

NATURE IMAGE IN THE SHORT STORIES OF TED HUGHES: *SNOW, THE HARVESTING AND THE RAIN HORSE**

Dilek ZERENLER**

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada Hughes'un *Snow*, *The Harvesting* ve *The Rain Horse* adlı öyküleri biçimsel olarak incelenmiştir. Karakterlerin ruhsal bölünmesi, doğadan ve iç dünyalarından uzaklaşmaları eserlerdeki dil kullanımıyla ortaya konmuştur. Yazarın biçimi, kelime seçimi, cümle yapıları, noktalama işaretleri ve tonlama ile verilmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu üç öykünün detaylı çalışması, karakterlerin doğa karşısındaki çaresizliklerini belirtmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Snow*, *The Rain Horse*, *The Harvesting*, Surrealizm, Shamanizm, Orientalizm

ABSTRACT

In this essay Hughes' three short stories *Snow*, *The Harvesting* and *The Rain Horse* were analysed in terms of style.¹ Psychic dissolution of the characters and their withdrawal from nature and their inner world were examined through his usage of language. The choice of words, sentence structure, punctuation, tone and rhythm were all analysed in detail to prove his style and achievement. The detailed study of these short stories showed vividly the intention of nature and the characters' desperate situations with their neurotic behaviour.

Keywords: *Snow*, *The Rain Horse*, *The Harvesting*, Surrealism, Shamanism, Orientalism

INTRODUCTION

Ted Hughes is one of the most important figures of contemporary English literature. In his works Hughes deals with man's troubled relationship with nature. He believes that technology and science cause a fearful withdrawal from nature. As a result people have alienated themselves from nature and its healing powers. For Hughes "the liberation of the intellect is paralleled by a corresponding lack of concern for the inner world and nonrational needs of human" (Scigaj,1991;103). Because of the dominance of rationalism people ignore their inner energies and do not have any intention to gain harmony between their inner and outer worlds. Hughes points out that science and technology "are the products of an overdeveloped, splitt-off rational component that distrusts and represses the instinctual" (Scigaj,1991;80).

Hughes differs from other artists in his use of myth and folklore of tribal and ancient societies to deal with the relation of man and nature. He uses Oriental philosophy and literature as an alternative to Western rationalism and utilitarian egocentricity. In this way he expresses man's internal journey from a different point of view. It is the fact that the Orient has a different world view from Europe. Before Romantics and Surrealists "Eastern artist had ranged through the entire human psyche" (Faas,1980;43). Also Jung believes that

* This article reports the author's MA dissertation.

** Öğr. Gör., Selçuk Üniversitesi Fen – Edebiyat Fakültesi

¹ These three short stories are taken from the book, Ted Hughes, (1995), *Difficulties of a Bridegroom*, *Collected Short Stories*, Faber& Faber, London. (p.41-51, 67-89)

“literature-including the occult tradition and the oral myths and folktales of tribal cultures- testifies to persistent psychological needs and desires for wholeness and self-development in humans” (Scigaj,1991;102). Like Jung, Hughes agrees that the shaman’s death, dismemberment, and resurrection results in the dissemination of a ‘healing power’ and profound ‘cathartic effect on the audience.’ Hughes, as alchemist and shaman, uses our imaginative powers to take us with him on the spiritual journey in search of enlightenment and wholeness.

Hughes’s combination of surrealism, the myths and folklore of ancient and tribal societies, and various Oriental influences make his art strikingly original. He brings together the conscious and the subconscious in his stories. He believes that personality will grow into wholeness when the repressed energy of subconscious comes to surface. In this sense he sees himself as a shaman who makes symbolic journeys to the underworld of the subconscious to cure split personalities. Hirschberg states that “The dissociation of personality that is so characteristic of Hughes’ protagonists is answered by the shaman’s ability to reintegrate split personalities, although primitives would put the case in terms of possession by evil spirits” (Hirschberg,1981;19).

In this essay I aimed at exhibiting the psychic dissolution of the characters in the three short stories, *Snow*, *The Harvesting*, *The Rain Horse*, by foregrounding the gap between their conscious and subconscious states. As Scigaj states “In the stories the characters exhibit varying stages of neurotic behaviour and personality breakdown based upon the repression of instinct” (Scigaj,1983;138). I have tried to analyse whether these characters achieve to maintain the wholeness of their psyche through the harmony between their conscious and subconscious. I took into consideration verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, their combination with other words, punctuation, sentence lengths and sentence structures. My attempt has been to present man’s place in the world of nature by examining through his usage of language.

THE BATTLE OF THE CONSCIOUS AND THE UNCONSCIOUS IN THE SNOW

The Hero’s Suspicion and Loneliness in an Unknown Place

In the short story, *Snow*, the hero struggles against the snow and tries to gain his identity in a surrealistic place. Nature acts against him and does not actually give him a chance to survive. It begins with a conjunction ‘And’ which immediately underlines that the hero is in the middle of a crucial event, “*And let me repeat this over and over again: beneath my feet is the earth, some part of the surface of the earth*”. A strick restless voice is heard as if the character is determined to convince a person about a serious problem. It urges the reader to guess what has happened till that time. The first sentence of the story presupposes the least prior knowledge, which causes suspense and curiosity. After the colon he repeats ‘the earth’ in the end of the same sentence as an emphasis to collect interest on it. It is surprising that he tries to be sure of what is already known and which does not need to be questioned. Therefore, the ‘earth’ being placed

under his feet functions for his displacement. He has doubts whether he is in this world or in an unknown place. He tries to convince himself and find relief by emphasizing the word 'earth'. His effort to prove this fact continues, "*Beneath the snow, beneath my feet, that is*". The author uses an incomplete sentence that omits the 'earth' in the end to foreground the rhythm. A new knowledge is injected with the word 'snow', and the reader learns that the narrator is at a place which is covered with snow. This causes to deepen his uncertainty about his own situation. As the signifier 'that is' is situated in the final part of this three-parted sentence, the author emphasizes that the narrator tries to be sure about what lies beneath his feet, but he has doubts about it whether it is the earth that he knows or not. We have his conflict. Thus he evaluates every aspect one by one. Also the power of the continuous snow is visualized with the words 'filling' and 'rivering' and the position of the hero against this power becomes dangerous, because he would be quickly buried alive. It is seen that the power of nature and of man are not equal. It can cover and bury him at the same time. Thus the hero who has doubts and questions in his mind is helpless against this power in an unknown place.

Although there are nine sentences composing the first paragraph its construction allows the reader to read it with a single breath, very quickly. The author prefers to use concrete nouns such as 'snow, earth, rock, soil' to identify his place. The hero aims to be clear rather than obscure. Because he is pursuing an absolute reality to feel safe. As Leech and Short (1984;204) points out, the restricted world is seen by the frequency of lexical repetition. Hughes uses repetitions such as 'beneath, feet, snow, earth' to show the narrator's limited world and his fixed thought. The simplicity observed in the lexis is reinforced by the simplicity in syntax. The author prefers to use simple and short sentences to give the narrator's psychology and mental state.

The event which causes him to be there emphasize the power of the nature: "*Our aircraft was forced down by this unusual storm.*" And it also indicates that it is impossible to change the fate. Especially the usage of the verb 'force' indicates the effect of this power. In the following long sentence "*The pilot tried to make a landing, but misjudged the extraordinary power of the wind and the whereabouts of the ground*" the pilot's effort against this 'unusual' power of nature is given with his inability to land safely. There is no alternative for them except submitting to their fate. The abnormality of nature's power is also underlined by the word 'extraordinary'. The result of this unequal struggle between man and nature is made clear and eventually the consequence is given as a violent crash. In the next sentence "*The fuselage buckled and gaped, and I was flung clear*" it is seen that although the crash is violent the narrator is conscious because he is able to use technical vocabulary such as 'fuselage, buckle'. In the second part of the same sentence 'I was flung clear' a passive voice is used to point out that he is not a doer, in other words everything happens out of his control.

The author in a poetic voice tries to explain the perpendicular force of the snow on the vast land in "*The bottomless dense motion of snow*" with 'bottomless' its gravity is given, and with its motion its surface strength is emphasized. We see

that the end-focus principle is the word 'snow' and premodification by adjectives is used for the motion of snow to emphasize its power. The character is conscious of his struggle against nature. The following short sentence *I started to walk*' expresses his only chance to survive which can only exist in action. With a lot of questions in his mind he begins to walk to an unknown destiny because in his situation it is impossible for him to guess the consequences. The sentence *"Whatever chance dropped me here in the snow evidently destroyed my memory"* displays the acceptance and realization of the destruction of his memory. 'Whatever chance' underlines his uncertain situation, especially the usage of 'chance' can be regarded as a kind of curse of his fate. Almost in every sentence he refers to the snow to emphasize its effect on him.

The Role of the Hero's Mind in the Ordeal

He gives orders to himself and develops a strategy in order to survive. For him the most important thing in this struggle is to keep his mind firm. The narrator decides what he must do in detail, thus he has to fix his mind in 'reasonable hopes'. In the sentence although he does not admit it openly we become aware of the fact that he needs to *"Mesmerize it slightly with a sort of continuous prayer"*. He is in need of the effect of a pray. He prefers to mesmerize his mind with a prayer instead of activating it. In his situation activation would mean jumping from one idea to another in panic with a lot of questions. With the adjective 'continuous' for prayer again the difficulty of encouraging the mind is implied. He regards his mind as an animated figure, a friend. But at the same time he focuses on the impossibility of being a friend of it. In the following sentence he explains it by, *"My support, my defence, but my enemy too- not perfectly intent on getting me out of this"*. The mind works against his existence. Such a dangerous existential state cannot exist among animals. They act without self-consciousness, in other words, they survive instinctively. In this sense the narrator prefers to be mindless like an animal which is expressed in the sentence *"If I were mindless perhaps there would be no difficulty whatsoever"*.

Hughes believes that pseudo-security of machines and rational analysis give shape to our life. (Scigaj;1991;20). It is impossible for a person to face the threat of mind in our society. Thus as a member of this society the narrator tries to use his mind and logical ideas as an instrument in his struggle. But he experiences the separation between mind and self in this dream-like scene. One can imagine that for the first time he comes across with the thought of the uselessness of his mind when he is under the threat of extinction. To have no thought is a kind of defence mechanism in his situation. The narrator can act and feel like an animal without being self-conscious or self-aware to survive, and therefore can depend on his instinct to keep his balance with nature. The narrator aspires to an animal state of existence, and wants to behave like an animal which is indicated in the following sentence *"The thing to do is to keep alert, keep my mind fixed in alertness, recognize these treacherous paralysing, yes, lethal thoughts the second they enter, catch them before they can make that burrowing plunge down the spinal cord"*.

Nature Image In The Short Stories Of Ted Hughes: Snow, The Harvesting And The Rain Horse

Although dedication to truth is a normal situation in his world, depending on the mind and its truth is meaningless in his struggle against nature. Because his rational thought is a barrier to cope with it. Hughes believes that the progress of civilization has exiled people from their rightful place in nature. (Scigaj,1991;20). In this way people have alienated themselves from it. As a member of this society the narrator does not know the language of nature, because he has closed his senses to it. Despite of this fact he relies on his mind which does not cope so well with nature.

Submission to Nature and Meditation as a Solution

He is alone in that surrealistic setting and the only thing he can trust is nature. Till this time he is alienated from the nature, thus it is not easy for him to decipher its language. In order to keep the balance with the nature he has to be in harmony with it. The next sentence "*The resignation to the wind's guidance is the foundation of my firmness of mind*" emphasizes the submission to the power of nature. Only this resignation can provide the firmness of his mind. In this way he wants to gain a harmony with the mind and instinct. For the first time he comes across a different aspect of the life, and its effect on him is expressed in the following sentence, "*The effect on my system of confidence would be disastrous*". He is confused in a way because he is not sure of what he must depend on to survive.

In the sentence "*The chair is of conventional type: nothing in the least mystifying about it*" the chair is regarded as an evidence of his identity and the world. The usage of the adjective 'conventional' for its type implies that it is the only normal and familiar thing for him that he experiences in the surrealistic setting. The narrator is not bewildered, because the type of the chair fits into his previous knowledge.

The author prefers to use one of the elements of surrealism, that is the disinterested play of thinking by giving logical and illogical thoughts one after the other to foreground the conscious and subconscious state of the narrator. Through his ordeal he is confused because of the flow of ideas. He has to concentrate on his aim and is in need of courage. This necessity is explained with a graphological sentence, "*Courages and calm*" which does not contain any verb part. Only the important part is foregrounded as if the narrator tries to convince himself. The narrator tries to mesmerize his mind, while he tries to control his mind's flow of ideas he depends on meditation as the repetition of the verb 'repeat' implies, "*I should repeat that, repeat it like the Buddhists with their 'O jewel of the lotus'*" As Scigaj (1983;120) states that the Buddhist chant is used as a powerful charm to focus his mind on his willpower and meditative energies.

The Hero's Success in the Ordeal

From the beginning of the story he questions everything and needs rational proofs for his ego to control his mind. Ted Hughes believes that science and technology glorifies the analytical powers of the human and ignores his emotional and instinctual needs. That the narrator feels himself secure only

when he finds logical answers for events. As Scigaj (1983;139) points out that in this story the rational thinking process is equated with the blinding lifeless snow. In this sense “It is seen that the conscious intellect, the ego, the stronghold of the personality is brought down” (Hirschberg,1981;216). Through the story the narrator submits to the power of nature and tries to gain balance with it. Harmonious contact with nature indicates the philosophy of Hughes. He believes that a person must recognize himself as a part of the natural world as all other living things. Because only by co-operating with nature rather than seeking to dominate her, one can create harmony in his life.

As the sentence, “*I should repeat that, repeat it like the Buddhists with their ‘O jewel of the lotus’*” emphasizes that through the agony of the ordeal the narrator depends on the powers deriving from Oriental perspectives. He can achieve his psychic wholeness in an Oriental pattern of release, destruction, and reintegration: the release of repressed fears, the recognition of these as self-created projections of a defensive ego which is destroyed and finally reintegrates with nature. (Hirschberg,1981;50). To achieve wholeness within the self one must recognize the repressed fears as self-created projections of ego and then allow them to rise to consciousness.

The narrator remains alive at the end of the story because he trusts his inner power. On the edge of precarious existential state he creates his own psychic wholeness through concentration and meditation. According to alchemy, meditations are designed for the liberation of unconscious, instinctual forces, in other words for increasing the sense of self, or ‘I’. But as the alchemist Francois Trajoni stated that this does not provide precise answers to the meaning of life or to the questions such as ‘where did I come from?’, ‘why am I here?’, ‘who am I?’ but “it operates in the dimensions where these questions arise” (Stavish,1997;3). It provides a path by which the self examination can take place. In *Snow* the same situation is experienced. Through the story the narrator asks the same questions, ‘where did I come from?’, ‘why am I here?’, and tries to find definite answers to them. Also Ted Hughes states the same philosophy that a person must locate final authority within the self, not in the temporary goals, cultural achievements which can lead to destruction. (Scigaj,1983;136).

In the story loneliness, submission to the violence and moments of silence are signposts of the complex and deep struggle of the narrator. Hughes states that “In our time the heroic struggle is not to become a hero but to remain a living creature simply” (Walder,1987,60). In order to be successful in such an ordeal a person must run after the wholeness for integration of the spiritual and material aspects of himself like the character in the *Snow*.

THE IMAGE OF HEAT IN *THE HARVESTING*

Weakness of Hero against the Power of Nature

The story *The Harvesting* takes place in the last ten minutes of the harvest. It is the best part of the harvesting because there are hares which hide in the remaining wheat and will be killed during that limited time. The protagonist,

Mr. Grooby desires to shoot these hares among the stookers and their dogs, but he has to struggle against the pressure of heat and time

Mr. Grooby tries to concentrate on his aim by mentally rehearsing for 'a hundreth time' the process of hunting. From the start the narrator implies that it will not be an 'effortless motion' to shoot the hares. First of all he has difficulty to concentrate on his target because of the pressure of heat and roar of the tractor. At the same time the existence of the dogs in the harvest distract him. Under such conditions hunting the hares will not be easy 'like a gesture in conversation'. Despite these facts Mr. Grooby looks forward to being a hero in the harvest. In fact this strong desire of his is one of the aspects of his ego.

But ironically he becomes the weak one against the power of nature when he feels the pressure of the scorching heat, "*Not a breath of air moved to relieve him*". The sweat at the corner of his eye prevents his concentration and he becomes nervous. Nature also does not give him a chance even to breathe for a while. All of the examples indicate that nature acts against his intentions. It is implied that he has to struggle against his physical condition and the power of nature if he wants to succeed in his aim. He starts accepting his weakness against the power of nature but this fact does not prevent him from experiencing the excitement of shooting. He develops strategies to prevent himself from the effect of sun such as 'standing perfectly still' and he thinks he can challenge the pressure of heat and time. In this way he feels himself powerful against the 'slowness of time and the huge enveloping weight of the heat'. With this comfort he observes every movement of the stookers and the tractor from a distance.

The Pressure of the Tractor

Besides the pressure of heat he has to struggle against the din of the tractor, too. He is deterred by the whine of the tractor which is underlined in the beginning of the story with the verbs 'bumble', 'nag', 'stop', and 'start'. The whirring noise of the tractor is as effective as the heat and does not allow him to concentrate on his aim. The narrator exhibits Mr. Grooby's helplessness by foregrounding the co-operation between the tractor and the heat. Because the blade of the cutter absorbs the sun rays and starts up the slope 'with something fierier and deadlier'. The effect of this co-operation exists as a fearful force acting against him. Both the nature and the tractor unite to achieve their violent intention. Especially the usage of the colour 'red' for the paddles of the reaper in the sentence, "... *wheat ears raining down under the red paddles of the reaper...*" is an image which functions for the tractor that breeds death like it does to the wheat and like its hero to the hare. The roar of the tractor affects him so much and he is involved in the activities of the field as if 'he too had been tossed out like one of the sheaves'. Finally he does not have sufficient energy to withstand the whirr of the tractor in that heat and 'allow[s] himself to yield a little to the sun'. The usage of 'a little' for yielding points out the degree of his ego. With the defensive and self-preservation functions of ego he controls his behaviour and does not surrender 'completely' to the sun. In this

way the narrator emphasizes that he still has energy to struggle against the power of nature.

But both technology and nature are pitiless and sharp in their deeds, he is not given a chance except admitting his own weakness against their powers. Suddenly he loses the control of his limbs. But as a hero Mr. Grooby does not want the stokers to see him in this situation. It is ironic that even in this condition he acts under the effect of his ego. With this thought he sits down hastily. But he knows that he is too late to adjust 'his pose to look as natural as possible'. As the 'red' image for the sun implies in the sentence, "*The sun had gathered to a small red spot in the top of his brain*", he reaches the edge of losing his consciousness. In the turmoil of dust, the tractor approaches him, but he is not conscious of realizing this dangerous situation. He just acts like a drunken man as he focuses to it as if 'it were the last spark of consciousness'.

The Relation of the Pursued and the Pursuer

All of these events make him feel 'stupified', 'terrified' and 'exhausted' like the hare. We have him identified with it. In this sense Mr. Grooby and the hare share the same fate. Their similar state is implied by the structure of the sentences, too. "*Then his eyes focussed*" is followed by "*It stared fixedly...*" and "*...as if it had noted some suspicious detail in the far distance*" completes the first one, too. Both of them are in the open and surrounded by the stokers and their dogs. Mr. Grooby knows that the dogs will try to chase the hares in the harvest, and this fact annoys him. He does not want to share this enjoyment with the dogs. Like Mr. Grooby the hare also runs from one side of the field to the other in order to prevent itself from the reaper of the tractor. And the hare's nerves have finally 'cracked' for its dance with mortality. It is not in its hand to change the cycle of fate, but like all living creatures it does not want to surrender to this well-known fact easily. Their similar state is also implied by the usage of a term 'crack' which is used in the context of 'shattered human identity'. (Hirschberg,1981;43). Like the hare Mr. Grooby's nerves are shaken because of his psychic vulnerability. Mr. Grooby is clearly perplexed by all these events. He is not able to make any sense of the events. And he has difficulty in adapting himself to the unexpected situations, such as the pressure of heat and time. Like Mr. Grooby the hare is terrified and exhausted because of the experience it has on the same morning. It is 'completely nonplussed' and cannot decide the necessary movement for his sake. It just sits without any intention to run away, although it is the target of Mr. Grooby, the dogs and the tractor.

Their similar state is implied again by the loss of his consciousness just after shooting. By the effect of the shot the hare somersaults and streaks back into the wheat but it is Mr. Grooby who faints. His unconscious state is described with the noun 'darkness', "*His head spun in darkness*". He is on the edge of losing his consciousness and this is followed by the threat of the tractor which works 'cruelly' against him. He wonders if he has fallen in front of it. His desperate situation, fear and surprise are all implied by the colour image 'black' in the sentence, "*The tractor's outline rose black against the blue sky...*". His psychology is

underlined by the expression, "*For a second everything disintegrated in din...*" which indicates that he is on the edge of 'something terrible'. He is within a 'hair's breadth' of losing control and being close to destruction. Any distraction or a careless behaviour would lead him to experience the inevitable end. His psychic vulnerability is expressed with systematic repetitions, "*...his brain was jammering: it can happen, it can happen, and it's happened*".

Throughout the story his only aim is hunting but ironically at the end of his first attempt he becomes the hunted one. Despite this fact he does not hesitate to aim at the hare mercilessly. It is ironic that he is not aware of the fact that he is the one who is under the merciless pressure of time and heat. It is a fact that he cannot grasp, "*Something important was going on, if only he could grasp it*". His strong desire 'includes him once more in events'. But he feels the pressure of limited time in his second attempt. Because in a short time the work in the field will end without a victim. The tractor will cut down the last stalk and he will miss the joy of hunting. And 'this prospect partly revived Grooby' but not completely, because he is still under the pressure of heat, "*It occurred to him that the sun had settled over the earth, so that the air was actually burning gas, depth of flame in every direction*". The hare is too near, that it is easy for him to shoot it. Although he knows that it is his last chance, he holds the fire. He is struck by the delicate lines of his victim's 'thin face'. It is interesting that for a moment Mr. Grooby feels "*... more like shooting it away to safety than shooting it dead*". In his first attempt he aimed mercilessly at the hare, but now he hesitates to shoot it. The close relation between Mr. Grooby and the hare is foregrounded in this way, too. They start to share the same feelings. In fact the hare is ready to surrender like Mr. Grooby. Because it is exhausted and terrified while it runs from one side of the field to the other. The reaper, the dogs and Mr. Grooby pursue it. But he struggles against the pressures like the hare which launches itself up the hill like a dart.

Like the first one, this attempt results with Mr. Grooby's blackout because of holding the gun too loose. Now he realizes that he reexperiences his predicament over and over again. And the result never changes, for he becomes the hunted one at the end. But it is too late for him to change something, because he used his last chance against himself. He wonders if he still lies in the wheat and whether all the events till his first blackout are just a dream or not. Because he has the same feelings such as being cut into two by the reapers and losing the control of his body. The expression 'the unearthly thin scream' indicates his dangerous dance with death. Mr. Grooby dimly becomes aware of the fact that he himself is the victim of life's grim mortality. It is clear that the reaper and greyhound pursue Mr. Grooby and not the hare. The ritual of the pursued and pursuer in other words, 'the hare and greyhound' is portrayed by the 'big white boney greyhound' which tries to chase the hare from one side of the field to the other. Amazingly during the second blackout Mr. Grooby sees 'the enormous white dog's head' looming above him and this can be regarded as an evidence of transformation. As Scigaj states "He has gone into a hare as the epigraph suggests" (Scigaj, 1991;62).

The 'Hare' Image in the Folk Custom

Hughes uses one of the folk customs of transformation which Mr. Grooby experiences in the story. As Hirschberg states, Frazer describes the harvest custom in detail in *The Golden Bough*. Frazer points out that in the European folk custom the wheat/corn is personified under the name of the Wheat-mother, or Corn-mother.(Hirschberg,1981;43). She is believed to be present in the last stalk of wheat/corn. And as it is cut down she is either caught, or driven away, or killed. The spirit of wheat/corn manifests itself not merely in vegetable but also in human form either by a stranger or a visitor. Frazer says that strangers/visitors of the harvest field are subjected to a variety of indignities from which they have to ransom themselves.

In *The Harvesting* the corn spirit in the form of a hare tries to escape from the harvest field. But Mr. Grooby as a hunter does not give the chance for it to run away. And as a person who stands nearest to the last sheaf of wheat becomes a hare spirit that has just ran away from the remaining patch of wheat. In the end of the story Mr. Grooby experiences a 'flight of soul' that he and the hare have exchanged personalities. In fact Hughes prepares the reader for this transformation by equating the state of Mr. Grooby to the hare's.

He uses them in his works to reintegrate diverse elements and to create harmony. In the story Hughes successfully adheres the European folk custom within the psychology of his protagonist. In the story the harvest custom functions as a lietmotif to deal with the neurotic behaviour of the protagonist. At the same time we have the dissolution of his ego. He experiences 'a disintegration and a flight of soul' while he has come to enjoy the last harvest of a wheat field. (Hirschberg,1981;42).

In *The Harvesting* Mr. Grooby ignores his psychic vulnerability and allows the outside events to affect his psychology. In addition to this desperate situation, at the end of the day he does not achieve his aim in the harvest field. Because he does not intend to keep balance with his inner and outer world. He becomes unsuccessful in this ordeal. In fact such a harmony could have given him the power to struggle. But he is not aware of this fact and complains about his conditions. As a result all his efforts cause him to experience his predicament again and again.

THE IMAGE OF RAIN IN *THE RAIN HORSE*

Alienation of the Hero from his Homeland

In this story Hughes deals with the 'neurotic behaviour' of a young man who returns to his home after a twelve years' absence. He is excited because after a long time he visits his homeland but instead of feeling a 'meaningful sensation' he feels only dullness and boredom in this place. This disappointment is followed by the threat of the horse which appears suddenly and pursues him malevolently throughout the story. We also have the pressure of rain disturbing him during this visit.

The harsh picture of nature is expressed in the beginning of the story with these words, 'thin blowing of rain', 'a raw, flapping wetness' and 'downpour

again', to indicate that the young man has to struggle against the power of nature in his homeland. In fact the nature clings on him as if it does not want to leave him free. This tendency is implied with the image of the 'mud' "...*inching up the trousers legs*". It is at the same time described as 'dark' to indicate its evil intention, "... *the dark mud of the lower fields*".

The usage of land as an agent in the sentence, "*This land no longer recognize him, and he looked back at it coldly, as at a finally visited home country, known only through the stories of a grandfather; felt nothing but the dullness of feeling nothing*" implies that although he does his best to evoke the 'right feelings', the nature does not recognize him. Therefore he begins to accuse himself and responds to it 'coldly'. The relation between them looks like a failure and he tries to find the reason of it. The young man is alienated from his homeland as the expression "... *felt nothing but the dullness of feeling nothing*" indicates. The land like a character causes him to feel that he does not belong to that place any more. Instead of a meaningful sensation he feels only dullness and boredom, and 'anger against the land that made him feel so outcast, so old and stiff and stupid'.

The Struggle against the Horse

Suddenly a horse appears with a 'nightmarish leopard' impression as the young man is in a low spirit. The young man watches every movement of the horse in detail as if he wants to give a meaning for the existence of the horse in that place. The glamorous horse climbs to the peak and disappears suddenly, as if it did not exist. The horse disappears so mysteriously that he cannot forget it. He comes to his senses with the beat of icy rain. He wants to get away from this nightmare and leave the place in a short time. But nature is acting against him, because he has difficulty in walking. The power and speed of rain is felt with the usage of 'ing' in the sentence, "... *his feet sucking and splashing, at every stride plunging to the ankle*". The rain has a capturing role which does not allow him to go away. As a result he shelters at random. Besides the pressure of rain nature does not offer him a safe place, "*The little crippled trees were small choice in the way of shelter...*". His displacement is felt in the midst of nature. Like an animal he instinctively takes a position under a crippled tree and observes nature. In the sentence, "... *but at a sudden fierce thickening of the rain he took one at random and crouched down under the leaning trunk*" the usage of 'leaning trunk' for shelter can be regarded as a curse of nature. And the usage of the adjective 'fierce' for rain implies the evil act of it, it thickens as if it wants to punish him. Its attack worsens his helplessness and alienation in nature. For an individual, 'a leaning trunk' is not a good place for a shelter but he feels himself safe under it. This unexpected sort of security can be regarded as an indication of getting into an instinctual life.

Like a creature the young man instinctually feels that something was approaching "... *when the ground shook...*". He hears 'the crash of a heavy body' before he sees it definitely. We have his senses alert and responding like the horse itself. The intention of the horse is a mystery. It immediately attacks him, "*Like lightning his legs bounded him upright and about face*". Like in a nightmare it

appears and disappears suddenly leaving the young man panting from the sudden excitement and effort. The way it disappears at a crucial point might be taken as a creation of his own imagination. He might be having an illusion. Suddenly he is alone in nature, again. But he is furious with the horse. He does not want to accept the violent intention of it. And he tries to find logical reasons for its behaviour such as having an abscess on its brain or being spiteful. For him the rain can affect its psychology and cause it to behave molevolently. He cannot find any explanation for its behaviour and this makes him to think of magical powers functioning, "*Maybe a mad animal can be clairvoyant*". Such a possibility can explain its strange act. Whatever the reason is he is under the threat of this horse, so he has to protect himself from an enemy by using every place as a trench.

The disappearance of the horse brings a relaxation only for a short time. For his nightmare approaches when the ground shakes, again. Before he is aware of its existence it pursues him. He is shocked because without any sign it catches him like an enemy who acts slyly. And immediately his body twists like a creature, "*He twisted around wildly to see how he had been caught*". This indicates that he thinks like a humanbeing, but acts like a creature. The narrator attributes instinctual quality to his actions. The effect of the horse on his psychology is so powerful that he feels the 'whack of its hooves and whinnying snort' in his mind. Again the horse gives up pursuing him and disappears suddenly which makes its existence doubtful. All the events show the horse's intention clearly. He is furious for being optimistic about its behaviour, because it is 'definitely after him'. This certainty forces him to arm like in a battle. He does not want to give a chance for it to be defeated. He uses the environment as a trench. The optimistic young man who had difficulty in accepting the violent intention of the horse becomes a person who wants to kill it without a second thought. This time brutality captures him. The young man's fear turns into anger, and anger turns into sadism in the end. With such a psychology he dares to challenge the horse. His 'blood beating' indicates his repressed feelings and violent intention. This causes a change in his character. When he feels the danger he does not hesitate to throw stones at it with a 'tearing roar'. One can trace a systematic increase in violence and in poetic tempo. He behaves as if he is 'under superior guidance'. His brutality is foregrounded by his strong desire to continue his bombardment without a single hit. On the contrary, the horse does not intend to attack him. It just watches him 'fixedly.' He is in panic and the most important thing for him is to leave the wood in a short time. On the contrary, the horse is static and watches 'his laborious retreat'. It becomes harder to 'trudge through the mud' with sodden clothes and with loads of stone. His fear diminishes with the tiny appearance of the horse in the skyline. He dumps the stones by the gatepost. The 'gate' functions as a border between nature and the town. And the stones at the border stand for the visual image of violence in nature. As he is closer to the town, he gets away from his instinctual life.

By the effect of the rain he becomes conscious of what he has experienced in his homeland. He longes to stretch out full-length under the rain. This

journey helps him to see the violent aspect of himself. We have his introspection. He experienced under the rain a threat of his own existence and when he feels secure he wants to purify himself from violence with the 'healing drops' of the rain. His desire from the rain is to sweep away all the events he has experienced in his homeland. The rain functions as a healing power in the end of the story whereas at the start it had a destructive role. With the disappearance of the horse 'the mingled smell of paraffin, creosote, fertilizer and dust' evoke the right feelings about his past. He remembers everything about the shed in detail and the certainty is expressed in the sentence "... *all was exactly as he had left it twelve years ago*". Familiarity with the place brings the confusion whether the ordeal with the horse was real or not, because it very quickly 's[a]nk from reality'.

The young man tries to be a part of nature in his experience. He dares to lose his identity as an individual and behaves like a creature most of the time. His instincts allow him to observe nature with its habitat in a rich way. But in the end it is only the chemicals that can remind him of a distinct past. They have an etherized role in shaking him and driving him into his human senses again. This fact is underlined in the story when he begins to take off his clothes piece by piece. His clothes symbolize his identity as an individual and as the visual expression 'piece by piece' indicate it is not easy to ignore one's own identity. The character wrings the 'grey water out of them' which is the rain water for he will never again experience such a strong feeling in his life. In the story for a time he ignores his individuality.

It is underlined that people present their violent aspects when they are under a threat of existence. This situation is defined by Freud as thanatos. It is related with an instinct of death. Besides the libido, this destructive instinct is regarded as a source of the energy of Id, and accounts for the instinctual violent urges of humankind. As Jung (1991;235) points out when people repress these powerful libidinal energies they may explode into violence. In other words, these repressed ideas move from the Id through the Ego and undergo distortions in dreams, displacement or neurotic behaviour which becomes evident in the young man's behaviour in *The Rain Horse*.

The Horse Image

Ted Hughes is interested in Oriental Literature and uses the typical animal of the shaman in the story. The horse symbolizes 'the repressed libidinal energies of the young man's own psyche'. (Scigaj,1983;139). And throughout the story the hero struggles against the horse which stands for his inner world, the psyche. But he is not aware at first of the meaning and importance of the horse in his life. Pollen states the same point that people try to approach their inner world with objective laws which cope so well with the outer world. But in this way the inner world becomes incomprehensible, absurd and invisible. (Pollen, 1994;148). However, the young man 'With a whole exasperated swarm of little anxieties about his shoes and his new suit' he portrays a person who pays attention to his appearance, but ignores his inner world. Alienation from

the inner world and repression of libidinal energies prevent the young man from understanding the events in his life exactly. As a result he feels lobotomised, 'as if some important part had been cut out of his brain'. He fails to recognize that the reason of this feeling is refusing the chance of psychological reclamation.

CONCLUSION

The detailed study of the stories has revealed the fact that man is weak and helpless against the power of nature. The characters do not know how to cope with it and they are alienated from the setting. Throughout the stories nature is acting against the characters. It does not give them a chance to escape from their desperate situations. And their neurotic behaviour doubles the dramatic atmosphere of the stories. The surrealistic imagery of psychic dissociation reflects moods of alienation and withdrawal from nature. The repetition and sequence of the words in the sentences bring out the impressive rhythm of the prose. And the poetic power of Hughes's story-telling voice carries the reader to the mysterious atmosphere of the stories.

In *Snow* the narrator tries to be powerful against nature but he is on the edge of losing his consciousness most of the time. The violent intention of nature is made obvious with the imagery he uses. The hero is aware of the fact that for successful endurance the key is to withdraw his awe and fear through concentration and meditation. He also opens his senses to nature to gain balance with it. The narrator understands that he can be one with nature without the need to evaluate, systematize, or dominate it through egocentric rational analysis. At the end he achieves to endure nature and therefore finds peace within himself and in the environment. In *The Harvesting* Mr. Grooby does not have any intention to gain balance within himself and nature. And this ignorance brings his defeat at the end. In the last story *The Rain Horse* Hughes focuses on the neurotic behaviour of a young man. He refuses the chance of psychological reclamation in the end. His alienation and withdrawal from nature does not allow him to be in harmony with nature. As a result he fails in his struggle.

In the stories the influence of Oriental literature is obvious. Hughes opens up negotiations with the destructive energies of contemporary cultures. And he tries to redirect these energies through a mind aware of what modes of perception and spiritual training other cultures have to offer. (Scigaj,1983;153). Science, technology and traditions of society blind the characters of *The Harvesting* and *The Rain Horse*. They do not have any intention to keep harmony with their inner world and nature. They ignore alternative perceptions and fail to gain psychological wholeness, except the hero of *Snow*. Only the narrator of *Snow* achieves to obtain the harmony within himself and nature through Oriental philosophy. He remains alive in the end of the struggle. In the story the hero, like a shaman, makes a journey to the subconscious to cure his split personality.

One is amazed to see that every word, phrase and sentence have an importance in the development of the stories by contributing to each other's meaning. (Erden,2002;21). It offers the interrelations between one choice of language and another. The intention of nature and the characters' desperate situations are portrayed vividly with these preferences. The choice of words reflects the power of nature and the characters' attitude to its pressure. The dominance of ego and characters' alienation from their instincts are expressed to underline the heroes' approach to their inner world.

In the stories Hughes deals with repressed aggression, psychic dissolution and alienation from nature. And in this way he tries to activate the energies of the reader and to enhance his potential to achieve wholeness, growth of personality and spiritual fulfilment so that he can develop a more cohesive bond with society. As Scigaj points out, "the main moral message of Hughes's art is psychological wholeness which leads to communal bonding" (Scigaj,1991;22). Because he desires a healthy society that has achieved to reach enlightenment. It is clear that in all three stories Hughes wants his readers to open their senses to new perceptions and create harmony in their life.

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