compares her skin with the skin of the Germans who were killed in Nazi Concentration Camps during Hitler's reign. Moreover, she introduces two surrealistic images: the speaker irrationally compares her "feet" with a "paperweight" and her "face" linen cloth that the Jews used to wear.

In the fifth and sixth tercet, Plath uses animal imageries of "nose", "eye" and "flesh" to indicate her own death, decay, destruction and banishment. She imagines that her "nose", "eye-

pits", "full set of teeth" and "sour breath" will soon be consumed by the grave. In short, Plath presents an image of her own dead body foreboding (foreshadowing) her death. The image is horrible, but it seems the speaker is trying to come terms with death she has trying to embrace by rejecting life and people. Thus, these two stanzas show her love for her own death, decay destruction and banishment rather than life and people.

In the seventh tercet, although Plath uses the animal imagery of cat, her usage is different from the common usage. Cat is a carnivorous animal that kills other animals weaker than it. Since cat is a predator, cat imagery is used to indicate murder, domination and suppression. But Plath uses cat imagery in the context of death and says that like cat she has nine times to die. This usage shows that Plath does not hesitate to present strong and carnivorous animals being victimized i.e. cat is victimized by death. Similarly, Plath relates organs of her own body with death and decay in the tenth tercet:

These are my hands,
My knees
I may be skin and bone. (432)

Here, Plath uses animal imageries of "hands" and "knees" to indicate the destruction of her own body. She thinks that her hands and knees may be "skin" and "bone" soon. However, she consoles herself by thinking that she will be same identical woman though her hands and knees have been turned into skin and bone in the near future. So, by using animal imageries of "hands" and "knees", she presents herself as a victim of time or death.

Plath tells a personal truth in the twelfth tercet: she was ten when she tried to commit suicide for the first time. The second time she had meant to do it earnestly. But they pulled her back into life. She says that as a suicide expert she has an affinity and skill at death; "dying", she says, is an art, and she does it exceptionally well. Plath's love for suicide and subsequent death

shows that she regards death as friend and life as enemy. Perhaps, she is fatigued from suppression given by patriarchal society and takes death as a means of emancipation from it.

In the eighteenth stanza, Plath regards her comeback to life as theatrical, coming to the same place, the same faces, the same brutes, who call the rescue (and new life they think they have given her) a miracle. But, there is a cost (charge) all the things they do; the doctors, especially take advantage of it. They take advantage from her unsuccessful suicide attempt by calling themselves as saviors. The mention of doctors reminds her of the German doctors who experimented on the dead bodies of the Jews of the concentration camps: "So, so Herr (Mr.) Doktor (German spelling,). So Herr Enemy [. . .]" This instance reminds her of the many images of the torture of the Jews by the Germans in the Second World War. "I am your opus"(432), says the poet to the doctor identifying herself with the victim on whom the doctor is going to perform an operation for learning something about the human body. Similarly, she is also the corpse for the scavengers to collect gold ornaments for the "dentists" to look for the golden teeth and for the German industry owners to make soap out of the fat from her body. The Germans actually did all these during the war. Thus, by using animal and war imageries, Plath identifies herself with the victims of Second World War and becomes sympathetic to the Jews who were tortured, killed and victimized by Hitler and his followers.

Plath's rebellious spirit is heightened in the last stanza. She says that a vengeant female figure has been born and will "eat men like air". This instance also suggests the birth of the phoenix from the ashes of the traditionally burnt woman. She means that all traditions including social, political, cultural and literary have been tortured and destroyed the female identity, but a new woman is born to burn all those rotten traditions.

Thus, with the help of mythological character Lady Lazarus and a number of animal imageries like "skin", "face", "right foot", "knees", etc, Sylvia Plath describes about the torture, domination and suppression of women prevalent in the patriarchal society. She compares her

condition with the condition of the Jews who were tortured and killed in the reign of Hitler. At last, she challenges that a new woman is born to destroy all kinds of oppressions, domination and segregation imposed upon women in our society.

The Eye-Mote

Sylvia Plath's Poem "The Eye-Mote" is an explanation of real life incident of the poet herself. With the help of several animal imageries, the poet craftfully magnifies an ordinary event occurred in her lifetime and presents herself as a victim of circumstances. The prominent animal imageries helpful to describe the loss of her eyesight and her desire to regain it are "horse", "tails", "necks", "manes", "camels", "unicorns", "beasts of oasis", "itch", "eye", "flesh" and the like.

The poem begins with the description of the idyllic landscape in which horses are grazing against the green backdrop of sycamores. The speaker is looking at the field of horses of which necks bent, manes blown and tails streaming against the green lawn. Moreover, the sun is striking white chapel pinnacles over the roofs indicating noon. Although the horses, the clouds, and the leaves are flowing away to the left like reeds in the sea, the sun holds them all.

The poet employs animal imagery of "horses" and other visual images like "daylight", "sun", "white chapel pinnacles", "roofs", "clouds", "leaves", "reeds" and "sea" to show beautiful landscape. Everything is fine and the speaker is happy. The necks of the horses are bent and manes are blown by the soft wind. The images "daylight", "sun" and "white chapel" are related to her eyes and they indicate that her eyesight is sharp and clear. The word "green" is also related to the eyesight and the sight of the grazing horse shows pleasant mood of the speaker.

But the happiness of the speaker does not last for a long time. Suddenly a splinter flies in and sticks her eye making everything up side down:

When the splinter flew in and stuck my eye,
Needling it dark. Then I was seeing

A melding of shapes in a hot rain;
Horses warped on the altering green,

Outlandish as double-humped camels or unicorns.

Grazing at the margins of a bad monochrome

Beasts of Oasis, a better time. (Plath 124)

Flying of a splinter in her eye becomes the turning point of her life. She feels that she is surrounded by darkness. The image of "hot rain" seems very powerful in this stanza. She compares her tears with hot rain and says that she sees melding of shapes in it. Further, she finds the horses grazing against the green backdrop of sycamores turn into double-humped camels or unicorns grazing at the margins of a bad monochrome. This animal imagery is often used to indicate odd and ugly events. She calls those camels or unicorns beasts of oasis. She calls her eye pupil "small grain" which burns abrading her eyelid.

Although flying a splinter in her eye is not an extraordinary event, the poet magnifies it craftfully. She takes this incident as a process of her own victimization. She becomes victim of circumstances and loses her eyesight. This poem is also an example of the tact and craft of the poet Sylvia Plath.

The speaker further says that when the splinter flew in and stuck her eye, she sees red cinder around which she herself, horses, planets and spires revolve. The "white sun" of the first stanza becomes "red cinder" in the third stanza. This is a movement from light to dark, white to red and day to night. Due to the loss of eyesight, the speaker sees midnight in the midday. Red is also the symbol of victimization (blood). The pain caused by the flying of a splinter in her eye makes her feel that she is revolving around the sun.

In the fourth stanza, the speaker says that the speck is stuck so firmly that neither tears nor easing flush can remove it. She had to suffer from it for a week. At the same time, she feels

that she has become blind from the distant past and will be blind in the future as well. When she becomes blind by the speck, she compares her plight with the plight of Oedipus:

I dream that I am Oedipus

What I want back is what I was

Before the bed, before the knife

Before the broach-pin and the salve

Fixed me in this parenthesis;

Horses fluent in the wind,

A place, a time gone out of mind. (124)

When the splinter flew in and stuck her eye, the speaker dream that she has become Oedipus who had destroyed his own eyes. But, unlike Oedipus, the speaker wants her eyesight back. She says that she would not have killed her father, married her mother and destroyed her eyes by broach-pin. If she could have restored her eye sight, the horses would fluent in the wind. But, this kind of occurrence of miracle is not possible. Gradually, the remembrance of the time and place of the death of her father goes out of her mind. She again brings animal imagery of horses to forget the pain caused by the splinter.

The poem is also an explanation of her unwanted birth. The flying of a splinter in her eye is the event that happened without her will. Likewise, she was born without her will. Her life was not her choice but a compulsion. So, she often presents herself as a victim of circumstances in her poems. That is why, the poem "The Eye-Mote" is significantly different from the poems of Ted Hughes. In his poems, for example, "Pike", "Thrushes", and "Hawk Roosting", generally, the speaker makes other creatures victim but here the speaker herself becomes the victim of circumstances.

The poet dreams that she has become Oedipus in the last section of the poem. This instance helps to understand her relationship with her father Otto Emil Plath. She often takes her father as an autocrat and male-chauvinist. So, she dreams that she has become Oedipus who had killed his father, married his mother and begot some children from her. When Plath's father died at the age of eight, she imagines that she had killed her father by herself.

The animal imagery of horse comes frequently in her poem and this poem is not an exception. She used to ride a horse named Ariel in her childhood. She uses horse imagery to present herself as a victim of male-chauvinism and a means of escape from such kind of oppression. When the splinter sticks in her eye, the beautiful image of horses turn into ugly image of camels or unicorns. The animal imagery of "flesh", "litch", and "eye" are also related to her pain, suffering and oppression.

The Bee Meeting

The poem "The Bee Meeting" is an opening poem of the sequence of poems Sylvia Plath originally called "Bees" and "The Arrival of Bee Box", "Stings", "The Swarm" and "Wintering" are other poems of the sequence. The "Bees" poems assess the poet's relationship with her neighbours, children, husband, other women and her place in history. Plath's vulnerability, specifically, female vulnerability to physical nakedness, is clear in these bee poems. For Plath, bee imagery evokes the figure of her father, Otto Emil Plath, a biologist specializing in entomology who died when she was eight

"The Bee Meeting" is a dream sequence in which the poet finds herself a victim: "unprotected in her sleeveless summary dress", vulnerable: "nude as a chicken neck" and alienated: "does nobody love me?" In this poem, the speaker's fear is conveyed through her confused and incessant questions, inability to recognize familiar people, stuttering repetitions, monstrous personification, and obsession with violence and death. Likewise, bizarre setting is created through imagery and metaphors of violence, a mixed atmosphere of ritual, the carnival

and the funeral and mythic allusions. The poem introduces us to village bee keepers who present frightening picture of social ritual:

Who are these people at the bridge to meet me? They are villagers—
 The rector, the midwife, the sexton, the agent for bees,
 In my sleeveless summary dress I have no protection,
 And they are all gloved and covered. Why did nobody tell me?
 They are smiling and taking out veils tacked to ancient hats. (Plath 116)

In contrast to the heavily veiled, protective disguises of the villagers, the speaker wears only a sleeveless summary dress, and her separation from them is emphasized by the juxtaposition of "I" and "they": "I have no protection - they are all gloved and covered"; "why did nobody tell me?" - They are all smiling. Further, the speaker feels vulnerable, "I have no protection" and alienated in the company of villagers, "why did nobody tell me [. . .] does nobody love me?"

The secretary of bees tries to turn her into an officially costumed beekeeper but this attempt only increases the persona's terror. She assumes the disguise of "milkweed silk", an inanimate and consequently a safer means of evading the aggressive power of the bees : "Now I am milkweed silk, the bees will not noticed/ They will not smell my fear, my fear, my fear"(116).

The persona worsens the situation by becoming confused to the people who are already familiar to her: "which is the rector now, is that man in black? / Which is the midwife, is that her blue coat?" The villagers are "nodding a square black head' and wearing "breastplates of cheesecloth" but she has to wear " sleeveless summary dress" and she is "led through a beanfield". Stanza four and five depict a dangerous and frightening landscape:

Strips of tinfoil winking like people,
 Feather dusters fanning their hands in a sea of bean flowers,

Creamy bean flowers with black eyes and leaves like bored hearts,
 Is it blood clots the tendrils are dragging up that string?
 No, no, it is scarlet flowers that will one day be edible.

[. . .]

They are leading me to the shorn grove, the circle of hives,
 Is it the hawthorn that smells so sick?
 The barren body of hawthorn, etherizing its children. (116)

All elements of the scene are personified, increasing the confusion of what's what. Her rush of questions reveals her suspicion: "Is it blood clots the tendrils are dragging up that string?" "No, no", she assures herself, "it is scarlet flowers that one day be edible". The speaker suspects that the villagers are leading her "to the shorn grove, the circle of hives". In her opinion, the bean flowers are like blood clots and the hawthorn tree kills its own offspring.

The speaker's suspicion further increases in the sixth stanza as well: "Is it the same operation (ritual) that taking place / Is it the surgeon my neighbors are waiting for"(116). Meanwhile, she sees the apparition in a green helmet and white suit but can not recognize whether he is "the butcher or the grocer or the postman." Likewise, she exhibits her vulnerability, incapability and victimization in the seventh stanza: "I cannot run, I am rooted, and the gorse hurts me / With its yellow purses, its spiky armory" (116).

The speaker identifies herself with the bees, specifically queen bee, and becomes sympathetic towards them. The villagers do not intend to harm bees; they merely want to save the queen bee from the virgins. Yet the bees misinterpret the smoke which is used to drive them out so that the hives can be moved: "smoke rolls and scarves in the grove / the mind of the hive thinks this is the end of everything". Likewise, the queen hides from the people who are trying to help her: "The old queen does not show herself, does she so ungrateful?" when the bees are smoked out of the hive, they (and the speaker) take flight of their senses: "How they come, the

outriders, on their hysterical elastics". Their fear ignites her and she steps into the fantasy of metamorphosis: "If I stand very still, they will think I am cow-parsley" (116).

Although the speaker identifies herself with the bees, specifically the queen bee, she confuses herself with them at last: "whose is that long white box in the grove [. . .] why I am cold" (117). Further, she experiences a foreboding of death.

The opening of the final stanza signals her defeat, "I am exhausted, I am exhausted" (117) and three accusing questions inserted in the last line exhibit her fear, "whose is that long white box in the grove, what they have accomplished, why I am cold" (117). She sees what appears to be a coffin, realizes something has ended, and feels the chill of the grove already upon her. The exhaustion she feels at the end of the poem makes her unable to answer those three questions.

Thus, with the help of bee imagery, metamorphosis and personification, the persona presents her vulnerability, incompetence and insecurity before the villagers who are performing the village ritual. The landscape of the poem is frightening and the tone is gothic one. The poet imagines her own victimization though there is no evidence of outside danger is shown in the poem. She misinterprets the activities of the villagers just like the bees misunderstand the intention of the villagers while they are trying to save the queen bee from the virgins. In the end, the poet becomes exhausted and can not answer the last battery of questions. The arrival of possible coffin compels us to contemplate about her death.

Black Rook in Rainy Weather

Sylvia Plath's poem "Black Rook in Rainy Weather" is a description of the pathetic condition of a wet black rook and its long wait for the arrival of the angel to get emancipation from such deplorable condition. The condition of the wet black rook can be compared to the condition of the Sylvia Plath herself after she was left by her husband Ted Hughes for Assia Wevill. The whole poem is an animal (or bird) imagery of wet black rook in which other images

like "feathers", "fire", "hunch", "twig", "spotted leaves", "eye", "sky", "table", "chair", etc. are incorporated in it.

The setting of the poem can be the dull and ruinous landscape of a certain place in which a black rook hunches on the stiff twig of a tree. The speaker sees a wet black rook arranging its feathers on the twig of a tree and meditates upon its pitiable condition in this poem. Further, the speaker seems sympathetic towards the condition of the bird and wants its emancipation from such deplorable condition. The opening two stanzas of the poem give the vivid and clear picture (image) of the wet black rook sitting on the twig of a tree:

On the stiff twig up there
 Hunches a wet black rook
 Arranging and rearranging its feathers in the rain—
 I do not expect a miracle
 Or an accident

To set the sight on fire
 In my eye, nor seek
 Anymore in the desultory weather some design,
 But let spotted leaves as they fall
 Without ceremony, or portent. (Plath 19)

The speaker sees a wet black rook sitting on the twig of a tree and begins to describe its condition with the help of a number of animal imageries: "hunch", "wet black rook", "feather" and "eye". The bird is soaked in the rain. So, it hunches on the twig of the tree. The image "hunch" denotes the confinement of the bird. It is confined on the twig of the tree because of the

coldness of the rain. In an attempt to protect its body from the rainwater, the bird is arranging and rearranging its feathers.

The speaker does not expect a miracle or accident of coming of an angel to remove the pains and sorrows of the bird. However, the image of "fire" provides some hope of arrival. Further, the "spotted leaves" fall as usual without any kind of ceremony or portent. The image of "spotted leaves" is helpful to understand the condition of the bird. Although the bird seems beautiful from outside, its inward condition is not good like the "spotted" leaves which may fall at any moment. Moreover, the bird is shivering due to the coldness of the rain and may fall at any time.

The speaker admits and desires some kind of promise from the mute sky that the angel may come to the bird but he or she can not complain to the sky. A certain minor light is still glowing out of the kitchen table or chair. The image of "glowing minor light" indicates a tiny ray of hope to the bird that the angel will come to take it to the paradise. Because of this tiny ray of hope, the bird waits for the rare and random descent of the angel.

Although the landscape is dull and ruinous, the speaker walks cautiously hoping whether any angel of whatever kind chooses to flare suddenly at his or her elbow. But, the image of "dull and ruinous landscape" may belittle the possibility of occurring the miracle i.e. descent of the angel. Further, this image also indicates the dull and ruinous condition of the bird. However, the bird is so graceful in appearance that it catches the senses of the speaker:

I only know that a rook

Ordering its black feathers can so shine

As to seize my senses, haul

My eyelids up, and grant

A brief respite from fear

Of total neutrality [. . .]. (19)

The speaker employs some images like "black feathers", "shine", "seize" and "eyelids" to describe the beauty of the black rook. The speaker says that when the bird keeps its black feathers in order, they are so shiny that they seize the senses, hauls his eyelids up and removes the fear of being total neutral towards the deplorable condition of the bird. The shine of the bird's black feathers is so powerful that the speaker cannot become neutral towards the pitiable condition of the bird. The poet shows difference between appearance and reality in this stanza. The bird is very graceful in appearance but his condition is pathetic in reality. The condition of this black rook is similar to the condition of Sylvia Plath herself after she was left alone by her husband Ted Hughes. Plath was beautiful and intellectual enough to catch the attention of the media and public but she was in pathetic condition at that time living alone with her two small children.

The speaker calls the rainy season "the season of fatigue". He says that with the help of luck, walking boastfully throughout this rainy season, he will patch together a content of all sorts. It means that he will make a unified whole by collecting different materials. The speaker changes the definition of the miracles and takes "spasmodic tricks of radiance" as miracles, miracles occur, otherwise they don't.

The speaker shows his concern over the descent of the angel again. He says that the bird is waiting for the descent of the angel but the descent of the angel is rare and random. In other words, the long wait for the arrival of the angel has already begun but the bird does not know how long it has to wait to get emancipation from such pathetic condition.

Thus, the whole poem "Black Rook in Rainy Weather" is an animal (bird) image of black rook in which other animal imageries are incorporated. The condition of the wet black rook is similar to the condition of the Sylvia Plath after she was left alone with her two children by her husband Ted Hughes for another woman Assia Wevill. The bird looks beautiful in appearance

but the reality is different. Like the black rook, Plath was beautiful and intellectual enough to catch the public attention but her life was difficult and boring. The bird is wet due to the rain; it hunches on the stiff twig of a tree and is waiting for the descent of the angel to get emancipation from such deplorable condition but it is not sure whether the angel will come or not. Similarly, Sylvia Plath is very pretty woman who is intellectual and creative enough to earn name and fame. But she is left alone by her husband Ted Hughes. As a result, she is compelled to wait for the miracle, i.e. reunion with her husband. She has a hope that her husband will come one day and keep her with him but it is not sure whether he will return or not. To sum up, Sylvia Plath talks about her own condition with the help of animal (or bird) imagery of black rook in this poem "Black Rook in Rainy weather". This scrupulous analysis of the selected poems too, upholds the fact that Hughes employs imageries of fierce and strong animals in his poems but Plath uses weak and demure animals or insects in her poems.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath's Animal Imagery: The Aggressive and the Docile

British Poet Ted Hughes and American Poet Sylvia Plath who are husband and wife employ a number of animal imageries in their poems but the nature and types of animals they use is quite different. Ted Hughes employs strong and fierce carnivorous animals like hawk, pike, jaguar, thrushes, etc in his poems whereas Plath uses weak and demure herbivorous animals or insects like horse, goat, sheep, bee, etc. in her poems. Hughes's poems are written from the perspective of "dominator" but Plath's poems are written from "being dominated" perspective.

Hughes idealizes violence and glorifies horror in his poems. His pikes are "killers from the egg"; the manner of his hawk is "tearing off heads" and the purpose of his thrushes is "nothing but bounce and stab". In short, Hughes's animals are predators. But Plath's animals are victims. They are shown victimized by circumstances or other external factors. Plath's wet black rook arranges and rearranges its feathers in the rain on the stiff twig of a tree in an attempt to save it from the cold. It "hunches" on the twig of a tree due to cold. The villagers go for bee hunting and take out honey from the hive of the bees by using smoke.

Since the animals of Hughes's are predatory, they can kill and eat Plath's animals. For instance, the ferocious jaguar can kill and eat weak sheep, goat or horse. Likewise, ruthless and boastful hawk of Hughes can kill the shy and weak wet black rook; the thrushes of Hughes are also capable to catch and eat insects of Plath. Thus, the nature of animals Hughes and Plath use in their poems is quite opposite: "killers" and "being killed" respectively.

Ted Hughes employs diverse and various animals in his poems but Plath uses few and limited types of animals in her poetry. He employs a variety of animals like jaguar, panther, hawk, pike, owl, fox, etc. whereas Plath uses goat, sheep, horse, bee and the like. This type of difference indicates their difference is perspective: one is broad and the other is narrow. Further,

Hughes use mythological animals like serpent and crow but Plath uses sexless spirit like Ariel which stands for service, colonization or domination.

The description and imageries of animals seem real and down to earth in Hughes's poems but Plath's poems are filled with surrealistic images and illusory descriptions. The description of hawk, jaguar, pike or thrushes seems realistic and natural but the images and description of bees or Ariel seem quite illusory and surreal.

Ted Hughes celebrates violence, ruthlessness, killing and domination but Plath revolts against the stereotypical notions of male-dominated patriarchal society and chooses death as means of escape from such domination. Hughes's animals provide death but Plath's animals are compelled to receive it due to adverse circumstances. Hawk, pike, jaguar, or thrushes of Hughes provides death but goat, sheep or rook of Plath are compelled to receive it without their will.

The readers can draw a parallel between the life and the works of both poets Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath. Hughes lived relatively long life and met a natural death from cancer in 1998 but Plath lived very short life and committed suicide choosing premature death in 1963. Love for suicide and self-destruction can be found in her poetry but Hughes's poems are filled with energy, vitality and strength. In this sense, their works and lives are somehow opposite each other.

Although this research work has not been able to include all of Ted Hughes's and Sylvia Plath's poems under analysis, the analyzed poems clearly project their masterful handling of animal imageries to render intended meaning. In his poems, Hughes celebrates vitality and violence of animals to show his "dominator" attitude. But, Plath employs victimized animals and shows their deplorable condition in order to express her pains and sorrows given by male dominated patriarchal society. Thus, Hughes's poems are written from the perspective of "dominator" but Plath's poems are written from "being dominated" perspective.

Works Cited

- Abrams, M.H. and Geoffrey Gatt Harpham. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 8th ed. Boston: Thomson & Wadsworth, 2005.
- Albert, Edward. *History of English Literature*. 35th imp. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Axelrod, Steven Gould. "Drama of Creativity in Sylvia Plath's Early Poems." *Pacific Coast Philosophy* 32.1 (1997): 76-86.
- Ayers, David. "H.D., Ezra Pound and Imagism" *Modernism: A Short Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004:1-11.
- Bedient, Calvin. "On Ted Hughes." *Critical Quarterly* 14.2 (Summer, 1972):103-121.
- Bundzen, Lynda K. "Poetic Arson and Sylvia Plath's Burning the Letters." *Contemporary Literature* 39.3 (1998): 438-51.
- Cosmos, Madeleine Pelmer. "Spencer's Ark of Animals: Animal Imagery in the *Faerie Queene*." *Studies in English Literature* 3.1 (Winter, 1963): 85-107.
- Cox, Brian. "Ted Hughes (1930-1998): A Personal Retrospect." *The Hudson Review* 52.1 (Spring, 1999): 29-43.
- Cudden, J.A. *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. 4th ed. London: Penguin Books, 1998.
- Drabble, Margaret and Jenny Stringer. *Oxford Concise Companion to English Literature*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Dyson, A.E. Ed. *Three contemporary Poets: Thomas Gunn, Ted Hughes and R.S. Thomas*. London: Macmillan Press, 1990.
- Gilbert, Sandra and Susan Gubar. "Infection in the Sentence." *Critical Theory since Plato*. Ed. Hazard Adams. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1992: 1163-95.
- Hibbett, Ryan. "Ted Hughes's Crow: An Alternative Theological Paradigm." *Literature and Theology* 47.1(Mar., 2003):17-31.

- Hoffman, Daniel. "Poetry: School of Dissidents" *Harvard Guide to Contemporary American Writing*. Ed. Hoffman. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979: 495-520.
- Horrison, Thomas P. "The Birds of Gerald Manley Hopkins." *Studies on Philology* 54.3 (Jul. ,1957): 448-63.
- Hughes, Ted. "Hawk Roosting." *Ted Hughes—Poems—*.Chicago: PoemHunter.com--The World's Poetry Archive, 2004: 8.
- . "The Jaguar." *A Pageant of Poems*. Ed. C . A. Sheppard. Mumbai: Orient Longman,1990: 192-93.
- . "Pike." *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. Eds. Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter and Ion Stallworthy. 4th ed. New York:Norton,1996: 424-25.
- . "Relic." *Ted Hughes—Poems—*.Chicago: PoemHunter.com--The World's Poetry Archive, 2004: 44.
- . "Thrushes." *Ted Hughes—Poems—*.Chicago: PoemHunter.com--The World's Poetry Archive, 2004: 22.
- Loizeaux, Elizabeth Bergmann. "Reading Word, Image, and the Body of the Book: Ted Hughes and Leonard Baskin's *Cave Birds*." *Twentieth Century Literature* 50.1(Spring, 2004): 16-58.
- Lyall, Sarah. "A Divided Response to Poems of Ted Hughes." *The New York Times* 12 June 2009.
- Kane, Julie."From the Baroque to Wabi: Translating Animal Imagery from Shakespeare's *King Lear* to Kurosawa's *Ran*." *Literature Film Quarterly* 25.2 (1997):146-151.
- Manghani, Sunil. Arthur Piper and Jon Simon. eds. *Image: A Reader*. 1st ed. New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2006.
- Matterson, Stephen. *American Literature: The Essential Glossary*. 1st ed. London: Arnold Publication, 2003.

Plath, Sylvia. "Ariel." *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. Eds. Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter and Ion Stallworthy. 4th ed. New York: Norton, 1996:430.

---. "Black Rook in Rainy Weather." *Sylvia Plath—Poems—*. Chicago: PoemHunter.com--The World's Poetry Archive, 2004:19.

---. "Lady Lazarus." *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*". eds. Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter and Ion Stallworthy. 4th ed. New York :Norton, 1996:431-32.

---. "The Bee Meeting." *Sylvia Plath—Poems—*. Chicago: PoemHunter.com--The World's Poetry Archive, 2004:116-17.

---. "The Eye-Mote." *Sylvia Plath—Poems—*. Chicago: PoemHunter.com--The World's Poetry Archive, 2004:124.

Preminger, Alex et al. *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965.

Rosenthal, M. L. *Early Hughes*. London: Macmillan Press, 1989.

Sanders, Andrew. *English Literature: The Short Oxford History*. London: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Shakespeare, William. *King Lear. William Shakespeare: The complete Works*. Ed. Alfred Herbage Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1969.

Smith, Pamela A. "The Unitive Urge in the Poetry of Sylvia Plath." *The New England Quarterly* 45.3 (Sep., 1972): 323-339.

Strangeways, A. I. "The Boot in the Face: The Problem of Holocaust in Poetry of Sylvia Plath." *Contemporary Literature* 37.3 (Autumn, 1996): 370-90.

Swift, Jonathan. "A Modest Proposal." *Elements of Literature*. Ed. Robert Scholes et al. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999: 42-49.

Thorney, G. C. and Robert Gwyneth. *An outline of English Literature*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1991.