

THE RESURGENCE OF MYTH IN THE 1970s  
IN THE POETRY OF TED HUGHES AND R.S.THOMAS:  
A JUNGIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

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October 1993

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all those who helped make this thesis possible, and in particular, Dr Neil Roberts, my supervisor, whose advice and friendship helped make these researches an enjoyable experience. Of the staff at Sheffield University, I would like to thank in particular the members of the English Literature Department, whose widely ranging views and attitudes made for a lively department, the staff of the library and, in particular, Mrs Meirlys Lewis of the Philosophy Department for her kind assistance with my Kierkegaard chapter. Thanks must go to my parents, and I would also like to thank all those whose presence made my stay in Sheffield a thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding one, especially the postgraduate community (from many faculties) who always provided stimulating and entertaining company. Finally I would like to thank Marta Perez for her continual support and advice, and for being wonderful.

## SUMMARY

The Resurgence of Myth in the 1970s in the Poetry of Ted Hughes and R.S.Thomas: A Jungian Perspective by Adrian Head.

This thesis attempts to introduce Jungian concepts to the study of poetry through a critical examination of the poetry written in the 1970s by Ted Hughes and R.S.Thomas.

My Introduction examines two contrasting approaches to literature, the mythical and the historical, defines myth, and introduces aspects of a Jungian approach to literature, including the many-angled approach and analogy.

Chapter One explains the Jungian concepts of the Archetype and the Collective Unconscious in a discussion of Crow, and also explores the mythological material relevant to the poems of Crow.

Chapter Two deals with the Jungian idea of Compensation, and brings this, as well as the idea of the archetype and the collective unconscious, to bear on the mythological material relevant to Gaudete.

Chapter Three introduces Jung's Individuation process and discusses the mythological sources of Cave Birds, in particular Ancient Egyptian myth and Alchemy. At the end of the chapter there is a brief discussion of Jung and Hughes, acting as a sort of conclusion to my discussions of Hughes.

Chapter Four uses the philosophy of Kierkegaard to explore the 1970s poetry of R.S.Thomas within a Jungian framework which includes ideas of the archetype, the collective unconscious, compensation and individuation. Jung's idea of Psychological Types is also briefly explored in this chapter.

Chapter Five finds in Gnostic literature clear parallels with R.S.Thomas' poetry, and, using the Jungian concepts already mentioned, goes on to suggest that R.S.Thomas attempts to modify Christianity in accordance with the beliefs of the Gnostics.

My Conclusion finds that many of the authorities quoted in this thesis call for a reorientation of society along the lines of the mythologies discussed in earlier chapters, and goes on to suggest that there is an unexplored unconscious history of the West.

## References

Throughout this thesis I have used the M.L.A. method of referencing, with two exceptions. These are:

The Collected Works of C.G.Jung, referred to by volume number and then page number.

The Masks of God by Joseph Campbell, also referred to by volume number then page number.

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The realm of the gods is a forgotten dimension of the world we know. And the exploration of that dimension, either willingly or unwillingly, is the whole sense of the deed of the hero. (Campbell, 1949, p.217)

Two recent books of poetry, R.S.Thomas's H'm and Ted Hughes's Crow, have courageously attempted to move beyond the narrowly fenced backwaters of English poetry. Both books...reveal a determination to fashion a new style of poetry, a poetry returning to its dark origins in myth and magic, ritual and chant, while remaining wholly modern in reference. (Anstey, ed., 1982, p.101)

Great art till now has always derived its fruitfulness from myth... (Jung 10, p.303)

INTRODUCTION

British poets, at least those who seem significant to these editors, are historical in imagination... Their plane of constant reference includes the social, the historical, the legendary (but usually not the mythical). (Schmidt and Lindop, ed., 1972, p.3)

These remarks were published in 1972 in the introduction to a 'critical survey' of the 1960s edited by Lindop and Schmidt. The book itself is a remarkable document, not least because the one volume of poetry that comes to dominate its pages is Crow, published in the same year and definitely on the other side of the mythical/historical divide to Lindop and Schmidt. The critical collection was followed up in 1980 by British Poetry since 1970: A Critical Survey, whose introduction, by Jones and Schmidt, is almost apologetic, finding that 'we have not in the 1970s experienced a 'major decade'' (Jones and Schmidt, ed., 1980, p.xxx) and blaming the academic system for this lack of 'major' poetry. One might as well blame patronage for the lack-lustre quality of verse in the Renaissance...<sup>1</sup>

If the editorial comments of the 1972 volume seem naive in retrospect, it is not for lack of warning--even within the contributions that Lindop and Schmidt introduce. Indeed, Hughes, largely because of Crow, is the poet most referred to in the volume. Silkin in interview refers to Crow several times, noting that the linguistic change from earlier Hughes is 'astounding'; Peter Porter points out that 'the middle ground is the ground where you get run over',



abuses 'pop poetry' ('you couldn't really dignify it with the name "cabaret"') as 'soft and squashy', sees Hughes's 'throwing over the whole idea of English poetry' as part of a wider movement, and finally remarks that 'in modern twentieth-century democracies, a poet can only tell lies in what one might call the private area...rather than in a world of actual affairs'; one major essay, 'Post-culture: pre-culture?' by Anne Cluysenaar is structured by use of the Crow volume; and Brownjohn is complimentary (Schmidt and Lindop, ed., 1972, pp.197, 203, 207, 205, 211 and 242-3). Finally there is another voice on the historical side of the divide, that of Eagleton, who, in an essay called 'Myth and History in Recent Poetry' complains that:

Other English poets beside Davie seem to have taken a recent turn towards myth. Gunn's Moly, Hughes's Crow, Geoffrey Hill's Mercian Hymns, Patrick Creagh's To Abel and Others, Stuart Montgomery's Circe, George Mackay Brown's Orkney sagas, Christopher Logue's experiments with Homer... (Schmidt and Lindop, ed., 1972, p.235)

He could, of course, have added R.S.Thomas' H'm<sup>2</sup> and (later) Seamus Heaney's North, and the list seems a creditable refutation of Lindop and Schmidt's remarks. It is worth examining Eagleton's complaints against myth in more detail. For Eagleton myth 'threatens to evaporate...its subject out of sight', is unable 'to accommodate a sense of historicity', and 'strips the individual of his social specificity' (Schmidt and Lindop, ed., 1972, pp.235 and 238). Specifically against Crow, Eagleton remarks on 'the seriousness of Hughes's commitment to a world-view in which

history can have value only in negative and caricatured form', and adds that:

Myth provides a measure of freedom, transcendence, representativeness, a sense of totality; and it seems no accident that it is serving these purposes in a society where those qualities are largely lacking. (Schmidt and Lindop, ed., 1972, p.239)

Those who apply exclusively socio-historical or political criteria to art might, then, persuade that any poetry written that is not accessible to such approaches is misguided or somehow not 'major'. Hughes himself, in a personal communication to Bishop, says that 'if a reader has no instinct for folklore, Myth etc...I don't know what Crow can offer...I'm sure to some it's an invisible book' (Bishop, 1991, p.110)<sup>3</sup>.

Whilst not wishing to disallow such approaches as the socio-historical and political, it is important, however, to recognize that there is an opposite point of view. From his study of Joyce, for example, Joseph Campbell finds that:

A properly tragic art...points to what is grave and constant in the lot of man: what cannot be done away by any alteration of social, political, or economic conditions...What is secondary and contingent, and so can perhaps be altered, is for the social critics and their kinetic--didactic--art. However, they mislead and poison to the root the very lives and life they conceive themselves to be improving if, in a zeal for social-political change, they attribute to the mere conditions of the century those pains and impulses that are actually of life itself and which, if life is to be affirmed, must also be affirmed. (Campbell 4, p.354)

For the purposes of this thesis it is this latter view of art that will be closely scrutinized, in part because

historical (as opposed to mythical) critics complain that where 'time, history, social reference, are annihilated and private symbolism or myth prevails', a 'sort of poetry' is created:

which requires "spontaneity" or "truth to living breath" as well, in some cases, as the rigorous suppression of transitional material, often fails to generate a structure significant to anyone but the individual poet--if to him. It is not interpretative but more accurately descriptive of a private world. It lacks, as well as a sense of time or history as distinct from presence, a sense of context. (Schmidt and Lindop, ed., 1972, p.3)

It is the aim of this thesis to find a generally significant structure to such poetry within the context of the human psyche. In order to explore the human psyche it has been necessary to turn to psychology, anthropology and mythology, and here one can frequently find views (views which I will return to) as scathing of socio-historic methodology as Eagleton is of the mythical, often because of the opinion that 'from even a cursory study...the process of human history has been wasteful and destructive' (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.175). Similarly, Stephen in Joyce's Ulysses presents the Modernist view that 'history...is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake' (Joyce, 1948, p.475). In any case, it can be argued that myth isn't as distant from social concerns as Lindop, Schmidt, Jones and Eagleton might persuade:

The realm of the gods is a forgotten dimension of the world we know. And the exploration of that dimension, either willingly or unwillingly, is the whole sense of the deed of the hero. (Campbell, 1949, p.217)

This 'forgotten dimension', as will be seen, is the inner dimension.

The importance of myth in society has often been recognized, and Plato, for example, in his Republic wonders 'if we could contrive...some magnificent myth that would in itself carry conviction to our whole community' (Plato, 1983, p.181)<sup>4</sup>, to which Hughes, in his 'Myth and Education' essay, has answered:

The myths and legends, which Plato proposed as the ideal educational material for his young citizens, can be seen as large-scale accounts of negotiations between the powers of the inner world and the stubborn conditions of the outer world, under which ordinary men and women have to live. They are immense and at the same time highly detailed sketches for the possibilities of understanding and reconciling the two. (Faas, 1980, p.192)<sup>5</sup>

Plato, whom Nietzsche regarded as one of the 'agents of the dissolution of Greece' (Nietzsche, 1968, p.29) and Hughes, who would probably agree with Nietzsche to some extent, at first would seem to have little in common. But they both hold an unaffected view of the efficacy of myth to help right universal wrongs, as well as an understanding that society needs myth to underlie its structure and reconcile the inner and outer worlds of its 'ordinary men and women':

a human being is only half alive if their life on the realistic, outer plane does not have the full assent and cooperation of their life on the mythic plane. The whole business of art, which even at its most naturalistic is some kind of attempt at 'ritualization', is to reopen negotiations with the mythic plane. (Hughes, 1992, p.106)

'The whole business of art' for such as Eagleton would, of course, be something very different, for, as Professor Otto, quoted by Campbell, points out, 'it is not easy...to discuss questions of religious psychology with one who...cannot recall any intrinsically religious feelings' (Campbell 2, p.47). Jung has also commented that 'one understands nothing psychological unless one has experienced it oneself' (Jung 17, p.200). Again, in complete contradiction to any sociological approach to literature and life, Hughes can say:

How things are between man and his idea of the Divinity determines everything in his life, the quality and connectedness of every feeling and thought, and the meaning of every action. (Hughes, 1971, pp.184-5)

Just as Eagleton can attack Hughes in ways mentioned above, without comprehending his point of view, so there appears a similar exasperation on the other side of the divide:

Humankind has gone to the immense psychological trouble of preserving myths and legends, telling stories, and dreaming involuntarily the history of the human psyche--and in our state of ultimate knowledge and enlightenment, we consistently disregard it all. (Segaller and Berger, 1989, p.193)

But, with the application of these views in his poetry of the 1970s, how does Hughes differ from his predecessors, especially those other great users of myth, Joyce, Eliot and the Modernists? Critics of Hughes often quote the same sentence to illustrate the Modernist attitude toward myth. Eliot, referring to Ulysses, says that Joyce's 'mythic method' was a way of 'manipulating a continuous parallel

between contemporaneity and antiquity' which would have the effect 'of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history' (Faas, 1980, p.98 and Sagar, ed., 1983, p.172). These critics, again with apparent unanimity, mark this as an opposing view to that of Hughes. Ramsay points to the wider range of mythical material used by Hughes, without reflecting on the availability of such material to the Modernists, and goes on to observe, as a major divergence from the Modernist method, that in Hughes 'there is a historical perspective...but much of the time it is subsumed in a controlling perspective that manages to be at once mythic, and deeply personal' (Sagar, ed., 1983, p.172), which in itself would not be a bad description of 'The Waste Land'. Faas also comments that 'a closer look at Crow shows that the poet's use of traditional mythology contravenes Eliot's comment in every single point' (Faas, 1980, pp.98-9). Again I feel that Faas takes the contrast too far, and the critics' arguments seem to derive mostly from a dissatisfaction with the word 'parallel', the scope of mythological material used, and an over-eager temptation to portray Hughes as even more of a trailblazer than he actually is.

More interesting in this context is Hughes' own response to the Eliot question--a response which remains evasive despite Faas' persistence with it, saying that Eliot 'speaks specifically of contemporary history which was his

own red herring I imagine' (Faas, 1980, p.204). And it is here, surely, that the main difference of approach between the Modernists and Hughes lies. For Hughes the 'futility and anarchy' is not exclusive to 'contemporary history', but has its origins in antiquity itself. 'The story of the mind exiled from Nature is the story of Western Man' (Faas, 1980, p.186) is just one of the ways in which Hughes expresses his feeling that the 'futility and anarchy' is more than just a modern phenomenon. Hughes does, however, use myth as a way 'of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy' that he suspects 'the story of Western Man' to be.

Another who reacts strongly against the exclusively historical or political approaches to human life is C.G.Jung who, in 1937, looked about him to see 'people cutting each other's throats in support of childish theories of how to create paradise on earth' (Jung 10, p.231). In the same volume Jung complains that:

Separation from his instinctual nature inevitably plunges civilized man into the conflict between conscious and unconscious, spirit and nature, knowledge and faith, a split that becomes pathological the moment his consciousness is no longer able to neglect or suppress his instinctual side. The accumulation of individuals who have got into this critical state starts off a mass movement purporting to be the champion of the suppressed. In accordance with the prevailing tendency of consciousness to seek the source of all ills in the outside world, the cry goes up for political and social changes which, it is supposed, would automatically solve the much deeper problem of split personality. (Jung 10, p.289)

Further, for Jung, 'an honest admission of modernity means voluntarily declaring oneself bankrupt' and, however 'painful', 'renouncing the halo of sanctity which history bestows' (Jung 10, p.76). This is clearly a view that is in opposition to that of the critics quoted at the start of this introduction, an opposition neatly summed up by Bodkin:

images...in any particular instance of their occurrence in poetry can be considered either as related to the sensibility of a certain poet, and a certain age and country, or as a mode of expressing something potentially realizable in human experience of any time or place (Bodkin, 1934, p.315)

This leads, therefore, to 'two possible forms of criticism' (Bodkin, 1934, p.315) which have been labelled here, for convenience, the historical and the mythical.

That the mythical is often inimical to the historical has much to do with the treatment of time, and, specifically, the subjective treatment of time<sup>6</sup>:

The idea suggested is of a sealing-off from historical time and an inward-turning to inward time: activation of the mind through appropriate influences from without, but then a response in terms of one's own readiness and pace of growth, not the needs, ideals, and expectations of anyone else, any group, or any so-called world...And absolutely indispensable for any such development is that separation from the demands of the day which all educators--until recently--understood to be the first requirement for anything approaching a spiritual life. (Campbell 4, pp.374-5)

It is myth that provides this necessary separation from the historical:

We must never forget that one of the essential functions of the myth is its provision of an opening into the Great Time, a periodic re-entry into Time primordial. This is shown by a tendency



to a neglect of the present time, of what is called the "historic moment". (Eliade, 1960, p.34)

Eliade, whose statements these are, conveniently, for the purposes of this thesis, associates this aspect of myth with the 'analogous tendency of the spirit in...psychoanalysis' (Eliade, 1960, p.55) and with 'poetic creation' which:

implies the abolition of time--of the history concentrated in language--and tends towards the recovery of the paradisiac, primordial situation; of the days when one could create spontaneously, when the past did not exist because there was no consciousness of time, no memory of temporal duration...for a great poet the past does not exist: the poet discovers the world as though he were present at the cosmogonic moment, contemporaneous with the first day of the Creation. From a certain point of view, we may say that every great poet is re-making the world, for he is trying to see it as if there were no Time, no History. In this his attitude is strangely like that of the "primitive", of the man in traditional society'. (Eliade, 1960, p.36)

The idea of 'the paradisiac, primordial situation' has obvious direct relevance to the Genesis/ Creation poems in both Crow and H'm, and these poems will be scrutinized in the appropriate chapters. Thomas himself in his introduction to The Penguin Book of Religious Verse paraphrases Coleridge to make much the same point, that 'the poet by echoing the primary imagination, recreates' (Thomas, 1983, p.64). Graves too says that 'poets do tend to live in a timeless world, where their predecessors are as real to them as their contemporaries' (Graves, 1959, p.121).

In this way poetry or mythology indicates 'the regenerative effect produced in the deep psyche' of man 'whereby he is in some sense "born again", being rendered

contemporary with the birth of the World' (Eliade, 1960, p.119). From there the biological reality of man can be examined without the distortion of the misdirected 'civilizing' historical process of the last 2,000 or 2,500 years<sup>7</sup> or, as Bodkin has it:

It is in the process of fantasy that the contemplated characters of things are broken from their historical setting and made available to express the needs and impulses of the experiencing mind. (Bodkin, 1934, p.7)

This notion can also be expressed the other way around, Campbell, for example, asserting that 'beneath the accidental surface effects of this world sit...the gods' whose 'ageless order of...myth...can be discerned through all time' (Campbell 4, p.484).

That myth is concerned with man's biology and his origins in Nature can be further argued if Mumford's assertion that 'the terms 'metaphor' and 'mythology' describe the original nature of language' can be accepted, and that 'in the formation of language, thought...was an afterthought' (Mumford, 1967, p.91). Similarly, for Jung, in a passage where he is talking about 'primitive man', he says that 'all the mythologized processes of nature...are symbolic expressions of the inner, unconscious drama of the psyche', accessible to the conscious mind because 'mirrored in the events of nature' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.6).

Allied to the idea of abolishing time is what might be termed the poetic moment which, in Joyce's (Stephen's) words again, is:

The mind in that mysterious instant Shelley likened beautifully to a fading coal. The instant wherein that supreme quality of beauty, the clear radiance of the aesthetic image, is apprehended luminously by the mind which has been arrested by its wholeness and fascinated by its harmony is the luminous silent stasis of aesthetic pleasure, a spiritual state very like to that cardiac condition which the Italian physiologist Luigi Galvani, using a phrase almost as beautiful as Shelley's, called the enchantment of the heart. (Joyce, 1948, p.335)

It is also, of course, the religious or spiritual moment:

No one can be taught it; nor can it be explained to anyone who has not known it. Yet all religions, mythologies, and "proper" works of art both derive from and refer to it, and so it must remain, for all those inaccessible to the experience, mere shells to be applied to other use: as, for instance, to magic, to pageantry, and to the maintenance of fools in the seats of the wise, to consolation (like the psalms), to the flattering of a race (like the Old Testament) or of an ecclesiastical social mission (like the New), to the disciplining of youth, decorating of blank walls, or blank hours, or to the preparation of old folk for approaching death. (Campbell 4, p.353)

Jung views this as the vital aspect of religion:

The seat of faith...is not consciousness but spontaneous religious experience, which brings the individual's faith into immediate relation with God. (Jung 10, p.292)

This remark is of important relevance to the post-1970 poetry of R.S.Thomas in particular, and in his essay 'A Frame for Poetry' Thomas says that 'it is within the scope of poetry to express or convey religious truth...in a more intense and memorable way than any other literary form is able to' (Thomas, 1983, p.90).

Such 'spontaneous religious experience' can be used in a positive way, as it is by Jung to awaken individuality

(and both Hughes and Thomas use it in this way<sup>8</sup>) or, 'as for the saint' Schopenhauer, quoted by Campbell, cites:

it does not release him from life permanently, but only momentarily, and so is not for him the way out of it but only an occasional consolation within it... (Campbell 4, p.357)

This too is an attitude to be found within the pages of Hughes and Thomas. Either way, as Day has it:

the fundamental purpose of all true archaic myth is the communication of that heightened state of awareness. A myth can never hold to the mundane world of everyday fact, for it must soar, it must evoke the marvelous, the fantastic, the uncanny. Only thus can it achieve for the listener the lifting to another and different plane of consciousness and perceptivity, a vaulting to the religious sphere. (Day, 1984, p.65)

Campbell's phrase with regard to the moment of spiritual enlightenment, that it cannot 'be explained to anyone who has not known it' points toward another reason for Eagleton's antipathy toward Crow, for, as Eliade has it:

Clearly, what we are dealing with here is a complete reversal of values; whilst current language confuses the myth with "fables", a man of the traditional societies sees it as the only valid revelation of reality. (Eliade, 1960, p.24)

Eliade sees 'symbolical thinking' as 'the only kind that is vital and creative' at the 'archaic stage of humanity' (Eliade, 1960, p.177) and thus, as Bodkin puts it, 'the literary psychologist...may relate his results to those of the anthropologist' (Bodkin, 1934, p.163) which is not far from the Renaissance-held view (Bacon and Boccaccio) 'that myths embody natural truths' (Ruthven, 1976, p.13). Myth is therefore psychological:

Cassirer suggests that philosophy and science are concerned with the perception of outward things, but myth is the perception of human expression itself. Science and philosophy try to see things as independent of man, but myth sees the world solely through the human mind. (Day, 1984, p.280)

Mythology...is psychology misread as biography; history, and cosmology. The modern psychologist can translate it back to its proper denotations and thus rescue for the contemporary world a rich and eloquent document of the profoundest depths of human character. (Campbell, 1949, p.256)

the following remark of Jung's is still applicable to the modern consciousness: "Myth is the primordial language natural to these psychic processes, and no intellectual formulation comes anywhere near the richness and expressiveness of mythical imagery. Such processes deal with the primordial images, and these are best and most succinctly reproduced by figurative speech." This "figurative speech" is the language of the symbol, the original language of the unconscious and of mankind. (Neumann, 1972, p.15)

Behind this is the idea, as Ruthven explains it, that 'myth is the primal language of experience' (which will link in later with Jungian notions of the archetype and the collective unconscious) and that:

modern writers who explore the recesses of mythic consciousness and deposit their findings in works of fiction should be valued for keeping us vitally in touch with the very springs of our humanity... (Ruthven, 1976, p.74).

The position towards which this argument is leading is that the mythical approach is 'natural', as opposed to the 'civilized' approaches of the historical and political. But further to this, the mythical approach can help to understand historical phenomena, as Riane Eisler asserts when speaking of the ancient move from Matriarchy to Patriarchy:

Most important, this fundamental paradigm shift in archeological and religious history is directly relevant to our mounting social and ecological crises. (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.4)

The historical approach might even be seen, by its very methodology, as supportive of the historical status quo Eagleton and others seek to undermine.

The natural aspect of myth is further explained by Day:

The all-important point here is that mythical thinking has been the standard pattern of humanity universally for all the countless millenia up until the 8th century B.C. Since the 8th century B.C. non-mythical thinking has become highly significant and to many greatly beneficial, but it is relatively recent in the long history of mankind and is still very far from total triumph. (Day, 1984, p.36)

Day, in a footnote, cites many notable supporters of this theory, and Campbell makes this point more forcibly in his Creative Mythology:

Through each, the species speaks. And since in human traditional rites also spontaneous collective responses to formalized displays occur, the earliest creators of the myths and rites of primitive mankind may not have been individuals at all, but the genes of the species. And since in human traditional rites also a certain psychological readiness to respond to certain specific sign stimuli is to be remarked--particularly among primitives--the earliest individual creators of myths and rites must not have been merely freely inventive fantasists, but inward-gazing, inward-listening seers (shamans), responding to some inner voice or movement of the species. (Campbell 4, pp.672-3)

Campbell holds this attitude in common with Jung:

The deeper "layers" of the psyche lose their individual uniqueness as they retreat farther and farther into darkness. "Lower down," that is to say as they approach the autonomous functional systems, they become increasingly collective until they are universalized and extinguished in the body's materiality, i.e., in chemical substances.

The body's carbon is simply carbon. Hence, "at bottom" the psyche is simply "world"...in the symbol the world itself is speaking. (Jung 9, Part 1, p.173)

The residue of mythical thinking in modern man is represented, at minimum, in 'certain festivals' which 'show the obscurely-felt need for an entirely new beginning' and which for him 'still have a resonance, obscure but profound, throughout his being' (Eliade, 1960, p.28) and also, as Eliade goes on to observe regarding modern humans:

the mythical attitude can be discerned in their distractions, as well as in their unconscious psychic activity (dreams, fantasies, nostalgias, etc.)...We cannot say that the modern world has completely eliminated mythical behaviour; but only that its field of action is changed: the myth is no longer dominant in the essential sectors of life: it has been repressed, partly into the obscurer levels of the psyche, partly into the secondary or even irresponsible activities of society. (Eliade, 1960, p.37)

For Jung, it is likely that 'myth and mystery...were the involuntary revelation of a psychic, but unconscious, pre-condition' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.188), and Eliade goes on to suggest the possibility that 'the understanding of the myth will one day be counted among the most useful discoveries of the twentieth century' (Eliade, 1960, p.38). This is a view Hughes himself would seem to corroborate when he calls Jung 'the philosopher of the next hundred years' (Bishop, 1991, p.252). Myth is relevant today because 'the essential human condition precedes the actual human condition' (Eliade, 1960, p.54). Indeed, many of the authorities cited in this thesis would agree with Neumann, quoted by Day, when he says

that "the malaise of culture is in reality the malaise of life in a world bereft of myth" (Day, 1984, p.442).

In contrast to many of the authorities cited above, Eagleton, it would seem, hopes to see mythical elements to be used towards specifically social ends (if at all) which, in the end, is not so far from the totalitarian uses of myth that Ruthven sees in Plato and Aristotle:

Plato's myths are aimed at subordinating individuals to the desires of the state, and Aristotle thought it likely that this is really what myths are for.<sup>9</sup> (Ruthven, 1976, p.8)

Jung, however, reverses this arrangement and postulates a mythological or psychological interpretation of socio-historical forces to assert the primacy of the individual over the state. Thus Jung in his approach can find socially and politically illuminating ideas concerning the Germany of 1936 through reference to Wotan, 'god of storm and...secret musings' (Jung 10, p.184) and contemplate in 1945 'the history of the last twelve years' as 'the case-chart of an hysterical patient' (Jung 10, p.209).

Eagleton's view of history is, then, in opposition to that of Jung, who believes that:

what has really been happening eludes the inquiring eye of the historian, for the true historical event lies deeply buried, experienced by all and observed by none. It is the most private and most subjective of psychic experiences...The great events of history are, at bottom, profoundly unimportant. In the last analysis, the essential thing is the life of the individual. (Jung 10, pp.148-9)



Concerning the word 'subjective', Hughes has said that 'under that vaguest of general terms lies the most important half of our experience' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.261). Hughes sees subjective imagination as a way of 'peering into the inner world', just as objective imagination is for 'peering into the outer one', and that 'the real problem comes from the fact that outer world and inner world are interdependent at every moment'. Human beings, says Hughes, 'are simply the locus of their collision' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.265). Those concerned more with the 'inner world' Jung termed 'introverted', those with the outer 'extraverted', and 'the predominance of empiricism', a way of thinking common to the extravert, for Jung, 'means the suppression of active thinking' (Jung 6, p.307). Jung also remarks that 'the truth of the one is the error of the other' (Jung 6, p.49), and what is needed, again, would seem to be a combination of both, of inner and outer, extravert and introvert, mythical and historical:

'mythic significance' sets out the claim for a world of the imagination which conveys the total possibilities of the human situation...How far does the imagination find in the exploration of myth a liberating power acting to redress the balance of an intellectual environment which is structured against it? (Righter, 1975, p.58)

Jung also answers Lindop and Schmidt's charge of 'a private world':

Our rationalistic attitude leads us to believe that we can work wonders with international organizations, legislation, and other well-meant devices. But in reality only a change in the attitude of the individual can bring about a

renewal in the spirit of the nations. Everything begins with the individual. (Jung 10, p.27)

Perhaps the historically-minded critic's problem is that of a 'very common experience', as Jung has it:

Everyone thinks that psychology is what he himself knows best--psychology is always his psychology, which he alone knows, and at the time his psychology is everybody else's psychology. Instinctively he supposes that his own psychic constitution is the general one, and that everyone is essentially like everyone else, that is to say like himself. (Jung 10, p.134)

In this way the historico-political theories, such as Marxism, are individually nothing more than something that 'describes a psychology which resembles that of its adherents' (Jung 10, p.135).

Eagleton's arguments against myth are thus rendered invalid (or, at least, subjective) by Jung's 'one simple rule' that 'the psychopathology of the masses is rooted in the psychology of the individual' (Jung 10, p.218).

Campbell takes this idea a stage further, claiming that 'we can no longer look to communities for the generation of myth':

The mythogenetic zone today is the individual in contact with his own interior life, communicating through his art with those "out there." (Campbell 4, p.93)

Thomas Mann in his Reflections of a Non-Political Man, quoted by Campbell, sets out the formula for the mythical approach:

Politics I hate, and the belief in politics, because it makes people arrogant, doctrinaire, harsh, and inhuman. I do not believe in the formulae of the anthill, the human beehive; do not believe in the republique democratique, sociale et

universelle...I believe in humility and work--work on oneself, and the highest, noblest, sternest, and most joyous form of such work seems to me to be art. (Campbell 4, p.315)

Campbell, indeed, quotes many artists in support of his arguments, including Goethe, Joyce and Emerson, the latter being especially powerful:

Society everywhere...is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members...It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs... Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. (Campbell 4, p.383)

This is a truth of profound importance to Jung who saw that 'culture is our only weapon against the fearful danger of mass-mindedness' (Jung 10, p.237). Systematic thinking is to be eschewed because human life does not apply itself to such criteria, as poets, more than others, clearly realize, here MacNeice in his 'Snow':

World is suddener than we fancy it.

World is crazier and more of it than we think,  
Incorrigibly plural. (MacNeice, 1979, p.30)<sup>10</sup>

Jungian theory avoids the worst excesses of systematic thinking by staying close to its biological origins in life itself; by concentrating on the individual; by being open-ended in its recognition of differing character types, for example, or through the recognition of the archetype as a fluid, rather than static, entity; and by an open and honest rendering of the problem itself:

A technique is always a soulless mechanism...A conscientious doctor must be able to doubt all his skills and all his theories, otherwise he is befooled by a system. But all systems mean bigotry and inhumanity. Neurosis--let there be no doubt about this--may be any number of things, but

never a "nothing but." It is the agony of a human soul in all its vast complexity--so vast, indeed, that any and every theory of neurosis is little better than a worthless sketch, unless it be a gigantic picture of the psyche which not even a hundred Fausts could conceive. (Jung 10, p.168)

However, although Jung's theory seems, by such admissions and adjustments, more true to the complexity of life than many others, it necessarily becomes a difficult methodology to handle because there are, as such, no absolute truths or criteria:

philosophical criticism has helped me to see that every psychology--my own included--has the character of a subjective confession...Even when I deal with empirical data I am necessarily speaking about myself. But it is only by accepting this as inevitable that I can serve the cause of man's knowledge of man... (Jung 4, p.336)

Thus Stevens in his On Jung can say that 'wisdom consists in acknowledging the legitimacy of other lifestyles but at the same time defending the dignity of one's own' (Stevens, 1991, p.225), and Jung himself has said that no one should imagine that they possess 'the theory which alone is right, but, doubting all theories, to approach gradually nearer to the truth' (Jung 8, p.297)<sup>11</sup>, that 'the assumption that only one psychology exists...is an intolerable tyranny' and that 'science is not the summa of life', but 'only one of the psychological attitudes, only one of the forms of human thought' (Jung 6, p.41).

For Jung, it was clear 'that our age and its most eminent representatives know and acknowledge only the extraverted type of thinking' (Jung 6, p.343)<sup>12</sup>. This position implies clear problems for the literary critic

concerned with the inner mythical world as opposed to the outer historical world since although in (archetypal) images produced by the unconscious there are 'the most striking connections with the poetic, religious, or mythological formulations', 'these connections are in no way factual' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.285). As well as this the judgement of any individual 'is conditioned by his personality type' and personal experience so that 'every point of view is necessarily relative' (Jung, 1971, p.234). Indeed, Bodkin's early attempt at literary criticism based upon Jungian theory, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry, encounters many difficulties because of these premises, as will be explained later in this introduction.

Jung calls these 'connections with the poetic, religious, or mythological formulations...spontaneous products of analogy' and, although they have 'an empirical basis' (Jung 9, Part 1, pp.285 and 332), they call for a many-angled approach, which means seeking the opinions of others, frequent quotation, and a capacity to recognize the shifting implications of individual images and symbols:

Jung and his colleagues...convince not by means of the narrowly focused spotlight of the syllogism, but by skirting, by repetition, by presenting a recurring view of the same subject seen each time from a slightly different angle--until suddenly the reader who has never been aware of a single, conclusive moment of proof finds that he has unknowingly embraced and taken into himself some wider truth. (Jung, ed., 1978, p.x)

Hughes and Thomas, as will be argued later, both employ what might be termed a many-angled approach to subjects, for

example, the various Genesis-inspired poems of Crow and Thomas' treatment of God in his poetry, which shifts from poem to poem. But the emphasis is also on allowing 'the participating reader' of Hughes' or Thomas' work to become creatively involved (through one or more of the varying analogies thrown up by the many-angled approach) and so 'enhance his or her potential of achieving wholeness, personality growth, spiritual fulfilment' and 'a more cohesive bond with society' (Scigaj, 1991, p.1). Scigaj later in his Ted Hughes says that 'the world of art' in Hughes' view 'can renew the spirit and liberate the individual from ignorant adherence to malformed cultural myths' (Scigaj, 1991, p.156), and it does this because the connections 'are in no way factual', as society might like them to be, but are found through analogies made by 'the individual' in his or her own creative interpretative effort. In this way, 'creative writing' can become 'a therapeutic tool, a mediator between the reader's inner life and the world of nature outside the self' (Scigaj, 1991, p.22). What 'mythical criticism' must do, then, is to provide the individual with a technique that might help in realizing his or her potential for 'spiritual fulfilment' and to provide many-angled interpretation of images and symbols which allow access which does not rely upon 'ignorant adherence to malformed cultural myths'. This approach agrees with one of the functions of myth, as Campbell sees it, which is 'to initiate the individual into

the order of realities of his own psyche, guiding him toward his own spiritual enrichment and realization' (Campbell 3, p.521).

This is in line with Jungian treatment of the universal imagery to be found in dreams, which must be approached from the point of view of the dreamer him- or herself, ignoring 'statistical thinking and...extraverted rational prejudices' because 'in our time genuine liberation can start only with a psychological transformation' of the individual (Jung, ed., 1978, p.245). If a dream produces 'a definite thought...it ceases to be a dream because it crosses the threshold of consciousness', and Jung says that for the same dream dreamt by 'two different individuals', 'it would be obviously absurd to interpret both dreams in the same way' (Jung, ed., 1978, pp.53 and 55-6). Freeman sums up this attitude to dream analysis saying that:

there is no such thing as a typical Jungian analysis...because every dream is a private and individual communication, and no two dreams use the symbols of the unconscious in the same way. (Jung, ed., 1978, p.xi)

The same is true of poetry, that no two readers respond to the symbols in the same way, so that for Eliot the meaning of a poem 'is not exhausted by any explanation, for the meaning is what the poem means to different sensitive readers' (Eliot, 1957, p.113). For Jung, 'one cannot think up ways and means' of liberation 'artificially...for such knowledge is merely collective, based on average experience, and...absolutely wrong, in individual cases' (Jung 9, Part

1, p.293), just as Blake writes 'I must Create a System or be enslav'd by another Man's' (Blake, 1966, p.629). Thus Hughes withholds 'my own opinion' from Faas, leaving interpretation to 'the reader's own nature' (Faas, 1980, p.214 and 199), because explanation can stop individuals becoming 'open imaginatively to the words' and because it would 'be playing your critics' game, the belief that all art is rationally explicable, and can be explained away' (Smith, 1972, p.211). Dreams (and poetry) can prompt a transformation, but only if the dreamer (or reader of poetry) responds to the imagery presented in such a way that the individual and personal consciousness can allow itself to be adjusted according to the needs of the whole psyche (conscious and unconscious) of that individual. Again, 'the harmonizing of conscious and unconscious...cannot be indicated in the form of a recipe', but 'is an irrational life-process which expresses itself in definite symbols' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.289), an essential process once it is realized or accepted that 'the inexorable law of nature' is that 'the world exists only because opposing forces are held in equilibrium' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.94). This process has a social dimension, however, because adjustments to a personal consciousness are made in accordance to the environment of the individual psyche. One sensitive to these promptings and adjustments, therefore, such as the poet, can discern that they might be caused by a one-sidedness or lack of balance inherent in his environment, or in society itself,



so that the poems they write approach a transformation of the collective psyche:

It is this process in the collective psyche that is felt or intuited by poets and artists whose main source of creativity is their perception of unconscious contents, and whose intellectual horizon is wide enough to discern the crucial problems of the age... (Jung 6, p.258)

In the remainder of the introduction it is necessary to look at some of these topics in further detail, specifically: what myth is; how it relates to the individual; and, finally, the beginnings of a Jungian approach to poetry. To begin with, there is the difficult business of defining myth:

Definers of myth are as varied and irreconcilable as delegates to the United Nations, but all theorizers about myth agree on one point: myth is non-rational. (Day, 1984, p.2)

Martin S. Day, in his The Many Meanings of Myth, indicates something of the variety of definitions available to this study, and before proceeding it is worth noting Campbell's cautionary assertion that 'there is no final system for the interpretation of myths, and there will never be any such thing' (Campbell, 1949, p.381).

At base, myth is 'the portrayal of transcendent reality in story form' (Day, 1984, p.207)), and Eliade's definition, quoted by Day, runs like this:

Myths are the most general and effective means of awakening and maintaining consciousness of another world, a beyond whether it be the divine world or the world of the Ancestors. This "other world" represents a superhuman, "transcendent" plane, the plane of absolute realities. (Day, 1984, p.206)

In these definitions the ideas of 'transcendent' or 'absolute' realities are important because, as Eliade says elsewhere, myth 'provides the pattern for human behaviour' (Eliade, 1960, p.23) regardless of social forces. This seems an important aspect of Day's common 'non-rational' denominator.

Other definitions of relevance to the approach adopted in this thesis are numerous, but particularly applicable are Frankfurt's idea that myth is '"nothing less than a carefully chosen cloak for abstract thought"' and that of Woods (both quoted by Russell):

"Myth is the symbolic nature of the truth of human existence...Thus, although myths are not literally or scientifically true at face value, they express a more profound truth at a deeper level of human consciousness." (Russell, 1977, p.52)

Any definition, however, which is not to be as vague as Day's common denominator must lean toward a particular viewpoint which, in the case of this thesis is dictated by close parallels between Hughes, Thomas and a psychological approach to myth. Before such a definition, however, it is important to note possible criticism of such an approach, such as that which Ruthven quotes:

'What the myth-critics appear to seek', says Paul West, 'is a kind of philosopher's stone which turns all conflict into golden myth', a myth which 'enables us to live out our lives intelligently in the presence of suggested pattern'...And if the pattern is the status quo, as it must be, myth-criticism stands revealed as the organ of bourgeois reactionaries. (Ruthven, 1976, pp.82-3)

This kind of accusation seems common among critics on the historical side of the divide, and Jung has answered it adequately by showing how radical change is needed but cannot come about except through the vehicle of the individual, for 'the individual is the only reality' who needs 'strength to swim against the stream of collective prejudice' (Jung, ed., 1978, pp.45 and 237). Jungian theory, if properly applied to the human being in his social context, is a revolutionary force for the good, insisting on adjustments to the human psyche that historical solutions ignore. Illusory political or historical paradises obscure the fact that human beings are not merely statistical units to be tampered with by generalized policy and statistical truth, but are individuals. Equally, the accusation can be reversed, Frye, for example, finding that 'myths of concern', which would include Marxism, to be 'conservative', similar in approach to 'bourgeois... progressive myths' (Frye, 1983, pp.45 and 88). In the end, whether 'myth-criticism' or Marxism is bourgeois and conservative or revolutionary and liberating must depend upon the individual concerned<sup>13</sup>.

This is not, I repeat, to disallow the historical approach which, under specific guises has questioned the Canon of English literature and brought to light the work of many poets who would otherwise be undervalued.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the Jungian van Franz insists that it is wrong to assert that 'the special features of art and literature (including

their interpretations) can be understood only from their archetypal foundation' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.378), and for Jung 'inability to be anything but one-sided, is a sign of barbarism' so that even the extraverted thinking attacked earlier for its assumption of supremacy is 'no less fruitful and creative than introverted thinking, it merely serves other ends' (Jung 6, pp.207 and 345). But the mythical approach must also be allowed its place, especially remembering Stevens assertion that 'wisdom consists in acknowledging the legitimacy of other life-styles but at the same time defending the dignity of one's own'.

Returning to a psychological definition of myth, then, Russell's definition is useful when he says that 'myths are products of the unconscious refined and modified by the conscious' (Russell, 1977, p.52). But, given the close parallels between Hughes and Jung ('the philosopher of the next hundred years'), the most important definition from the point of view of this thesis is that of Jung. Jung in The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious makes this definition:

Myths are original revelations of the preconscious psyche, involuntary statements about unconscious psychic happenings... (Jung 9, Part 1, p.154)

The 'statements', once made, are clearly open to modification by the conscious mind, which fits in with Russell's definition, but immediately here the close relationship Jung sees between the human mind and myth is apparent. In an essay 'On the Psychology of the Trickster-

Figure', Jung makes the point more forcefully by saying that 'all mythical figures correspond to inner psychic experiences and originally sprang from them' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.256). Thus myth is 'the revelation of a divine life in man' (Jung, 1971, p.373).

One important point to make, however, is that 'the myths of East and West cannot be measured by the same yardstick' (Day, 1984, p.36), and one argument of this thesis is that it is psychologically dangerous to apply the tenets of one mythical inheritance to the other. This is also because differing social and historical forces apply to East and West so that adjustments to the psyche (provided partly by myth) will be different according to circumstances. Jung remarks that 'the comedy of Christianity in Africa is really pitiful' (Jung 10, p.89), and the approach of this thesis is to concentrate principally on Western mythological inheritance. This is in part because the psychological and mythical world of the individual is principally autochthonic, concerned with:

what Joyce terms "the uncreated conscience" of one's race, an inward world of potentials unrealized in the visible order of one's time... (Campbell 4, p.485)

In fact, this affects only one part of my thesis, the influence of 'Dravidian vacanas' on the Gaudete epilogue.

The epilogue poems of the Gaudete volume present a problem within the mythological scheme of the three Hughes books considered here in that the mythological element in

their 'triple source' is 'a collection of South Indian vacanas' (Faas, 1980, p.137), an influence explored by Faas in his chapter on Gaudete. The problem here is that, in Jung's view, for the West to find compensatory myths and thereby a new and appropriate psychological or religious outlook, it should not have to go outside its own historical and geographical ancestry which has its roots in North Africa and Europe:

It is not for us to imitate what is organically foreign, Jung urged, or worse still to send out missionaries to foreign peoples. It is our task to build up our Western culture, which sickens of a thousand ills. This had to be done on our own doorstep. (van der Post, 1988, p.203)

Van der Post also cites a dream Jung had which sent him home from India with the implication that by being there Jung was evading the problems of his own Europe which was 'sickening and in danger of collapse' (van der Post, 1988, p.261), and Stevens points out that psychological growth, becoming 'as complete human beings as we can', can only be done 'within the context of our culture' (Stevens, 1991, p.185). Van Franz also warns against adopting 'Eastern practices' and 'Eastern methods' in the West (Jung, ed., 1978, p.228).

Campbell, while admitting that 'the civilization of the Near East had been a major contributor to Europe' (Campbell 4, p.114) (and I will return shortly to Campbell's view on the influence of Christianity in Europe) goes on to say:

It is of the essence of our study to recognize, however, that, no matter how great the force of the Oriental contribution to the twelfth- and thirteenth-century flowering of the European

imagination may have been, the inward life and spirit of that European epoch was in every aspect different from anything the Orient ever had known or would be likely to achieve...throughout the literature of Europe's hero-deeds the experience communicated is on the side rather of wyrd than of kismet: not surrender to the invincible force of an outside determinant, but the sense of an inward potentiality in the process of becoming, with, however, an approaching inevitable end. (Campbell 4, pp.137 and 139-40)

Indeed, Campbell spends much time and brings into his arguments many examples and authorities (including Wolfram von Eschenbach, of relevance to my Gaudete chapter) to explain the differences between East and West:

Carl Jung has made the point in his distinction between the "Self" as understood in Eastern thought and the "self" in his own science of individuation. "In Eastern texts," he writes, "the 'Self' represents a purely spiritual idea, but in Western psychology the 'self' stands for a totality which comprises instincts, physiological and semi-physiological phenomena"...the individuality is not (as in the Orient) a mere figment of illusion, to be analyzed away and dissolved at last, but a substantial entity in itself, to be realized, brought to flower. And the adventure of each, so interpreted, will consist in the following of a summons away from "the fixed and the set fast" (Goethe's phrase) of the world conceived as law, to a "becoming," the Purgatory, of an individual life moving toward its own proper end, its wyrd, or, in Dante's terms, its own appropriate place among the petals of the Paradisal golden rose.

Thus in the Parzival of Wolfram it is precisely in the general, authorized, socially ordered life-ways of his time that the obstacles are recognized to that solitary journey to fulfillment, that lonely, dangerous quest, which is the only way to an individual life. (Campbell 4, pp.481-2)<sup>15</sup>

Graves too, in his The White Goddess, points to a basic difference of opinion between 'Indian mystics' and his own view of poetry:

Indian mystics hold that to think with perfect clarity in a religious sense one must first eliminate all physical desire, even the desire to continue living; but this is not at all the case with poetic thinking, since poetry is rooted in love, and love in desire, and desire in hope of continued existence. (Graves, 1961, p.409)

Eliot too, cited by Bodkin, speaks of 'a racial or traditional mind, a 'mind of Europe' which to the poet is more important than his private mind' (Bodkin, 1934, p.45).

For the purposes of this work, with its ideas of the collective unconscious, compensation and individuation, the Western mythological inheritance of primitive systems (such as shamanism), and of the mythologies of Europe and North Africa will be deemed most appropriate, although Campbell would also seem to question the latter when he talks about 'the whole historic sweep of Levantine spirituality, in irreconcilable opposition to the native humanistic individualism of Europe' (Campbell 4, p.382):

Now it can hardly be said of the Christian cult... that it was "brought forth" from the substance, life experiences, reactions, sufferings, and realizations of any of the peoples on whom it was impressed. Its borrowed symbols and borrowed god were presented to these as facts; and by the clergy claiming authority from such facts every movement of the native life to render its own spiritual statement was suppressed. Every local deity was a demon, every natural thought, a sin. So that no wonder if the outstanding feature of the Church's history in the West became the brutality and futility of its increasingly hysterical, finally unsuccessful, combats against heresy on every front! (Campbell 4, p.629)<sup>16</sup>

What is said here might find agreement from many of the authorities central to this thesis, even from Hughes himself. However, Christianity has obviously had enormous



influence on the West for many centuries and has, further, created its own compensatory movements during that time, the various forms of 'heresy' Campbell mentions. Jung himself recognizes the importance of Christianity to the Western psyche:

If we now try to cover our nakedness with the gorgeous trappings of the East, as the theosophists do, we would be playing our own history false. A man does not sink down to beggary only to pose afterwards as an Indian potentate. It seems to me that it would be far better stoutly to avow our spiritual poverty, our symbol-lessness, instead of feigning a legacy to which we are not the legitimate heirs at all. We are, surely, the rightful heirs of Christian symbolism, but somehow we have squandered this heritage. (Jung 9, Part 1, pp.14-5)

When dealing with R.S.Thomas this thesis will be concentrating on two compensatory forces within Christianity, gnosticism and the philosophy of Kierkegaard.

Blake, as noted, brings a further warning to those who would deal with literature dogmatically, and also provides a purpose behind the 'private world' aspect of the mythical approach that Lindop and Schmidt found so objectionable, when he says 'I must Create a System or be enslav'd by another Man's'. Inherent in this idea is a pluralist approach which, under a Jungian guise, will be returned to later in a discussion of psychological types. For now it is worth quoting Russell on the general attitude:

There is not one system, but many. No one truth system can exhaust knowledge of a phenomenon. In the experience of humanity, a number of systems have laid claim to universality. All such claims, including the most current, scientism, are specious. No system is absolute...Among the

systems that exist today are science, myth, poetry, mathematics, and history. They are multiple realities, subuniverses. To shutter oneself up in any one of them is to blind oneself to the disturbing but beautifully complex riot of reality. (Russell, 1977, p.37)

Lindop and Schmidt could have found this same warning in the pages of their own volume, in the warnings of Peter Porter, for example, against critics with 'powerful convictions' and a spurious 'objectivity'. 'There are very few critics', he adds, 'who are utterly responsible' (Schmidt and Lindop, ed., 1972, pp.203-4). Again, the mythical approach cannot disallow the historical, but must insist on its right to coexistence. This is in line with most who stand on the mythical side of the divide--Campbell, for example, who shortly will be expanded upon, insists on the primacy of the individual, but is willing to concede the value of outer forces 'for those caught up in the creative labor and exhilaration of their development' (Campbell 4, p.388). This is, at least in part, because the finding of one's own 'center implies not only courage in one's own truth but also respect for its equivalent in others' (Campbell 4, pp.576-7). Having said what he says regarding the outer forces, however, Campbell immediately returns to the main thrust of his argument, quoting Emerson's idea that 'the thought is always prior to the fact; all the facts of history preexist in the mind as laws' and goes on to stress that:

The wicked thing about both the little and the great "collective faiths," prehistoric and historic, is that they all, without exception, pretend to hold encompassed in their ritualized mythologies all of the truth ever to be known.

They are therefore cursed, and they curse all who accept them, with what I shall call the "error of the found truth," or, in mythological language, the sin against the Holy Ghost. (Campbell 4, p.389)

For Campbell, as it would seem for Hughes and Thomas and many others of artistic bent (here Ortega y Gasset), the individual needs to be stressed because:

Man's genuine self is swallowed up by his cultural, conventional, social self... socialization pulls man out of his life of solitude, which is his real and authentic life. (Campbell 4, p.390)

Campbell, later in his work, quotes Loren Eiseley, who puts the situation facing modern humanity more starkly:

"Because man, each individual man among us, possesses his own soul...and by that light must live or perish, there is no way by which Utopias-- or the lost Garden itself--can be brought out of the future and presented to man. Neither can he go forward to such a destiny. Since in the world of time every man lives but one life, it is in himself that he must search for the secret of the Garden." (Campbell 4, p.624)

Finally, in this brief survey of Campbell's view of the individual in his Creative Mythology, another system is placed in contrast to subjectivity, one that has relevance to Hughes (see, for example, his essay 'The Environmental Revolution') but also, particularly, to R.S.Thomas, that of the church:

It has been one of the really painful problems of the modern Western individual to gain release for his conscience from this Levantine assurance of a separation of spirit and nature (mythic dissociation), together with its correlative totalitarian dogma (social identification) of "society"--almost any quorum, it seems, will do: a "people," a "Church," even a trade union, or anything calling itself "the state"--as the only vehicle of value, through association with which

an individual life can achieve worth: when actually the truth is the other way round, that whatever human worth a social group may claim, it will have gained only by grace of the great and little individuals of its membership. (Campbell, 4 p.637)

The primacy of the individual pertains especially to the poet, not least because of the idea that poetry can somehow replace religion, as expressed by many cultural critics of the past, notably Arnold, I.A.Richards and Santayana for whom, according to Bodkin, 'an individual's religion' can be 'understood...as the poetry in which he believes' (Bodkin, 1934, p.324).

If the three critics quoted above seem today somewhat passe and even naive, I think that their theories can be tenable if attached to the poetic or mythical approach (as opposed to the historical) adopted here<sup>17</sup>. The poet Peter Redgrove in his extraordinary book The Black Goddess and the Sixth Sense sets up two approaches to the world which are analogous to the ones dealt with here:

Becker thinks of two complementary brain-systems. It is the neurones in the brain which operate like a digital yes-no switching system, sophisticated but limited; but it is the DC fields which are the more primitive analogue system, working by form and pattern as a kind of internal 'charged cloud'.

Two modes of mental action which correspond with this were distinguished by the German Romantic philosopher A.W.Schlegel: the non-poetic and the poetic views...Thus, it is not the yes-no world of pragmatic reductionism which is the common human 'magic stuff', but rather that visionary mode which appears to everybody in dreams and intuitions...It is the metaphorical mode, the analogue or simulating mode, the infinitely malleable, transforming 'magic stuff'. (Redgrove, 1987, p.108)

Redgrove thus aligns himself to the mythical side of the equation, and Hughes in his recent Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being makes a similar biological point when talking about 'the left and right hemispheres of the brain':

We are told that, in general, the left side processes verbal language, abstract concepts, linear argument, while the right side is virtually wordless, and processes sensuous imagery, intuitive ideas, spacial patterns of wholeness and simultaneity...By nature the two sides presumably live in a kind of happy marriage. A noisily chattering society is supercharged with right-side participation: music, song, dance, colour, imagery--and a vernacular tending naturally to imagery and musicality.

But, as history demonstrates, the onset of rationality institutes proceedings for a kind of divorce... (Hughes, 1992, p.157)

'The right side' would seem analogous to the unconscious and its language to myth, and according to numerous poets in the twentieth century, this divorce must not be allowed to happen. The use of myth is a useful method of delaying or perhaps stopping the proceedings.

Hughes' desire for and need of mythological foundations to Crow are highlighted by two things he says to Faas in the 1970 interview, 'Ted Hughes and Crow'. The first is Hughes' contrast between himself and 'The Movement' and its historical approach supporters where he says he was 'all for opening negotiations with whatever happened to be out there', and the second is his realization that in order to do this he would have to resort to myth:

In the old world God and divine power were invoked at any cost--life seemed worthless without them.

In the present world we dare not invoke them--we wouldn't know how to use them or stop them destroying us. We have settled for the minimum practical energy and illumination--anything bigger introduces problems, the demons get hold of it. That is the psychological stupidity, the ineptitude, of the rigidly rationalist outlook--it's a form of hubris, and we're paying the traditional price. If you refuse the energy, you are living a kind of death. If you accept the energy, it destroys you. What is the alternative? To accept the energy, and find methods of turning it to good, of keeping it under control--rituals, the machinery of religion. The old method is the only one. (Faas, 1980, pp.200-1)

This sounds much like Jung's archetypal theory (see, for example, the discussion of the serpent in my Crow chapter), and one effective way to invoke these energies is through poetry, not least because, as Robert Graves observed:

The prosaic method was invented by the Greeks of the Classical age as an insurance against the swamping of reason by mythographic fancy. (Graves, 1961, p.223)

But, wider sociological implications which are obviously concerned with 'the stubborn conditions of the outer world' are closely linked with 'the powers of the inner world' and controlled by a mythology which must necessarily look, as Mann also has it, 'both outward and inward' (Campbell 4, p.329)<sup>18</sup>. Hughes goes on to tell Faas that:

Every writer if he develops at all develops either outwards into society and history, using wider and more material of that sort, or he develops inwards into imagination and beyond that into spirit, using perhaps no more external material than before and maybe even less, but deepening it and making it operate in the many different inner dimensions until it opens up perhaps the religious or holy basis of the whole thing. Or he can develop both ways simultaneously. Developing inwardly, of course, means organizing the inner world or at least searching out the patterns there and that is a mythology. (Faas, 1980, p.204)

And so, as Parker observes, and as Blake would approve, Hughes 'resolutely carves out a new mythology in this post-Auschwitz world' (Sagar, ed., 1983, p.50), although the words used here make the scheme seem more purposeful than it probably is, since one of the most interesting aspects of Hughes' use of myth, whether in set situations (such as the poems in which Crow contemplates the sea) or in the more traditional mythic settings (such as the Genesis-inspired poems) is the improvisational nature of such use (to be explored in my next chapter). Equally, 'searching out the patterns there' indicates a greater receptivity to unconscious forces (collective as well as individual) than the resolute carving Parker suggests.

Jung also approaches the idea of the inner and the outer worlds:

In my picture of the world there is a vast outer realm and an equally vast inner realm; between these two stands man, facing now one and now the other, and, according to temperament and disposition, taking the one for absolute truth by denying or sacrificing the other. (Jung 4, p.337)

Campbell in his Occidental Mythology contrasts 'the great Near Eastern orthodoxies' (which include Christianity) with other cults where 'the two strengths, "outside" and "within," are finally to be recognized as identical' (Campbell 3, p.254). When dealing with Thomas, one chapter of this thesis will concern itself with unorthodox Christianity in the form of gnosticism, which also concerns itself with the inner and the outer, and Bo Gustavsson

points out that Hughes' early works concern a 'mythic journey' which 'takes place on two planes simultaneously; it is both an inner journey and a journey into nature' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.231).

Usually in the West, of course, the inner world is downgraded in favour of the more readily approachable outer world:

So here are two worlds, which we have to live in simultaneously. And because they are intricately interdependent at every moment, we can't ignore one and concentrate on the other without accidents. Probably fatal accidents...We quickly realize that the inner world is indescribable, impenetrable, and invisible. We try to grapple with it, and all we meet is one provisional dream after another. It dawns on us that in order to look at the inner world 'objectively' we have had to separate ourselves from what is an exclusively 'subjective' world, and it has vanished...We solve the problem by never looking inward. We identify ourselves and all that is wakeful and intelligent with our objective eye, saying, 'Let's be objective'...The exclusiveness of our objective eye, the very strength and brilliance of our objective intelligence, suddenly turns into stupidity--of the most rigid and suicidal kind. (Scigaj, ed., 1992, pp.261-2)

Hughes' solution to the problem, the 'faculty that embraces both worlds simultaneously' is 'imagination' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.266). Thomas also, using Coleridge, finds that 'the nearest we approach to God' is through 'the primary imagination' (Thomas, 1983, p.64), and these ideas will be returned to in later chapters.

Parker's description of Hughes resolutely carving out a 'new mythology' is further misleading, for the mythology Hughes finds is not entirely new, and behind his use of myth



there seem to lie the ideas of various psychologists, anthropologists and mythographers. Especially, for example, there is the Jungian idea already quoted that 'myths are original revelations of the preconscious psyche, involuntary statements about unconscious psychic happenings'. This points to a fundamental aspect of Hughes' use of myth, one that further marks his difference from Eliot, whose use of myth in 'The Waste Land', for example, wavers between potentially universal structures (such as his use of the Grail legend) and specific ironic pointers to the wasteland of Modern Europe in comparison with a mythologized (and, perhaps, idealized) historical past or, as Hughes might say, a red herring. So, as Ramsay remarks, Hughes:

believes in the dream-work efficacy of myth, even today, and unlike Joyce or Eliot ultimately turns to it in *Crow* for its inherent imaginative sanity, and not just for its ironic bearing on modern history. (Sagar, ed., 1983, p.172)

Here we are back with a part of Plato's conception of the use of myth, its usefulness being due to its 'inherent imaginative sanity'. But whereas Plato creates a myth to use as a sane foundation for his Republic, Hughes creates the mythology of Crow in order to emphasize fundamental errors of past and present as well as to suggest tentatively remedies with regard to both the inner world and 'the stubborn conditions of the outer world'. In 'The Environmental Revolution', for example, Hughes attacks the mythological foundation of 'Western Civilisation':

The fundamental guiding ideas of our Western Civilisation are against Conservation. They derive from Reformed Christianity and from Old Testament Puritanism. This is generally accepted. They are based on the assumption that the earth is a heap of raw materials given to man by God for his exclusive profit and use. The creepy crawlies which infest it are devils of dirt and without a soul, also put there for his exclusive profit and use. By the skin of her teeth, woman escaped the same role. (Faas, 1980, p.186)

Against the myths of Western Civilization Hughes brings the myths of Crow. And in this warfare of myths he will subvert tradition (Genesis, the crucifixion, St. George, etc.) as well as invent, develop, or reuse certain other myths. The use of myth therefore allows Hughes to attack Western Civilization without his appearing to preach or be didactic (this 'compensatory' use of myth by Hughes develops with the three books considered here, and will be further explored in later chapters). His 'super-simple' and often allegorical fables, written in a language without pretension, cut a deeper groove, finally, than even the vociferous prose of such pieces as 'The Environmental Revolution', although poetry and prose are mutually supportive.

In this ambition Hughes has been aided by a twentieth century mythographical tradition comprising the work of such varied writers as Jung, Campbell, Eliade and Graves.<sup>19</sup> These mythographers all sought to find universally applicable mythic motifs and by that a basic and fundamental psychology valid for the West (if not for the whole human race), and an underlying assumption in Crow is that these researches are proven. Hence Hughes' comment that:

My main concern was to produce something with the minimum cultural accretions of the museum sort-- something autochthonous and complete in itself, as it might be invented after the holocaust and demolition of all libraries, where essential things spring again--if at all--only from their seeds in nature--and are not lugged around or hoarded as preserved harvests from the past. (Sagar, 1978, p.107)

Therefore, when Ramsay says that 'in Crow, Ted Hughes writes as if the world's mythologies were open and available to his imagination' (Sagar, ed., 1983, p.171), he is, to a certain extent, missing the point.

It is in this, perhaps, that Hughes and R.S.Thomas are most revolutionary in the 1970s, and in their approaches they seem to answer a problem posed by Basil Bunting in a letter published in the same decade:

The function Homer performed for Greek poets was performed for 3 centuries for English poets by the Bible. But since the Church of E. has now translated it from English into journalese, and since nobody reads it any more (audiences don't even seem to be familiar with the adventures of King David), there doesn't seem to be anything tangible we could attach the word 'myth' to. (Bunting, 1977, p.11)

Casual reference to, or quotation from, Greek and Jewish mythologies would not, as Bunting argues, work in the 1970s in the same way as it had done for the Modernists and their predecessors. To attempt such a use of myth would presumably bring accusations of unwarranted obscurity, elitism, conservatism, or even nostalgia.

In approaching this problem Hughes and Thomas have adopted different strategies to incorporate myth into their work which would hope to offset such criticism. Thomas'

books since 1970 have included a significant number of poems that approach metaphysical issues through an apparently self-invented mythology that is abstract and portentous, featuring such entities as God, the machine and man. In doing this, it seems, Thomas has successfully avoided the above accusations whilst still being able to use myth as a device to approach big metaphysical issues (such as the nature of God). Hughes, on the other hand, can be accused of obscurity, but not of an elitist kind. Hughes has, in the 1970s especially, developed a stance toward Jungian theory concerning universal archetypes by which his poems intend to communicate a message subliminally. Hughes has written that 'for most poems there are two basic versions' which are 'quite different', one engaging 'the conscious mind', the other 'the unconscious' (Bishop, 1991, p.75). I will return to this idea later, but such a stance obviously depends upon the existence of the collective unconscious (to be explored at the beginning of the next chapter); upon Jung's insistence on 'the autonomy of the unconscious'; and the more-or-less equal roles in 'the total performance of the psyche' (Jung 8, pp.287 and 254) of both conscious and unconscious. This strategy avoids the charge of elitism because if Hughes is attempting communication with unconscious elements of the psyche, then conscious intellect is (beyond the capacity to read) irrelevant.

Both poets, then, write poetry that uses mythologies which are plausibly common property. That people at every

level of society have some sort of notion concerning the existence or non-existence of the supernatural (one of R.S.Thomas' main areas of concern) is, I think, obvious, but Hughes' appeal to a collective unconscious is more problematic, although, at worst, it does represent, perhaps, the only tenable option left open for any use of complex mythology in poetry. Michael Hamburger, in talking about how people do not actually believe in Greek myths, adds the proviso that:

If they do believe in those myths, it is likely to be on the grounds of a Jungian collective unconscious; and there another twentieth century problem arises, namely, that we have too much of everything to have anything at all. Too many myths. (Hamburger, 1977, p.12)

The second point Hamburger makes is resolved by Jungian archetypal theory and the related concepts of the collective unconscious and individuation (all of which will be explained in ensuing chapters), or by others following Jung, such as Joseph Campbell who finds the various myths to be variations of a 'monomyth'. Hamburger, whose view of Jung seems misinformed, might dismiss such approaches as 'Hocus Pocus Polymyth' (Hamburger, 1977, p.12) but, whether or not he and his fellow detractors have a point, if Jungian theory is the only way in which people are 'likely' to 'believe in those myths', then Hughes' use of or parallels with Jung in the 1970s, culminating in Cave Birds is, at very least, a noteworthy attempt and necessary exercise if the powerful

tool of mythology is still to be exploited in poetry and not to be lost, as Basil Bunting feared.

What certainly can be said is that Hughes is creating what might be termed a mythical style of writing, one which, as has already been suggested, may have certain effects upon the reader. These effects are tentatively described here by Bodkin in relation to 'The Ancient Mariner':

as we read the straightforward language of Coleridge's ballad, it is the contrast of our waking thought, running alongside our dream-like acceptance of the tale, that gives us the sense of it as a thing of poetic witchery, made to minister to some imaginative need. (Bodkin, 1934, p.36)

Later, in relation to Eliot's 'The Waste Land', Bodkin talks of:

the words within the haunting rhythm...holding attention while the forces of feeling and attendant imagery negotiate in the antechambers of the mind. (Bodkin, 1934, p.309)

Bodkin's book, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry, is remarkable in being an early (1934) attempt at applying Jungian theory to poetry, but one that is flawed by its style and methodology, as might be observed from the above two extracts. I will return to what I see as the problems with her book later, but it is a significant book because of its near-uniqueness. Eagleton, in his Literary Theory: An Introduction (1983) devotes his longest chapter to 'Psychoanalysis', but his book contain no reference to Jung. This may be in part due to Eagleton's own prejudices, but it is also due to the antipathy shown by theoretical critics to C.G.Jung. Freud is preferred by most if not all. Whilst

poets write copious and wide-ranging books concerning poetic theory which often parallel or quote, with approval, the works of Jung, the academic and scholarly world prefer to apply the more straightforward and narrow concerns of dogmatic idealists from the world of politics, sociology, linguistics and Freudian psychology, relegating the former works to footnotes on courses or in books concerning the particular poet's verse. And yet it is clear that Freud is a blatantly unsuitable authority to apply to poetry. Bodkin remarks of the Freudians that 'they have not been sensitive' to 'the kind of experience communicated by poetry' (Bodkin, 1934, p.328), not least because, as Day puts it, 'Freud and his followers regard myth as infantile, neurotic-psychotic, and always escapist' (Day, 1984, p.340). Freud, in the view of Campbell, belongs to the historical side of the historical/ mythical divide--he 'treats chiefly of historical factors' (Campbell 4, p.654)--and Jung identifies Freud as an extravert, saying that 'the theory of Freud...is strictly limited to empirical facts' and warning against the 'necessarily unbalanced' nature of Adler's (introverted) and Freud's (extraverted) 'wholly one-sided development' (Jung 6, pp.508 and 62). It is also clear that any Freudian approach is antipathetic to many artists:

It is not hard to imagine what...Freud...would have thought of Thomas Mann's exploration of the recapitulatory paradox that whereas 'in the life of the human race the mythical is an early and primitive stage, in the life of the individual it is a late and mature one'...Mann here comes close to the anti-Freudian position taken by Jung, who

believed that myths are 'the most mature product of young humanity'. (Ruthven, 1976, pp.54-5)

Against the negative views of art and myth held by Freud, 'Jung...deemed myth vital to man's creativity and maturation' (Day, 1984, p.340), and Bodkin further points to the contrasting approaches:

The difference between the two schools lies in Jung's belief that a synthetic or creative function does pertain to the unconscious--that within the fantasies arising in sleep or waking life there are present indications of new directions or modes of adaptation, which the reflective self, when it discerns them, may adopt, and follow with some assurance that along these lines it has the backing of unconscious energies. (Bodkin, 1934, p.73)<sup>20</sup>

One reason for the dominance of Freudian approaches to literature is the difficulty of creating a coherent Jungian framework of critical analysis. This is because of Jung's insistence upon treating any individual as an individual, rather than through the application of pre-formulated laws. Jung's theories are always, he continually insists, provisional (and provisional approaches to subjects will be a prominent theme in the next chapter, with especial reference to Hughes and Popa), ready to admit ascendancy to any that better explain the workings of the human psyche, and flexible enough to alter according to the needs of any particular individual under scrutiny:

The interpretation of dreams and symbols demands intelligence. It cannot be turned into a mechanical system and then crammed into unimaginative brains. It demands both an increasing knowledge of the dreamer's individuality and an increasing self-awareness on the part of the interpreter. (Jung, ed., 1978, p.81)



Equally, and as will be more fully explored at the beginning of my next chapter, 'it is impossible to give an arbitrary (or universal) interpretation of any archetype' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.87). The difficulty is, then, in finding an approach that will be consistent, and this is indeed difficult, for 'the Jungian approach' can be criticized 'for not presenting psychic material systematically':

That is, when we are dealing with statistical averages, a rational and systematic description of the facts is possible. But when we are attempting to describe a single psychic event, we can do no more than present an honest picture of it from as many angles as possible. In the same way, scientists have to admit that they do not know what light is. They can say only that in certain experimental conditions it seems to consist of particles, while in other experimental conditions it seems to consist of waves. (Jung, ed., 1978, p.167)

Jung has shown...how subtle and differentiated all attempts at interpretation must be, in order not to weaken the specific individual and cultural values of archetypal ideas and symbols by leveling them out--i.e., by giving them a stereotyped, intellectually formulated meaning...That is why his concepts and hypotheses are conceived on as wide a basis as possible (without making them too vague and all-embracing) and why his views form a so-called "open system" that does not close the door against possible new discoveries. (Jung, ed., 1978, pp.377-8)

Bodkin's attempt at formulating a Jungian approach to literature is a brave and early one, but one that admits the impossibility of 'a strict technique' (Bodkin, 1934, p.2) which often means no technique at all:

A profound response to great poetic themes can be secured only by living with such themes, dwelling and brooding upon them, choosing those moments when the mind seems spontaneously to open itself to their influence. (Bodkin, 1934, p.3)

This approach leads to unscholarly statements of the obvious:

Central passages, while the play is thus lived with, grow ever richer in meaning, becoming intertwined with the emotional experience of one's own life. (Bodkin, 1934, p.9)

To special pleading:

It is not, I think, from readings accomplished within a single week and 'prompted by the desire to arrive at some definite expressible opinion', that we may expect to establish a genuine relationship with a poem, and discover what it can mean to us emotionally. (Bodkin, 1934, p.28)

To a neglecting of critical responsibility:

In asking the reader to examine his own emotional response to Hamlet, or to The Ancient Mariner, I am venturing to assume that he will have in the case of these poems a response to examine which is genuine, and a growth of years rather than days. (Bodkin, 1934, p.29)

To pseudo-Romantic nonsense:

one should read a page of poetry, or distilled prose, and wander with it, muse, reflect, and prophesy, and dream, upon it. (Bodkin, 1934, p.29)

To desperation:

there is so much confusion surrounding the idea of symbolic speech and imagery, so much opportunity for the play of subjective caprice, that I cannot expect the reader to feel other than doubtful concerning the attempt to explore the poem's symbolism in further detail. (Bodkin, 1934, p.37)

To silliness:

on one occasion, there appeared an image of a crowd of people struggling for a bus at a particular London street corner. For a moment I thought the numerical suggestion in the 'thousand thousand slimy things' had broken right away from its context... (Bodkin, 1934, p.44)

To be fair to Bodkin, she certainly recognizes the problem:

Concerning my own work, set in relation to Freud's results, the criticism will naturally be made that it is highly subjective--a single individual's interpretation. My only defense against the charge must be that some escape from subjectivity is possible through its recognition. The results of an individual may have value, if presented, as individual results, with sincerity, after persistent application of the mind to the material, and comparison with the available recorded results of others. (Bodkin, 1934, p.328)

This is not much of a defence, and there is clearly a problem with the sort of approach Bodkin applies.

In trying to find a more structurally sound approach to the 1970s poetry of Hughes and Thomas, I have resorted to several Jungian concepts, whose application to poetry I discuss in successive chapters. Briefly, these are the Archetype and the Collective Unconscious (discussed in my Crow chapter), Compensation (Gaudete), and Individuation (Cave Birds). Alongside these run discussions of Introversion/ Extraversion and the related Psychological Types, and throughout there is an attempt at a many-angled approach which involves both detailed examination of individual images, as in archetypal theory, and frequent quotation of anthropological, mythical, literary, psychological, and other sources. I apply all of these concepts in my Cave Birds chapter and then in my two chapters on R.S.Thomas, which loosely take on a compensatory framework.

1. Equally, of course, the historical approach and literary theory itself are 'academic'.
2. Many have noted the change in the 1970s of the poetry of R.S.Thomas and Ted Hughes, for example, Colin Meir says of R.S.Thomas that 'the most striking change from one volume to the next occurs between Not That He Brought Flowers (1968) and H'lm (1972)' (Jones and Schmidt, 1980, p.1) and Uroff says that 'Crow marks a new stage in Hughes's career' (Uroff, 1979, p.201).
3. Although it somewhat anticipates later discussion in this thesis, it is interesting to note that Eagleton and his supporters exhibit all the tendencies of Jung's 'extraverted thinking type':
 

Just as the extraverted thinking type subordinates himself to his formula, so, for their own good, everybody round him must obey it too, for whoever refuses to obey it is wrong--he is resisting the universal law, and is therefore unreasonable, immoral, and without a conscience. (Jung 6, p.347)

'From an extraverted and rationalistic standpoint', Jung goes on to say, certain other 'types are indeed the most useless of men' (Jung 6, p.404). Jung deals with eight types, although insisting that they are not 'the only ones that exist' (Jung 6, p.489) which are further discussed later in the thesis. Four of the eight types are extravert, and four introvert, and Jung's principle aim behind this model is to further human understanding because, 'sad though it is, the two types are inclined to speak very badly of one another' (Jung 6, p.517) (Campbell and Bishop, for example, tending to 'speak very badly' of the extravert):

A real understanding can, in my view, be reached only when the diversity of psychological premises is accepted...every man is so imprisoned in his type that he is simply incapable of fully understanding another standpoint...so each type, conscious of his own partiality, should refrain from heaping abuse, suspicion, and indignity upon his opponent. (Jung 6, p.489)
4. Elsewhere in this thesis, when referring to the works of Plato, I use The Loeb Classical Library editions (published by William Heinemann Ltd). The Loeb edition translates this passage reads: '"How then," said I, "might we contrive...one noble lie to persuade...the rest of the city?"' (Plato, 1930, p.301).
5. Hughes two 'Myth and Education' essays seem principally Jungian in content, dealing with the inner and outer worlds and their potential reconciliation in imagination, and echoing many passages from Jung's work. Hughes' idea that 'every new child is nature's chance to correct culture's error' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.265) finds support from Jung's 'each individual is a new experiment of life in her ever-changing moods, and an attempt at a new solution or new

adaptation' (Jung 17, p.93), and Jung seems to share many of Hughes' concerns over education:

one must in all seriousness face the question of how such idiotic and bigoted methods of education ever came to be employed, and still are employed. Obviously, for the sole reason that there are half-baked educators who are not human beings at all, but walking personifications of method. Anyone who wants to educate must himself be educated. (Jung 17, p.168)

6. Levi-Strauss, as explained by Leach, makes this pertinent point:

when history takes the form of a recollection of past events it is part of the thinker's present not of his past. For the thinking human being all recollected experience is contemporaneous; as in myth, all events are part of a single synchronous totality. (Leach, 1970, p.16)

7. Some, such as Eliade (Eliade, 1960, p.153), date this 'decline' from the advent of Christianity, but opinions vary, Nietzsche, for example, dating it from the flourishing of Socrates (Nietzsche, 1968, p.29).

8. Many other poets too, such as Cummings whom Graves cites and quotes:

poetry and every other art was and is and forever will be strictly and distinctly a question of individuality...If you wish to follow, even at a distance, the poet's calling...you've got to come out of the measurable doing universe into the immeasurable house of being. (Graves, 1959, p.185)

9. It could, perhaps, be argued here that Hughes, in accepting the Laureateship in 1984 has attached himself to the national myth, such as it is, of England, which might lead to suspicions of totalitarian intent. This position is, however, untenable since Hughes' use of myth in the 1970s is, as will be shown, largely concerned with releasing the individual from the concerns of history and into an exploration of his or her own psyche with the proviso that after such inward journeys, readers might be able to approach the outer world in a saner, more responsible (but still individual) manner than before. Hughes' acceptance of the laureateship, if one can speculate on such things, seems to have more to do with his desire to move with greater effect in the spheres of ecology and education (seeing education as primarily imaginative and certainly not for the purposes of indoctrination, as his 'Myth and Education' essays amply prove).

10. Elsewhere, in 'Autumn Journal', for example, where MacNeice seems to warn against mass-minded adherence to systems, such as Marxism, which in the end imply the system against which it purports to struggle (MacNeice, 1979, p.120).

11. This attitude is one shared by Hughes according to Brook who is quoted as saying that 'Ted is rare...there's not

another writer in the world who would accept that his personal world must of necessity be incomplete' (Smith, 1972, p.125).

12. Scigaj points out that 'science is never value-free' (Scigaj, 1991, p.68), and Frye talks about those who 'rationalize whatever they find existing in society, instead of recognizing anomalies or absurdities in it' and that these are 'not only largely uncritical attitudes, but also somewhat humourless' (Frye, 1983, p.160). Jung frequently attacks 'such narrow-minded and short-sighted views', pointing out 'how prompt we are to take offence when somebody does not share our convictions' (Jung 10, pp.136-7):

I am an empiricist, not a philosopher; I cannot let myself presuppose that my peculiar temperament, my own attitude to intellectual problems, is universally valid. Apparently this is an assumption in which only the philosopher may indulge, who always takes it for granted that his own disposition and attitude are universal, and will not recognize the fact, if he can avoid it, that his "personal equation" conditions his philosophy. (Jung 9, Part 1, pp.75-6)

13. Oppositions, such as that of Frye and Eagleton, could be multiplied indefinitely (and Jung's Psychological Types contains many such examples). Antagonisms between the two sides is, from the Jungian point of view, due mainly to a total misunderstanding of the extravert viewpoint by the introvert and vice versa. For Jung both attitudes are valid and necessary for a balanced approach to life.

14. What is perhaps more objectionable, however, is the pretence to objectivity of certain critical theories, the exclusivism of certain theories (so that Eagleton can reject mythical poetry), and the (seemingly) complete ascendancy in the world of literary criticism of attitudes which often seem particularly harmful to poetry. When, if ever, in a published collection of modern critical theory were the views of poets seen to dominate? And yet most poets sooner or later have interesting things to say about poetry, and some present complex and complete theories themselves.

15. Campbell also quotes Heinrich Zimmer:

But we cannot take over the Indian solutions. We must enter the new period our own way and solve its questions for ourselves, because though truth, the radiance of reality, is universally one and the same, it is mirrored variously according to the mediums in which it is reflected. Truth appears differently in different lands and ages according to the living materials out of which its symbols are hewn...We cannot borrow God. We must effect His new incarnation from within ourselves. (Campbell 4, pp.625-6)

16. Elsewhere Campbell talks of 'the Levantine revenge':

the massive diffusion of Pauline Christianity over the whole culture field of Europe, after which the native Celtic and Germanic sense of being, and manner of experience, were compelled to find both expression and support in alien terms, antipodal, or even antipathetic, to every native sentiment and impulse. (Campbell 3, p.401)

17. Frye finds a similar conclusion concerning Arnold:  
It is not that poetry will become a substitute or replacement for religion, a situation that could only produce phony literature as well as a phony religion. It is rather that religion will come to be understood increasingly as having a poetic rather than a rational language, and that it can be more effectively taught and learned through the imagination than through doctrine or history. (Frye, 1983, p.116)

18. Campbell later quotes Mann further on this subject:  
The boon of art proceeds from the circumstance (to use diplomatic terms) that it maintains equally good relationships to life and to pure spirit, that it is simultaneously conservative and radical; from the circumstance, that is to say, of its mediate and mediating place between spirit and life. (Campbell 4, p.331)

19. Day in his The Many Meanings of Myth has this to say:  
Joseph Campbell with a 20th century Jungian approach has viewed the myth of the hero as the all-encompassing monomyth...The flip side of this theory is the claim that the primordial Earth Mother and her service by the male underlie all myth. Robert Graves, the English poet, has eloquently pled the case... (Day, 1984, p.59)

'Flip sides' are too rigid a division in this sort of territory, and this comparison would certainly surprise Campbell, who uses Graves in his work (e.g. Campbell 3, pp.152-5) without the least hint of conflict. Similarly, both attack Christianity for similar reasons (e.g. Graves, 1961, pp.424-5 and Campbell 4, pp.626-7), principally for the rejection of the goddess Mother Nature.

20. For Jung, it was Freud's 'regrettable dogmatism' which led to their parting company, 'an almost fanatical dogma based on a one-sided interpretation of the facts' (Jung 17, p.67). Jung also attacks the fact that 'the Freudian school presents the unconscious in a thoroughly negative light, much as it regards primitive man as little better than a monster' (Jung 16, p.152). The division between the two is neatly summed up by Wheelwright's assertion that 'Jung was primarily interested in where you were going to, and Freud...in where you came from' (Segaller and Berger, 1989, p.44). Jung, of course, was immensely enthusiastic about the importance of poetry, myth and the unconscious.

Chapter One: CROW

Just as Eliot's 'The Waste Land' is helped towards 'a shape and a significance' by the ghost of a Grail legend narrative, so the narrative structure of Crow has to be considered, especially as the book's subtitle reads 'From the Life and Songs of the Crow'. But, if Crow works as a mythical narrative it is not because of repeated reference to an obvious framework of traditional myth, nor because there is an obvious plot to Crow's life interspersed by his songs--although the early poems clearly take Crow through birth ('Two Legends', 'Lineage', 'Examination at the Womb-door', 'A Kill') and childhood ('Crow and Mama', 'A Childish Prank', 'Crow's First Lesson'). With regard to the possibility of a coherent plot, hints from the poet followed by guesses from the critics abound with regard to a plausible originally conceived storyline which, although they may illuminate some aspect of the book (and as such can be useful), often seem in contradiction with each other and, finally, inadequate. Hughes himself, however, remarks in his 1970 interview with Faas that 'the story is not really relevant to the poems as they stand', and this is a view he repeats in his 1977 interview when he says , regarding Crow, that 'it is not the story that I am interested in but the poems' (Faas, 1980, pp.206 and 213).

I would argue, however, that a sense of narrative is, if not necessary, at least helpful to an appreciation of Crow. This sense of narrative (Crow is born, grows up, has adventures and sings his songs), however tenuous, lend the poems a greater amount of freedom (freedom to improvise,



explore and interact) than they would have as single entities. Don McKay agrees, saying that Crow 'suggests the existence of a core story or myth without divulging it, and coheres around the character of Crow himself' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.115), but Hughes uses various other devices to enhance this sense of unity and interaction in Crow.

Crow is in part made coherent by the repeated appearances of various themes, scenarios and motifs. Faas mentions this in his 1970 interview with the poet:

One of the unifying devices in Crow, it seems to me, is the recurrence of particular themes. Especially complex is your symbolic use of the notions of Laughter, Smiling and Grinning... Another recurrent motif is Crow eating in the face of adversity...

Hughes, however, is reticent with regard to this aspect of the book, saying only that 'I'm not quite sure what they signify' (Faas, 1980, p.207). Incidentally, it is quite possible that Hughes indeed does not know what these motifs signify since Crow is an experimental work drawing nourishment from, among others, the work of Carl Gustav Jung who describes 'the nascent work in the psyche of the artist as an autonomous complex' (Jung 15, p.78) and who also seems to lie behind Hughes' idea of 'hieroglyph language'.

One possibility that will be explored in the following pages is that Crow is deliberately not a conscious narrative:

A story told by the conscious mind has a beginning, a development, and an end, but the same is not true of a dream. Its dimensions in time and space are quite different; to understand it you must examine it from every aspect... (Jung, ed., 1978, p.12)

A dream might then be designated an unconscious narrative, and the many-aspect approach suggested by Jung is relevant to this discussion of Crow and to the 'hieroglyph language'. Equally, it is possible that any imposed narrative is to be found by each individual reader, just as 'some observers' thought that the Orghast experiment 'would provoke the audience to invent a narrative for themselves' (Smith, 1972, p.181).

The 'hieroglyph language', which will be further remarked upon in my next chapter, is an idea that features in a personal letter written to Gifford and Roberts by the poet. The word 'hieroglyph' means 'sacred carving', and hieroglyphs, such as those of Ancient Egypt, are pictorial in nature. The idea of 'sacredness' is evident in the case of Ancient Egypt because, long after its fall from usage in day to day life, hieroglyphic script was retained for decoration of temples and funerary sites. Also, anyone who has ever read an account of the deciphering of Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs will recognize some element of mystery and detective work pertaining to Hughes' idea of 'hieroglyph language'. Jung himself says that in dream-analysis 'we proceed in a manner not unlike that employed in the deciphering of hieroglyphs' (Jung 17, p.155), and the idea is an aspect of Hughes' approach to Shakespeare where he makes the detective analogy himself, saying that:

tiny clues are as important in these plays of Shakespeare as in any much longer and much wordier detective story... (Hughes, 1992, p.340)

Indeed, Hughes elsewhere in his Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being refers several times to the idea of hieroglyphs saying, for example, that:

In these early plays, Shakespeare can be seen like some archaeologist, making tentative interpretation of the new system of hieroglyphs that somehow he has unearthed. (Hughes, 1992, p.496)

The 'hieroglyph language', as well as being a language in the usual sense, is one that has a pictorial and numinous element which, as is the nature of numinous phenomena, is not directly accessible to consciousness. Neumann asserts that such 'symbols...relate...to the whole of the psychic system, which embraces consciousness and the unconscious' and that they contain 'both conscious and unconscious elements' (Neumann, 1972, p.16). Jung also calls the symbol 'the saving factor...which embraces both conscious and unconscious and unites them' (Jung 6, p.264), and later in the same book refers to what he terms 'the primordial image':

The interpretation of its meaning, therefore, can start neither from the conscious alone nor from the unconscious alone, but only from their reciprocal relationship. (Jung 6, p.443)

'The primordial image' is 'also termed archetype' (Jung 6, p.443), and the hieroglyph language has a strong similarity with Jung's concept of the archetype, Jung sometimes referring to archetypes as hieroglyphs (e.g. Jung 9, Part 1, p.302). The archetype 'is an irrepresentable, unconscious, pre-existent form that seems to be part of the inherited structure of the psyche' (Jung 10, p.449), 'irrepresentable' because 'archetypes are true and genuine

symbols that cannot be exhaustively interpreted' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.38):

It seems to me probable that the real nature of the archetype is not capable of being made conscious, that it is transcendent... (Jung 8, p.213)

Campbell points out that archetypes are not Jung's invention, and quotes many examples of previous thinkers who came up with much the same idea (Campbell, 1949, p.18), and Eliade too uses the term, remarking, for example, and in line with much that has been said earlier, that 'the archetypes':

are impersonal and do not participate in the historical Time of the individual life, but in the Time of the species--even of organic Life itself. (Eliade, 1960, p.54)

Archetypes are further described by Jung as 'dynamic factors' which 'have their own initiative and their own specific energy' (Jung, ed., 1978, pp.65 and 67) and are natural phenomena, "patterns... 'stamped upon the physical organism', 'inherited in the structure of the brain'" (Bodkin, 1934, p.4). Jung also relates the concept to creativity and mythology:

The primordial image, or archetype, is a figure--be it a daemon, a human being, or a process--that constantly recurs in the course of history and appears wherever creative fantasy is freely expressed. Essentially, therefore, it is a mythological figure. (Jung 15, p.81)

Jung also calls archetypes 'mythological motifs or mythologems' which are 'characteristic of dreams' (Jung 8, p.291) and elsewhere elaborates:

An archetypal content expresses itself, first and foremost, in metaphors. If such a content should speak of the sun and identify it with the lion, the king, the hoard of gold guarded by the dragon,

or the power that makes for the life and health of man, it is neither the one thing nor the other, but the unknown third thing that finds more or less adequate expression in all these similes, yet--to the perpetual vexation of the intellect--remains unknown and not to be fitted into a formula. (Jung 9, Part 1, p.157)

The lack of any suitable formula points again to the complexity of Jungian ideas, but many would argue that this is in keeping with the complexity of individual (as opposed to statistical) life. Archetypes point toward both the individual and the collective--'common to entire peoples or epochs' (Jung 6, p.443)--being:

universal in their basic forms and unique in their individual manifestations. As a consequence, all life is a balancing act between the personal and the collective... (Stevens, 1991, p.54)

The idea of balance is an important one, since 'these images are balancing or compensating factors that correspond to the problems which life confronts us with in reality' (Jung 6, p.220), and I shall deal more fully with the idea of compensation in my next chapter. But also important here is the idea of 'individual manifestations', because 'archetypes come to life only when one patiently tries to discover why and in what fashion they are meaningful to a living individual' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.88), and I will return to this point shortly.

Stevens in his On Jung (pp.37 and 59) and Day help clarify the idea of the archetype as a natural phenomenon by linking the archetype to instinct and 'innate releasing mechanisms':

The archetype in the human psyche is like the image of the chicken hawk in the freshly hatched chicken...a permanent imprint that presumably all men share in common. (Day, 1984, p.341)

The imprint itself is latent until activated by the image (here, of a hawk) and Jung sees archetypes as resulting from the evolutionary process. Just as 'a particular anatomical structure is a product of environmental conditions working on living matter' (Jung 6, p.444) so archetypes are:

the accumulated experiences of organic life in general, a million times repeated, and condensed into types. In these archetypes, therefore, all experiences are represented which have happened on this planet since primeval times. The more frequent and the more intense they were, the more clearly focussed they become in the archetype. (Jung 6, p.400)

'Archetypes are biological entities' (Stevens, 1991, p.59) and the frequent confusion or one-sidedness demonstrated by the conscious ego when confronted by an archetype is, for Jung, because the 'concreteness' of an archetype 'dates from a time when consciousness did not think, but only perceived' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.33):

Archetypes are entirely healthy expressions of nature. They contribute to pathology only when an unhealthy environment causes them to be built into pathological complexes. (Stevens, 1991, p.35)

Jung (e.g. Jung 9, Part 1, p.226) and, here, Neumann both argue that the archetype is, like Nature, morally neutral:

It is an essential feature of the primordial archetype that it combines positive and negative attributes and groups of attributes. This union of opposites in the primordial archetype, its ambivalence, is characteristic of the original situation of the unconscious, which consciousness has not yet dissected into its antitheses. Early man experienced this paradoxical simultaneity of good and evil, friendly and terrible, in the godhead as a unity; while as consciousness developed, the good goddess and the bad goddess, for example, usually came to be worshipped as different beings. (Neumann, 1972, p.12)

Hence Hughes' complaint that 'Where I saw elementals and forces of Nature they saw motorcyclists with machine guns on

the handlebars' (Faas, 1980, p.201), and Geoffrey Hill seems to make a similar point, saying that 'the ambiguities and scruples seem to reside in the object that is meditated upon' (Haffenden, 1981, p.90). However, the one-sided emphasis upon consciousness displayed by certain critics is apt to simplify and thus distort the archetypes:

The discriminating intellect naturally keeps on trying to establish their singleness of meaning and thus misses the essential point; for what we can above all establish as the one thing consistent with their nature is their manifold meaning, their almost limitless wealth of reference, which makes any unilateral formulation impossible. (Jung 9, Part 1, p.38)

'To the scientific mind', Jung elsewhere says, 'symbolic ideas are a nuisance because they cannot be formulated in a way that is satisfactory to intellect and logic' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.80).

Eliade explains the point to any archetypal image, in this case 'certain images of the Earth Mother':

Every primordial image is the bearer of a message of direct relevance to the condition of humanity, for the image unveils aspects of ultimate reality that are otherwise inaccessible. (Eliade, 1960, p.156)

In saying this about 'certain images' (rather than any particular one), Eliade recognizes a complexity inherent to all archetypes, something Campbell too is keen to point out:

mythic symbols point beyond the reach of "meaning," and even in the sphere of meaning have many "meanings." To define and fix authoritatively any consciously conceivable set of final "meanings" would be to kill them--which is, of course, what happens in dogmatic and historicizing theology, as in both didactic and pornographic art. Symbols of the mythological order, like life, which they unfold from dark to light, are there, "thus come" from beyond "meaning," on all levels at once. (Campbell 4, p.671)

Stevens, in his On Jung points to the same method employed in dream interpretation:

Because every symbol encompasses more than can be said about it, it is important not to 'reduce' it to its archetypal origins, but to amplify its meaning by examining it in an archetypal light. When working with a dream symbol, one must not rationalize it or smother it with categories but circumambulate it (literally, walk round about it), so to speak, reflecting its different facets in consciousness. (Stevens, 1991, p.107)

Similarly, Jung says that 'assimilation is never a question of "this or that," but always of "this and that"' (Jung 16, p.156), and Hughes himself talks about the jaguar in a similar way in his 1970 interview with Faas:

A jaguar after all can be received in several different aspects...he is a beautiful, powerful nature spirit, he is a homicidal maniac, he is a supercharged piece of cosmic machinery, he is a symbol of man's baser nature shoved down into the id and growing cannibal murderous with deprivation, he is an ancient symbol of Dionysus since he is a leopard raised to the ninth power, he is a precise historical symbol to the bloody-minded Aztecs and so on. Or he is simply a demon...a lump of ectoplasm. A lump of astral energy. (Faas, 1980, p.199)

The mythic symbol is in this way the archetypal image which pertains to aspects of the archetype within each and every human psyche. Eliade's 'certain images of the Earth Mother' would individually relate to some aspects of the Earth Mother archetype, but even a large number of such images could never encompass the archetype itself, in the same way that a hieroglyphic (pictorial) representation of a hawk relates to a hawk, but is not in itself a hawk (equally, neither is any particular hawk the hawk as a species). Archetypes are therefore similar to Platonic Ideas (Ruthven, 1976, p.20 and Eliade, 1960, p.54), and the 'hieroglyphs'



are archetypal images which interrelate with their appropriate archetype. This pertains to the provisional and flexible approaches of poet and reader to Crow, to be explored shortly with relation to the figure of Crow himself.

Crow, especially in his role as trickster, can thus be read as an archetypal figure, and Stevens explains the breadth of possible archetypes:

there are as many archetypes as there are typical situations in life. There are archetypal figures (e.g., mother, child, father, God, wise man), archetypal events (e.g., birth, death, separation from parents, courting, marriage, etc.) and archetypal objects (e.g., water, sun, moon, fish, predatory animals, snakes). (Stevens, 1991, p.39)

The hieroglyph language, then, is a language made up primarily of images that in their numinosity are intended to by-pass the consciousness of Western man in order to target the unconscious part of the psyche which, as Jung defines it, is an altogether older entity--pre-Socratic in much of its make up, and therefore non-dualistic. This seems reminiscent of 'Orghast's search for 'a universal access-route to our innermost, buried infra-rational selves'' (Smith, 1972, p.240), but Jung further differentiates between the 'personal unconscious', 'comprising all the acquisitions of personal life, everything forgotten, repressed, subliminally perceived, thought, felt' (Jung 6, p.485), and the 'collective unconscious', the part which Hughes is presumably trying to target:

The collective unconscious is not to be thought of as a self-subsistent entity; it is no more than a potentiality handed down to us from primordial times in the specific form of mnemonic images or inherited in the anatomical structure of the

brain. There are no inborn ideas, but there are inborn possibilities of ideas that set bounds to even the boldest fantasy and keep our fantasy activity within certain categories: a priori ideas, as it were, the existence of which cannot be ascertained except from their effects. They appear only in the shaped material of art as the regulative principles that shape it; that is to say, only by inferences drawn from the finished work can we reconstruct the age-old original of the primordial image...or archetype. (Jung 15, pp.80-1)

It is, then, this inherited and hereditary 'potentiality handed down to us from primordial times' that Hughes seeks to target, and the collective unconscious--'a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.4)--is further described by Jung as being formed of 'the instincts and the archetypes together' (Jung 15, p.80):

The unconscious is not a demoniacal monster, but a natural entity which, as far as moral sense, aesthetic taste, and intellectual judgement go, is completely neutral. It only becomes dangerous when our conscious attitude to it is hopelessly wrong. (Jung 16, p.152)

For Jung, 'just as the human body is a museum...of its phylogenetic history, so too is the psyche' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.287).

The concept of the collective unconscious also relates to the poetic or religious moments discussed in the introduction in that 'at such moments we are no longer individuals, but the race; the voice of all mankind resounds in us' (Jung 15, p.82). Similarly, the collective unconscious is also relevant to the arguments already noted over history:

By "history" we usually mean the history which we "make," and we call this "objective history." The truly creative fantasy activity of the brain has nothing to do with this kind of history, but

solely with that age-old natural history which has been transmitted in living form since the remotest times, namely, the history of the brain-structure...This unconscious, buried in the structure of the brain and disclosing its living presence only through the medium of creative fantasy, is the suprapersonal unconscious. It comes alive in the creative man, it reveals itself in the vision of the artist, in the inspiration of the thinker, in the inner experience of the mystic. The suprapersonal unconscious, being distributed throughout the brain-structure, is like an all-pervading, omnipresent, omniscient spirit. It knows man as he always was, and not as he is at this moment; it knows him as myth. (Jung 10, p.10)

The Collective Unconscious is, therefore, closely related to myth and Lillian Feder in her Ancient Myth in Modern Poetry also makes this point:

Myth is an essential element in Jung's conception of the "collective unconscious," the contents of which are not personal but general, resulting from "the inherited brain-structure. These are the mythological associations--those motives and images which can spring anew in every age and clime, without historical tradition or migration." (Feder, 1977, p.49)

Mythology is therefore 'collective psyche, and not individual psyche' (Jung 7, p.93) and the collective unconscious is, as Day puts it, 'the repository of myth':

The similarity of many myths in plot and characters, the immense attraction and persistence of myth, arise from the common store in the unconscious of all men. The master story tellers of all eras create truly memorable narratives by tapping the collective unconscious and thus gaining a universal appeal. (Day, 1984, p.340)

Campbell reports that Jung goes so far as to imagine the collective unconscious materialized as 'a collective human being combining the characteristics of both sexes, transcending youth and age, birth and death' and 'almost immortal' (Campbell 4, p.632).

Jung also relates his ideas of the collective unconscious directly to critical analysis of literature in a passage from his essay 'Psychology and Literature':

What is of particular importance for the study of literature, however, is that the manifestations of the collective unconscious are compensatory to the conscious attitude, so that they have the effect of bringing a one-sided, unadapted, or dangerous state of consciousness back into equilibrium. (Jung 15, pp.97-8)

The idea of 'literature' as 'manifestations of the collective unconscious', seems close to Hughes' view of poetry, here talking about Plath's 'The Moon and the Yew Tree':

It's my suspicion that no poem can be a poem that is not a statement from the powers in control of our life, the ultimate suffering and decision in us. It seems to me that this is poetry's only real distinction from the literary forms that we call 'not poetry'. (Newman, ed., 1970, p.194)

Equally Hughes' remarks on Plath's 'Flute Notes from a Reedy Pond', that 'it is an elegy for an old order, the promise of a new' (Newman, ed., 1970, p.191) points to an aspect of the collective unconscious which:

has a Janus-face: on one side its contents point back to a preconscious, prehistoric world of instinct, while on the other side it potentially anticipates the future... (Jung 9, Part 1, p.279)

One final point to make is that the collective unconscious keeps an otherwise over-civilized man in contact with nature, which has important relevance for Hughes' ecological concerns. Redgrove quotes Lewis Thomas to make this point:

Thomas appears to equate the unconscious mind, leading down to the depths of the self, with the subcellular details of the body; moreover this is a collective unconscious, since certain of these

details are almost identical in all creatures.  
(Redgrove, 1987, p.28)

Hughes too confirms the possibility of this ecological reading when talking about Orghast and 'the luminous spirit...that takes account of everything and gives everything its meaning', which is 'human, of course, but... also everything else that lives' (Bishop, 1991, p.213).

Returning to Crow, it is true to say that the volume contains many recurring motifs and images (some of which might be described as archetypal) which bolster the sense of unity within the volume, so much so that a small selection of themes and motifs (Faas' examples quoted earlier of 'laughter' and 'eating', along with black, blood, weeping and violence, for example) leaves few poems outside its range.<sup>1</sup> When I come to examine the poems myself it will be in terms of themes, since a further part of the 'narrative' of Crow comes from what might be called 'internal sequences' of a number of poems examining similar themes or scenarios from different angles (Crow's confrontation of the sea, the various Genesis poems, etc.). This method emphasises the provisionality of the poet's approach to these various themes, and allows for a fuller exploration of archetypal images such as the snake.

The tightness of thematic content and imagery recalls something Hughes says to Faas concerning Crow:

Faas: Did the writing of Oedipus have an influence on your poetry?

Hughes: Yes, that had. I did that in the middle of writing those Crow pieces. And that turned out to be useful...And as I worked on it, it turned into a process of more and more simplifying, or in a way limiting the language. I ended up with something like three hundred words, the smallest

vocabulary Gielgud had ever worked with. (Faas, 1980, p.212)

Hughes describes the language of Crow as 'super-simple' (Faas, 1980, p.208), but this does not mean mere restriction of vocabulary. Indeed, Crow includes such exotic words as 'Osfrontalis', 'gimletted' and 'cephalopod', and also draws an abundant vocabulary from its various fields of interest (there are, for example, more than forty species of animal, excluding birds, that grace the pages of Crow, from the gnat to the whale). It is, however, pertinent to say that within the simple and often abstract scenarios of Crow, the poems acquire an archetypal or mythic quality and, by this, a freedom to say more or less what the poet feels it necessary to say. Relevant to this is an extract from Hughes' introduction to the Popa volume, where he is talking about East European poets:

They have had to live out, in actuality, a vision which for artists elsewhere is a prevailing shape of things but only brokenly glimpsed, through the clutter of our civilised liberal confusion. (Faas, 1980, p.183)

By using a mythical narrative in which archetypal images abound and through which Crow, a beast of instinct, stalks, Hughes has found a way for the West European poet to cut through 'the clutter of our civilised liberal confusion'.

There is one final problem I wish to look at with regard to treating Crow as some sort of sequence or narrative. An important aspect for a critic wishing to approach Crow is whether or not to regard the book as a finished artefact complete within itself. This is a thorny problem, not least because:

The first edition carried a note on the dust-jacket that the book 'contains the passages of verse from about the first two-thirds of what was to have been an epic folk-tale'. (Gifford and Roberts, 1981, p.115)

Therefore, perhaps, the playing of the water and the singing of Littleblood promised in the volume's last two poems might have occurred in the missing final third. This issue is further confused by apocryphal Crow poems<sup>2</sup>, rumours brought back from poetry performances, and the various conflicting versions of an original tale<sup>3</sup> (which can, however, be useful in illuminating certain aspects of Crow, as will be demonstrated shortly). My answer to this, with reservations, has been to treat Crow as a finished work on the basis that this is the form the poet (whatever the circumstances) chose to publish. This might be regarded as a purely personal decision, but it has an important precedent. 'The Waste Land' is a poem which can be regarded as a finished artefact despite the more recent publication of the pre-Pounded version, and this view would find little academic opposition. 'The Waste Land' and Crow, as published, are the genuine article. Everything else is a footnote.

The strongest unifying device of Crow, the hieroglyph supreme, is Crow himself, and one aspect of Crow is his own provisional nature. Sagar, for example, says with regard to the choice of a crow as protagonist:

The prevalence of ravens and crows in folklore derives largely from the real bird's characteristics. The crow is the most intelligent of birds, the most widely distributed (being common on every continent), and the most omnivorous ('no carrion will kill a crow'). Crows are, of course, black all over, solitary, almost indestructible, and the largest and least musical

of songbirds. It is to be expected that the Songs of the Crow will be harsh and grating. He kills a little himself, and, as carrion eater, is dependent on the killing of others and first on the scene at many disasters. (Sagar, 1978, p.105)

Bold has a less complete list but also points to the fact that the Crow 'uses its intelligence to exploit the weak and helpless' (Bold, 1976, p.119).

The dictionary points to further possibilities for understanding the figure of Crow. The word 'crow' can mean 'to exult loudly' or to boast, and various phrases suggest aspects of Crow's character and nature: 'as the crow flies' (to go straight); 'crow-bar' (a lever); 'white crow' (a rarity); and 'crow's nest' (a look-out point).

If, as Hughes has indicated in his 'Myth and Education' essay, myth has to do with 'negotiations between the powers of the inner world and the stubborn conditions of the outer world' (Faas, 1980, p.192), then the figure of Crow can be seen as an element or, indeed, a power of the inner world, possibly even a psychic familiar or what Harner, quoted by Redgrove, calls a 'power animal' (Redgrove, 1987, p.11). This possibility is in part clarified by the idea that 'Myth...expresses instinctual drives and the repressed wishes, fears, and conflicts that they motivate' (Feder, 1977, p.10). To return to Hughes' terms, then, Crow appears as a figure representing 'the powers of the inner world', and within the mythic structure of the book he, as representative of 'instinctual drives', comes against his own (and therefore our) 'repressed wishes, fears, and conflicts' that living in 'the stubborn conditions of the outer world' have created. As an 'inner force' Crow is



necessarily anti-orthodox (and thus compensatory) in the threat he presents to the 'outer world', but this is not necessarily a purely destructive anti-orthodoxy:

Crow is a mythic creation who eternally questions the orthodox view of the world by being something less than human, the consequence of which is that he outrageously threatens to become something more. (Williams, 1987, p.85)

Another possibility is that:

Crow is God's nightmare, a mistake that can talk back and crow over the mess that is humanity, the failure of the Garden of Eden. And the nightmare is more potent than the dream. (Bold, 1976, p.119)

One idea behind this statement is that the 'nightmare' of awakening consciousness is, despite being a nightmare, of greater potency than the instinctual idyll of man's biological past--the dream-like 'Garden of Eden'. Another possible 'meaning' for Crow comes from Bold's mention of 'the tradition of associating the crow with death' (Bold, 1976, p.118), a tradition that can be related psychologically to the death of the rational ego and its total dependence on consciousness. Death is certainly present in Crow, but sometimes in abeyance to the forces of life, when Crow passes his entrance exam in 'Examination at the Womb-door', for example, a poem which in its repeated response 'Death' hammers home the observation made by Bold.

Crow begins with the poem 'Two Legends', a poem in two parts which are significant in their difference of tense and imagery. The first part is in the past tense and the blackness (which unites the two parts) is internal throughout, an epithet for various internal body parts (with



implying a continual and on-going creation (rather than one that occurred in six days or in illo tempore) and, in Jungian terms, the sun and moon can be representative of consciousness and unconsciousness respectively, which gives a hint as to another aspect of Crow's 'meaning'. It would seem from this, the first poem of the book, that Crow may be plausibly interpreted as representative of some sort of ur-humanity and as such can stand for a humanity without its civilized complexities (or with them, but simplified, or rather, concentrated, into the single hieroglyph), and this perhaps gives a clue as to what Hughes means when he talks of Crow as 'super-simple'. Metaphysical issues are made simpler by the figure of Crow who has none of the complex social problems facing modern man--indeed, he starts out as a blank and must learn about life from the start. He has, however, his 'flying' (a state of ecstasy pertinent to the union of the unconscious with the conscious, and to the magical flight of the primitive figure of the shaman, a figure explored at the beginning of my next chapter) and the not unconditional promise of 'a black rainbow' (and shortly I note the connection between the crow and the rainbow-like peacock's tail) as well as the tenacity illustrated in 'Lineage', the second poem in Crow ('Screaming for Blood/ Grubs, crusts/ Anything...').

Other hints from the poet regarding the figure of Crow should be recognized, if not actually exclusively followed, such as the one which prompts Sagar to say:

I can find no hint in Crow that the creator of Crow is God's prisoner or that Crow has a quest to locate and release him. (Sagar, 1975, p.118)

One possibility here is that 'the creator of Crow' is the 'mama' of the early poems who actually gives birth to Crow, and not a 'him' at all.<sup>4</sup> If the prisoner is thus a Mother Earth figure, then this scenario would tally well with the anthropological theory of a primitive supersession of masculine over feminine deities as well as with Hughes' view that 'Old Testament Puritanism' and 'Reformed Christianity' have exiled 'man from Mother Nature--from both inner and outer nature' (Faas, 1980, p.186). There is also an interesting psychological possibility in that, as will be explained more fully in my Cave Birds chapter, a psychological desire for completeness pertains to Crow or, as Hughes has said in a radio interview, 'the whole purpose of the thing is to try to turn him into a man' (Bold, 1976, p.117). Thus God in Crow comes to represent the most one-sided aspect of consciousness (absolute mind) which has come about in the evolutionary history of humanity, and the animal instinct in man seeks to find again the balance between consciousness and unconsciousness (mind and body) by relocating and reuniting with a more complete supernatural representation of fully realized humanity (the goddess, Mother Nature). In other words, it is as if Crow represents some instinctive desire still left in the human being to acknowledge what modern Western man has forgotten, and in this way achieve a more rounded and saner psychological state.

Scigaj also reports a potential narrative which would seem to confirm much of the previous paragraph:

Hughes originally conceived Crow to have a medieval epic plot where the protagonist, after many trials and ordeals, learns how to end his alienation from Nature and win Nature as his bride. (Scigaj, 1991, p.13)

Scigaj also gives a different version to this 'originally conceived plot', 'the unpublished master plan', where God shows 'this puny bird...around his creation and tests him'. Crow survives and 'begins tinkering' (Scigaj, 1991, p.72), but none of these various possibilities can be considered absolute without disturbing the flexible and expansive nature of myth, dream and poetry and creating a potentially dogmatic stance. Two myths used by Hughes illustrate why, first 'the Sophia myth':

A demiurge, Jaldabaoth, likewise materializes to take tyrannical possession of the new creation of agonized materials, in which Sophia (actually the creatress of the whole thing) is now a prisoner. So, in a sense, Jaldabaoth, who imprisons and makes her suffer, is her son. (Hughes, 1992, p.352)

Here the 'son' or, remembering 'Two Legends', consciousness is the tyrannical god, and, remembering Sagar's comments concerning 'God's prisoner', Crow is a creation of Sophia (the unconscious) seeking to release the goddess. However, in the Orghast myth, the son of Moa, 'womb of all' is 'mechanically...suppressive' and becoming more so with the advance of time, 'the 'birdlike' figure of Krogon...kin to Crow (and Chronos)' (Smith, 1972, pp.93, 94 and 97). Crow might therefore be both the imprisoner of the goddess and he who seeks to release her, and one possible reading of Crow, as consciousness, ties these two possibilities together. The unconscious gives birth to consciousness ('Two Legends') which then proceeds to try and escape its origins ('Crow and

Mama') but cannot and must finally accept and attempt reconciliation with the unconscious:

The phenomenon of human consciousness was a recurrent source of wonder to Jung. He saw it as the most remarkable achievement of the cosmos, and he detected a purposive element in its evolution. It was as if the cosmos had wished to become conscious of itself, and created consciousness as a means to achieve this goal. (Stevens, 1991, p.29)

If a goddess is intended in Crow, it is presumably 'the May-eve aspect' (and Gaudete is set in May) 'of the Love-and-Death goddess Freya, alias Frigg, Holda...Coronis (from her raven)...Rhiannon, Arianrhod, Cerridwen...or Anna', because 'Freya's prophetic raven was borrowed from her by Odin, just as Bran borrowed Danu's and Apollo Athene's' (Graves, 1961, p.403).

But the name Bran can also be linked to the idea of an older deity or 'God's prisoner', and this further possibility appears in Graves' The White Goddess. Graves presents Cronos, who in Greek myth was the God superseded by Zeus, as being related to Bran, the representative of a pre-Christian Britain, when he says that 'it is possible that another name for Cronos, the sleeping Titan...was Bran, the Crow-god' (Graves, 1961, p.66). This connection with Bran might seem a surprising possibility given the professed universality of the book, but perhaps it is, in part, an answer to E.M.Forster's complaint 'Why has not England a great mythology?...England still waits...for the one poet who shall voice her' (Jones and Schmidt, ed., 1980, p.75). This possibility is given further support by Bold when he quotes from Hughes in a letter:

One of the starting points was that the Crow, as the bird of Bran, is the oldest and highest totem creature of Britain. Bran's oracular head was buried in Tower Hill, saying that England could not fall while he stayed there, but Arthur--it is said--dug it up, because he wanted England to be defended by his strength alone. But the birds were kept. During the last war the ancient lineage of ravens at the Tower died out and new ones had to be brought in, and their wings clipped to keep them there. The crow was also Odin's bird--therefore the totemic bird in chief of the Angles, Saxons, etc., and of the Norsemen. England pretends to the lion--but that is a late fake import. England's autochthonous Totem is the Crow. Whatever colour of Englishman you scratch you come to some sort of Crow. (Bold, 1976, p.117)

Jung was also interested in Arthurian legends, which he connects to 'the Celtic god Bran' (Jung 6, pp.236-7), his wife Emma studied them, and other Jungians see these legends as 'the British myth', narrating 'the creation and early history of Britain as a whole' (Segaller and Berger, 1989, p.147). Arthur, incidentally, is, according to Graves, like 'Herne the Hunter', just another version of Bran (Graves, 1961, p.89). Bran is elsewhere described as 'a god of inspiration...a patron of storytellers...and is also a giver of primal and ancestral wisdom' (which would link him to poetry, narrative and the unconscious) who sometimes took the form of a Crow or Raven (Matthews, 1991, p.76). Bishop also points out that Bran 'acquired the ability to prophesy by borrowing the crow of the Goddess' (Bishop, 1991, p.112).

The idea that Crow is specifically about England's spiritual and/ or psychic poverty has parallels with Gaudete (in which the English vicar Lumb reappears in a sort of exile in Ireland) and also with something Keith Cushman says in his article 'Hughes' Poetry for Children' concerning Nessie the Mannerless Monster:

In the end the Queen appoints Nessie 'vice-regent of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland'; England is apparently beyond redemption. (Sagar, ed., 1983, p.243)

England might well be beyond redemption, but at least in Crow Hughes finds mythological ideas which could be seen to stand in compensation to (in his view) false or potentially harmful national myths, such as the lion and St George. By returning to an early god of England in preference over later figures, Hughes may well be portraying desperation anyway since, as Eliade has it:

in case of extreme distress, when one has tried everything else in vain, above all in any disaster that comes from heaven--drought, storm or plague--one turns back to the Supreme Being, and prays to him. (Eliade, 1960, p.136)

Eliade cites the case of the Old Testament Hebrews, but the comparison here becomes apt if the relation between Bran and the (pre-Olympian) Cronos is remembered. This tendency to primitiveness is furthered by Bran's identification with the Crow as 'the oldest and highest totem creature of Britain', especially because 'the first deities were almost certainly animals' (Day, 1984, p.146). Totemism also involves 'men... displaying the attributes of their totem animal' (Day, 1984, p.154) which again would link Crow to modern man as well as to certain aspects of the poet, such as scavenging<sup>5</sup>.

Totemism can be seen as compensatory (attempting to balance a one-sided attitude) to 'the exigency of a discontinuity between man and nature which Christian thought has held to be essential' (Levi-Strauss, 1964, p.3), and the totem figure pertains not only to the collective, the tribe, as '"a supernatural being which represented the entire species"' (archetype), but also to the individual as a



personal 'supernatural protector... "a particular mammal or bird, such as one might see by day around the wigwam"' (Levi-Strauss, 1964, p.23). Crow is therefore useful to Hughes in exploring both the crisis of the individual and the crisis of the tribe. Levi-Strauss concludes in his Totemism that the figure 'is not outside us but within us' (Levi-Strauss, 1964, p.104), and the totem might therefore be said to be a psychological factor both in the life of the individual and his society:

"Totemic and other ritual symbols are the ideological landmarks that keep an individual on his course." As a member of a large clan, a man is related to common and distant ancestors, symbolized by sacred animals; as member of a lineage, to closer ancestors, symbolized by totems; and lastly, as an individual, he is connected with particular ancestors who reveal his personal fate and who may appear to him through an intermediary such as a domestic animal or certain wild game... (Levi-Strauss, 1964, p.74)

Crow as totem is therefore an archetype of the tribe's collective unconscious, but in the last role Levi-Strauss postulates here, a significant component of the individual's psychic life.

Crow is presented as a more apposite totem for the nation than the lion, and the attitude of England's patron saint is also questioned, with receptivity and cooperation demonstrated to be a wiser strategy than the confrontation in 'Crow's Account of St George'. Further to this, Crow as an autochthonic totem plausibly links him to Jungian theory and the ideas quoted earlier. In this role the figure of Crow could be seen to mediate between the unconscious and consciousness (much like the figure of Mercurius, to be discussed in my Cave Birds chapter), bringing information

from the unconscious in a form (often symbolic) that is assimilable to the conscious mind. John Matthews in his book The Celtic Shaman describes 'The Crow and the Raven' in a way that is open to such an interpretation:

It is a bringer of knowledge, though not always the kind the hearer might wish. As a companion in the Otherworld it is wise and knowledgeable...it was recognized as an oracular bird, given to providing omens... (Matthews, 1991, pp.61-2)<sup>6</sup>

A further (and hopeful) interpretation for Crow can be found in Campbell, when he talks of the myth where 'the crow which had put on the peacock's feathers then caws with the other crows in funereal concert'. The peacock is ambivalent, having 'an angel's feathers, a devil's voice, and a thief's walk', but equally 'symbolic of the Resurrection', and there is also the '"peacock's tail"' (Campbell 4, p.501), a hopeful stage in the alchemical process (discussed further in my chapter on Cave Birds).

Crow is therefore many things, and poems can lend themselves to varying interpretations dependent upon an initial view of Crow's role. Crow can be seen, amongst other things, as: an English Totem; a symbol for man himself; emblematic of collective or individual primitive urges (the unconscious) trying to assimilate civilized cultural notions; representing the buried instinct of man, impulsive and tenacious; and a 'super-simple' entity capable of cutting through 'the clutter of our civilised liberal confusion', whether here in England or in the world at large. It is these interlinked and shifting definitions of Crow's role that are largely responsible for the numinosity of the 'hieroglyph' (archetype) and the provisional and

expansive nature of individual poems as well as the volume as a whole. The Crow has many negative attributes--'the Night-crow brings terror' (Graves, 1961, p.298)--but these are balanced by positive ones, one of which goes some way toward explaining Scigaj's otherwise grandiose opening to his (as editor) Critical Essays on Ted Hughes, describing Hughes as 'Healer of the torn psyche', in that, as Graves has it:

Bran is the Celtic name for the ancient Crow-god, variously known as Apollo, Saturn, Cronos and Aesculapius, who was also a god of healing... (Graves, 1961, p.124)

The difficulty with exactly defining Crow is well presented by Uroff:

Crow's paradoxical nature combines forces that the divisive habits of reason seek to separate, so Crow is both tricked and trickster, bungling and shrewd, wondering and convinced, deadly and vital. His nature is not so much double as unitary. He includes multitudes...If Crow's own identity defies categories, it also resists definition by outside references. Crow is not simply the destructive anti-force to the Creator: he is both a creator in his own right, making gods for playmates, and also the one who beats hell out of the snake...Crow's unitary nature is the secret of his fascination. As demon or as dark god, he may be dismissed as wilfully perverse; but in his defiance of opposing categories he represents that mysterious nature that is both repulsive and strangely fertile...uncontainable and lively. (Uroff, 1979, p.208)

Ambivalence is, according to Jung, characteristic of any archetype:

Every archetype contains the lowest and the highest, evil and good, and is therefore capable of producing diametrically opposite results. Hence it is impossible to make out at the start whether it will prove to be positive or negative. (Jung 10, p.237)

Crow is therefore only a negative image if the reader chooses to interpret it in that particular way, a point that might be remembered in the notorious critical debate over 'Hawk Roosting'<sup>7</sup>.

Treated properly, archetypes and 'myths of a religious nature can be interpreted as a sort of mental therapy' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.68) which compensate 'in modern Western man...for overemphasis on consciousness' (Neumann, 1972, p.17). As Neumann says, 'consciousness' must learn 'to react more subtly' (Neumann, 1972, p.13) to the symbol whose meaning, according to Bishop, 'remains to a large extent dependent upon the spiritual resonances the listener/reader is able to awaken in his own nature' (Bishop, 1991, p.20). Therefore, the numinous element of symbols becomes 'blocked when the images are insisted upon as final terms in themselves' (Campbell 2, p.46):

Hughes hopes that the violence of Crow activates compensatory powers in the reader's psyche. One can temporarily free the neurotic by using the right fantasy to activate repressed energies in the psyche. When these repressed energies are acknowledged and welcomed into conscious life, the psyche heals itself and personality growth once again becomes possible. (Scigaj, 1991, pp.78-9)

Much that Hughes says in his 'Myth and Education' essay on the subject of 'stories' concerns this idea of awakening 'in the reader "a fuller possession of his own power and centrality"' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.13):

New revelations of meaning open out of their images and patterns continually, stirred into reach by our own growth and changing circumstances...It does not matter, either, how old the stories are. Stories are old the way human biology is old...What began as an idle reading of a fairy tale ends, by simple natural activity of the imagination, as a rich perception

of values of feeling, emotion and spirit which would otherwise have remained unconscious and languageless...A simple tale, told at the right moment, transforms a person's life with the order its pattern brings to incoherent energies. (Scigaj, ed., 1992, pp.259 and 267-8)

Bishop also uses the same idea, pointing to the role of the reader and postulating:

a readership which generates and sustains psychological growth, rather than simply obeying a predefined set of abstract (and external) critical rules...Literary criticism, like Poetry, has to rediscover its 'inner life': 'aesthetic criticism', valuing language through an abstract set of critical standards, now has to subordinate itself voluntarily to the prior claim of 'psychological criticism', which values the internal process actually undergone. (Bishop, 1991, p.2)

Perhaps Bishop goes too far in this, since there have always been poets who 'rediscover' the 'inner life' and different people will always respond to poetry in different ways, which should allow a pluralist approach to criticism including abstract sets of critical standards. But he is right to point to the similarity between this approach and the 'symbiotic' relationship between doctor and patient in Jungian psychology which involves the transformation of both (Bishop, 1991, p.254).

Bishop's book is a useful one when considering the individual reader's psychological approach to poetry, although he does occasionally fall into the trap of one-angled interpretation (of 'A Childish Prank', for example, on page 132), and also attacks 'scholarly search for correspondence' and 'the mechanical-intellectual sifting and correlation of 'interesting' allusions' (Bishop, 1991, p.186). Bishop himself is not free from this (his treatment of 'black', for example, on page 192), but in Jungian terms

the conscious must be allowed a role in the life of the psyche as well as the unconscious. As noted before, the unconscious is brought into play by the very fact that the conscious mind is concentrating on individual images in its 'scholarly search for correspondence'.

Finally, with regard to the figure of Crow, there is in Crow much that is of relevance to the mythological figure and archetype of the Trickster:

the action of the book...follows very faithfully the typical incidents in a cycle of Trickster-narratives. The wild escapades in series, causes leading to improbable effects that snowball in magnitude, maniacal pursuits, villainous transformations, the periodic Bang! that utterly destroys the protagonist, who then appears in the next scene intact, the wholesale inconsistencies between narratives--all this is standard fare in the Trickster story... (Sagar, ed., 1983, p.176)

Indeed, Hughes, in 'A Reply to critics', points to the direct relationship between Crow and the Trickster (an archetypal character explored by Jung, amongst others, in Paul Radin's book The Trickster), and this figure, appropriately enough, appears at the start of this succession of three books (Crow, Gaudete, and Cave Birds) in which Hughes seeks out a new and compensatory spiritual potentiality for Western Man. Appropriate because 'Trickster Literature is the beginning' of 'a cultural process':

Trickster Literature expresses...the renewing sacred spirit, searching its depths for new resources and directives exploring towards new emergence and growth. And this is how the worst moment comes closest to the best opportunity. (Dyson, ed., 1990, pp.109-110)

The last sentence of this extract points directly toward 'the dark night of the soul' which is the starting point for renewal in both myth and Jungian psychology, and which is a concept of importance to Gaudete and, more especially, Cave Birds.

The parallels between the figure of Crow and the Trickster of Paul Radin's book are many: the Trickster is 'a hero who is always wandering'; he (and the Trickster seems to be almost invariably male) 'is always hungry'; he 'is not guided by normal conceptions of good or evil'; and 'is either playing tricks on people or having them played on him' (Radin, 1972, p.155). On the other hand, the Trickster, in the course of his adventures (and often accidentally) 'creates many of the objects man needs' (Radin, 1972, p.156), something Crow does, with God's partnership, in 'Crow's Song of Himself', for example:

When God hammered Crow  
He made gold  
When God roasted Crow in the sun  
He made diamond...

Similarly, and in line with Crow's own development, the Trickster's adventures are, according to Radin, of two kinds:

The first deals with his self-education, his progress from immaturity to maturity, from insecurity to security; the second, with his endeavours to make the earth habitable for man... His task is to grow up and to see that human beings grow up with him. (Radin, 1972, p.166)

The Trickster also lives 'in a world that has no beginning and no end' and is himself 'ageless', the symbol of 'an archaic and primordial past, where there as yet existed no clear-cut differentiation between the divine and the non-

divine' (Radin, 1972, pp.167-8), although this is not to say that the Trickster is merely history:

for he represents not only the undifferentiated and distant past, but likewise the undifferentiated present within every individual. (Radin, 1972, p.168)

Hughes has said that the Trickster does not operate 'within a closed society, but on the epic stage, in the draughty wholeness of Creation' (Dyson, ed., 1990, p.112) and the notion of timeless myth is something Hughes also uses in his mythological works in order to balance such a notion with the Western idea of man's linear progress from primitive to civilized, so that in Crow:

This universe is one in which all history is happening simultaneously, so Crow is able to move freely from one era to another, from the beginning of the world to the end.<sup>8</sup>

There is also a psychological aspect to the figure of the Trickster, just as there is to Crow:

Though he seems...to have no purpose, at the end of his activities a new figure is revealed to us and a new psychical reorientation and environment have come into being... (Radin, 1972, p.168)

Jung links the Trickster to 'the shadow', 'an impressive shadow figure antagonistically confronting a personal consciousness' whose integration 'brings about an alteration of personality' (Jung 9, Part 1, pp.262, 265 and 270)<sup>9</sup>:

The so-called civilized man...never suspects that his own hidden and apparently harmless shadow has qualities whose dangerousness exceeds his wildest dreams. As soon as people get together in masses and submerge the individual, the shadow is mobilized, and, as history shows, may even be personified and incarnated. (Jung 9, Part 1, p.267)

In this way, the Trickster performs a social role of letting 'the audience purge itself of its anarchistic and socially



undesirable drives' (Day, 1984, p.231) or, in other words, placating 'the shadow', but he can also assist in the 'unification of society' as well as be an aid to social development, because 'only the clout of the Trickster myth has much chance to effect internal change in a static society' (Day, 1984, p.232). Hughes invokes the Trickster as a counter to 'the rigidly rationalist outlook' of 'the present world' (Faas, 1980, p.200), a Civilization which Hughes has called 'an evolutionary error' (Faas, 1980, p.186).

Talking of the Trickster figure, Jung says:

Because of its numinosity the myth has a direct effect on the unconscious, no matter whether it is understood or not...The figure works, because secretly it participates in the observer's psyche... (Jung 9, Part 1, pp.268 and 270)

Hughes expresses what might be a parallel view when, in talking to Faas about the jaguar as a symbol, he says:

It is my belief that symbols of this sort work. And the more concrete and electrically charged and fully operational the symbol, the more powerfully it works on any mind that meets it. The way it works depends on that mind...on the nature of that mind. (Faas, 1980, p.199)

Both Hughes and Jung speak of the symbol working on the observer or reader, and Hughes is reiterating an idea he expressed in 'Literature among the Primitives', where he speaks of 'the seminal thing that in primitive sculpture and primitive music has already operated on us' (Faas, 1980, pp.176-7). This active nature of the symbol points toward a central aspect of Hughes' mythic method, the by-passing of 'the entanglement of my reader's immediate intellectual response' with language of 'no very explicit meanings'

(personal communication, October 1978), as he explains in a personal letter to Gifford and Roberts. Hughes is here talking about Gaudete, and I shall return to this subject in my chapter on that book, but the idea is also of relevance to both Crow and Cave Birds.

In talking about Crow (specifically about the poem 'Truth Kills Everybody') in a letter to Gifford and Roberts, Hughes refers to 'hieroglyph symbols' (he also refers to 'hieroglyph language', already discussed, in connection with Gaudete poems), and it is these that in Crow enable the poems to evade 'immediate intellectual response' and to target deeper layers of the psyche (personal communication, October 1978). It is therefore in not targeting the conscious ego that Crow is 'something autochthonous...as it might be invented after the holocaust...where essential things spring again...only from their seeds in nature' (Sagar, 1978, p.107). Indeed, Hughes talks about the Trickster as living in 'the perpetual replay archive of all that ever happened to living organisms' (Dyson, ed., 1990, p.111), which sounds like the archetype living in the collective unconscious.

The figure of Crow is just such a 'hieroglyph symbol', and is linked to the Trickster in this role. Robinson, in talking about Hughes' 'A Reply to my Critics', says that:

he identifies Crow with the Trickster figure, the embodiment of 'the optimism of the sperm, still struggling joyfully along after 150 million years', who belongs to the beginning of literature, being found in primitive and folk sources, and recommends himself to Hughes because he represents, more clearly than any other archetypal personality, the possibility for a new

beginning for human development. (Robinson, 1989, p.54)

The Trickster, then, 'who antedates the civilized conception of God' (Hirschberg, 1981, p.71) and who, on a 'civilized' God's arrival seems to be 'reduced to the position of an evil-working semi-deity' (Radin, 1972, p.164), fascinates and repels, in part because 'something in man is profoundly disinclined to give up his beginnings, and something else believes it has long since got beyond all that' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.269), but also because the Trickster is himself the 'personification of ambivalence' (Radin, 1972, p.xiii). The Trickster is anti-rational, and, as such, can become a counterbalance (or compensatory myth) to the Socratic inheritance which, with its successors in Judaeo-Christianity and rationalist science, are deemed inept and dangerous by such luminaries as Jung, Nietzsche, Lawrence, Graves, and, of course, Hughes. Day sees the Trickster in opposition to God, and as 'individuality' which is 'in direct and bitter opposition' to 'conformity' (Day, 1984, p.230) and, in his 'Introductory Essay' to The Trickster, Radin contrasts his subject with Job, 'orthodoxy' and 'awe-inspiring rationalization', and Plato, 'the obliteration of ambivalence' (Radin, 1972, pp.xx-xxi):

At the beginning of the Book of Job, then, the concrete ambivalence of the human condition is denied, good and evil have a dual rather than a single source... (Radin, 1972, p.xv)

Hughes would add that 'when Christianity kicked the devil out of Job what they actually kicked out was Nature' (Faas, 1980, p.199) and that this creates an 'exile...from both

inner and outer nature' which leaves post-Platonic Western history as 'a story of decline' (Faas, 1980, p.186).

The Trickster, on the other hand, has a dual nature, being both 'benefactor and buffoon', 'a buffoon-hero' who displays 'cunning and stupidity' (Radin, 1972, pp.124-5 and 180) and who 'is both subhuman and superhuman, a bestial and divine being' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.163). For Jung this duality is in the nature of archetypes and symbols:

I am of the opinion that the union of rational and irrational truth is to be found not so much in art as in the symbol per se; for it is the essence of the symbol to contain both the rational and the irrational. It always expresses the one through the other; it comprises both without being either. (Jung 10, p.18)

The contents of the collective unconscious, the archetypes, with which we are concerned in any occurrence of psychic mass-phenomena, are always bipolar: they have both a positive and a negative side. Whenever an archetype appears things become critical, and it is impossible to see what turn they will take. As a rule this depends on the way consciousness reacts to the situation. (Jung 10, p.229)

Significantly, as Ramsey in his essay 'Crow, or the Trickster Transformed' puts it, the Trickster serves:

a complex mediative purpose--as between the moral ideals of a people's Way, and their naked instincts...a dynamic interposing between polar opposites as a permanent condition, allowing, as in myth and ritual, the mind to hold on to both opposites at once. (Sagar, ed., 1983, p.174)

The term 'mediator' would link the Trickster to Mercurius, the alchemical Hermes--'Hermes preserved the primitive characteristics of the Trickster' (Russell, 1977, p.126)--of relevance to Cave Birds whom I will speak of in my third chapter, and Kerenyi and Jung point to comparisons between the trickster and other figures prominent in the

mythological foundation of Hughes' poetry, Kerényi to Prometheus, Hermes, and Dionysus (Radin, 1972, pp.180, 185 and 187); and Jung to the Shaman (Jung 9, Part 1, p.256). Campbell points to a figure close to the Celtic aspect of Crow already discussed when he refers 'to the greatest trickster of all, Cuchullin' (Campbell 4, p.419), and Day also talks of 'the Trickster as a Christ figure suffering agonies for his benevolent theft' (Day, 1984, p.234).

Crow as Trickster also has links with 'individual development' (Day, 1984, p.232) or the Jungian process of individuation (the integration of the two halves of the psyche--conscious and unconscious--into a whole, an idea I explore in greater depth when examining Cave Birds), so that Jung can call the Trickster 'a minatory and ridiculous figure' who nevertheless 'stands at the very beginning of the way of individuation (Jung 9, Part 1, p.271). In this context it is interesting to note that:

Being frightened is, in Winnebago symbolism, generally the indication of an awakening consciousness and sense of reality, indeed, the beginning of a conscience. (Radin, 1972, p.134)

Later, Cave Birds will be seen to commence with 'The scream', and in Crow, the frustrated 'cry' of the preconscious first part of 'Two Legends' gives way to 'Lineage', which begins:

In the beginning was Scream  
Who begat Blood  
Who begat Eye  
Who begat Fear...

At the start of the sequence, Crow is 'like the Winnebago Trickster...a child for whom 'no ethical values exist'' (Hirschberg, 1981, p.75), but he is equally

'dwelling in the lower worlds that he may bring forth the potential of himself and become a spiritual master'

(Hirschberg, 1981, p.100):

instead of acting in a brutal, savage, stupid, and senseless fashion, the trickster's behaviour towards the end of the cycle becomes quite useful and sensible. (Jung 9, Part 1, p.266)

The Trickster, then, is a part of any individual's psychological growth, presenting an opportunity for transformation or 'new emergence and growth' (Dyson, ed., 1990, p.110), but he also goes through a similar process himself, and his story, 'like many other myths...was supposed to have a therapeutic effect' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.267).

As well as providing Hughes with a vehicle for his ideas and a coherency to his fantasy, the Trickster Crow allows him freedom to satirize man--'the Wakdjunkaga cycle' is 'among other things...a satire on man' (Radin, 1972, p.151)--and to take liberties with any originally conceived storyline, just as aboriginal story-tellers do:

These individuals are always highly respected by the community, and they are permitted to take liberties with a given text denied to people at large...This meant that its content and style, while they may have been fixed basically and primarily by tradition, were fixed secondarily by individuals of specific literary ability... (Radin, 1972, p.122)

Such a position might also pertain to the reader and/or critic (an encouragement to creativity, activating the unconscious), but whether it does or not, it certainly gives scope to provisional readings of the book.

In finding a style appropriate to this mythological approach and provisional outlook, Hughes has drawn in

particular from two traditions: primitive song and contemporary East European poetry. His excitement at the discovery of the latter is clearly evident in his 'Introduction to the Poetry of Vasko Popa':

Circumstantial proof that man is a political animal, a state numeral, as if it needed to be proved, has been weighed out in dead bodies by the million. The attempt these poets are making to put on record that man is also, at the same time and in the same circumstances, an acutely conscious human creature of suffering and hope, has brought their poetry down to such precisions, discriminations and humilities that it is a new thing. It seems closer to the common reality, in which we have to live if we are to survive, than do those other realities in which we can holiday, or into which we decay when our bodily survival is comfortably taken care of, and which art, particularly contemporary art, is forever trying to impose on us as some sort of superior dimension. (Faas, 1980, p.183)

Much in this introduction indicates the nature and extent of Crow's indebtedness to the East European poets, and to Popa in particular. With regard to the thematic content of East European poetry, Hughes comments:

Their poetic themes revolve around the living suffering spirit, capable of happiness, much deluded, too frail, with doubtful and provisional senses, so undefinable as to be almost silly, but palpably existing, and wanting to go on existing... (Faas, 1980, p.183)

The figure of Crow might be so described, and with regard to Crow, the word 'provisional' is important, as I have already observed. Again, Hughes says of the East European poets that one quality he admires is their 'simple animal courage' in 'continuing to explore' (Faas, 1980, pp.183-4). As well as pointing to the provisional and ever-exploratory nature of Crow, it is also interesting to note that the last two poems of the volume finish with water about to play (the

second of the 'Two Eskimo Songs', 'How Water Began to Play') and with 'Littleblood' about to, the poet hopes, sing. Crow himself, although he makes mistakes, has a tenacious quality that might be described as 'simple animal courage', and certainly he continues to explore, just as he is the agent for the poet's and, potentially, the reader's exploration.

This persistent and improvisatory approach to subjects continues with Popa, as with Hughes, in the language of the poetry:

The air of trial and error exploration, of an improvised language, the attempt to get near something for which he is almost having to invent the words in a total disregard for poetry or the normal conventions of discourse, goes with his habit of working in cycles of poems. (Faas, 1980, p.184)

For Hughes, originally, 'Crow was really an idea of a style', and the idea to write 'the songs that a Crow would sing' with 'a super-simple and a super-ugly language which would in a way shed everything except just what he wanted to say without any other consideration' (Faas, 1980, p.208) would seem to have received some support from the example of East European poetry. This language would seem to be in common with Hughes' view of 'Shakespeare's hieroglyphic system':

On the one hand, this verbal language of the common bond, as a crisis improvisation, is a kind of prodigiously virtuoso pidgin. It never loses this extempore, unpredictable quality of something being put together, out of everything within reach, in an emergency--snatched and grabbed out of the listener's ears, his shirt front, his top pocket, his finger ends, in a brilliant and slightly bewildering conjuring act. (Hughes, 1992, p.152)



Crow himself is, as already noted, a scavenger, and in a famous attack Shakespeare is called 'an upstart Crow' (Honigmann, 1982, p.2).

I could point to many Crow poems whose approaches appear to derive in part from those of Popa, but will limit myself, for the sake of brevity, to comparison with Popa's cycle called 'Games', the only Popa included in The Rattle Bag, an anthology selected by Hughes and Heaney. But here are examples enough:

He who is not smashed to smithereens  
 He who remains whole and gets up whole  
 He plays (Heaney and Hughes, ed., 1982, p.171)

Here are examples of straightforward language bluntly describing violence (see, for example, 'A Kill'), the idea of surviving, of carrying on (see, for example, 'Crow's Song of Himself'), and a final line with an idea of play which is recalled in the second of the 'Two Eskimo Songs'. A further two lines of 'Games' read 'Some bite off the others'/ Arm or leg or whatever...' (Heaney and Hughes, ed., 1982, p.173), which seems echoed in 'People's arms and legs fly off and fly on again' from 'In Laughter'. There is also a deadpan debunking effect, caused in the Popa poem by the word 'whatever', which is a technique often used in Crow, again in the poem 'In Laughter' and in 'A Grin', for example.

Hughes has appropriated themes and techniques from the East European poets, but it would be difficult to charge even the poems closest to that tradition of plagiarism since, as Michael Parker observes:

Like the poetry of Pilinszky, Popa, Herbert and Holub, Crow poses questions, offers meditations

'that have been common coin since Job and Sophocles'... (Sagar, ed., 1983, p.50)

Another area of influence indicated by Hughes' pre-Crow critical writings is that of 'Primitive Song' and 'Literature among the Primitives'. Hughes' interest in such areas, given his attitude toward 'Western Civilisation', is clear, and he hopes to discover in primitive song:

something analogous to the gills in the human embryo, something as revealing of the inmost buried nature of the thing. (Faas, 1980, p.167)

Also of relevance is the primitive's closer relation to Nature so that, for him 'The country he inhabits is at the same time the topography of his unconscious' (Jung 10, p.26), an idea pertinent to Hughes' ecological concerns, given Jung's belief that:

every civilized human being, however high his conscious development, is still an archaic man at the deeper levels of his psyche. (Jung 10, p.51)

Equally, according to Frye, the 'technologically simple society preoccupied with the means of survival' is more likely to view poetry as 'a primary need rather than a superfluous refinement' (Frye, 1983, p.79).

In 'Literature among the Primitives', Hughes mentions the 'Winnebago Trickster Cycle', and the idea of the Trickster is a main anthropological source, as has been observed, for Crow. But here there might be a problem because if Hughes is to have minimal 'cultural accretions of the museum sort', it can only be on his own terms. If his use of the Trickster is to be viewed as valid it must presumably be because the figure 'might show something analogous to the gills in the human embryo' (Faas, 1980, p.167) and therefore somehow pre-museum, or outside the

museum. Similarly with the Oedipus poems and those inspired by the book of Genesis. In order to accept that these scenarios are 'analogous to the gills', or biological as much as cultural, it seems that Jungian archetypal theory is essential, and as this study of Hughes continues, Jung grows in importance and influence.

In any case, I think the no 'cultural accretions of the museum sort' must be regarded as a tendency rather than a rule. One example of how a quite detailed knowledge of relevant mythology widens the potential range of meaning in a poem comes in 'Truth Kills Everybody' (to be looked at shortly), which is the last in an internal series of poems concerning the relationship between man or Crow and the sea<sup>10</sup>. The sea, of course, is 'the favourite symbol for the unconscious, the mother of all that lives' (Jung 9, Part 1, pp.177-8), biologically speaking because 'it seems reasonably certain that life began in the sea' (Lovelock, 1979, p.87), and drowning can indicate 'the engulfment of ego, the principle of individuality...the...unconscious share in "venerable Nature"' (Campbell 4, p.287). I will explore these points more fully in my discussion of 'Truth Kills Everybody'.

The poems in Crow concerning the sea begin with 'Crow Alights', where Crow 'saw the sea/ Dark-spined, with the whole earth in its coils...And he shivered with the horror of Creation'. Crow's response, his starting 'searching for something to eat' ('That Moment'), is to attempt to understand through measurement and ownership 'the world, mountainously heaped' and 'the heavens, littering away'

('Crow Hears Fate Knock on the Door'). But, when he returns to the sea, or the (collective) unconscious, Crow feels only anxiety and pain in realizing that he cannot form a meaningful relationship with it ('Crow on the Beach'). In 'A Bedtime Story', one of Crow's songs, the sea is there to be understood, but man is ill-equipped to cope, and 'Creation had failed again'. Crow also seems ill-equipped to understand or form a relationship with the sea, and in 'Crow and the Sea' he tries and fails many times to cope with it (through sympathy, hatred, ignorance, etc.).

Finally, in 'Truth Kills Everybody' Crow does gain some sort of understanding from the sea, although without at least some mythological knowledge, much of this poem's import might be missed:

So Crow found Proteus--steaming in the sun.  
Stinking with sea-bottom growths  
Like the plug of the earth's sump-outlet.  
There he lay--belching quakily.

Crow pounced and buried his talons--

And it was the famous bulging Achilles--but  
he held him...

Knowing Proteus was a sea-god (and the 'belching quakily' also points toward Poseidon, god of earthquakes as well as the sea, 'the earth shaker'<sup>11</sup>) explains the opening phrase which begins with the word 'so', indicating that this action by Crow is a result of what went before, his failure in the previous poem ('Crow and the Sea') to gain any kind of meaningful relationship with the sea or the collective unconscious. Bearing in mind Hughes' comments about the need 'to accept the energy', it seems that Crow's attempts in this poem are constructive, at least in intention,

although his attempt to 'find methods of turning it to good, of keeping it under control' (Faas, 1980, pp.200-1) are fatally flawed. Unable to deal with the sea itself, Crow resorts to a very human means of comprehension, a deity invented by man in his own image as a symbol for and explanation of natural phenomena--something shown to be a dangerous procedure in 'Crow's Playmates', where the anthropomorphism of nature leads to alienation from it. To understand Proteus' place in the poems one needs to understand that Proteus could be made to prophesy if found asleep and then subdued, as Menelaus did in The Odyssey (Book IV). The god was also a shape-changer, and hence the various metamorphoses that occur in the poem. Again, if another myth is known, the poem can be seen as one of many examples where Crow gets it wrong, and Hughes has described this poem, as will be more fully explained later in this analysis of 'Truth Kills Everybody', as 'the chief positive step that Crow ever takes, but even this he takes wrongly' (Dyson, ed., 1990, p.114). The 'chief positive step' would seem to lie in Crow's attempt to understand the 'energies' represented by the sea and latent in the (collective) unconscious. Crow gets it wrong not only because of his anthropomorphizing but, more significantly because it should be Thetis, Proteus' daughter, he grabs, as Peleus does in Ovid's Metamorphoses (Book XI). Proteus himself seems to suggest this by ironically turning into Achilles, the offspring of Peleus and Thetis who, furthermore, is described as 'bulging' (suggesting pregnancy).

In other words, Crow's 'mistake' is the same as that of humanity when it rejected the goddess for the god (about which more will be said later), and some of the transformations that follow can be seen as further ironic reminders of this error--the screeching woman (which is also prophetic when one considers the suffering of women under the patriarchal systems) and the 'wreath' (suggesting death and mourning--of the goddess or of man himself) of snakes, which is plausibly a reference to primitive snake goddesses, such as the Medusa. Presumably, the 'truth' gained from a goddess (Thetis) would have been more fruitful, and it is certainly appropriate that a masculine deity prophesies the catastrophic results of the predominantly masculine process of 'civilization'. Crow's mistake is, however, 'the chief positive step' because of his tenacity, his 'determination is itself an advancing thing' (Dyson, ed., 1990, p.114), as he clings on to the transforming deity until it transforms him. Hughes in his 'A Reply to Critics' and 'On Images in Crow' makes this point and has other interesting things to say concerning 'Truth Kills Everybody':

since what he wants--to lose himself in that spirit-link with his creator--means the end of his ego-shell, then that breakthrough will destroy him as the Crow he was. But he does break through, and he is duly exploded...The images were all taken from memorable dreams...any sense of ease in the contemplation of annihilation, in this poem, is not mine. (Dyson, ed., 1990, pp.112-3)

What Crow is grappling with is not 'something dangerous', but what becomes--at the end of his mistakes and errantry--his bride and his almost-humanity...the images it throws up are compound metaphors, dream-symbols...Parables of this sort, I know, are bald fantasies without a certain sort of subjective experience in the reader. (Dyson, ed., 1990, pp.114-5)

The idea that the dream-images are in some sense 'not mine' points to their origin in the collective unconscious, and such images depend upon the reader's unconscious and conscious mind to be effective. If there is obscurity in this particular poem (and Hughes' many comments imply difficulties for readers) this would seem to be part of a technique whereby the reader, in activating the conscious mind to contemplate a difficulty with any particular image, especially a super-simple one, creates a concentration which can allow the unconscious also to confront the image with its own response.

Ostensibly, certain metamorphoses in the poem are hard to explain, and raise a possible complaint against many of the poems in the book, where lists appear (at first sight) to be randomly drawn-up and seem to contain images which add nothing (except, perhaps, confusion) to the poem as a whole. But these examples of images illuminate what Hughes meant by 'super-simple' and 'super-ugly' language, and also by the notion of 'hieroglyph language'. All the images are eventually assimilable to interpretation, but the 'gone steering wheel', for example, is prosaic enough to be plausibly ugly and simple, a 'hieroglyph' with a meaning (or meanings) to be registered by the unconscious and deciphered by the conscious part of the psyche. The 'hieroglyph' in this way has a simple pictorial form hiding, presumably, a secret, sacred or mystical meaning. In fact, Jung examines this same image in his analysis of a patient's dream, seeing it as revealing 'rudderless confusion' and arguing that this

image is likely to trigger a positive reaction from the unconscious, 'since the dream is compensatory':

The essential content of the dream-action...is a sort of finely attuned compensation of the one-sidedness, errors, deviations, or other shortcomings of the conscious attitude. (Jung 8, p.295)

Therefore the image might be said to work on the reader even if that reader does not consciously comprehend its portent. The 'gone steering wheel' is an archetypal image of the 'mandala', which in Jungian psychology is circular, and exists as an archetype for (psychic) wholeness, the aim of individuation (the attempted integration of the conscious and unconscious parts of the psyche). Many of the images used elsewhere in Hughes' work are basically mandalas, such as the egg, the flower, the sun, the snake as uroboros, and the eye (Jung 9, Part 1, p.361). Here, the image also pertains to remarks made by Day when explaining 'the primal and permanent "archetypal idea" of lost governance' (again emphasising the natural, as opposed to socio-historical, basis to archetypes):

Suppose that the deep unconscious feels that all control has been lost and the psyche is thrashing about blindly. In bygone days the personal unconscious reproduced this "archetypal idea" as a runaway horse, eyes wide-staring, nostrils aquiver, reins trailing uselessly. In the last century the runaway locomotive or railway train frequently proved the up-to-date image. Today the runaway automobile seems the general symbol in Western society for this feeling of lost control. (Day, 1984, p.341)

Hughes' hieroglyph in this instance can, therefore, be said both to prophesy and to prompt a compensation to the conscious attitude and, finally, make possible an integration of conscious and unconscious into a balanced



psyche, as symbolized by the mandala. Both compensation and individuation are more fully explored in later chapters, but this approach would seem to be in contrast with Bishop's dislike for 'scholarly search for correspondence' (Bishop, 1991, p.186) for, as Jung explains, anyone confronting these difficult images 'has to puzzle out a meaning from a succession of contrasts and paradoxes' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.108).

Every image in this poem is open to this sort of investigation by the conscious mind during the course of which (as the conscious mind ponders) the unconscious is involved in a contemplation of the pictorial nature of such imagery. Since Hughes clearly believes this to be an important poem in Crow, and since the method illustrates the way in which archetypal images or hieroglyphs work, it is worth pursuing some of the other images in 'Truth Kills Everybody', a poem whose title, by the way, might bring a character from Joyce's Finnegan's Wake to mind, here described by Campbell:

that One is...the troubled dreamer himself, whose initials, H.C.E., are to be read allegorically as "Here Comes Everybody"; that is to say, as archetypal of us all... (Campbell 4, p.258)

Of the other images in 'Truth Kills Everybody', the 'staring shark' can be interpreted as pertaining to man himself who assimilates information (food) through his never-resting (if a shark stops still, it dies) compulsive voraciousness to survive, whereas the 'oesophagus' ('the tube...extending from the mouth to the stomach, and serving for the passage of food and drink') could represent the

unconscious into which the information goes even though it has neither sought that information nor builds upon it in the way consciousness may be said to.

The '2000 volts' that make 'his body go blue' is clearly of relevance to Hughes' notion of trying 'to accept the energy' (Faas, 1980, p.200), and reveals further possibilities when compared to a Plath poem, 'The Hanging Man' (Plath, 1981, p.141):

By the roots of my hair some god got hold of me.  
I sizzled in his blue volts like a desert prophet.

This reveals a range of possibilities for Hughes' hieroglyph, possibly bringing in the idea of compensation through the metaphor (a gruesome one, perhaps, for compensation itself, or for what patriarchy does to women who are not suited for its own outlook) of 'electro-therapy' which Plath was undergoing at the time she wrote the poem. The title of her poem and the 'desert prophet' also point toward the Christian images present toward the end of 'Truth Kills Everybody'.

Christianity is a religion prophesied by the move from Thetis to Proteus (goddess to god) and also by Achilles, whose presence in the poem is not merely ironic. In terms of the poem, Achilles is both positive, in that he was 'the lucky seventh...child' (Graves, 1961, p.128) of an originally matriarchal order, and negative, his heel demonstrating him to be a mythical prototype for Christ (Graves, 1961, p.318), as Graves explains. In this way, as Crow makes his mistake, Achilles represents the turning

point in the history of humanity, the much bigger mistake for which Crow's action is symbolic:

In Greece, when the Moon-woman first became subordinated to the Thunder-god as his wife, she delegated the charge of poetry to her so-called daughter, her former self as the Triple Muse, and no poem was considered auspicious that did not begin with an appeal to the Muse for inspiration. Thus the early ballad, The Wrath of Achilles, which introduces the Iliad of Homer, begins: 'Sing, Goddess, of the destructive anger of Achilles, son of Peleus.' That Achilles is styled 'son of Peleus' rather than 'son of Thetis' proves that the patriarchal system was already in force... (Graves, 1961, p.390)

The change from matriarchy to patriarchy had already begun, then, at the very beginnings of Western Literature, and this in itself, as well as in its place in the poem, prophesies the coming of Christianity and all that entails.

The metamorphoses towards the end of the poem also have a prophetic aspect: an angel which leads to Christ which leads to the destruction of the world. The presence of Christ in the sequence of metamorphoses is not merely gratuitous, since central to many poems and to the scheme of Crow is the idea that the Christian God and Christianity are part of a (patriarchal) process which leads, through dialectics and the divorce of man from nature (Socrates), to a situation of inevitable global destruction.

I have concentrated at length on 'Truth Kills Everybody' because Hughes clearly regards it as an important poem, defending it in both the letter to Gifford and Roberts, and 'A Reply to Critics'. In the latter, as already noted, Hughes confesses that 'the images were all taken from memorable dreams', a confession which explains the confusion Hughes found amongst his critics but which,

taking the fact that Jung regarded 'memorable' dreams as likely to derive from the collective (rather than the personal) unconscious, not impossibly subjective. Hughes' own interpretation is that the poem 'records one of Crow's face-to-face encounters with the object of his search' (Dyson, ed., 1990, p.112), which could be the goddess herself (so he should have grabbed Thetis), Graves referring to the error (in this case specifically Christian) of regarding the sea-deity as masculine:

'Mary' to the Gnostics meant 'Of the Sea'. The male Holy Ghost is a product of Latin grammar--spiritus is masculine--and of early Christian mistrust of female deities or quasi-deities. Conception by a male principle is illogical...The Gnostics, whose language was Greek, identified the Holy Spirit with Sophia, Wisdom; and Wisdom was female. In the early Christian Church the Creed was uttered only at baptism, which was a ceremony of initiation into the Christian mystery and at first reserved for adults; baptism was likewise a preliminary to participation in the Greek mysteries on which the Christian were modelled, as in the Druidic mysteries.

The town of Eleusis, where the most famous mysteries of all took place, was said to be named after the Attic King Eleusis...The mother of Eleusis was 'Daeira, daughter of Oceanus', 'the Wise One of the Sea', and was identified with Aphrodite, the Minoan Dove-goddess who rose from the sea at Paphos in Cyprus every year with her virginity renewed. (Graves, 1961, p.157)

This links the sea poems of Crow to 'The baptist' of Cave

Birds which:

Enfolds you  
In winding waters, a swathing of balm

A mummy bandaging  
Of all your body's puckering hurts

In the circulation of sea.

Baptism is 'to plunge into the mythological realm' and originally concerned with 'rebirth' and not with the

cleansing of sins, according to Campbell, who further warns (in line with archetypal theory) that 'mythological symbols...have to be followed through all their implications' (Campbell, 1949, p.251). Here the encounter with the goddess ('a mummy') actually occurs, and the 'mummy bandaging' indicates the eternity conferred upon Egyptian pharaohs as well as the healing effects suggested by the word 'bandaging' and by the traditional view of such cloth as medicinal. 'The baptist' leaves the poet, or the reader (the poem insists on the 'you'), ideally at least, initiated and ready for growth ('a seed in its armour'). An image towards the end of the poem demonstrates another aspect of the sea in that the 'you' is 'an iceberg of loss/ Shrinking towards the equator', which also has parallels with 'Collision with the earth has finally come', a Gaudete epilogue poem where there is 'A kelp adrift/ In my feeding substance'<sup>12</sup>. Jung makes a remark concerning the collective unconscious that it is 'the sea upon which the ego rides like a ship' and that 'individual consciousness is surrounded by the treacherous sea of the unconscious' (Jung 10, p.138) which is 'like the conscious...never at rest, never stagnant' (Jung 17, p.51). And so, in 'Truth Kills Everybody', the images that arise from the encounter are archetypal images rising from the collective unconscious, but they lack the healing potential they might have possessed if the sea was a goddess, if history had not been dominated by god-inspired patriarchies. Once again Jung's point concerning the dual nature of the archetype is made apparent, and a warning he makes is given relevance:

If the flow of instinctive dynamism into our life is to be maintained, as is absolutely necessary for our existence, then it is imperative that we should remould these archetypal forms into ideas which are adequate to the challenge of the present. (Jung 10, p.283)

In this way, 'Truth Kills Everybody' is an internal encounter which is 'the chief positive step that Crow ever takes, but even this he takes wrongly', 'the chief positive step' being an attempt 'to lose himself in that spirit-link with his creator':

Taking it too suddenly, unprepared and ignorantly, by force, he can't control the self-transformation. The spirit-light emerges as shattering flame. So his momentary gain destroys him, and is itself lost. He reappears elsewhere as the same old Crow, or rather as not quite the same. A Crow of more fragments, more precariously glued together, more vulnerable. (Dyson, ed., 1990, pp.112-3)

This pertains to the post-holocaust situation postulated in 'Notes for a Little Play', discussed later, but the point about 'Truth Kills Everybody' is that the crude images (taken from dreams) defy immediate conscious understanding but hopefully (and according to Jungian theory) find some level of impact on the unconscious part of the psyche. The idea would seem to be that, whilst the conscious mind contemplates or puzzles out the hieroglyph, the unconscious (as consciousness imaginatively seeks solutions) is stirred into life in the mind of the reader and begins its subversive and compensatory adjustments to the psyche which could lead, eventually, to the unconscious of that reader (and by analogy that of society) asserting its right to an equal status in the psyche, thus creating (in Jung's view) a more balanced humanity, even if this might mean the

destruction of the ego (here, as elsewhere, metaphorical and actual, of the world). The 'gone steering wheel' can be remoulded into its healing psychic original, the mandala as Jung suggests, in order to find 'ideas which are adequate to the challenge of the present'.

As 'Truth Kills Everybody', without careful study, demonstrates, a major problem in Crow is that some poems seem marred (for the reader's conscious mind at least) by seemingly random or irrelevant articles on a list. One example, which Gifford and Roberts point to, is 'Crow's Song of Himself':

Something is clearly happening in the last four lines which gives the poem some point and seriousness, but on reflection the rest of it seems just a build-up: the poet could go on like that indefinitely, or remove several of the couplets, with neither greater nor lesser effect. (Gifford and Roberts, 1981, p.111)

I also remember the poet and critic Andrew Waterman referring to 'Crow and the Birds', a poem highly praised by Gifford and Roberts, in the same way: remove a few birds and it makes no difference. All three poems have interesting and powerful things to say: 'Truth Kills Everybody' I have already dealt with; 'Crow and the Birds' is explored by Gifford and Roberts; and 'Crow's Song of Himself' I shall look at briefly now. The poem ends:

When God said: 'You win, Crow,'  
He made the Redeemer.

When God went off in despair  
Crow stropped his beak and started in on the  
two thieves.

If Crow can be seen in this poem as relating to certain urges in man then it is the stubbornness of these urges that

leads to God's capitulation and the need for the creation of 'the Redeemer'. As a result, God grieves, and Crow (or man) looks toward the digestion of dialectics and the Christian stick-and-carrot system, symbolized here by the two thieves, one heaven- and the other hell-bound. The hieroglyph of the two thieves is not beyond redemption, however, and Campbell in his Occidental Mythology demonstrates the original 'meaning' behind the hieroglyph which pertained to 'the rise of light to the upper and descent to the nether world':

However, in the usual Christian reading a moral turn is given to such signs, so that their mystic sense disappears; for, with this retained, hell itself would be redeemed, whereas the whole point of the Christian dualism is that sin is absolutely evil, hell eternal, and its souls forever damned. (Campbell 3, p.260)

Equally, Neumann reports the ambiguity inherent in the symbol of the cross, 'brought out by the presence of the good and the bad thief at either side' (Neumann, 1972, p.253). Hughes at the end of Cave Birds will again be seen attempting the rescue of the cross as an archetype from the one-sided Christian interpretation:

As in dream, the images range from the sublime to the ridiculous. The mind is not permitted to rest with its normal evaluations, but is continually insulted and shocked out of the assurance that now, at last, it has understood. Mythology is defeated when the mind rests solemnly with its favorite or traditional images, defending them as though they themselves were the message that they communicate. These images are to be regarded as no more than shadows from the unfathomable reach beyond, where the eye goeth not, speech goeth not, nor the mind, nor even piety. Like the trivialities of dream, those of myth are big with meaning. (Campbell, 1949, p.270)

But, these four lines with their, as I have interpreted it, powerful possibilities, can clearly not stand alone:



they need the mundane build-up, which is repetitive and plausibly incantatory, of the previous lines to work against. Also, as has already been noted, the list in this particular case relates to Trickster mythology (the often accidental creation of useful items by the Trickster). Further to this, the list structure is also present in many early literatures and mythologies, and the poem is therefore pertinent to Hughes' desire to acknowledge and explore mythologies other than Christianity and possibly compensatory to it. In this particular case, the poem appears to enact a creation myth (leading to man, woman and 'the Redeemer') which might have a positive effect with regard to the resulting last two lines:

Among many archaic peoples rests the belief that exact knowledge of origins will give control over present circumstances. (Day, 1984, p.131)

This presumably is linked to Hughes' idea to 'have one's spirit invested in something that will not vanish...when the churches collapse' (Faas, 1980, p.207) and also pertinent to the poems in Crow that approach the Genesis myth.

The Genesis-inspired poems in Crow invite psychological readings due to the metaphorical potential of Paradise and the Fall. Redgrove, via Blake, for example, sees the Paradisiac condition as pertinent to biological reality before the constructions of intellect:

For Blake, the senses were originally diffused over the entire being, as in the relaxation or hypnoidal experience. To him all the senses except touch had been turned rigid, unable to expand or contract as they did once in Eden (and seem still to do, albeit unconsciously...)...It might seem, then, that our bodies still live in Eden, but our minds refuse to know it. (Redgrove, 1987, pp.48 and 92)

This idea pertains not only to the (pre-) historical fall into consciousness, a subject noted earlier in the discussion of 'Two Legends', but also to the personal (pre-) history of each human being, as Day points out when discussing 'expulsion from Eden':

Psychoanalysts perceive as the universal basis for this myth a yearning for the paradise of the womb and a bleak disappointment at being thrust into a hostile world. (Day, 1984, p.241)

Campbell also says that 'these myths of creation narrate of the remotest past' but also 'at the same time of the present origin of the individual' (Campbell, 1949, p.279). Thus the Genesis myth is assimilable to the psychology of the race as well as the individual, and this simultaneous macro- and micro-vision has relevance to discussions of the individual and society in my introduction, to much of Hughes' work of the 1970s, and to the inner and outer worlds Hughes talks about in his interview with Faas. The Genesis story provides Hughes with a plausibly biologically-based method of looking inward and outward simultaneously, and is just one of many mythologically- or psychologically-based devices the three volumes considered here find to do this. By centring a selection of poems on the Genesis story Hughes is able to appeal both to collective and individual unconscious forces working within the psyches of his readers. Bishop finds the Genesis poems also to be concerned with 'history':

Myth...simply approaches the conception of 'history' from a different, internal point of view. For Hughes, the levelling and reconstruction of the self, language and Creator-image--in which myth participates--is a cultural, historical necessity, though its sense of 'history' manifested in the individual and collective psychology is scarcely congruent with a

Marxist understanding of the term. One cannot imagine, for example, Terry Eagleton acquiescing in Hughes' original contention that 'How things are between man and his idea of the Divinity determines everything in his life, the quality and connectedness of every feeling and thought, and the meaning of every action.' (Bishop, 1991, pp.130-1)

The Genesis-inspired poems also metaphorically (in being created out of nothing) force the reader to consider his or her own psychology (the poet's being hidden behind the device of supposed spontaneous creation) which might be pushed away from orthodoxy by the unorthodox versions of a familiar myth:

The creation of the world becomes the archetype of all "creation", all construction, of all real and effectual action. So we see this strange phenomenon; that, while the Creator no longer receives direct religious attention, his creation becomes the pattern for all kinds of actions. (Eliade, 1960, p.151)

Further to this, the individual is implicitly invited to reconsider and perhaps even adapt his own psychology, an appeal that also pertains to society as a whole if my earlier suggestion of macro- and micro-readings can be accepted, since 'to remake a living integrity menaced by sickness', as Eliade asserts in The Forge and the Crucible, 'it is first necessary to go back ad originem, then to repeat the cosmogony' (Eliade, 1962, p.157). Eliade here links this act specifically to alchemy (of importance to my chapter on Cave Birds), but elsewhere he makes the same assertion:

This means that the myths of the origin of the human race still exert an important influence on the religious life of the tribe; they are not just recited no matter when or no matter how, but only to accompany and justify a ritual designed to re-make something (health, the vital integrity of the sick person), or to make, to create a new

spiritual factor (the shaman) or situation.  
(Eliade, 1960, p.161)

among many primitive peoples, an essential element of any cure is the recitation of the cosmogonic myth. (Eliade, 1989, p.81)

Hughes himself points to the 'primitive pre-creation atmosphere' of Popa's work (Popa, 1969, p.12), and has also 'argued that artists could create their own paradises from the world around them' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.217).

The biblical Genesis myth is unsatisfactory in a number of ways, not least in its 'Word of God' rigidity, and the problems Hughes encounters in the Genesis myth are looked at from many different perspectives throughout the sequence until workable (if provisional) conclusions and interpretations are possible. This provisionality is anyway pertinent to the Genesis story in its apocryphal forms, some of which have become curiously orthodox, such as the one Russell cites:

The interpretation of the story of the expulsion of Adam and Eve in Gen. 3 continues to be the subject of lively debate. Modern scholars reject the notion that the writer of Gen. 3 intended to equate the serpent with the Devil. Only in Apocalyptic and later literature does the serpent become the tool of Satan or Satan himself.  
(Russell, 1977, p.182)

The same author sees such varieties as pertinent to mythology (as opposed to doctrine or dogma or history) itself and reminds of the 'non-rational' nature of myth noted in the introduction:

Such refinements are not necessary to understand the myth, which, like most myths, should not be expected to be logically or serially consistent... if understood as myth, the story is comprehensible without being consistent. (Russell, 1977, pp.196-7)

Any provisionality on the part of Hughes is also justified by the fact that the Bible story itself, as with 'the Babylonian myths from which it derives', is, according to Eisler, 'based on folk memories of a time before' (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.12). Campbell points out that 'the ultimate source of the biblical Eden...cannot have been a mythology of the desert' (Campbell 3, p.105) and also sees a certain amount of heretical possibilities present in the bible stories themselves which are, after all, mythical and, therefore, less one-sided than the orthodox might wish:

there is...an ambivalence inherent in many of the basic symbols of the Bible that no amount of rhetorical stress on the patriarchal interpretation can suppress. They address a pictorial message to the heart that exactly reverses the verbal message addressed to the brain... (Campbell 3, p.17)

'The heart', or the unconscious, receives a more balanced and fuller picture than the conscious mind, and points to Campbell's 'basic symbols' as archetypes.

Further to this there are numerous other interpretations of the Genesis story possible from disciplines other than the ones already mentioned, such as the astonishing linguistic researches of Allegro which lead him to conclude that:

The whole Eden story is mushroom-based mythology, not least in the identity of the "tree" as the sacred fungus... (Allegro, 1970, p.80)

In an early poem, 'A Childish Prank', God is seen to have created two zombie-like creatures, but is unable then to find a purpose for his creations. Crow, with typical impulsiveness, plays his 'childish prank' and solves the problem in a typically trickster-like fashion. Day

explicitly links the trickster to his figure of the 'Culture-Bringer' and goes on to say:

Myths through much of the Pacific and western N. America state that humans were instructed in the use of genitalia by the Culture-Bringer. (Day, 1984, pp.234-5)

But the conclusion to the poem is as provisional as Crow's solution, and other conclusions will be approached later in the sequence. However it is interesting to note that this improvisatory treatment of the Genesis myth is in itself compensatory to that of the Old Testament, both in its new versions and in the fact that there are new versions at all, bringing into question the idea of The Bible as 'The Word of God', fixed and inviolable.

One detail to note in this poem is that it is the 'worm' and not the snake that Crow uses for his 'prank' (perhaps because a worm chopped in two can survive, whereas a snake will obviously die). The worm is the initial form of the phoenix, a notion mentioned at the start of my Cave Birds chapter, and is therefore indicative of a potential for transformation, the phoenix being according to Jung synonymous with the peacock already mentioned (Jung 9, Part 1, p.375). The snake also is reported 'almost everywhere symbolizing what is latent, preformal, undifferentiated' (Eliade, 1989, p.69) and, given the setting, it is not difficult to associate the worm with the snake. Even in this one poem there is enough that laughs at the one-sided (masculine) psychological interpretation of the snake offered by the Freudians:

The school of Freud has made us familiar with the phallic meaning of the serpent-image, and with the

deeply founded connexion between the sense of guilt and fear, and the undisciplined impulses of sex. (Bodkin, 1934, p.276)

This is a limited and limiting view, especially as 'the serpent has a vast symbolism' (Walker, 1983, p.154), leading to psychologically harmful effects that are in common with Hughes' views on the Judeo-Christian inheritance of the West (here described by Day):

Judeo-Christian tradition interprets the loss of the Garden of Eden as the loss of innocence, the maturing of a human from childish naivete to adult recognition of carnality, sin, and evil. The mythical theme of the lost paradise is worldwide, but over much of the globe no sin or guilt is attributed to mankind, and the loss is deemed an accident, divine caprice, or unwarranted enmity against humanity. (Day, 1984, p.241)

Indeed, Russell sees the view of the snake as 'phallus' as part of the Hebrew move toward dualism and refers to 'one common mythological aspect of the serpent that fails to adhere to the Hebrew Devil: the feminine' (Russell, 1977, p.217). Redgrove makes a similar point:

It is only in the Judeo-Christian mythology that the snake is evil and the Tree dangerous: Greek and Sumerian Edens are paradises of trees haunted by oracular serpents. (Redgrove, 1987, p.128)

The archetype of the snake is psychologically more complex than mere "phallus" or simple 'evil', as will be further explained shortly, but even the 'worm' of 'A Childish Prank' demonstrates the "phallus" idea to be incomplete.

When Crow comes to destroy the snake with his impulsiveness the action is no longer a 'prank', but 'A Horrible Religious Error', and this seems to tally with Hughes' opinion that (pre-) history took a wrong turning when it detached itself from Mother Earth, as symbolized here by the primitive matriarchal totem, the snake. God, a

firmly masculine deity, is indeed made uncomfortable in the presence of this older (and potentially compensatory) deity ('God's grimace writhed') and Crow, for once, does God a favour. That it is an ancient religion that Hughes is trying to evoke with the presence of the snake is made clear by his reference to that ancient symbol of the caduceus, 'still the world's best-known symbol of the healing arts' (Day, 1984, p.425), carried by 'the trickster Hermes' (Campbell 3, p.162). Hermes is variously described as 'a phallic deity' who 'represented sexual desire' (Russell, 1977, p.126); 'guide of souls to the underworld' (Campbell 3, p.161); 'Greek god of mystic knowledge and rebirth' (Campbell 3, p.9); son of 'the Greek Goddess Maia' (Graves, 1961, p.174), associated with the month of May; and the Mercurius of the alchemists. He is also 'the male traditionally associated with the triad of those goddesses of destiny--Aphrodite, Hera and Athene' (Campbell 3, p.162):

When the serpent emerged, earth-bowel brown,  
From the hatched atom  
With its alibi self twisted around it...

This begins to point toward the more complex nature of the 'serpent-image', 'for if the serpent mediates between Adam and Eve...the odds are that the serpent is hermaphroditic' (Ruthven, 1976, p.41). The word 'hermaphrodite' is, of course, a combination of two of the above mentioned deities, Hermes and Aphrodite (Campbell 3, p.164), principle gods of male and female sexuality respectively, and Russell explores the symbolism further:

The primeval snake or serpent, the ouroboros,  
pursuing itself in an endless circle as do the yin  
and the yang, is a coincidence of opposites. The



serpent can heal and help; the serpent can destroy. (Russell, 1977, p.68)

This is, of course, pertinent to the nature of archetypes and the snake, to simplify, has a potential to heal if interpreted along the lines of Russell, but destroys when viewed in the one-sided manner of Genesis and Freud.

The Genesis myth can also be read as a psychological story of Adam's inner life. Adam, as 'Cosmic Man' who is 'not only the beginning but also the final goal of all life' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.215) represents (for the male psyche) the paradisaical state at the beginning and end of life, in the unified psyche of the child and in the individual who has integrated his unconscious life into the psyche. One part of this unconscious life is the figure of the anima, which for Jung represents the feminine component of the male, who, as Eve, is separated by the dualist God from Adam (his rib), leading to the Fall. The snake, which 'as a rule...personifies the unconscious' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.370), then attempts to repair the damage through physical and metaphorical sexual union, just as the unconscious female part of the masculine psyche attempts reintegration in the process of individuation. In this version, the snake is also the anima figure:

The anima also has affinities with animals, which symbolize her characteristics. Thus she can appear as a snake or a tiger or a bird. (Jung 9, Part 1, p.200)

The tiger will reappear in my Gaudete chapter, and the bird in my Cave Birds chapter, but this version of the Genesis myth also has historical precedent:

According to the Naassenes the demiurge, the Old Testament deity, tried to prevent Adam and Eve

from acquiring knowledge, and it was the serpent who persuaded them to disobey the demiurge and taste of the fruit. (Walker, 1983, p.155)

The serpent, as shall be shown, is to reappear in later poems with an important role to play, but here it is interesting to note the connection with Gnosticism. The Gnostics were early Christians (who wrote many gospels roughly contemporary with the orthodox four) whom I shall deal with at greater length when considering the poetry of R.S.Thomas, and they, like Hughes and Thomas, were prepared to question and even rewrite what is now regarded as orthodox scripture:

Scholars investigating the Nag Hammadi find discovered that some of the texts tell the origin of the human race in terms very different from the usual reading of Genesis: the Testimony of Truth, for example, tells the story of the Garden of Eden from the viewpoint of the serpent! Here the serpent, long known to appear in gnostic literature as the principle of divine wisdom, convinces Adam and Eve to partake of knowledge while "the Lord" threatens them with death, trying jealously to prevent them from attaining knowledge, and expelling them from Paradise when they achieve it. (Pagels, 1980, p.xvii)

Another figure of interest in 'A Horrible Religious Error' is the 'sphinx', another archetypal image misunderstood by Freud (and humanity), as evidenced by Crow's overly simplistic and brutal reaction, a reaction in line with those Crow makes in 'Oedipus Crow'. Redgrove refers to 'the non-Oedipal solution, to proceed in dialogue with your visions' and adds:

Jung remarks how tragically Oedipus was misled by his own cleverness. The riddle 'was, in fact, the trap which the Sphinx laid for the unwary wanderer. Overestimating his intellect in a typically masculine way, Oedipus walked right into it, and all unknowingly committed the crime of incest. The riddle of the Sphinx was herself...' It was the dual nature of the Sphinx that he

should have contemplated...For the Egyptians the Sphinx was a vision of nature in which opposites united. (Redgrove, 1987, pp.xxvi-xxvii)

Redgrove attacks 'the Oedipal-patriarchal prejudices of our culture' and 'the Oedipal preoccupation and structure of modern science' (Redgrove, 1987, pp.xvi and xxix), and attempts to rescue the archetypal image from its one-sided and negative interpretation:

the unconscious mind is no mere lumber-room of childhood errors and traumata but a living, breathing, sensing, perfumed, luminous Sphinx. (Redgrove, 1987, p.xxx)

Others make the same point, Levi-Strauss, for example, believing 'with regard to the riddle of the Sphinx' that 'it is in the nature of things that a mythical riddle should have no answer' (Leach, 1970, p.82).

Crow's reaction to 'the serpent' in 'A Horrible Religious Error' is to 'Beat the hell out of it', both literally and in terms of the cliché, and eat it. Here Crow's masculine nature is pertinent to something Meret Oppenheim (quoted by Redgrove) said when she, in preferring 'Jung's view to that of the phallogentric Freud' had 'her intuitions confirmed by undergoing Jungian analysis' that 'the first state was matriarchal...Eve has been damned, and the snake with her--by men' (Redgrove, 1987, pp.162-3). Redgrove can again be seen to be attempting a rescue of the archetypal image from its narrow and negative Freudian reading. That 'the first state was matriarchal' also has its parallels in Genesis myths, and Campbell finds that Adam and Eve, having been made of earth 'were thus the children of the mother-goddess Earth' (Campbell 3, p.29). Uroff finds another dissenter to orthodox interpretations of

Genesis when she says that 'Hughes attempts to rewrite the creation story along lines laid down by Robert Graves':

Hughes is denying the biblical version of Adam and Eve and asserting that it must be replaced with the true story of God's mother, the old pagan goddess, the world's creator, long suppressed by Christianity's patriarchal system. (Uroff, 1979, p.222)

In 'Crow's First Lesson', Crow unwittingly points out to God the facade of his creation (and the fallacy of the Romantic view of nature) by creating natural enemies of man when trying to pronounce the word love<sup>13</sup> (too blatant a lie or too painfully difficult an ideal for such a creation), and by then creating two grotesque forms whose struggle and lust laugh back at God's notion of what he has created. Crow learns guilt in this poem, but whose fault is the disastrous outcome of this first lesson? Is it not equally the fault of God who tries to fool himself and Crow that what he has created is somehow ideal? Crow's own grotesque creations show 'love' to be untenable in a universe where the shark must be voracious and ever-moving to survive, where insects in their struggle to survive carry disease or are parasitic, and where there are two sexes. With regard to the latter, Joseph Campbell in his The Hero with a Thousand Faces remarks that:

The removal of the feminine into another form symbolizes the beginning of the fall from perfection into duality; and it was naturally followed by the discovery of the duality of good and evil, exile from the garden where God walks on earth, and thereupon the building of the wall of Paradise, constituted of the "coincidence of opposites," by which Man (now man and woman) is cut off from not only the vision but even the recollection of the image of God. (Campbell, 1949, p.153)

Linked closely to this is the Jungian version of the Fall, where duality begins with the awakening of consciousness and the resultant split of the psyche into conscious and unconscious (see my earlier discussion of 'Two Legends'). Consciousness, it would appear from Crow's accidental creations, is as restless and voracious as the shark and a parasite on the unconscious. The two struggle together as Crow's final grotesque creations, 'Man's bodiless prodigious head' (consciousness) and 'woman's vulva' (unconsciousness) until God feels compelled to attempt a separation which leads to the creation of duality and the accompanying Judeo-Christian taboo over sex. Lovelock in his Gaia makes this point:

Perhaps we were indeed expelled from the Garden of Eden and perhaps the ritual is symbolically repeated in the mind of each generation.

Biblical teaching that the Fall was from a state of blissful innocence into the sorrowful world of the flesh and the devil, through the sin of disobedience, is hard to accept in our contemporary culture. Nowadays it is more fashionable to attribute our fall from grace to man's insatiable curiosity and his irresistible urge to experiment and interfere with the natural order of things. Significantly, both the biblical story and, to a lesser extent, its modern interpretation seem aimed at inculcating and sustaining a sense of guilt--a powerful but arbitrary negative feedback in human society. (Lovelock, 1979, p.107)

Other poems in Crow rewrite the Genesis myth in ways too many to consider fully here. In 'Criminal Ballad' a man's garden seems an innocent facade to something more horrible, and in 'Crow Blacker than Ever' the distance between man's and God's expectations of each other and the reality they share leads to another provisional and impulsive action by Crow--the painful nailing together of

heaven and earth, perhaps symbolic of the nailing of Christ to the cross, so that 'Man could not be man nor God God'.<sup>14</sup> "'This is my Creation'" cries Crow, but Hughes does not leave his exploration at that--although in three further poems on this theme, Crow does not play an active part (they are, however, presumably his songs).

'Apple Tragedy' puts forward a view inherent in other poems (and in mythologies other than the Judeo-Christian)--that God is culpable in the tragic incidents of Eden. The serpent god that Crow destroyed in 'A Horrible Religious Error' is back and, having completed a presumably successful creation, is disturbed and finally displaced by a god who is portrayed as either foolish or malevolent. Even this surprising treatment of the Genesis myth (having to do with cider) has a mythical precedent quoted by Russell:

the Greek Apocalypse of Baruch introduces a new element, which did not have lasting influence: the tree that led Adam and Eve astray, says this peculiar work, was the vine, for "from the drinking of wine come all evils." (Russell, 1977, p.212)

'Apple Tragedy' itself is strongly opposed to the inheritance in the 'Civilized' West of this malevolent masculine God and His strange masculine prophet Freud with his conspiratous and blinkered 'snake as phallus' philosophy of repression. Eve and Adam, in the fable of the poem, presumably abhor the snake at the end of the poem because of this association, 'Eve...screeching: 'Rape! Rape!'' and Adam smashing 'a chair on its head'. If, on the other hand, the snake can be viewed as an emissary from the unconscious, then the actions of Adam and Eve in this poem (and of us all

in Western Society) are dangerous. Biological reality is suppressed in an atmosphere of guilt, sin, and fear that lead inevitably to the one-sided and potentially critical state of the West today ('everything goes to hell'). God himself is, of course, 'well pleased' as 'everything goes to hell', and this is perhaps the bleakest and certainly the most iconoclastic version of the Genesis myth in Crow, but it is still only provisional.

'Snake Hymn', although provisional in tone itself ('If it was not God/ It was...'), finishes this internal sequence on an optimistic note:

The snake in the garden  
 If it was not God  
 It was the gliding  
 And push of Adam's blood.

The blood in Adam's body  
 That slid into Eve  
 Was the everlasting thing  
 Adam swore was love.

The blood in Eve's body  
 That slid from her womb--  
 Knotted on the cross  
 It had no name.

Nothing else has happened.  
 The love that cannot die  
 Sheds the million faces  
 And skin of agony

To hang, an empty husk.  
 Still no suffering  
 Darkens the garden  
 Or the snake's song.

Anthropological connections are important here, ancient serpent worshipping working as a base to this poem which Hughes and/ or Crow can develop as they wish. The shedding of skin points to the original logic behind the snake being a prominent goddess totem for primitive peoples and it is

used here as a metaphor for the continuation of the human race. Still the snake, 'the gliding/ And push of Adam's blood...That slid into Eve' sings, as it might also do in 'Littleblood'. 'Love' has returned after being unpronounceable in 'Crow's First lesson' (presumably because in 'Snake Hymn' it is the love of a man and woman for each other, which appears more tenable than any universal and abstract concept invented by a universal and abstract god) and can be seen again as having to do with the androgynous nature of Eve's blood after it has mingled with Adam's. This blood, which has no name, is 'Knotted on the cross' (and here the gnostic appraisal of Christ as an hermaphrodite, as well as comments made earlier on the possible hermaphroditic nature of the snake, are relevant), is tied to the suffering inherent in 'life', and 'love' in this sense is continually reborn to undergo suffering, but also to experience visions of the garden and the continuing song. As Hughes says in his 'Myth and Education' essay, 'every new child is nature's chance to correct culture's error' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.265).

The preceding poem, 'Notes for a Little Play' ('play', of course, being an important concept in the book, as already mentioned) suggests a post-nuclear-holocaust Adam and Eve. The poem is not without hope, not least because 'the marriage of these simple creatures' is 'Celebrated here...Without guest or God'. The 'myth of the end of the world is of universal occurrence' and is closely linked to the Genesis mythology already discussed since:



The end of the world is never absolute; it is always followed by the creation of a new, regenerated world... (Eliade, 1960, p.243)<sup>15</sup>

Thus, closely linked to the Genesis-inspired poems in Crow is its theme of global destruction, which is in line with Jung's assertions that 'the more primordial and aboriginal' symbolic experiences are, 'the more they represent a future truth' (Jung 6, p.383) and the idea that 'anything psychic is Janus-faced--it looks both backwards and forwards' (Jung 6, p.431). Equally, according to Campbell, 'only birth can conquer death--the birth, not of the old thing again, but of something new' (Campbell, 1949, p.16), and the Jungian analyst Jolande Jacobi remarks that 'every transformation demands as its precondition "the ending of a world"--the collapse of an old philosophy of life' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.363).

As 'Truth Kills Everybody' showed, within the mythical framework of Crow, Armageddon is inevitable given the prevailing forces in Western Civilization, and this view is further corroborated by 'Crow's Account of the Battle' where:

Blasting the whole world to bits  
 Was too like slamming a door  
 Too like dropping in a chair  
 Exhausted with rage  
 Too like being blown to bits yourself  
 Which happened too easily  
 With too like no consequences.

The language at the end of this extract is struggling hard to maintain any sort of control, and this poem interestingly follows 'Crow Tyrannosaurus' in which Crow's desire to 'try to become the light' is thwarted by his instinct, 'his head,

trapsprung'. Crow has presumably learnt from this and now delivers his emotional account of the inevitability of war:

And when the smoke cleared it became clear  
This had happened too often before  
And was going to happen too often in future  
And happened too easily...

This unavoidable and continuous war, furthermore, escalates towards a final explosion of the globe.

This is, of course, a real problem, not to be brushed under the carpet as Schmidt and Lindop suggest Hughes should do in their Movement-like head-in-the-sand evasinary tactics, attacking Crow for being written 'without a...depth or generality of experience' (Schmidt and Lindop, ed., 1972, p.196). No one has experienced global destruction, but this does not make it a non-subject. Jung deals with the same subject, and connects it to Christian dualism which 'foists it off on the devil' and therefore 'exonerates man's conscience of...responsibility':

Considering that the evil of our day puts everything that has ever agonized mankind in the deepest shade, one must ask oneself how it is that, for all our progress in the administration of justice, in medicine and in technology, for all our concern with life and health, monstrous engines of destruction have been invented which could easily exterminate the human race. (Jung 10, p.298).

The poem following 'Crow Alights', 'That Moment', finishes like this:

And the body lay on the gravel  
of the abandoned world  
Among abandoned utilities  
Exposed to infinity forever

Crow had to start searching for something to eat.

The quatrain is remarkably similar in effect to much of what R.S.Thomas was achieving at the same time in H'm. The

apparent (super-) simplicity belies an intelligent pun on 'abandoned' and the heavy irony of 'utilities' and 'infinity forever'. In this way, as with Thomas, what at first seems casual is loaded with possibility, with 'the world' being deserted by man and/ or God, or indulging in licentious behaviour with the result that there is nobody to utilize the 'utilities'. It might seem reckless and presumptuous for a poet to blame either God or man directly for global destruction, but the ambiguity allows either, both, or neither possibilities to stand. Then, as the trees and streets 'closed forever', Crow's reaction, in the face of disaster, is to survive. Eating is itself a metaphor for survival<sup>16</sup> fraught with its own moral problems, as 'Crow Tyrannosaurus', the poem over the page, explicitly demonstrates. But, here at least, Crow has managed 'to drag himself out of it in fairly good morale' (Faas, 1980, p.207).

Other poems in the book highlight aspects of man's determined path towards self-destruction. 'The Black Beast' appears as an allegory of man's own escalating armed struggles where his enemy is (inevitably) man<sup>17</sup> and 'A Disaster' also illuminates an aspect of this theme. Its first line recalls the opening of 'The Gospel According to St. John' (King James Version), 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'. But, since here we have 'a word' rather than 'the Word', this could mean doctrine and written law, especially religious law. Pertinent to this interpretation are the final chapters of Graves' The White Goddess:

But as soon as religion in its primitive sense is interpreted as social obligation and defined by tabulated laws--as soon as Apollo the Organizer, God of Science, usurps the power of his Mother the Goddess of inspired truth, wisdom and poetry, and tries to bind her devotees by laws--inspired magic goes, and what remains is theology, ecclesiastical ritual, and negatively ethical behaviour...one of the reasons for the restlessness of Christendom has always been that the Gospel postulates an immediate end of time and therefore denies mankind a sense of spiritual security. (Graves, 1961, pp.479 and 481)

It appears obvious from what Graves says that a written doctrine, especially one that is nearly two thousand years old, will be unable to adapt to the changing circumstances of humanity. This is a point supported and furthered by Campbell in his Occidental Mythology where he talks of deities 'not...immanent in nature but transcendent'

(Campbell 3, p.431):

Like the virtue of the Sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church, which are unaffected by the realities of the world, the fall of Christian empires, the personal lives of the clergy, or the total refutation through science of the mythology on which they rest, so, too, the garment of Islam--and now likewise of the People--is of a transcendental order untouched by the realities of time, or by the sins of those upon whose shoulders it descends. (Campbell 3, p.438)

Campbell also points out that the tendency of these religions 'has always been toward exclusivism, separatism, and intolerance' and that 'the old patterns of morality...no longer match the actualities even of the local, let alone the world, scene' (Campbell 3, pp.431 and 522).

In 'A Disaster' Hughes simplifies the problem by having 'a word' stand for jealous occidental doctrines and having it then attempt to devour the world. That 'a word' is 'not...immanent in nature but transcendent' is further

emphasized by the fact that it is 'all mouth,/ Earless, eyeless' in contrast with Crow whose 'eye's roundness' and 'ear's deafness' have been caused by his being a part of nature in 'Crow Tyrannosaurus'. Incidentally, Crow's wanting 'to become the light', if a comparison with New Testament doctrine (e.g. 'the true light' of 'The Gospel According to St. John') can be made, argues once again that Christianity's transcendent system is dangerously out of touch with reality. This is further supported by the fact that it is 'Christ's hot pounding heart' in 'Truth Kills Everybody' that transforms into the explosive earth.

Returning to 'A Disaster', then, Crow's role in it is an interesting one. He benefits from the death of men and the collapse of cities ('he ate well'), but when 'a word' begins to damage the earth 'he became watchful', which seems to imply concern or worry. But the earth survives the onslaught, as does Crow, who walks and muses at the end and who is presumably now in better shape to withstand the 'words' of the following poem, 'The Battle of Osfrontalis'.

Clearly, in 'A Disaster' 'a word' has been somehow defeated by the earth, which implies that something survives. What survives could be all nature, if 'a word' 'could digest nothing but people', or Crow alone, especially if, as Bold asserts, 'the animal in Crow can resist words' (Bold, 1976, p.123), as is the case in 'Crow's Last Stand'. Crow certainly survives, but in these two contexts, what is Crow? This is a difficult question to answer, but I would tentatively assume Crow here, when his mythological plumage is removed, will be found to stand for some small remnant or

aspect of humanity now bereft of a self-destructed civilization.

The idea of a self-destructed civilization is, of course, an extremely pessimistic one, but for Hughes and/ or Crow it is only a useful one to put forward if something can be learned from it. Hughes, like R.S.Thomas, takes the potential disaster of the world's or, at least, civilization's finish and struggles to discover some escape or positive potential from it. Myth has proved a useful device for both poets in dealing with this subject since it simplifies, objectifies and crystallizes the issues which are then accessible to the (super-) simple lyric line. Hughes was, as has been pointed out, strengthened in this resolve by other poets, such as Popa:

Hughes: Popa, and several other writers one can think of, have in a way cut their losses and cut the whole hopelessness of that civilization off, have somehow managed to invest their hopes in something deeper than what you lose if civilization disappears completely and in a way it's obviously a pervasive and deep feeling that civilization has now disappeared completely. If it's still here it's still here by grace of pure inertia and chance and if the whole thing has essentially vanished one had better have one's spirit invested in something that will not vanish. And this is a shifting of your foundation to completely new Holy Ground, a new divinity, one that won't be under the rubble when the churches collapse.

Faas: In Crow the first and second creation seem to be separated by nuclear war which you hint at in poems such as "Crow Alights" and "Notes for a Little Play."

Hughes: Yes, a complete abolition of everything that's been up to this point and Crow is what manages to drag himself out of it in fairly good morale. (Faas, 1980, p.207)

Hughes certainly finds some hope in 'Notes for a Little Play'. The note form of this poem (implying a certain

provisionality and also a need for the readers to participate in the act of creation, "writing up the notes") with its deadpan effects ('two strange items') creates a powerful emotive impact in the way that 'Crow's Account of the Battle' did. The 'demolition' is:

total  
 Except for two strange items remaining in the  
 Two survivors, moving in the flames blindly.

This is in line with a point Eliade makes about myths of destruction, for 'the disappearance of an entire humanity... is never total, for a new humanity is born from a pair of survivors' (Eliade, 1989, p.87).

Hughes' consideration of these two survivors provides, psychologically at least, the element of hope from this most horrific of themes:

And this is the marriage of these simple  
 Celebrated here, in the darkness of the sun,  
 Without guest or God.

Linked to any external view of this theme is the internal destruction of everything (ego), 'a complete abolition of everything that's been up to this point', as Hughes says. The post-holocaust dance of celebration is here 'without... God', or without the orthodox and wrong-headed inheritance of the West. The post-holocaust situation allows for a new start, a new Eden, a 'regeneration', as Eliade has it, both metaphorically and psychologically within the minds of poet and reader. Simultaneously, of course, the poem registers the problems with and potential outcome of Western Civilization and its God which, in the end, is a God of

Reason. Jung, whose views on global destruction were quoted earlier, continues on the same page to warn that 'Reason alone no longer suffices'. Left to Reason humanity, at best, must live in fear:

The fear of universal destruction may spare us the worst, yet the possibility of it will nevertheless hang over us like a dark cloud so long as no bridge is found across the world-wide psychic and political split--a bridge as certain as the existence of the hydrogen bomb. (Jung 10, pp.298-9)

That bridge might be the individual, represented psychologically (conscious and unconscious) and in terms of personal love (the various Adams and Eves), existing in the inner and outer worlds, as presented by two facing poems in Crow, 'Snake Hymn' and 'Notes for a Little Play'<sup>18</sup>.

There is, however, a negative postscript to the positive conclusion to the theme of global destruction in Crow ('Notes for a Little Play')--'King of Carrion', although the word 'carrion' might conceivably be a pun<sup>19</sup>. This poem is altogether enigmatic--who is the 'King of Carrion'? At first it obviously seems to be Crow, a carrion bird in both senses of the pun. But on closer examination, it might seem that Christ is intended. The 'palace...of skulls' recalls Golgotha; the 'crown' so close to the word 'splinters' recalls the crown of thorns; 'the hanged thing' is a plausible description of Christ; and the 'kingdom' might be that which Christ promised to allow Christians into but which is, in the poem, empty (presumably because no human can completely deny the animal within in favour of the spiritual and thus follow Christ to his kingdom). If this interpretation is accepted, then the poem seems to be yet



another warning to reject Christianity before it is too late:

Christianity deposes Mother Nature and begets, on her prostrate body, Science, which proceeds to destroy Nature... (Faas, 1980, p.187)

That Christianity is a religion that eschews the natural is a view held by many. Frye speaks of 'the Christian teaching that there were no gods and nothing numinous in nature' except that they be 'devils' (Frye, 1983, p.52); Eliade introduces his The Myth of the Eternal Return with the idea (Eliade, 1989, p.xi); and Campbell quotes Professor Flugel as saying of Christianity that there is:

a tendency to adopt an attitude of distrust, contempt, disgust or hostility towards the human body, the Earth, and the whole material Universe, with a corresponding tendency to exalt and overemphasize the spiritual elements, whether in man or in the general scheme of things. (Campbell, 1949, p.113)

For Neumann this concentration by the Christian on 'the "pure spirit"' has created a 'one-sidedness' which 'is threatening the existence of Western mankind' (Neumann, 1972, p.57). Nietzsche too sees Christianity as unnatural, and also brings in, for comparison, the idea of dream:

reverse the whole love of the earthly and of dominion over the earth into hatred of the earth and the earthly--that is the task the church has set itself... (Nietzsche, 1973, p.70)

This purely fictitious world is distinguished from the world of dreams, very much to its disadvantage, by the fact that the latter mirrors actuality, while the former falsifies, disvalues and denies actuality. (Nietzsche, 1968, p.125)

Hughes use of dream in Crow and other books points towards a natural compensation for the unnatural religion, Christianity.

Christianity, as Hughes says with an Old Testament verb, 'begets...Science':

When it came the turn of the Christian Church to embody the laws of the inner world, it made the mistake of claiming that they were objective laws. That might have passed, if Science had not come along, whose laws were so demonstrably objective that it was able to impose them on the whole world...The small piloting consciousness of the bright-eyed objective intelligence had steered its body and soul into a hell. (Scigaj, ed., 1992, pp.264-5)

Scigaj quotes various authorities which parallel this view, and some who call for a radical solution to the problem:

The historian Lynn White, Jr., in an essay often quoted by ecologists, argued that Christianity paved the way for the ecological ravages of modern science by condemning the animism of tribal cultures as an idolatrous belief in a spirit world inhabiting nature. Once Christianity drained the spirit out of nature, humans could exploit it without regard to the needs of animals and plants or the preservation of minerals...Some feminist theologians venture further...by calling for a new, nonpatriarchal religion with an ecologically grounded creation story. (Scigaj, 1991, pp.133-4)

The possibility of a new (and primitive) matriarchal theology is discussed later in this chapter.

Destructive science, as 'Truth Kills Everybody' showed, is the natural heir to Christianity, and an inevitable result of 'Western Civilisation' as 'an evolutionary error'. 'Heroic technological progress...is a story of decline' (Faas, 1980, p.186) which leads not to a society but a hell and in Crow, just as in R.S.Thomas' H'm, science is a part of the mythological landscape, so that rockets ('Crow and Mama'), 'Universal laws' ('Crow's Account of the Battle')

and 'a machine-gunner' ('A Grin') appear as naturally in the poems as the various plants, birds and animals.

Crow's career in science properly begins with 'Crow Hears Fate Knock on the Door'. Nature, he imagines, is an 'infinite engine':

He imagined the whole engineering  
Of its assembly, repairs and maintenance--  
And felt helpless.

Crow determines to escape through logic and science the 'buried cell' (and the prison of the body and/ or the biological inevitability of 'progress' are also themes which run right through Crow) of himself. Historically this attitude would seem to tally with the awakening ambitions of man, as demonstrated by such early scientific pioneers as Lucretius with his discourse The Nature of the Universe, written according to 'true reason', as well as his Greek predecessors, such as Epicurus, in whose 'well-marked footprints' Lucretius placed his own reasoning and 'resolute steps' (Lucretius, 1951, p.96). 'The prophecy', which pertains to man as much as to Crow, concerns, according to Ramsey, 'the concept of Man the Measurer and Measure' which will lead to 'alienation from Nature and the peculiar ignorance that goes by the names of rational scepticism and scientific inquiry' (Sagar, ed., 1983, p.180). For Jung too, 'as scientific understanding has grown...man...is no longer involved in nature' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.85). This makes Bold's remarks concerning his own disappointment that Hughes had 'been unable to see the epic significance of our scientific age' (Bold, 1976, p.131) ironic. Hughes' views are here close to those of Nietzsche:

For seventeen years I have not wearied of exposing the despiritualizing influence of our contemporary scientific pursuits. The harsh Helot condition to which the tremendous extent of science has condemned every single person today is one of the main reasons why education and educators appropriate to fuller, richer, deeper natures are no longer forthcoming. (Nietzsche, 1968, p.62)

The pursuit of science leads to the warfare of 'Crow's Account of the Battle' as well as the self-destruction of 'The Black Beast', and the destructiveness of science is a recurring theme. In 'Crow's Account of St George', the temptations of science are made clear:

He sees everything in the Universe  
Is a track of numbers racing towards an answer.

In his concentration of logic, which fills him with 'delirious joy' since he thinks he is approaching the sort of understanding prophesied by Crow in 'Crow Hears Fate Knock on the Door', he becomes unable to cope with something as irreducible and therefore, to his logical mind, as monstrous as a fellow human being. Inevitably, at the end, 'his wife and children lie in their blood'. Not only does this poem offer a modern rendering of the St George myth, a myth Hughes castigates in his 'Myth and Education' essay and against which he seems to be fighting in his book for children The Iron Man, but it also renders a small scale metaphor for the Armageddon possibility already discussed. Many of the points Hughes makes in his essay and children's book also find echo in Campbell when talking about 'The Queller of Beasts', a Cretan seal of c. 1600 B.C.:

We note that a Christian reading has been given to the monsters. They are sprung of the race of Cain. Thereby a sense of moral evil has been added to the old pagan one of natural terror. The lions on the Cretan seal...are quelled, not slain;

and, even if slain, would not have been morally evil. (Campbell 4, p.117)

Another aspect of this dehumanization by science is approached by Faas in his brief discussion of 'Crow's Vanity'. After talking about 'The Contender' (Christ or Prometheus), Faas goes on to say:

In the following poem, progress and technology, as championed by the original Prometheus, have become mere chimeric projections of "Crow's Vanity"--

Mistings of civilisations towers gardens  
 Mistings of skyscrapers webs of cities--

the protagonist looking for "a glimpse of the usual grinning face" in "the evil mirror" and breathing heavily with excitement... (Faas, 1980, p.107)

However, this is where Faas abandons the argument. But, surely, a plausible argument in this light, if Crow can be seen as embodying humanity or an element of it, is that 'progress and technology' have removed humanity's self-identity (or, at least, have lessened it by removing the part that Crow might stand for) from the picture. This interpretation would find support from other poems in Crow, as it does from this extract from Hughes' essay 'Leonard Baskin':

The Scientific Spirit...is hard-headed, it fears nothing, it faces the facts, and how it has improved our comforts! And yet what is this master of ours? The Scientific Spirit was born of the common hunt for the nourishing morsel, nursed by the benign search for objective truth, schooled in the pedagogic idolatry of the objective fact, graduated through old-maid specialised research, losing eyes, ears, smell, taste, touch, nerves and blood, adapting to the sensibility of electronic gadgets and the argument of numbers, to become a machine of senility, a pseudo-automaton in the House of the Mathematical Absolute. So it ousts humanity from man and he dedicates his life to the laws of the electron in vacuo, a literal self-sacrifice, and soon, by bigotry and the especially

rabid evangelism of the inhuman, a literal world-sacrifice, as we all too truly now fear. (Faas, 1980, p.167)

This quotation reveals something of the meaning behind the 'Earless, eyeless...word' of 'A Disaster', and the phrase 'the Scientific Spirit', reveals Hughes tendency to mythologize science, with its capital letters perhaps recalling 'the Holy Spirit'. But then science is just another mythology, dangerous only because it pretends to universality:

It is we alone who have fabricated causes, succession, reciprocity, relativity, compulsion, number, law, freedom, motive, purpose; and when we falsely introduce this world of symbols into things and mingle it with them as though this symbol-world were an 'in itself', we once more behave as we have always behaved, namely mythologically. (Nietzsche, 1973, p.33)

Science is a particularly one-sided view of the universe, the product of 'an overdeveloped, split-off rational component that distrusts and represses the instinctual' (Scigaj, 1991, p.80), and Hughes himself has said:

The exclusiveness of our objective eye, the very strength and brilliance of our objective intelligence, suddenly turns into stupidity--of the most rigid and suicidal kind...The educational tendencies of the last three hundred years, and especially of the last fifty, corresponding to the rising prestige of scientific objectivity and the lowering prestige of religious awareness, have combined to make it so. It is a scientific ideal...The disaster is, that it is heading straight towards infinite misery, because it has persuaded human beings to identify themselves with what is no more than a narrow mode of perception...Scientific objectivity, as we all know, has its own morality, which has nothing to do with human morality. It is the morality of the camera. And this is the prevailing morality of our time. It is a morality utterly devoid of any awareness of the requirements of the inner world. It is contemptuous of the 'human element'. That is its purity and its strength. The prevailing philosophies and political ideologies of our time subscribe to this contempt, with a nearly

religious fanaticism, just as science itself does.  
(Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.262-3)

Jung speaks in this context of 'wrong orientation' (Jung 6, p.346), and Redgrove is equally dismissive of what Hughes calls 'a narrow mode of perception':

It is easy to be clever if you leave something important out. Thus Einstein's theories avoid all subjective experience whatsoever; and Freud in effect forbids our acquiring direct knowledge from adult sexuality; he forbids 'carnal knowledge'. (Redgrove, 1987, p.xxix)<sup>20</sup>

Crow himself, in 'Crow and Stone', seems to embody 'the Scientific Spirit', a role very different from the one he held in 'Crow's Vanity':

But by now the stone is a dust--flying in vain,  
And Crow has become a monster--his mere eyeblink  
Holding the very globe in terror.

And still he who never has been killed  
Croaks helplessly  
And is only just born.

This poem has greater significance if certain points Eliade makes are known:

The stone parentage of the first men is a theme which occurs in a large number of myths...That the stone is an archetypal image expressing absolute reality, life and holiness is proved by the fact that numerous myths recount the story of gods born from the petra genitrix analogous to the Great Goddess, the matrix mundi. (Eliade, 1962, p.43)

Mumford adds that 'throughout human history stone has been the agent and symbol of continuity' (Mumford, 1967, p.115), and Neumann that '"stones" are among the oldest symbols of the Great Mother Goddess' (Neumann, 1972, p.260). The stone which was the goal of the alchemists (thus making stone another symbol pertaining to the distant past and the hoped-for future) is also of relevance here:

The alchemical stone (the lapis) symbolizes something that can never be lost or dissolved,

something eternal that some alchemists compared to the mystical experience of God within one's own soul. (Jung, ed., 1978, p.226)

Crow's battle against stone is therefore, like 'The Black Beast', a battle against himself, a battle against his soul, and 'Crow and Stone' therefore ends the internal sequence with a warning reminiscent of the famous cartoon by David Low, first published in the Evening Standard of August 1945 which shows a white-coated scientist standing astride the globe and offering the atom to humanity, portrayed as a napped baby (Walker, 1978, p.144).

In poems such as 'The Black Beast', 'Crow's Account of St George' and 'Revenge Fable', man's fascination with science ends with the destruction of Nature and, as a result, the destruction of humanity. 'Revenge Fable' finishes like this:

With all her babes in her arms, in ghostly  
She died. weepings,

His head fell off like a leaf.

This (although trees releaf in the spring), along with Crow's fated quest, outlined in the 'prophecy' of 'Crow Hears Fate Knock on the Door' and shown to be inescapable in 'Oedipus Crow', would seem to leave little room for redemption:

In spite of our proud domination of nature, we are still her victims, for we have not even learned to control our own nature. Slowly but, it appears, inevitably, we are courting disaster...By the aid of reason, so we assure ourselves, we have "conquered nature"...It remains quite natural for men to quarrel and to struggle for superiority over one another. How then have we "conquered nature"? (Jung, ed., 1978, p.91)



But the protagonist in the above extract is a male and in the science poems the protagonists, Crow or unnamed scientists, are always firmly masculine:

It was Jung's view that masculine, patriarchal values have produced a Western culture--both secular and religious--which neglects the soul, and the balancing influence of the feminine psyche. (Segaller and Berger, 1989, p.119)

Segaller and Berger go on to quote Andrew Samuels in terms that might annoy a feminist, an issue I will deal with shortly in relation to the Jungian feminist Wehr:

I think the feminine stands against organization, for example against organized religion. It stands against hierarchy, for example class systems. It stands against an overdependence on logic and rationality, so that the hard sciences are challenged. It stands against an excessive dependency on technology and so it espouses natural issues, an interest in ecology, in the environment. In other words, the feminine principle needs to be understood not as some kind of neutral discovery of Jung's, but as a political movement of the unconscious, with a programme, just as any other political movement has a programme. (Segaller and Berger, 1989, p.119)

Even 'a word' of 'A Disaster' recalls, in terms I dealt with earlier, the masculine Judaeo-Christian and Islamic religions. Furthermore, if Thetis should have been the target for Crow in 'Truth Kills Everybody', then this poem also joins a large number in which the relationship between a masculine Crow and a female figure, sometimes, if not always, representative of Nature herself, is examined. Man has exiled himself from Nature thanks mainly to the striving toward 'civilisation' which culminates in modern science and religion. Woman, however, has escaped the role man finds himself in 'by the skin of her teeth' (Faas, 1980, p.186), and in Crow the analogy of woman to Nature, which also

appears at the end of 'Revenge Fable', is so pervasive that it intrudes into poems where the connection is not plainly stated--in 'Crow and Mama', for example.

'Crow and Mama' is ostensibly a poem concerning the unavoidable and painful relationship between Crow and his mother, but, given the nature of the book as a whole, it can also be seen as an allegory for man's relationship with Nature. As Crow grows he strives to be free of his mother, using increasingly technological means, and yet he cannot attain that freedom, and he hurts her in the process. So, it would seem, in Hughes' view, is the relationship between man and Nature. As man tries to free himself, through 'civilisation', from primitive beginnings ('Crow and Stone') and closeness to Nature, he incidentally damages Mother Nature who is, after all, his inescapable origin.

It is interesting to note here that the creation of this particular myth allows the poem to work on these various levels so that it can represent many things: an episode in the life of Crow; the growth away from the mother by the boy-child, signalled in many societies by an introduction or initiation into the masculine world; the separation of mankind from the closer-to-nature religion of 'the Great Mother' and the resultant movement towards the anthropomorphism and, beyond that, the abstraction of the more patriarchal religions; and, linked with all these, the scientific endeavour which obsesses man and with which he seeks to separate himself from Nature.

Hughes here, and throughout his work, appears to have taken on a Jungian identification of woman with Nature, and

the Jungian view of the feminine has not gone unquestioned, by feminists especially. Demaris S. Wehr in her book Jung and Feminism challenges Jung's (and therefore Hughes') view of women:

The effect of Jung's theory, however unintended, is to undermine women's feeling of self-worth in themselves. (Wehr, 1988, p.105)

The main problem Wehr finds with Jung is that 'Jung defined the feminine largely in terms of receptivity' (Wehr, 1988, p.6), a view she finds potentially dangerous to the feminist outlook and resulting from (in Wehr's view) the lack of a sociological context for Jung's theory, 'Jungian psychology's view of the human being is nearly "contextless"' (Wehr, 1988, p.14):

Women's "diffuse" consciousness, he felt, was closer to the principle of Eros (relatedness), and men's "focused" one to the principle of Logos (analysis). Jung, however, sees Eros and Logos as natural--even as archetypal principles--rather than as culturally created tendencies in women and men. That makes a crucial difference between his and most feminists' views. (Wehr, 1988, p.102)

Neumann, who dedicates his The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype to Jung at eighty, makes exactly this point, but finds whether or not 'this archetypally "feminine" world involves the economic or political domination of the woman...irrelevant' (Neumann, 1972, p.91). This is a point that Rand Brandes also misses when talking about Gaudete:

Hughes does not (with one notable exception) write about real, complicated women who are culturally conscripted; he instead offers a cosmic feminine principle--the apotheosized disembodied woman. (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.173)

One could equally say that in Gaudete Hughes does not (with one notable exception) write about real, complicated men.

Wehr, however, is not entirely negative about the Jungian view of the feminine (although she appears at times to forget Jung's uneasy feelings about 'authority, logic and rationality' in general):

In spite of these failings, Jung's psychology, including his psychology of the animus, has meant a great deal to many women. We can see that, although his starting point leaves women in a deficit position with regard to natural female authority, logic, and rationality, the schema does allow women to claim those qualities via their "masculine side." That is clearly more liberating than not claiming them at all. Furthermore, women who are attracted to Jungian psychology find an appreciation of the "feminine" in Jung's work, and often feel vindicated in a way of being that our society does not value. (Wehr, 1988, p.122)

Finally, Wehr provides what might amount to an escape clause for both Jung and Hughes, as well as an approach that can allow feminists to accept the analogy between woman and Nature in the works of these two men, an approach that derives from the recognition that 'with his unexamined acceptance of male-generated gender-related images, Jung has dealt primarily with the inner world of the male and its projections' (Wehr, 1988, p.126):

The anima is clearly an immensely powerful force in the male psyche. If women realize that men are perceiving their animas, not women themselves, in these kinds of statements about women's psychology, they will find them less confusing. (Wehr, 1988, p.108)

This is, in fact, a principal idea behind Jung's work, as Day explains when speaking of the anima and animus:

Jungian theory would interpret the anima as femininity and the unconscious in a man, and the animus as masculinity and consciousness in a woman. (Day, 1984, p.377)<sup>21</sup>

Campbell explains further that 'In C.G.Jung's terminology', the anima is 'for the male...the archetype of life itself,

life's promise and allure' (Campbell 4, p.488)<sup>22</sup>. The anima can personify the collective unconscious for the male psyche (Jung 9, Part 1, pp.244-5) and, as an archetype, 'is bipolar...positive one moment and negative the next' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.199). Jung himself remarks that men's view of woman can be derived from 'their own anima projections and distorted accordingly' (Jung 17, p.198).

The goddess figure in Crow is then an important figure for the rebalancing of Western patriarchal Civilization, and perhaps 'our future on earth...depends on man following his own feminine self' (van der Post, 1988, p.180), and Hughes himself talks about:

The idea of the damned self rising to steal the beloved woman, who is the soul...It should be said again, this is only a metaphor. From the point of view of woman, everything is different, in the sense that the 'tragic error' belongs exclusively to the psychology of the man (except where woman imitates man). (Hughes, 1992, p.516)

Pertinent here also is the personal quest for wholeness of Crow's male author:

Jung was aware that his psychology possessed a masculine bias because he knew it had grown out of his own experience. For this reason he encouraged women with whom he was in close contact to develop a feminine counterpoise to his work. (Stevens, 1991, p.213)

The idea of the anima is clearly important to the role of the feminine in Crow and Hughes sees the problems of the Western Civilized individual as more prominent in the male, but in 'A Reply to Critics' Hughes would probably annoy feminists such as Wehr by finding a biological foundation for his creation. In this essay, the figure of Crow is related directly to that of the Trickster, which Hughes

describes as 'the optimism of the sperm, still struggling joyfully along after 150 million years':

The sperm is looking for the egg--to combine with every human thing that is not itself, and to create a new self, with multiplied genetic potential, in a renewed world. (Dyson, ed., 1990, p.110)

Campbell clinches the analogy when contemplating the 'King and Queen', united in one body in the symbolism of an alchemical operation, recalling the hermaphrodite mentioned earlier:

Biologically this dual form can be compared to that stage in the fertilization of an egg cell when the nuclear contents of the egg and sperm commingle to constitute the new life. (Campbell 4, pp.292-3)

Where Wehr's view of Jung is finally a distortion is when she tries to create a sociological context for archetypal theory. Jung's theory depends, it seems to me, on unconscious forces (especially if collective) being biological, and sociological only in the very widest sense that the collective unconscious and its archetypes were planted in a prehistory where human beings were more or less social animals and in that they still exist today in the individuals that go to make up a human society.

'Receptivity', a word Wehr worries about, is as obviously related to the role of the egg as it is to the role allotted to women by patriarchal social systems. Jung can be liberating for women, as Wehr rightly points out, but Wehr's attempt to find meeting points between social or political context and the collective unconscious is, in the end, misguided. Indeed, Hughes lists certain archetypes (including the Trickster) and remarks that 'none of them

operates within a closed society, but on the epic stage, in the draughty wholeness of Creation' (Dyson, ed., 1990, p.112). The context of any modern society is brief and vague in comparison to the '150 million years' in which the collective unconscious has had to grow, something Hughes again relates to the Trickster:

All the annihilations and transformations that befall Trickster are reminiscent of what used to happen to some gods. This agon is like the perpetual replay archive of all that ever happened to living organisms, as if all life could pool its experience in such beings, and it defines the plane Trickster lives on, the dimension of psychic life through which he fares forward, destruction-prone but indestructible, and more than happy, like the spirit of the natural world...And rescuing through everything the great possibility. (Dyson, ed., 1990, pp.110-1)

'The great possibility' is, of course, union with the anima or, in the sperm's case, 'marriage with its creator' (Dyson, ed., 1990, p.111), which would give Wehr the same escape clause regarding the anima, if she came to read Crow, that she found with Jung although to do so would undermine Jungian theory. Be that as it may, I think Crow is to be interpreted as the masculine psyche trying to come to terms with the feminine principle, or anima, although whether this masculine psyche is seen to be specifically pertinent to the twentieth century (which would satisfy Wehr's modifications of Jung) or universal is up to the individual reader, despite the fact that Hughes' comments in 'A Reply to Critics' would certainly point to the universal reading of Jung:

The spirit of the sperm, as Trickster, may be generalised, simultaneously base and divine, but it is not at all abstract. His recurrent adventure is like a master plan, one of the

deepest imprints in our nature, if not the deepest, and one of our most useful ideas. We use it all the time, quite spontaneously, like a tool, at every stage of our psychological recovery or growth. It supplies a path to the God-seeker... (Dyson, ed., 1990, p.111)

The subject of nature can again be looked at as a sort of internal sequence within the book that works toward a provisional but positive conclusion. There are the sea poems already mentioned in which Crow often stands in pained awe before the might of the sea, and in general Crow and the men he sometimes sings of are hurt as they strive for scientific answers from Nature ('Crow Hears Fate Knock on the Door', 'Crow's Account of St George', etc.). Other responses to Nature tried out by Crow are also proved to be wrong ones. None of his attempts to come to some sort of understanding of the sea by treating it as human or human-like in 'Crow and the Sea' are effective, and in 'Glimpse' his attempt to romanticize Nature is cut short by Nature herself:

The touch of a leaf's edge at his throat  
Guillotined further comment.

Crow should really have learnt that Nature is not to be romanticized from such poems as 'Crow Tyrannosaurus' where 'Creation/ ...was a cortege/ Of mourning and lament'. But even in 'Glimpse' the hieroglyphs suggest an alternative reading. Scigaj says that the poem is 'the closest Crow comes to attaining his bride' (Scigaj, 1991, p.83), and Hughes himself explains:

Throughout mystical tradition, beheading signifies 'removing carnal consciousness, replacing it with spiritual consciousness'. In general, beheading means to be reborn with a new, other consciousness. This meaning is constantly refreshed and re-enforced by recurring as a



common, archetypal event in ordinary dream life. In each of the beheadings of the tragic sequence (there are only three) Shakespeare uses the idea, as if quite consciously, in this sense. (Hughes, 1992, pp.395-6)

Thus decapitation is a hieroglyph whose meaning is more complex than is at first apparent.

Opposition to Nature is a wrong response. In 'Crow and Stone' Crow becomes 'a monster' and has learnt nothing from his confrontation 'And is only just born', and in 'A Disaster', 'a word' comes killing men but cannot, in the end, defeat Nature. Surprisingly, however, such negative-seeming poems often contain a sting of hope in their tails. 'Revenge Fable' ends with a touch of hope if it is remembered that trees releaf in the spring, and in 'Crow and Stone' Crow finishes up 'only just born'. Where science and rationality leave no hope to find, mythology and Nature, especially when related (which has the happy effect, since myth can be psychological, of reminding any reader that he is a part of Nature), find much:

every year a symbolic destruction of the world (and thereby of human society) is celebrated--in order to create it anew; every year the cosmogony is repeated, in ritual imitation of the archetypal gesture of the Creation. All these things show that the symbolisms derived from the nature and the acts of the supreme Heavenly Beings have continued to dominate the religious life of archaic humanity, even when those beings are no longer worshipped: the symbolism has perpetuated, in an occult and allusive way, the memory of the divine Person who had withdrawn from the world. (Eliade, 1960, p.152)

Mythology when related to Nature in this way provides a surviving force to outlive the worst disasters its opponents can inflict. This is what remains 'when the churches collapse' and the association with Nature, and particularly

with Mother Earth, throws, perhaps surprisingly, fresh light upon the peculiarly English aspects of Crow noted earlier, since '"Mother" is an archetype and refers to the place of origin' (Jung 16, p.158).

The importance of this 'Earth-Mother' to humanity is extremely ancient, as Day points out:

The worship of the Great Mother is deeply buried in the infancy of the species and in the individual unconscious, reverencing fertility and nourishment long before any community spirit consciously emerged in mankind...Before there were any gods there must have been the goddess of earth, the Great Mother. (Day, 1984, pp.168 and 175)<sup>23</sup>

Day, as usual, cites a great number of supporters for his argument in a footnote, and this idea, Eisler argues, has revolutionary potential:

It puts at issue the very foundations of a five-thousand-year-old system in which the world was imaged as a pyramid ruled from the top by a male god, with the creatures made in his image (men), in turn divinely or naturally ordained to rule over women, children, and the rest of nature: a system marked by chronic warfare and the equation of "masculinity" with domination and conquest--be it of women, other men, or nature. (Campbell and Muses, ed., p.4)

The replacement of the Mother Goddess by a Father God occurred in both the (as Hughes puts it) 'Greek-Roman' and 'Anglo-Saxon-Norse-Celtic' (Faas, 1980, p.171) origins of the English, Graves citing 'All-Father Wotan' and 'All-Father Zeus' (Graves, 1959, p.17).

Neumann explores exhaustively the figure of 'The Great Mother' in his book, and is keen there to insist upon the psychological aspect:

Here it should not be forgotten that "early mankind" and "matriarchal stage" are no archeological or historical entities, but

psychological realities whose fateful power is still alive in the psychic depths of present-day man. The health and creativity of every man depend very largely on whether his consciousness can live at peace with this stratum of the unconscious or consumes itself in strife with it. (Neumann, 1972, pp.43-4)

Jung too says that 'the unconscious is the ever-creative mother of consciousness' (Jung 17, p.115), a statement that in itself illuminates much of Crow, 'Crow and Mama', for example, becoming the attempted escape of consciousness from its origins.

The Mother Goddess is, therefore, an archetype, 'the creative-destructive female ruler of the underworld' (Uroff, 1979, p.220), with both a positive and a negative side, 'the supreme goal and...most frightful danger' (Stevens, 1991, p.132). But, as with all archetypes, to suppress the negative side is to court disaster, as Hughes points out:

If he is to preserve the equilibrium and control required of him by society, it is obvious what that rational ego has to do, so he does it. He splits the Goddess into the part that supports and confirms his rational existence, and the part that would disrupt it. He makes a sacred, binding contract with the one, and suppresses the other.

According to the Equation, this act of suppression is the beginning of the dramatic consequences. The rejected part of the Goddess, angered, so to speak, by the suppression, defies it, and works to find some way back into life. (Hughes, 1992, p.513)

And, just as 'the unconscious is the ever-creative mother of consciousness', so 'the murder of the Goddess is the murder of the source of life: the destruction of mankind' (Hughes, 1992, p.221). Equally, just as Hughes' Goddess 'works to find some way back into life', Campbell sees Her, despite being buried under various European Gods, 'effective as a counterplayer...in the unconscious of the civilization'

(Campbell 3, p.70) and 'an ever-present threat' to the 'castle of reason' set up by 'the orthodox patriarchal systems of the West' (Campbell 3, p.86). Recent manifestations of the re-emergence of the Goddess would include, as Jung observes, the Catholic Church's recent raising of Mary to the state of divinity, 'the Assumption of the Divine Virgin' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.107), and Lovelock's Gaia theory, to be discussed shortly:

Within the field of mythic thought...both metaphorically (as one's nature knows) and historically (as Gimbutas shows) the God beyond God is God's Mother. (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.125)

It is clear that Jung's theories have parallels with Hughes' environmental concerns:

In the widest span of human mythology, the world of nature is associated with the feminine; and just as Jungian analysts follow Jung's lead in seeking a feminine balance in the patriarchal world, and in the psychology of the individual male, so they tend to be concerned about the materialistic rape of the environment--a conflict of imposed goal over natural processes. (Segaller and Berger, 1989, p.124)

Eisler writes that the significance of the Mother Earth figure has been found again in 'a new scientific theory' which 'marks a break with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century mechanistic, scientific views', in 'the Gaia hypothesis' which finds the Earth to be 'a unified living system designed to give and sustain life' (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, pp.4-5). Redgrove also makes this point and goes further:

nature is a cosmic animal (All-Tier). This idea recurs; one form of it which has become very popular, and is supported by the findings of contemporary science, is James Lovelock's Gaia. In truth it is an immemorially ancient notion--

that the earth is a goddess...'The tragedy of nature is bound to the tragedy of man, as the salvation of nature is dependent on the salvation of man'...A new animal-human partnership may be the next phase of evolution, if we are lucky--for the animals are closer to Gaia than ourselves. (Redgrove, 1987, pp.1 and 9)

Man is as much a natural creature as he is an historical one, and it is ridiculous to pretend that he isn't and neglect the former in favour of the latter. If myth is of biological origins (even if modified by culture as Graves and others have shown) its inclusion is essential for the sanity of humanity.

Lovelock's hypothesis, for which William Golding supplied the name (Lovelock, 1979, p.10) is 'that the entire range of living matter on Earth...could be regarded as constituting a single living entity' (Lovelock, 1979, p.9):

It is an alternative to that pessimistic view which sees nature as a primitive force to be subdued and conquered. It is also an alternative to that equally depressing picture of our planet as a demented spaceship, forever travelling, driverless and purposeless, around an inner circle of the sun. (Lovelock, 1979, p.12)

Gaia works not according to the usual methods of humanity, with its written doctrines, its right and wrong, and its inability to accept all aspects, including the negative ones, of archetypes. Lovelock talks about 'the flexible Gaian way by adapting to change and converting a murderous intruder into a powerful friend' in contrast to 'the human way' of 'restoring the old order' (Lovelock, 1979, p.31):

There can be no prescription, no set of rules, for living within Gaia. For each of our different actions there are only consequences. (Lovelock, 1979, p.140)

Lovelock's theory, along with Jung's idea of the unconscious being mother of consciousness, put a new gloss on 'Two

Legends', as a struggle for perception by the mother unconscious rather than by consciousness:

Still more important is the implication that the evolution of homo sapiens, with his technological inventiveness and his increasingly subtle communications network, has vastly increased Gaia's range of perception. She is now through us awake and aware of herself. (Lovelock, 1979, p.148)

The most adequate response to Nature in Crow, and one that is common to R.S.Thomas as well, seems to be one of attentive waiting upon meaning (feminine and unconscious in Jungian terms) rather than striving after it (masculine and conscious), which is in line with Hughes' remarks that 'the nearest we can come to rational thinking is to stand respectfully...before this Creation, exceedingly alert...' (Faas, 1980, p.172). As the poems on Nature approach the end of the book, some drop hints to this effect, or can be interpreted in this way. 'Crow Frowns' expresses the idea of waiting in universal terms, expressing concisely the enigma of man's purpose in time with regard to some infinite 'everything' that created him:

His footprints assail infinity

With signatures: We are here, we are here.  
He is the long waiting for something  
To use him for some everything  
Having so carefully made him

Of nothing.

Nature in 'Glimpse' forces Crow to shut up and wait silently, and in 'Crow Paints Himself into a Chinese Mural', 'The dusk waits.// The spears, the banners, wait'. In the second of 'Two Eskimo Songs', water waits to play, 'Utterly

worn out 'utterly clear' after its struggle to become organic.

This poem, 'How Water Began to Play', has mythical associations with much of what is to follow in this thesis, and is obviously linked to the sea poems already discussed. Water is 'the most alien, least formulated element on earth' (Bishop, 1991, p.124) and, as was noted earlier, can represent the unconscious symbolically. Neumann also saw 'the Universal Mother as the primordial water of the universe' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.239). Perhaps in this role it can mark the beginning of the 'cure' for the 'sickness' of Western Civilization and the individual within it as well as an initiation of the shamanizing poet (and the figure of the shaman will be discussed at the beginning of my next chapter), if something Eliade narrates concerning a sick man ('the future shaman') is considered:

he heard his Sickness (that is, smallpox) speak, saying to him: "From the Lords of the Water you will receive the gift of shamanizing..."...The woman, who was probably the Lady of the Water, said to him: "You are my child; that is why I let you suckle at my breast. You will meet many hardships and be greatly wearied." (Eliade, 1972, p.39)

Water also pertains to the beginning of the alchemical process (discussed in my third chapter):

One of the alchemists' maxims was: 'perform no operation till all be made water.'...Kirchweger... writes: 'For this is certain, that all nature was in the beginning water, and through water all things were born and again through water all things must be destroyed.' (Eliade, 1962, p.153)

Life too, from the biological point of view, almost certainly began in water:

Earth is the water-planet. Without water there would have been no life, and life is still utterly dependent on its impartial generosity. It is the ultimate background of reference. (Lovelock, 1979, p.82)

Day also sees water as pertinent to myths of origin when he comes to list his eight basic patterns for 'the myth of Creation':

The myth establishing body consciousness is the myth of Creation. The first four of the mythical theories about Creation in the list below all involve water, apparently the amniotic fluid surrounding the fetus. Probably the original water deities were female. Aphrodite was born of sea foam, and Thetis, mother of Achilles, was only one of numerous sea goddesses and nymphs. (Day, 1984, p.362)

Day also has something to say concerning the concept of 'play':

The play theory of Huizinga suggests that myth, like most human culture, has developed from play. Play, myth, and religion all proffer a symbolic meaning beneath the superficial... (Day, 1984, p.281)

For Jung the idea of play was vital, one of the 'psychological necessities' of life, something which again is unhistorical ('breaking away from the facts that apply at any time') and to do with 'transformation' (Segaller and Berger, 1989, pp.80-1):

The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect, but by the play instinct acting from inner necessity. The creative mind plays with the object it loves. (Jung 6, p.123)

Hughes too sees play as having serious intent when he talks about 'the riddle of the 'double vision'' in Shakespeare and says that 'imaginative play had brought him to the painful secret: exactly as in psychoanalysis' (Hughes, 1992, p.176).



Play too, then, can be relevant to origins and finally, in this context, Redgrove makes a point (in common with Jung's view) about play, here concerning the dolphin:

Perhaps their great talent is play ('Be playful and know I am God') and this accounts for their extraordinary brain development, for they have larger brains than human beings. (Redgrove, 1987, p.17)

Crow finishes with the enigmatic 'Littleblood', which is a difficult poem to analyse, as is demonstrated by the fact that critics appear to like the poem but find it difficult to say why. Hirschberg sees the poem as an inverted (coming at the end, not the beginning) appeal to the muse showing Crow, grown wise on death, as a self-realized soul with a quietly triumphant voice (Hirschberg, 1981, p.126); Faas calls it a lyrical masterpiece where Littleblood is 'a surrealistic fairy tale creature' who has experienced the absurdity of existence and can still dance, as well as a future muse for Hughes (Faas, 1980, p.116); Sagar and Bishop, strangely, but perhaps wisely, neglect the poem in their books on Hughes; Parker refers to 'Littleblood' as a 'fragile wraith' with so small an amount of blood easily squandered, a useful part, he asserts, of a post-Auschwitz mythology for Hughes (Sagar, ed., 1983, p.50); Ramsey sees 'Littleblood' as a replacement totem for Crow, still tenacious, but without the rage and the agony (Sagar, ed., 1983, p.185); and Walder refers to the poem's calming influence on the reader as well as the idea that perhaps we, like 'Littleblood', can, at least, sing (Walder, 1987, p.75).

Approaching the poem myself, one thing seems clear--the idea that wisdom lies in the blood. This is a vague phrase which, put in psychological terms, might be phrased as primitive wisdom buried deep in the psyche and, therefore, to do with notions of the 'hieroglyph language' and the Jungian concept of 'the collective unconscious'. Another important aspect of 'wisdom in the blood' comes in Hughes' essay 'Myth and Religion of the North' where he speaks of 'this particular mythology' as being 'much deeper in us, and truer to us' than its more southerly counterparts. He goes on to compare 'the Greek-Roman branch' of our vocabulary with the 'Anglo-Saxon-Norse-Celtic' and concludes that it is the latter of these two components which 'belongs to our blood' (Faas, 1980, p.171). This blood hides from the mountains in the mountains just as it has remained hidden from man in man, and stays close to the idea of a more natural and healthy existence in accord with Nature, 'Eating the medical earth'. The entity known as Littleblood, then, is the natural wisdom that lies within all living things, which is able to cope with the diversity of evolution and the processes of life and death (as expressed in the paradoxes or oxymorons 'Ploughing with a linnet's carcase...Sucking death's mouldy tits'). The animals mentioned are various, and would seem to be there, at least partly, as a corrective to the standard Western view (endorsed by Christianity) of man's superiority over Nature:

In Africa, for instance...zoological classification does not culminate in Homo sapiens, but in the elephant. Next comes the lion, then the python or the crocodile, then man and the lesser creatures. Man is still dovetailed into

nature. It never occurs to him that he might be able to rule her; all his efforts are devoted to protecting himself against her dangerous caprices. It is civilized man who strives to dominate nature and therefore devotes his greatest energies to the discovery of natural causes which will give him the key to her secret laboratory. That is why he strongly resents the idea of arbitrary powers and denies them. Their existence would amount to proof that his attempt to dominate nature is futile after all. (Jung 10, p.66)

The presumption of superiority by humanity is brought into question by Lovelock who, looking from the point of view of Gaia rather than Man, also sees humanity as relatively unimportant:

Life on this planet is a very tough, robust, and adaptable entity and we are but a small part of it. The most essential part is probably that which dwells on the floors of the continental shelves and in the soil below the surface. Large plants and animals are relatively unimportant. (Lovelock, 1979, p.40)

Lovelock even goes so far as to suggest that the 'minute organisms' that inhabit 'the gut of all animals' may be what is of larger importance to Gaia, 'and it may well be that large mammals including ourselves serve mainly to provide them with their anaerobic environment' (Lovelock, 1979, p.109). At best, man is 'a part of, or partner in, a very democratic entity' (Lovelock, 1979, p.145), and this is a point Nietzsche too is keen to make:

Man is absolutely not the crown of creation: every creature stands beside him at the same stage of perfection...And even in asserting that we assert too much: man is, relatively speaking, the most unsuccessful animal, the sickliest, the one most strayed from its instincts... (Nietzsche, 1968, p.124)

This final point is also one that Lovelock makes when he remarks that 'the conventional wisdom of a closed urban

society' is 'isolated from the natural world' (Lovelock, 1979, p.135).

The poet (or Crow, if this is another of his songs) calls upon this creature, emblematic of natural wisdom, to sing to him--perhaps, indeed, a muse as Faas suggests. To complement this interpretation, Gifford and Roberts make some useful observations in that the poem 'celebrates the persistence of the blood of life' and:

It seems as if, when freed from the burden of individual consciousness, when contemplated as the attribute of life itself, paradox is a source of wonder and tenderness, not of anguish. (Gifford and Roberts, 1981, p.146)

Therefore, the poem can be seen as a culmination of the treatment of Nature in Crow in which both the poet and Littleblood are seen to be waiting, Littleblood to sing, and the poet finally to hear.

1. Reading through again, it is interesting to note that if I'd included other birds as a motif, then 'Crow and the Birds', 'Robin Song' and 'Owl's Song' would also disappear from the exceptions, leaving only 'Crow Alights', which itself threatens violence, even if it doesn't deal with it directly.
2. There are, for example, some poems in Moortown that originally appeared under different titles as Crow poems (see Gifford and Roberts, 1981, 'Bibliographical Appendix').
3. Such as the confusion regarding Crow and/ or God as a prisoner suggested by Sagar when he says 'I can find no hint in Crow that the creator of Crow is God's prisoner or that Crow has a quest to release him' (Sagar, 1975, p.118).
4. Faas also assumes a second masculine deity on the grounds that the this deity is found to be 'Loving his enemies' in 'Crow's Theology' (Faas, 1980, p.99), although the 'his' without a capital (it is capitalized earlier in reference to deity) can refer to Crow.
5. David Porter, for example, writes that 'Hughes's... imagined poet is a scavenger over all the mishmash of the global junkyard' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.49).
6. I have generally resisted analysis of the raven, although Graves remarks that 'The crows of Bran, Cronos, Saturn, Aesculapius and Apollo are, equally, ravens' (Graves, 1961, p.67).
7. An interesting parallel can also be made here, in that the reception of archetypes sounds like the Renaissance Christian Cabalist Georgi's planetary theories:  
 These stars give different characteristics to the influences but they are none of them in themselves bad. Saturn and Mars are not bad or unfortunate, as in astrology. All the influences of the stars are good as they pour down from the divine creator, though they have different virtues. It is only the bad reception of the influence by the evil will of the recipient which turns their intrinsically good influences into vices. (Yates, 1979, p.99)
8. Taken from a summary of 'an extempore narrative' given by Hughes at public readings by Neil Roberts in a set of notes on Crow designed for students at Sheffield University and called 'A Reader's Guide to Crow'.
9. Jung's essay 'On the Psychology of the Trickster Figure' is also including in Radin's The Trickster (pp.195-211).
10. Although one could argue that 'Two Eskimo Songs', which juxtaposes the temporal existence of man to the eternal existence of water, is of the same ilk, which would give the internal sequence a more positive conclusion--with water about 'to play'--than it gains from 'Truth Kills Everybody'.
11. Graves makes this connection, seeing Poseidon as another name for Proteus and adds 'I should guess Proteus to be a general name of the god who is the son, lover and victim of the old Mother Goddess' (Graves, 1961, p.354).
12. Lovelock, incidentally, sees kelp as playing an important role in his Gaia theory (Lovelock, 1979, pp.117-9).

13. It is interesting to speculate here that a mixture of the word 'love' and a crow's rough 'caw' might produce a sound closer to the word 'laugh', Crow's laughter being a prominent feature, as many have noted, of the book. This particular part of the poem has given rise to various interpretations: Hoffman concludes from it that 'Love is possible only for God' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.151); Fernandez that 'the only love Crow knows...is the demonic kind' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.157); and Scigaj that Crow 'is browbeaten with abstract concepts, which only result in repressing his instinctual life' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.167). All of these interpretations, and more, seem valid, but are restrictive if insisted upon individually, to the exclusion of other possible interpretations.
14. Incidentally, Eliade speaks of two main 'categories' of Paradisiac myths, one of which, of relevance to this poem, speaks 'of an extremely close proximity that existed primordially between Heaven and Earth' and that:  
 One could show, for instance, that the myths of the primordially close proximity of Heaven to Earth...are in some sense connected with a matriarchal ideology. (Eliade, 1960, pp.59-60)
15. Elsewhere Eliade takes this point further and develops an idea of the radical nature of (artistic) pioneers in mythical thinking:  
 it is worth noting that the work of two of the most significant writers of our day--T.S.Eliot and James Joyce--is saturated with nostalgia for the myth of eternal repetition and, in the last analysis, for the abolition of time...And, at a moment when history could do what neither the cosmos, nor man, nor chance have yet succeeded in doing--that is, wipe out the human race in its entirety--it may be that we are witnessing a desperate attempt to prohibit the "events of history" through a reintegration of human societies within the horizon...of archetypes and their repetition. (Eliade, 1989, p.153)
16. Day, for example, says that:  
 The miracle of recovered energy and vitality after eating would reinforce the formula: food equals life. (Day, 1984, p.324)
17. Bold makes this connection:  
 He denies the black beast, splits his enemy's skull, crucifies a frog under a microscope, peers into the brain of a dogfish. In doing these things he becomes the black beast and more and more like a man with every line that passes. (Bold, 1976, p.123)
18. See also 'A Woman Unconscious' from Lupercal, where 'one, numb beyond her last of sense' does not suffer 'a lesser death' than that which results from the destruction meted out where 'Russia and America circle each other' and where 'bomb be matched against bomb'.
19. Hughes uses the same pun in his Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being (Hughes, 1992, p.386).
20. Thus Nietzsche can say:

psychology shall again be recognized as the queen of the sciences, to serve and prepare for which the other sciences exist. For psychology is now once again the road to the fundamental problems. (Nietzsche, 1973, p.36)

Hughes himself 'has read all of Jung's translated volumes' and calls Jung 'The philosopher of the next hundred years' (Bishop, 1991, p.252).

21. Day also says that:

Jung insists that...for the proper balance of each human psyche there must be the compliment of the other sex... (Day, 1984, p.354)

Taken to its logical conclusion, this position would imply a society of 'balanced' individuals, one which would therefore be, essentially, neither patriarchal nor matriarchal in outlook.

22. Neumann asserts that 'man's anima figure...is a product of genuine experience of the nature of the Feminine, and not a mere manifestation of male projections upon the woman' (Neumann, 1972, p.33), but this is to forget that this 'genuine experience' is nevertheless a masculine experience, and, as Mumford describes, has a tendency toward exaggeration:

the very compulsion to overplay the more brutal masculine qualities may have resulted, on a Jungian interpretation, in the enlargement of the feminine component in the male unconscious. The so-called mother goddesses in paleolithic art may represent the hunter's instinctual attempt to counterbalance the occupational over-emphasis on killing by an increased sensitiveness to sexual enjoyment and protective tenderness. (Mumford, 1967, p.117)

23. Many authorities quoted here deal with this topic, Campbell, for example, dating the change from 'c. 2500 B.C.' and having many illuminating things to say about the psychological and historical shift from Matriarchy to Patriarchy (Campbell 4, pp.626-8).

## Chapter Two: GAUDETE

### The Shaman

'Littleblood' was seen to be questioning man's self-appointed position as ruler over Creation, demonstrating an attitude in common with primitive societies and the figure of the shaman:

the prestige of animals in the eyes of the "primitive" is very considerable; they know secrets of Life and Nature, they even know the secrets of longevity and immortality. By entering into the condition of the animals, the shaman shares their secrets and enjoys their plenitude of life...The shaman cannot leave his body and set out on his mystical journey until after he has recovered, by intimacy with the animals, a bliss and a spontaneity that would be unattainable in his profane, everyday situation. The vital experience of this friendship with the animals takes him out of the general condition of "fallen" humanity and enables him to re-enter the illud tempus described to us by the paradisiac myths. (Eliade, 1960, p.63)

There is a clear analogy here with the animal poems of Hughes' early volumes, and with much that is said concerning animals and poetry in Poetry in the Making. For example, in his opening chapter, 'Capturing Animals', Hughes advises that when dealing with a subject for a poem, such as an animal, the poet should 'look at them...from their own point of view', suggesting that poet should 'look at it, touch it, smell it, listen to it, turn yourself into it' (Hughes, 1969, pp.16 and 18). Such attitudes are clearly in common with the figure of the shaman:

It is the shaman who turns himself into an animal, just as he achieves a similar result by putting on an animal mask. Or, again, we might speak of a new identity for the shaman, who becomes an animal-spirit, and "speaks," sings, or flies like the animals and birds. (Eliade, 1972, p.93)

But, as well as being relevant to the early works, the figure of the shaman applies equally to Gaudete, as the



above quotation demonstrates, recalling the masks and costumes worn at the Gaudete orgy.

The animal identification also points towards Crow and Cave Birds, and Eliade reports that shamans have 'helping spirits' which 'can appear in the form of...all kinds of birds (especially the goose, eagle, owl, crow, etc.)' (Eliade, 1972, p.89). Eliade also notes that shamans claim 'to take flight like birds, or mounted upon...a bird' (Eliade, 1960, p.102). Further, the primitive association of birds and shaman seems to have fed directly the mythic inheritance of the West. Eliade cites 'Odin's two crows' (Eliade, 1972, p.381) and Day has this to say:

To many peoples a bird is a shaman's spirit. Hence the talking birds, creatures of great knowledge like the birds who informed Siegfried of Regin's villainous designs. Many gods, like Egyptian Horus and Grecian Athene, look like birds deified, perhaps originally as shaman spirits. Hermes, angels, and similar supernatural beings are winged humans, intermediaries like the shaman between earth and heaven. (Day, 1984, p.111)

The figure of Crow himself could be said to be a 'helping spirit', although because of his identification with the trickster his role is more complex and, indeed, Day remarks that 'much of the Trickster material seems parody or travesty of the shaman' (Day, 1984, p.231). One obvious similarity between the two figures is that they both arrived early in the history of humanity, so that Weston La Barre, quoted by Day, can say:

"There were shamans before there were gods...It is not so much that shamanism is the root of all religion as that all religion is in sober essence shamanism." (Day, 1984, p.122)

Eliade seems to agree with La Barre, saying that 'there is reason to believe that such mystical experiences' as shamans

have 'were in some manner accessible to archaic humanity from the most distant ages' (Eliade, 1972, p.62). In this way, on a global scale, Hughes can be seen, in a personal and cultural crisis, to be going back to an older religious form, just as, on a national level, he went beyond Christianity to find Bran and his totem Crow.

At the end of his Shamanism, Eliade makes this important point concerning the 'ecstatic experience' of the shaman:

We have termed the ecstatic experience a "primary phenomenon" because we see no reason whatever for regarding it as the result of a particular historical moment, that is, as produced by a certain form of civilization. Rather, we would consider it fundamental in the human condition, and hence known to the whole of archaic humanity; what changed and was modified with the different forms of culture and religion was the interpretation and evaluation of the ecstatic experience. (Eliade, 1972, p.504)

The 'ecstatic experience' therefore takes on aspects of an archetype in being an open-ended experience accessible to incomplete interpretation. But, because of what Eliade says here, the shaman is a useful figure for any poet attempting to deal with biological reality in order to help heal the psychic wounds inflicted by the history of the last few thousand years.

Usually shamanism is a calling, 'an imperious summons to the religious life' (Day, 1984, p.109), which might point to the removal of Lumb to the underworld in the prologue of Gaudete or to 'The summoner' of Cave Birds. Following the summons, according to Eliade, is the initiation:

However selected, a shaman is not recognized as such until after he has received two kinds of teaching: (1) ecstatic (dreams, trances, etc.) and (2) traditional (shamanic techniques, names and functions of the spirits, mythology and genealogy

of the clan, secret language, etc.). This twofold course of instruction, given by the spirits and the old master shamans, is equivalent to an initiation. (Eliade, 1972, p.13)

Immediately the role of the shaman can be seen as analogous to that of the poet--and especially to Hughes, who uses dreams in his work, with Shakespeare, Jung, Graves and others fulfilling the role of 'the old master shamans'. Equally, the 'two kinds of teaching' allow a tutorial role to both unconscious (ecstatic) and conscious (traditional or, as Eliade (Eliade, 1972, p.14) also calls it, 'didactic').

The scheme of initiation put forward by Eliade would also be pertinent to Gaudete and Cave Birds:

We shall soon see that all the ecstatic experiences that determine the future shaman's vocation involve the traditional schema of an initiation ceremony: suffering, death, resurrection. Viewed from this angle, any "sickness-vocation" fills the role of an initiation; for the sufferings that it brings on correspond to initiatory tortures, the psychic isolation of "the elected" is the counterpart to the isolation and ritual solitude of initiation ceremonies, and the imminence of death felt by the sick man (pain, unconsciousness, etc.) recalls the symbolic death represented in almost all initiation ceremonies. (Eliade, 1972, p.33)

The 'psychic isolation of "the elected"' occurs at the start of both the Gaudete prologue and Cave Birds where, in 'She seemed so considerate', for example, 'my pet fern, the one fellow creature I still cherished,/ It actually had died'.

One important thing to note is that the calling and initiation of the shaman are precipitated by a crisis (in Hughes' case both personal and social) which 'evidently plays the part of a mystic initiation'. Also, Eliade adds that 'the specific rites of shamanic initiation include...in a dream or in a series of dreams' the shaman's 'celestial

journey right to the foot of the Tree of the World' (Eliade, 1960, p.79). This idea of a 'series of dreams' concerning a 'celestial journey' relates to Gaudete and more specifically to Cave Birds and the Jungian process of individuation.

One poem in Crow, 'Examination at the Womb-door', would seem to have direct relevance to the report of a Winnebago shaman quoted by Eliade:

One day I heard the sounds of little children outside, and other sounds too, and I decided to go out. Then it seemed to me that I went through a door, but in reality I was just newly born from a woman. (Eliade, 1960, pp.162-3)

Here the passage of birth, the shaman's reincarnation, can be likened to an initiation ceremony, and the importance here is that the initiation of a shaman is 'self-triggered...instead of the traditional and formal group-sponsored initiation' (Day, 1984, p.109). Again, the experiences of the shaman exhibit strong parallels with the Jungian process of individuation, to be explored more fully in my next chapter. The shaman must 'first...undergo a death of the old self' in order to create 'the rebirth of a new self, the full-fledged shaman' (Day, 1984, p.109). The figure of the 'full-fledged shaman' has relevance both to the 'psychodrama' (Scigaj's term) of Gaudete and to Cave Birds: An Alchemical Cave Drama:

Through his own preinitiatory and initiatory experiences, he knows the drama of the human soul, its instability, its precariousness; in addition, he knows the forces that threaten it and the regions to which it can be carried away. If shamanic cure involves ecstasy, it is precisely because illness is regarded as a corruption or alienation of the soul. (Eliade, 1972, pp.216-7)

Part of any shaman's initiation involves a 'journey into the regions of the beyond' (Eliade, 1972, p.131), and:

sanctified by his initiation and furnished with his guardian spirits, the shaman is the only human being able to challenge the danger and venture into a mystical geography. (Eliade, 1972, p.182)

This allows the shaman to act as guide to individuals after death which, interpreting the role of the shaman metaphorically, could mean the death of the old self that leads to the birth of the new, Eliade reporting, for example that 'the shaman knows the road and...has the ability to control and escort a "soul"' (Eliade, 1972, p.183). The shaman is closely associated, therefore, with death, and his rebirth in Jungian terms signifies contact and interaction with the collective unconscious (the dead):

"Seeing spirits," in dream or awake, is the determining sign of the shamanic vocation, whether spontaneous or voluntary. For, in a manner, having contact with the souls of the dead signifies being dead oneself. That is why...the shaman must so die that he may meet the souls of the dead and receive their teaching; for the dead know everything. (Eliade, 1972, p.84)

The shaman's journey to the underworld has clear parallels with Gaudete and with Cave Birds, as will be later described, in that the shaman 'is accompanied by his ancestors and his helping spirits' and, 'as each "obstacle" is passed, he sees a new subterranean epiphany' (Eliade, 1972, p.201). Hughes himself refers to 'the shamanic... healer's difficult transcendental journey' (Hughes, 1992, p.121), and the shaman, like anyone undertaking 'the perilous journey', 'soon finds himself in a landscape of symbolical figures' (Campbell, 1949, p.101), as do Crow, Lumb and the protagonist of Cave Birds.

The shaman's journey to the underworld can also be balanced by journeys to Heaven (see 'The risen' of Cave Birds, for example):

the initiatory dreams of future shamans include both descents (= ritual sufferings and death) and ascents (= resurrection). In this context we can understand that, after battling the evil spirits or descending to the underworld to recover the patient's soul, the Yakut shaman feels the need to re-establish his own spiritual equilibrium by repeating the ascent to the sky. (Eliade, 1972, p.236)

This idea of balance is closely related to Jungian psychology, especially to archetypal theory and compensation, and Day gives a psychological interpretation of such journeys:

Modern psychology would say that he is descending into the darkest well of the unconscious at grave risk, for failure to return means hopeless psychosis. The shaman interprets it as a dangerous trip afar, ventured upon only because of severe need. The worst ailments, causing unconsciousness, fever ravings, and madness are explained with superb symbolism as "lost souls." (Day, 1984, pp.119-20)

The journey of the shaman to Heaven equally has psychological import, pertinent particularly to the Genesis-inspired poems of Crow already discussed:

the shaman, during his journey, returns to the paradisiac condition. He re-establishes the communications that used to exist in illo tempore between Heaven and Earth: for him, the cosmic Mountain or Tree becomes again a concrete means of access to Heaven, just as they were before the Fall. For the shaman Heaven once again draws near to Earth; it is no higher than the top of a house, just as it used to be before the primordial schism. Lastly, the shaman renews the friendship with the animals. (Eliade, 1960, pp.65-6)

This close proximity of Heaven and Earth is pertinent also to Crow 'Nailing Heaven and earth together' in 'Crow Blacker than ever'.

The journey the shaman, 'the oldest professional healer' (Day, 1984, p.120), makes is often to affect a cure, for 'the shaman is also a magician and medicine man; he is believed to cure, like all doctors' (Eliade, 1972, p.4).

This has obvious bearing on the prologue to Gaudete, where Lumb is unable to cure the underworld 'woman tangled in the skins of wolves' protesting that 'He is not a doctor', and to the figures of Doctors in the Gaudete main text and epilogue poems. But Scigaj extends the parallel when he says:

A shaman possessed of ecstatic mana converts the neurotic libidinal blockages of his or her "patients" into healing energies. So too can the modern shaman--the poet--according to Hughes. (Scigaj, 1991, p.2)

In terms of shamanic descents to an underworld and flights to a spiritual source, Hughes belongs to a wide European tradition that includes Goethe, Novalis, Lorca, Rilke, Rimbaud, Baudelaire, Nerval, and Valery, among others. (Scigaj, 1991, p.17)

In his epilogue to Shamanism, Eliade makes a general point about the shaman:

In a general way, it can be said that shamanism defends life, health, fertility, the world of "light," against death, diseases, sterility, disaster, and the world of "darkness." (Eliade, 1972, pp.508-9)

The shaman is also concerned with the psychological condition of individuals and societies, curing psychological disorders so that Day can amend his statement that 'the shaman looks like the oldest professional healer' to 'perhaps the shaman should rather be called the first psychiatrist' (Day, 1984, pp.120-1). This is linked to the shaman's role 'as mediator between mankind and the mysterious supernatural world' (Day, 1984, p.109):

He, the mediator between worlds, between sexes, between all the bewildering dualities of life, offers wholeness. (Day, 1984, p.121)

'Wholeness' will be seen to be the aim of individuation (also resolving the duality of conscious and unconscious),

and Eliade makes a similar point concerning 'a "cosmological dualism":

The World Tree precedes this dualism, for it represents the cosmos in its totality; it even symbolizes the unification of the two supreme divinities. The creation of the world is the result of a conflict between two gods representing two polar principles: feminine (cosmologically lower, represented by the waters and the snake) and masculine (the upper region, the bird). During the struggle between these two antagonists, the World Tree (= the primordial totality) is destroyed. But its destruction is only temporary; archetype of all creative human activity, the World Tree is destroyed only that it may be reborn. (Eliade, 1972, pp.284-5)

The shaman, then, through his 'ecstasy re-establishes the primordial condition of all mankind' is able 'to abolish the polarity typical of the human condition, in order to attain to ultimate reality' (Eliade, 1972, p.486).

Crow's ascent, epitomized in 'Crow's Fall', is balanced by other images, such as 'Crow spraddled head-down in the beach-garbage', from 'Crow and the Birds', the poem facing 'Crow's Fall'; the descent of Lumb to the underworld in the prologue of Gaudete and the corresponding ascent of the changeling Lumb give way to the oak tree of the penultimate epilogue poem, whose roots descend and whose branches ascend; and in Cave Birds, 'the sun' and the 'worms' of 'The scream' herald the 'rainbows' (linking Heaven and Earth, as was seen in the Crow poem 'Two Legends') of 'The owl flower' and the 'world's brow' of 'The risen', where 'sunspots/Emerge as earthquakes'.

The journey of the shaman clearly implies bilocation, a concept of obvious parallel to Gaudete with its two Lumbs:

we can see how "possession" could develop from an ecstatic experience: while the shaman's soul (or "principal soul") was traveling in the upper or lower worlds, "spirits" could take possession of



his body. But it is difficult to imagine the opposite process, for, once the spirits have taken "possession" of the shaman, his personal ecstasy--that is, his ascent to the sky or descent to the underworld--is halted. It is the "spirits" that, by their "possession," bring on and crystallize the religious experience. (Eliade, 1972, p.507)

One interesting link between Gaudete and the two other Hughes volumes considered in this thesis, is the link provided between twins and birds in primitive thinking, as explored by Levi-Strauss:

Twins "are birds," not because they are confused with them or because they look like them, but because twins, in relation to other men, are as "persons of the above" to "persons of below," and, in relation to birds, as "birds of below" are to "birds of the above." They thus occupy, as do birds, an intermediary position between the supreme spirit and human beings. (Levi-Strauss, 1964, pp.80-1)

Day comments that 'Bilocation, characteristic of shamans, is, of course, a divine characteristic' (Day, 1984, p.171), and shamans are ultimately religious figures:

those who, as it were, incarnate the sacred, because they live it abundantly, or rather "are lived" by the religious "form" that has chosen them (gods, spirits, ancestors, etc.). (Eliade, 1972, p.32)

This points toward Jung's idea that the artist is in some way controlled by his own art, and elsewhere Eliade states that:

In a word, the shaman is the great specialist in spiritual questions, it is he who knows better than anyone else the numerous dramas, the risks and dangers of the soul. The shamanist complex represents, in the "primitive" societies, that which is usually known in the more highly developed religions as mysticism and mystical experience. (Eliade, 1960, p.61)

Eliade's remarks here also demonstrate parallels with the Jungian process of individuation (the drama and progress 'of the soul') and the role of the unconscious. As Day puts it,

'the earliest religious specialists were thus moved to a usurpation by the unconscious', and Day's remarks relate to the idea of the shaman's journey, already discussed:

He is also capable in the presence of others of leaving his body while he is making a journey to the spirit realm. We would interpret this experience as employing the metaphor of an outer, geographic journey for what is an inner, psychic quest. Dreams have certainly contributed... (Day, 1984, p.108)

Equally, Jung argues that the alchemists, of importance to my next chapter, used the metaphor of outer experimentation for inner psychic developments.

The idea of dreams (which I return to later in this chapter) might lead to suspicions of a purely personal relevance to the 'psychic quest', but Eliade offsets such criticism:

In any case, there is no question of anarchical hallucinations and of a purely individual plot and dramatis personae; the hallucinations and the mise en scene follow traditional models that are perfectly consistent and possess an amazingly rich theoretical content. (Eliade, 1972, p.14)

This 'psychic quest' also corresponds to the ecstatic/didactic divide noted earlier:

all over the world magico-religious powers are held to be obtainable either spontaneously (sickness, dream, chance encounter with a source of "power," etc.) or deliberately (quest). (Eliade, 1972, p.22)

The 'psychic quest' seems basically to follow the Jungian idea of individuation, union of conscious and unconscious into a 'true personality', in that the shaman:

feels the need for these ecstatic journeys because it is above all during trance that he becomes truly himself; the mystical experience is necessary to him as a constituent of his true personality. (Eliade, 1972, p.293)

Again, this is not impossibly self-centred, because the shaman often undertakes such journeys on behalf of society, and also because the shaman is not only 'the archetypal religious personality' but also 'the model for many humans in their spiritual quest' (Day, 1984, p.109).

The shaman can also be linked to the role of the artist, and Day speculates that:

Perhaps dance, music, poetry, and the drama owe a tremendous debt to the first professional in all these fields, the shaman. (Day, 1984, p.118)

Especially related to the role of the shaman is that of the poet:

Among the Buryat the shamans are the principal guardians of the rich oral heroic literature. The poetic vocabulary of a Yakut shaman contains 12,000 words, whereas the ordinary language--the only language known to the rest of the community--has only 4,000. (Eliade, 1972, p.30)

This compares well with what Graves has to say about the immense learning of Celtic poets and bards in the first chapter of his The White Goddess but Eliade goes on to say that 'every shaman has his own song' (Eliade, 1972, p.100) and makes further remarks that could equally be made of the poet:

The shamans did not create the cosmology, the mythology, and the theology of their respective tribes; they only interiorized it, "experienced" it, and used it as the itinerary for their ecstatic journeys. (Eliade, 1972, p.266)

Such a statement could be made about all three of Hughes' volumes considered here, and Eliade draws many parallels between the shaman and artistic figures such as the Celtic 'fili (poet)'<sup>1</sup>, Plato, and Zarathustra (Eliade, 1972, pp. 382, 394 and 398). Indeed, shamanism seems to take on a role very similar to that of the poet when he:

seeks to experience in concreto a symbolism and mythology that, by their very nature, are not susceptible of being "realized" on the "concrete" plane. (Eliade, 1972, p.494)

Indeed, David Porter says that the shaman's 'trafficking with the underrealm obviously represents to Hughes's mind his primal act as a poet' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.54).

Finally, Eliade concludes his Shamanism with exactly these sorts of observation:

Probably a large number of epic "subjects" or motifs, as well as many characters, images, and clichés of epic literature, are, finally, of ecstatic origin, in the sense that they were borrowed from the narratives of shamans describing their journeys and adventures in the superhuman worlds.

It is likewise probable that the pre-ecstatic euphoria constituted one of the universal sources of lyric poetry. In preparing his trance, the shaman drums, summons his spirit helpers, speaks a "secret language" or the "animal language," imitating the cries of beasts and especially the songs of birds...Poetic creation still remains an act of perfect spiritual freedom. Poetry remakes and prolongs language; every poetic language begins by being a secret language, that is, the creation of a personal universe, of a completely closed world. The purest poetic act seems to re-create language from an inner experience that, like the ecstasy or the religious inspiration of "primitives," reveals the essence of things...What a magnificent book remains to be written on the ecstatic "sources" of epic and lyric poetry, on the prehistory of dramatic spectacles, and, in general, on the fabulous worlds discovered, explored, and described by the ancient shamans... (Eliade, 1972, pp.510-11)

Certain aspects of this parallel between shaman and poet pertain particularly to Hughes, one of which is 'a "secret language"' or '"animal language"'. In Crow there is 'the cry that, swelling, could not/ Pronounce its sun' ('Two Legends'); 'In the beginning was Scream' ('Lineage'); 'the cry' that rips 'through him' ('A Kill'); 'a fearful cry' ('Crow and Mama'); the disastrous gaping and retching of Crow ('Crow's First Lesson'); the dog whose 'shapeless cry

was a blort of all those voices' ('Crow Tyrannosaurus'); 'screams' and 'groans' ('Crow's Account of the Battle'); screeching ('The Black Beast'); and so on (these many examples come from less than the first quarter of Crow). Gaudete too boasts many examples in all its parts, for example the 'despair of beasts/ And roaring of men' (p.19) from the prologue; 'a throat-gouging scream' (p.147) of the main text; and the epilogue poems 'I heard the screech, sudden', and 'Hearing your moan echo, I chill. I shiver'. Cave Birds begins with 'The scream' and elsewhere in the volumes are many examples of Eliade's '"animal language"', such as the 'jabber of unborn spirits' ('The scapegoat'); 'This cry alone struggled in its tissues' ('A flayed crow in the hall of judgement'); and 'this stranger who wails out your name' ('The gatekeeper').

This idea of animal language is clearly linked to the Orghast project in which Hughes 'created a new language that attempted to mime the animal music that originates deep in the human subconscious, where volition first evolved language' (Scigaj, 1991, p.85):

when the mind is clear and the experience of the moment is actual and true, then a simple syllable can transmit volumes. A survivor only needs to sigh and it hits you like a hammer. A commentator could chatter on for a month and you'd get nothing...Hughes argues that sound can 'magically' affect the way a fern grows, or the way iron filings group themselves; the sound of speech, then, even when there is no semantic content for the listener, is an effect to be explored...the implication would be that there exists in the human race a common tonal consciousness, 'a language belonging below the levels where differences appear', in Hughes's words. (Smith, 1972, pp.46-7)

'Some animals and birds express this being pure and without effort, and then you hear the whole desolate, final actuality of existence in a voice,

a tone. There we really do recognize a spirit, a truth under all the truths. Far beyond human words. And the startling quality of this "truth" is that it is terrible. It is for some reason harrowing, as well as being the utterly beautiful thing.' In the loss of that spirit, 'the real distress of our world begins there'. (Smith, 1972, p.245)

This 'truth under all the truths', 'harrowing' and 'beautiful', would seem to be the archetype of life itself.

Another parallel can be found in Campbell's Creative Mythology when he talks about shamans:

They were the first finders and exposers of those inner realities that are recognized today as of the psyche. Hence the myths and rites, of which they were the masters, served not only the outward (supposed) function of influencing nature, causing game to appear, illness to abate, foes to fall, and friends to flourish, but also the inward (actual) work of touching and awakening the deep strata and springs of the human imagination; so that the practical needs of living in a certain specific geographical environment--in the arctic, tropics, desert, grassy plains, on a mountain peak or on a coral isle--should be fulfilled, as it were, in play: all the world and its features, and the deeds of man within it, being rendered luminous by participation in the plot and fabulous setting of a grandiose theater piece...These gave to everything a meaning not there in any practical, economic sense, but only as play, enacted dream: a grave, yet joyous, tragicomic play, to the grave and constant roles of which the young were introduced and trained by the elders of their world. (Campbell 4, pp.384-5)

The word 'play' in one sense looks back to Crow and 'How Water Began to Play', and in another looks forward to Gaudete as 'psychodrama' and to the 'drama' of Cave Birds: an Alchemical Cave Drama.

Another connection between Hughes and the figure of the shaman concerns ecological issues and the relationship between man and Nature, for the shaman 'is believed to understand the language of all nature' (Eliade, 1972, p.96). Linked to this is the Goddess, already encountered in Crow, and to be encountered also in Gaudete and Cave Birds. In

one example Eliade quotes, the Goddess appears as a spirit guide ('"If you will not obey me, so much the worse for you. I shall kill you".') to the shaman:

Sometimes she comes under the aspect of an old woman, and sometimes under that of a wolf, so she is terrible to look at. Sometimes she comes as a winged tiger. (Eliade, 1972, p.72)

The shaman also stands in compensatory opposition to orthodox religious positions, just as Hughes seeks to oppose the orthodox Western religious inheritance. Day comments that:

Under shamanism myth tends to develop a growing and changing revelation, capable of immense alteration and power with the additional visions of new shamans. The whole course of priesthood is to freeze and rationalize myth. (Day, 1984, p.140)

Day points to several contrasts, amongst which are: the shaman as 'maker of myth', the priest as 'steward'; the shaman's 'ecstatic alteration of consciousness' in contrast to the priest's 'detailed pedagogical indoctrination'; and the shaman's 'individual vision' set against the priest's 'institutional conformity':

The individualistic religious experience of the shaman will constantly erupt, opposing the staid, conservative, entrenched priesthood. (Day, 1984, pp.140-1)

However, 'The individualistic religious experience of the shaman' that Day cites is not to imply an essentially anti-social or a purely private role:

This small mystical elite not only directs the community's religious life but, as it were, guards its "soul." The shaman is the great specialist in the human soul; he alone "sees" it, for he knows its "form" and its destiny. (Eliade, 1972, p.8)

The shaman's essential role in the defense of the psychic integrity of the community depends above all on this: men are sure that one of them is able to help them in the critical circumstances produced by the inhabitants of the invisible

world. It is consoling and comforting to know that a member of the community is able to see what is hidden and invisible to the rest and to bring back direct and reliable information from the supernatural worlds. (Eliade, 1972, p.509)

The role of the shaman in society also, obviously enough, depends on the attitude of the onlooker. An historically-minded critic with an interest in Freud would be dismissive, whereas one who is mythically-minded and has an interest in Jung would probably be enthusiastic:

There is...a difference of opinion among psychological authorities, some deeming the shaman normal but sensitive and gifted, while others look upon the shaman as hysterical, himself undergoing severe regression and inducing regression in his society. (Day, 1984, p.109)

For a society that is tolerant of shamanism, however, the shaman is a useful member of any community, battling 'for the safety and welfare of his society':

With his enormous and unearthly powers the shaman may exercise extraordinary social functions...the shaman conducts all the rites of passage (birth, initiation of young males, marriage, funeral), acts as community counselor and arbitrator (reconciling enemies, placating family enmities, even treating with aliens), administering justice often by finding the culprit in his dreams, generally exercising social regulation and control by threatening to unleash his redoubtable spirit allies upon transgressors, even determining the time and place for crops.

But the monumental achievement of the shaman, guarantee of his survival in many societies today and often in clandestine form even in highly civilized cities, is his treatment of human ailments. (Day, 1984, pp.118-9)

Equally, and again in line with Hughes' own attitude, the shaman belongs to both the inner and the outer worlds:

Naturally, apart from...ecstatic voyages undertaken for collective religious reasons, the shaman sometimes undergoes ecstasy, or may seek it, for spiritual reasons of his own. (Eliade, 1960, p.102)

Shamanism has fed into the mythical inheritance of Western man, as suggested by the parallels with mythical and



artistic figures of the West mentioned earlier. Day suggests that shamanism might be 'a worldwide religion which at one time was standard for all mankind' (Day, 1984, p.122), and Eliade cites mythical figures of the West whom he sees as deriving originally from the shaman, such as Odin, Apollo, and Orpheus (Eliade, 1972, pp.380, 388 and 391-2). Eliade also dismisses the idea that 'the shamanic descent to the underworld derives from an exotic influence', by which he means Oriental (Eliade, 1972, p.400). As will be seen shortly, Gaudete begins with just such a descent.

Charles Muses, in his essay 'The Ageless Way of Goddess' attacks 'The arrogant myth that "modern science" can "conquer nature"' and also remarks, somewhat harshly, on Jung and Eliade in their view of the shaman:

We also must not stop short, as Mircea Eliade and Carl Jung tend to do, in merely patronizing the old shamans while still denying the ontological validity of their claims, as though the whole subject were susceptible of being psychologized or anthropologized away. Rather must we undertake a supershamanic enterprise, that Heroic Journey described so eloquently by Joseph Campbell, knowing the instrumentalities for it can be forged within us by paying careful attention to what the Old Ones taught; for the nature of life and of our universe goes back to profoundly natural powers and wisdom we cannot even yet begin to conceive. (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.153)

Finally, in this brief look at the shaman, and in line with what was said earlier regarding the Freudian and Jungian views of the shaman, Redgrove points out that the usefulness of such a figure depends upon the society he finds himself in:

What place is their in this society for people who see visions? If they are lucky enough to encounter a belief structure which assures them that what they envision is real or useful, and they find it is so, and can handle it, then they become witches, shamans or poets. But if they

encounter a psychiatric doctor who cannot understand these matters except in terms of 'mad' or 'sane' and can see no way of adjusting them to society, then the person surprised by the extension of his senses will be treated as mad, and will accordingly withdraw into the isolation of true madness. (Redgrove, 1987, p.58)

### Gaudete

Gaudete is a volume full of enigma. It is characteristic that in the Faas interview, 'Ted Hughes and Gaudete', only about a quarter of its space concentrates on its chosen subject. Faas also seems less than relaxed, his questions on Gaudete being uncharacteristically disconnected, as if read randomly from a list. Indeed, Faas remarks that 'it is easy to misinterpret Gaudete' (Faas, 1980, p.214), and one finds the same sort of surprise in Hughes there that he exhibits elsewhere, for example, in a personal letter sent to Gifford and Roberts where he says that 'your remark that the narrative of Gaudete does not convey meaning gives me pause, as you can imagine' (personal communication, October 1978). Similarly the enlarged 'Argument' of the later editions points to a realization in Hughes of greater-than-expected difficulties amongst his readers with regard to interpretation.

In the same letter Hughes speaks of a 'sort of hieroglyph language' which:

only works in poetry if the switches are thrown, somehow, and the aesthetic electricity flows through the circuits. The difficulty is--a system assumes a totally sympathetic reader, and also in this case one with a feeling for the traditional 'sacred' role of tigers... (personal communication, October 1978)

The figure of the tiger is to return in both the main text and the epilogue poems of Gaudete.

Robinson points toward a similar notion and sees a certain radical nature to Hughes' methods which are:

concerned to create a movement away from the familiar and well-signposted territory of morals and the orthodox character-descriptive vocabulary, towards the more difficult and less well-signposted territory of pre-moral and archetypal cultural patternings. (Robinson, 1989, p.83)

Robinson also confesses that in Hughes' approach: 'the very welter of associations and resonances thrown up defeats the interpretative effort' (Robinson, 1989, p.82). But Gaudete, like Crow and Cave Birds, would seem to work on the premise that the unconscious will respond to these hieroglyphs whether or not the conscious mind is able to decipher them. The best option for a critic, therefore, would seem to be to interpret the text where possible, acknowledging ambiguities, as well as pointing to areas in which 'associations and resonances' plausibly exist. As Gifford and Roberts say with regard to one particular scene: 'there is...a multiplicity of clues...which need to be followed through, even though they may seem to conflict with each other' (Gifford and Roberts, 1981, p.169).

Exactly how close any critic's interpretation comes to that intended by Hughes is impossible to know. However, if Hughes, as Robinson asserts, is relying on 'archetypal cultural patternings' in 'an eternally recurrent drama' (Robinson, 1989, p.82), then unintended parallels are always likely. Hughes, in using the methods he does, leaves Gaudete open to that which he might regard as misinterpretation, but this is a risk he appears able to accept, saying to Faas 'my own opinion I withhold...As far

as interpretation goes--I leave all options open' (Faas, 1980, p.214).

Gaudete begins with two epigraphs, and, in common with Hughes' thoughts elsewhere, such as his comments on the dangerous myth of St George in his essay 'Myth and Education', both speak of a reconciliation of contraries usually beyond the scope of orthodox occidental philosophy as epitomized by Christianity. Heraclitus speaks of Dionysos and Hades as one, reconciling notions of life with notions of death, and throughout his 'terse, obscure epigrams' (Morrall, 1977, p.30) he speaks of the world as one of flux in which 'everything tends sooner or later to go over into its opposite' (Campbell 3, p.160) and in which 'what opposes unites' (Heraclitus, 1987, p.15). Morrall sees Heraclitus as 'more than any other Greek writer up to his own time, as typifying the attempt...to end the already looming 'quarrel between poetry and philosophy'' (Morall, 1977, p.30) or, in Jungian terms, introvert and extravert, or in the terms of my introduction, mythical and historical thinking. The phrase Morall quotes is Plato's, who, famously, would ban poets from his Republic and Heraclitus' mediatory stance can be regarded as compensatory, a notion to be more fully explained later in this chapter, to Plato and his persuasive extravert stance which Nietzsche so frequently attacks. Jung himself put much store by Heraclitus, quoting him often (e.g., Jung 6, p.426), as did Nietzsche (e.g., Nietzsche, 1968, p.36).

Parzival has been called 'the first great spiritual biography in the history of Occidental letters' whose author 'on the European scale is to be ranked second not even to

Dante' (Campbell 4, pp.429-30). The quotation used as an epigraph is taken from a remarkable passage toward the end of the work in which an infidel and a Christian knight come to fight each other and yet are portrayed by the author as equals (they are, in fact, brothers) and who, after fighting, become reconciled:

Feirefiz and Parzival ended their strife with a kiss. It was more fitting for them to be friends than bitter enemies. Their contest was settled by loyalty and affection. (Wolfram, 1980, p.372)

Parzival has many characteristics in common with ideas discussed already in this thesis. Campbell sees the work as to do with the mythical (as opposed to the historical) approach to life, calling Parzival 'a "mythological updating"' (Campbell 4, p.521):

The important thing about Wolfram's Grail is that, though his tale is for amusement and its characters and episodes are frankly fantasies, they are nevertheless understood to be true in a timeless, trans-historic dimension. (Campbell 4, pp.483-4)

The work is compensatory (historically and mythically) to attitudes of the West both then and now, both in terms of individuality (to be discussed shortly) and Christian dualism:

And his aim for life was neither rapture aloft, quit of the flesh, nor rapture below, quit of the light, but--as the symbol on his shield and flag, horse and helm makes known--the way between. His own fanciful interpretation of his hero Parzival's name, perce a val, "pierce through the middle," gives the first clue to his ideal, which is, namely, of a realization here on earth, through human, natural means (in the sinning and virtuous, black and white, yet nobly courageous self-determined development of a no more than human life) of the mystery of the Word Made Flesh: the logos deeper than logic, wherein dark and light, all pairs of opposites--yet not as opposites--take part. (Campbell 4, pp.431-2)

Therefore just as Feirefiz's skin is a mixture of black and white, so Wolfram begins his story with the thought that 'the courage of the steadfast man is motley like the magpie' (Wolfram, 1980, p.15), and this attitude Campbell links to other myths of importance to this thesis, such as 'Celtic myths, largely of...Bran the Blessed: the "Rich Fisher," Bron...' (Campbell 4, p.549) and gnosis (Campbell 4, pp.476 and 550). Graves too sees Arthurian myth as a counterforce to Christianity, with Arthur as 'a counter-Christ' and Malory's Morte D'Arthur as 'the Briton's counter-Bible' (Graves, 1959, pp.238 and 240).

Inevitably, reaction sets in against the new and compensatory mythology Parzival sets up, even within the Quest literature itself, Campbell here citing another Grail legend, the Queste del Saint Graal:

The main purpose of the monk's Queste del Saint Graal was to check the trend of this reawakening to nature, reverse its current, and translate the Grail, the cornucopia of the lord of life, into a symbol no longer of nature's earthly grace, but of the supernatural--leaving nature, man, history, and all womankind except baptized nuns, to the Devil. (Campbell 4, p.566)

Importantly, Campbell sees Parzival as dealing specifically and radically with the individual:

in Wolfram the guide is within--for each, unique; and I see in this the first completely intentional statement of the fundamental mythology of modern Western man, the first sheerly individualistic mythology in the history of the human race: a mythology of quest inwardly motivated--directed from within...For each, in himself, is in his "intelligible character" an unprecedented species in himself, whose life-way and life-form...can be revealed and realized only by and through himself. Hence that sense of yearning and striving toward an unknown end, so characteristic of the Western living of life--so alien to the Oriental...as Spengler has well said: "In Wolfram von Eschenbach, Cervantes, Shakespeare, and Goethe, the tragic line of the individual life develops

from within outward, dynamically, functionally."  
(Campbell 4, pp.553-4)

This idea of obeying 'what the mystics call the Inner Voice'  
(Campbell 4, p.564) is, then, a principal message of

Parzival:

In Wolfram's Parzival the boon is to be the inauguration of a new age of the human spirit: of secular spirituality, sustained by self-responsible individuals acting not in terms of general laws supposed to represent the will or way of some personal god or impersonal eternity, but each in terms of his own developing realization of worth. Such an idea is distinctly--and uniquely--European. (Campbell 4, p.480)

For Jung too, 'the inner voice is the voice of a fuller life, of a wider, more comprehensive consciousness' (Jung 17, p.184).

These two epigraphs and the works from which they come are, therefore, compensatory to the mainstream directions of modern Western society. Some of these directions Hughes lists in his essay 'The Environmental Revolution':

The fundamental guiding ideas of our Western Civilisation...derive from Reformed Christianity and from Old Testament Puritanism...It is the story of his progressively more desperate search for mechanical and rational and symbolic securities, which will substitute for the spirit-confidence of the Nature he has lost. (Faas, 1980, p.186)

Hughes lists 'Politicians, Sociologists, Economists, Theologians, Philosophers' (Faas, 1980, p.187) as victims and perpetrators of this situation, all of whom might be said to deal with abstractions of one form or another which often exclude consideration of the individual. The problem here, however, is that Hughes also says:

The story of the mind exiled from Nature is the story of Western Man...The basic myth for the ideal Westerners life is the Quest. The quest for a marriage in the soul or a physical re-conquest. The lost life must be captured somehow. It is the story of spiritual romanticism and heroic

technological progress. It is a story of decline...Civilisation is an evolutionary error. (Faas, 1980, p.186)

Taken out of context the idea of rejecting 'the quest for a marriage in the soul' might seem to refute all of Hughes' work in the 1970s. Hughes himself has said that shamanism 'is the outline...of the Heroic Quest', 'one of the main regenerating dramas of the human psyche: the fundamental poetic event' (Hughes, 1964, p.678), and Scigaj calls 'the adventure quest' the 'structuring principle of Hughes's major poetic sequences' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.3). Crow is in part informed by Hughes' original idea that the protagonist had some sort of quest 'to save a desecrated female in the underworld who then becomes his bride' (Faas, 1980, p.214). Equally, Parzival, of importance to Gaudete, is 'a crucial seminal work' and 'a tribal dream' (Faas, 1980, p.212), the latter remark pointing again to its compensatory function (as a dream), as will shortly be explained. And in Cave Birds, of course, there is the important poem 'Bride and groom lay hidden for three days'. In context, however, this 'marriage in the soul' is linked to a 'spiritual romanticism' not involving Nature, whereas Crow's prospective bride, the female of the Gaudete prologue and epilogue, and the bride of Cave Birds are all clearly linked to what Hughes in this same essay calls 'Nature as the Great Goddess of mankind' (Faas, 1980, p.187), whose 'inner' (rather than 'outer') aspect is presumably the unconscious. Equally, the idea of the quest is here linked to 'physical re-conquest' and 'heroic technological progress' which 'abandons Nature' (Faas, 1980, p.186) rather than seeking to locate and revive 'the Great Goddess'. A



quest like St George's is to defeat the dragon, a dualistic confrontation of good and evil, whereas Parzival's, as already noted, is to 'pierce through the middle'. Hughes' 'Quest' is 'the psychological transformation of the soul', and Hughes is a 'mystic quester' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, pp.149 and 232). What this means is that, although the the idea of the quest structures the three works considered here, there is combined with it an attentiveness, so that the protagonists often approach the position of what Bishop calls the 'passive hero' (Bishop, 1991, p.143). This is in line with Jung's view 'that the primitive does not think consciously, but that thoughts appear' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.153), which would provide the unconscious half of the equation, the unconscious itself being a primitive entity.

This discussion is also relevant to the roles of the sexes in Gaudete, something discussed more fully later in the chapter. Bani Shorter, an American Jungian analyst, makes this point:

Mrs Shorter considers that the deepest underlying difference between women and men can be expressed as a contrast between 'process' and 'goal'. The masculine-dominated, patriarchal, materialist society is about doing, acting and achieving; and it ignores and oppresses the invaluable 'feminine' ways of being, processing, and enabling. (Segaller and Berger, 1989, p.120)

But for Jung, 'wisdom seeks the middle path' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.231) because, as with Heraclitus, 'everything that works is grounded on its opposite' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.32):

For his part, Jung was convinced that the psyche, like the body, was a self-regulating system. It strives perpetually to maintain a balance between opposing propensities, while, at the same time, actively seeking its own individuation. A dynamic polarity exists between the ego and the Self, between the persona and the shadow, between masculine consciousness and the anima, between

feminine consciousness and the animus, between extraverted and introverted attitudes, between thinking and feeling functions, between sensation and intuition and between the forces of Good and Evil.

Just as the body possesses control mechanisms to keep its vital functions in balance, so the psyche has a control mechanism in the compensatory activity of dreams. (Stevens, 1991, p.49)

Hughes see Parzifal, which he links to Bran as 'a fusion of the Arthurian mythos' and 'a Gnostic union of love' (Hughes, 1992, pp.431-2). The combination of the two is the Jungian quest, the drive for individuation, and this middle path involves both seeking and waiting in a strange combination, partly because both the conscious and unconscious (the 'inner voice') cooperate in the move towards their union:

No act of choice caused him to take this path; rather, he felt the path had chosen him. 'From the beginning I had a sense of destiny, as though my life was assigned to me by fate and had to be fulfilled. This gave me an inner security, and, though I could not prove it to myself, it proved itself to me. I did not have this certainty, it had me.' (Stevens, 1991, p.65)

In the same way the alchemist believed himself to be the servant of the work, believed that not he but Nature brought his efforts to fruition. (Stevens, 1991, p.244)

The choice of epigraphs is also relevant to the division of the sexes in Gaudete, not least because the culminating experience for the women in the book is the orgy and for the men, the hunt. Dionysos was the master of 'orgiastic rites' (Day, 1984, p.247), whereas, in Arthurian legend, adventures often began with the hunt for the white hart.

The prologue begins with Lumb exhibiting many of the symptoms of sickness Hughes would see as indigenous to modern England and 'Western Man': 'He has no idea where he is going. Or where he is'. He is oppressed by the twilight

which, extending the symbolism, could be regarded as a manifestation of history as well as of nature (as could the later 'dusk in a desert'), and yet is in a hurry to go nowhere, his speed impeded only by the trappings of his Christian faith ('the dragging flap of his cassock'). As a modern man he is isolated ('an empty town', 'a desert') and unable to cope with 'the stillness'<sup>2</sup>. The opening dozen lines contrast in little touches the natural with the man-made: a stride that reaches, a cassock that drags; and the 'charred black chimneys' that 'jag up into the yellowish purple'. Short sentences paint these details into a sketchy landscape and are resonant of dream or, indeed, of film (Gaudete was originally planned as a film) and create an atmosphere of suspense or danger ready for the following events which happen 'abruptly', 'immediately' or 'suddenly', with all the shock of nightmare.

It is worth looking more closely at the nature of dream, since it is pertinent to all parts of Gaudete and to the 'tribal dream' of Parzival. Jung calls the dream 'an inner vision' and goes on to say:

The dream is a little hidden door in the innermost and most secret recesses of the soul, opening into that cosmic night which was psyche long before there was any ego-consciousness, and which will remain psyche no matter how far our ego-consciousness extends...All consciousness separates; but in dreams we put on the likeness of that more universal, truer, more eternal man dwelling in the darkness of primordial night. (Jung 10, pp.144-5)

For Jung, therefore, 'every man, in a sense, represents the whole of humanity and its history' (Jung 8, p.250) and 'the dream is specifically the utterance of the unconscious' (Jung 16, p.147).

Dreams are often seen as prophetic, which they can be since 'many crises in our lives have a long unconscious history' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.36), so that the unconscious can warn of a situation even before the conscious mind, whether individual or collective, is aware of the situation. By paying attention to dreams, 'our most effective aid in building up the personality' (Jung 16, p.153), the individual can only gain in understanding, especially because 'the unconscious contains everything that is lacking to consciousness' and has 'a compensatory tendency' (Jung 10, p.152). Dreams are 'pure products of nature not falsified by any conscious purpose' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.48), and this compensatory relationship Jung describes as 'a biological relationship' (Jung 10, p.218) which attempts a rebalancing of an unnaturally one-sided view:

Dreams are impartial, spontaneous products of the unconscious psyche, outside the control of the will. They are pure nature; they show us the unvarnished, natural truth, and are therefore fitted, as nothing else is, to give us back an attitude that accords with our basic human nature when our consciousness has strayed too far from its foundations and run into an impasse.

To concern ourselves with dreams is a way of reflecting on ourselves--a way of self-reflection. It is not our ego-consciousness reflecting on itself; rather, it turns its attention to the objective actuality of the dream as a communication or message from the unconscious, unitary soul of humanity. It reflects not on the ego but on the self; it recollects that strange self, alien to the ego, which was ours from the beginning, the trunk from which the ego grew. It is alien to us because, through the aberrations of consciousness, we have alienated ourselves from it. (Jung 10, p.149)

As natural phenomena, 'as far removed from conscious control as...the physiological activity of digestion', dreams provide Jung with 'an absolutely objective process from the nature of which we can draw objective conclusions' (Jung 17,

p.59) about the state of the individual and, through the collective unconscious, the state of that individual's society.

Jung also says that, as with the body, the mind 'bears the traces of its phylogenetic development' which gives rise to 'the possibility that the figurative language of dreams is a survival from an archaic mode of thought' (Jung 8, p.248). Dreams are therefore, in line with much of the mythology discussed here, anti-dualist:

For here, since the dreamer and his dream are the same, the subject-object opposition falls: the visions are of his own motivating powers; their personifications are his gods--or, if improperly served, disdained, or disregarded, become his fiends...All the gods are within: within you--within the world. And it will be according to the inward tensions and resolutions, balances and imbalances, of the individual that his visions will be of either infernal or celestial kind... Here all pairs of opposites coincide, whether of subject and object, the dreamer and his dream, desire and loathing, terror-joy, or the micro- and the macrocosm. (Campbell 4, p.650)

Dreams can be said, therefore, to be essentially compensatory to the modern conscious dualist Western view, exactly as the two epigraphs were seen to be. Indeed, Nietzsche sees dream as 'a second real world' (Campbell 4, p.651), and this world is closely related to mythology, where the 'correlation between...subjectivity and object--as in dream--is exactly what gives to mythic tales their quality of revelation' (Campbell 4, p.491).

Campbell at several points (e.g., Campbell 4, p.661) equates dream with myth, asserting that 'mythology and the psychology of dream are recognized as related, even identical' (Campbell 4, p.358), and Eliade agrees:

It is always in dreams that historical time is abolished and the mythical time regained--which

allows the future shaman to witness the beginnings of the world and hence to become contemporary not only with the cosmogony but also with the primordial mythical revelations. (Eliade, 1972, p.103)

Similarly, 'All poetic inspiration/ Is but dream interpretation'<sup>3</sup>, and Redgrove quotes Norman Brown to point to 'the substantial identity between poetic logic (with its symbolism, condensation of meaning, and displacement of accent) and dream logic'' (Redgrove, 1987, p.177). Campbell in his Creative Mythology helpfully ties together art, myth and dream:

In art, in myth, in rites, we enter the sphere of the dream awake. And as the imagery of dream will be on one level local, personal and historic, but at bottom rooted in the instincts, so also myth and symbolic art. The message of an effective living myth is delivered to the sphere of bliss of the deep unconscious, where it touches, wakes, and summons energies; so that symbols operating on that level are energy-releasing and -channeling stimuli. That is their function--their "meaning"--on the level of Deep Sleep: while on the level of Waking Consciousness the same symbols are inspirational, informative, initiatory, rendering a sense of illumination with respect to the instincts touched, i.e., the order subliminal of nature--inward and outer nature--of which the instincts touched are the life. (Campbell 4, pp. 671-2)

Jung talks about the dream in terms relevant to the 'psychodrama' (Scigaj's term) of Gaudete and the drama of Cave Birds:

The whole dream-work is essentially subjective, and a dream is a theatre in which the dreamer is himself the scene, the player, the prompter, the producer, the author, the public, and the critic. (Jung 8, p.266)

One important possibility here is that Hughes' books can be treated as dreams open for interpretation, collective tribal dreams which can open a door not to the psychological state of Hughes, but, through analysis of response, the psychology of the individual reader. This subjective element makes

objective criticism difficult, for ideally with any dream one must 'establish the context with minute care' (Jung 16, p.148). Further, 'no dream symbol can be separated from the individual who dreams it' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.38) and 'the same dream-motifs mean one thing on one occasion and the exact opposite on another' (Jung 17, p.101). But this is where the idea of the archetype (which acknowledges opposite possibilities) and the connection between myth and dream become important. Campbell says that 'dream is the personalized myth, myth the depersonalized dream' (Campbell, 1949, p.19) and Hughes himself calls myths 'big dreams' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.267), a term he may have borrowed from Jung. Hughes uses dreams in his poetry because 'dreams for Hughes have always conveyed important bulletins from the subconscious' (Scigaj, 1991, p.6). Without recourse to myth, analysis can either probe Hughes' psychology or the psychology of the reader, which can lead to the strange personal confessions of Bodkin quoted in my introduction. By the analogy to myth, however, and through the many-angled approach of archetypal theory, a stance can be maintained that is objective but which allows in the subjectivity of any particular reader.

The language of dream is 'the language of nature, which is strange and incomprehensible to us' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.85), and indeed Jung uses the same metaphor Hughes does, saying that in dream-analysis 'we proceed in a manner not unlike that employed in the deciphering of hieroglyphs' (Jung 17, p.155). But to avoid this difficulty is to ignore one half of the creative act, since 'the significance of the unconscious in the total performance of the psyche is

probably just as great as that of consciousness' (Jung 8, p.254).

Returning to the prologue, what follows is also reminiscent of nightmare or film, with scenes that are not only fantastic but also shift quickly. In the first of these scenes Lumb moves among the dead 'incredulous', 'touching hands and faces in unwitting parody of Christ's healing miracles' (Robinson, 1989, p.74). Lumb's actions are themselves somewhat dream-like, and there is a pathos to their apparent logic. He touches, 'looks for wounds' and 'lifts' before his mind is able to appreciate the situation ('A mass-grave!') and deduce ('They were herded in here, then all killed together'). Similarly, just as in dreams, it now seems that 'directions have shifted' and, after clambering about, 'finally, he simply stands, listening to the unnatural silence'. Only now, it seems, does Lumb panic.

The next scene in this dream-like sequence begins with the cry of another voice than that of the panicky Lumb. The creature that appears with his ape-like aspect, his 'small aged face, wild as a berry--the scorched, bristly, collapsed face of a tinker', and his 'rough-snagged shillelagh of voice, hard and Irish' is similar to figures from pre-Christian Ireland, one of the Sidhe, perhaps, whose laughter recalls that of Yeats' 'The Unappeasable Host', or that of the heart in 'Into the Twilight' (the action of Gaudete, of course, begins in 'oppressive twilight') which is ready to 'Come clear of the nets of wrong and right' (Yeats, 1982, p.65). Such laughter also recalls passages from Crow, and it points to the old man as an emissary of the spirit world,





(Hirschberg, 1981, p.181) according to Hirschberg, a Mother Earth figure, and, understandably, in the twentieth century she is sick. She is also, on an individual level, the soul, the 'Sacred Bride, in the form of the Goddess...in the form of the divine creative power of Nature' (Hughes, 1992, p.369). Perhaps she also, along with the old man, can raise echoes of Lear and Cordelia, that most popular of tales set in pre-Christian England, and Hirschberg also links her to Eve (Hirschberg, 1981, p.182). Scigaj, referring to Graves, calls her 'a nearly dead Cerridwen, an ancient wolf goddess of nature' who 'came to Britain circa 2500 B.C., during the New Stone Age' (Scigaj, 1986, pp.169-70).

The figure of the goddess (see also my Crow chapter) is, of course, very ancient in the history of humanity, 'integral to our most ancient sacred traditions', plausibly 'the original religious impulse of humanity', which has left 'an indelible imprint on the Western psyche' (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, pp.5, 50 and 47). Redgrove gives an interesting reason for the persistence of the Great Goddess:

Genetic research by scientists at the University of California suggests 'that everybody on the planet is descended from the same woman. She... lived in Africa about 300,000 years ago, and descendants of the group she belonged to eventually migrated out of Africa, giving rise to all the people living today.' (Redgrove, 1987, p.118)

Her situation in the cave of Gaudete is perhaps explained by the fact that in Celtic mythology 'Fairyland, presided over by a queen, is underground' and 'seems to stem from a matrilineal period' (Day, 1984, p.507). Further to this is the idea that '"the Goddess religion went underground"--a

process that began in the mid-fourth millennium before our era':

The Goddess gradually retreated...Human alienation from the vital roots of earthly life ensued, the results of which are clear in our contemporary society. But the cycles never stop turning, and now we find the Goddess reemerging...bringing us hope for the future... (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.49)

All sorts of complexities enter with this last statement, as often happens with archetypes, where each reader will find different aspects (or none) registering consciously and unconsciously. The idea of 'the Goddess reemerging' finds echo in Allegro, who suggests that humanity might be 'moving towards a revival of the old Nature religion' of 'the Earth-mother' (Allegro, 1977, p.186). As Persephone, the underworld goddess can expect a later resurrection, as she can through lunar symbolism as Yeats' A Vision might suggest and Campbell explains:

The phases of the moon are four: three visible (waxing, full, and waning) and one invisible (three nights dark). Persephone, ravished to the netherworld by Hades/Pluto, became--while there invisible to the living--queen of a netherworld of death and regeneration. (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.98)

In this context, it should also be remembered that wolves howl at the moon.

All this, of course, pertains to the (male) psyche, with the goddess as an underground (unconscious) anima figure, ill because of the one-sided attitude of Lumb and the (English) Western Man he represents. As anima, the goddess figure can also act as muse, 'unheard, underground', and Joseph Campbell also refers to the Muse of the Earth 'known as Surda ("Silent") Thalia':

No one can possibly function, either as poet or as artist, in...a desacralized environment. The repudiated and absconded Muse of the living Earth, Surda Thalia, must first be invoked and recalled. (Campbell and Muses, ed, 1991, pp.88-9)

Concerning Gaudete, it should be remembered that Maud is dumb, cured only at the very end of the main text (p.147).

The goddess of the Gaudete prologue certainly represents something wholesome, supernatural and forgotten. And dying. Lumb is to cure her, but fails to do so in a way which recalls Parzival's failure to cure Anfortas at Munsalvaesche where 'true to the dictates of good breeding, he refrained from asking any question' (Wolfram, 1980, p.127). Campbell suggests that this demonstrates a fault in Parzival in that he acts 'in terms of what people would think' and not according to his own 'integrity' (Campbell 4, p.454). Both Parzival and Lumb at first react according to the dictates of external 'systems' (the court and church conventions), although both are given a second chance and through their new willingness to help, having now eschewed social convention in favour of personal integrity, both effect cures by their actions. Presumably Lumb 'declares he can do nothing' due to his own "good" breeding, his training as a vicar and, related to this, his civilized and rational conscious behaviour as opposed to primitive and instinctive unconscious behaviour, and Hughes himself refers to 'the hero's original crime--which was his rejection of the Goddess' (Hughes, 1992, p.221). A passage in Eliade's Shamanism shows a more positive response to 'a nearly dead Cerridwen', as well as a reason for her calamitous state:

The goddess's hair hangs down over her face and she is dirty and slovenly; this is the effect of men's sins, which have almost made her ill. The shaman must approach her, take her by the

shoulder, and comb her hair... (Eliade, 1972, p.295)

What follows Lumb's failure to act appears to be a shamanic initiation ceremony, perhaps because Lumb will need such an initiation if he is to help the goddess recover. Lumb was presumably chosen for this task because, as a country vicar, he is potentially the most suitable candidate, being both a representative of whatever religion survives and also in being close to nature. Perhaps his name also has a double-edged significance since a tall chimney (recalling the 'charred black chimneys' of the 'Prologue') is not only a symbol of modern man's harmful aspirations, but also a device that takes noxious gasses away from the earth. The name can also, more obscurely, combine the sexuality of both sexes, a useful encapsulation since Lumb has profound effect upon the psyches of the men and women in the book through his own sexual activities and an awakening of such instincts within his (particularly female) parishioners. Hirschberg finds 'Lumbar' meaning 'the loins' (Hirschberg, 1981, p.180), and 'Lumb', as well as meaning 'a chimney' (male), can also mean 'a deep pool' in a river or 'a well...in a mine' (female).

Joseph Henderson refers to 'the archetype of initiation' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.120) and Hughes seems to have drawn upon many mythological sources for Lumb's initiation, such as the Ancient Egyptian figure of Osiris (see my next chapter) and his resurrection where a celebratory ritual involved 'a tree trunk with branches stripped off' (Day, 1984, p.99). The 'aboriginal faces', at first mistaken by Lumb for 'lions' (an adopted British totem), force him to choose a tree, and Lumb chooses that

most English of trees-as-symbols, the oak, appropriate also, remembering 'the woman tangled in the skins of wolves' because 'the wolf is closely associated with the oak-cult' (Graves, 1961, p.282). Then, 'stroke by stroke, he and the tree-bole are flogged', and the tree-bole becomes his double. But now, through the use of the whip-mark across the skull, we are to understand that the Lumb of the text from now on is, in fact, his magically created double.

The idea of 'twins' is one that Jung examines, asserting that 'we are that pair of Dioscuri, one of whom is mortal and the other immortal' and also talking about 'the duplication motif' which 'occurs when unconscious contents are about to become conscious and differentiated' (Jung 9, Part 1, pp.131 and 344). This will lead to a more balanced psyche, as exhibited by the Lumb of the Gaudete epilogue poems. In this context, Bishop talks of 'closing the fissure opened by Lumb's tragic division of functions (priest and doctor)...towards the unity of 'Poet' and 'Shaman'' (Bishop, 1991, p.219).

The idea of the two Lumbs pertains to the Shaman's bilocation, already discussed, where 'The shaman's body is now inhabited by a spirit...that answers in his stead' because the shaman himself 'is now in the lower regions' (Eliade, 1972, p.239). What the original Lumb does in 'the lower regions' might be surmised from a primitive belief (here of 'the peoples of North Asia') that 'the otherworld' is 'an inverted image of this world':

Everything takes place as it does here, but in reverse. When it is day on earth, it is night in the beyond...what is broken here below is whole in the otherworld and vice versa. (Eliade, 1972, p.205)

Incidentally, this idea seems equally applicable to an earlier poem, 'Ghost Crabs' from Wodwo where 'We are... bacteria' to the crabs, 'the powers of this world', 'Dying their lives and living their deaths'. The quotation also puts forward an interesting possibility for the sacrifice of Felicity at the end of the main text of Gaudete since its reverse might imply a cure or resurrection of the beleaguered underworld goddess, and thereby success for the original Lumb in his underworld mission.

The idea of two concurrent dramas occurs in Hughes' discussion of Shakespeare, where he talks about the theme of 'the Rival Brothers', 'the irrational being and the rational':

Their 'rivalry' corresponds to the alienation between the Puritan Adonis and the Goddess. The irrational brother's feeling of inferiority and his consequent bid to supplant his rational brother correspond to the Goddess's rage on being rejected and her consequent inspiring of the Boar to destroy the one who rejected her by usurping him...the hero first of all rejects the Female's lust, then assaults her sexually--or attempts to. (Hughes, 1992, pp.219-20)

This Goddess-created male (the changeling Lumb) is:

a front man midway between her Underworld and the world of the rational ego. This new personality becomes a secondary ego, as irrational as the Underworld half of the Goddess who has created him, and, like her, suppressed by the rational ego. He is not only her subordinate, and the commander of her powers. He serves as a rallying point, a recruiting officer, for every malcontent impulse that the rational ego continues to reject or suppress. (Hughes, 1992, p.514)

This sounds much like Jung's shadow figure, and Hughes sees Shakespeare as following 'a laborious process of bringing these two minds (the Rival Brothers), within himself, to mutual understanding' (Hughes, 1992, p.508), something which happens to Lumb only in the epilogue.

The prologue seems to follow the pattern of a shamanic initiation beginning with 'a crisis' by which 'the shamanic vocation is manifested' (Eliade, 1972, p.xii). This is followed by 'sufferings' and 'tortures' by '"demons of the illness"', 'symbolic ascent to Heaven by means of a tree' and 'a descent into Hell' during all of which 'the future shaman no longer resists' (Eliade, 1960, pp.79-81). The experience is archetypal, and Eliade reports that the shamanic experience 'closely follows the classic ritual of initiation' (Eliade, 1960, p.79). The experience is also of psychological import--perhaps even for the reader--where the initiate 'is present, in a dream, at his own dismemberment', and Eliade remarks that 'the symbolic return to chaos is indispensable to any new Creation' which is 'in the last analysis, the birth of a new personality' (Eliade, 1960, pp.80-1). Finally, Eliade brings in the 'lunar symbolism' already noted in relation to the initiation:

Now, the Moon disappears--that is, dies--periodically, to be born again three nights later; and this lunar symbolism stresses the idea that death is the first condition of all mystical regeneration. (Eliade, 1960, p.199)

It should be noted that the Lumb of the epilogue poems demonstrates a 'new' personality for Lumb, different from that of the prologue and the main text, and a personality appropriate to such a 'mystical' rebirth.

In the prologue, as the old Lumb is left behind, the new Lumb, it seems, must also be ritually initiated before he can begin life in the upper world. The 'colossal white bull' is of significance not least because Graves talks of 'Dionysus the Danaan White Bull-god' (Graves, 1961, p.335), and the initiation itself can be compared to various



historical rites, such as that of 'the Phrygian god Attis' (Scigaj, 1986, p.171) which Scigaj quotes, or that of Mithra, which Campbell cites:

And we are informed from numerous sources of an actual bull sacrifice, the taurobolium, which was performed above a pit in which the initiate lay, so that he was baptized in a cascade of hot bull's gore. (Campbell 3, p.260)

Eliade points out that this initiation is closely related to a shamanic one (Eliade, 1972, p.121) and the bull can also be linked with the White Goddess and the lunar symbolism noted earlier since 'the bull was the animal of the moon' (Campbell 3, p.60), because of its horns (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.97).

Hughes himself would seem to confirm Scigaj's reference to Attis when talking about 'the ritual death and resurrection of Attis', during which:

in a secret sacrament, initiates in a pit were washed under the cascading blood of freshly slaughtered bulls, and emerged 'sinless' and new-born to be clothed, and for some days fed, as new-born babies. (Hughes, 1992, p.9)

But here Hughes is making a comparison with the Venus and Adonis myth, which would imply that no specific mythological reference is intended, but instead there is a typical (or archetypal) initiation whose purpose symbolically and psychologically would seem to be rebirth and the beginnings of a shamanic or mystical/ religious career or individuation, the integration of the two halves of the psyche, as represented by the two Lumbs.

The bull is a very ancient totem, worshipped 'since the Paleolithic era' for his 'strength, ferocity, and virility' (Day, 1984, p.146), but also has, through his horns, 'associations with death and the underworld, and an

uncontrolled, destructive sexuality' (Russell, 1977, p.70). Russell links the underground sacrifices of a bull 'in imitation of Mithras' slaying of the primeval bull' with 'the more mystical and religiously inclined' Roman Neopythagoreans (Russell, 1977, p.154). Graves finds the bull sacrifice and symbolism pertinent to Christ, Jehovah and therefore 'Cronos (Bran)' (Graves, 1961, pp.142 and 336) and this very welter of associations points to the bull as an archetype, as Campbell points out when talking about Picasso's picture Minotaur:

The moon, the moon-bull, and the dead and risen god, whether as the mild and loving Christ or as this savage mixed monster of the abyss, are of an order of symbolization the "meanings" of which cannot be reduced to light-world, even "dream-world" terms. (Campbell 4, p.668)

The bull as an archetype exists for each individual to find their own response, and its history is complicated enough to be relevant to both male and female. The bull is 'the symbol of the father', and the cult of Mithra was 'a vigorous mystery religion confined exclusively to males' (Day, 1984, pp.429 and 202). But bull's blood ('most potent magic') was 'a poison deadly to anyone but a Sibyl or a priest of Mother Earth' (Graves, 1961, p.105), bulls were often killed 'within caves...i.e. within womb symbols' (Day, 1984, p.384), and there is also the association with Dionysos:

the Dionysian cult was mostly though not exclusively practiced by female devotees...Central to the mysteries of Dionysus was the tearing to pieces of a young living bull... (Day, 1984, p.202)

There is much for the psyche of any reader of either sex to respond to in the archetype of the bull, often of an

initiatory nature. Graves, for example, quotes Virgil's lines 'The white bull with his gilded horns/ Opens the year...' (Graves, 1961, p.380). Equally, in the main text of Gaudete, different characters respond to the bull in different ways. Lumb has a bull's strength and virility, Mrs Holroyd watches 'The blossoms snow down' on her bull 'like a confetti' (p.60), whilst her husband saws 'the horns off a young bull' (p.126) (removing remembrance of the moon goddess, perhaps), which symbolically points to the condition of the men in Gaudete and also prophesies the eventual fate of the changeling Lumb.

Finally, as the protagonists of this prologue ritual (like the 'old man' earlier) indulge in 'infernal laughter', in a scene symbolic of birth, 'the new Lumb makes his entry into the world through the bloody Womb Door of a slaughterhouse' (Faas, 1980, p.125). This release follows Lumb's earlier isolation amongst the corpses and his initiation, which point to Lumb as archetypal hero, Stevens speaking of 'the perilous journey of the hero, bearing the archetypal hallmarks of isolation, initiation and the return' (Stevens, 1991, p.179). The changeling Lumb, however, fails in his effort to bestow benefits because he is 'inadequate' to his task, in part because of the lack of readiness in 'the immovable dead end forms of society and physical life' in England (Faas, 1980, p.215).

Having reached the end of such a fantastic prologue which, in its first page moves from the mundane to the bizarre, the question arises as to how Hughes has managed to maintain his reader's credulity. The answer, it would seem, is principally through myth. The idea of film or dream

pervades the prologue, and adds to the numinosity of the events and figures it describes. These themselves, as already noted, appear to echo (sometimes British) mythological motifs and, according to Jungian theory, would thereby strike a chord in the Collective Unconscious, so that what might be regarded as fantastic cannot be regarded as mere caprice. The argument, which proceeds the prologue, also helps prepare a reader for the bizarre, and it is interesting to note that the enlarged argument of 1979 includes a specific claim on indigenous mythology through the phrase 'Just as in the Folktale...'.

The main text begins with the same contrast of the natural and the human world that began the prologue. The 'high-velocity rifles' are 'Creatures in hibernation', and the 'tiger's skull' has a 'small man-made hole' contrasting with 'the dragonish eye-sockets'. Sentences, as in the prologue, are often short and detailed, seemingly cinematic, and frequently without a main verb or, as Hughes himself describes the lines, 'a single lumped summary rather than an unfolding paragraph' (personal communication, October 1978). The overall effect is of an almost punctilious attention to detail within a generally sketched landscape which leads to a tone of restraint. Such a style is pertinent to something Hughes said in his 1977 interview with Faas:

But then I became more interested in doing a headlong narrative. Something like a Kleist story that would go from beginning to end in some forceful way pushing the reader through some kind of tunnel while being written in the kind of verse that would stop you dead at every moment. A great driving force meeting solid resistance. And in order to manage that I had to enclose myself within a very narrow tone, almost a monotone, so that the actual narrative trimmed itself down more and more. (Faas, 1980, p.214)

The 'great driving force meeting solid resistance' applies to several aspects of the narrative. The forceful flow of detail arrests the eye (or lens) but drives the narrative forward, so that at the start the swift shift from binoculars to 'correspondence/ Concerning the sperm of bulls' to the rifles to the coffee to the tiger's skull might cause pause over individual items but it also pushes the narrative onward and in so doing tells the reader, indirectly, much about Hagen's character. The mixture of prose and verse in Gaudete aids this process, the prose elements assisting the narrative flow, the poetic concentrating attention upon individual words and detail. Assonance and alliteration also create a melody that is a 'driving force', but, at the same time, cause an effect that must give pause:

Everything hangs  
 In a chill dewdrop suspension,  
 Wobbled by the gossamer shimmer of the crosswind.

Here, the last line with its alliteration on s, m and r, and its tight assonance ('wobbled...gossamer...of...crosswind' and 'shimmer...wind', both assonances echoing the previous line's 'dewdrop' and 'chill') mean that each word must be carefully articulated, and yet the effect is sufficiently lyrical to suggest an atmosphere reflecting that which the words describe.

Further to this, metaphors and imagery mix different elements of the natural world, which not only allows the reader to see natural phenomena in a new way but also reflects on an interconnectedness inherent in nature (or, indeed, in dream, film, or myth) where 'the poplars lift and pour like the tails of horses'. Poplars are imaginatively

linked with water and horse-tails, and other examples of this technique abound: 'the streaming leaf-shoal of the willows' (p.25); 'the toppling continents of hard-blossomed cumulus' (p.26); and 'the crumpled feet of gigantic beeches' (p.29), for example. In the last example, as elsewhere in Gaudete, the possible anthropomorphism of nature would seem to include man in this interconnectedness, whether he wishes it or not. Indeed, whether the reader notices it or not, the text will have just such an effect on him or her because, as Faas puts it (paralleling the idea of 'hieroglyph language'):

its poetic language has a synaesthetic impact on all the five senses as well as on the subconscious sensorium behind and beyond them. (Faas, 1980, p.130)

The mixture of prose and verse in Gaudete has literary antecedents, such as the one Graves quotes:

It seems that the Welsh minstrels, like the Irish poets, recited their traditional romances in prose, breaking into dramatic verse, with harp accompaniment, only at points of emotional stress. (Graves, 1961, p.27)<sup>5</sup>

The presence of the Wolfram epigraph points to the influence of Celtic romance on Gaudete. Graves also talks of 'two distinct and complementary languages' in his The White Goddess, 'the ancient, intuitive language of poetry' and 'the more modern, rational language of prose, universally current' (Graves, 1961, p.480):

What interests me most in conducting this argument is the difference that is constantly appearing between the poetic and prosaic methods of thought...And in England, as in most other mercantile countries, the current popular view is that 'music' and old-fashioned diction are the only characteristics of poetry which distinguish it from prose: that every poem has, or should have, a precise single-strand prose equivalent. As a result, the poetic faculty is atrophied in



specifically, for example, with medieval romance  
(remembering the Parzival epigraph):

One thing Malory did--he placed his time as  
BEFORE. Now there is a curious time...Time  
interval in the past is a very recent conception.  
Julius Caesar found no difficulty in being  
descended from Venus... (Steinbeck, 1976, p.358)

Something within Hagen, whether acknowledged or not, has that sense of timelessness found everywhere in mythology and related, as far as modernity is concerned, to genetic inheritance and the concept of (as Hughes calls it) 'ancestral memory' (Faas, 1980, p.171) or (as Jung would call it) 'the Collective Unconscious'. The passage shows the character of Hagen (and therefore all of us) to be rooted in and somewhat affected by distant (ancestral) history and, further, it links Hagen with the masculine hunting background discussed later in this chapter. Finally, in connection with Hagen, Robinson points to a mythical namesake, the Hagen of the Nibelungenlied, a 'hero-slaying' character from Teutonic mythology (Robinson, 1989, p.82).

The above extract from Gaudete also demonstrates the interdependence of plot and narrator. Hughes, in a letter to Gifford and Roberts, says that 'the style was indispensable to the theme' (personal communication, October 1978), and the style is clearly dependent upon the narrator. This narrator is omniscient, beyond the scope of a character and, indeed, of a film-script writer. Without the mythical elements contained in plot and form, the mixture of verse and prose, and 'the epic style similes etc' (personal communication, October 1978) that Hughes indicates in the letter to Gifford and Roberts, such a narrator might be seen



as an awkwardness--at best, perhaps, an easy luxury for Hughes. And without such a narrator, the plot would seem overblown with possibilities of pretentiousness or even ridiculousness. Through the chosen techniques a reader is able to learn more than he or she could otherwise (in film, for example), and the narrator is able to insert much into the text that would not normally be acceptable, such as the occasional reminder of the changeling Lumb's otherness:

Hagen  
 Contemplates their stillness. The man-shape  
 To which his wife clings.  
 He does not detect  
 Lumb's absence.

The narrator is also able, through the choice of adjective or metaphor untranslatable onto celluloid, to invest the natural world with potency and threat:

The vista quivers.  
 Decorative and ordered, it tugs at a leash.  
 A purplish turbulence  
 Boils from the stirred chestnuts, and the spasms  
 of the new grass, and the dark nodes of bulls.

Similarly, it seems natural that the narrative is invested with much potential symbolism (such as Hagen's shooting of the ringdove in 'Hagen is striding'), the narrator being able to achieve these effects through a detached stance sustained in both the tone and the content of the main narrative.

Obviously the most important character in the main narrative is the changeling Lumb, and it is appropriate at this point to examine the character of this Lumb as well as his mythical ancestry. The range of mythic material available to perhaps clarify Lumb's origin is wide. Day, for example, in his The Many Meanings of Myth, says:

Starting as an aniconic representation, tree trunks have been adorned and worshipped by numerous archaic peoples...Dryads were humans in tree form, according to the Greeks. Scandinavian and other mythologies claim that men and women were first formed from trees... (Day, 1984, p.270)

Day also states that 'Numerous myths worldwide report humans born from trees' (Day, 1984, p.319). Further clues to the mythological background of Lumb can be found in Graves' The White Goddess:

At mid-summer, at the end of a half-year reign, Hercules is made drunk with mead and led into the middle of a circle of twelve stones arranged around an oak, in front of which stands an altar-stone; the oak has been lopped until it is T-shaped. He is bound to it with willow thongs in the 'five-fold bond' which joins wrists, neck and ankles together, beaten by his comrades till he faints, then flayed, blinded, castrated, impaled with a mistletoe stake, and finally hacked into joints on the altar-stone. (Graves, 1961, p.125)

Graves associates Hercules with both Apollo and Dionysus (Graves, 1961, p.257), and the 'twelve stones' perhaps echo Lumb's nightmare scene where the women of Lumb's congregation, who number twelve (and therefore could be said to form a witch's coven along with Lumb, as I will argue later), surround a pit with only their heads above the earth (pages 102-103).

There are a score or more references to the oak in Graves' The White Goddess, and many give clues to or confirmation of aspects of Lumb's character and his significance in the plot. Hughes himself refers to the idea where 'the god is released or reborn from the tree' (Hughes, 1992, p.6), and I will return to a discussion of the archetype of the tree at the end of this chapter, concentrating for now specifically on the oak. Graves links, for example, the oak-king to St. John the Baptist,

Gawain and 'the prime phallic god' Hermes (Graves, 1961, pp.180 and 355), and he also has this to say:

Cerridwen abides. Poetry began in the matriarchal age, and derives its magic from the moon, not from the sun. No poet can hope to understand the nature of poetry unless he has had a vision of the Naked King crucified to the lopped oak, and watched the dancers, red-eyed from the acrid smoke of the sacrificial fires, stamping out the measure of the dance, their bodies bent uncouthly forward, with a monotonous chant of : 'Kill! kill! kill!' and 'Blood! blood! blood!' (Graves, 1961, p.448)

Critics, Hirschberg and Scigaj especially, also concentrate on the links between Lumb and the oak-king, Hirschberg asserting that 'undoubtedly, Lumb is a representative of the 'king of the wood'' (Hirschberg, 1981, p.187). Scigaj, on the other hand, links the changeling with 'Jung's Shadow archetype' and also asserts that 'the oak symbolizes both his physical strength and its limits, including of course his mortality' (Scigaj, 1986, pp.173 and 185). The idea of the shadow is a useful one for understanding the relationship between the two Lumbs:

repressed dispositions come to form another complex of subpersonality, which Jung called the shadow...the shadow complex possesses qualities opposite to those manifested in the persona. Consequently, these two aspects of the personality complement and counterbalance each other, the shadow compensating for the pretensions of the persona, the persona compensating for the antisocial propensities of the shadow...In effect, the shadow, which Jung regarded as only a part of the unconscious psyche, is roughly equivalent to the whole of the Freudian unconscious...However one may choose to set about it, assimilation of the shadow is a crucial step on the way to individuation. (Stevens, 1991, pp.43 and 46)

Stevens adds that 'the more rigid the cultural mores...the more powerful and capacious the shadow' (Stevens, 1991, p.84), so that the changeling Lumb's outrageous behaviour is once again an indictment of the state of England. Any

individual, however, can find in the shadow 'values that are needed by consciousness', and 'whether the shadow becomes our friend or enemy depends largely upon ourselves' because 'the shadow becomes hostile only when he is ignored or misunderstood' (Jung, ed, 1978, pp.178 and 182).

Critics point to many other parallels between myth and the oak of the text, Hirschberg especially who links the oak with Dionysos, the resurrected god; with Sylvia, which he defines as 'the private meaning' (Hirschberg, 1981, pp.186-7); and also with a puppet:

In turn this reflects Graves's belief that 'in the primitive cult of the universal goddess...there was no room for choice; her devotees accepted the events, pleasurable and painful in turn, which she imposed on them as their destiny...'. Lumb is destroyed by the intolerable tension between his assigned fate and his human desires. (Hirschberg, 1981, p.194)

Scigaj combines the Northern and Southern components of the English mythological inheritance when he says that:

Greeks, Norsemen, and Druids associated the oak tree--symbol of royalty, power, and oracular knowledge--with midsummer fertility orgies and sacrifices--the lover and hag aspects of the White Goddess. (Scigaj, 1991, p.87)

Hughes says of these two components, the Northern and the Southern, in the English language that 'the combination of the two is our wealth' (Faas, 1980, p.171).

All of this, then, links Lumb to the oak-king and posits tenuous parallels between Gaudete and such works as The Bacchae, Parzival, Gawain, as well as with mythologies of various peoples which all point toward the same anthropological origin, a sort of primitive ur-myth. This would seem to suggest that Lumb is an anthropologist's attempt to amalgamate various other older figures into a

modern version of an archetype, which has the happy side-effect of lending the text a mythological, psychological and artistic depth. But Lumb is more than that.

At base he represents the psychological consequences of the bleak view of a post-Darwinian humanity whose only aim is the continuation of the species through procreation: the urge of the selfish gene. In this he also represents a repressed part of the original Lumb's psyche (or biology) which, having been beaten down (in part through the original Lumb's vocation and society), asserts itself finally in such a grotesque and ultimately tragic manner. Gaudete could plausibly be treated as a psychological document concerning itself with the mental state of Lumb and/ or Hughes. It is certainly possible in this way to see Lumb as a representative of the repressed urges in readers, the characters of Gaudete, and even Hughes himself, and thus, ultimately, to view Lumb as a scapegoat figure for Western Man. However, to follow any of these interpretations exclusively is partially to miss the point since myth has its meanings on various levels, many of which can, and should, flourish simultaneously. So that, finally, the changeling Lumb is many things: shaman; scapegoat; id; Shadow; oak-king; prototype; and also a character in his own right, a part of the story itself which has presumably the same proviso that Hughes gives Crow when he says:

It is a quarry in that it is a way of getting the poems. So it is not the story that I am interested in but the poems. In other words, the whole narrative is just a way of getting a big body of ideas and energy moving on a track. For when this energy connects with a possibility for a poem, there is a lot more material and pressure in it than you could ever get into a poem just written out of the air or out of a special

occasion. Poems come to you much more naturally and accumulate more life when they are part of a connected flow of real narrative that you've got yourself involved in. (Faas, 1980, p.213)

So many possibilities have lead Brandes to complain of Gaudete's 'resistance to monologic readings' (Scigaj, ed., p.173), but this is exactly the point. 'Monologic readings' must, in the opinions of many, including Jung, necessarily distort dream, poetry, and finally life itself. 'Monologic readings' merely present subjective (or objective only in that they might refer continually to a 'system', which is finally just organized subjectivity) readings as if they were objective.

Hirschberg calls Lumb's housekeeper 'a spectral figure full of meaning' and also points to the lilac and apple blossom she is carrying when we first see her (p.62) as appropriate to the book: the lilac is linked with Dionysos and renewal, and the apple with the White Goddess and femininity (Eve). To this he adds the thought that 'these associations clearly underscore Maud's mythic connections' and he also links Maud with Juno and Mary Magdelene, to Lumb's Dionysos and Christ (Hirschberg, 1981, pp.193-5). Graves connects 'apple-trees' with King Arthur and 'the Isle of Avalon', but also 'a silver white-blossomed apple branch' with Bran and the 'apple branch' is a signal by the White Goddess to summon Bran 'to enter the Land of Youth' (Graves, 1961, p.254), heralding, perhaps, the changeling Lumb's final demise and helping explain Maud's actions where 'She seems to be praying, She is weeping' (p.94).

Maud appears to be a combination of priestess or holy woman ('Her dumbness/ Is a mystery', her 'compact nun stillness') and witch (her scrying and her spells). Her

place in the narrative is clarified by Hughes when he calls her 'the representative in this world of the woman that' Lumb 'is supposed to cure in the other world' (Faas, 1980, p.215). One thing to note immediately from this statement is that Maud is cured of her dumbness during the course of the main narrative (p.147) and dies, by her own hand, shortly afterwards. So, it might appear that the main narrative has two functions as far as the untold story of the original Lumb in the underworld is concerned: firstly 'to bring about this renovation of women' (Faas, 1980, p.215) apparently desired by underworld forces; and secondly, perhaps, to portray a grotesque parody of the real work being done underground by the real Lumb. If this latter idea can be accepted, then it would appear that the original Lumb succeeds, as evidenced by Maud's speech. For the former task, however, Maud 'is inadequate', and Lumb 'even more so' (Faas, 1980, p.215).

Gifford and Roberts confess themselves uncomfortable with the figure of Maud and 'the occult atmosphere that surrounds her':

The writing that concerns her raises acute problems of tone and is one of the major elements that, we think, damage the poem's wholeness. (Gifford and Roberts, 1981, pp.161-2)

This problem is, however, somewhat offset by the consideration of another possible source for the plot. Just as there are links between Gaudete and the predominantly British myths of, for example, The White Goddess, Arthurian legend, Cerridwen, Druidism, Robin Hood folklore, Beowulf, King Lear and other works, there is also a link with witchcraft. This cross-section of British history, myth and

culture points toward what might be regarded as an attempt to revive a tradition of indigenous non-Christian myth:

Until almost the time of the Norman Conquest the legal enactments show that though the rulers might be nominally Christian the people were openly heathen...All through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the battle raged. The Pagans fought a gallant, though losing, fight against a remorseless and unscrupulous enemy; every inch of the field was disputed... (Murray, 1970, pp.21-2)

Such a mass of evidence shows that till the end of the seventeenth century the Old Religion still counted large numbers of members. (Murray, 1970, p.33)

Within such a framework Maud's actions would appear less exotic, and the text of Gaudete tends to support such a comparison. 'In the British witch-cult the male sorcerer was dominant' (Graves, 1961, p.401) says Graves, and Murray points out that 'the number in a coven never varied, there were always thirteen, i.e. twelve members and the god' (Murray, 1970, p.68). It is interesting, therefore, to note that Felicity is only initiated when one of the original twelve named women (Janet Estridge) is dead.

As well as lending a certain credibility to the figure of Maud, another oddity of the text, Jennifer's attendance at the 'W.I. meeting' on the same day as her sister's suicide, is given some support:

There were two classes of meetings, the Esbats which were specially for the covens, and the Sabbaths...Attendance at the Esbat was compulsory for the coven... (Murray, 1970, p.77)

Further details appear to corroborate the connection, such as associations between witches and 'Bull Dionysos', dressing up as beasts (the stag especially), the name 'Nick', the sacred dance, Maytime celebrations, sacrifice and orgies (Murray, 1970, pp.29, 38, 78, 79, 121 and 128),



for example, and it should not be greatly astonishing if any 'new religion' to stand against Christianity should be closely linked with the last English religion to do so.

Particularly pertinent to this is something Hughes wrote in his 1964 essay 'Myth and Religion of the North':

This particular mythology is much deeper in us, and truer to us, than the Greek-Roman pantheons that came in with Christianity, and again with the Renaissance, severing us with the completeness of a political interdict from these other deities of our instinct and ancestral memory. It is as if we were to lose Macbeth and King Lear, and have to live on Timon and Coriolanus; or as if a vocabulary drawn wholly from the Greek-Roman branch were to take over absolutely from our Anglo-Saxon-Norse-Celtic: there's no doubt which of these two belongs to our blood. The combination of the two is our wealth, but in the realm of mythologies, the realm of management between our ordinary minds and our deepest life, we've had no chance to make a similar combination. (Faas, 1980, p.171)

With Gaudete, then, and its background of plausible 'Anglo-Saxon-Norse-Celtic' sources and tradition, Hughes might be seen to be attempting 'a similar combination' in 'the realm of mythologies'. These sources, being of the 'blood', the 'instinct' and 'ancestral memory', point strongly toward Jungian notions of restoring the balance between conscious and unconscious forces. In the modern age, Jung argues that the discerning person knows and feels that his psyche is disquieted by the loss of something that was important to his ancestors, a sense of the numinous. Gaudete, then, can be regarded as an attempt to replace the sense of the numinous, by having these 'Anglo-Saxon-Norse-Celtic' undercurrents work on the reader, whether consciously or unconsciously--the 'hieroglyph language' idea I quoted at the start of this chapter, which 'only works in poetry if the switches are thrown'. 'The combination of the two is

our wealth' is an interesting idea, and Hughes himself seems to be seeking, in, for example, the attempted middle position between the attitudes of the sexes in Gaudete, represented by the epilogue poems, just such a combination, as also evidenced by the two epigraphs. The underground half of the equation, the one that 'belongs to our blood', 'our instinct and ancestral memory' is equally manifest in history:

The idea of Nature as a single organism is not new. It was man's first great thought, the basic intuition of most primitive theologies. Since Christianity hardened into Protestantism, we can follow its underground heretical life, leagued with everything occult, spiritualistic, devilish, over-emotional, bestial, mystical, feminine, crazy, revolutionary, and poetic. (Faas, 1980, p.187)

Just as that which 'belongs to our blood' seeks to restore balance within the single psyche, so history produces 'everything occult...and poetic' in an attempt to compensate for the one-sidedness of mainstream forces such as 'Protestantism'. This is what Jung termed compensation.

Witchcraft is a useful vehicle by which to introduce more fully the Jungian concept of compensation which speaks of 'an unconscious counterbalance to consciousness' (Jung 10, p.290). Jung's idea is that 'the role of the unconscious is to act compensatorily to the conscious contents of the moment' (Jung 10, p.15), so that:

If anything of importance is devalued in our conscious life, and perishes...there arises a compensation in the unconscious. (Jung 10, p.86)

This is related to the striking of a balance between the inner and the outer worlds already noted, where 'the unconscious' can be likened to 'a world seen in a mirror':

our consciousness presents to us a picture of the outer world, but also of the world within, this being a compensatory mirror-image of the outer world. We could also say that the outer world is a compensatory mirror-image of the inner world. At all events we stand between two worlds, or between two totally different psychological systems of perception; between perception of external sensory stimuli and perception of the unconscious. (Jung 10, pp.17-18)

Compensation relates both to the individual and to humanity as a whole:

Whenever a civilization reaches its highest point, sooner or later a period of decay sets in. But the apparently meaningless and hopeless collapse into a disorder without aim or purpose, which fills the onlooker with disgust and despair, nevertheless contains within its darkness the germ of a new light. (Jung 10, p.142)

On both the individual and the wider level compensation is an inevitable and, in the end, irresistible force of nature, which seeks to restore balance:

We have known for a long time that there is a biological relationship between the unconscious processes and the activity of the conscious mind. This relationship can best be described as a compensation, which means that any deficiency in consciousness--such as exaggeration, one-sidedness, or lack of a function--is suitably supplemented by an unconscious process...If such a compensatory move of the unconscious is not integrated into consciousness in an individual, it leads to a neurosis or even to a psychosis, and the same would apply to a collectivity. Clearly there must be something wrong with the conscious attitude for a compensatory move of this kind to be possible; something must be amiss or exaggerated, because only a faulty consciousness can call forth a counter-move on the part of the unconscious. (Jung 10, pp.218-220)

In Gaudete itself it would seem that the unconscious or the underworld forces of the prologue produce the changeling Lumb of the main text as 'a compensatory move' to the one-sidedness of the original Lumb, allowing a new state of equilibrium or balance, in Lumb himself, and perhaps also the author and the reader, to be approached in the epilogue.

Hughes sees poetry as a compensatory force, poetry being 'the record of just how the forces of the Universe try to redress some balance disturbed by human error' (Faas, 1980, p.198), and there are certain parallels here with Hill's idea that the poem might be a part 'of resistance to the drift of the age' (Haffenden, 1981, p.88). For Jung, 'the psyche is a self-regulating system that maintains its equilibrium just as the body does' (Jung 16, p.153), and so compensation is a natural process. But what is particularly interesting is that Lovelock's recent Gaia theory puts the theory of compensation on a global stage, and indeed he talks of 'compensatory change', referring to 'cybernetic systems' which work in much the same way as a thermostat by which, for example, 'the Earth's surface temperature is actively maintained at an optimum by and for the complex entity which is Gaia' (Lovelock, 1979, pp.9, 50 and 53). Lovelock goes on to say:

The over-long delay in the understanding of cybernetics is perhaps another unhappy consequence of our inheritance of classical thought processes. In cybernetics, cause and effect no longer apply; it is impossible to tell which comes first, and indeed the question has no relevance. (Lovelock, 1979, p.52)

Lovelock's theory again points toward problems with a one-sided emphasis on 'classical thought processes' and 'traditional linear logic' (Lovelock, 1979, p.50).

Unknowingly, Lovelock seems to have produced a very Jungian view of Nature.

There are at least two ways of looking at the figure of the witch in history, two ways which are summed up here by Day:

Intellectuals of the 19th century generally agreed that witchcraft never truly existed, but was the fantastic and hysterical panic reaction of the 16th and 17th centuries to some toothless and repulsive old hags, falsely branded as witches. Margaret Murray early in this century argued that witchcraft was a real and active pagan fertility cult mistaken for a satanic anti-Christian conspiracy. (Day, 1984, p.122)

Graves supports the latter view, seeing 'the witch-covens of Western Europe' as part of a great inheritance of 'secret Mystery-cults' dating originally 'from the Old Stone Age' (Graves, 1961, pp.12 and 10).

Yates wonders 'how far the witch craze was a genuinely popular movement' and how far it was something 'manipulated and intensified from above' (Yates, 1979, p.71), and Trevor-Roper supports the alternative point of view, despite admitting that 'The Renaissance was a revival...of pagan mystery-religion' and that 'such beliefs are universal, in time and place' (Trevor-Roper, 1969, pp.11-2). Trevor-Roper is concerned with 'the organized, systematic 'demonology' which the medieval Church constructed out of those beliefs' and which he sees as the foundation of the Renaissance witch-craze:

Nor was the craze entirely separable from the intellectual and spiritual life of those years. It was forwarded by the cultivated popes of the Renaissance, by the great Protestant reformers, by the saints of the Counter-Reformation, by the scholars, lawyers and churchmen of the age of Scaliger and Lipsius, Bacon and Grotius, Berulle and Pascal. If those two centuries were an age of light, we have to admit that, in one respect at least, the Dark Age was more civilized. (Trevor-Roper, 1969, p.12)

For Trevor-Roper the key question concerning 'the mythology of the witch-craze' is whether it originated with 'the heretics themselves' or whether 'the inquisitors... articulated it for them':

It has been argued by some speculative writers that the demonology of the sixteenth century was, in essence, a real religious system, the old pre-Christian religion of rural Europe which the new Asiatic religion of Christ had driven underground but never wholly destroyed. (Trevor-Roper, 1969, p.40)

Trevor-Roper rejects such theories, Murray's included (Trevor-Roper, 1969, p.41), in favour of the theory that it was the inquisitors themselves that built up the mythology of the witches:

if we look at the revival of the witch-craze in the 1560s in its context, we see that it is not the product either of Protestantism or of Catholicism, but of both: or, rather, of their conflict. Just as the medieval Dominican evangelists had ascribed witch-beliefs to the whole society which resisted them, so both the Protestant and Catholic evangelists of the mid sixteenth century ascribed the same beliefs to the societies which opposed them. (Trevor-Roper, 1969, p.67)

Even Luther and Calvin believed in witches (Trevor-Roper, p.64), but the point here is that, from the compensatory point of view, whether Murray or Trevor-Roper are correct is largely irrelevant. In the face of the final removal of the feminine from orthodox worship in the West, the collective unconscious throws up a compensatory mythology which concerns itself particularly with the female, both as deity and acolyte. The collective unconscious is therefore, through this revival of pagan mythology, seeking to restore a balance threatened by the emergence of sternly dualist and masculine creeds. Which ever view is taken, it seems that compensatory forces are present. Jung, for example, sees that 'the consequence of increasing Mariolatry was the witch hunt' (Jung 6, p.236), whereas Yates calls 'Dee, Bruno, and Spenser' representative of 'those European stirrings of protest against the

reactionary suppression of the Renaissance' (Yates, 1979, p.105).

Hughes seems to approach the same issue himself in an earlier poem, 'Witches' from Lupercal:

Did they dream it?  
Oh, our science says they did.  
It was all wishfully dreamed in bed.  
Small psychology would unseam it.

Bitches still sulk, rosebuds blow,,  
And we are devilled. And though these weep  
Over our harms, who's to know  
Where their feet dance while their heads sleep?

The last line of the first quatrain quoted here is especially interesting if a pun on 'unseam'/'unseem' is allowed, suggesting that a little psychology would make witchcraft a reality in that 'we are devilled' by psychic phenomena which can mask themselves as gods or devils. The poem itself would appear to suggest that the mythology of the witches is something to take seriously from the psychological viewpoint, and can point towards a compensatory (individual and collective) role for such a mythology. In this way it is appropriate in Gaudete that Lumb, 'An Anglican Clergyman' should become the leader of the coven.

In his 1977 interview with Faas, Hughes talks about 'The balance...between German/Scandinavian, and ancient Britain/Celtic, between Puritanical suppressive and Catholic woman worshipping...' (Faas, 1980, p.215). One of the most interesting mythological themes of the main text relates to the difference of unconscious inheritance in male and female and, by extension, to the apparent differences between the sexes per se. Hughes points towards a difference in his essay 'The Environmental Revolution' where he says that

woman 'by the skin of her teeth' has escaped the destructive role inherited by man 'from Reformed Christianity and from Old Testament Puritanism' (Faas, 1980, p.186). This difference can be further exacerbated if certain aspects of a Jungian theory of a subconsciously inherited race memory can be accepted (Hughes' 'ancestral memory'). Then the anthropo-mythological ideas of Father Schmidt or Joseph Campbell become pertinent to the subliminal effect of Gaudete, that 'in the hunting world the masculine psyche prevails and in the planting world the feminine' and, according to Campbell, these two basic primitive systems of belief leave little or no role to the non-dominant sex (Campbell 1, p.351). Campbell links the feminine and masculine primitive systems with 'two mythological archetypes of immemorial age', the moon and the sun respectively (Campbell 4, p.348), and elsewhere he has this to say:

The "system of sentiments" proper to a hunting tribe would be improper to an agricultural one; that proper to a matriarchy is improper to a patriarchy... (Campbell 3, p.520)

Hughes widens this contrast in his Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being:

one can see that the Equation--the two myths each interpreting the other--is itself a gigantic map of the attempted cooperation of the brain's two hemispheres. The Goddess myth is in the right side, while the (ultimately rational and secularizing) myth of the Goddess-destroyer is in the left side. Blood sacrifice and archaic, matriarchal religious emotion are in the right, while new, Utopian, militant, rational morality is in the left. (Hughes 1992, p.161)

I will examine the effects of this unconscious inheritance upon the men and women of the main text shortly, but for now it is important to note that the characters of



the narrative are unable to cope with their reawakened instincts and that the negative psychological effects of such instincts are best represented by a part of Lumb's dream. In that dream the men of the village, in attempting to beat Lumb with cudgels, are themselves trampled and crushed, apparently by the cattle their ancestors might have hunted or herded. And the women, with their semi-ecstatic and apparently paralysing meditations, are seen to be buried up to their necks (appropriate to the predominantly agricultural matriarchies of pre-history) and screaming. These appear as appropriate symbolic punishments for this mistaken and incomplete return to more instinctual modes of being as preserved, presumably, by a gender-orientated race memory. To examine further the difference between the sexes in Gaudete, however, it would be useful to look at some of the characters in the book, beginning with the men.

In some ways Hagen is Lord of the land and Lord of the plot:

Faas: At first I thought Hagen was to be the hero of the book.

Hughes: In fact, I had originally planned to make it his story. A story of what's going on in his head. (Faas, 1980, p.215)

Gaudete begins and ends with Hagen looking through telescopic devices at Lumb, the source of disturbance in his village. Similarly, the symbolic act of shooting a dove in the opening sections is paralleled by the final shot of the book, which kills Lumb. As Viking overlord it is Hagen who, at first reluctant to join the hunt, finally finishes it and restores order. He is also the prime archetypal male of the book, being both hunter and voyeur, and is clearly on the

'German/Scandinavian' and 'Puritanical suppressive' side of Hughes' equation.

These elements combine to permit several negative traits in Hagen's character. He appears as hard as 'masonry' or 'gravel' (p.23); his laughter is machine-like and he wears a 'mask/ Of military utility' (p.28); he is very much an Establishment or an 'Empire' figure (p.34); and his eyes at one point are described as being 'fixed in a spiritless nicotine-yellow dullness' (p.129). These 'Puritanical suppressive' elements are shown to be psychologically unsound in two ways by the episode with the dog. First Hagen takes his rage out on his beloved pet since, in his moment of uncontrol, 'This dog is going to account for everything', and second, having committed the act, his mind is unable properly to cope with it and he is left 'baffled' and with 'horror...as dry/ As volcanic rock' (p.35), an apt metaphor because his horror has solidified out of his volcanic rage. The dog itself can be 'a symbol of the Underworld' (Graves, 1961, p.53) and therefore the unconscious, and such symbolism again points to the 'Puritanical suppressive' nature of Hagen.

If Hagen's spying begins the story, it is Garten's that 'sets everything going', Garten being 'a sort of inverted child equivalent of Hagen, the ungrown element in him' (Faas, 1980, p.215). Garten also shows the masculine traits of voyeurism (through his spying) and hunting (with his ferret and through his poaching). He is a child-like version of Hagen partly because he has not yet developed a mask and thus easily betrays his (negative) emotions. He is jealous (of Lumb, p.65); suspicious (of Betty and Mrs

Walsall, p.66); fearful (of Evans, p.67); and frequently nervy or jumpy. He suffers from his own connivances in being thumped by Evans and in Felicity's death. But, against these negative qualities Garten does retain his animal innocence (p.30), something Hagen has long since suppressed.

Commander Estridge is also revealed as a voyeur and a hunter, in that he keeps caged birds and stuffed animals (pp.42-4). He too suffers negative emotions such as jealousy (p.47), rage (p.143) and even hatred (p.128). In his hatred of Lumb he reveals, in part, a symptom of his 'Puritanical suppressive' character in that, through his voyeurism and jealousy he reveals that he would, if he could overcome various obstacles, like to be himself in Lumb's position with regard to Mrs Holroyd (p.47). Estridge is restricted by the establishment mask he wears, being out of touch with his daughters, with nature, and finally with himself.

Dr. Westlake demonstrates perhaps the most grotesque symptoms of the masculine character. He appears as a theatrical and sadistic pervert (p.56); exhibits fear when confronted with anything that does not suit his own rationality (p.57); drinks (as most of the men seem to do) in order to cope (p.71); ignores any thought of a universal sort (p.71) and at times of crisis simply stops thinking (p.73); and he is also seen to be of a jealous nature (p.72). In the scene with Jennifer Estridge he is shown to have voyeuristic tendencies, and he is also a hunter, owning a gun which he fires at Lumb and returning to his home 'With the sensation of finding his trap at last tenanted' (p.73).

Dunworth, in his sudden realization of love and the simultaneous realization of previous fault within himself, is perhaps the character who, along with Estridge for a while, comes closest to escaping his own restricted nature. But he is ultimately unable to do so, and joins the final hunt for Lumb despite his earlier attempted reasonableness (p.137). He is, nevertheless, a hunter in that he owns a gun and is at one stage ready to shoot Lumb (p.85). In the end Dunworth is unable to cope with his emotions, turning them towards suicidal feelings (pp.87 and 130) or towards feelings of doom and helplessness (p.131).

The down-to-earth and practical Holroyd and Evans are both described as 'hardy animals of the...landscape' (p.155), but they are also caught in the trap of masculinity, joining in and, to some extent, leading the hunt for Lumb. They are both highly physical men and Holroyd engages in the potentially symbolic act of dehorning a bull, whilst Evans beats his wife.

The males of Gaudete can be seen to be suppressing a large part of their psyches in such a way as to have dangerous consequences, particularly when faced with a crisis, such as the crisis Hagen's dog presents to him. With the greater crisis precipitated by Lumb the final result is that the males come together to hunt Lumb and finally murder him.

As with the men, the sleeping instincts within the women of the book are awoken and lead to the violent deaths of three of their number. If there is a "message" in this it is that without a proper outlet for the instincts of man and woman, sooner or later a tragedy will occur (as it did

in 'Crow's Account of St George'), especially given such a catalyst as Lumb. Just as the unchecked release of instinct leads to disaster, it is the total suppression of instinct that allows such a situation to be tenable in the first place.

One trait common to the women of the book is in contrast to one common in the men. Whereas the men of the book in general concentrate upon action (so Hagen shoots the ringdove), in some cases refusing to think, the women's thought is elevated so far above the day to day existence that they appear, at times, unable to act.

In Pauline Hagen's case she feels 'Something overpowering/ Like an unmanageable horse', she anoints herself with a plant, and she feels she cannot get close enough to earth. Further to this, she 'meditates' abstractly:

She is like the eye of a spirit level  
Intent  
On earth's poles, the sun's pull, the moon's  
imbalance.

But this newly awakened consciousness leaves Mrs Hagen detached from what goes on around her and even leads to 'a flash of malice' (pp.31-4).

Mrs Westlake also meditates broadly and grandly:

She feels the finality of it all, and the nearness and greatness of death. Sea-burned, sandy cartilage, draughty stars, gull-cries from beyond the world's edge. (p.39)

However, as with Pauline Hagen, this wider consciousness leads to Mrs Westlake feeling 'vacant' (p.38), out of touch and sympathy with her own house (in Jung's view often symbolic of the psyche with its mixture of conscious and unconscious elements) and, another trait common to many of

the women, suicidal. Mrs Westlake is apparently so detached from what goes on around her toward the end of the narrative that she simply 'Slews Felicity's slack sack-heavy body/ Away' (p.148) in order to get at Lumb.

There is no doubting the pure animal vitality that has been imbued in these women. Even Estridge concedes that his daughters are 'Like leopard cubs suddenly full-grown, come into their adult power and burdened with it' (p.41). The power is impressive, but other adjectives surrounding this passage point to its danger: 'Unmanageable...burdened... uncontrollable...horrific'. The two daughters, unprepared for such an awakening, are unable to control their new-found vitality. Jennifer, we learn (p.57), had been indifferent, if not callous, toward the feelings of her sister, and Janet is curiously detached as she hangs herself (p.45). Further to this, and despite her nightmare, Jennifer is nevertheless present later in the day at the orgy. Janet, incidentally, broadens her awareness just before her death, releasing the caged birds 'back to their true friends/ And true enemies' (p.45), demonstrating, perhaps, the potential of a better-managed reawakening among the women.

The sunbathing Mrs Holroyd also indulges in meditation and, although it is a less destructive or depressive ('she knows she is happy'), it is, nevertheless, a fact that she is 'helpless in the languor of it' and 'unable to move'. Further to this 'She wants nothing to change. She does not want to think about anything, or to open her eyes' (pp.58-9).

Of the other more minor female characters, Betty is disturbed by a strange sexual dream when sleeping with a cat

(p.89), the cat, of course, being closely associated with witches (Redgrove, 1987, p.3) because 'felines were a symbol of the Goddess' (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.9); Mrs Walsall 'has lost interest in everything else' and chooses to exist in a 'numbed' state (pp.54-5); Mrs Evans reveals all the women of the parish to be under Lumb's spell (p.113); Mrs Garten in her passion is able to ignore the chaos of rabbits and ferrets about her (p.68); Mrs Dunworth is indifferent to her husband and his gun (pp.88 and 86); and Mrs Davies, after sex with Lumb, has a strange encounter with a snake (p.95).

Hughes remarks that: 'in Gaudete the women are being put together in a mistaken, wrong and limited way' (Faas, 1980, p.214). From the evidence listed above it would seem that the main problem with these reawakened women lies in their total obsession with themselves, with Lumb or with raw nature, which allows no possibility of meaningful interaction with fellow humans. Where the men are obsessed with the outer world and conscious forces, the women are equally obsessed with the inner world and unconscious forces. Only in the epilogue can a balance be approached:

while the specific achievement of the male world lies in the development of the masculine consciousness and the rational mind, the female psyche is in far greater degree dependent on the productivity of the unconscious...Through his mystery, Dionysus captured the woman's soul with its penchant for everything that is supernatural, everything that defies natural law. (Neumann, 1972, pp.292-4)

These two sets of characteristics in men and women loosely relate to Jung's ideas of extraversion and introversion, but also to non-dualist mythologies, such as that of Odin or 'Othin':

Othin sacrificed one eye for knowledge of the runes. One socket ever thereafter gazed inward, the other, ever outward, held to the world of phenomenality. Two interlacing snakes, red and blue, of the Tunc page of the Book of Kells are evidently of like meaning: one, of the knowledge inward of eternal life, the other, outward, of temporality... (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.120)

Hughes, as already noted, refers to the idea of balance between 'Puritanical suppressive and Catholic woman worshipping', and Gaudete approaches many such balances. One example is the idea of balancing introvert and extravert, and if Gaudete were to be treated simply (and reductively) as a document pertinent to the psychology of Hughes and/ or Lumb, then it would seem that the extraverted conscious (the males of the book) seeks, after crisis, union with the introverted unconscious (the women) in order to approach the state of a better-balanced psyche in the epilogue poems.

Moving outside the realm of the single psyche (although the above comments might equally refer to any reader who is persuaded by Gaudete to attempt a similar recombination), other possibilities present themselves. One thesis put forward by Campbell is that the two systems have been put together, but wrongly:

what the historian of mythologies everywhere uncovers, from the British Isles to the Gangetic Plain, is a consistent pattern (retained in religions even to the present day) of two completely contrary orders of mythic thought and symbolization flung together, imperfectly fused, and represented as though of one meaning. (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.104)

Campbell elsewhere talks of 'the paleolithic individual and the neolithic sanctified group' and their 'irresoluble conflict' which 'has created and maintained even to the



present day a situation of both creative reciprocity and mutual disdain' (Campbell 3, p.34). But other sets of opposites are also at work in the division of the sexes in Gaudete, not least 'masculine' and 'feminine principles' and the 'objective-subjective, or Apollo-Dionysos' (Bishop, 1991, pp.155 and 157). Closely linked to this is the divide Hughes sees between the inner and outer worlds:

So what we need, evidently, is a faculty that embraces both worlds simultaneously...This really is imagination. This is the faculty we mean when we talk about the imagination of the great artists. The character of great works is exactly this: that in them the full presence of the inner world combines with and is reconciled to the full presence of the outer world. And in them we see that the laws of these two worlds are not contradictory at all; they are one all-inclusive system; they are the laws that somehow we find it all but impossible to keep, laws that only the greatest artists are able to restate. They are the laws, simply, of human nature...So it comes about that once we recognize their terms, these works seem to heal us. More important, it is in these works that humanity is truly formed. And it has to be done again and again, as circumstances change, and the balance of power between outer and inner world shifts, showing everybody the gulf. The inner world, separated from the outer world, is a place of demons. The outer world, separated from the inner world, is a place of meaningless objects and machines. The faculty that makes the human being out of these two worlds is called divine. That is only a way of saying that it is the faculty without which humanity cannot really exist. It can be called religious or visionary. More essentially, it is imagination which embraces both outer and inner worlds in a creative spirit. (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.266)

The inner and outer are relevant to the Goddess and the God respectively, 'the Mother and Father of all mythic conflicts', as Hughes illustrates with his 'metaphor of two parallel mythic events':

The first of these events is in the Jehovah myth, where the victim, the Love Goddess, is cast into Hell and an attempt is made to destroy her physically, or at least to confiscate and deprive her of her thaumaturgic powers. The second is the

Gnostic, Neoplatonist or alchemical myth of the Female as the hero's own soul, the Divine Truth of his being, from which he is somehow alienated, and which he tries to repossess, ignorantly, in the external form of a real woman somehow forbidden to him or removed from him, and whom, in his benighted violence on that physical plane, he kills, so bringing about the destruction of his own soul on the mythical plane. (Hughes, 1992, pp.212-3)

The opposites finally match up, in general rather than absolute terms, into two sides, one which is conscious, masculine, paleolithic-hunting, Apollonian, Puritanical, outer, objective and extraverted God worship, the other being unconscious, feminine, neolithic-agricultural, Dionysian, Catholic, inner, subjective and introverted Goddess worship.

Perhaps, then, the impulse behind Gaudete is an attempt to disentangle these two systems from their ill-matched union, through the way the men and women in the book react so differently to the catalyst Lumb, and then tentatively to move towards a more suitable recombination. Gaudete would then be in line with the works of the alchemist who 'saw the essence of his art in separation and analysis on the one hand and synthesis and consolidation on the other' (Stevens, 1991, p.240). If this point could be sustained, then the problem can be recognized as being postulated by Hughes in an earlier poem, 'Crow Blacker than ever', where Crow's 'Nailing Heaven and earth together' is a 'gangrenous' example of an inadequate combination of these two systems and their various related dualities (sun and moon, man and woman, conscious and unconscious, etc.).

The balance that is approached in the epilogue poems might be seen as a predominantly matriarchal solution because it concentrates specifically on a goddess figure.

Eisler, however, sees this as a patriarchal misunderstanding of matriarchy, which states that the primitive 'matriarchies' which preceded the patriarchal system were societies in which 'women must have dominated men':

The real alternative to patriarchy is not matriarchy, which is only the other side of the dominator coin. The alternative, now revealed to be the original direction of our cultural evolution, is a partnership society: a way of organizing human relations in which--beginning with the most fundamental difference in our species, the difference between female and male--diversity is not equated with inferiority or superiority. (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.13)

for our goddess-worshiping ancestors, there were no such sharp polarities between "masculine" and "feminine" and "spirituality" and "nature"...There is here no need for a false dichotomy between a "masculine" spirituality and a "feminine" nature. The reason is that there is here no need to proclaim the superiority of one over the other, of spirit over nature, of man over woman. Moreover, since in ancient partnership societies woman and the Goddess were identified with both nature and spirituality, neither woman nor nature were devalued and exploited. (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, pp.18-9)

For Hughes, woman has escaped 'by the skin of her teeth' the worst aspects of Christianity and mechanization, and so it is in the feminine that hopes left humanity might seem to reside:

Too much soul is reserved for God, too little for man. But God himself cannot flourish if man's soul is starved. The feminine psyche responds to this hunger, for it is the function of Eros to unite what Logos has sundered. The woman of today is faced with a tremendous cultural task--perhaps it will be the dawn of a new era. (Jung 10, pp.132-3)

Finally, in this context, the Lumb of the main text, as shaman, would seem to have access to both worlds (which culminate individually in the hunt and the secret orgy). These two worlds could possibly find greater reunion if Lumb was less 'inadequate' to his task:

The shaman's chief function is healing, but he also plays an important role in other magico-religious rites, as, for example, the communal hunt, and, where they exist, in secret societies...or mystical sects. (Eliade, 1972, p.299)

The changeling Lumb has access to both worlds in Gaudete, and therefore has the possibility to unite them, indeed, as the 'Argument' has it, bring about 'the birth of a Messiah to be fathered by Lumb', or to become a Messiah himself:

Naturally this split is a hindrance not only in society but also in the individual. As a result, the vital optimum withdraws more and more from the opposing extremes and seeks a middle way... projected in the form of a mediating god, a Messiah. (Jung 6, p.194)

Certain scenes in Gaudete lend themselves to a mythological interpretation, such as the strange adventure or dream in which Lumb comes to grips with his own naked double. Here, critics aver that this new Lumb is not the original Lumb: Gifford and Roberts see the connection as not 'very profitable' (Gifford and Roberts, 1981, p.170); and Scigaj, without hesitation, calls the new Lumb 'yet another "double"' (Scigaj, 1986, p.182), although why there should be two when we have only seen one created is not clear. Hirschberg, on the other hand, believes this to be 'the original Rev. Lumb' (Hirschberg, 1981, p.195). The overall difficulty with this scene, as well as with others in the book, is somewhat clarified by Faas:

Appropriately enough, the primary source for the underworld narrative in Gaudete was the poet's dreams which began to proliferate as he turned them into a framework for the original story. Crucial in all this was a dream which Hughes, in conversation, interpreted as a perfect image of the divided self: a very brilliantly lit dream about fishing at a lake where he met himself and had a fight, tore his own hand off and threw it away. (Faas, 1980, pp.123-4)

What might have been a problem for Hughes, the integration of his dreams into a sustained narrative (which again relies upon Jung's theory of the Collective Unconscious to avoid charges of overly obscure subjectivity), is an immense difficulty for reader and critic alike.

It is difficult to make a positive interpretation about the naked Lumb. Is it a third Lumb or the original? And what is it trying to do? It might even be the changeling Lumb if, in its dreams, it dreams the adventures of the original Lumb. This last option is perhaps the one worth pursuing, for several reasons, including the fact that it best fits with Hughes' dream. The protagonist in the next nightmare sequence, where Lumb gives birth to 'The baboon woman' is very likely to be the original Lumb, so that it seems as if, when the changeling Lumb dreams, he dreams the adventures of his other half, the original Lumb. The fishing scene then falls into a fairly simple Jungian pattern, with the ego trying to catch a fish, which usually represents a content of the unconscious. Those concerned with the unconscious, 'a question of spiritual being or non-being':

will keep their standpoint firmly anchored to the earth...become fishers who catch with hook and net what swims in the water. (Jung 9, Part 1, p.24)

Lumb when fishing 'secures his foothold' (p.79) on the earth. Putting the scene into psychological terms, then, the ego hopes to hook the fish, perhaps to be associated with the nearby anima, Felicity or "happiness", but must first confront the shadow (the naked Lumb). Talking of the ego and the shadow, Van der Post has this to say:

These two opposites in the negations of our time are turned into tragic enemies. But truly seen, psychologically, and perhaps best defined in the non-emotive terms of physics, they are like the negative and positive inductions of energy observed in the dynamics of electricity. They are the two parallel and opposite streams without which the flash of lightning, always the symbol of awareness made imperative, was impossible. (van der Post, 1988, p.217)

There is lightning, of course, in the fishing scene, and in talking about the 'Rival Brothers' myth in Shakespeare, Hughes makes reference to 'the loss of the hand (and loss of rule)' (Hughes, 1992, p.266) by one of the brothers which in this context would seem to imply that the shadow figure (the changeling Lumb) is losing control of the psyche (the plot of Gaudete). In one version Hughes gives, two brothers on May day 'fought annually for Creiddylad', daughter of 'the sea god Llyr' (Hughes, 1992, p.265). Relevant too is Hughes' comments on the use of the storm in later Shakespeare plays which will 'violently force the Tarquin to atone in the second death' and 'induce his rebirth into the arms of the waiting Goddess' (Hughes, 1992, p.400). In terms of the Gaudete plot, the shadow Lumb or Tarquin is forced to retreat 'floundering' and perhaps drowning into the lake, whilst the ego Lumb embraces the waiting Goddess Felicity, 'squeezing her to his sodden body' (p.83).

Hirschberg provides a useful clue to the battle by drawing attention to the Beowulf and Grendel myth (Hirschberg, 1981, p.196). Pursuing this further, it could be that the Christian hero, like St George, defeats this 'monster' but, like Beowulf, will eventually be beaten himself by another 'monster', the monsters being repressed aspects of the self or psyche. In this Hughes might find a

metaphor for the final triumph of nature and the goddess over a tired and spiritless Christian-bred humanity.

There is also a possibility that the scene could be a portrayal of the archetypal myth (as elaborately explored by Graves in his The White Goddess) of the old and new year kings fighting over the goddess, and the appearance of rain, a sign of promised fertility, might corroborate this<sup>6</sup>. If this could be argued, then Hughes might excuse himself any charges of obscurity on the grounds that his archetype is targeting a deeper layer of the psyche than consciousness. Indeed, Hughes' use of this particular archetypal situation points toward the radical nature of his project. If, as Jungian theory would insist, the unconscious of a reader responds to such an archetype then some feeling for renewal or change will be triggered, as well as some archaic recall of a past spirituality now lost to consciousness. Eventually, perhaps, such a situation might promote religious feelings that are closer to Nature or, if this particular archetype can be regarded metaphorically, the desire to replace old and tired Western ways with a new and fresher age. Finally, Campbell uncovers further clues from Wolfram and other Grail Romances throughout his Creative Mythology:

Josephe confers the Grail upon the king who is to succeed him as his keeper, and who will be known as THE RICH FISHER when he will have miraculously served a large company with a single fish he is now to catch...In the Irish epics he appears as King Nuadu of the Silver Hand, of the people of the fairy hills, who, having lost an arm in combat, replaced it with an arm of silver, and so, like the Fisher of the Grail Castle, was a maimed king. (Campbell 4, pp.408-9)

Bron was to be called THE RICH FISHER, because of the fish he had caught, at which time the period of grace began. (Campbell 4, p.534)

Campbell also associates 'Brons, THE RICH FISHER' with 'the Welsh god Bran the Blessed' (Campbell 4, p.570), and all of this points toward Hughes' attempt both in Crow (through the connection with Bran) and Gaudete to help inaugurate a new age, a new beginning, whether for individual readers or for society as a whole.

The next episode of the book concerns Lumb's crash and ensuing nightmare. As is often the case in Gaudete, Lumb has a vague premonition of the approaching catastrophe in that 'He feels uneasy' (p.98). The 'hairy-backed hands' that cause the crash presumably belong to some servant of the goddess, the 'old man' (p.13) or the 'gigantic man' with the 'bristling back' (p.15) of the prologue or even, perhaps, the original Lumb. Either way, it seems, the crash and the vision that follows it are caused by forces supernatural.

It is suddenly night, but, as is the nature of dreams, the dreamer does not notice the change: it is also raining, and Lumb is being beaten by men. The nightmare seems to be in part a premonition of what is to come later, in the hunt, and Lumb even 'shouts to the men' (p.99) in an attempt to reason with them, a course of action he considers later, just before the hunt begins with the leaping alsatian (p.153). Perhaps the 'sodden paper' (p.100) at this stage is a forerunner of Garten's damning photograph. Certainly 'the murder-shouts' and 'malice' reoccur in the final hunt for Lumb.







This birth scene is an extraordinary concept, even for this book, and I am cautious even to attempt a possible explanation. However, one tenuous possibility does spring to mind: man can be said 'to give birth to' religions, and perhaps this scene is symbolic of that as certain men, if they can lose their twentieth-century arrogance (over nature especially), might spawn a psychically sound religion from a 'patchwork' of sources, an idea which would plausibly link well with the idea of compensation. In this way it would be argued that a part of Hughes' aim in Crow, Gaudete, and Cave Birds is to present a 'patchwork' of various historically actual and metaphorically potential compensations to 'the fundamental guiding ideas of our Western Civilisation' that he condemns in the essay 'The Environmental Revolution' (Faas, 1980, p.186). If tenable, this theory would also bring to mind the reformed Lumb of the epilogue writing his 'hymns and psalms' very much like the Jews must have done in Babylon (Lumb is also in exile, in Ireland) as they began to consolidate their own new religion, perhaps unifying a 'patchwork' of Middle Eastern beliefs as they did so.

The changeling Lumb now sees that the men cannot hold the woman down and that her face is now 'undeformed and perfect' (perhaps signalling success for the original Lumb in his underworld mission). Finally the changeling Lumb comes clear of the nightmare:

And he is crawling out of the river  
Glossed as an exhausted otter, and trailing  
A mane of water.

As a footnote to the discussion of this scene, it might be observed that the Lumb of the epilogue calls up a creature, 'an otter' is the priest's guess, from the water. The

description here of the changeling Lumb as an otter might well point to an identification, symbolic or actual, between the changeling Lumb and the 'otter' of the epilogue. If Gaudete is looked at as a sort of psychodrama, then, it would seem that the reformed Lumb has the more carnal side of his nature under control at last.

In a following scene (p.116), the otherworldly Maud indulges in witchcraft in order to affect Lumb in some sort of supernatural way. Her reasons for this may be an attempt to change Lumb's decision to leave, confirm her own suspicions, or even merely to delay Lumb's departure by keeping him immobile. Her activities resemble a traditional view of the magic spell in that it needs material, somatic and verbal elements in combination in order to be effective. Maud mutters, tears the head from a pigeon, daubs herself with its blood--and Lumb is trapped. Perhaps this can be linked to the activities of the shaman who, after sacrificing, 'daubed blood on his face and costume' (Eliade, 1972, p.233) as Maud apparently does (p.124).

Lumb's dream is presumably, at least in part, guided by Maud and her spell. The cramming of women into the cathedral (p.118) could be interpreted as a criticism of Christianity, saying that the church is unable, literally and metaphorically, to accommodate so many women. The metaphor might also imply that this, wrongly, is the only opportunity for miracle afforded them. Equally the vision might be Maud's way of showing Lumb that a continuation of their purpose is the 'only miracle' possible for these women, thereby tempting him back into the fold and also testing his resolve. Equally, Maud could simply be

indulging in 'divination and clairvoyance' which are 'the prerogative of shamanesses' (Eliade, 1972, p.184). The cathedral is described as a 'capacious cavern', and the peace of the place is 'like a cave under a waterfall' both images suggesting womb-like security (and recalling 'the dome of rock' of the prologue) with the now beautiful Maud as some kind of queen 'throned beside' a king-like Lumb.

The congregated women being often compared to birds (the 'talons/ Of a giant dragonish gripe') and the flaming griffon would appear to hint that the conflagration here envisioned is like that of the phoenix, ready for the new and miraculous creation--and perhaps if there was no interruption (Felicity's banging on the door), Maud would have pushed the vision toward this end. However it appears that when Maud encounters Felicity at the door she realizes that the dream she had placed in Lumb's mind would be ineffectual, hence her smile that 'seems to understand'. Returning briefly to the phoenix and anticipating my discussion of the mushroom, Allegro connects the two after explaining the purpose behind the phoenix which, like so much of the mythological material pertinent to Gaudete is to do with rebirth and regeneration:

Like the fabulous Phoenix, the mushroom is self-generated and regenerated, bursting forth from the volva, only to die as quickly and then apparently miraculously to reappear, a resurrection of its own self...The fungus was a microcosm of the whole fertility process, the essence of god compressed into the womb and penis of the hermaphrodite mushroom. (Allegro, 1970, p.95)

I will return to discussion of the mushroom and its role in the orgy of Gaudete shortly.

The orgy scene begins with the gathering of the women (p.132). But for the 'Something is wrong' (an example of the foreboding that pervades Gaudete in its dreams, visions and tone) and the 'withered fungus' sandwich, the scene might depict any normal W.I. meeting with its 'dainty triangular sandwiches, prettily stacked'. Then the music, which is integral to all that follows, starts up. Music and religion are obviously linked, and with primitive religions especially so. The mythographer Day quotes many examples of such a link, three of which are listed below, the last example again linking Gaudete to Dionysos:

Intensive and repetitive cadences help achieve trance and spirit possession...Shamans have long used drumbeating to contact the spirit world...The Olympian worship made meager use of music, but the Greek mystery cults emphasized ecstatic music; conservative critics especially objected to the inflammatory effect of the aulos (a reed instrument) in such cults as the Dionysian. (Day, 1984, p.79)

The combination of music and ritual again combines inner and outer in a way here described in the ancient 'Chinese "Book of Rites," Li Chi':

Music makes for common union. Rites make for difference and distinction. From common union comes mutual affection; from difference, mutual respect...Music comes from within, rites act from without. Coming from within, music produces serenity of mind. Acting from without, rites produce the finished elegance of manner. (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.73)

Dancing too is pertinent to the Gaudete orgy, the dance being intended, perhaps, 'to insure the renewal of fertility and well-being of the earth' (Day, 1984, p.73). Day also talks about 'The maniacal transport of the dancers of Dionysus' and that Aristotle felt 'the entire drama of ancient Greece' to be derived from the Dionysian dance (Day,

1984, p.74). Eliade reports in his Shamanism that 'from the earliest times, the classic method of achieving trance was dancing' (Eliade, 1972, p.451). Bodkin uses Nietzsche to elaborate on the connections between dance, trance and poetry:

Let us turn again to the pregnant saying of Nietzsche that the essential nature of tragedy is that of a vision generated by a dance. Poet and spectator, he says, undergoing the Dionysian excitement are enabled to transform themselves and find expression through the bodies and souls of others--the actors upon the stage. The dramatic poet, or the spectator under the influence of dramatic poetry, sees before him forms which live and act, but with which he is intimately at one. His glance penetrates to their innermost being because his own sense of life has taken shape in them. (Bodkin, 1934, pp.83-4)

The idea again would seem to be that, just as the women of the parish transform into the animals whose pelts and masks they wear, so the reader, by becoming involved in a mythological plot in which archetypes abound, brings his own experience and interpretation to the plot which might effect a transformation within that reader. Thus David Porter defines Hughes' goal as being:

to release the deep animations of the culture rather than to contain his private agonies...to put his readers, like the crowd before the jaguar's cage, into the presence of the demons themselves. This is the poet's task as he conceives it; demon is another word for both the poem and the poet. (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.61)

The use of hallucinogenic mushroom in ecstatic orgiastic rituals has its precedent in myth and history, and in mystery cults especially. Graves cites 'Eleusinian, Samothracian and Cretan Mysteries' and also says that:

Ambrosia was the name of Dionysus's autumnal feast in which, I suggest, the intoxicant toadstool once inspired his votaries to a divine frenzy... (Graves, 1961, p.334)

John M. Allegro, a prominent member of the international team that worked on the famous Dead Sea scrolls (see his The Dead Sea Scrolls), has used his linguistic skills to research and write the astonishing book The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross. In this book, Allegro suggests that:

Christianity was only a latter-day manifestation of a religious movement that had been in existence for thousands of years, and in that particular mystery-cult form for centuries before the turn of the era... (Allegro, 1970, p.193)

Allegro's basic thesis is that in the Bible and particularly in 'the whole New Testament story' all is not what it seems, and that 'the "surface" details of the story, names, places, and possibly doctrinal teachings' are 'false' (Allegro, 1970, p.193), and that these falsities are there to obscure a mushroom-based mystery religion from sceptical non-initiates and persecuting authorities. The Greek origin of the word 'mystery' itself means 'secret ceremony' (Day, 1984, p.199) and for Allegro the cross, for example, began its symbolic life as a mushroom, as did the tree in Eden (Allegro, 1970, p.80).

Day also notes this possibility:

An impressive roll of modern experimenters from the noted author Aldous Huxley through scientific researchers reports that the natural and man-made drugs do indeed generate intensely religious experiences...There is growing conviction that the origins of myth and religion may be inseparable from early man's employment of the entheogens. (Day, 1984, p.70)

When asked, Hughes has denied ever taking hallucinogenic mushrooms, but the presence of the mushroom in Gaudete can bring the whole wealth of mythological and linguistic sources of Allegro's book into play. It reinforces Hirschberg's comparison of Lumb to Christ but then places



Christianity itself in a historically longer tradition of mystery religions of which Lumb's is just the latest manifestation. Other connections are numerous, for example:

The Heavenly Twins, the Gemini or Dioscourai, were identified with the Morning Star, as is Jesus in the New Testament. These mushroom characters were similarly credited with power over storms, since the sacred fungus was itself a product of the storm-god in the tempest. (Allegro, 1970, p.116)

The two Lumbs are, of course, 'Twins' who fight in a storm and, extending the parallel, one twin is eternal (the unconscious) and the other mortal (the conscious).

Shamans too can 'have recourse to intoxication by mushrooms to learn, for example, the means to be employed for a cure', and Eliade talks of 'the pre-eminently shamanic mushroom Agaricus muscarius' (Eliade, 1972, pp.228 and 400), although Eliade also expresses the suspicion that such use of entheogens might be a sign of decadence among the shamans. Since the mushroom, for Allegro, is an important component of certain mystery-religions, it is important to note that Eliade links the various mystery religions to witches and refers to '"orgies" of witches' (Eliade, 1960, p.218).

Returning to the Gaudete text, the women eat their sandwiches, drink their tea and smoke their 'cigarettes' in order to approach a state of mind suitable to the Dionysian excesses that follow, but there is again that uneasiness, 'a difficulty', and Jennifer especially, and not surprisingly, 'Knows more and more clearly that she should not have come'.

Maud and Felicity are yet to join the other women. As is usual in Gaudete, detail is significant in hinting at mythic import and in creating echoes from elsewhere in the

text. Here, for example, Maud's 'bridal dress' recalls religious ceremony as well as the earlier dream of the cathedral.

Felicity is now drugged:

It occurs to her  
That Maud's regalia is some special craziness  
Connected to her dumbness.

Lumb promises to follow within minutes.  
Felicity appeals with a last look.  
Words seem suddenly too big, they refuse to shape  
in her mouth.  
She interprets his look as reassurance.  
Actually his face is impenetrable.

The 'some special craziness' of Maud's 'regalia' is possibly linked with the significance of the orgiastic and sacrificial rituals of primitive (agricultural) societies: as the rites herald in the new year, or as the seed grows, death and corruption (black) is thrown off and life and fertility (white, 'bridal') is welcomed in, as Maud will throw off her dumbness and Felicity her mortality (Felicity here is now also dumb). Finally, the last two lines of the above extract remember the 'Two worlds,/ Like two strange dogs circling each other' (p.125) and point again to the gulf between individuals, especially those of different sex.

Then begins the orgy or, as Faas likens it, 'a black mass version of the ritual Lumb might have been able to perform if he had lived up to his mission' (Faas, 1980, p.129). Regarding the orgy itself, Eliade remarks that:

the marriage between Heaven and Earth is mimed by the priest and his wife...The imitation of the divine marriage sometimes gives rise to veritable orgies. But the meaning of the orgy is not difficult to understand; the orgy is a symbolic re-entry into chaos, into the primordial and undifferentiated state...It is to recover the original wholeness out of which sprang differentiated Life, and from which the Cosmos emerged. It is by such a symbolical and lurid

reintegration into the pre-cosmological state that they hope to ensure an abundant harvest. For the harvest represents the Creation, the triumphal manifestation of a young, rich and perfect Form. "Perfection" is produced in the beginnings, ab origine. They hope, therefore, to recover the vital reserves and the germinal riches which were made manifest for the first time in the majestic act of the Creation. (Eliade, 1960, p.186)

Allegro and Campbell both see the orgy as linked closely to 'the Agape, so-called Love Feast' of the New Testament which would have included, according to Allegro, 'eating of the mushroom's flesh' (Allegro, 1970, pp.173-4). Campbell wonders 'how far the Gnostic versions of the agape moved towards the Dionysian orgy' (Campbell 4, p.152) and gnosticism, as will be demonstrated later in connection with R.S.Thomas, can be regarded as compensatory to "orthodox" Christianity.

The mystery religions and their orgies also relate to shamanism:

There is every reason to believe that the secret societies and modern mystical sects have largely taken over the ecstatic activity that formerly belonged to shamanism. (Eliade, 1972, p.300)

The shaman's involvement here is equally concerned with rebirth or starting anew:

we can...understand why the future shaman, before becoming a wise man, must first know "madness" and go down into darkness; and why creativity is always found in relation to some "madness" or "orgy" involved with the symbolism of death and darkness. C.G.Jung explains all this as contact with, and reactivation of the collective unconscious. (Eliade, 1960, p.225-6)

The mention of Jung reminds that the whole process described by Eliade here is not far distant from the Jungian concept of individuation whereby, after crisis, 'a wise man' can result from the interaction of an individual psyche's

conscious and unconscious elements. Individuation will be more fully discussed in my next chapter.

The sexual act itself is closely linked to the origins of religion, and Allegro remarks that 'there is no doubt that the sexual power of women was vital to the mystery cults' (Allegro, 1970, p.81). Sex is an obvious metaphor for the uniting of opposites (also discussed in my next chapter), and is relevant to religious ceremonies of renewal, where 'the union of a god and goddess was believed to assure or restore the fertility of earth, herds, and humans' (Day, 1984, p.268).

Hirschberg links the orgy in Gaudete to Dionysos (Hirschberg, 1981, p.179), and as that figure has appeared several times in this discussion of the orgy, it is worth examining this connection more closely. Day comments that 'women were the chief devotees of the Dionysian cult' (Day 86) and sees its role 'in classic Greece as the rebellion against reason, order, conformity...an essential psychic safety valve' (Day, 1984, pp.86 and 247). Graves refers to 'a secret Dionysiac mushroom cult' who 'ritually ate a spotted toadstool called 'flycap' which 'gave them enormous muscular strength, erotic power, delirious visions, and the gift of prophecy' (Graves, 1961, p.45).

In his essay 'The Environmental Revolution', Hughes refers to 'Dionysus':

when the modern mediumistic artist looks into his crystal, he sees always the same thing. He sees the last nightmare of mental disintegration and spiritual emptiness, under the super-ego of Moses, in its original or in some Totalitarian form, and the self-anaesthetising schizophrenia of St. Paul. This is the soul-state of our civilisation. But he may see something else. He may see a vision of the real Eden, "excellent as at the first day,"

the draughty radiant Paradise of the animals, which is the actual earth, in the actual Universe: he may see Pan, whom Nietzsche mistook for Dionysus, the vital, somewhat terrible spirit of natural life, which is new in every second. Even when it is poisoned to the point of death, its effort to be itself are new in every second. This is what will survive, if anything can. And this is the soul-state of the new world. (Faas, 1980, pp.186-7)

This idea of 'the new world' reminds of the various examples already found of re-creation, of going back ab origine and beginning anew. But Hughes also corrects Nietzsche's 'Dionysus' to Pan, son of Mercury (a figure of importance to my next chapter). This is presumably to emphasize the natural aspects of the Dionysian myth, to return the myth to its purpose and point of origin in Nature, which a mystery religion, in its concern for metaphysics, might lose. But, as Campbell emphasizes, the Dionysian myth is fundamentally concerned with man and Nature:

Under the magic of the Dionysian force, not only does the bond between man and man again close together, but alienated, hostile, or suppressed Nature celebrates her festival of reconciliation with her lost son, man. (Campbell 4, p.337)

After linking the orgy explicitly to 'the cult of Dionysos' Hirschberg adds that 'not only have each of the women taken on an archetypal role as an aspect of the feminine goddess but Lumb has become the shaman-priest' (Hirschberg, 1981, p.202). Certainly Lumb, in taking the role of a stag, identifies himself (somewhat prophetically) with Actaeon who was hunted to death by his own hounds (Lumb's male parishioners) and also with the goddess since, according to Graves, 'both stag and bull were sacred to the Great Goddess' (Graves, 1961, p.216).

The music has an enormous effect on the drugged women ('they...have become the music...Their feet are trying to

climb the music but are too heavily rooted') although, as Gifford and Roberts observe, the effect is not entirely to be welcomed:

there is a kind of transcendence in the women's experience...but the music that they have 'become' is 'slogging, deadening, repetitive'. (Gifford and Roberts, 1981, p.180)

Then we learn (from the omniscient narrator) that for Felicity, 'In the lottery of the mushroom sandwich/ Everything was arranged for her'. The arrangement was presumably made by Maud with or without the help of the underworld forces for whom she appears to be an agent. The distinction is an important one for, as we shall see with the circumstances surrounding Felicity's death and the recovery of Maud's speech (as well as hints in certain epilogue poems, such as 'When the still-soft eyelid sank again'), there is a possibility that such a sacrifice was either intended by the powers below or was part of a (grotesque) parody of events underground.

As music drew a comparison between the two Estridge girls and leopards (p.41), so the atmosphere of drugs and music bring the comparison of a tiger to Felicity. 'A hot-throated opening flower of tiger' emphasizes the closeness to things earthly of the tiger, and the idea occurs later in Hughes' 'Tiger-psalm', in Moortown, as well as in the approximately contemporary R.S.Thomas poem (from Frequencies in 1978), 'The White Tiger' with 'the crumpled flower of its face'. Earlier in this chapter I quoted from a letter where Hughes assumes 'a totally sympathetic reader' who has 'a feeling for the traditional 'sacred' role of tigers', and big cats also recall the 'man eater' of the epilogue poems

'Music, that eats people' and 'This is the maneater's skull'. In his Shamanism, Eliade reports that 'the tiger forms part of an extremely archaic religious complex', that the tiger is 'initiatory master' and 'the incarnation of the mythical ancestor, the first Great Shaman' (Eliade, 1972, pp.339, 344 and 345). William Blake, of course, used 'The Tyger' to show how there was more to religion and nature than 'the Lamb' (Blake, 1966, p.214). I will return to the tiger towards the end of this chapter, but in this context it is relevant to note something Hughes says in a personal communication to Bishop:

In drug religions what the neophyte finds in the depths of his trance corresponds in detail to the mythology shared by the cult group...Without a shared mythological framework, the experience of the trance is chaotic--and disintegrative. So repeating the experience destroys the individual. (Bishop, 1991, p.165)

So that again, it seems plausible that Maud and Lumb are 'inadequate' to their task because of the lack of such a shared mythology and 'the immovable dead end forms of society and physical life' (Faas, 1980, p.215), and that a part of Hughes' poetry of the 1970s, because of the mythological sources called upon, is to attempt to reintroduce a shared mythology, at least into the more receptive of his individual readers.

Interestingly, the reader is now able, through the omniscient narrator, to see into the mind of the intended sacrificial victim, and what can be seen there has parallels again with primitive history and myth. Day points out that the word 'sacrifice' derives from 'sacer-facere (Latin, "to make holy")', 'the basic element' of which 'is the transformation of something from the profane world to the

spiritual world' and that the victim 'did not necessarily tremble in terror' for he or she had 'the certainty of immediate transport to the gods in heaven' (Day, 1984, pp.301 and 303). Day lists a dozen possible reasons for sacrifice, including 'fertility of the soil'; promotion of the 'vitality and fertility' of the gods; 'to regain contact with mythical ancestors'; 'to replicate the primal sacrifice' which assures 'full continuity of life and society' and makes human sacrifice 'a re-enactment of the original creation and a renewal of creation'; to provide 'a scapegoat to carry off the sins and guilt of the entire group, as in the case of Christ'; and to give 'an offering to Mother Earth' (Day, 1984, pp.303-4). The sacrifice in Gaudete, then, can be seen as a last desperate effort to find a way of renovating lost autochthonic religions.

Eliade finds much the same conclusion:

Let us specially note that the creation is completed and perfected either by a hierogamy or else by a violent death; which means that the creation depends both upon sexuality and upon sacrifice, voluntary sacrifice above all...The mythic pattern remains the same: nothing can be created without immolation, without sacrifice... The violent death is creative--in this sense, that the life which is sacrificed manifests itself in a more brilliant form upon another plane of existence. (Eliade, 1960, pp.183-4)

This last comment might point to the reappearance of Felicity (= happiness) in the mystical epilogue poems. Looking at this possibility from the point of view of a psychological reading pertinent to the protagonist (Lumb or Hughes), it would seem that the idea of escape from responsibility via the anima figure will not take place, and, instead, the difficult and painful acceptance of responsibility for one's own psyche can be approached



through the recreated anima of the goddess figure in the epilogue poems.

Equally, however, there is a possibility that the sacrifice of Felicity is an example of how Maud is 'inadequate' in the task 'to bring about the renovation of women and therefore of life in general in this world' (Faas, 1980, p.215). Campbell and Muses see human sacrifice as part of religions that have become decadent:

the Goddess "who needs [human] blood to create anew" is a later and degenerated form of the earliest religion in which life, not death, lay at the core of things. In fact, it is still insufficiently recognized that the cruel and ignorant cults of blood sacrifice--human or not--are always later degenerations of an earlier and much higher doctrine. (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, pp.48-9)

The idea of sacrifice also points toward a further potentially compensatory (in that it was in opposition to Christianity and might, metaphorically at least, still be so) and historically native religion, Druidism. In England, at the end of the eighteenth century, 'theoretical foundations were being laid for the establishment of Druidic mythology', one which 'William Blake was convinced by' (Ruthven, 1976, p.68). This would appear to be a classic piece of compensation, as the imagination puts up a new Jerusalem in confrontation to the 'dark Satanic Mills' (Blake, 1966, p.481).

Ward Rutherford in his book on the druids speaks of the sacrificial victim becoming the actual god during ritual, being 'a central figure in the proceedings, writhing and entranced convinced he is the reincarnation of the god' and 'goes joyously, remorselessly to his bloody death' (Rutherford, 1978, p.134). It is worth noting here some

other things Rutherford says regarding the druids and which pertain to Gaudete (especially since Hughes points to the 'ancient Britain/Celtic' element of the book in the 1977 Faas interview), so that the choosing of a king was:

done by means of the Tarbfeis or bull-dream. A bull...was sacrificed and a broth prepared from it. The sacrificers then laved in this and ate the flesh. In a vision which came during the sleep that followed, the identity of the future king was revealed to them. (Rutherford, 1978, p.74)

Rutherford also talks about:

the primal myth of almost every agricultural society wherein a young god is either abducted or voluntarily descends into the underworld, there to fight some great battle...and by his victory bring the gift of growing corn. (Rutherford, 1978, p.122)

Much that occurs in the orgy of Gaudete also finds echo in Rutherford's book on the druids:

Often stimulants will be used, either drugs or alcohol, for both were (and still are) regarded as producing states of mind which approximate to the divine...Perhaps most vital of all elements was the constant rhythmical music and drumming which accompanied the entire proceedings. (Rutherford, 1978, pp.128-9)

Rutherford also compares druids to the figure of the shaman (Rutherford, 1978, pp.125-6), and so reveals another potential mythological source for Gaudete. This is no great surprise since Graves, in his The White Goddess, links Dionysos to the druids<sup>7</sup>, but it does help root the Dionysos elements of the book firmly on English (and Irish) soil.

So, again, perhaps the apparently senseless sacrifice of Felicity is more ambiguous than it might at first appear, since Felicity herself knows she 'is to be the sacramental thing' and is 'already holy' and, further, that 'Somehow she has become a goddess'. This might link with Felicity's

eating of the mushroom sandwich, since 'literally, the word entheogen means "inducing a god within"' (Day, 1984, p.66). Also in this section, and possibly relating to parallel events with the original Lumb in the underworld:

some final crisis of earth's life is now to be enacted  
Faithfully and selflessly by them all.

The important word here is 'enacted' and it points not only toward their action, but also perhaps to Rutherford's 'gift of growing corn' as well as to some of the more significant underworld action taken by the original Lumb. Connected with this also, perhaps, is the epilogue poem 'I heard the screech, sudden' where 'This is no longer the play.// The mask is off'. Finally in this context, Eliade talks of 'the initiatory character' of 'secret feminine associations':

The girl or the initiated woman becomes conscious of a sanctity that emerges from the innermost depths of her being...initiation is equivalent to a change of level, to the passing out of one mode of being into another; the young woman is brutally separated from the profane world; she undergoes a transformation of a spiritual character which, like all transformation, implies an experience of death. We have just seen how the ordeals of the young women resemble those that are symbolic of the initiatory death. But what is in question is always a death to something which has to be surpassed, not a death in the modern and de-sanctified sense of the term. (Eliade, 1960, p.217)

After briefly revisiting the men to see them set out to find their scapegoat ('Now Lumb will somehow pay for everything'), the text returns to the orgy. Hirschberg asserts that the 'animal pelts' the women wear 'correspond, in an uncanny yet accurate way with their natures' and that the women have 'taken on an archetypal role as an aspect of the feminine goddess' (Hirschberg, 1981, p.202). Certainly the animals chosen are those of the English countryside and

as such are pertinent to a goddess of nature resident in England, or in her English aspect. Eliade speaks of 'the symbolism of the mystical rebirth for which one is ritually dressed in the skin of an animal' (Eliade, 1960, p.199) and Day says that 'wearing garb or mask means an actual transformation' (Day, 1984, p.286). This potentially explains the 'some final crisis of earth's life' which 'is now to be enacted/ Faithfully and selflessly by them all', the drama of Mother Nature and, specifically, the drama of Nature as she exists in England.

The use of animal masks and costumes also pertains to the shaman and to primitive man:

For primitive man, donning the skin of an animal was becoming that animal, feeling himself transformed into an animal. We have seen that, even today, shamans believe that they can change themselves into animals...He who, forgetting the limitations and false measurements of humanity, could rightly imitate the behaviour of animals-- their gait, breathing, cries, and so on--found a new dimension of life: spontaneity, freedom, "sympathy" with all the cosmic rhythms and, hence, bliss and immortality. (Eliade, 1972, pp.459-60)

For the shamans themselves, as for Lumb, the animal imitated was often the stag (Eliade, 1972, p.155). Graves points toward European and British survivals of the myth of 'the antlered king', connecting with the May-time events of

Gaudete:

The May-day stag-mummers of Abbot's Bromley in Staffordshire are akin to the stag-mummers of Syracuse in ancient Sicily, and to judge from an epic fragment concerned with Dionysus, one of the mummers disguised as an Actaeon stag was originally chased and eaten. (Graves, 1961, p.217)

It seems likely that Llew's mediaeval successor, Red Robin Hood, was also once worshipped as a stag...In May, the stag puts on his red summer coat. (Graves, 1961, p.318)

Jung also remarks that the stag is a 'symbol of Christ' and that 'in alchemy, Mercurius is allegorized as the stag... because the stag can renew itself' (Jung 8, p.293), which creates another hieroglyph for rebirth.

Felicity now loses the drug-and-music-fired transcendence of the earlier section and experiences fear, and from this point on the ceremony loses some of its previous pretension to holiness since, even though she later 'feels everything beginning to deepen again', she also 'forgets who she is or where she is' (p.145). The figures around her no longer seem beautiful but have become grotesque parodies of owl and badger. Lumb himself is lost in the atmosphere, along with 'a rocking owl' and everybody else, and 'bobs under stag antlers' unable to and probably even unaware of the need to rescue Felicity:

The music inside their bodies is doing what it  
wants at last  
As if they were all somnambulist  
They are no more awake than leaves in a whirlpool.

The question arises: who or what is the whirlpool? Who or what is it that controls the tragedy shortly to follow as the 'leaves' are sucked in. The only answer, barring chance or chaos, is that the powers of the underworld are in some sort of control over the events that follow: the sympathetically shared sexual act; the sacrifice; and the driving out of Lumb. All three occur when the women are not in control but are under the influence of the ritual, the drugs, the music. Maud is the initiator, but she too is not in control and is also an agent for the underworld. Hughes calls her 'inadequate' to the task of bringing about 'this renovation of women and therefore of life in general', but,

again, this inadequacy seems to be due to 'the immovable dead end forms of society and physical life' as she finds it, i.e. as she finds it in England. This, along with Lumb's resurfacing in Ireland and evidence from other works (such as Crow and the children's book Nessie the Mannerless Monster) point to an England where even the goddess herself might be proved 'inadequate'. The possible conclusion is, then, that Lumb and Maud's mission has failed because of dead end English 'society and physical life', but a postscript to this might be that Felicity's sacrifice, the sacrifice of the virgin (a theme prominent in myth and history) is required and guided by the underworld powers as effecting or, at least, signalling, the original Lumb's cure of the goddess. This is further supported, presumably, by the miracle of Maud's cure, her regained speech.

This is, of course, just one interpretation of the events. Hirschberg sees it differently:

In the mythical context one aspect of the feminine is at war with another; the hag destroys the maiden...Throughout Gaudete Maud and Felicity struggle for Lumb's soul...Maud does not perceive the other women in the parish as rivals because Lumb only gives them a purely sexual relationship. It is only when his affections are in question, his simple human preference for Felicity, that Maud desires to be revenged...Felicity...was to be the new Virgin Mary bearing the new Christ, not fathered by the Holy Ghost but by Lumb acting as an emissary for the life force of which Dionysos, in the story, serves as an emblem. (Hirschberg, 1981, p.203)

This has interesting potential, especially since the rivalry could be paralleled in two earlier versions: the ectoplasmic bride (p.63) and the enthroned Maud (p.121). However, it is somewhat diminished by the fact that Maud is

otherworldly and by the miracle of her regained speech, and also by Lumb's previous pledge of love to Janet.

Scigaj refers to Felicity and Lumb's death as 'a climax of the real Lumb's personality dissolution in the underworld, as the unconscious completely overtakes the rational ego' (Scigaj, 1986, p.178) which, at least in psychological terms, would seem to support my reading rather than Hirschberg's. However, the case is far from clear cut even, perhaps, in Hughes' mind since the Argument expresses doubt over the matter, saying that 'it may be that the original Lumb has done the work they wanted him to do...', or perhaps it is just that Hughes is reluctant 'to explain my riddle, which I should refrain from doing' (Faas, 1980, p.122). Therefore, in the end, the interpretation depends on the reader and his or her psychological response to Gaudete.

If the orgy is the climax of the book as far as the women are concerned, the hunt is the climax for the men. The action begins with the attack on Lumb by the dog (p.153), an early aid to man's hunting aspirations. Lumb is portrayed as animal-like in that he 'bounds away' and 'lopes out', although his attempts to aid his own escape by emulating the lungs 'of a wolf or even a fox' and the 'furious micro-energy and stamina of the blue-fly' fail to work. Frequently in the chase Lumb will try to identify with natural forces, attempting to gain strength from them, but always 'the idea takes no hold', apparently because 'The miles of otherworld rootedness weigh in against him', and he is alone, without assistance from nature or his supernatural creators (who seem, anyway, practically synonymous with

natural forces). And so, 'Static trees are a police of unmoving' and the grass is unyielding. Even the previously helpful tree (p.53) is no longer encouraging, and the tree-made changeling feels 'suddenly' that there is 'no hope'.

Appropriately enough for a mythological tale, we now begin to see that the action will end where it first began, on Major Hagen's land, thus giving the story a sense of completeness. Similarly, the action will close, as it began, with Hagen viewing Lumb with the aid of telescopic sights. But, for the moment, Lumb is still running, though now 'like a hurt stag' which seems to echo the Actaeon myth<sup>8</sup>. If this comparison can be made it would seem that Lumb, as Actaeon, has disturbed and intruded upon a group of women (his congregation) and is being hunted down by his own hounds (the missing male congregation) for his blasphemy. More pertinent, perhaps, is P.V.Glob's description of the history and myth surrounding a stag hunt that survives to this day:

The stag as a sacrificial animal is known from finds in Denmark and from innumerable myths and representations throughout Europe...In Denmark, stag hunting as a spring festival continued right up to the present time in the Vordingborg district where on Knudshoved Point a man was dressed up as a stag in a sheepskin coat with antlers on his head at Shrovetide and was chased from farm to farm while the other men shot at him with blank cartridges. In the end, he let himself be 'killed' and was carried on a sledge to the farm where the spring feast was being held. It is a good example of the preservation of an ancient custom. (Glob, 1973, p.153)

The 'stag as a sacrificial animal' would ensure continued fertility, and the Glob example shows remarkable parallels with the Gaudete text, including the shooting, the farms, and the human 'stag'.





intended (a sacrifice at the appropriate time might indicate unjustified success for the changeling's mission).

Alternatively, the time of May is suited to the witchcraft element of Gaudete, 'May Eve' being one of the four Sabbaths for British witches, and elsewhere in The White Goddess Graves refers to 'May Day, famous for its orgiastic revels' and May as related to 'the Greek Goddess Maia' (Graves, 1961, pp.168 and 174). Maia, incidentally, is the mother of Mercury, a figure (under the guise of Mercurius) of importance to my next chapter.

Other interpretations are more pedestrian by comparison: it could be that the changeling Lumb has been somehow informed (or events have been somehow informed) that the other Lumb is to return, and so the changeling must be cancelled; or, perhaps, that the underworld is less than happy with the changeling's performance in the parish, and that the changeling now realizes this; or it could be merely that the land needs his compost, as suggested by the last line of the above extract.

The text continues, after some reflections on a nature now 'dull', 'worthless', 'accidental' and 'spiritless':

He knows now that this land  
This embroidery of stems and machinery of cells  
Is an ignorance, waiting in a darkness--  
He knows at last why it has become so.

Mythologically, the reason for the lacklustreness in nature would be that Lumb has yet to be sacrificed to revitalize the earth. Or it could be that the land--in the sense of both country and earth--has lost its power through an inability of its people to come to terms with the natural world around it, and that Lumb's being hunted is symptomatic



'Mannlicher .318'. This is Hagen the Hunter's goddess and, as the text, with perverse irony, suggests 'the unfailing bride/ Of his ecstasies in the primal paradise, and the midwife of Eden's beasts...'. And so, Lumb is finally shot.

The men are shown as voyeurs to the end and are described as being 'Like sightseers'. In the clearing up process that follows, some details appear to have a mythological import. The burning of Lumb and the two women can be seen as a mock-version of a pagan cremation ritual--and, indeed, the men are 'entranced by the deep satisfaction of it', so much so that Maud's death is hardly heeded. Maud dies in a position often adopted by primitive peoples in their burials--'in Stone Age tombs' (Day, 1984, p.312), for example--that of a foetus, to await rebirth.

Finally, 'All evidence goes up'.

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Given the 'ancient Britain/Celtic' elements of the book, it is wholly appropriate that the original Lumb should be seen resurfaced 'in a straggly sparse village on the West Coast of Ireland'. Arthurian Romance itself, according to Campbell, is derived from Celtic mythology:

Professor Loomis, in his authoritative work, The Grail, makes it evident beyond question that the matiere of the Queste was derived in the main from Celtic myths, largely of Manannan Mac Lir and his Welsh counterpart, Bran the Blessed... (Campbell 4, p.549)

After the 'English Maytime' events of the main text it is also appropriate that the Epilogue should take place in May. What follows is a useful device to explain how, in the context of the story, the poems which finish the volume came to be written. This is important to note since it allows

the poems more scope. By being seemingly accidentally left behind by Lumb, the poems can be expected and permitted to be obscure since they were originally intended for the author's (and perhaps the goddess') eyes only:

Madness in the saints means their complete absorption into the divine. The mad saints have wholly opted out of this world; their madness is indifference, freedom, transcendence. (Day, 1984, p.87)

Through various devices (Lumb, the deserted book, the addressing of the goddess, etc.) Hughes has distanced himself from his own poems, allowing them an independence and freedom of their own.

But in terms of Campbell's hero myth, the epilogue poems represent an 'elixir':

If the hero in his triumph wins the blessing of the goddess or the god and is then explicitly commissioned to return to the world with some elixir for the restoration of society, the final stage of his adventure is supported by all the powers of his supernatural patron. (Campbell, 1949, pp.196-7)

This is the 'ego-shattering, life-redeeming elixir' (Campbell, 1949, p.216), and some of the difficulties with the epilogue poems are related to the complicated nature of the 'elixir':

How teach again...what has been taught correctly and incorrectly learned a thousand thousand times, throughout the milleniums of mankind's prudent folly? That is the hero's ultimate difficult task. How render back into light-world language the speech-defying pronouncements of the dark? How represent on a two-dimensional surface a three-dimensional form, or in a three-dimensional image a multi-dimensional meaning? How translate into terms of "yes" and "no" revelations that shatter into meaninglessness every attempt to define the pairs of opposites? (Campbell, 1949, p.218)

These epilogue poems present the reader with several problems, the first of which is whether to treat these

'hymns and psalms' as individual poems related to each other and/ or to the rest of the volume, or to regard them as a sequence of poems per se. Hirschberg and Scigaj choose to treat the epilogue poems as a developing sequence but, although both have interesting things to say, their approach seems to me to be finally a distortion. Hirschberg seems too selective in finding poems to suit his pattern, and Scigaj tends to read poems from the point of view of his own imposed structure. Some sort of development exists within the sequence (the first poem is clearly introductory and the penultimate poem represents an attitude arrived at through the sequence, for example), but it seems more appropriate to examine certain themes through individual poems whilst acknowledging the possibility of a skeletal structure, much as I did with Crow.

In the introduction I mentioned potential problems when bringing Eastern myth into the discussion of the epilogue poems. However, it would seem from Faas that the influence of the 'South Indian Vacanas' was primarily one of conceit and style with their 'common devotion as addressed to a divinity' (a goddess), a devotion which 'is intensely personal, willing to share its ecstasies with animals and plants rather than with confederates of an organized religion' and their combination of 'a straightforward spontaneity of basic statement with a studied allusiveness of puns, conceits and allegories' (Faas, 1980, pp.137-8), all of which are encountered in the epilogue poems. Such a model is a useful one for Hughes who, in the three books considered in this study, is very much concerned with the individual.

Hughes' other two sources, named by Faas, were his fear of cancer and his dreams which, for a Jungian, provide a plausible access to mythology through the Collective Unconscious. It is therefore likely that the poems of the epilogue will be pertinent to Western mythology and compensatory to the mainstream of Western thought, just as the Collective Unconscious is.

The five themes I choose to look at here are interrelated, and their range encompasses all but a few epilogue poems. They are: the inadequacy of the acolyte; the inadequacy of humanity; the relationship between humanity and the goddess; the relationship between the acolyte and the goddess; and the wisdom and vitality of the goddess herself. All these themes, of course, are compensatory to 'the fundamental guiding ideas of our Western Civilisation' where there is 'the assumption that the earth is a heap of raw materials given to man by God for his exclusive profit and use' (Faas, 1980, p.186) and where God, of course, is firmly masculine. Perhaps Hughes is advocating in these epilogue poems a new religion along the lines of Lovelock's Gaia thesis. If this is so, he would not be the first:

Contending that all the major religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) impacting Western Society are distressingly and obtusely dominated by male imagery, Naomi Goldenberg advocates a new religion reinstituting the loving, nurturing Mother Goddess. (Day, 1984, p.214)

Hughes' goddess, however, and his view of Mother Nature, is more ambivalent than the 'loving, nurturing Mother Goddess' suggested here.

The position of the first poem is certainly important in that it introduces the tone of voice, the style of poetry and the mental state of the acolyte in his relationship with the goddess, and so informs all that is to follow. Here the supplicant asks 'What will you make of half a man', and proceeds to elaborate this semi-cliche in both literal and metaphoric terms. The mixing of grotesque literality and metaphor heightens the poignancy of the poet's sense of inadequacy and compounds the sense of humility before the goddess. Further, the poem is also a watershed as the new Lumb begins to recognize and reject his former self, the vicar, the 'veteran of negatives' (which might relate, amongst other possibilities, to the various 'Shalt nots' that riddle Christianity).

Faas appears to assume that the 'half a man' refers to the Lumb of the main narrative (Faas, 1980, p.136), whereas Sweeting assumes it to be the original Lumb, the Lumb of the prologue (Sagar, ed., 1983, p.86). A more interesting possibility is that both are intended. The three two-line statements about the 'half a man' seem applicable to both Lumbs, rather than to aspects of the same Lumb, and if the 'And' that begins the final line links epithets for the two different Lumbs, rather than aspects of a single Lumb, then the poem becomes a more illuminating introduction to the epilogue poems.

Translating this into psychological terms, the acolyte's inadequacy is due, or has been due, to an imbalance of conscious ego (the original Lumb) and unconscious shadow (the Lumb of the main narrative). The original Lumb, having suppressed his unconscious in order to



function as a village vicar, is unable to cope with what happens to him, and the changeling Lumb represents an overcompensation for this, which appears to allow the unconscious to hold sway. Jung says that 'as a rule, a man needs the opposite of his actual condition to force him to find his place in the middle' (Jung 6, p.228). In the poem, each of these figures is 'half a man', and these poems can be seen as an attempt to resolve the two halves, both inadequate, into a whole, to unite the 'veteran of negatives' with 'the survivor of cease', an idea of 'individuation' which will be explored more fully in the next chapter:

man could only be well and sane when this quarrel between him and his shadow, between the primitive and the civilised, was dissolved. Only when the two were reconciled could they enter together into the presence of the master-pattern, as Jung's experience had already done. Only then did man become whole. Wholeness was the ultimate of man's conscious and unconscious seeking. (van der Post, 1988, p.218)

Hughes compares Shakespeare's 'Tragic Equation' to the psychological reality of one man where, 'at one pole is the rational ego' and 'at the other is the totality of this individual's natural, biological and instinctual life' (Hughes, 1992, p.513). Also of relevance is Hughes' view of King Lear where he finds a 'new kind of rebirth', and where 'Adonis became Tarquin--now Tarquin becomes a saint' (Hughes, 1992, p.264). Equally, the presumably chaste vicar of the prologue becomes the lustful changeling of the main text becomes the saintly Lumb of the epilogue.

Other poems in the sequence, such as 'Music, that eats people' and 'The swallow--rebuilding', touch on the poet's own inadequacy. The latter's question 'So how will you

gather me?' finds answer in Redgrove's The Black Goddess and the Sixth Sense which talks about 'The method of Isis...kept as a secret by the Gnostic sects':

The theology of this was that the god-substances, scattered through the universe, were only truly brought together in humans, and the collected essences could be shared, hence re-creating the undivided god or goddess: 'I am dispersed in all things, and in gathering me you gather yourself.' (Redgrove, 1987, p.140)

Similarly, the poem's last line, 'If you can catch that, you are the falcons of falcons' and its challenge finds elucidation in another theory of poetry book written by a poet, The White Goddess, where Graves is talking about the goddess Circe:

Her name means 'she-falcon', the falcon being a bird of omen, and is also connected with circos, a circle, from the circling of falcons and from the use of the magic circle in enchantment; the word is onomatopoeic, the cry of the falcon being 'circ-circ'. (Graves, 1961, p.375)

The circle (in the poem the sun appears in the penultimate line) for Jung was symbolic of wholeness, of the end result of individuation, and so the poem would seem to suggest that it is only through inner development or individuation that the goddess, and thus her acolyte, can be 'gathered'.

About a fifth of the poems widen the acolyte's inadequacy to include that of humanity. In 'I hear your congregations at their rapture', for example, 'speech' is diagnosed as being one of man's prime ailments in contrast to the cry of birds 'long ago perfect' and that of beasts which 'will not chill into syntax', implying a vitality ('rapture' and 'not chill') unavailable to humanity with its 'beetling talk'. Of relevance here is the earlier discussion of the shaman's 'animal language', and Don Mckay

says that 'speech itself is seen as a corruption and construction of animal music' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.118), Lumb having control of the latter, as evidenced by his calling up an otter from the lake. The word 'beetling' is an interesting one in this context: it could imply heavy-handedness as with the heavy-handed tool called a beetle, with also an element of stupidity preserved by the phrase 'beetle-brain', meaning 'blockhead'; it could imply aspects of the insect in its manic scurry or apparent insignificance; or it could mean that speech hangs threateningly over man, especially remembering Hardy's 'beetling Beeny Crest' from 'The Going' (Hardy, 1976, p.338); or, most likely, the phrase can hold more than one of these possibilities. What follows is equally interesting:

Words buckle the voice in tighter, closer  
Under the midriff  
Till the cry rots, and speech

Is a fistula

Eking and deferring  
Like a stupid or a crafty doctor  
With his year after year  
Of sanguinary nostrums  
Of almosts and their tomorrows

Through a lifetime of fees.

Wordplay is rife here, and after 'buckle' ('to fasten' or 'to bend, warp') there comes 'sanguinary', meaning bloodthirsty but also calling to mind 'sanguine' or hopeful, further linked to 'nostrums', which recalls an image of medieval quacks and their remedy of bleeding with all its modern and historical, actual and metaphorical, connotations. 'Nostrums' itself compounds this ambiguity since it is either a medicine (usually of doubtful

effectiveness), or a 'pet scheme, or favourite remedy, for bringing about some political or social reform'. All of these various reverberations can be applied to speech as 'a fistula' (ironically likened to 'a stupid or a crafty doctor'), but also to humanity since it is speech that contrasts man with the more vital birds and beasts. Thus the last five lines can be read as a summary of human history as stupid or crafty leaders spew out with hope their bloody and ineffectual prescriptions and remedies, without ever getting beyond 'almosts and their tomorrows' and always with 'a lifetime of fees'.

'A doctor extracted' also wittily uses a doctor to approach the history of the species through metaphor. 'A doctor', that man of science rumoured to heal, but not always capable of doing so, removes all sense of awe and mystery in nature from his patient and, with consummate irony, reads a story:

About a God  
Who ripped his mother's womb  
And entered it, with a sword and a torch  
  
To find a father.

Anthropologically the male psyche in elevating the masculine gods of primitive pantheons (mother and child, or mother, son and daughter combinations) had to contrive a father god, but historically, armed with a torch to enlighten and also to burn, and with a sword to smite, man has done much harm in his quest for knowledge, harming his own mother, the earth.

'Churches topple' points to the futility of a major part of such a quest, organized and orthodox religion. In this poem churches topple and the poem posits a playful

metaphoric-and-actual reason for their demise, 'The reverberations of worship'. Contrasting this, nature stays, protected by the power and fertility of the goddess, much as it is seen to do in Remains of Elmet.

'Calves harshly parted from their mamas' appears to contain an allegory on man's historical progress, humanity being portrayed as calves taken away from the earth (the unconscious), 'their mamas'. The separation from meaningful relationship with Mother Earth is (reluctantly) accepted and the calves cower together in the conformist field of complacency--'They will never stray any more'. 'So much for calves', says the poem:

As for the tiger  
He lies still  
Like left luggage.

He is roaming the earth light, unseen.

He is safe.

Heaven and hell have both adopted him.

The tiger, then, represents one who 'Reaches both hands into the drop' ('A man hangs on'), one who has been forgotten 'Like left luggage' by everyone, the calves especially. Unburdened (light) it is the tiger and not the calves who is actually 'safe', although the calves clearly think that they are: safety, it seems, lies in daring. Blake's 'The Tyger' again comes to mind, and Eliade in his Shamanism reports that sometimes 'the Spirit-Instructor of young candidates for initiation appears in the form of a bear or a tiger' (Eliade, 1972, p.72). Jung links the tiger to his anima figure:

The anima also has affinities with animals, which symbolize her characteristics. Thus she can

appear as a snake or a tiger or a bird. (Jung 9, Part 1, p.200)

It would seem from this that the tiger represents the goddess herself whom Graves describes as 'both lovely and cruel' and who 'loves only to destroy' but 'destroys only to quicken' (Graves, 1961, pp.248 and 434) or, at least, one of her devotees such as the poet:

Therefore 'being too sinful for Heaven yet safe from Hell he haunts the earth like a will o' the wisp'. In other words, he secured poetic immortality. (Graves, 1961, p.246)

The true poet...must address only the Muse--not the King or Chief Bard or the people in general--and tell her the truth about himself and her in his own passionate and peculiar words. The Muse is a deity, but she is also a woman... (Graves, 1961, p.444)

The addressed female of the epilogue poems is thus the goddess, the Muse, the anima, and women that the poet has personally known. The latter explains the presence of three elegies in the epilogue, 'Once I said lightly', 'Waving goodbye, from your banked hospital bed' and 'I know well', their place in the sequence further clarified by the letter to Gifford and Roberts where Hughes speaks of Lumb assuming the 'several women in his life' (personal communication, 1978) into the goddess.

More than a third of the poems deal with the strange relationship between the goddess, addressed as 'you', and her worshipping acolyte:

The unrelated human being lacks wholeness, for he can achieve wholeness only through the soul, and the soul cannot exist without its other side, which is always found in a "You". Wholeness is a combination of I and You, and these show themselves to be parts of a transcendent unity whose nature can only be grasped symbolically... (Jung 16, pp.243-4)

In this relationship the acolyte is able to accept that the goddess is not only mistress of life, but also mistress of death and destruction. The aptest metaphor for this dual quality of the goddess lies in the relationship between eater and eaten, between killer and prey. In this, death can be seen as the 'absorption' (a fruitful ambiguity) of one life force by another, as in 'Who are you?'. There the goddess violently grabs the acolyte, and this idea can be found elsewhere in the sequence, in 'The sun, like a cold kiss in the street' and 'I skin the skin', for example.

What the goddess seems to require from her acolyte is the total dedication asked for in, for example, 'She rides the earth'. This poem would seem to point to the goddess as Queen of Earth and Heaven, and the poem also refers to 'a great white bull', about which something has been said already. The apple (about which something has also been said) of the second stanza might link this poem to 'In a world where all is temporary', in which case it would seem that the protagonist there has nailed 'his heart/ To the leafless tree'. The apple mentioned in 'She rides the earth', along with various other mythological apples (that of Eden, for example), might disincline one to pluck it. It would seem, however, that by this gesture the acolyte gives his life into the hands of the goddess, expecting nothing although, in reality, one presumes, being somehow resurrected as a releafed tree in the spring. Such a view would seem to be supported elsewhere as the ego-less acolyte asks to be gathered by the 'falcon of falcons' in 'The swallow--rebuilding' and is protected by a wolf, an emissary of the goddess, after he has exposed himself fully to the

elements in 'The night wind, muscled with rain'. Graves in his The White Goddess comments that 'love of the Goddess makes the poet mad: he goes to his death and in death is made wise' (Graves, 1961, p.253).

'The grass-blade is not without' seems to go one stage further:

Any blade of grass may assume, in myth, the figure of the savior and conduct the questing wanderer into the sanctum sanctorum of his own heart. (Campbell, 1949, p.44)

The poet-acolyte begs to be allowed to join the ranks of the goddess' 'warriors', i.e. to be at one with the natural world like the grass-blade, the blackbird and the badger, the second being wholly appropriate to the goddess since its beak represents 'terror and exultation', not only because it devours as well as sings, but also because of its colour symbolism: black for terror and gold for exultation. This is the point of the goddess, 'the blood from whose left side brought death, and from her right side, life' (Campbell 4, p.229) or, as Day puts it, 'The Great Mother accepts no moral restrictions: her only obligation is fecundity' (Day, 1984, p.177). Campbell, in talking about Wolfram and the Grail Romances, makes a similar point:

if the goddess Amor is to be served, neither light alone nor darkness can represent her way, which is mixed...according to this mythology, the one way is of absolute loyalty to that outward innermost object. (Campbell 4, p.567)

The last and potentially confusing phrase points to the methods of the Gaudete epilogue poems which through the vehicle of the 'outward' natural world of the goddess point to the 'innermost' individuation process initiated and continued by the inner version of the goddess, the anima. A



further representation of the goddess, as 'Lady of Animals' brings into the equation Hughes' ecological concerns, as well as confirming the outer and inner importance of the goddess:

The Lady...of the Beasts is conceived as the guardian of collective animals, while simultaneously acknowledging human needs. The net effect is sacral ecology, divinized conservation. (Day, 1984, p.164)

Neumann calls this 'Lady of the Beasts' the 'guiding purpose, the unconscious spiritual order of the whole' (Neumann, 1972, p.278).

Whilst many poems in the sequence look at the relationship between the acolyte and the goddess, a handful of them widen this to examine the relationship between humanity and the goddess. 'At the top of my soul', for example, might be read as concerning this relationship:

Behind me  
A cave

Inside the cave, some female groaning  
In labour--

Or in hunger--

Or in fear, or sick, or forsaken--

Or--

At this point, I feel the sun's strength.  
I take a few still-aimless happy steps.

Here the poet himself offers different interpretations to his sense data. A possible interpretation is to see this man's departure from the cave as a metaphor for the desertion of the goddess by men in prehistoric times as well as the (ensuing) split of consciousness from the unconscious. This reading would allow all the above alternatives so that the mother goddess gives birth to life

and yet is hungered, frightened, sickened or forsaken by the desertion. Other evidence supports such an interpretation: the 'useful-looking world', which would have had man as an integrated part of itself until the split, whereas now it is merely 'a thrilling weapon'; the cave (which might bring Plato's cave to mind), in that 'early man regarded the cave as the womb of the Earth Mother' and 'caves are openings into the body of the Universal Mother' (Day, 1984, pp.33 and 98) (in which case it would appear that the goddess has 'given birth' to the speaker of the poem who has presumably just left the cave); and in the fact that, after some doubts about the well-being of the 'female', the speaker feels 'the sun's strength' which prompts him to walk, the sun being often the prime masculine deity (as well as symbolic of consciousness) whose distant and celestial mythology in prehistory usurps the earth mother (unconsciousness). At this point the speaker's steps are 'still-aimless', but the previous mention of the earth as a weapon hints at the direction soon to be taken.

'Collision with the earth has finally come' is also usefully interpreted if seen as a metaphor for man. If the 'I' can be regarded as mankind in general (past, present and future), the 'Collision with the earth has finally come' in that modern man can no longer ignore ecological issues. Man is variously compared to 'A kelp, adrift/ In my feeding substance' (the present), just as man is adrift in the natural world; 'a mountain', unmovable perhaps because of ideas and notions of a faraway heaven--but also, in Jungian symbolism, an indication of potential (the future--see also my discussion of this symbol as it appears in 'The Scream'

in my Cave Birds chapter); and 'A sea/ Full of moon-ghost, with mangling waters' (the past, but see also my discussion of the sea in my Crow chapter), in that various memories, whether universal, tribal or individual, are all a part of man. However, with all this 'moon-ghost' mangling memory, there is no shape, no direction:

Dust on my head  
Helpless to fit the pieces of water  
A needle of many Norths.

The following phrase, 'Ark of blood', is therefore a useful description of religion, an ark being either a Noah-like vessel that should take one to safety or the one in which all life exists (all animal life); or the chest in which sacred relics are kept (thus keeping humanity too much rooted in its 'mangling' past). The word 'blood' also has a fruitful ambiguity since it could either mean a tribal or racial stock or the blood that was, is, and will be spilt by such tribally wrought religions: no wonder, then, that 'old men' find it 'useless'.

Two other poems ('The sea grieves all night long' and 'Every day the world gets simply') link worldly opposites (horror and joy or beauty and ugliness) with the goddess, and many of the poems in the sequence concern themselves with the qualities of the goddess and, in particular, the wisdom and vitality which she has and can impart. The vitality in music--'Shakespeare's recurrent symbol of harmony' (Yates, 1979, p.129)--is looked at in a pair of enigmatic poems, 'Music, that eats people' and 'This is the maneater's skull'. The former recalls an episode from the main text in which Commander Estridge hears and reacts to Jennifer's emotional rendering of the Beethoven scherzo

(p.41) as well as other musical occasions, the music 'in' Lumb (p.50) or the music of the orgy, for example. Music is also compared to the insect-impaling shrike, the tiger, and also to 'the maneater/ On your leash'. However, in the acolyte's state of humility he recognizes that there is nothing left for the music to devour, he himself having already been humbled, emptied and rejected by the goddess. Levi-Strauss, quoted by Leach, notes a strong connection between myth and music:

myth and music (and dreaming) have certain elements in common; they are, says Levi-Strauss, "machines for the suppression of time"...the last movement of a symphony is presupposed by its beginning just as the end of a myth is already implicit where it began...repetitions and thematic variations of myth play upon physiological characters of the human brain to produce emotional as well as purely intellectual effects. Furthermore, what the individual listener understands when he hears a myth or a piece of music is in many ways personal to himself--it is the receiver who decides what the message is. In this respect myth and music are the converse of spoken language where it is the sender who decides what the message is. The structural analysis of myth and music will lead us to an understanding of the unconscious structure of the human mind because it is this unconscious (natural) aspect of the brain which is triggered into response by these special cultural (non-natural) devices:

"Myth and music thus appear as conductors of an orchestra of which the listeners are the silent performers"... (Leach, 1970, pp.115-6)

Again, as with the hieroglyph language, music and myth can be seen to be targetting the unconscious mind, and Hughes makes much the same point concerning music when talking about Orghast:

'The point was to create a precise but open and inviting language, inviting to a lost world we wanted to explore. Music is one such language--mathematically precise, but completely mysterious and open, giving access to a deeper world, closed to direct analysis.' (Smith, 1972, p.45)

'This is the Maneater's skull', like many of the poems in the sequence, communicates satisfaction in its tone: the short disjointed sentences which only the one long line (the seventh) breaks free from. This is supported by the sparseness of assonance in the first six lines (with the notable exception of the disquieting half-rhyme on 'skull' and 'gullet' and also, less obviously perhaps, the suitably uncomfortable 'death' and 'deaf'). Each syllable of the first six lines requires a clear enunciation that is almost awkward and, with its dead-pan (short factual sentences) tone it is almost a relief when we come to the seventh line, with its more wholesome assonance ('whole' and 'flowed') and gentle alliteration which hurries along to satisfy the poem's built-up unease and to render well the maneater's former vitality. This is followed by adjacent assonance ('cry' and 'quieted') that must give pause, and this helps prepare the reader for a quiet and slow reading of the last three lines. In this way the poem is emotionally satisfying as it releases the built-up frustrate energy in the seventh line before leading to the calmer finish. Equally, the imagery is bold (with 'the Arc de Triomphe' being almost surrealistic) and yet effective, the word 'assemblage', for example, being exactly right in its pointing toward machine-like ('nacelles') possibilities, or toward a former life as the sum of its parts, or towards exactly what the poet's imagination has been doing: reassembling from the skull the various parts of the whole.

In 'The lark sizzles in my ear', the sun, variously described as 'the core of the blue peace'; 'the sapphire's flaw'; and, significantly, as 'blinding' (prophets in myth

are often blind) transmits 'A prophecy' through the lark, 'prophecy' presumably in the sense of received wisdom--here, perhaps, the wisdom of vitality. Again there is a potentially useful ambiguity in the question 'When you touch his grains, who shall stay?', where 'his grains' could mean the lark's food or essence and where 'stay' can mean check, postpone, endure, suspend (execution, judgement) or simply remain.

'A bang--a burning' begins like this:

A bang--a burning--  
I opened my eyes  
In a vale crumbling with echoes.

This might suggest, whether on an actual or metaphorical level, global destruction through nuclear devastation, and that all that is left the survivor ('the survivor of cease') are memories, echoes. Into this merge, perhaps, hints of a previous world-destroying event, the flood, best known in the Genesis version which includes the dove and the rainbow. At first the acolyte is unable to cope with the cry of the dove, seemingly because 'From this centre/ It wearies the compass'. 'The compass' has an interesting range of possibilities: the direction-finding device; the instrument for describing circles; the boundary; and the range, particularly of a voice. The likeliest implication for the acolyte is, perhaps, that the dove in its cry pushes at normally prescribed limitations. But then, as he begins to question, the poet indicates two items of hope: the rainbow which, as in the Genesis version, would seem to promise no further devastation (of acolyte or globe, whether actual or metaphorical), as well as indicating a union of heaven and earth; and the wings, which imply freedom.

The vitality of the goddess is sufficient to revive 'the dead man' of 'The dead man lies, marching here and there'. One possible reading of this poem is that modern man is 'the dead man', 'marching here and there/ In the battle for life, without moving' and safe in his complacency:

He prays he will escape for what comes after.  
At least that he'll escape. So he lies still.

However, the 'lies' of a lack of real activity can be easily shot down by the arrival or sudden revelation of the goddess:

And from that moment  
He never stops trying to dance, trying to sing  
And maybe he dances and sings

Because you kissed him.

'I see the oak's bride in the oak's grasp' ponders on the oak and his bride, presumably the earth, perhaps even the goddess herself. In the main text, of course, the changeling Lumb was made from an oak and various mythological connections, such as the oak-king sacrifice, have already been looked at. Here, the 'inching hydra strength' is a superb description of a growing tree, the many snakes of a hydra being analogous to the branches of a tree, which grow again if you cut them down. This could imply psychic growth, since the tree 'represents symbolically the growth and development of psychic life' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.152). The word 'hydra' can also simply mean 'a thing' noted for 'the difficulty of its extirpation'. In its nuptials the tree drops 'twigs, and acorns, and leaves' and in this, it seems, 'The oak seems to die and to be dead/ In its love-act' (this, of course, is

the natural justification for and reflection of much of the regenerative mythology echoed in the main text). This is entirely apt since at autumn the oak drops its leaves and twigs (to decompose) and its acorns (to germinate in the earth). In the last four lines the poet considers death ('brown leaf') and resurrection ('acorn'), as applied to himself. This would seem to point towards an inadequacy of 'nostalgia' or idle dreaming of past and future whereas the oak-tree is very much concerned to express its present vitality. This is why the poet's (and mankind's) outlook is 'A perilously frail safety'.

The tree is, according to Day, 'an arch symbol for life and divinity', and reports of myths which describe 'man descended from tree', including 'Teutonic mythology' (Woden) and, more speculatively, the idea behind the British 'figure of speech... "hearts of oak"' (Day, 1984, pp.100 and 418). The oak itself Graves reports as having roots which 'are believed to extend as deep underground as its branches rise in the air' which 'makes it emblematic of a god whose law runs both in Heaven and in the Underworld' (Graves, 1961, p.176). This can allow trees to serve as 'intermediaries between earth-bound man and deities of the sky' (Day, 1984, p.101), and Eliade in his Shamanism would also add the underworld:

The Cosmic Tree is essential to the shaman... expressing the sacrality of the world, its fertility and perenniality...related to the ideas of creation, fecundity, and initiation, and finally to the idea of absolute reality and immortality...the Cosmic Tree always presents itself as the very reservoir of life and the master of destinies. (Eliade, 1972, pp.270-1)



The 'Cosmic Tree' of the shamans is 'conceived as occupying the Center of the World' (Eliade, 1972, p.120) and, in Jungian terms, represents (through its roots and branches) the balance between conscious and unconscious forces necessary for wholeness, centred on the self:

In the history of symbols this tree is described as the way of life itself, a growing into that which eternally is and does not change; which springs from the union of opposites and, by its eternal presence, also makes that union possible. (Jung 9, Part 1, p.110)

The tree, as archetype, is necessarily a complicated symbol concerned with opposites, Neumann finding birth and death, and both male and female symbolism:

The center of this vegetative symbolism is the tree. As fruit-bearing tree of life it is female: it bears, transforms, nourishes; its leaves, branches, twigs are "contained" in it and dependent on it. The protective character is evident in the treetop that shelters nests and birds. But in addition the tree trunk is a container, "in" which dwells its spirit, as the soul dwells in the body. The female nature of the tree is demonstrated in the fact that treetops and trunk can give birth, as in the case of Adonis and many others.

But the tree is also the earth phallus, the male principle jutting out of the earth...But the tree as house or bearer of fruit is not only evaluated positively as a place of birth...it can also be an abode of death. (Neumann, 1972, pp.48-50)

Hughes himself recognizes the fact that the archetype of the tree can hold these last two opposites together:

The Divine Child Adonis is born from a tree, Osiris is resurrected from a tree, Attis and Christ are sacrificed on trees: the tree is the Goddess. (Hughes, 1992, p.397)

Jung also points out that the tree is symbol of 'the Great Mother' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.69), and also finds that 'the "philisophical" tree is a symbol of the alchemical opus, which as we know is an individuation process' (Jung 9, Part

1, p.324), and alchemy will be of importance to my next chapter.

The vitality of the Goddess, portrayed as dancing (as with 'the dead man'), is vivid in the study of the oak-tree in 'Your tree--your oak' and it is further emphasized in the Selected Poems by the indentation of the final four lines.

The oak, 'Your tree', is again vital in 'its instant':

Agony in the garden. Annunciation  
Of clay, water and the sunlight.  
They thunder under its roof.  
Its agony is its temple.

In this, and especially in its religious (Christian) language, the oak becomes a vital entity (symbolic and actual) in a more-than-local context. It pertains to unconscious ('the seas') and conscious ('flying') forces, finally united in a symbol of wholeness:

The seas are thirsting  
Towards the oak.

The oak is flying  
Astride the earth.

Finally, the 'glare' of the last poem would seem to be the omnipresent vibrant energy of the goddess:

The effect of the successful adventure of the hero is the unlocking and release again of the flow of life into the body of the world. The miracle of this flow may be represented...dynamically as a streaming of energy, or spiritually as a manifestation of grace. (Campbell, 1949, p.40)

1. A term which Graves connects to the druids (Graves, 1961, p.21).
  2. Isolation and sickness, as explained earlier, are pertinent to the 'calling' of the shaman.
  3. Sachs quoted by Campbell (Campbell 4, p.335). Graves too can be seen to be making a similar point when he says that 'the act of composition occurs in a sort of trance, distinguishable from dream only because the critical faculties are not dormant' (Graves, 1959, p.99). The critical faculties provide the interpretation (as far as is possible), pointing again to the essential cooperation of conscious and unconscious in the creative act.
  4. See Ann Skea's essay 'Wolf-Masks: From Hawk to Wolfwatching' (Scigaj, ed, 1992, pp.241-51).
  5. Elsewhere the distinction between the narrative function of prose and the lyrical function of poetry is more clear-cut, in Seamus Heaney's Sweeney Astray, for example, or R.S.Thomas' The Echoes Return Slow. What Hughes seems to have been looking for is a more tenuous distinction in order to promote cooperation between the conscious part of the psyche (prose) and the unconscious (poetry).
  6. Examples of Graves' dealing with this myth are many (for example: Graves, 1961, pp.24, 110 and 180-1). Jacobi writes:
 

In mythology, rain was often thought to be a "love union" between heaven and earth...This was understood as a sacred marriage of the gods. In this way rain can be said to represent a "solution" in the literal sense of the word. (Jung ed., 1978, p.338)
- Other examples of confrontations and (re)solutions brought about by rain abound in literature: in Shakespeare's King Lear and other works; in Coleridge's 'The Ancient Mariner'; or the rain of 'What the Thunder said' in T.S.Eliot's 'The Waste Land'.
7. Graves, 1961, pp.195-6, for example, where he links the Druidic finger-alphabet to 'the horned Dionysus'.
  8. See also Hughes. poem 'Actaeon' in Moortown.
  9. Allegro, however, finds that the 'chief calendrical festivals' for 'the witches' religion' were 'held on May Eve...and November Eve' (Allegro, 1977, p.165).

### Chapter Three: CAVE BIRDS

Cave Birds is, we believe, Hughes's finest book to date. (Gifford and Roberts, 1981, p.199)

I have shown how, in Crow and Gaudete, Hughes builds into his narrative structures a myriad of historical and mythological scenarios which, if not vital, nevertheless add colour, substance and foundation to an otherwise over-simple content. Cave Birds is perhaps the most complete and self-assured of these schemes (which helps explain the praise of critics, such as that of Gifford and Roberts quoted above), its mythological and historical background bringing the protagonist and his metaphysics into sharp relief without being overtly intrusive or even necessary for some grasp of the drama being enacted. The idea put forward by, for example, Jung and Campbell, that mythological motifs and stories have a common denominator that is closely related to the content of the human psyche, finds a natural home in the mythical technique of Cave Birds.

The title and subtitle of Cave Birds: An Alchemical Cave Drama immediately point to a number of mythological sources. The words 'alchemical', 'cave', 'drama' and 'birds' all suggest themes and ideas apparently unconnected but which are more closely linked than might at first be suspected. Hughes himself talks about Shakespeare's 'betrothal ceremony of Ferdinand and Miranda' as:

the most primeval nativity cave drama: the rebirth, from earth, of the god. In other words, the alchemical marriage of the two redeemed ones, of 'widower Aeneas' and 'widow Dido'--the archetypal Shakespearean hero and heroine reborn and reunited--is symbolized by the birth of the divine self... (Hughes, 1992, p.451)

Jung uses the term 'self' to designate the 'goal of the individuation process', 'the wholeness that transcends consciousness' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.164), and the cooperative union of conscious and unconscious forces within the single psyche.

Hughes' comments, with the masculine and feminine being reborn into a united whole, the self of individuation, are particularly relevant to Cave Birds, where the protagonist suffers death ('The executioner') and is reborn along with the feminine element of the book (in 'After there was nothing there was a woman', for example). The two combine in 'Bride and groom lie hidden for three days' and lead to 'the birth of the divine self' (the goal of individuation) in 'The risen'. But the elements of the title and subtitle find other points of contact.

Gilchrist, for example, asserts that 'it would be possible to devote a whole book just to the symbolism of the different birds in alchemy' (Gilchrist, 1984, p.74), and Eliade that 'alchemists had the power of rising up into the air' through their identification with birds (Eliade, 1960, p.100). Similarly, Day suggests that 'the masked dancers on the walls of Paleolithic caves' might represent the origin of drama (Day, 1984, p.81), and Baskin's drawings may be seen as modern versions of such cave art. Indeed, there is the figure of a bird in a cave painting at Lascaux which Eliade links to the shaman, although he adds that 'the symbolism and mythologies of "magical flight" extend beyond the bounds of shamanism proper and also precede it' (Eliade, 1972, p.481). The Lascaux bird has been carbon-dated between 15,380 and 12,686 B.C. (Clark, 1969, p.66), and, as

might be expected with Hughes, one notable link between the elements of the title is their potential for primitiveness. The cave drama is the original form, perhaps, of drama, which is a primitive art in itself; birds feature in cave paintings, the oldest form of artwork known to man and presumably, therefore, pertinent to the oldest religions; and alchemy is perhaps the oldest science concerned directly with the earth: 'The emergence of alchemy marked a deep crisis in ancient thought and science' (Lindsay, 1970, p.1), remarks Lindsay, but the alchemists themselves saw their tradition extending back to Moses and beyond. Eliade too sees 'at least a part of the 'prehistory' of alchemy' deriving from 'primitive myth and ideology', alchemy merely taking the place 'of very old beliefs which had their roots in prehistory' (Eliade, 1962, pp.49-50 and 168), and further notes:

a close connection between the art of the smith, the occult sciences (shamanism, magic, healing, etc.) and the art of song, dance and poetry.  
(Eliade, 1962, p.99)

Levi Strauss in his Totemism quotes Rousseau with approval to the effect that poetry too is of primitive origins, 'the first speech was all in poetry; reasoning was thought of only long afterwards' (Levi-Strauss, 1964, p.102).

Both the 'cave' and the 'bird' of the title can be treated as archetypes, something Bodkin suggests regarding the cave when she says it is possible that:

this strong association of the cavern with the mysterious archaic depths of the mind itself... which poets have felt who never knew of...cavern sanctuaries, is actually in some way influenced or determined by traces transmitted from the remote experiences of which these caverns give evidence... (Bodkin, 1934, p.128)

In line with Hughes' view of the 'primeval nativity cave drama', Jung says that 'the cave is the place of rebirth' where 'one is shut up in order to incubated and renewed' and that anyone who finds himself in such a cave 'will find himself involved in an--at first--unconscious process of transformation' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.135). Eliade adds that 'The role of the cave in paleolithic religions appears to have been decidedly important', especially in 'initiation rites' which are 'concrete symbols of passage into another world, of a descent to the underworld' (Eliade, 1972, p.51). The cave is also traditionally associated with both the tomb and the womb (Day, 1984, p.33), a useful encapsulation of opposites, but Neumann finds another pair of opposites inherent in the archetype of the cave, seeing 'the primordial cave' as being formed of both 'the night sky' and 'the earth' (Neumann, 1972, p.223), usually represented as Father God and Mother Goddess respectively. Eliade also remarks on 'the ritualistic role played by 'caves'' which could 'be interpreted as a mystic return to the mother', and Eliade refers his readers to the use of caves as 'sepultures' as well as the settings for 'initiation rites' (Eliade, 1962, p.41):

In prehistoric times the cavern, often resembling, or ritually transformed into, a labyrinth, was at once a theatre of initiation and a place where the dead were buried. The labyrinth, in its turn, was homologised with the body of the Earth-Mother. To penetrate into a labyrinth or cavern was the equivalent of a mystical return to the Mother... (Eliade, 1960, p.171)

The word 'theatre' here reminds that Cave Birds is a drama, and the idea of the labyrinth can stand as a symbol for the obscurity of Cave Birds, an alchemical opus, and the

complicated archetypal symbolism of the individuation process. But, further to this, the cave is a suitable place for Hughes' psychological adventure after Gaudete with its attempted recombination of feminine agricultural and masculine hunting values. The cave itself, as womb of the goddess, pertains to the origins of the former, whereas the art work found, for example, at Lascaux, is relevant to the origins of the latter, although Mumford refers to Leroi-Gourhan's theory that 'cave artists were endeavouring to formulate their new religious perspectives, based on the polarity of male and female principles' (Mumford, 1967, p.120). The cave is, therefore, an ideal setting for the recombination which found only partial success in Gaudete.

Eliade sees the role of the cave as important also for the shaman, in North America, for example, where 'it is in caves that aspirants have their dreams and meet their helping spirits' and also where shamans embark on 'a deliberate quest' to seek shamanic powers (Eliade, 1972, pp.52 and 101). Eliade also cites a European example in 'Epimenides of Crete' who '"slept" for a long time in the cave of Zeus' and 'left the cave a master of "enthusiastic wisdom"' (Eliade, 1972, p.389).

The bird too is significant to the shaman, with each shaman having 'a Bird-of-Prey-Mother' (Eliade, 1972, p.36), and Eliade refers to 'three chief types' of shamanic costume, each of which 'tends to give the shaman a new, magical body in animal form'. These are 'the bird, the reindeer (stag), and the bear--but especially the bird', and Eliade goes on to emphasize further 'the mythical relations



that exist between the eagle and the shaman' (Eliade, 1972, pp.156-7).

Allegro provides a further link between the cave and the bird by referring to 'the "womb-birds" of mythology' (Allegro, 1970, p.95), of which the phoenix was the most famous, and I will return briefly to this idea when discussing 'The scream'.

As with the cave, so the bird as an archetype has had significance 'from the Magdalenian epoch through the Neolithic, Chalcolithic, and Copper Age' and Gimbutas further links the bird to the Goddess, referring to 'Figures of the Goddess with...ornithomorphic features' and linking 'the megalithic Goddess with the archaic Bird Goddess', the latter being also associated particularly with creation myths (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, pp.37, 41 and 68). The creatures created by Hughes and Baskin in Cave Birds appear themselves to be part human and part bird, and Eliade, regarding 'the "magical flight"' encountered in 'archaic anthropology', speaks of a 'group of myths and legends about the aerial adventures of the mythic Ancestors', the 'bird-men (or feathered men)' (Eliade, 1960, p.101). What was said in my previous chapter about twins as birds is also relevant, where both were found to occupy 'an intermediary position between the supreme spirit and human beings' (Levi-Strauss, 1964, p.81).

Birds themselves, Eliade elsewhere states, 'are psychopomps' (Eliade, 1972, p.98), and the bird is traditionally associated with the soul or spirit, by Yeats in his poem 'Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen' (Yeats, 1982, p.234), for example:

Some moralist or mythological poet  
Compares the solitary soul to a swan...

Eliade takes this traditional association, and develops it:

Let us remember the importance assumed by the symbols of the soul as a bird, of the "wings of the soul", etc., and the images which point to the spiritual life as an "elevation", the mystical experience as an ascension, etc. The amount of documentation now at the disposal of the historian of religions is such, that any enumeration of these motifs and these symbols would be likely to be incomplete. So we must resign ourselves to a few allusions bearing upon the symbolism of the bird. (Eliade, 1960, p.105)

Eliade's assertion of necessary incompleteness regarding 'these motifs and these symbols' again points to the archetypal nature of the bird, 'an archetype par excellence' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.49) according to Jung, and the open-ended nature of archetypal images in myth, dreams, poetry which can only be distorted by reductive, causal or rigidly systematic approaches. Eliade further complicates his picture by his reference to the idea of 'the spiritual life as an "elevation", the mystical experience as an ascension, etc.', a complication taken up later in the same chapter:

the symbolism of ascension always refers to a breaking-out from a situation that has become "blocked" or "petrified"...And it will be noticed that, in a number of different contexts--oneiric, ecstatic, ritual, mythological, etc.--we find complementary, but structurally indissoluble meanings which fall into a pattern. Furthermore, we do not manage to decipher everything that such a pattern presents, as it were in cryptography, until, after having "decoded" its particular meanings one by one, each in its own frame of reference, we take the trouble to integrate them into a whole. For each symbolism is a "system" and can only be really understood so far as we study it in the totality of its particular applications. (Eliade, 1960, p.118)

Regarding the latter point, the 'symbolism' (or archetype) of ascension or the bird is ultimately beyond 'complete' exegesis. Reductive or completely causal approaches toward

symbolism and the archetypes, towards dream and poetry, can distort through the one-sidedness of 'modern consciousness':

it is clear that a thinking dominated by cosmological symbolism created an experience of the world vastly different from that accessible to modern man. To symbolic thinking the world is not only 'alive' but also 'open': an object is never simply itself (as is the case with modern consciousness), it is also a sign of, or a repository for, something else. (Eliade, 1962, pp.143-4)

For any critic attempting a Jungian approach to poetry, no exegesis can pretend to completeness for, to take Eliade's words again, even if 'having "decoded" its particular meanings one by one' on the collective level, probably and impossible task in itself, this would not present 'the totality of its particular applications' because, in the act of reading poetry, each reader brings their own personality and personal unconscious to the text. What the Jungian critic can do is point toward levels of meaning on the collective level which might plausibly help any particular reader expand and explore their own response to the archetype.

Elements of the subtitle also have a psychological aspect to them. Drama can be linked with enactment, ritual and catharsis, and alchemy was used by Jung to illustrate the psychological processes of individuation, despite, and perhaps because, of its obscurity:

We live today in a time of confusion and disintegration. Everything is in the melting pot. As is usual in such circumstances, unconscious contents thrust forward to the very borders of consciousness for the purpose of compensating the crisis in which it finds itself. It is therefore well worth our while to examine all such borderline phenomena with the greatest care, however obscure they seem, with a view to discovering the seeds of new and potential orders. (Jung 16, pp.320-21)

Alchemy might seem a strange mythological foundation on which to base a late twentieth-century poem sequence. In Hughes' case, however, it is Jung's explanation of alchemy as a metaphor for psychic processes that is important:

years of alchemical study provided Jung with historical validation for his own experiences, with a paradigm of the individuation process and with a series of metaphors for analysis... (Stevens, 1991, p.246)

Hughes' views are often similar to those of Jung's alchemical works. Hughes' idea of Christian man's 'exile...from Mother Nature--from both inner and outer nature' (Faas, 1980, p.186) evinces an attitude in common with Jung who thought that 'worship of nature, a legacy from the past, stood in more or less secret opposition to the views of the Church' (Jung 16, p.214).

Jung explains the crisis Hughes describes as the 'exile...from both inner and outer nature' in terms of the conscious and unconscious, seeing 'wholeness' in man as a union of the two, believing that 'a neurosis' develops whenever one side of the psyche is repressed:

That is also the reason why our time has become so utterly godless and profane: we lack all knowledge of the unconscious psyche and pursue the cult of consciousness to the exclusion of all else. (Jung 13, p.36)

This 'cult of consciousness' has, for Jung, a centuries-long history, and is also condemned by Hughes as 'the psychological stupidity, the ineptitude, of the rigidly rationalist outlook', an outlook which leads to a 'nightmare of mental disintegration and spiritual emptiness' (Faas, 1980, pp.200 and 186). This again reflects a view sympathetic to that of Jung:

An inflated consciousness is always egocentric and conscious of nothing but its own existence. It is incapable of learning from the past, incapable of understanding contemporary events, and incapable of drawing right conclusions about the future. (Jung 12, p.480)

Hughes' complaint against man as 'a state numeral' in his Popa introduction also demonstrates an attitude in common with that of Jung who talks about 'aggregations of half-baked mass-men' and who adds that 'the mass-man is good for nothing...a mere particle that has forgotten what it is to be human and has lost its soul' (Jung 16, p.321).

Similarly, Hughes' view of Popa as a 'human creature' in contrast to 'a state numeral' (Faas, 1980, p.183) is also relevant to Jung's philosophy which asserts that:

the real carrier of life is the individual...In the last resort it is neither the "eighty-million-strong nation" nor the State that feels peace and happiness, but the individual...The goal of the winged youth is a higher one than the fulfilment of collective ideals. (Jung 14, pp.163-5)

These ideas are closely linked to the figure of the alchemist who, Jung insists, must work alone and works as an example and metaphor for the individuation process (the rebalancing of the conscious and the unconscious within an individual):

there is but one remedy: the inner consolidation of the individual, who is otherwise threatened with inevitable stultification and dissolution in the mass psyche. (Jung 16, p.232)

The basic premise for Jung's interest in alchemy is that it provides a metaphorical example and historical foundation for his psychological theories, the alchemist, along with the shaman, providing 'two of the most important ancient ancestors of his individuation process' (Scigaj, 1991, p.102). Alchemy was for Jung 'the historical counterpart of my psychology of the unconscious' (Jung,

1971, p.231). Jung argues that by intensive study and by the allegorization of laboratory methodology the alchemists externalized in symbolic form psychological verities which:

seem to have had a psychic effect of a positive nature, something akin to satisfaction or even a perceptible increase in wisdom...there occurred during the chemical procedure psychic projections which brought unconscious contents to light, often in the form of vivid visions. (Jung 14, pp.319-20)

The chemical procedure, argues Jung, paralleled and came to symbolize a psychic one which would lead to a beneficial advance in self-knowledge, and the more astute among the alchemists recognized this, understanding their operations as 'what we today would call the individuation process' (Jung 14, p.469). Once it is understood that 'God' is related closely to, or actually is a potential component of, the psyche, then a further connection to Gaudete and Lumb can be noted, in that the alchemical process 'is the mystical drama of the God--his passion, death and resurrection' (Eliade, 1962, pp.149-50). In this context, and connected to the fishing scene of Gaudete and the birds of Cave Birds, Eliade quotes Ripley:

The philosophers say that the birds and fishes bring the Stone to us, each man possesses it, it is everywhere, in you, in me, in all things, in time and in space. (Eliade, 1962, p.163)

'In short', comments Eliade, 'the Western alchemist, in his laboratory...worked upon himself' to change his 'own mode of being' (Eliade, 1962, pp.159 and 183). Hughes himself would seem to agree with much of the above, referring in his study of Shakespeare to 'the quasi-mythical psychology of alchemy' and also to 'the alchemical transformation of a single soul' (Hughes, 1992, pp.120 and 340).

Such a process also provides a useful analogy to poetry in that the alchemist worked 'with ideas, with psychic processes and states, but referred to them under the name of the corresponding substances' (Jung 14, p.493). Indeed, for Hughes with his propagandist vision of a new age<sup>1</sup>, in his essay 'The Environmental Revolution', for example, the alchemist provides a useful model because, according to Jung, the alchemist 'by knocking on the door of the unknown...is obeying the law of the inner, future man' and is also creating a new attitude to counter rationality, 'an attitude that accepts the irrational and the incomprehensible simply because it is happening' (Jung 13, pp.180 and 17). Jung at one point seems to validate Hughes' own mythic method by talking about conditions where:

the imagination is given free play in the observation and investigation of the products of the unconscious. Under these conditions forms of thought emerge in which one can afterwards discover parallels with mythological motifs, including Christian ones; parallels and similarities which perhaps one would never have suspected at first sight. (Jung 13, p.299)

Further to this, and importantly for Jung, 'the place or the medium of realization is neither mind nor matter, but that intermediate realm of subtle reality which can be adequately only expressed by the symbol' (Jung 12, p.283). And, because every alchemist created an original set of ideas (believing that any he borrowed would be ineffective), this allows Hughes, as pseudo-alchemist, a remarkable freedom (or even necessity) to invent. Hughes also gains through alchemy a precedent or excuse for obscurity, 'for many of the books are written so obscurely that they are understood only by their authors' (Jung 12, p.289). This obscurity

arises especially because, in line with Hughes' own mythic method<sup>2</sup>, 'in mysticism...no "symbolic" object has only one meaning; it is always several things at once' (Jung 14, p.443). Indeed, Jung quotes from an alchemical text that 'such matters must be transmitted in mystical terms, like poetry employing fables and parables' (Jung 16, p.286). It is not surprising, then, that some critics, such as Robert Stuart, have complained of 'interpretative problems' in Cave Birds where 'many of the poems exhibit a peculiar and uncanny resistance to full explication' (Jones and Schmidt, ed., 1980, p.82). 'Full explication' is, as has been observed, never possible where an archetype is involved, and this 'resistance' might be seen to be a part of the strategy and method of Cave Birds. Such a method encourages the reader to do his own research and thereby increase his own knowledge of what Hughes might regard as beneficial material. Bishop at this point would disagree, attacking 'the mechanical-intellectual sifting and correlation of 'interesting' allusions' (Bishop, 1991, p.186) and finding in Cave Birds lines that 'comprise a denial of the indulgence of scholarly procedures...hinting at their inadequacy':

The act of reading poetry entails more than either admiring or harshly judgemental appreciation; it involves the reader in a certain commitment to the moral process poetry enacts in words... (Bishop, 1991, p.188)

For Jung, the process of individuation was a cooperation between conscious and unconscious forces within the single psyche, and the 'commitment to the moral process poetry enacts in words' must include the reader's intellectual appreciation, as well as a more passive waiting upon



meaning, not least because it concentrates the mind on particular images, allowing them to become 'vivid and alive':

However abstruse and strange the language and imagery of the alchemists may seem to the uninitiated, they become vivid and alive as soon as comparative research reveals the relationship of the symbols to processes in the unconscious. (Jung 14, p.xvii)

The 'comparative research' is an essential element of dream analysis and individuation for Jung:

I consider it impossible for anyone without knowledge of mythology and folklore and without some understanding of the psychology of primitives and of comparative religion to grasp the essence of the individuation process, which, according to all we know, lies at the base of psychological compensation. (Jung 8, p.290)

For Jung, the individuation process was 'consciously lived and actively participated in by the committed ego' (Stevens, 1991, p.189). Also, and importantly for Cave Birds, the alchemical adept, like Hughes, and possibly the attentive reader, 'instead of watching the drama' of the transformation, becomes 'one of the actors' (Jung 12, p.477).

For Hughes, then, Cave Birds: An Alchemical Cave Drama represents a process of individuation, 'that biological process...by which every living thing becomes what it was destined to become from the beginning' (Stevens, 1991, p.187) and which 'involves the progressive integration of the unconscious timeless self in the personality of the time-bound individual' (Stevens, 1991, p.188). This is a task which 'entails the most painstaking self-examination and self-education, which can, however, be passed on to others by one who has acquired the discipline himself' (Jung

16, p.292), so that, for his readers, Cave Birds becomes one of the 'useful and edifying models held up to us by poets and philosophers' (Jung 12, p.481):

The agony of breaking through personal limitations is the agony of spiritual growth. Art, literature, myth and cult, philosophy, and ascetic disciplines are instruments to help the individual past his limiting horizons into spheres of ever-expanding realization. (Campbell, 1949, p.190)

Much is therefore asked of the reader, and this is in line with Jung's view of art when he asserts that 'we' should 'let a work of art act upon us as it acted upon the artist', and 'to grasp its meaning, we must allow it to shape us as it shaped him' (Jung 15, p.105). Jung also remarks that although the alchemist 'is a unique individual, he also stands for "man" as a species, and thus he has a share in all the movements of the collective unconscious' (Jung 16, p.291). These ideas are central to Jung's philosophy:

In the last analysis every life is the realization of a whole, that is, of a self, for which reason this realization can also be called "individuation." All life is bound to individual carriers who realize it, and it is simply inconceivable without them. But every carrier is charged with an individual destiny and destination, and the realization of these alone makes sense of life. (Jung 12, p.222)

The integration of unconscious contents is an individual act of realization, of understanding, and moral evaluation. It is a most difficult task, demanding a high degree of ethical responsibility. Only relatively few individuals can be expected to be capable of such an achievement, and they are not the political but the moral leaders of mankind. The maintenance and further development of civilization depend on such individuals... (Jung 10, p.221)

The last sentence here is an important one, because although individuation defies 'the tyranny of received opinion', and turn from popular culture to the contents of the collective unconscious, Jung 'is not advocating individualism' nor 'a

narcissistic withdrawal from the world' (Stevens, 1991, pp.199-200):

The opposition to the collective norm, however, is only apparent, since closer examination shows that the individual standpoint is not antagonistic to it, but only differently oriented. The individual way can never be directly opposed to the collective norm, because the opposite of the collective norm could only be another, but contrary, norm...the individual way...needs the norm for its orientation to society and for the vitally necessary relationship of the individual to society. (Jung 6, p.449)

Individuation, however, is compensatory to any collective norm, since it depends upon the individual seeking unique solutions to the problem of his own unique personality, and Jung recognized that a great amount of courage was needed to pursue the goal of individuation:

The achievement of personality means nothing less than the optimum development of the whole individual human being. It is impossible to foresee the endless variety of conditions that have to be fulfilled. A whole lifetime, in all its biological, social, and spiritual aspects, is needed. Personality is the supreme realization of the innate idiosyncrasy of a living being. It is an act of high courage flung in the face of life. (Jung 17, p.171)

To develop the personality is a gamble, and the tragedy is that the daemon of the inner voice is at once our greatest danger and an indispensable help. It is tragic, but logical, for it is the nature of things to be so. (Jung 17, p.186)

For Jung, however, individuation, 'whereby an individual becomes as complete a human being as it is possible for him or her to be', was 'the highest of all human attainments' (Stevens, 1991, p.9):

The self is our life's goal, for it is the completest expression of that fateful combination we call individuality... (Jung 7, p.240)

Uroff declares that Plath and Hughes were both 'engaged in the...enterprise of recovering a genuine self--which was, as

they understood it, the purpose of poetry' (Uroff, 1979, p.12), and indeed, the Jungian self has its own symbolism:

Just as conscious as well as unconscious phenomena are to be met with in practice, the self as psychic totality also has a conscious as well as an unconscious aspect. Empirically, the self appears in dreams, myths, and fairytales in the figure of the "supraordinate personality", such as a king, hero, prophet, saviour, etc., or in the form of a totality symbol, such as the circle, square, quadratura circuli, cross, etc. When it represents a complexio oppositorum, a union of opposites, it can also reappear as a united duality. (Jung 6, p.460)

The idea of Cave Birds as a sequence parallels the sequential process of individuation, and finds further comparison with 'the series of pictures found in alchemy' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.38) and in 'dream-series', where dreams in series yield more meaning than they would as separate dreams:

They seem to hang together and in the deepest sense to be subordinated to a common goal, so that a long dream-series no longer appears as a senseless string of incoherent and isolated happenings, but resembles the successive steps in a planned and orderly process of development. I have called this unconscious process spontaneously expressing itself in the symbolism of a long dream-series the individuation process. (Jung 8, pp.289-90)

Eliade, using Jung, brings emphasis to another aspect of alchemy of potential importance to Hughes:

Alchemy represents the projection of a drama, at once cosmic and spiritual, in laboratory terms... In the eyes of alchemists, observes Jung, Christianity saved man but not nature. It is the alchemist's dream to heal the world in its totality...The alchemists came to believe that, as Christ redeemed man through his death and resurrection, the opus alchymicum would redeem Nature. (Eliade, 1962, pp.225-7)

Perhaps man's original role in the natural scheme (and the reason why consciousness evolved) was as custodian of Nature, as he appears in Eden and other Creation stories.

The alchemist revives such a role in that he 'takes up and perfects the work of Nature, while at the same time working to 'make' himself' (Eliade, 1962, p.47). Eliade calls the alchemist 'the brotherly saviour of Nature', and 'it could even be said that he collaborates in its 'redemption'' (Eliade, 1962, pp.52 and 129). The inner nature of the alchemist moves toward perfection at the same time as the outer material (Nature) he works upon. The ecological implications of this aspect of alchemy play a role in many of Hughes' later works, such as Remains of Elmet (1979), Moortown (1979), and River (1983), which are beyond the scope of this thesis. But in Cave Birds, these ideas refer back to modern man's exile 'from both inner and outer nature' and forward to the Egyptian notions of the ka and the maat, to be discussed later in this chapter.

Finally, and perhaps curiously, alchemy can be seen as compensatory to the scientific attitude. Not only were alchemists not 'merely gold-seekers', but also, as Taylor, quoted by Eliade, says 'we shall not find in alchemy any beginnings of a science' because 'at no time does the alchemist employ a scientific procedure' (Eliade, 1962, p.148). Alchemy is finally "'subjective," and thus non-scientific' (Eliade, 1962, p.181), and in an appendix to The Forge and the Crucible, Eliade has some interesting things to say concerning Newton:

It is highly significant that the founder of modern mechanical science did not reject the theology of the primordial secret revelation, nor did he reject the principle of transmutation, the basis of all alchemies...In its spectacular development, 'modern science' has ignored or rejected its Hermetic heritage. In other words, the triumph of Newton's mechanics abolished Newton's own scientific ideal. As a matter of

fact, Newton and his contemporaries had expected quite another type of scientific revolution...the perfection of man through a new method of learning. (Eliade, 1962, pp.232-4)

In his 'The Environmental Revolution' Hughes says that 'Christianity deposes Mother Nature and begets, on her prostrate body, Science' (Faas, 1980, p.187), and the mysticism of the alchemists 'was alien to Christianity' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.307):

Jung also believed that alchemy stood in compensatory relationship to medieval Christianity. To the Christian it was man who needed to be redeemed by God, but to the alchemist it was God--'the divine world soul slumbering and awaiting redemption in matter'--who needed to be redeemed by man...Thus he says approvingly: 'The alchemists ran counter to the Church in preferring to seek through knowledge rather than to find through Faith'. (Stevens, 1991, p.233)

This last attitude will be encountered again when considering Gnosticism in relation to the poetry of R.S.Thomas.

Two other sources, apart from alchemy, for the background to Cave Birds: An Alchemical Cave Drama are revealed by the fact that 'Hughes' subtitle was at one time to have been 'The Death of Socrates and his Resurrection in Egypt' (Robinson, 1989, p.100). The 'cave' of the title plausibly directs a reader towards Plato's cave, and certain works of Plato are of some use in understanding the book. But what is of importance here is a certain element of Plato's philosophy, pertaining particularly to his early works, something that Nietzsche called 'Socratism, for which he was really too noble' (Nietzsche, 1973, p.95). Here, the central issue is Hughes' view of Socrates and his complaint against him, although Hughes himself says of Plato that 'he invented that careful, logical step-by-step style of

investigation' that 'evolved finally into the scientific method itself' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.256).

The plot of Cave Birds, such as it is, can be fitted into a scheme where Socrates is tried, dies, is born again and because of his after-life experiences, forced to change his philosophy. But within that framework Socrates is also an Everyman so that the trial, death and after-life experiences of Socrates correspond to those of modern Western man whose inheritance, as Nietzsche and others have complained, is the Socratic mind. Indeed, Nietzsche, quoted by Campbell, complains that 'Socratic man' was 'prototype and protagonist of "the Decadence"' whose intellect was 'subduing, disorienting, and dissolving life, unloving of its imperfection, sterilized to its mystery' (Campbell 4, p.376). The reawakening and change of attitude witnessed in Socrates is something Hughes also seems to experience through the poems and something which, it would seem, Hughes hopes his readers and eventually Western man will come to experience.

Hughes' argument with Socrates relates especially to the division of body and soul to the detriment of the former. Socrates in the Phaedo speaks of the soul suffering 'imprisonment' in a body and how the lover of knowledge:

encourages it gently and tries to set it free, pointing out that the eyes and the ears and the other senses are full of deceit, and urging it to withdraw from these, except in so far as their use is unavoidable, and exhorting it to collect and concentrate itself within itself, and to trust nothing except itself and its own abstract thought of abstract existence... (Plato, 1977, p.289)

For Socrates, then, 'the true philosopher' seeks to separate the soul from the body, thus 'freeing' it. Indeed,

Socrates' invective against the body, especially in the Phaedo, is so strong that instinct is almost banished, and the views espoused are those which Nietzsche was later to condemn as 'the entire morality of improvement', the 'rationality at any cost' (Nietzsche, 1968, p.34). Indeed, Socrates' rational mind, according to Diogenes Laertius, was unable to cope with 'the treatise of Heraclitus' and his philosophy led him to a position of 'being convinced that the study of nature is no concern of ours' (Diogenes Laertius, 1925, pp.153 and 151).

Instinct is not completely banished, however, because there still exists the curious figure of Socrates' 'daimonion':

I have had this from my childhood; it is a sort of voice that comes to me, and when it comes it always holds me back from what I am thinking of doing, but never urges me forward. (Plato, 1977, p.115)

In talking of 'the daemon of Socrates', Jung says that 'the strongly rationalistic attitude of Socrates repressed the intuitive function as far as possible' (Jung 6, p.145), and the 'daimonion' sounds very much like the unconscious as described by Jung, and is clearly linked to 'The summoner':

I have tried twice already to meditate on my defence, but my divine sign interposes. (Xenophon, 1968, p.645)

This 'voice of God', then, refuses to allow Socrates a defence at his Athens trial, thereby condemning him to death and summoning him to the otherworldly trial of Cave Birds.

Interestingly, in a dream, Socrates receives a summons from 'a beautiful, fair woman, clothed in white raiment' (Plato, 1977, p.155), who would appear to be an 'anima' figure, the anima being, for Jung, the female



personification of the unconscious who can act as guide and psychopomp in the process of individuation. A further dream also pricks Socrates, who believed poetry, especially dramatic poetry, to be harmful and corrupting, into decidedly non-Socratic action:

I thought it was safer not to go hence before making sure that I had done what I ought, by obeying the dream and composing verses. (Plato, 1977, p.213)

Hughes himself quotes a further anima figure, Diotima, 'who taught Socrates about the real nature of 'total, unconditional love'' (Hughes, 1992, p.92), a lesson, as Graves points out, not learned by the philosopher (Graves, 1961, p.12).

Nietzsche's view of Socrates has much in common with that of Hughes, and Robinson points to two further anti-Socratic precedents:

Heidegger, like Robert Graves, traces rational hubris ('the most stiff-necked adversary of thought') to its roots in Socrates... (Robinson, 1989, p.100)

Robinson also, regarding Cave Birds, says that 'Christian-Socratic civilisation has suppressed an essential element in its life, an element subsumable under the name 'the feminine'' (Robinson, 1989, p.105). In Xenophon's Oeconomicus, which features Socrates, the woman is placed very firmly in the home (Xenophon, 1968, p.451), but what is under attack here is the Socratic reliance, despite dreams and the 'voice of God', on a logical and masculine consciousness: 'that which puts its trust in measurement and reckoning must be the best part of the soul' (Plato, 1935, p.451). This is also Graves' complaint:

One of the most uncompromising rejections of early Greek mythology was made by Socrates. Myths frightened or offended him; he preferred to turn his back on them and discipline his mind to think scientifically...Socrates, in turning his back on poetic myths, was really turning his back on the Moon-goddess... (Graves, 1961, pp.10-1)

Whereas alchemy attempts the union of opposites, Socratic thought holds them apart--consciousness and unconsciousness, body and soul.

But, if alchemy is an old tradition informing and, in Jung's view, compensating for the mainstream 'progress' of civilization, Ancient Egyptian mythology is an even older one because it is 'the union of Egypt' that, according to Rundle Clark, 'marks the beginning of history' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.25). In Gaudete witchcraft was seen as a potential compensatory power for (rural) Christianity, and in Cave Birds alchemy and Ancient Egyptian mythology are similarly put forward as historically actual and currently metaphorical compensations for 'the entire morality of improvement', the 'rationality at any cost' which, begun by Socrates, has, in the views of certain pre-eminent philosophers, psychologists and poets, been immensely damaging.

The Ancient Egyptians are generally regarded as conservative, believing 'progress' irrelevant, preferring instead to maintain the god-given status quo, an attitude in obvious opposition to 'the entire morality of improvement'. Indeed, the Egyptians held the belief that approach and closeness to the primordial was of the utmost importance and that in such a state there was no obvious separation of 'art' from 'life', and there also existed a concept of 'the Primeval Age of Oneness' which, as I shall show shortly, is

a useful metaphor for the goal of individuation in Cave Birds.

The attitude of the Ancient Egyptian towards myth affords Hughes ample poetic precedents. Myths could be, for example, parables and included numerous literary devices such as 'the apt proverb, the humorous or obscene allusion, the pun and the occasional touch of pathos or characterization' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.196). Also, 'the initiate suffers for all--and his liberation is the liberation of all' (Versluis, 1988, p.111), a position which was also true for the alchemist and which is also relevant, of course, to a certain attitude concerning the role of the poet.

There are many similarities between Ancient Egyptian mythology and the Jungian notion of individuation, and 'the Egyptians sometimes explained their myths in psychological terms' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.128). Also, and importantly for Hughes whose poem sequences move toward a transcendence of notions of linear 'progression' in history, mythic events were symbolic of and pertinent to everyday life for the Ancient Egyptian. Egyptian art was mostly symbolic and they regarded their myths as having an eternal validity.

Regarding the latter point, Versluis remarks:

It is difficult for the modern person to remember that mythological symbolism refers not to any historical past, so much as to vertical, supratemporal, analogical Reality, and that therefore the attribution of temporality to a mythos is a gross distortion... (Versluis, 1988, p.61)

This view gives the myth-creator (Hughes, the Ancient Egyptian, or, indeed, the alchemist) a great deal of freedom because, unlike with Christianity or other 'Word of God'

religions, 'as long as this belief was held myths could be altered...to suit the requirements of a developing world and psychic consciousness' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.262).

Therefore Egyptian myth was flexible and without official doctrine or dogma, the Egyptians 'feeling that the creation of the universe was too mysterious and complex to be explained always in the same terms' (Rundle Clark, 1959, pp.36-7). This idea also links in with alchemy and mysticism in general because in these areas of study, as has already been noted, 'no "symbolic" object has only one meaning; it is always several things at once'.

To the Ancient Egyptian, then, different interpretations of the cosmos were all acceptable and, in his 'Conclusion', Rundle Clark asserts that:

For the Egyptians, mythology was not a collection of texts but a language...They belong to a way of thinking in which consistency in the logical sense is irrelevant...This is why Egyptian mythology is so simple, so absurd and sometimes so profound. It is dream, metaphysics and poetry, all at once. (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.263)

The links between Ancient Egyptian mythology and the elements of the title and subtitle of Cave Birds: An Alchemical Cave Drama are many. One Egyptian mythological text is known as 'the Book of Caverns' and Versluis speaks of 'the suffering of the initiate in...trial in a querert (Egyptian: cavern)' (Versluis, 1988, p.110). Such myths also give rise to dramatic performance, and Versluis further notes that one term given to Ancient Egypt was 'al-chemia (Arabic)' (Versluis, 1988, p.79):

It is not coincidence that some of the earliest alchemical texts are attributed to Egyptian adepts, for this initiatory science of the remembrance of one's Angelic Origin is indeed fundamental to understanding the Egyptian

initiatory tradition; it is the Egyptian science par excellence, and to it they devoted all their energies. (Versluis, 1988, p.107)

Stevens in his On Jung adds that 'European alchemy seems to have derived its origins from ancient Egypt' (Stevens, 1991, p.230), and Hughes finds a 'rich Egyptian matrix' behind many of Shakespeare's plays, including Hamlet, King Lear and, of course, Antony and Cleopatra (Hughes, 1992, p.268). Campbell includes ancient Egyptian mythology in his Oriental Mythology, although he confesses difficulties in doing so, reporting from Frazer that 'the myths of the dead and resurrected god Osiris' are 'practically the same' as 'those of Tammuz, Adonis, and Dionysos', and talks of 'a common, late neolithic, early Bronze Age theme' (Campbell 2, pp.47-8). Graves too speaks of identifying Bran with Osiris (Graves, 1961, p.198), and elsewhere of the introduction of 'Brigit or Bride', who was basically Isis, 'into the British Isles in the second millenium B.C.' (Graves, 1959, p.271).

Two aspects of bird mythology hold particular importance with regard to Cave Birds: firstly, the Egyptians believed that the soul was like a bird, assuming that shape after the death of its host body; and secondly, there is the idea of the bird as a messenger from the gods, as with the phoenix, for example, which 'mediates between the divine mind and created things' and which is also 'the chief messenger from this inaccessible land of divinity' (Rundle Clark, 1959, pp.246-7). One reason for this is clearly that the bird is master of both earth and sky and, as such, a reminder of the state of Primordial Oneness, for the Egyptians believed that the earth and the sky were originally united, and their sacred rites were performed to

reunite this sundered pair, a metaphor for individuation and its goal of 'the self', as will shortly be explained. This belief might be encapsulated, for example, in the symbol of the Ankh, if a derivation from primitive myth is allowed:

"Her name," as Samuel Kramer remarks, "may originally have been Ki '(mother) Earth,' and she was probably taken to be the consort of An, 'Heaven,'--An and Ki thus may have been conceived as the parents of all the gods..." (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.64)

Campbell adds that 'heaven (An) and the earth (Ki) were in the beginning a single undivided mountain (Anki)' (Campbell 3, p.57), and there are the 'mountains' of 'The scream', the first poem of Cave Birds, about which more will be said in the discussion of that poem.

The Egyptian myth of the 'night journey of the sun' in the underworld is a myth with clear parallels to Jungian individuation, 'a journey into the inner reaches of the mind and an attempt to penetrate to the reality which underlies phenomena' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.166). Equally, there is 'the far journey home--the Lion Path in ancient Egypt' which 'is based on the feminine aspect of divinity' (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, pp.135 and 139). Rundle Clark also asserts that 'the Egyptians lived closer to the forces of their unconscious minds than we do' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.266) and Versluis remarks on the 'seamless unity and harmony' of the non-dualistic Egyptian 'mindset' (Versluis, 1988, p.45).

One aspect of Egyptian mythology pertinent here, and relevant to the views of both Hughes and the alchemists, is that the gods themselves are ambivalent. Hughes himself has said that 'when Christianity kicked the devil out of Job

what they actually kicked out was Nature' (Faas, 1980, p.199), and for the alchemists 'there is nothing in nature that does not contain as much evil as good' (Jung 14, p.55). Hughes refers to the dual nature of Isis as 'the Great Goddess' who 'has two natures', one 'benign', and the other bringing 'suffering and destruction and the dementia of the hero' (Hughes, 1992, p.270). This is corroborated by Neumann who sees Isis as 'combining features of the Terrible and the Good Mother', corresponding 'to the archetype of the Great Mother' (Neumann, 1972, p.22). Jung further remarks, agreeing again with Hughes' views, that the Christian opposition of good and evil 'is the real world problem' in contrast to the idea of the self which is 'a union of opposites par excellence' for, 'in the self good and evil are indeed closer than identical twins' (Jung 12, pp.19 and 21). Russell makes exactly this contrast between ancient Egyptian myth and Zarathustra, Zoroastrianism and Christianity:

The two spirits are opposites, then, but they are also twins, a coincidence of opposites. The difference between Zarathustra's doublets and those of the Egyptians is that rather than the opposites being manifestations of the One being, they are dissociated, independent principles... The solution to this twinning in the nature of the One is not the eventual reconstitution of the divine (or psychic) whole, but rather the elimination of one of the two by cosmic battle (psychic repression), a solution very similar to that adopted by late Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The Devil has become a totally alien force, not to be assimilated but to be destroyed. We are not to recognize the evil in ourselves and consciously suppress it; rather, we are to deny that it is in us, insist that it lies somewhere outside us, and therefore strive for the perfection that will come when we have driven off its assaults. Whatever the merits of this theodicy, its psychological difficulties are manifest. (Russell, 1977, pp.107 and 111)

Two divine pairs aptly demonstrate this aspect of Egyptian mythology: Horus and Seth, 'those apparently mortal enemies' which Manchip White reports 'occupying a single body' (Manchip White, 1952, p.35), or, according to Professor Frankfort (quoted by Campbell), 'opposites in equilibrium' who were, nevertheless, 'the mythological symbols for all conflict' (Campbell 2, p.83); and Isis and Osiris. Isis and Osiris represent a union of opposites Versluis refers to as 'pure consciousness' and 'matter', adding that they 'are not separate entities but rather aspects or emanations of one another' (Versluis, 1988, pp.37-8). In one myth Isis helps reanimate the inert and sundered body of Osiris, an act which reveals her as potentially symbolic of the 'dynamism' of consciousness as it attempts union with the unconscious (the inert Osiris) in the process of individuation. Regarding the individual and individuation, it is interesting to note the editorial reference in In All Her Names to:

the ancient teaching (in Egypt par excellence) of the sacredness of individual life and its temporary restriction and constriction in a "pupal" chamber of miraculous transformation. (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.49)

Many of the various myths and ideas relating to Osiris are pertinent to Cave Birds, Osiris being:

the most vivid achievement of the Egyptian imagination...the completely helpless one, the essential victim...the sufferer with all mortality but at the same time...the power of revival and fertility in the world. He is the power of growth in plants and of reproduction in animals and human beings. He is both dead and the source of all living. Hence to become Osiris is to become one with the cosmic cycles of death and rebirth. (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.97)



Two ideas concerning Osiris have an especially important part to play in Cave Birds. Firstly, Osiris was Nature and as such allows Hughes a metaphor with which to approach ecological issues; and secondly, Osiris' fate was interpreted individually and psychologically by the Egyptians<sup>3</sup>, Osiris himself symbolizing the unconscious. The two ideas are directly linked in one text where 'the soul can say: 'I am the plant of life which grows through the ribs of Osiris'' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.255), and also by Rundle Clark when he says:

The passion and triumph of the god may symbolize the cyclic events of external nature...but they also externalize a drama of the soul. (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.179)

Here, then, is an obvious link with alchemy: both traditions 'externalize a drama of the soul', a drama of coming to terms with the unconscious.

In this way Cave Birds repeats Crow and Gaudete by attempting to revive and integrate, with varying results, the repressed unconscious half of the psyche, and a direct link between Osiris and the first epigraph of Gaudete, for example, is that for the Ancient Egyptians, 'Osiris was both Hades and Dionysos'. At this point Rundle Clark goes on to say that Osiris 'is helpless, and the power he embodies is inert, asleep or listless, and completely passive' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.121). As such Osiris symbolizes the unconscious in the wider metaphorical myth of the psyche: 'the High God's twin souls are said to be Osiris and Re' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.158). Re, the governing power of light as the sun, is said to be 'master of the universe but...unsure of himself' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.185), and so

could be regarded as symbolic of consciousness. 'Yesterday is Osiris and tomorrow is Re' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.157), remarks one coffin text and, it might be added, with luck and successful individuation, today could be the High God<sup>4</sup>.

Through his use of Ancient Egyptian mythology, then, Hughes gains access to a metaphor that works in both ecological and psychological areas of concern, as he does with alchemy where 'this true philosophy will teach you how you should know yourself, and if you know yourself rightly, you will also know the pure nature' (Jung 16, p.295).

Two concepts of Ancient Egyptian thought relate particularly well to these areas of concern: the maat or mayet to the ecological; and the ka to the psychological. Behind the maat, both Goddess and principle or, as Campbell puts it, '"truth" or "right order"...She is an eternally present, world-supporting principle' (Campbell 2, p.54) lies the idea that everything was a part of one overall order, and that 'the universe depends upon the life-force controlled by the laws of what we should now call nature' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.47). All of nature had a sacred significance and this 'Mayet--the natural order of the world' is, Rundle Clark asserts, 'probably the earliest approach to the concept of 'Nature' as understood in Western thought' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.143). The mayet or maat also acts as a compensatory myth for Hughes because:

The antithesis of maat, of harmony, is...egotism, materialistic acquisition and covetousness, solipsism--the very basis of the modern era... (Versluis, 1988, p.21)

Significantly for the individuation process of Cave Birds, 'Maat' as a goddess--'goddess of ultimate truth and justice'

(Hirschberg, 1981, p.173), according to Hirschberg--was the consort of Hermes, the Mercurius of alchemical texts, and, like Isis, the intermediary between heaven and earth or, as Versluis puts it:

Maat, then, is the principal union between the celestial and the temporal in the cosmos...In the primordial world, therefore, the two were perceived as they truly are--as One. (Versluis, 1988, p.17)

Here, then, is the importance of primordial unity, 'the High God', and the goal of Jungian individuation: the self.

Finally, concerning the maat or 'Mayet', and of importance to the trial sequence in Cave Birds, Ptah-hotep, as reported by Rundle Clark, says 'great is Mayet, lasting and penetrating' and that 'he who transgresses its laws is to be punished' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.64).

The ka, which relates to the 'inner partner' of Jungian psychology, is described by Wallis Budge in this way:

The Egyptians believed that every man possessed a spiritual duplicate of himself which lived within him from the moment of his birth to the moment of his death; to this duplicate they gave the name KA...when it joined the body it became its mental, moral and spiritual individuality and disposition, its rational guide, its far-seeing protector, and in some respects it acted as its guardian angel. (Budge, 1987, p.458)

The ka, then, would seem to relate to 'the protector' of 'The summoner', the 'He' of 'After the first fright' and to certain bird figures (such as the 'bird-being' of 'She seemed so considerate'), and is presumably an answer to 'A riddle':

The ka, or double, was...the Angelic counterpart and indeed Essence of man, which when he approached, was seen to be he himself, his Divine Essence, more He than he. (Versluis, 1988, p.53)

Finally, an analogy can be drawn between the ka and the Jungian anima or self, the psychopomp and goal of individuation, the philosopher's gold:

the point of ceremonial praxis extended through one's life is not only to perfect one's life upon earth, but in truth to 'reveal' one's transcendent, or Angelic counterpart, which is ultimately more oneself than oneself, more real than that contingent passionate being we call 'I'. (Versluis, 1988, p.128)

Jung himself would seem to make the same analogy when talking of the 'anima and animus':

The concept of "soul" which I am now using can be compared more with the primitive idea of the soul, for instance the ba-soul and ka-soul of the Egyptians, than with the Christian idea of it, which is an attempt to make a philosophical construct out of a metaphysical individual substance. (Jung 10, p.42)

The process of individuation, according to Jung, begins in one of two ways:

This process can, as I have said, take place spontaneously or be artificially induced. In the latter case you choose a dream, or some other fantasy-image, and concentrate on it by simply catching hold of it and looking at it...You then fix this image in the mind by concentrating your attention. Usually it will alter, as the mere fact of contemplating it animates it. The alterations must be carefully noted down all the time, for they reflect the psychic processes in the unconscious background, which appear in the form of images consisting of conscious memory material. In this way conscious and unconscious are united, just as a waterfall connects above and below. A chain of fantasy ideas develops and gradually takes on a dramatic character: the passive process becomes an action. (Jung 14, pp.495-6)

This parallels the idea of the quest discussed concerning Parzival, and Jung says that during 'creative fantasy', 'the archetype finds its specific application', and the 'chain of fantasy ideas', or 'a sequence of fantasies produced by deliberate concentration', Jung also calls 'active

imagination' (Jung 9, Part 1, pp.78 and 49), a concept I will return to shortly. Whereas for Freud fantasy is 'a regressive means of escape from reality' (Stevens, 1991, p.89), for Jung 'every creative individual whatsoever owes all that is greatest in his life to fantasy' (Jung 6, p.63):

it is the mother of all possibilities, where, like all psychological opposites, the inner and outer worlds are joined together in living union. Fantasy it was and ever is which fashions the bridge between the irreconcilable claims of subject and object, introversion and extraversion. In fantasy alone both mechanisms are united... fantasy is for the most part a product of the unconscious...Christianity, like every closed system of religion, has an undoubted tendency to suppress the unconscious in the individual as much as possible, thus paralyzing his fantasy activity. Instead, religion offers stereotyped symbolic concepts that are meant to take the place of his unconscious once and for all. The symbolic concepts of all religions are recreations of unconscious processes in a typical, universally binding form. (Jung 6, pp.52-3)

Jung found the sort of material he worked with in his psychoanalysis in both dreams and fantasies (Jung 17, p.105), the former being a healthy form of passive fantasy (Jung 6, p.429), the latter being called by Jung 'active imagination' or 'active fantasy':

active fantasy is one of the highest forms of psychic activity. For here the conscious and the unconscious personality of the subject flow together into a common product in which both are united. Such a fantasy can be the highest expression of the unity of a man's individuality, and it may even create that individuality by giving perfect expression to its unity. (Jung 6, p.428)

Active imagination von Franz calls 'a certain way of meditating imaginatively' to make 'conscious connection with psychic phenomena' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.219). For Jung it is 'the art of letting things happen...in the psyche' (Jung 13, p.16) but differs from 'Eastern forms of meditation' in that

with the latter there is no 'conscious goal or program' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.219). Anyone involved in active imagination becomes one of the actors:

You yourself must enter into the process with your personal reactions, just as if you are one of the fantasy figures, or rather, as if the drama being enacted before your eyes were real. It is a psychic fact that this fantasy is happening, and it is as real as you--as a psychic entity--are real. (Stevens, 1991, pp.202-3)

Hughes too talks about 'certain fantasies' which 'can have startling psycho-biological consequences on the fantasist's immediate life', and elsewhere in his study of Shakespeare, Hughes refers to 'active ritual', an 'inner soul-drama' the purpose of which is 'to recover the soul and reconnect it to the ego' and which commits, 'on the mythic plane', its audience 'to the spiritual quest' (Hughes, 1992, pp.448 and 108).

In Cave Birds, 'The Scream' initiates the conceit of the book as well as introducing various themes, images and ideas of importance to the sequence as a whole. In a way it stands as a sort of prologue to what follows, as the lack of accompanying drawing might indicate. It introduces the drama:

There was the sun on the wall--my childhood's  
Nursery picture. And there was my gravestone  
Which shared my dreams, and ate and drank with me  
happily.

This opening to Cave Birds, 'The scream', indicates a potential for fantasy and a possible resultant transformation:

The activation of unconscious fantasies is a process that occurs when consciousness finds itself in a situation of distress...fantasies of this kind belong to the world of childhood... (Jung 10, p.281)

Active ritual drama always begins with a psychic malaise, usually a failure in the link between the personality on the realistic plane and the spiritual self or soul on the mythic plane. (Hughes, 1992, p.107)

Campbell quotes Zimmer, talking about Arthurian Romance, on the symbol of 'the child, the son' which can connote 'a higher transformation of the personality' because 'the child is the self reborn in pristine perfection' (Campbell 4, p.552). Picasso is quoted as saying that 'every child is an artist' and that 'the problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up' (Stevens, 1991, p.88), and for Jung too the symbol of the child can herald 'the rebirth and restitution...of all that is lost' (Jung 6, p.271). Eliade brings a mythological aspect into the discussion, in line with much that has already been said concerning primitive myth and creation stories, referring to 'the illud tempus of childhood' (Eliade, 1960, p.53).

Hughes' critics emphasize the tone of the poem, Gifford and Roberts, for example, finding that 'what is caught in that tone is a too-easy acceptance of the nature of things that amounts to a glib complacency' (Gifford and Roberts, 1981, p.204). The poem was originally called 'I was just walking along', which is in line with this 'glib complacency', but the content of the poem, the imagery, is more difficult to analyse, as Hughes himself admits when talking about Crow in a personal letter to Gifford and Roberts:

I know that in writings of this sort it is very difficult to decide what is authentic and what is only imagined, unless you are actually on the inside of it. (personal communication, October 1978)

What Hughes calls in this letter his 'hieroglyph language' is a language whose aim, as has already been noted in earlier chapters, is to by-pass the conscious mind in order to speak directly to the unconscious through the use of 'hieroglyphs' thought by some (such as Jung) to be recognizable as latent symbols by the unconscious. In Cave Birds such a language is approachable consciously through reference to the mythological backdrop to the drama and, just as has been observed with the alchemists, the language becomes 'vivid and alive' after 'comparative research'.

Jung 'assigned great importance to the first dream in an analysis, for, according to him, it often has anticipatory value' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.329). Jung also says that 'the symbols of wholeness frequently occur at the beginning of the individuation process' which 'says much for the a priori existence of potential wholeness' (Jung 9, Part 1, pp.164-5), and several images in the poem indicate a potential for transformation. The relevance of 'childhood' has already been commented upon, but there are also the lazy 'mountains', which 'are symbols of the personality and of the self' (Jung 13, p.309), and can, if ascended, indicate 'an experience of "regeneration"' (Eliade, 1960, p.119). Shamans too can 'complete their shamanic instruction in solitude, on a mountain' (Eliade, 1972, p.86). There are the 'worms', the phoenix having, as already mentioned, 'a preliminary larval stage' (Allegro, 1970, p.95), and Jung adds to this reference to the falcon, the bird in 'The risen' at the end of Cave Birds, when he states that 'the rejuvenated phoenix (falcon) first takes the form of a worm' (Jung 14, p.342). There is also the 'Flesh of bronze', and



the 'greenness' of bronze could be the prima materia for the alchemists, 'changed by our magistry into our most true gold' (Jung 12, p.159). The scream itself would have promised transformation for the gnostic Christian (gnosticism can be usefully employed to illustrate Jungian theory, and will be dealt with more thoroughly when I come to consider the work of R.S.Thomas) in that:

According to the Gospel of Truth, the process of self-discovery begins as a person experiences the "anguish and terror" of the human condition, as if lost in a fog or haunted in sleep by terrifying nightmares. (Pagels, 1980, p.144)

Relevant to this hieroglyph language are Jung's remarks concerning 'the archetype' as 'an "eternal" presence', where he says that 'the only question is whether it is perceived by the conscious mind or not' (Jung 12, p.221). Jung, at this point, is discussing a dream-sequence in which the principal archetype (the mandala) had appeared in the very first dream although in disguised, latent form (a hat)--"We were always there, only you did not notice us" (Jung 12, p.221)--just as 'The Risen' lives, disguised, in 'The scream'.

The attitude of the persona in 'The scream' might link him to Socrates whom Xenophon quotes as believing 'self-control to be the foundation of all virtue' (Xenophon, 1968, p.67) and who is not infrequently shown evincing the complacency and arrogance evident in the line 'I knew I rode the wheel of the galaxy'<sup>5</sup>. Certain aspects of Egyptian mythology also appear to inform the poem supporting, for example, the alchemical view of the 'worm' as a latent 'falcon' of the self.

Finally, there is the scream itself (and where there are stone temples often there are sacrificial weapons) which finds precedent in Versluis' book on Egyptian religion (although here he is quoting Chuang Tsu), and explanation in Jung:

For the breath of the true man rose up from his heels while the breath of common men rises from their throats. When they are overcome, their words catch in their throats like vomit. (Versluis, 1988, p.21)

Intellectual understanding and aestheticism both produce the deceptive, treacherous sense of freedom and superiority which is liable to collapse if feeling intervenes. (Jung 16, p.278)

The symbolic process is an experience in images and of images. Its development usually shows an enantiodromian structure like the text of the I Ching, and so presents a rhythm of negative and positive, loss and gain, dark and light. Its beginning is almost invariably characterized by one's getting stuck in a blind alley or in some impossible situation; and its goal is, broadly speaking, illumination or higher consciousness, by means of which the initial situation is overcome on a higher level. (Jung 9, Part 1, pp.38-9)

Even the 'obsidian dagger' is a hieroglyph with a potential for transformation, and Neumann reports that 'obsidian, because of its original food-producing properties, came to be regarded...as the very principle of existence' (Neumann, 1972, p.190).

The 'fantasy image' for Hughes in Cave Birds is made concrete by Baskin's various bird-being pictures, and, in 'The summoner', 'the grip' of the sequence begins. It is clear that the idea of dream, implicit in 'The summoner', is of importance to both the scheme of Cave Birds and, indeed, to the process of individuation, because 'first indications of a future synthesis of personality...appear in dreams or in "active imagination"' (Jung 16, p.199). The 'effulgence'

of the poem would seem to refer to the divine light of nature, the lumen naturae, an alchemical concept which I shall return to later. From the latter half of the poem, however, it is clear that, as Hughes has said, 'his own self, finally, the innate nature of his flesh and blood, brings him to court' (Robinson, 1989, p.111). Scigaj reports that 'as in Crow, the crime is against the feminine in nature and in the self, a patriarchal attempt to divest the self of everything...except the intellect' (Scigaj, 1991, p.103).

'The summoner' also introduces the trial sequence of Cave Birds, and in 'After the first fright' this is continued, as Hughes points out, quoted by Robinson, in his radio broadcast, relating that the persona 'is confronted in court with his victim...his own daimon, whom he now sees for the first time'. On the same page, Robinson points to the presence of Socrates in this poem (Robinson, 1989, p.111), and one 'hieroglyph' has a particular relevance to this, 'the stopping and starting/ Catherine wheel in my belly', the belly being the home of the appetites in the Timaeus. St Catherine, incidentally, was 'according to legend...the daughter of Pharaoh, and was well versed in philosophy, particularly the works of Plato' (Anderson, 1987, p.99). The idea of a trial has psychological value in itself for, according to Jung:

When we are conscious of our guilt we are in a more favourable position--we can at least hope to change and improve ourselves. As we know, anything that remains in the unconscious is incorrigible; psychological corrections can be made only in consciousness. Consciousness of guilt can therefore act as a powerful moral stimulus...Where sin is great, "grace doth much more abound." Such an experience brings about an

inner transformation, and this is infinitely more important than political and social reforms which are all valueless in the hands of people who are not at one with themselves. (Jung 10, pp.215-6)

'The interrogator' draws much of its imagery from the mythologies of alchemy and Ancient Egypt, the vulture figure being symbolic of one of the undesirable early results in an alchemical opus (and in individuation), but at the same time can announce 'a kind of preliminary stage of the lapis' (Jung 12, p.169), the lapis being the philosopher's stone, the aim of alchemists and a symbol of the self in the individuation process. In one Egyptian myth, Re (the sun) complains that mankind has left his normal god-ruled domain and fled into the desert, and is advised to send his Eye ('This bird is the sun's key-hole/ The sun spies through her') to 'descend upon them as Hathor' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.182). Hathor, Wallis Budge reports, wears 'a vulture head-dress' and 'is identified with Nut', also called Mut, the 'World-mother' who 'symbolized Nature' (Budge, 1987, pp.375, 131 and 372). Jung too makes this association, quoting Horapollo to the effect 'that vultures are female only and symbolize the mother' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.46), and Scigaj calls the vulture here the anima (Scigaj, 1991, p.104).

Graves speaks of 'the griffon-vulture sacred to Osiris' (Graves, 1961, p.209), whereas Hirschberg and Scigaj link the vulture to Isis and Neumann to 'the Egyptian Mother Goddess' who, like an archetype, 'gives protection and shelter' but is also the 'corpse-devouring goddess of death' (Neumann, 1972, p.146). But whichever goddess she represents, she is, as Gifford and Roberts say, revealing 'the material nature of man, unprotected by claims of

'civilisation'' (Gifford and Roberts, 1981, p.208), and, as Robinson puts it, gathering 'evidence of a guilt' (Robinson, 1989, p.113). What the vulture comes to stand for in the end will depend upon any particular reader, and in the mythology set out in Orghast, 'the Vulture' has variable meaning according to the onlooker, is 'the open wound' and 'Light' or 'consciousness'; 'a crime', 'guilt' and a 'jailor'; 'his prisoners, the earth, his own body'; and 'his sickness' (Smith, 1972, pp.96-7). For each character of the Orghast experiment, then, the figure of the vulture gives rise to a cluster of associations or 'meanings' which, although they overlap, are never exactly the same, which is exactly how the archetype functions.

Jung remarks, regarding individuation, that 'it is of supreme importance that this process should take place consciously' (Jung 16, p.232), and it is important to note in this context that the vulture is sent by the sun god. It is the sun, then, as consciousness, that is the initiator of the drama, whose aim is a unity with the unconscious.

The man of the poem is alone, for, as Jung says:

everyone who becomes conscious of even a fraction of his unconscious gets outside his own time and social stratum into a kind of solitude...But only there is it possible to meet the "god of salvation." (Jung 14, p.201)

He is further described as being in 'the badlands', a desert which is specifically man-made through bad farming practice (which is obviously symbolic of the self-created spiritual crisis that man finds himself in), which is also of importance to the beginning of an alchemical opus and the beginning of individuation:

there have always been people who, not satisfied with the dominants of conscious life, set forth... to seek direct experience of the eternal roots, and, following the lure of the restless unconscious psyche, find themselves in the wilderness... (Jung 12, p.36)

Nietzsche too refers to he 'who goes into god-forsaken deserts' as 'genuine' (Nietzsche, 1969, p.127) and for Jung, the desert is 'a wild land remote from men', 'an image of spiritual and moral isolation' but it is where 'the keys of paradise' can be found (Jung 9, Part 1, p.35). Campbell too refers to deserts as 'regions of the unknown' which 'are free fields for the projection of unconscious content' (Campbell, 1949, p.79). At the beginning of an individuation process, then, it is 'as though one were entering a strange territory, a region of the psyche to which one feels no longer related' (Jung 14, p.300), and this finds a parallel with Egyptian myth in which, at the beginning of a legend concerning the reawakening of Osiris (and here it is apposite to remember that in the previous poem 'I went cold'):

After his death Osiris finds himself in a cheerless underworld and remonstrates about his lot:

...What is this desert place into which I have come?

...I wander helplessly herein. (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.139)

There is hope, however, in this poem after 'comparative research' locates it: the poem represents a start, and there is also the 'concrete shadow' of man and vulture. Jung comments that 'man as a whole being casts a shadow' (Jung 12, p.196) and 'verily there is no other foundation of the Art than the sun and its shadow' (Jung 14, p.92).

'The plaintiff' is a positive figure in the book, 'the life-divining bush of your desert', 'life-divining' in that (remembering the Egyptian delight in puns) it is she who makes life have a religious quality and also she who is able to find life where there might seem to be none (in the desert 'badlands', or under the regime of 'The judge'). She is the 'burning tree' in the desert, recalling the burning bush of Exodus (chapter 3) which lifted Moses from solitude, exile, and despair to a divine mission<sup>6</sup>. 'The heavy-fruited, burning tree' also relates to the illustrations of a burning tree in Alchemical Studies<sup>7</sup>. In his note to figure 4, Jung links the burning tree illustrations 'to the alchemical arbor aurea and cosmic tree', which are in turn linked to the unconscious of the artist or patient, and which indicate a desire for wholeness, the tree, of course, being of both the earth and the air.

'The plaintiff' is also 'your moon of pain' which, Bradshaw asserts, 'powerfully evokes an inner, psychic landscape, now under the sway of night' (Sagar, ed., 1983, p.231), and Robinson sees this 'she' as:

now grown so huge that he can no longer ignore her. The speaker points out, with powerful irony, that it is the protagonist's very unawareness which has allowed her to grow to such proportions: 'how you have nursed her!' (Robinson, 1989, pp.116-7)

As ka or anima it is this 'she' who comes to revive the broken persona and to commence individuation, although such a process will take time, as the following poems, which are more negative, will shortly show. Regarding this, Jung has remarked that:

Whenever a process has reached a culmination as regards either its clarity or the wealth of

inferences that can be drawn from it, a regression is likely to ensue. (Jung 12, p.175)

This, however, does have the proviso that 'regression can act in the service of growth' (Stevens, 1991, p.132), partly because it can reactivate 'in the unconscious a more or less primitive analogue of the conscious situation' (Jung 6, p.186) and thereby work toward satisfactory resolutions. This can entail 'the birth of the symbol' through which 'regression is converted into progression, the blockage starts to flow again' (Jung 6, p.263).

Here regression follows in the next poem, 'In these fading moments I wanted to say' which represents, perhaps, what Jung calls 'negative inflation' and which also demonstrates a complete change of attitude from 'The scream':

Positive inflation comes very near to a more or less conscious megalomania; negative inflation is felt as an annihilation of the ego. (Jung 16, p.262)

Indeed, where there was a vomited scream there is now 'unspeakable outcry', and the callousness portrayed in 'The scream' is replaced by over-sensitive response, both attitudes unworkable, and both resulting from an over-reliance upon logic and consciousness (logically one can either ignore or identify with the suffering of others--but both are, it seems, untenable options). This is not the only interpretation, however, and Gifford and Roberts find 'the hero's claims to be living a life that is the opposite of complacent are transparently desperate exaggerations' (Gifford and Roberts, 1981, p.211), and Scigaj agrees, saying that 'by the end of the poem the persona has lost every bit of his artistic integrity' (Scigaj, 1986, p.227).



The 'she', again probably representing the ka or anima, changes the direction of the poem, talking about her life as 'a cold business of mountains and their snow', small consolation except in its tone ('Right from the start...Yes there were always...one will do a lot...after the byes...'), all of which is almost motherly) and in the mountain image itself, which recalls 'The scream'. The poem is some movement forward on the road to individuation because, as Jung says:

if fate should exact a debt from him in the form of guilt, it is a debt to himself. Then he will recognize the worth of his psyche, for nobody can owe a debt to a mere nothing. (Jung 14, pp.363-4)

As the archetypes, like all numinous contents, are relatively autonomous, they cannot be integrated simply by rational means, but require a dialectical procedure, a real coming to terms with them, often conducted by the patient in dialogue form, so that, without knowing it, he puts into effect the alchemical definition of the meditatio: "an inner colloquy with one's good angel." Usually the process runs a dramatic course, with many ups and downs. (Jung 9, Part 1, pp.40-1)

First, however, the 'he' must die to the everyday world of consciousness--a world which is as good as dead to him anyway:

The whole earth  
Had turned in its bed  
To the wall.

'The executioner' represents that death, the 'nigredo' of the alchemists. This state amounts to 'a provisional extinction of the conscious standpoint' (Jung 14, p.98), much as had been witnessed in the previous poem and the state is usually followed, according to Jung, by a purgatorial experience, plausibly given voice in the confession of 'The accused'. 'The executioner' has opposite it a Baskin illustration of what looks like a black raven,

the raven being, for the alchemists, symbolic of the nigredo state. Jung regards this state as corresponding to the darkness of the underworld and the unconscious, as well as relating to 'the dark night of the soul'. All is not lost, however, at this alchemical or psychic stage because there is 'light in this darkness, life in this death' (Jung 16, p.297). Indeed, Jung mentions a 'black executioner' and, regarding the nigredo state, goes on to say:

it is a state of incubation or pregnancy. Great importance was attached to the blackness as the starting point of the work. (Jung 14, p.512)

The idea of a 'state of incubation' is given expression here by the final lines of the poem ('It feels like the world/ Before your eyes ever opened') and links this poem with 'A flayed crow in the hall of judgement' and its accompanying Baskin picture, which is egg-shaped. Jung refers to the 'egg-shaped' vessel of the alchemists:

One naturally thinks of this vessel as a sort of retort or flask; but one soon learns that this is an inadequate conception since the vessel is more a mystical idea, a true symbol like all the central ideas of alchemy. (Jung 12, p.238)

Day also finds 'a mystical idea' in connection with the egg, when he talks about 'the primal being':

Its initial form is the symbol of perfection, the symbol of the unconscious: the circle, sphere, round, egg, the World Egg in many myths. The circle is without beginning and without end. Within the primal World Egg, [Egyptian] myth... situates the World Parents or, perhaps more accurately, the Bisexual World Parent, for in the original World Egg male and female are not separate but still one... (Day, 1984, pp.359-60)

Campbell also quotes an Orphic hymn to the same effect, where 'Originally Heaven and Earth were a single form--the Cosmic Egg' (Campbell 4, p.99).

Many of the poems in Cave Birds: An Alchemical Cave Drama can be seen in the light of the maat as well as of the ka, a man seeking wholeness standing as metaphor for the hoped-for new vision of all humanity as described by, for example, Hughes in his essay 'The Environmental Revolution'. So that, for example, 'First, the doubtful charts of skin' is both the individual's journey and of wider import, concerned with both the ka and the maat. Versluis in talking about Egyptian myth, says that 'the journey inwards...mirrors the outward Creation' (Versluis, 1988, p.23). With the alchemists the situation is similar, some alchemical texts quoted by Jung using the same conceit as the poem:

Man is to be esteemed a little world, and in all respects he is to be compared to a world. The bones under his skin are likened to mountains... The bladder is the sea... (Jung 13, p.92)

Equally, the shaman has a 'map of the complicated and dangerous itinerary' along which he guides 'the deceased' (Eliade, 1972, p.446).

'First, the doubtful charts of skin' journeys through not unfamiliar Hughes territory ('a heathery moor, and a roofless church') and the final destination is significant, the menhir being of especial (and perhaps religious) interest to primitive peoples, appropriate to Hughes' poetic landscape, and also synonymous with the 'lapis' or 'philosopher's stone', the miraculous stone alchemists often saw as the goal of their work and a metaphor for the goal of individuation, the self. Initiation and rebirth might also be suggested by the menhir grave stone, for Graves refers to 'dolmens' as 'sacred doors through which the totem-clan

initiate crawls in a ceremony of rebirth...in ancient Britain' (Graves, 1961, p.213) and for Neumann, 'the dolmen is...the place where the Great Goddess rules' (Neumann, 1972, p.159).

Scigaj is surely wrong in thinking 'the analytic ego' as the 'principal weapon' referred to (Scigaj, 1986, p.228). Gifford and Roberts argue that 'the hero's finding weapons in his own grave suggests that he must discover his own subjection to death' (Gifford and Roberts, 1981, p.213), and Hirschberg gets it right, I feel, when he says that 'the weapons Hughes refers to are those of self-knowledge' (Hirschberg, 1981, p.169). Hughes himself has said of the poem that:

sentenced and swallowed by the Raven, the hero finds himself on a journey which leads him not to death, but to the start of a new adventure. (Robinson, 1989, p.122)

'Under this rock, he found weapons' might bring Theseus to mind with regard to any 'new adventure', but the protagonist's soldierly actions in the next poem, 'The knight', turn out to be very different from those of the minotaur-slayer:

The knight

Has conquered. He has surrendered everything.

This way of thinking in opposites is common to alchemists as well as standard for ancient mystery religions, such as those of Ancient Egypt. The poem relates to the alchemical idea that 'only that which can destroy itself is truly alive', but also raises more general problems, as expressed by Jung in his works on alchemy, such as the belief that paradox will always arise, however hard and far you push the

boundaries of knowledge, and that 'the difficult operation of thinking in paradoxes' is 'a feat possible only to the superior intellect' (Jung 12, pp.74 and 148).

'The knight' is also a figure relevant to the Egyptian view of death where, according to Spencer, 'the Egyptians regarded the dead as being very much alive' (Spencer, 1982, p.72) and where the Egyptian hieroglyphs for 'funeral' translate literally as 'the day of union with the earth' (Budge, 1987, p.313). There is also a connection between 'The knight' and the figure of Osiris who, although once 'the Dead King' is also 'the spirit of becoming', 'the personification of the coming into being of all things' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.165). Such territory is also that of Socrates who, in the Phaedo, speaks of 'dissolution and decomposition' in the dead human body which he contrasts with the mummies of Egypt (Plato, 1977, p.281). Socrates, however, misses the point and contrasts bodily corruption with the immortality of the soul whereas, for the Egyptians, and in alchemical symbolism, as Jung reports, there is an instance where because of 'the preceding mortificatio and sublimatio, the body has taken on "quintessential" or spiritual form and consequently...is not so very different from spirit' (Jung 16, p.288), just as the mummy was regarded as 'home' for the ka. The poem is also the union of opposites, a creature of air with the earth. But whereas a bird and the earth clashed violently in early Hughes ('The Hawk in the Rain'), here the union of upper and lower is presented with symbolism that suggests the ceasing of strife:

Now he kneels. He is offering up his victory

And unlacing his steel.

Also of relevance is the shaman's ability 'to see himself as a skeleton', and as Eliade reports (at first quoting Rasmussen), the shaman:

"can, by the power his brain derives from the supernatural, as it were by thought alone, divest his body of its flesh and blood, so that nothing remains but his bones...By thus seeing himself naked, altogether freed from the perishable and transient flesh and blood, he consecrates himself, in the sacred tongue of the shamans, to his great task, through that part of his body which will longest withstand the action of the sun, wind and weather, after he is dead."...To reduce oneself to the skeleton condition is equivalent to re-entering the womb of this primordial life, that is, to a complete renewal, a mystical rebirth. (Eliade, 1972, pp.62-3)

This connection is strengthened by the fact that Eliade refers to the shaman's costume having 'the appearance of a skeleton', possibly 'the skeleton of a bird' or 'rather, a combination of human and bird skeleton' (Eliade, 1972, pp.159-60).

'The knight' is also concerned with both the inner and the outer worlds, which 'places human death solidly in the context of larger natural processes' (Gifford and Roberts, 1981, p.101) to gain an understanding of unity with the universe, but which is also a 'sacrificing' of the inner 'safe and separate ego' (Robinson, 1989, p.124). 'The knight' is 'himself the prima materia' and, as Scigaj concludes, 'to grow as adults Jung counsels that we must learn to let go...and trust in our own knightlike integrity' (Scigaj, 1986, p.216).

'In these fading moments I wanted to say' is a poem which can be regarded as a regression natural and inevitable to the individuation process, and the same seems to be true of 'Something was happening', which follows two positive

poems. The content of much of this poem represents a personal tragedy, but 'the eagle-hunter' at the end offers at least some hope. 'The eagle-hunter' is an interesting figure to compare to the 'bird-hunter' of Ancient Egypt, the phrase being a synonym for a dead man in the afterlife, as well as being connected with 'one of the most widespread of all saga motifs--the return of the conquering hero' which, in Egypt, 'took the form of a hunter who comes back to his people, bringing with him a wild but now subdued animal' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.227)--a myth with obvious analogies to the process of individuation (the unconscious being that 'wild animal'). The eagle can also be a symbol of the goal of individuation because it was 'said to devour its own wings or feathers', and is 'therefore a variant of the uroboros' (Jung 14, p.144). The eagle has already been mentioned in connection with the shaman, the eagle being for him a mythical ancestor:

The gods decided to give mankind a shaman to combat disease and death, and they sent the eagle...the eagle saw a woman asleep under a tree, and had intercourse with her. Some time later the woman gave birth to a son, who became the "first shaman." (Eliade, 1972, p.69)

Robinson adds, regarding the eagles, that they 'are the supreme powers of the bird realm, the most majestic forces of the unconscious and the imagination' (Robinson, 1989, p.126), and Scigaj, quoting Hughes' own introduction to the poem, discovers further parallels with shamanism:

"While the hero undergoes his vigil a helper begins to work for him calling on the eagles." This "helper" is both the eagle-hunter and the eagle he summons, a helping spirit of the shaman. (Scigaj, 1986, p.221)

Moving on through the sequence, the Baskin picture for the poem 'His legs ran about' points also to shamanism, especially remembering the egg-shape of the earlier picture and poem 'A flayed crow in the hall of judgement':

the Bird-of-Prey-Mother, which has the head of an eagle and iron feathers, lights on the tree, lays eggs, and sits on them; great, middling, and lesser shamans are hatched in respectively three years, two years, and one year. When the soul comes out of the egg, the Bird-Mother entrusts it to a devil-shamaness, with only one eye, one arm, and one bone, to be taught. (Eliade, 1972, p.37)

'His legs ran about' has an especial relevance to Osiris, he being 'the sexual potency of males and the fertility of females' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.130) as well as being made whole again by Isis and Nephthys, who gather his sundered and scattered parts together in one Egyptian myth:

His legs ran about

Till they tangled and seemed to trip and lie down  
With her legs intending to hold them there forever

His arms lifted things, groped in dark rooms, at  
last with their hands

Caught her arms  
And lay down enwoven at last at last...

Equally, the poem has a relevance to alchemy, the sexual act often viewed as a metaphor for the uniting of body and soul, consciousness and unconsciousness. Indeed, the poem may have found its genesis in the alchemical myths concerning the union of a king and queen, in one of which the king is made to say 'all my limbs seem divided one from another' (Jung 16, p.263), and the line 'Like a mirror face down flat on a mirror' has further relevance to the process of individuation:

the unconscious is thus shown its own secret reflection, in which it recognizes itself and so joins forces with the conscious mind. (Jung 12, p.221)



The mirror does not flatter, it faithfully shows whatever looks into it; namely, the face we never show to the world because we cover it with the persona, the mask of the actor. But the mirror lies behind the mask and shows the true face.

This confrontation is the first test of courage on the inner way...In the end one has to admit that there are problems which one simply cannot solve on one's own resources. Such an admission has the advantage of being honest, truthful, and in accord with reality, and this prepares the ground for a compensatory reaction from the collective unconscious... (Jung 9, Part 1, pp.20-1)

Jung also says that after such an admission, the individual is more likely to be receptive to intuitions, dreams, and other manifestations of the unconscious. The mirror also formed 'part of the sacred furniture of the Mysteries, and probably stood for 'know thyself'' (Graves, 1961, p.395), and also has a mystical role to play in shamanism (Eliade, 1972, p.154).

I will return to parts of the following discussion when looking at the poem 'Bride and groom lie hidden for three days', but some of the ideas are worth emphasising:

Although man and woman unite they nevertheless represent irreconcilable opposites which, when activated, degenerate into deadly hostility. This primordial pair of opposites symbolizes every conceivable pair of opposites that may occur: hot and cold, light and dark, north and south, dry and damp, good and bad, conscious and unconscious. (Jung 12, p.152)

In alchemy, then, there is first 'a process of separating out (divisio, separatio) of the pairs of opposites' (Campbell 4, p.279) before any attempted recombination can take place, as happened with the two Lumbs and the two sexes in Gaudete. The feminine, the anima, in Cave Birds had been recognized and isolated earlier in such poems as 'A riddle' and 'After there was nothing there was a woman', and now,

here and in 'Bride and groom lie hidden for three days', a new and less one-sided combination can be approached.

'Walking bare' indicates the growing self-reliance of a more fully individuated individual (as witnessed in 'His legs ran about'). The 'Lightness beyond lightness' (a pun which reveals two metaphors of increased freedom) and the 'blowtorch light little enough// But enough' would seem to refer to the alchemical lumen naturae, the light of nature:

They discover that in the very darkness of nature a light is hidden, a little spark without which the darkness would not be darkness...The light from above made the darkness still darker; but the lumen naturae is the light of the darkness itself, which illuminates its own darkness, and this light the darkness comprehends. (Jung 13, p.160)

Eliade links such light to shamanism (Eliade, 1960, p.83), and Redgrove adds to this the goddess and the cave:

Hekate, the third person of the feminine trinity, is the one that sees all from her cave. She is Mary Lucifer, and is called also phosphorus, the light-bringer. This suggests the lumen naturae, the light of nature, which we have met equally in the light that fills the shaman's body... (Redgrove, 1987, p.156)

In 'Walking Bare', the 'lightness' now found is well reflected in the language, in the assonance and alliteration, for example, of these two lines:

And new skylines lift wider wings  
Of simpler light.

The title of the poem itself demonstrates a new found liberty in nakedness, a concept implying openness and naturalness for the alchemists:

The chaste disguises have fallen away. Man and woman confront one another in unabashed naturalness. (Jung 16, p.235)

Van der Post also speaks of Jung dreaming that he stripped off to 'swim the channel to find the Grail', commenting that

it shows Jung to be 'simple and ready as Parsifal' and that 'only then was he fit to swim this great rift in himself', to find the grail, 'a self that was more than the sum of himself' (van der Post, 1988, p.261).

'Bride and groom lie hidden for three days' and its accompanying Baskin picture take as their starting points alchemical metaphors:

Sitting together at one table means relationship, being connected or "put together." The round table indicates that the figures have been brought together for the purpose of wholeness. (Jung 12, p.177)

And then take the glass vessel with the bride and bridegroom and cast them into the furnace, and cause them to be roasted for three days, and then they will be two in one flesh. (Jung 14, p.15)

For the alchemist, 'the last and most formidable opposition' was 'expressed very aptly as the relationship between male and female' (Jung 14, p.89):

It has numerous connections with other pairs which do not display any sex differences at all and can therefore be put into the sexual category only by main force. These connections, with their manifold shades of meaning, are found more particularly in Kundalini yoga, in Gnosticism, and above all in alchemical philosophy... (Jung 9, Part 1, p.70)

two spirits are melted together and are interchanged constantly between body and body...In the indistinguishable state which arises it may be said almost that the male is with the female, neither male nor female, at least they are both or either'. (Jung 14, p.24)

In alchemy, the royal marriage was a union of utmost symbolic importance, marriage with the anima figure symbolized successful union of conscious and unconscious, and was the aim of the individuation process, and also, such a marriage is:

the conscious union of the ego with everything that has been projected into the "You." Hence

wholeness is the result of an intrapsychic process which depends essentially on the relation of one individual to another. (Jung 16, p.244)

Here, finally, the attempt at a recombination of opposites. especially this 'last and most formidable opposition', which seemed to meet with failure in the main text of Gaudete, finds a successful conclusion. Redgrove talks about:

The prime artistic and magical need...to effect a synthesis between male and female principles, between what was unconscious in the man--the world of women; and what was unconscious in the woman--the world of men. (Redgrove, 1987, p.161)

Redgrove adds that 'The fusion of man and woman had its obvious counterpart in the sexual act' (Redgrove, 1987, p.161), and elsewhere has this to say:

Lovers struggle, with consequent damage and disease to both psyche and soma, in an adverse milieu in which neither science nor established religion can see any purpose to sex other than procreation. The ancient view of non-procreative love was the reverse of this, and arose from exclusively human characteristics, which may yet paradoxically repair the broken bridge to the community of nature. In it body and mind are one: the flesh thinks, the mind feels; the animal unity is achieved...The reason why I say 'exclusively human' is that there is an erotic peak among a majority of humans when no child can be conceived. (Redgrove, 1987, p.132)

Gifford and Roberts add that 'sexual union is a metaphor for wholeness of being and oneness with the world; it is also both a cause and a consequence of wholeness and unity' (Gifford and Roberts, 1981, p.226).

The same idea pertains to to the shaman, Day referring to his 'mediating and unifying function':

As he brought this world and the other world together in his person, he also united both sexes within himself. (Day, 1984, p.114)

This suggests androgyny, 'an archaic and universal formula for the expression of wholeness, the co-existence of the contraries' and 'the ultimate being, the ultimate reality'

(Eliade, 1960, pp.174-5). Stevens finds a biological origin to this idea, saying that 'for the first six weeks of life the Self is hermaphroditic, in the sense that the foetus has the same physical structure whether it is male or female' (Stevens, 1991, p.55). Also, regarding the shaman, Allegro says of the relationship with 'his guiding spirit' that 'its consummation is most readily described in human sexual terms, and the bond likened to marriage' (Allegro, 1977, p.103).

Many of the ideas quoted can also be found in  
Gnosticism:

In gnosticism, Anthropos or Primal Man...was a hermaphrodite. His creation is described in terms indicating this: 'Male and female he created them' (Gen. 1:27), a passage which refers to Adam alone...Another of the apocryphal sayings of Jesus from the Gospel of the Egyptians is prompted when Salome asks when the end of the world would come about, and Jesus answers, 'When you put off the garment of shame, when the two become one, and the male with the female is neither male nor female.'

Christ is the prototype of the male-female unity, the perfect androgyne...In the gnostic view the discord inherent in gender has to be harmonized in a coincidentia oppositorum or 'union of opposites', wherein contraries and conflicts are resolved. Such a condition is periodically rehearsed in the sacrament of the bridal chamber when the original androgynous state is experienced. (Walker, 1983, pp.121-2)

The alchemist and the shaman, as has been shown, and the gnostic, as will be shown in a later chapter, all stand in a compensatory relationship to orthodox Christianity, and all imply with their sexual unions a potential for unity within the psyche. This is equally how Hughes interprets the hieroglyph in his work on Shakespeare, saying, for example, that 'what is at stake is no longer merely brides and grooms, but the soul, Isabella' and that 'the betrothal ceremony of Ferdinand and Miranda' is symbolic of 'the

nativity of the redeemed self, the reborn divine self'  
(Hughes, 1992, pp.223 and 455).

'Bride and groom lie hidden for three days' finishes  
like this:

So, gasping with joy, with cries of wonderment  
Like two gods of mud  
Sprawling in the dirt, but with infinite care

They bring each other to perfection.

Campbell talks of 'the antiquity of the idea of the two that  
in the pit of darkness become again one' (Campbell 4,  
p.283), and Jung frequently points out, regarding the lapis,  
'the old alchemical dictum: in stercore invenitur--"it is  
found in filth"' (Jung 14, p.554).

'The owl flower' follows, and, regarding the Baskin  
picture, Scigaj comments that it 'fans out his ovoid  
splendour of feathers' in a pose that 'Hughes perceives...as  
a mandala of renewal and wholeness' (Scigaj, 1991, p.108).  
The owl is 'the bird of death' portending 'the end of life'  
(Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.42) but also rebirth, as  
Graves' connection to Persephone (Graves, 1961, p.211) might  
suggest. The death of the old self and the birth of a new  
might therefore be suggested, and there is also, through the  
connection with the goddess, 'the supreme source of  
prophecy', the owl's 'reputation for wisdom' (Graves, 1961,  
p.211). For Jung the flower is a mandala symbol and he also  
refers to, appropriately enough after the union witnessed in  
the previous poem, to 'the sapphirine flower of the  
hermaphrodite' (Jung 14, p.448). The flower has a similar  
importance in Ancient Egyptian mythology, where 'the flower  
opens to reveal the head of the emerging soul, the Divine  
Child' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.67). Neumann also finds that

'the psyche as flower' and 'the virgin as flower' both 'symbolize the flowerlike unfolding of the highest psychic and spiritual developments' (Neumann, 1972, p.262).

Much of the imagery used in the poem recalls that of earlier poems in the sequence ('a leaf' and 'the egg-stone', for example, the latter being synonymous with the lapis), and this imagery has a meaning that is clarified by reference to the mythologies of the alchemists and Ancient Egyptians. 'The falling dew', for example, 'is a portent of the divine birth now at hand' (Jung 16, p.271) in alchemy, and other examples abound:

A coffin spins in the torque.  
Wounds flush with sap, headful of pollen,  
Wet with nectar  
The dead one stirs.

A mummy grain is cracking its smile  
In the cauldron of tongues.

The coffin, Neumann reports, is 'another symbolic sphere in which the maternal character of containing is stressed', talking also of Osiris' coffin 'in the form of tree and pillar' and the goddess Nut 'in her character of coffin' who 'encloses the dead' (Neumann, 1972, pp.45 and 244). The tree as symbolic of the self has already been commented upon, and the coffin bears one ready for rebirth, just as in alchemy the royal pair must die to be reborn as the divine child or hermaphrodite both of which, as has already been noted, represent a union of opposites. The 'coffin' and the 'sap' also represent a combination of opposites most concretely realised here with 'A mummy grain', and the coffin 'spins' because '"movement in a circle around oneself"' means that 'all sides of the personality become involved' (Jung 13, p.25). Robinson points to a pun on

'stirs' and adds that here 'the hero enters the hub of 'the wheel of the galaxy'' (Robinson, 1989, p.142), a wheel he boasted to ride in 'The scream'. The 'grain' is plausibly a symbol of the self and is of relevance to Egyptian myth as an example quoted by Wallis Budge demonstrates:

The barley which was placed in the tomb in the layer of earth symbolized the body of the deceased which, like the grain, contained a living germ. (Budge, 1987, p.462)

Equally, in alchemy the grain is an important image, being synonymous with the lapis:

Thus "every grain becomes wheat..."...and the little, single individual becomes the "great man," the homo maximus or Anthropos, i.e., the self. (Jung 13, p.284)

The grain is further 'A mummy grain', 'mummy' in one sense pointing to the grain as mother of its fruit, but also 'a womb or a chrysalid or pupal shell, symbolized in ancient Egypt as the enswathed mummy in its case' (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.131)<sup>8</sup>.

The idea of 'the self' is also pertinent to the next poem in the sequence, and the first thing to notice about 'The risen' is Baskin's picture which now has shades of gray (indicating the integration of the opposites, specifically black and white) instead of the normal contrast of black line and white background. As with the 'gods of mud' two poems previously, 'The risen', like the lapis, has been 'found in filth':

He lifts wings, he leaves the remains of  
something,  
 A mess of offal, muddled as an afterbirth...

In the wind-fondled crucible of his splendour  
 The dirt becomes God.



Incidentally, Jung remarks that 'the identification of the transformative substance with God' by the alchemists 'in the Middle Ages must have seemed like blasphemy' (Jung 14, p.279) and, in 'The risen', the two historical and metaphorical compensatory myths are set as a balance against their mainstream rivals: Egyptian myth against Socratic thought; and alchemy against the rationalist Christian heritage.

The falcon of 'The risen' is usually interpreted by critics as Horus, 'a symbol of the hero's developed skill in managing his own inner balancing' (Robinson, 1989, p.145), and Hughes finds Apollo and Dionysos to be a 'Europeanization of the Egyptian Horus'. Apollo is:

the God of Truth, the God of Poetry...and the God of Healing...It is worth a glance, just in passing the shrine at Delphi, to see that Dionysus, the archetypal dying and resurrected god, was buried here and that the Delphic priesthood regarded him as the cyclic, or dying and reborn, inner being of Apollo. (Hughes, 1992, p.373)

In Ancient Egyptian myth Horus was 'the living son and resurrection of the creative power of Osiris' (Campbell 2, p.87) and:

appears as a falcon and soars up into the sky, beyond the flight of the original bird-soul, beyond the stars (the 'gods of Nut') and all the divinities of olden time...In so doing he brings back light and the assurance of a new day, thus subduing Seth, who personifies the terrors of darkness and death. (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.213)

This falcon is something reborn and new, but also something older, there being 'two gods called Horus', 'the original falcon who flew up at the beginning of time' and 'the son of Isis and heir to Osiris' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.216). The original falcon is 'the High God' mentioned earlier who, 'in his primeval form can be thought of as a monstrous falcon,

whose eyes are the sun and moon' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.230). The older Horus might therefore be said to represent 'the primordial state of oneness' mentioned earlier and, as such, a model for the Jungian idea of 'the self' or individuated individual as symbolized by the younger Horus. Both represent wholeness, a union of conscious and unconscious--whether of Isis and Osiris or 'sun and moon'. But there is also another falcon myth (remembering that Egyptian myth was flexible) which, amongst other things, sheds light on the problematical 'The green mother'<sup>9</sup>, or the goddess Nut the reborn Horus was said to fly beyond. In this myth there is a 'Divine Falcon' who is sent by Horus to the helpless Osiris in order to wake him<sup>10</sup>. In alchemical terms this messenger is Hermes or Mercurius, 'the patriarch of alchemy' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.311) who 'stands in a compensatory relation to Christ' (Jung 13, p.245), and who mediates between body and spirit. Day comments that 'Hermes looks more and more shamanic' with his role 'as a psychopomp in antiquity' (Day, 1984, p.111), and Mercurius is also:

the prima materia of the lowly beginning as well as the lapis as the highest goal...also the process which lies between, and the means by which it is effected. He is the "beginning, middle, and end of the work." (Jung 13, p.235)

Mercurius is an archetypal figure who is both 'mystagogue and psychopomp' but also 'the poisonous dragon, the evil spirit and "trickster" (Jung 9, Part 1, p.377). As well as being 'both good and evil', Mercurius is 'hermaphroditic', the 'Philosophic ambisexual Man', 'called husband and wife, bridegroom and bride, or lover and beloved' (Jung 13, pp.218-9). Mercurius also combines the elements within him,

and 'truly consists of the most extreme opposites' (Jung 13, p.220).

Jung, as already noted, says that it is consciousness that must begin the drama of individuation, and as such it is Horus who sends the 'Divine Falcon' to awake Osiris (unconsciousness). The myth works equally well in ecological terms if Horus becomes consciousness in nature (i.e. man) because one belief held was that Osiris was the earth itself. Further, Day asserts that 'Hawk-headed Horus bears a striking resemblance to a shaman with a bird mask' (Day, 1984, p.149).

According to Eliade, shamans who 'scale the nine heavens in performing a cure' encounter at each level the 'guardian spirits' (Eliade, 1972, p.233). Similarly, on the way to Osiris, the 'Divine Falcon' must pass a variety of obstructive figures, some of which seem to have relevance to Hughes and certain poems in Cave Birds: 'the Leonine One' (Hughes is a Leo), 'the goddess Nut' ('The green mother'), 'Gatekeepers' ('The gatekeeper'), 'Dwellers in the Caverns' (birds of the cave, perhaps, to whom in this myth the Divine Falcon says: 'Reveal the mysteries to me! Open the secret caverns to me!'), and 'the fearsome sphinx' ('A sphynx' of 'The gatekeeper') (Rundle Clark, 1959, pp.145-151). He passes them all, even Nut, 'The majestic Great Mother...is here no more than a minor hindrance' (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.153), and provides the revitalising link between Horus and Osiris:

I am the Falcon who dwells amid the light,  
 who has control over his own light,  
 who is invested with his own diadem,  
 who can go to and fro to the limits of the sky.  
 (Rundle Clark, 1959, p.147)

Alchemy, which links the phoenix to the falcon, reflects some of these aspects of Egyptian myth (in which Horus symbolized the morning sun):

In alchemy the uniting of the soul with the body is the miracle of the coniunctio, by which the lapis becomes a living body. The phoenix signifies precisely this moment. The alchemical transformation was often compared to the rising of the sun. (Jung 14, pp.337-38)

The sun, who has existed from the beginning, rises up like a falcon out of the midst of his lotus-bud. (Jung 14, p.342)

The latter quotation might also recall 'The owl flower', and the falcon is equally connected to the figure of the shaman:

at the culminating point of the sacrifice the sacrificer spreads his arms to imitate the falcon and sings a chant in honor of the stars. According to many traditions, the power of flight extended to all men in the mythical age; all could reach heaven...sorcerers and shamans are able, here on earth and as often as they wish, to accomplish "coming out of the body," that is, the death that alone has power to transform the rest of mankind into "birds"...An analysis of the "imagination of motion" will show how essential the nostalgia for flight is to the human psyche. The point of primary importance here is that the mythology and the rites of magical flight peculiar to shamans and sorcerers confirm and proclaim their transcendence in respect to the human condition; by flying into the air, in bird form or in their normal human shape, shamans as it were proclaim the degeneration of humanity. (Eliade, 1972, pp.478-80)

Eliade also mentions European witches and the falcon of 'The Egyptian Book of the Dead' in this context of flight, and 'the nostalgia for flight' in the psyche is presumably related to Eliade's notion of ecstasy (the full title of his book is Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy), a state associated with primordial oneness and therefore with the final result of the unification of opposites, especially consciousness and unconsciousness in the process of individuation. The idea of magical flight in Cave Birds

might also 'proclaim the degeneration of humanity', something Hughes is keen to do elsewhere, especially in essays such as his 'The Environmental Revolution'. Magical flight can be associated with poetry, as, for example, in The White Goddess, where Graves describes the Goddess giving the hero 'a winged helmet and winged sandals, symbolizing the swiftness of poetic thought' (Graves, 1961, p.231).

Of 'The risen' it is said:

When he soars, his shape  
Is a cross, eaten by light,  
On the Creator's face.

The 'cross' (recalling the 'cross-shaped cut' of 'The summoner'--"We were always there, only you did not notice us") is a 'middle disposition', like the gray in Baskin's picture and the 'Divine Falcon', the '"medium between depth and breadth"...as between two extremes or opposites...a symbol of Mercurius' which 'represents the quinta essentia, the oneness and essence of the physical world, i.e., the anima mundi' and which also 'corresponds to the modern representations of the self' (Jung 14, p.505). The cross of Christ's crucifixion is a classic example of an archetype distorted by one-sided interpretation. Jung sees Christianity as having 'its roots in the archetypal Osiris-Horus myth of ancient Egypt' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.69), and the cross represents the union of opposites, 'the twofold tree of good and evil...whose ambiguity is often brought out by the presence of the good and the bad thief' (Neumann, 1972, p.253). Orthodox Christianity does not include the evil component of this archetype, a dangerous procedure since 'pointed at evil, it shows evil that it is already

included and has therefore lost its destructive power' (Jung 9, Part 1, p.382)<sup>11</sup>.

The final couplet, argue Gifford and Roberts, 'must come as a shock' (Gifford and Roberts, 1981, p.231), but this is only the case if 'The risen' at this point is Horus. As the 'Divine Falcon', or Mercurius, he represents the process of individuation, which modern man is tardy to let land in his life:

But when will he land  
On a man's wrist.

Thus Bishop is right to say that these two lines represent 'a question directed at the reader in the everlasting present' and a challenge 'to fill out the schematic frame of Hughes' creative myth with the substance of his own experience' (Bishop, 1991, p.202).

In 'Finale' there is a possible reference to Socrates, who, in the Phaedo, is made to say regarding the 'hobgoblin' death that 'You must sing charms to him every day until you charm away his fear' (Plato, 1977, p.271). Impossible, 'Finale' asserts, because either 'the ritual' summons him, or he turns up anyway.

'Finale' has definite relevance to alchemy and individuation, however. On the one hand the alchemical adept recognizes that life's biggest problems cannot finally be solved but that he must, nevertheless, continue searching to find where his philosophy is still defective. Wholeness is always just out of reach because 'man's totality, the self, is by definition beyond the bounds of knowledge', but 'Finale' is more ambiguous than that because the figure of Mercurius is also 'a kind of goblin, a familiar who stands

by the adept in his work and helps the physician to heal' (Jung 14, pp.63 and 228), and, as such, may have been 'summoned' by the ritual.

Also relevant is 'the betrothal ceremony of Ferdinand and Miranda' mentioned earlier, which is 'the reborn divine self' but also 'is simultaneously, inevitably, the rebirth of Tarquin' (Hughes, 1992, p.455). Thus the goblin might be some sort of shadow figure, to be acknowledged just as Prospero says of Caliban in The Tempest, 'this thing of darkness I/ Acknowledge mine' (Shakespeare, 1980, p.38). Indeed, Hughes talks of 'Caliban as a Tarquin bent on usurpation and murder', of 'the Horus to Caliban's Set' and also says of the Masque in The Tempest that 'according to the Ainu proverb, 'At the end of the ritual, up comes a goblin'' (Hughes, 1992, pp.454-5 and 446).

Finally, regarding both 'Finale' and Cave Birds as a whole, Campbell suggests that 'the entire course of a lifetime' might be 'a rite of initiation and can be experienced as such' (Campbell 4, p.484). This would be similar to the way in which Hughes interprets Shakespeare, with the proviso that 'this act of transcendence can never be more than provisional, a possibility to be sustained' (Hughes, 1992, p.499). This is in line with individuation which 'is a process, rather than a goal--one works towards it, rather than expecting to achieve it' (Segaller and Berger, 1989, p.5), and Jung stresses that:

The goal is only important as an idea; the essential thing is the opus which leads to the goal: that is the goal of a lifetime. In its attainment "left and right" are united, and conscious and unconscious work in harmony. (Jung 16, p.200)

Hughes and Jung.

Whoever speaks in primordial images speaks with a thousand voices; he enthrals and overpowers, while at the same time he lifts the idea he is seeking to express out of the occasional and the transitory into the realm of the ever-enduring. He transmutes our personal destiny into the destiny of mankind, and evokes in us all those beneficent forces that ever and anon have enabled humanity to find a refuge from every peril and to outlive the longest night. (Jung 15, p.82)

In Crow, Gaudete, and Cave Birds, Hughes 'speaks in primordial images', setting such a language, a 'hieroglyph language', within the framework of original mythological sources which range from creation myths and the Trickster in Crow, through Druidism and witchcraft in Gaudete to Egyptian myth and alchemy in Cave Birds. One thing that unites all these sources, however, is their compensatory nature:

Therein lies the social significance of art: it is constantly at work educating the spirit of the age, conjuring up the forms in which the age is most lacking. The unsatisfied yearning of the artist reaches back to the primordial image in the unconscious which is best fitted to compensate the inadequacy and one-sidedness of the present. (Jung 15, pp.82-83)

The original sources listed above all compensate in a specific or general way for 'the fundamental guiding ideas of our Western Civilisation' which Hughes attacks so vehemently in his essay 'The Environmental Revolution' and elsewhere. Some, such as witchcraft and alchemy, were historically compensatory, but all are used by Hughes as potential and current compensations for 'the story of the mind exiled from nature', 'from both inner and outer nature':

What is of particular importance for the study of literature, however, is that the manifestations of the collective unconscious are compensatory to the conscious attitude, so that they have the effect of bringing a one-sided, unadapted, or dangerous



state of consciousness back into equilibrium.  
(Jung 15, pp.97-98)

As this mythological exploration of 'both inner and outer nature' moves from Crow to Gaudete to Cave Birds, the applicability of Jungian psychology grows until it seems all pervasive. From Jung Hughes gains more than just a mythology. He also gains philosophical outlook and spiritual authority:

Art is a kind of innate drive that seizes a human being and makes him its instrument. The artist is not a person endowed with free will who seeks his own ends, but one who allows art to realize its purposes through him. As a human being he may have moods and a will and personal aims, but as an artist he is "man" in a higher sense--he is "collective man," a vehicle and moulder of the unconscious psychic life of mankind. (Jung 15, p.101)

All three Hughes books considered here can be regarded as attempts at individuation, or, perhaps, as parts of one single individuation process, and all three have the notion of a female presence as something to aim for and retain (if possible), this presence being somewhat akin to the Jungian anima.

A Jungian theory of literature is conspicuously absent from twentieth-century criticism (Terry Eagleton's Literary Theory--An Introduction (1983), for example, fails even to mention Jung, despite devoting about a fifth of its pages to 'Psychoanalysis'). This fact is especially strange when it is considered that a list of poets showing marked sympathy for Jung or for certain Jungian ideas would have to include, among many others, Eliot, Yeats, Lawrence, Graves, Hughes, Heaney, Redgrove and R.S.Thomas.

That Jung has been sidelined is the theoretical critic's disgrace. That he is, in the nineties, again

becoming generally fashionable is proof, if proof were needed, that in matters of ideology and taste (Jung and ecology both being fine examples), the poets come first, critics and society in general arriving with their "new" ideas some few decades later.

1. Jung also speaks of a possible future 'nobler culture in a regenerated age' (Jung 16, p.231).
2. Such problems, especially regarding 'hieroglyph language', Hughes admits to in his letter to Gifford and Roberts (personal communication, October 1978).
3. Thus Campbell can say 'the man or woman who has died is identified with and actually called Osiris', and connect this with 'the idea of death as a rebirth', often from 'the egg' (Campbell, 1949, p.369).
4. Hughes has also made the point that 'since Osiris is a form of the sun god Re, Horus is also the son of Re' (Hughes, 1992, p,271). Horus will return towards the end of the chapter as a symbol of successful individuation in 'The risen'.
5. Robinson points out that instead of riding the wheel, the persona is actually 'within it and subject to its laws' (Robinson, 1989, p.109).
6. Alchemists liked to count Moses among the earliest of their number, and 'Saint Stephen boasts that the great legislator Moses "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians"' (Budge, 1988, p.4).
7. Figures 3, 5, 8 and 15, for example.
8. Hughes finds that 'mummy' is a:  
compact image of the Goddess who is the Mother ('mummy' simply), but also the Sacred Bride (made of 'maidens' hearts'), and also the Death Goddess or Queen of Hell (made from mummified dead hearts). (Hughes, 1992, p.475)

Concerning the 'grain', it is worth remembering what Jesus had to say concerning it and the (mother) earth:

Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. (John 12, 24)

9. For example, Robinson pauses to ponder 'why then is this a temptation it would be wrong for him to accept?' (Robinson, 1989, p.133).
10. It is ironic at this point that Bradshaw, in complaining that 'The risen' is too obscure, says 'there is clearly some connection between the falcon in 'The risen' and Horus and Osiris' (Sagar, ed., 1983, p.211).
11. A letter to Gifford and Roberts from Hughes seems to confirm this critique of Christianity, as well as much of the discussion in this chapter:  
it...is a critique of sorts of the Socratic abstraction and its consequences through Christianity to us. His resurrection in Egypt, in that case, would imply his correction, his re-absorption into the magical-religious archaic source of intellectual life in the East Mediterranean, and his re-emergence as a Horus--beloved child and spouse of the Goddess. (Gifford and Roberts, 1981, p.260)

Chapter Four: KIERKEGAARD

The main features of R.S.Thomas's distinctive quality and power as a poet from his first published volume, The Stones of the Field (1946), up to Not That He Brought Flowers (1968), have been fairly well defined...But in his poetry of the last decade...beginning with the publication of H'm (1972), and continuing through Laboratories of the Spirit (1975), The Way of It (1977) and Frequencies (1978), Thomas has made clear departures from this earlier line of writing. (Dyson, ed., 1990, p.242)

Thomas' 1972 departure into myth has been noted by many. Jones and Schmidt predictably see this as a wrong direction, remarking that 'Thomas suddenly succumbed to the influence of a younger poet, Ted Hughes', and that his was 'a borrowed energy' (Jones and Schmidt, ed., 1980, p. xxviii), whereas Dyson sees 'the three volumes of the 1970s' surpassing the earlier work and taking Thomas 'into a still rarer class of excellence' (Dyson, 1981, p.305)<sup>1</sup>. It is these three volumes (H'm, Laboratories of the Spirit, and Frequencies) that shall be examined in these next two chapters.

Schmidt and Jones' comparison of Thomas with Hughes seems dependent mostly on the fact that both concentrate on mythical forms in the 1970s, but this is not, for Thomas, 'a borrowed energy', unless it is an energy borrowed from some sort of zeitgeist or from the collective unconscious since, as was pointed out in the introduction, a great many poets made a similar shift at a similar time. Indeed, the great differences in mythical method between the two poets have forced a different approach to Thomas than that which was used for Hughes, and in these two chapters poems from the three

Thomas volumes will be considered with little respect for the order in which they appear. Equally, there are few specific pointers toward established mythical frameworks in Thomas, although important themes in Thomas' work of the seventies have lead to the two frameworks considered here, those themes being the philosophy of Kierkegaard and unorthodox Christianity (gnosticism).

Thomas confesses an interest in philosophy ('I engage with philosophy/ in the morning'--'Present'), and in one poem presents a 'Synopsis', which includes brief comments on Plato, 'Aristotelians', Spinoza, Hume, Kant and Hegel to conclude with Kierkegaard's view of 'the self', a concept which I will return to later:

that grey subject  
of dread that Soren Kierkegaard  
depicted crossing its thousands  
of fathoms...

The metaphor here derives from Kierkegaard's own work, and is one that somewhat anticipates my own discussion of the subject, where 'man is a synthesis of the temporal and of the eternal, every moment out upon "70,000 fathoms"' (Kierkegaard, 1983, p.327).

Kierkegaard seems the most frequently mentioned or alluded to of philosophers in the work of R.S.Thomas, and this would seem in large part because of Kierkegaard's insistence of the primacy of the subjective over the objective, the individual over the universal and the introverted over the extraverted:

If order is to be maintained in existence--and that, after all, is what God wants, for he is not a God of confusion--then the first consideration must be that every human being is

an individual human being, becomes conscious of himself as an individual human being. Once people are allowed to merge in what Aristotle terms the animal category--the crowd, then this abstraction (instead of being less than nothing, less than the least significant individual human being) becomes regarded as some thing. And then it isn't long before this abstraction becomes God. (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.151)

The emphasis on the 'individual human being' is something that demonstrates parallels with not only Thomas but also, as has been already suggested, with Hughes and, as will be pointed out from time to time throughout this chapter, with Jung. Kierkegaard makes this point concerning the primacy of the individual over the collective time and time again, in 'Selected Entries from Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers Pertaining to Repetition', for example, where there is the idea of turning:

one's mind away from all this great and high-sounding talk about the heavens and world history to the smaller, to the inexhaustible and blessed object of his concern, to individuals... (Kierkegaard, 1983, p.288)

Kierkegaard would seem to lift the life within the individual above the life of external realities, 'life's pleasures or its sorrows', lift it toward the spiritual:

So much is spoken about wasting one's life. But the only life wasted is the life of one who so lived it, deceived by life's pleasures or its sorrows, that he never became decisively, eternally, conscious of himself as spirit, as self... (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.57)

Once again there is the idea of the 'self' to which I will return later, but Thomas too, in many poems, speaks of the necessity to become conscious of this need to go beyond the life of external realities, and to find

consciousness of spirit from within, as he does in

'Groping':

Moving away is only to the boundaries  
of the self. Better to stay here...  
...The best journey to make  
is inward. It is the interior  
that calls.

Thomas seems to have intuited that external realities arrive only through the senses, which are literally and metaphorically the 'boundaries/ of the self'. As Colin Meir points out, when talking of Thomas, 'when...the poet turns from observation to introspection...the language becomes more abstract; concepts replace images' (Jones and Schmidt, ed., 1980, p.6). Here it might be recalled that Hughes also spoke of the sort of poet who 'develops inwards into imagination and beyond that into spirit' (Faas, 1980, p.204), and I will return to this point of comparison in my next chapter.

Whether this movement, 'when Iago Prytherch vacated the stage for God', is to be appreciated or not seems to depend upon the personality of the reader or critic, so that Nightingale sees Thomas' inward journey as one in which 'we shall all be the losers' (Anstey, ed., 1982, pp.136 and 35), whereas Allchin, among others, point to the importance of this inwardness:

The poet's inner struggle, the priest's inner struggle, is linked with the great struggle which has been and is going on in the whole of our Western world, perhaps in the whole of humanity. (Anstey, ed., 1982, p.125)

Many judgements of Thomas' poetry of the 1970s sound extreme because of the psychological divide between introvert and extravert, two fundamentally opposed world

views each of which finds it hard to appreciate the other's point of view. The same fundamental opposition will be explored in the next chapter in the antipathy between orthodox and gnostic Christianity.

Returning to 'Groping', this is how Thomas' poem ends:

sometimes a strange light  
shines, purer than the moon,  
casting no shadow, that is  
the halo upon the bones  
of the pioneers who died for truth.

In the darkness of the interior, then, there is 'a strange light' (which would seem to link nicely with the alchemical idea of the 'lumen naturae'), a light cast by 'pioneers' of such ventures which, in a Jungian sense, might refer to the ancestral base of the Collective Unconscious, but which also, in a more general sense, would imply such previous travellers as Kierkegaard, who himself made an inward journey at the expense of more social concerns, including a decision to break off his engagement.

Indeed, spirituality implies for Kierkegaard not only a metaphorical escape from temporal distractions, but also a literal one, a withdrawing from the society of others:

In general, the urge for solitude is a sign that there is after all spirit in a person and the measure of what spirit there is.  
(Kierkegaard, 1989, p.95)

This is a position with which Jung, as has been observed, and Nietzsche would seem to agree (Nietzsche, 1969, p.90), and Kierkegaard goes on to castigate socializers



as 'chattering nonentities' and little children that need 'the soothing hushaby of social life' (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.95). He also attacks the society of his own age for similar reasons, as Gardiner first illustrates through quotation and then explains:

My principal thought was that in our age, because of the great increase of knowledge, we had forgotten what it means to exist, and what inwardness signifies...

Living had become a matter of knowing rather than doing, accumulating information and learning things by rote as opposed to taking decisions that bore the stamp of individual passion or conviction. (Gardiner, 1988, pp.34-5)

Against this Kierkegaard presents 'a realm of spirit, and this is a realm of individuals' and remarks that 'the main task of a philosophy of life is to devote itself to the phenomena of the individual spirit' (Kierkegaard, 1983, pp.312 and 322).

Thomas too would seem to approve of such a potentially isolated position in 'Invitation', for example, where two voices call him to play an active social role in both village and town, but call in vain:

And I stay  
Here, listening to them, blowing  
On the small soul in my  
Keeping with such breath as I have.

'The small soul in my/ Keeping' would seem to imply a responsibility on the part of the individual for the well-being of his own spirituality, an idea that would find approval from both Jung and Kierkegaard for whom, according to Gardiner:

'the sole ethical interest is in one's own reality'. All attempts to externalize or

objectify it, whether in the shape of 'world-history' or of socially established rules and norms or of both, are deeply erroneous...  
(Gardiner, 1988, p.86)

Earlier in his book Kierkegaard, Gardiner had made the case for the individual emphatic on Kierkegaard's behalf:

Personality is the 'absolute', is 'its own end and purpose'...his attention is directed towards his own nature, his substantial reality as a human being with such and such talents, inclinations, and passions, this being something which it constantly lies within his power to order, control, and cultivate. There is thus a sense in which he can be said, consciously and deliberately, to take responsibility for himself...his self-knowledge is not 'a mere contemplation' but a 'reflection upon himself which itself is an action'.  
(Gardiner, 1988, p.49)

From what has been said so far, it should be clear that the sort of philosophy Kierkegaard espouses is essentially antagonistic toward society as he finds it and therefore against the main stream of thought such as it was then and is now, essentially anti-orthodox and in this way compensatory in the way the philosophy of the alchemists was seen to be. Further to this, Kierkegaard's works, again like the alchemists, might be regarded as for the initiated only, or, as Kierkegaard puts it in a letter accompanying 'the book Repetition' and addressed to '"the real reader of the book"', that it is written '"in such a way that the heretics are unable to understand it"' (Kierkegaard, 1983, pp.300-1). But the emphasis on solitude also has a religious and a moral purpose, as Hannay points out in his introduction to The Sickness unto Death:

The more one loses any social identity, and the more naked, undifferentiated and 'spiritual' one becomes, the better adapted one is to

occupy that solitary position 'directly before God'. (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.10)

if the individual takes precedence over the group, it must acquire its moral 'code' directly from the eternal source of all value... (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.25)

Further, Kierkegaard argues, it must be with the individual that God deals because 'however many are judged, if there is to be any seriousness or truth in the judgement, then judgement is passed on each individual' (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.156).

Two individuals occupy adjacent poems in Thomas' Laboratories of the Spirit, 'Ann Griffith' to whom 'God spoke' in a way suited to 'the poor girl from the village/ without learning', and 'Farming Peter', which I quote in full:

and there the scarecrow walked  
over the surface of the brown  
breakers tattered like Christ  
himself and the man went  
at his call with the fathoms  
under him and because  
of his faith in the creation  
of his own hands he was  
buoyed up floundering  
but never sinking scalded  
by the urine of the skies deaf  
to the voices calling from  
the high road telling him  
his Saviour's face was of straw.

Here the 'scarecrow' individual, away from 'the voices' of society across 'the fathoms' (recalling Kierkegaard's '"70,000 fathoms"'), is intent only on his own progress which clearly is involved in an interior dialogue with Christ. Christ is clearly the 'Saviour' of the last line (the two words are the only capitalized words of the poem, whose unpunctuated flow would seem to suggest continuity and flow), and the mocking calls from 'the

high road' could ironically confirm the identification with the straw face of a scarecrow. The meaning of the poem depends upon several ambiguous moments: whether the 'breakers' or the 'scarecrow' are 'tattered'; whether 'his call' intends 'his trade' (presumably as a farmer) or the beckoning of Christ and/ or the 'scarecrow'; and whether 'the creation/ of his own hands' means the creation of his flesh (by God) or the 'scarecrow' (possibly identified with Christ, depending on an earlier ambiguity) which he has himself with 'his own hands' created. Such ambiguity, however, tends to lead to the triple identification of the 'scarecrow', Peter and Christ. In this way, it would seem, it is upon the individual self that Christian salvation depends.

'Farming Peter' could also be regarded as a peasant figure, so typical in Thomas' earlier work, an individual whose principal merit often seems to lie in his stoical patience, and the idea of patience and waiting, as they apply to the individual, is the area D.Z. Phillips explores with regard to Kierkegaard. In his exploration of this subject, Phillips refers exclusively to Kierkegaard's Purity of Heart:

Is patience not precisely that courage which voluntarily accepts unavoidable suffering?... Thus patience, if one may put it in this way, performs an even greater miracle than courage. Courage voluntarily chooses suffering that may be avoided; but patience achieves freedom in unavoidable suffering. By his courage, the free one voluntarily lets himself be caught, but by his patience the prisoner effects his freedom--although not in the sense that need make the jailer anxious or fearful...He makes a virtue out of necessity. He brings a

determination of freedom out of that which is determined as necessity. (Phillips, 1986, p.85)

Certainly in Thomas there is much of this patience, which seems to involve a resigned stoicism to 'unavoidable suffering'. Earlier in his work there were many stoical figures, the peasants who resist weather and temptation to continue a harsh and stoical existence on the land, and occasionally these figures survive after 1970, as in the poem 'This One':

Oh, I know it: the long story,  
The ecstasies, the mutilations;  
Crazed, pitiable creatures  
Imagining themselves a Napoleon,  
A Jesus; letting their hair grow,  
Shaving it off; gorging themselves  
On a dream; kindling  
A new truth, withering by it.

While patiently this poor farmer  
Purged himself in his strong sweat,  
Ploughing under the tall boughs  
Of the tree of the knowledge of  
Good and evil, watching its fruit  
Ripen, abstaining from it.

As Phillips has it, 'is not the patient figure in the field to be preferred above those who think they can take eternity by storm; who seek instant answers which claim to be religious' (Phillips, 1986, p.85). Thomas loads the octave with negative imagery which is reflected by positive imagery in the sestet of this sonnet: the decadence of imagining oneself 'a Napoleon' against the 'poor' but 'strong' peasant; the 'gorging' against the 'abstaining'; the 'kindling' against the living 'tree'; the 'withering' against the 'tall boughs'; and the chaotic-sounding activities and descriptions of 'ecstasies...mutilations...Crazed, pitiable...Imagining', etc., against the more solid description of the 'strong'



Occasionally this tactic of preparing and waiting would seem to work, as it does in 'Suddenly', where 'As I had always known/ he would come, unannounced...', and in 'Sea-Watching' Thomas picks up on a metaphor, which Phillips quotes, used by Kierkegaard in Purity of Heart where:

if you should see it so, you would be drawn upwards by contemplating the purity of the sea. If you saw it every day, then you would declare that it is forever pure--like the heart of that man who wills but one thing. (Phillips, 1986, p.137)

The 'one thing' is 'heaven', and Thomas is 'that man' in 'Sea-Watching':

Grey waters, vast  
                   as an area of prayer  
 that one enters. Daily  
                   over a period of years  
 I have let the eye rest on them.  
 Was I waiting for something...

You must wear your eyes out,  
 as others their knees.  
                   I became the hermit  
 of the rocks, habited with the wind  
 and the mist. There were days,  
 so beautiful the emptiness  
 it might have filled,  
   its absence  
 was as its presence; not to be told  
 any more, so single my mind  
 after its long fast,  
   my watching from praying.

Watching and waiting have become synonymous with prayer to 'that man who wills but one thing' or Thomas with his 'so single my mind', until absence and presence merge and the waiting and patience become ends in themselves. Thus, 'The meaning is in the waiting' and, as Meir puts it, 'it is this state of mind which allows for both praise and vision' (Jones and Schmidt, ed., 1980, p.11):

It is the turning  
 aside like Moses to the miracle  
 of the lit bush, to a brightness  
 that seemed as transitory as your youth  
 once, but is the eternity that awaits you.  
 ('The Bright Field')

Patience can be active as well as passive, as Thomas asserts in, for example, 'Emerging':

Well, I said, better to wait  
 for him on some peninsula  
 of the spirit. Surely for one  
 with patience he will happen by  
 once in a while. It was the heart  
 spoke...

...We are beginning to see...

...that  
 as form in sculpture is the prisoner  
 of the hard rock, so in everyday life  
 it is the plain facts and natural happenings  
 that conceal God and reveal him to us  
 little by little under the mind's tooling.

In this way, perhaps, one could view certain Thomas poems or certain 'plain facts and natural happenings' as rejected chips of stone from the 'hard rock' under which God's form can be found. The individual, then, in the course of his life, can be seen to be chipping away at the hard rock of potential revelation in order to try to better understand God. As D.Z. Phillips puts it, this idea of waiting 'is not a matter of 'hanging around'' (Phillips, 1986, p.68), and Moelwyn Merchant says of 'Kneeling' that 'the poem leads to no vision, no credal conclusion but simply to a process, a meditative patience, a 'waiting'' (Moelwyn Merchant, 1989, p.61).

The idea of 'active patience' is similar to the stance adopted by Hughes and his 'critical prose psychological ideas', as Bishop puts it, 'such as



'keeping space open' and what he calls 'alert rationality'' (Bishop, 1991, p.13):

The nearest we can come to rational thinking is to stand respectfully, hat in hand, before this Creation, exceedingly alert for a new word. (Faas, 1980, p.172)

Equally the method has similarities with the Jungian method of individuation:

In the end one has to admit that there are problems which one simply cannot solve on one's own resources. Such an admission has the advantage of being honest, truthful, and in accord with reality, and this prepares the ground for a compensatory reaction from the collective unconscious...Prayer, as we know, calls for a very similar attitude and therefore has much the same effect. (Jung 9, Part 1, p.21)

in order to bring the individuation process into reality, one must surrender completely to the power of the unconscious, instead of thinking in terms of what one should do, or of what is generally thought right, or of what usually happens. One must simply listen, in order to learn what the inner totality--the Self--wants one to do here and now in a particular situation...There is only one thing that seems to work; and that is to turn directly toward the approaching darkness without prejudice and totally naively, and to try to find out what its secret aim is and what it wants from you. (Jung, ed., 1978, pp.165-6 and 170)

Emphasis on the individual leads to a curious element of Kierkegaard's philosophy, one that leads Hannay in his book Kierkegaard to suggest the term 'paraphilosopher':

Whatever his historical importance as cultural innovator or iconoclast, Soren Kierkegaard is not normally reckoned among the major philosophers. He is not even widely held to be a philosopher at all, or not a very good one, least of all by those for whom the hallmark of true philosophy is the systematic and economical statement of a well-defined thesis and supporting argument. (Hannay, 1982, p.8)

Indeed, Kierkegaard's 'basic epistemological thesis', as explained by Hannay, is 'that essential truth not only lies outside our theoretical grasp, but can be accepted as truth only in defiance of absolute standards of rationality' (Hannay, 1982, p.12). Kierkegaard's 'truth', then, is:

"true of the individuality (that is, poetically true), not as factually so and not even as if it may be that, but it is presented under the illumination of subjectivity". (Kierkegaard, 1983, p.358)

The idea of 'poetic truth' is something Thomas deals with in his essay 'The Creative Writer's Suicide':

His duty, his function, that which justifies his very existence, is to use every literary gift in his possession in order to create, in words and with words, a masterpiece. That is the truth for him. And in pursuit of this truth he is prepared to expend all his resources until he has exhausted himself... Kierkegaard defined a poet as one who suffers. It is in his anguish that he opens his mouth, but the sound which comes out is so sweet to the ears of his listeners that they press him to sing again, that is to suffer still further. (Thomas, 1983, p.170)

'Poetic truth' seems relevant to 'Petition', a poem which also points at the complexity of terms such as 'truth'<sup>2</sup> which here would seem to mean something very different:

One thing I have asked  
Of the disposer of the issues  
Of life: that truth should defer  
To beauty. It was not granted.

As I argue later, 'truth' here would seem to imply a deterministic and scientific view, as opposed to the more poetic idea of 'beauty'. Graves can thus argue that 'a beautiful result is as good as a demonstrable proof' (Graves, 1959, p.307), and elsewhere for Thomas such a



For Kierkegaard a devout pagan is to be preferred to an insincere worshipper of a true conception of God because 'precisely in the interest lies the proof' (Gardiner, 1988, pp.98-9). Thomas himself often shows himself to be more interested in the 'how' of things rather than the 'what', so that in 'Scenes':

There is a stillness  
about certain Ming vases which in itself  
is a form of prayer, though to what god  
is not known.

This open-mindedness about other cultures and religions extends to the point where Thomas can even be seen to be preferring the sincerity of a pagan over the problems inherent in a Christian world<sup>3</sup>, like Kierkegaard. For example, here is Thomas' poem 'The Gap' in full:

The one thing they were not troubled  
by was perfection; it was theirs  
already. Their hand moved in the dark  
like a priest's, giving its blessing  
to the bare wall. Drawings appeared  
there like a violation of the privacy  
of the creatures. They withdrew with their  
finished, leaving the interrogation of it <sup>work</sup>  
to ourselves, who inherit everything  
but their genius.

This was before  
the fall. Somewhere between them and us  
the mind climbed up into the tree  
of knowledge, and saw the forbidden subjects  
of art, the emptiness of the interiors  
of the mirror that life holds up  
to itself, and began venting its frustration  
in spurious metals, in the cold acts of the  
machine.

The interesting word here is 'genius', which can mean 'tutelary and controlling spirit', signifying that it is the seriousness of his religiousness and the aptness of his deity to which primitive man owed his pre-fall 'perfection', a time when art was created by a 'priest's'

hand. Terms in the second half of the poem such as 'the fall' and 'the tree/ of knowledge' point to an allegorical reading of Genesis and a complicity of Judaeo-Christianity in the loss of such a 'genius'. Art, whilst being 'like a violation' before the fall is now the 'forbidden' which, in its context (existing in 'the tree/ of knowledge') is likened to the forbidden fruit of Eden. The 'what' consequences of such an act appear then as 'the cold acts of the machine', a subject to which I will return shortly. But also of interest here and of relevance to this poem is this, from Gardiner's book:

In the biblical story of the fall Adam is presented as being ignorant initially of the difference between good and evil and of all that it entails; even so, the prohibition that he should not eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge 'awakens in him the possibility of freedom'. Kierkegaard treats the story as illustrating in mythic form the manner in which the transition from a state of unselfconscious 'immediacy' to one of self-awareness and self-determination arises in the experience of every individual. (Gardiner, 1988, p.108)

This last sentence seems psycho-analytical in import, and Kierkegaard might be better portrayed as a psychologist than as a philosopher<sup>4</sup>, one for whom 'psychology pertains to the imaginatively depicted stages in the actualization of human possibilities rather than to an empirical description of behaviour' (Kierkegaard, 1983, p.361). From this follows what is perhaps the most unusual aspect of Kierkegaard's work:

"My pseudonymity or polyonymity has not had an accidental basis in my person...but an essential basis in the production itself...What has been written, then, is mine, but only insofar as I, by means of audible lines, have placed the life view of the creative,

poetically actual individuality in his mouth, for my relation is even more remote than that of a poet, who poetizes characters and yet in the preface is himself the author".

(Kierkegaard, 1983, p.362)

This again emphasises that 'if there is one main message in Kierkegaard's writings it is that subjectivity... should be preserved and cultivated at all costs' (Hannay, 1982, p.32), and Patrick Gardiner discusses 'polyonymity' and preserving subjectivity in his book Kierkegaard:

By following such a method, which he termed one of 'indirect communication'...he sought to enable his readers to acquire a more perspicuous insight into their own situation and motivation, but without the didacticism that was characteristic of 'objective' modes of discourse...the idea was to approach people 'from behind', manoeuvring them into a position from which they themselves, as a result of interior reflection, could step back and make a radical choice between remaining where they were and opting for a fundamental change. Their freedom and autonomy as individuals must at all costs be respected... (Gardiner, 1988, p.38)

This is exactly the point behind the Jungian personality types, which portray different ways of thinking (such as introvert and extravert) as exactly that, as subjective experience. One 'type' should be able to respect any other 'type' even if the ways of thinking pertinent to that 'type' are in opposition to their own. Gardiner goes on to say that:

all the early 'aesthetic' works...exemplify the 'indirect' approach to which Kierkegaard attached such importance. Not only do they set out to present opposed outlooks and styles of living; they do this in an imaginative or 'poetical' fashion which is designed to exhibit--from the inside--what it is like to envisage life within the perspectives identified. (Gardiner, 1988, p.40)

Thomas seems to concur with Kierkegaard in his method, finding 'truth' concerning large and abstract issues from a many-angled perspective. In this way, for example, Thomas comes to grips with his God, exploring and seeking explanation in a number of different poems, each poem seeming to begin again from scratch and to build its own simple picture, and in this Thomas seems to have something more in common with Hughes who, as we have seen, was provisional, like Popa, in the exploratory fables of Crow. Many poems in H'm begin with an abrupt simplicity: 'What is this? said God' ('Echoes'), 'It was March.' ('Pouf'), and 'Why no!' ('Via Negativa'), for example. Indeed, five of the thirty-seven poems in H'm begin with the word 'it', and ten with the word 'and', which would seem to emphasise the provisional nature of many of these poems as they come into existence, tell their story, and then disappear once more. It might be said, then, that any sense of narrative that exists in, for example, H'm consists in the constant vagueness of background (with neither time nor space be specified), the reoccurrence of certain main players who share the personal pronouns between them (God, the machine, the persona), and the atmosphere of provisionality. Indeed, it is perhaps because of this provisionality that R.S.Thomas is able to scrutinize his faith so thoroughly, writing what might seem, in another context, blasphemous fables in which the nature of God is examined from all angles, including negative as well as positive potential

attributes. Presumably, then, such a style allows Thomas to probe his faith thoroughly without, he might hope, the possibility of his losing that faith. At times he even seems to make the probing the basis for his faith, something that is (as will be seen in the next chapter) in common with the Gnostics.

Such an approach is in line with archetypal theory, and also involves the Jungian idea of 'circumambulation' around a problem or an image (Jung, ed., 1978, p.14), so that Jung can say that 'the goal of psychic development is the self' but that 'there is no linear evolution; there is only a circumambulation of the self' (Jung, 1971, p.222). But in one poem, 'Perhaps', Thomas seems to go further and find this position as analogous to that of God himself:

His intellect was the clear mirror  
he looked in...

...It was one that reflected  
the emptiness that was where God  
should have been. The mind's tools had  
no power convincingly to put him  
together. Looking in that mirror was a journey  
through hill mist where, the higher  
one ascends, the poorer the visibility  
becomes. It could have led to despair  
but for the consciousness of a presence  
behind him, whose breath clouding  
that looking-glass proved that it was alive.  
To learn to distrust the distrust  
of feeling--this then was the next step  
for the seeker?

A presence, presumably God, stands behind the speaker ready to guide and guiding incidentally by breathing and clouding the mirror that is a metaphor for the objective uphill journey that the intellect has indulged in since the times of Socrates and Plato. Intellect and



objectivity, both on a personal and a universal level, are inadequate, it seems, and the more subjective 'feeling' too must play a part in this quest.

Objectivity itself is really a misnomer, as Jung is often at pains to point out, and as Kierkegaard also felt, according to Frye who refers to 'comprehensive intellectual systems like that of Hegel' as:

fundamentally immature because with this attitude man tries to fit himself into a larger container, the general outlines of which he can see with his reason, but forgetting that his reason built the container. (Frye, 1983, pp.128-9)

The mirror metaphor of 'Perhaps' is apt because, as with the advance of science into the misty realms of quantum theory earlier in this century, 'the higher/ one ascends, the poorer the visibility', and because science, determinism and objectivity are, in the end, self-reflecting merely.

Many have noted the many-angled approach of R.S.Thomas, which can act against 'the temptation to propagandize on behalf of one's beliefs' (Thomas, 1983, p.93) and deflect any accusations of one-sidedness. Moelwyn Merchant refers to 'the rhetorical poise which is the central characteristic of his verse...which consists of a precise placing of opposed and seemingly irreconcilable truths' (Moelwyn Merchant, 1989, p.21), but as well as the notion of a balanced approach, there is also the desire to experiment:

I think we must accept that there is...an element of experiment, of playing with notions, which has been a characteristic from the first, but only now fully declares itself. If I am

right, each poem is a tentative whole, an autonomous creation, but the full effect depends upon dialogue. (Dyson, 1981, p.313)

What was said in my Crow chapter concerning individual poems as provisional approaches to similar themes and my comments towards the end of that chapter concerning the concept of play are relevant to the above comments, but this many-angled approach for Thomas depends not only on his own methods of writing, but also upon the individual psychology of 'each new reader':

I must choose words and rhythms which will keep it fresh and have the power to recreate the experience in all its original intensity for each new reader. But in this very process the experience is changed and will continue to be changed as each new reader apprehends it. (Thomas, 1983, p.83)

If, as Jung's theory of types argues, psychological growth includes approaches to and understanding of different psychological types, then both poet and reader are implicated in such a process throughout R.S.Thomas's work of the 1970s. Before looking briefly at Jung's types, it is worth noting that Thomas, in his 'The Creative Writer's Suicide', acknowledges the possibility of various different 'truths' when answering Kierkegaard's question 'does man have a right to let himself be killed for the sake of the truth?':

each and every person must interpret and pursue truth according to his own lights. This is not to deny the existence of one fundamental truth; it means rather that there is one truth for the biologist, another for the economist, another for the creative writer, and so on. Are these but aspects of the one fundamental truth? I cannot answer that one. (Thomas, 1983, p.169)

Returning to Kierkegaard's 'polyonymity', there is a clear parallel with the Jungian theory of 'types', of which there are eight:

a type is a characteristic specimen of a general attitude occurring in many individual forms. From a great number of existing or possible attitudes I have singled out four; those, namely, that are primarily oriented by the four basic psychological functions: thinking, feeling, sensation, intuition. When any of these attitudes is habitual, thus setting a definite stamp on the character of an individual, I speak of a psychological type...A further division into two classes is permitted...namely introversion and extraversion. (Jung 6, p.482)

The extravert is one whose 'fate...is determined more by the objects of his interest', whereas the introvert's fate 'is determined more by his own inner self' (Jung 6, p.3). I will return to these ideas later in this chapter and in my next chapter, but for now it is important to note that such a system allows for philosophies to be correct and objective for their own appropriate types (Marxism is appropriate to an extraverted thinking type, for example, and Jung confessed himself to be an introvert), but not universal. It is only through the subjective many-angled approach that true universality can be approached. Thus in Kierkegaard's Either/ Or, there are two pseudonymous authors who present opposing views 'in the form of edited sets of papers and letters', and would appear, from Gardiner's description of them, to conform to Jung's introverted thinking type ('the judge') and his extraverted sensation type ('the aestheticist') (Gardiner, 1988, pp.40-51). Similarly, in 'Mediations', Thomas presents the religious experience of three

different types, the first two of which are clearly  
extraverted and introverted respectively:

And to one God says: Come  
to me by numbers and  
figures; see my beauty  
in the angles between  
stars, in the equations  
of my kingdom...

...And to another:  
I am the bush burning  
at the centre of  
your existence...

Thomas' many-angled approach goes further than this, however, for as well as the many different human points of view his 'I' can be seen to represent, that 'I' can also adopt the perspective of a time-and-space-transcendent human, as well as the perspective of God and, further, this God is an 'I' creatively imagined from a variety of perspectives. God, like the time-and-space transcendent human being, appears in vague and empty landscapes, especially in H'm, in 'The Island', for example. Frequently the word 'it' designates the earth: 'He touched it. It exploded' ('Repeat'); 'And having built it/ I set about furnishing it/ To my taste...' ('Making'); 'I'm going to destroy/ It' ('Soliloquy'); and 'It was perfect' ('Other'). Similarly, Heaven in 'The Kingdom' is 'it' ('It's a long way off...') and this continual reduction of the earth ('A small globe' in 'The Coming') and heaven to a manageable, if vague, entity, allows R.S.Thomas to approach metaphysical issues in a direct and exploratory way. The technique also allows Thomas to reassert the validity of individual and subjective experience as primarily significant.

Kierkegaard further emphasises the primacy of the individual in an 'Open Letter to Professor Heiberg':

Your observations are always superb, whether they are about the heavens or about world history. Suppose the individual has learned from you how he is to observe the heavens. Credit where credit is due, but apart from the heavens and world history, there is still a history called the individual's history. (Kierkegaard, 1983, p.287)

In Jungian terms, the exchange between Professor Heiberg and Kierkegaard could be regarded as a confrontation of extravert and introvert, one as difficult to resolve as persuading Eagleton to reverse his extravert judgement of Hughes. For Kierkegaard, the extravert 'Hegelian thesis' caused 'the status of the individual' to be much 'diminished, his role being reduced to that of merely 'representing', or giving particular expression to, the ethos of his age or society' (Gardiner, 1988, p.85):

he sought to underline the profound gulf that separates two stances which it is possible to adopt in our dealings with reality--the disengaged stance of contemplation and objective enquiry and the engaged or participatory stance of agency and practical volition. (Gardiner, 1988, p.89)

Indeed, the historical, over which Marxist critics busy themselves, is, for an introvert such as Kierkegaard, largely irrelevant:

"Out with history. In with the situation of contemporaneity....This is why I use imaginary constructions instead of actual histories". (Kierkegaard, 1983, p.360)

For Eliade, Kierkegaard here provides for Christianity an essential element of any myth:

One is always contemporary with a myth, during the time when one repeats it or imitates the gestures of the mythic personages.

Kierkegaard's requirement of the true Christian was that he should be a contemporary of the Christ. But even one who is not a "true Christian" in Kierkegaard's sense still is, and cannot not be, a contemporary of Christ; for the liturgical time in which the Christian lives during the divine service is no longer profane duration but is essentially sacred time, the times in which the Word is made flesh, the illud tempus of the Gospels. (Eliade, 1960, p.30)

Jung thought that the religious experience often appears exclusive to the introverted view, and the credal to the extraverted:

A creed gives expression to a definite collective belief, whereas the word religion expresses a subjective relationship to certain metaphysical, extramundane factors. (Jung 10, p.257)

Jung too is often accused of being ahistorical, preferring to deal with eternal verities than the particulars of history, and this is an important aspect of Thomas' work:

There was a background of guns and bombs.  
Bullies maintained their power  
For a season. Cash had its say  
Still in the disposal of seats, titles.

One voice, quieter than the rest,  
Was heard, bemoaning the loss  
Of beauty. Men put it on tape  
For the future, a lesson in style.

The last line of this poem, 'The Times' recalls the importance Kierkegaard sees in the 'how' rather than the 'what' (style rather than content). But here the 'what' is also important, the 'beauty' (or poetic truth--see my brief discussion of 'Petition' earlier). But the title and the generalized nature of the first stanza point to time-bound 'truths' as trivial and repetitive and which ought to defer, as 'Petition' has it, to 'beauty'. This

is the transhistorical truth which 'men' put off 'For the future', although it exists in the poem, an idea which will be returned to shortly. But, for Thomas it is often only outside the historical that reality can be sought, in the solitude mentioned earlier, as in 'Selah'<sup>5</sup>:

The nations proceeded  
to the manufacture of the angels  
with steel wings, hurrying  
to and fro with their unnecessary  
message. Beyond the horizons  
of our knowledge, in deserts  
not of its own making, the self  
sought for the purpose that had brought it  
there.

The idea of 'the self' is one to which I will return, but it is clear that it is only away from the 'unnecessary/ message' of world events that meaning is to be sought, a message reiterated elsewhere, as here, for example, in 'Now':

Is it  
sufficient for us  
that we, like that minority  
of our fellows in the hurrying  
centuries, turning aside  
re-enter the garden?

In this particular poem Thomas takes this idea one stage further, as will be observed in my discussion of it in the next chapter, but one final example, 'The Bright Field' has a particular relevance to Kierkegaard:

Life is not hurrying  
on to a receding future, nor hankering after  
an imagined past. It is the turning  
aside like Moses to the miracle  
of the lit bush, to a brightness  
that seemed as transitory as your youth  
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.

For Thomas, this 'turning/ aside' is important, as it is for Jung, Campbell and others, and is something

expressive of man's dual nature as temporal creature with intimations of immortality:

But creatures of time and space as we all are, we are yet haunted by dreams of eternity and we have a conception of ourselves as arresting the flow of time...we should try to formalise and crystallise or trap this evanescent experience, and arrest it and take it out of the time-flow. And this is surely what the better poets are able to do. (Thomas, 1983, p.112)

Kierkegaard would rather talk "psychologically, not world-historically, by evoking an awareness of how much must be lived" (Kierkegaard, 1983, p.361), and this attitude seems to favour the poetic:

"Aristotle remarks in his Poetics that poetry is superior to history, because history presents only what has occurred, poetry what could and ought to have occurred, i.e., poetry has possibility at its disposal". (Kierkegaard, 1983, p.359)

This 'possibility' is something Thomas exploits and comments upon in many poems, such as 'The Times', which I discussed earlier; 'The Kingdom', which I discuss in my next chapter; 'After Jericho', where 'There is an aggression of fact/ to be resisted successfully/ only in verse'; and in 'Postscript', a poem which might have taken its title from the name of a Kierkegaard book (Concluding Unscientific Postscript):

The tins marched to the music  
Of the conveyor belt. A billion  
Mouths opened. Production,  
Production, the wheels

Whistled. Among the forests  
Of metal the one human  
Sound was the lament of  
The poets for deciduous language.

Against the historical reality of 'Production,/ Production', the poet is able to present the



'possibility' of 'deciduous language' as an opposing value. In contrast to the confusing, all-pervading and 'Production'-driven notion of 'progress', 'deciduous' suggests a renewable, circular and natural alternative to the ironically named 'forests/ Of metal'.

Just as Kierkegaard questions the value of 'history', so also he questions 'how far this matter of logic applies in the actual world, in the qualitative world ' (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.130) or 'the 'illusions of objectivity'' (Gardiner, 1988, p.2) and science. Thomas too, time and time again, makes a similar point, bringing 'the heart/ Not the mind' of 'The River' (a frequently used opposition in Thomas, often to the detriment of the latter) to his subjects. With regard to 'science', and talking of 'Job's position' in Repetition, Kierkegaard asks:

But what science is of such a nature that it has room for a relationship that is defined as an ordeal, which viewed infinitely does not exist at all but exists only for the individual? Such a science does not and cannot possibly exist. (Kierkegaard, 1983, p.209)

Frequently in his works Kierkegaard complains of 'an age that has crossed out passion in order to serve science' (Kierkegaard, 1983, p.7) and 'the 'disinterested' scientific approach' (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.35), and this has clear parallels with Thomas' attitude toward both science and the machine:

We are told with increasing vehemence that this is a scientific age, and that science is transforming the world, but is it not also a mechanized and impersonal age, an analytic and clinical one; an age in which under the hard gloss of affluence there can be detected the

murmuring of the starved heart and the uneasy spirit? (Thomas, 1983, p.93)

In the objectivity of science, in a 'mechanized and impersonal age', there can be no place for the individual and such unscientific notions as the 'heart' and the 'spirit':

The probes have gone on, outward into space, inward into the very marrow of humanity; and the reductionists' conclusion is always the same: life, the universe, man are nothing but elaborations of physical laws which can be subsumed under comparatively simple equations. (Thomas, 1983, p.149)

'The reductionists' conclusion' is something often explored in Thomas' poetry, a frequent tactic being bald expression of the reductionist 'facts' which work from this point of view towards some resolution, however provisional, that is not reductionist. 'Bravo!' begins in this way:

Oh, I know it and don't  
care. I know there is nothing in me  
but cells and chromosomes  
waiting to beget chromosomes  
and cells.

This poem works toward finding a response to this attitude in 'a woman/ I know' (a muse or perhaps an anima figure, the soul), but there is even resistance in this blunt opening. First, and obviously, 'Bravo!' is a poem, and therefore by its very form can be seen to be fighting against this attitude. Secondly, the exasperated 'Oh' is very human, an individual gesture made by a human being, and not by 'cells and chromosomes'. Thirdly, by using 'cells and chromosomes'<sup>6</sup> and by playing with them (inverting them for poetic effect, fitting the scientific terms to the lyrical line), Thomas is making the

reductionist view subservient to the poetic. And finally, there is that marvelous word 'beget', more suited to a biblical genealogy than to a reductionist's view of biological processes, implying that science may have replaced religion as humanity's faith or that science itself is mythological.

These last two points, that science has replaced religion and might be a religion in itself is another issue Thomas explores, here, for example, in 'No Answer':

Life is too short for  
Religion; it takes time  
To prepare a sacrifice  
For the God. Give yourself  
To science that reveals  
All, asking no pay  
For it.

Thomas' tight-lipped irony, saying that 'Life is too short for/ Religion' and then recommending science in religious terms reminds of Mumford's 'myth of the machine':

the notion that this machine was, by its very nature, absolutely irresistible--and yet, provided one did not oppose it, ultimately beneficent. (Mumford, 1967, p.224)

'No Answer' provides an answer to this suspicion of beneficence:

The nucleus  
In the atom awaits  
Our bidding. Come forth,  
We cry, and the dust spreads  
Its carpet. Over the creeds  
And masterpieces our wheels go.

The suggestion is that it is the unguarded view of the machine and science as beneficent that is most dangerous, a complacent attitude to mechanization. Perhaps this is the point behind the mythology of science, that a one-

sided view suppresses and makes dangerous the other elements pertinent to a more balanced judgement, as in archetypal theory:

The two poles of civilization, then, are mechanically organized work and mechanically organized destruction and extermination. (Mumford, 1967, p.221)

For Mumford, the machine and mechanization have a very long history because 'the great labor machine' of ancient societies 'was in every aspect a genuine machine' (Mumford, 1967, p.191), but one which, as it does now, needed a mythical dimension (the beneficence) to support it since mechanized life needs individuals to have 'submissive faith and unqualified obedience' (Mumford, 1967, p.190). Mumford's one pole cannot exist, it seems, without the other and, as must be obvious to anyone living in the twentieth century, the possibility of the latter shows no sign of being left behind by 'civilization' without radical re-orientation of society. Equally, Mumford sees 'the human machine' as having 'two aspects: one negative, coercive, and too often destructive; the other positive, life-promoting, constructive' (Mumford, 1967, p.191). Thomas' anti-machine stance might, therefore, be regarded as compensatory, an attempt to balance the naive and one-sided view of many that the machine and mechanized life is an unchallengable worker of wonders, an attempt to restore the archetype to its full ambiguity. Frye makes this point when talking about the anti-mechanistic 'Luddite tendency' among poets:

The Luddite tendency is really a protest against the mechanical dehumanizing of life... and it only looks reactionary when its opposite is assumed to be beneficent. (Frye, 1983, p.89)

Thomas too looks at the possibility of 'organized destruction and extermination', in 'The Hearth', for example, where, as in 'Bravo!', it is personal love that provides resistance and is contrasted to those outside 'this small room' and 'our love':

the victims  
Of time, travellers  
To a new Bethlehem, statesmen  
And scientists with their hands full  
Of the gifts that destroy.

Equally, in a few poems, the other side of science, the beneficent side, is looked at, Thomas being able to acknowledge both sides of the archetype, in 'The Kingdom', for example, where 'industry is for mending/ The bent bones and the minds fractured/ By life'. At first 'The Kingdom' is, like Abercuawg (to be explored in my next chapter) 'a long way off' and seemingly fantastic, but:

to get  
There takes no time and admission  
Is free, if you will purge yourself  
Of desire, and present yourself with  
Your need only and the simple offering  
Of your faith, green as a leaf.

The poem insists on the 'you', and it is the individual, as so often in Thomas, that presents the greatest resistance to mechanization and who maintains the principle of 'The Kingdom'.

In 'Postscript', as already noted, it is specifically 'The poets' who provide this marginal resistance:

Among the forests  
Of metal the one human  
Sound was the lament of  
The poets for deciduous language.

Against the metallic forests 'deciduous' language, or poetry, eschews 'progress' in favour creating anew within the rhythms of Nature. This may seem merely marginal resistance, but Thomas will continue lamenting, as well as celebrating, throughout the 1970s and beyond, acting as an inspiration and support to those others among his readers who are ready to question the whole notion of mechanized life:

the critical weakness of an over-regimented institutional structure--and almost by definition 'civilization' was over-regimented from the beginning--is that it does not tend to produce psychologically healthy people. The rigid division of labor and the segregation of castes produce unbalanced characters, while the mechanical routine normalizes--and rewards--those compulsive personalities who are afraid to cope with the embarrassing riches of life. (Mumford, 1967, p.226)

But perhaps the most forthright determination to resist the machine occurs at the very start of H'm, in 'Once', a poem which begins with the word 'God' and finishes with the word 'Machine' with its capital letter, as if to express the worry that somehow science and 'the Machine' have supplanted, or are attempting to supplant, God:

I took your hand,  
Remembering you, and together,  
Confederates of the natural day,  
We went forth to meet the Machine.

But, once again, what seems at first to be straightforward, is full of complex ambiguities. There is the 'you' (Eve, God, or a lover) and the 'I' (Adam,

humanity, or Thomas); 'confederates' can have negative connotations ('confederates in crime'); 'natural day' can mean just daytime or the age when Nature (as opposed to 'the Machine') ruled supreme (and the 'you' and the 'I' could be simply confederates with each other, or confederates with Nature); and the verb 'to meet' can be read as amicable, neutral, or hostile. These ambiguities are irresolvable, and insist that one-dimensional or mechanistic interpretation is impossible, and express resistance to 'the Machine' as much as the sentiments themselves, but with the added advantage of engaging the reader, as he or she wrestles with the ambiguities, in that very resistance.

This insistence on the individual and complexity underlying apparent simplicity is in line with Jung's view of myth:

Myth is more individual and expresses life more precisely than does science. Science works with concepts of averages which are far too general to do justice to the subjective variety of an individual life. (Jung, 1971, p.17)

Hughes too, as has been noted, shares this attitude with Thomas, and it is a message Jung is keen to repeat and emphasize throughout his works. Jung insists that 'science comes to a stop at the frontiers of logic, but nature does not' (Jung 16, p.264) and, like Hughes in his 'Myth and Education' essay, Jung insists upon the importance of the unconscious, 'the matrix of a mythopoeic imagination which has vanished from our rational age' (Jung, 1971, p.213). Viewed from the point of view of Jung's archetypal theory and his theory of

compensation, both Hughes and Thomas can be seen to be reinstating 'the matrix of a mythopoeic imagination', both for themselves and for their readers. For Jung, 'the goal and meaning of individual life...is the only real life':

Scientific education is based in the main on statistical truths and abstract knowledge and therefore imparts an unrealistic, rational picture of the world, in which the individual, as a merely marginal phenomenon, plays no role. The individual, however, as an irrational datum, is the true and authentic carrier of reality, the concrete man as opposed to the unreal ideal or "normal" man to whom the scientific statements refer. What is more, most of the natural sciences try to represent the results of their investigations as though these had come into existence without man's intervention, in such a way that the collaboration of the psyche--an indispensable factor--remains invisible. (Jung 10, p.252)

One effect of Thomas placing individuals against 'the Machine' is, by placing two different viewpoints in opposition, to insist that science itself is exactly that, merely a viewpoint, agreeing with Nietzsche's view 'that physics too is only an interpretation and arrangement of the world...and not an explanation' (Nietzsche, 1973, p.26) or, as Anne Cluysenaar has it, 'the scientific and non-scientific modes of seeing the rainbow are just that--different modes, not truth versus a lie' (Schmidt and Lindop, ed., 1972, p.222). So that, even in the bleak 'At it', where God, here a God of science and determinism, 'sits at that strange table/ of Eddington's' with its 'nodes and molecules', Thomas 'storming at him,/ as Job stormed with the eloquence/ of the abused heart' is an attitude with as much 'truth' in



it as the attitude of 'that abstruse/ geometry that proceeds eternally/ in the silence beyond right and wrong'.

Against the 'inhuman' master, Science, Kierkegaard also brings Christianity:

In a Christian sense, the superior elevation of disinterested knowing, far from being greater seriousness, is frivolity and pretence.  
(Kierkegaard, 1989, pp.35-6)

The sense of Christianity meant here, however, is somewhat removed from the Christianity attacked by Hughes in his 'The Environmental Revolution', and Kierkegaard, like Thomas, often seems closer to the introvert Gnosticism (to be explored in the next chapter) than to the extravert orthodox churches. Indeed, Thomas often implies that God is responsible for or at least complicitous with a mechanistic, reductionist or deterministic world of his own creating, often coming close to Jung's, Hughes' and, here, Mumford's view of orthodox Christianity:

Now we come to one of the curious paradoxes of history: the fact that certain missing components, necessary to widen the province of the machine, to augment its efficiency, and to make it ultimately acceptable to the workers as well as to the rulers and controllers, were actually supplied by the other-worldly, transcendental religions: in particular by Christianity. (Mumford, 1967, p.263)

Thomas often seems to realise, in 'Pre-Cambrian, for example, a need to move away from orthodoxy, to find a new faith capable of coping with and opposing the machinations of the technological age:

What I need  
now is a faith to enable me to out-stare

the grinning faces of the inmates of its  
 asylum,  
 the failed experiments God put away.

That this faith is an individual one, a notion explored further in both this and the next chapter, as opposed to an orthodox and collective one, is in line with Jung's view of Christianity:

in Christianity, Christ is an exemplar who dwells in every Christian as his integral personality. But historical trends led to the imitatio Christi, whereby the individual does not pursue his own destined road to wholeness, but attempts to imitate the way taken by Christ. (Jung, 1971, p.310)

For Jung, as it seems for Thomas, with Christianity 'blind acceptance never leads to a solution; at best it leads only to a standstill and is paid for heavily in the next generation' (Jung, 1971, p.241), and the same may be said of science.

Just as (collective) orthodox and (individualistic) gnostic forms of Christianity stand in opposition, so there is an opposition in much of Thomas' work, as in life itself, of the reasoning and poetic views of life, as has already been briefly commented upon, and Thomas makes this distinction as early as 1964:

"Reason may say that science and progress are valuable--they relieve hunger, and so on--yet one's feelings, the poetry in one, seem to say something quite different, beyond reason."  
 (Anstey, ed., 1982, p.34)

This attitude found occasional expression in the volumes of the 1960s, in 'St Julian and the Leper' from Not That He Brought Flowers, for example, where St Julian's kiss had 'love that/ Our science has disinfected', but it becomes a major theme in the his poetry of the 1970s.

Poetry finds itself in fundamental opposition to the orthodox world of objectivity and the scientific attitude because, as Frye puts it, 'poetry speaks the language of myth and not the language of reason or fact' (Frye, 1983, p.84):

poetry knows nothing of progress, only of recurrence. Whatever science may say, the poet's world continues to be built out of a flat earth with a rising and setting sun, with four elements and an animate nature, the concrete world of emotions and sensations and fancies and transforming memories and dreams. (Frye, 1983, p.83)

Thomas too, as has been noted, laments the possible loss of 'deciduous language' in 'Postscript', and his poetry is seen, along with Hughes', by Abbs, as part of a growing resistance, remarked on elsewhere in this thesis, to 'the laws of reason':

Now as we witness the disintegration of a civilisation based on the laws of reason and matter, a return to the mythopoeic, such as can be detected in H'm and Crow, can be understood as a necessary quest for more primitive and more holistic forms of understanding and being. (Anstey, ed., 1982, p.107)

It is possible that we are about to see another revival of the great Celtic-Romantic rebellion against the closed universe of analytical reason...a positive response to what we witness all around us, the steady collapse of rational and materialistic civilisation. Certainly a study of the recent work of R.S.Thomas and Ted Hughes brings one to these conclusions. (Anstey, ed., 1982, p.115)

The 'positive response' of both Hughes and Thomas 'against the closed universe of analytical reason' is to place the individual above the collective in imaginative lyrics and forthright prose, to elevate the subjective to at least an equal status with the objective.

As well as the opposition of objectivity and subjectivity, Kierkegaard considers many other fundamental opposites in his works, such as "infinite" and "finite", "eternal" and "temporal"...and "freedom" (later "possibility") and "necessity" that Hannay mentions (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.20). These three particular oppositions will be returned to shortly, but oppositions lead to paradoxes and Kierkegaard's view (possibly at the expense of Heraclitus<sup>7</sup> and others) is that:

Christianity...is the first discoverer of the paradoxes, is as paradoxical as possible; it is as though it were working against its own ends by setting up sin so firmly as an affirmative position that now it seems perfectly impossible to remove it--and then this very Christianity wants with the atonement to remove it so completely that it is as though drowned in the ocean. (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.133)

Kierkegaard also says that 'the sin/faith opposition is the Christian one which transforms all ethical concepts in a Christian way' (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.115).

It should be remembered that archetypes themselves are of a paradoxical nature, and Hughes, as has been noted in my discussions of 'Crow's Song of Himself' and 'The risen', Hughes treats the cross as an archetype, just as Thomas seems to do in 'The Tool' when he writes about 'the alternatives/ of the tree'. Equally, in his 'Introduction to The Penguin Book of Religious Verse', Thomas writes that 'without darkness, in the world we know, the light would go unprized; without evil, goodness would have no meaning' (Thomas, 1983, p.66).

Man's role, then, is to live between opposites, seeking his 'fulfilment' but:

left hovering between the familiar, protean, and finite world, which is found incapable of supplying fulfilment, and a totally unknowable, unchanging infinite which, instead of coming closer, becomes conceptually increasingly remote. (Hannay, 1982, p.32)

Elsewhere Hannay also talks about 'imbalances that fail to bring the historical and ideal together' which are 'the forms of the sickness of despair' (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.23).

Clearly what is needed is a 'healthy balance' that 'must be struck' (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.22) or 'mediation', but 'mediation' which 'must be understood in relation to immanence' (Kierkegaard, 1983, p.308). One especial form of mediation brings me back to those three oppositions mentioned earlier:

A human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity. In short a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two terms. Looked at in this way a human being is not yet a self. (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.43)<sup>8</sup>

This again begins to sound like Jungian psychology, with the human being as a 'synthesis' of the infinite, eternal and free unconscious forces, and the finite, temporal and necessity-ridden consciousness. Very many of Thomas' poems (such as 'Ruins') consist of a consciousness speaking from a point of almost-timelessness ('And this was a civilisation/ That came to nothing...'). Equally, Thomas often speaks of 'the heart' (the unconscious) and 'the mind' (consciousness) in his poetry, and Dyson speaks of 'the ambiguous balance he has always kept

between the two' (Dyson, 1981, p.320)<sup>9</sup>. But with Kierkegaard again, parallels with individuation are also present where there is:

an idea of the 'self', not as some kind of substance or thing, some entity which the human being ineluctably is, or assembles itself into being, but as a 'relation' which 'relates to itself'. This self-relating relation, or self-relating synthesis, is what Kierkegaard calls 'spirit'. (Kierkegaard, 1989, pp.20-1)

I will return to the notions of the self (in gnosis) in the next chapter, but the connection to the alchemical process and to individuation is clearly here as the relations between those three pairs of opposites I mentioned earlier (and thus consciousness and unconsciousness) need a mediating 'spirit' (Mercurius) in order to achieve the self. But the process of individuation (since the self can never be finally reached and sustained) is in itself spiritual, defines 'what Kierkegaard calls 'spirit''. Kierkegaard also says that:

Every human being is the psycho-physical synthesis planned as spirit; this is the building, but he prefers living in the basement, that is, in the categories of sensation. (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.74)

These basement-dwellers are particularly, in The Sickness Unto Death, 'the determinist' and 'the fatalist':

Personhood is a synthesis of possibility and necessity. Its manner of being is therefore like breathing (respiration), which is aspiration and expiration. The determinist's self cannot breathe because it is impossible to breathe necessity alone, which on its own suffocates the human self. (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.70)<sup>10</sup>

That other misunderstander of the introvert, 'the petty bourgeois', is but a little better off in that he or she 'lacks any spiritual characteristic and is absorbed in the probable, in which the possible finds its tiny place' (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.71).

The resolution of the conflicting opposites is intricately tied up with the idea of the 'self':

To become aware of one's self is to become aware, at the same time, of 'something eternal' in the self, and we are to take this to mean that in some sense the self transcends the temporal sphere in which its existence is none the less rooted. It is not clear how we are to understand this 'something eternal'.  
(Kierkegaard, 1989, p.22)

Hannay here is unsure, and difficult though it is to attempt to correct one who seems the main scholar of Kierkegaard's philosophy, it seems valid to agree with his 'Perhaps one might even describe the eternal as the interest that motivates one to become a self' (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.23). This is valid in the sense that in Jungian terms it is the eruption of the (collective) unconscious that initiates the individuation process, the desire to 'become a self'. But, further to this, using the Jungian analogy again, the 'something eternal' is the unconscious in its collective sense. In this way, Stevens can say:

Individuation, then, involves the progressive integration of the unconscious timeless self in the personality of the time-bound individual.  
(Stevens, 1991, p.188)

For Jung, 'God is...a function of the unconscious' (Jung 6, p.243) and 'the God image...for Jung was

synonymous with the archetype of the Self' (Stevens, 1991, p.248)<sup>11</sup>:

the Self is identified with God or the pantheon of gods, with the result that both God and Self come to share the same symbolism. (Stevens, 1991, p.42)

In a way, the Self is to the ego what the parent is to the child, or, in the great world religions, what God is to man, for the ego is, in a manner of speaking, the Self's representative 'on earth' (i.e. in physical reality). (Stevens, 1991, p.67)

This is not to belittle God, but it does point to the immense significance of individuation for any Jungian:

Fidelity to the law of one's own being is a trust in this law, a loyal perseverance and confident hope; in short, an attitude such as a religious man should have towards God. (Jung 17, p.174)

The idea of 'the self' is a useful one, but the term can cause confusion, as it does in this passage from D.Z.Phillips book on Thomas:

Once again, the emphasis is on turning away from religion conceived as a mode of possession; an advancement of self-interest, however enlightened. Religion has to do with dying to the centrality of the self, such that God can come in at the right place. (Phillips, 1986, p.102)

Here, when Phillips uses the word 'self' he means 'the ego' or consciousness, and 'self-interest, however enlightened' is a remark irrelevant to individuation since the process itself requires a sacrifice of the ego 'such that God can come in at the right place'. Equally, 'the Judge' in Either/ Or, as quoted by Gardiner, 'refers to an 'ideal self' which is 'the picture in likeness to which he has to form himself' (Gardiner, 1988, p.49).



There are many parallels between Kierkegaard's philosophy and the Jungian idea of individuation, Kierkegaard stating that 'ethics concentrates upon the individual, and eternally it is the task of every individual to become an entire man' (Gardiner, 1988, p.87):

it was central to his vision of the human condition that we should lead our lives in a way that required us to be continuously attentive to our ultimate worth and destiny as individual persons... (Gardiner, 1988, p.92)

The parallels are at times extraordinary, and if one were to replace the idea of 'psychical' with 'conscious' and 'physical' with 'unconscious', then the following extracts from Gardiner's book on Kierkegaard might be said to be Jungian in content:

Kierkegaard's psychological writings portray the structure of the human personality in dynamic and volitional terms. From one point of view a human being may be described as 'a synthesis of the psychical and the physical', an intimate conjunction of mental and bodily characteristics...But to regard an individual solely in that light is to lose sight of the fact that he is able to transcend his natural traits and circumstances and that he must also be understood as 'spirit'--a crucial dimension which Kierkegaard connects with the notion of acquiring a 'self' and which underlies his notoriously cryptic definition of the latter concept as 'a relation that relates itself to its own self'...To be a person is to exist in the mode, not of being, but of becoming... (Gardiner, 1988, pp.105-6)

The 'notoriously cryptic definition' is, under a Jungian light, shown plain, in that the 'self' in the individuation process is closely linked to the mediating or relating agent (Mercurius) and is also the spur and the end of individuation. Further to this, for

Kierkegaard and again in line with Jung the goal of the self is not humanly possible, and 'becoming' is emphasized, 'a self, every moment it exists, is in a process of becoming' (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.60). By concentrating on 'the self', Kierkegaard, like Jung, can make claims to a certain sort of universality.<sup>12</sup>

Individuation would seem to be the subjective quest in a way that the objective quest might be said to be 'progress' of 'civilization'. Thus, for Thomas in 'The Moon in Lleyn', he can draw comfort even when 'progress' has lead to a situation where 'Religion is over' even in his own rural parish:

In cities that  
have outgrown their promise people  
are becoming pilgrims  
again, if not to this place,  
then to the recreation of it  
in their own spirits.

This idea of the inward travelling pilgrim reoccurs in Thomas' work ('The best journey to make/ is inward'-- 'Groping'), and is central to the final poem of the final volume considered here, 'Pilgrimages' from Frequencies:

There is no time on this island.  
The swinging pendulum of the tide  
has no clock; the events  
are dateless. These people are not  
late or soon; they are just  
here with only the one question  
to ask, which life answers  
by being in them. It is I  
who ask. Was the pilgrimage  
I made to come to my own  
self, to learn that in times  
like these and for one like me  
God will never be plain and  
out there, but dark rather and  
inexplicable, as though he were in here?

Much of what has been discussed so far has a relevance to this poem, the ahistorical ('There is no time...no clock...dateless'); the idea of answers to be found within ('which life answers/ by being in them'); the assertion of the subjective (granted a sentence of its own: 'It is I/ who ask'); the idea of the 'self' ('to come to my own/ self'); and the notion of the God within, the God of individuals rather than of creeds. The poem (like Kierkegaard) even seems tentatively to approach the Jungian notion of the 'self', the goal of individuation, being the divinity itself.

The act of creativity, of writing poetry, seems both a metaphor for and a part of the individuation process.

Thomas approaches this issue many times in his prose:

the poet would seem to be the master, forcing the words to do the bidding of the conscious mind. Yet this, also, is a travesty of the position. Words have a surprising resilience, and get their own way often by appearing to yield...we also have it...that a poem is a piece of luck. This is a pregnant statement, but certainly one aspect of it has to do with words themselves--a lucky finding or perception of the right word, the felicitous phrase or brilliant metaphor. (Thomas, 1983, p.81)

owing to our sub-conscious, sub-strata, or whatever people call that experience, or that faculty inside us to take in things and to benefit from them, and to choose the right things when we are not really conscious of doing so, it can pay dividends in a poet as it does in many other people...The people who are most likely to be inspired are the people who have had the most training and done the most work. (Thomas, 1983, p.114)

This last sentence demonstrates a stance similar to that of 'active patience', already discussed, as well as to

what was said earlier in this chapter concerning the idea of waiting and stoicism.

Kierkegaard, however, is a Christian, and one must grant him his faith:

The self is the conscious synthesis of infinitude and finitude, which relates to itself, whose task is to become itself, which can only be done in the relationship to God. (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.59)

This relationship, however, is not orthodox:

Christian heroism, and indeed one perhaps sees little enough of that, is to risk unreservedly being oneself, an individual human being, this specific individual human being alone before God, alone in this enormous exertion and this enormous accountability. (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.35)

The notion of 'being oneself, an individual human being' is in contrast to the stance of 'imitatio Christi' attacked by Jung and mentioned earlier in this thesis, and the idea of being 'alone before God' is one that has especial importance for Thomas, Meir, for example, seeing 'the form of a monologue with God' of great importance to Thomas' later work (Jones and Schmidt, ed., 1980, p.4). Thomas as a 'specific individual human being alone before God' is necessarily complicated, and this leads to the many-angled approach of Thomas' work, but the act of writing poetry itself can be construed as an act of being 'alone before God', as Thomas (via Coleridge) seems to suggest here:

The nearest we approach to God...is as creative beings. The poet, by echoing the primary imagination, recreates. Through his work he forces those who read him to do the same, thus bringing them nearer the primary imagination themselves, and so, in a way, nearer to the

actual being of God as displayed in action.  
(Thomas, 1983, p.64)

This attitude can perhaps ameliorate the Jungian position that the goal of individuation is the deity by describing it instead as the confrontation with the deity:

the self...was the end of the harsh road of individuation and the purpose of all one's seeking, for in that self one experienced the presence of the author of the mighty activity that Jung called God. (van der Post, 1988, p.252)

Thomas brings all his individuality into this confrontation, and some of his stances, such as the 'storming at him' of 'At it', where God is not even afforded a capitalized personal pronoun, or poems in which God seems to be behaving in an incomprehensible and seemingly vindictive or foolish manner, may at first shock, but seem in line with Eliade's understanding of Kierkegaard:

God reveals himself as personal, as a "totally distinct" existence that ordains, bestows, demands, without any rational (i.e., general and foreseeable) justification, and for which all is possible. (Eliade, 1989, p.110)

Again, Eliade's description of Kierkegaard's 'God' sounds like the unconscious, which is 'personal' and "totally distinct" and irrational in its orientation.

Another parallel is that Kierkegaard, like Jung, worries and warns about the lack of the inward-looking individual in an outward-looking society:

There are very few people who live their lives to any degree at all in the category of spirit...to be concerned for one's own soul and to want to be spirit looks from the world's point of view like a waste of time, yes, an inexcusable waste of time which should be punishable in civil law, in any case punished with contempt and ridicule as a kind of treason

against humanity, as a perverse madness which manically fills out time with nothing.  
(Kierkegaard, 1989, p.88)

Further to this, Kierkegaard's concept of 'despair' sounds very like 'the dark night of the soul' of individuation, where 'despair is itself a negativity... But to arrive at the truth one has to pass through every negativity':

for Kierkegaard...Despair is not a disorder of the kind that should be rooted out or prevented. Indeed, from the point of view of spiritual development, there is something healthy about it...Kierkegaard thinks despair offers the only avenue to 'truth and deliverance'. (Kierkegaard, 1989, pp.74 and 5)

This role of despair rests, for Kierkegaard, exclusively with the Christian, and 'for repentance to emerge, a person must first...despair to the full, so that the life of the spirit can break through from the ground up' (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.91).

A crucial ingredient in this 'process of becoming' is, for Kierkegaard, faith, which is 'a task for a whole lifetime' (like individuation) and in which 'one knight of faith cannot help the other at all' (Kierkegaard, 1983, pp.7 and 71), as with the alchemists and, as will be later explained, the gnostics. This 'task for a whole lifetime' is something central to Thomas, Adkins saying that 'at the center of Thomas's stark realism may be found 'a little point': in life's challenge itself lies the faith of man' (Dyson, ed., 1990, p.254), and Nichols also asserts that:

Redemption is seen in a long vista; not in an immediate transformation of reality, but in a distant vision, a long-term acceptance and trust. (Dyson, ed., 1990, p.226)

For Kierkegaard, faith has to be understood as belief ('to believe is to be') as opposed to the essentially different concept of comprehension, where 'comprehension is man's circumference in relation to the human; but to believe is man's relation to the divine' (Kierkegaard, 1989, pp.126 and 128):

I simply keep constant hold of the Christian principle that sin is affirmative--not as something that can be comprehended, but as a paradox which has to be believed. (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.130)

As well as this, faith is 'the opposite to being in despair' (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.79) and also 'the paradox that interiority is higher than exteriority' (Kierkegaard, 1983, p.69). Thus, for Thomas' 'The Prisoner', God is to be found in 'the last place we look/...his hideout/ in flesh and bone' and for 'The Prisoner' himself, 'If his world/ contracted, it was to give birth'. For Kierkegaard, faith is also the 'paradox that the single individual is higher than the universal' (Kierkegaard, 1983, p.55), a notion which once again recalls certain remarks of Jung concerning the primacy of the individual over the state. Gardiner talks of Kierkegaard's assertion:

that the truth of Christianity exists 'only in subjectivity'...As he constantly reminds us, it is of the essence of faith as he conceives it that it constitutes a personal venture or risk, a whole-hearted and passionate determination to accept something in the full consciousness that it lies beyond the reach of all intellectual demonstration and any sort of objective warrant. (Gardiner, 1988, p.100)

Faith is thus, like 'love' which 'has its priests in the poets', a 'passion' (Kierkegaard, 1983, p.32):

for if he wants to imagine that he has faith without passionately acknowledging the impossibility with his whole heart and soul, he is deceiving himself and his testimony is neither here nor there... (Kierkegaard, 1983, p.47)

The idea of 'impossibility' at first seems strange, but in the context of Kierkegaard's thought it makes sense:

The decisive thing is: for God everything is possible. This is eternally true and therefore true every moment...the decisive moment only comes when man is brought to the utmost extremity, where in human terms there is no possibility. Then the question is whether he will believe that for God everything is possible, that is, whether he will have faith...Salvation, then, is humanly speaking the most impossible thing of all; but for God everything is possible! (Kierkegaard, 1989, pp.68-9)

From the human point of view this is the 'chasmal abyss' that separates 'the most remote possibility of faith' and 'its object' (Kierkegaard, 1983, p.20). Thomas refers to this idea in one poem as 'The Gap', where God sees 'the tower of speech' approaching his 'level', but sees that there is still 'the blank.../ by his name' in 'the dictionary/ they used':

And the darkness  
that is a god's blood swelled  
in him, and he let it  
to make the sign in the space  
on the page; that is in all languages  
and none; that is the grammarian's  
torment and the mystery  
at the cell's core, and the equation  
that will not come out, and is  
the narrowness that we stare  
over into the eternal  
silence that is the repose of God.

Again this poem may be read from two essentially opposing points of view. The letting of God's blood, presumably signifying the coming of Jesus, is either God's way of



ensuring that man with his intellect and language does not become divine through his own actions, or is God's way of helping to bridge the gap. Assuming the latter, it seems that for man to arrive at 'the repose of God' the bridge that is faith in Christ must be crossed, but this entails a Kierkegaardian leap of faith, since the bridge itself is paradoxical and beyond the logical and objective understanding of those scientists of the sign, linguists, 'grammarians' and mathematicians, as well as being 'the mystery/ at the cell's core'. Incidentally there could be a pun here on the word 'cell' which might imply a monastic scholar, or that life itself, without this 'mystery', is prison-like.

Kierkegaard's solution to this problem of the abyss is through 'the absurd', 'the movement by virtue of the absurd that commences when one has reached the border of the wondrous' (Kierkegaard, 1983, p.313) or, as Hannay puts it, 'Kierkegaard's solution to the contradiction is an act of will, the choice to 'become infinite' by 'risking everything'' (Hannay, 1982, p.35). The absurd and also faith in the absurd are further seen to be compensatory (in the Jungian sense):

The absurd is the negative sign. "I," says the believer, "I really cannot be satisfied with having only rhetorical predicates for determining where I have my life, where, from the spiritual point of view, I am, so to speak. But the absurd is a category, and a category that can exercise a restraining influence. When I believe, then assuredly neither faith nor the content of faith is absurd. Oh, no, no--but I understand very well that for the person who does not believe, faith and the content of faith are absurd, and I also understand that as soon as I myself am not in

the faith, am weak, when doubt perhaps begins to stir, then faith and the content of faith gradually begin to become absurd for me. But this may have been the divine will: in order that faith--whether a man will have faith or not--could be the test, the examination, faith was bound up with the absurd, and the absurd formed and composed in such a way that only one force can prevail over it--the passion of faith... (Kierkegaard, 1983, p.262)

The 'rhetorical predicates' of objective and logical procedures of reason are set in a compensatory relationship with faith and the absurd. But for Thomas, awareness of the '70,000 fathoms' can exist even in moments of doubt, as two poems from Frequencies illustrate. This is the sestet from Thomas' sonnet 'The Empty Church':

He will not come any more  
to our lure. Why, then, do I kneel still  
striking my prayers on a stone  
heart? Is it in hope one  
of them will ignite yet and throw  
on its illumined walls the shadow  
of someone greater than I can understand?

The almost exasperated 'Why' points to the realisation of the logical absurdity of his actions, as does the acceptance in the last line that intellect is of little help any way. But once again the poetry puts forward such a revelation as a possibility, a possibility which in the context of the metaphor in the poem, has actually happened (in that the reader is asked to imagine shadows on a wall).

In the appropriately named 'Waiting', doubt tries to overcome the faith of the persona:

Face to face? Ah, no  
God; such language falsifies  
the relation. Nor side by side,  
nor near you, nor anywhere

in time and space...

...Young

I pronounced you. Older  
I still do, but seldomer  
now, leaning far out  
over an immense depth, letting  
your name go and waiting,  
somewhere between faith and doubt,  
for the echoes of its arrival.

Here there is direct reference to the 'chasmal abyss' at the end of the poem, but at the start there is reference to 1 Corinthians 13, 11-2:

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I  
understood as a child, I thought as a child:  
but when I became a man, I put away childish  
things.

For now we see through a glass darkly; but then  
face to face: now I know in part; but then  
shall I know even as also I am known.

Thomas repudiates the idea of 'face to face', and would seem to pass further comment on the idea in verse eleven that one's understanding increases with the advance of age and maturity, leaning out over the 'immense depth' 'seldomer/ now'. But 'face to face' is exactly the absurd relationship Kierkegaard proposes for Christianity.

The problem that 'man is separated from God by the most yawning qualitative abyss' (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.155) is approached by a leap of faith which overcomes the absurd and puts the individual into direct and personal (subjective and introverted) relationship with God, much as was observed earlier in this chapter:

Christianity teaches that this single human being, and so every single human being, whether husband, wife, servant girl, cabinet minister, merchant, barber, student, etc., this single human being is before God--this single human being, who might have been proud to have spoken once in his life with the king, this human being who hasn't the least illusion of being on

an intimate footing with this or that person, this human being is before God, can talk with God any time he wants, certain of being heard; in short this human being has an invitation to live on the most intimate footing with God! (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.117)

Thomas too, in certain poems, seems to enjoy just such a relationship, as here with 'Llananno':

I often call there.  
 There are no poems in it  
 for me. But as a gesture  
 of independence of the speeding  
 traffic I am a part  
 of, I stop the car,  
 turn down the narrow path  
 to the river, and enter  
 the church with its clear reflection  
 beside it.

There are few services  
 now; the screen has nothing  
 to hide. Face to face  
 with no intermediary  
 between me and God, and only the water's  
 quiet insistence on a time  
 older than man, I keep my eyes  
 open and am not dazzled,  
 so delicately does the light enter  
 my soul from the serene presence  
 that waits for me till I come next.

There is the idea of being 'face to face' with God in this poem, an idea rejected in 'Waiting', which again demonstrates the way in which Thomas is prepared to look at things from many perspectives, as Kierkegaard does. But many other issues already discussed in this chapter find their place in this poem. There is the option to read the poem in different ways, either as one of specifically religious revelation or one of a sublime experience of Nature, depending on whether the 'serene presence' is God or the light-reflecting water; there is the insistence on the necessity of solitude (rejection of society) in the 'gesture/ of independence of the speeding/ traffic I am a part/ of', which further

becomes, if this can be seen as a metaphor for time and the 'progress' of history, a dismissal of history and 'objective' life in general; there is the transcending of time and history ('a time/ older than man'); there is the idea that it is God who is able to bridge the 'gap' or 'abyss', and that it is the acolyte's responsibility merely to be in a state of readiness in the lines 'I keep my eyes/ open and am not dazzled,/ so delicately does the light enter'; there is possibly a pun on the word 'presence' which would dismiss past and future (pertinent to the 'speeding traffic') for spontaneous revelation in the here and now; and finally there is the recognition of 'soul' (rather than 'mind' or 'body') that is responsive to any potential religious revelation 'from the serene presence/ that waits for me till I come next'.

1. This shift in the work of R.S.Thomas is emphasized by the fact that the two selected volumes of Thomas' poetry are called Selected Poems 1946-1968 and Later Poems 1972-1982, the split occurring when the 1970s began, and the two volumes reading very differently. The difference is perhaps most easily noted by means of a word count, the word 'God' appearing three times in Poetry for Supper (1958), no times in The Bread of Truth (1964) and only six times in Pieta (1966), whereas in Frequencies (1978) there are twenty-eight appearances of the word 'God'.

2. I am not enough of a philosopher to attempt a definition of 'truth' here, but then perhaps such definitions would be out of sympathy with the many-angled provisional approach recommended and adopted throughout this thesis

3. In his review of Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee, for example, the last essay in Thomas' Selected Prose.

4. The Jungian Van Franz has made a similar point, saying that:

Many existentialist philosophers...go only as far as stripping off the illusions of consciousness: They go right up to the door of the unconscious and then fail to open it.  
(Jung, ed., 1978, p.164)

In the case of Kierkegaard, however, the Jungian view would be, as I argue later in the chapter, that the Christian God (or, indeed, any deity) is closely identified with the (collective) unconscious.

5. The word 'selah' is 'a musical or liturgical direction of some kind, perhaps indicating pause or rest'. Blake used the word in his 'Jerusalem' (Blake, 1966, p.649), and Thomas has another poem, in his Later Poems, called 'Selah!'. Also, in 'Minor', from Between Here and Now, Thomas says that 'Nietzsche had a word/ for it', and Nietzsche too used the word 'selah':

You desert maidens,  
At whose feet I,  
For the first time,  
A European under palm-trees,  
Am permitted to sit. Selah.  
(Nietzsche, 1969, p.315)

That this is the word Thomas might imply in 'Minor' is supported by the fact that Nietzsche's poem seems to have fed directly into 'Selah' where, 'in deserts/ not of its own making', the (European) 'self/ sought for the purpose that had brought it there'.

6. In a 1964 essay Thomas remarks, concerning 'technical names', that:

One of the great questions facing the poet is: Can significant poetry be made with these new words and terms? In theory the answer is frequently an affirmative one. People say: "I don't see why not". They quote words such as chromosomes as being actually attractive. My own position is usually to allow this as a

legitimate theory, but to ask in practice,  
 "Where are the poems?" (Thomas, 1983, p.85)

7. Jung often quotes Heraclitus with approval, especially concerning enantiodromia and paradoxes. For example, under an entry for Enantiodromia in his 'Definitions' section of Psychological Types, several quotations from Heraclitus appear, including these two:

Mortals are immortals and immortals are mortals, the one living the others' death and dying the others' life.

The way up and the way down are the same.  
 (Jung 6, p.426)

8. In his introduction to this volume, Hannay points out, regarding 'eternal' and 'temporal' that 'in the opening passage these are unaccountably reversed' (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.20).

9. Strangely enough, Nietzsche, who does not seem to have been particularly fond of Kierkegaard (Nietzsche, 1969, p.339), also speaks of 'the Self' which 'rules and is also the Ego's ruler', although Nietzsche's concept seems closer to the body (unconscious) than to a balanced relationship between the conscious ego (mind) and body (heart) (Nietzsche, 1969, p.62).

10. Hannay's footnote regarding this passage remarks that:

Appropriately here, the Danish for 'breathing in' (inaande) and 'breathing out' (udaande), like the English 'aspiration' (or 'inspiration') and 'expiration', includes the word for spirit (Aand). (Kierkegaard, 1989, p.171)

11. Jung often stated this point baldly:

A mind that is still childish thinks of the gods as metaphysical entities existing in their own right, or else regards them as playful or superstitious inventions...the gods are without doubt personifications of psychic forces. (Jung 10, p.185)

Jungians clearly recognize that this is a touchy issue, especially for Christians. Von Franz, for example, says:

If someone objects that there is a religious reality in itself, independent of the human psyche, I can only answer such a person with this question: "Who says this, if not a human psyche?" No matter what we assert, we can never get away from the existence of the psyche--for we are contained within it, and it is the only means by which we can grasp reality. (Jung, ed., 1978, p.253)

12 Jung's system can claim universality only in the way it incorporates all philosophies into its psychological categories, including such schemes as the Hegelian, Freudian and Marxist as 'true', but only true for a certain group of people--in these cases the extraverted thinking type--and therefore not universal. Elsewhere (such as in some of his views on literature) Jung's thought sometimes appears to be that of the introvert,

thus rendering his thought as 'true' as that of his opposite type, the extravert, but again, not universal. Much of Kierkegaard's philosophy is, of course, compensatory to this opposite type, compensatory to: other tendencies implicit in the prevalent social ethos of his time: absorption in the 'outward', the external; absence of a clear sense of individual identity and responsibility; complacent acquiescence in deterministic myths as opposed to serious practical commitment; a pervasive cult of indifference presenting itself under the guise of sophisticated detachment. (Gardiner, 1988, p.48)

Kierkegaard does, it could be argued, find a similar universality to that of Jung through his various pseudonymous personas already mentioned, through his 'polyonymity'.



Chapter Five: GNOSIS

Gnosis, which 'involves an intuitive process of knowing oneself' (Pagels, 1980, p.xix), was historically an alternative Christianity which, in the early years of the faith especially, rose as a challenge to and compensation for the early orthodox church. Gnosticism can be seen as a compensatory force, historically actual and currently metaphorical, in the same way as witchcraft, alchemy and Egyptian myth, for example, are presented as compensatory by Hughes:

The concerns of gnostic Christians survived only as a suppressed current, like a river driven underground. Such currents resurfaced throughout the Middle Ages in various forms of heresy... (Pagels, 1980, p.150)

Walker agrees, finding 'few unorthodox, schismatic or heretical movements in Christian history that cannot be traced back to gnostic sources' (Walker, 1983, p.163):

Gnostic truth is heterodox, and presents alternative values. It is an allegory, since it speaks in another way. It is a paradox, which means something contrary to received opinion. It is not logical, rational, or even thinkable. (Walker, 1983, p.190)

This idea of compensation is, of course, a Jungian one, and Jungian ideas apply themselves usefully to gnosticism:

Gnosticism and orthodoxy, then, articulated very different kinds of human experience; I suspect that they appealed to different types of persons. (Pagels, 1980, p.143)

Jung himself writes that 'the Gnostic movement in the early centuries of our era...clearly demonstrates the breakthrough of unconscious contents at the moment of compensation' (Jung 6, p.20). This would also appear to

have direct relevance to Jung's ideas of the types mentioned in the last chapter, and of the introvert/extravert, subjective/objective or intuitive/systematic divides, the first of these parts being applicable to gnosticism, the second to orthodoxy:

the Gnostics took their visions as absolutely real, or at least as relating to reality...The Gnostics projected their subjective inner perception of the change of attitude into a cosmogonic system and believed in the reality of its psychological figures. (Jung 6, p.19)

In Gnosticism we see man's unconscious psychology in full flower...it contained...that Promethean and creative spirit which will bow only to the individual soul and to no collective ruling...we find in Gnosticism...a belief in the efficacy of individual revelation and individual knowledge. (Jung 6, pp.241-2)

The latter of the above divisions have had their sway for many hundreds of years, but then Hughes, Jung and Thomas could argue that humanity is in the mess it is in precisely because of its almost total reliance upon the orthodox: the extraverted objective systems represented by the mainstream religious, political and scientific forces.

Indeed, Pagels reports that:

gnostic ideas fascinated the psychoanalyst C.G.Jung: he thought they expressed "the other side of the mind"--the spontaneous, unconscious thoughts that any orthodoxy requires its adherents to repress. (Pagels, 1980, p.xxxv)

Stevens calls Jung 'a lifelong gnostic' (Stevens, 1991, p.141) and Don Cupitt remarks that 'Freud is the more respectable thinker...Whereas Jung is something like a gnostic, he's a heretical underground thinker' (Segaller and Berger, 1989, p.42). Stevens reports that Jung

turned to the gnostics, but found too little information, much of which came 'from their opponents and persecutors' (Stevens, 1991, p.191). This situation has changed since the death of Jung, however, with the newly translated Nag Hammadi find, and, as one might expect from a compensatory movement, gnosticism evinces strong parallels with Jungian theory<sup>1</sup>. For example, one branch of gnosticism (there is no orthodoxy in gnosticism--just as there was found to be none in alchemy) 'shares with psychotherapy a fascination with the nonliteral significance of language':

A follower of Valentinus, the author of the Gospel of Philip, explores the relationship of experiential truth to verbal description. He says that "truth brought names into existence in the world because it is not possible to teach it without names." But truth must be clothed in symbols: "Truth did not come into the world naked, but it came in types and images. One will not receive truth in any other way." This gnostic teacher criticizes those who mistake religious language for a literal language, professing faith in God, in Christ, in the resurrection or the church, as if these were all "things" external to themselves. (Pagels, 1980, p.133)

Pagels also points to further parallels:

For gnostics, exploring the psyche became explicitly what it is for many people today implicitly--a religious quest...Many Gnostics...insisted that ignorance, not sin, is what involves a person in suffering. The gnostic movement shared certain affinities with contemporary methods of exploring the self through psychotherapeutic techniques. Both gnosticism and psychotherapy value, above all, knowledge--the self-knowledge which is insight. (Pagels, 1980, pp.123-4)

The first quotation of the above two seems a valid description of archetypes, and Walker in his Gnosticism actually makes this connection, seeing the gnostics

concerned with 'archetypal images' (Walker, 1983. p.34), and the latter quotation would seem to relate to the idea of individuation. Hans Jonas, quoted by Churton, speaks of the gnostics in terms of 'progressive spiritual self-transformation' (Churton, 1987, p.44), and in Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting, Rudolf Bultmann, who never refers to Jung, describes gnosticism in terms directly analogous to the process of individuation (with 'soul' here standing for the conscious and 'body' for the unconscious):

Man's true Self is differentiated not only from the body and its senses, but also from his soul. The anthropology of Gnosticism is therefore trichotomous. It distinguishes body, soul and Self...My real Self is always a future possibility. (Bultmann, 1983, p.166)

Self-knowledge, both in this special sense and in a more general sense--'most people confuse "self-knowledge" with knowledge of their conscious ego-personalities' (Jung 10, p.249)--is emphasized again and again in gnosticism: you must know yourself or you know nothing. Rituals are useless, but if you know yourself, you will know God:

Most people live...in unconsciousness. Remaining unaware of their own selves, they have "no root." The Gospel of Truth describes such existence as a nightmare...How--or where--is one to seek self-knowledge? Many gnostics share with psychotherapy a...major premise: both agree--against orthodox Christianity--that the psyche bears within itself the potential for liberation or destruction. (Pagels, 1980, pp.125-6)

The emphasis is firmly on 'subjective, immediate experience' (Pagels, 1980, p.132) rather than any history of events, with the self as the basis for the universal--

and the gnostic, with effort, can himself aim to become the living Christ. Churton, for example, finds that:

History, as we understand it, was of no interest to them. It was not a question of, 'what was the event?' but 'what does this mean to me?' (Churton, 1987, p.28)

In this context it is interesting to note the subjective standpoint put forward in the first lines of the first three poems of H'm:

God looked at space and I appeared...

And I standing in the shade...

Oh, I know it: the long story...

The 'I' in all three of these poems ('Once', 'Petition', and 'This One') gives a universal and subjective view of both time and space, which is again in keeping with the beliefs of Gnosticism. The various 'I's enable the poet to approach subjects from different angles and different personalities, which is equally pertinent to the Jungian idea of personality types and the many-angled approach employed by both Jungians and gnostics who 'do not speak with one voice...but express contrary opinions' and who represent a 'miscellany of conflicting opinions' (Walker, 1983, pp.21 and 11). For the gnostics, Christ was 'all things to all men', appearing differently 'to each of the different sects who so contentiously seek him':

The Gospel of Philip states that Christ revealed himself in a manner in which all men would be able to see and understand him. To the great he appeared great, and to the small, small. To the immature he appeared as a youth, and to the mature as a man of wisdom. (Walker, 1983, p.82)

Thomas' many-angled approach seems to follow this idea, allowing not only for the subtle shift of attitude of the complex human nature of himself, but also allowing for such shifts and differences of attitude amongst his readers. Thomas himself, in his essay 'A Frame for Poetry', puts forward the argument for a more provisional approach to Christ than is offered by orthodoxy:

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and for ever", is assuredly one of the hard sayings of the Bible. If the message is the man, then Jesus was a poet, and he changes and grows as each new epoch explores and develops the resources of that living poetry. (Thomas, 1983, p.90)

Moelwyn Merchant makes a similar point concerning Thomas' poetry, where he talks about the idea of 'work (and thought) in progress' and says that Thomas 'is never afraid to declare that a poem is 'interim'' (Moelwyn Merchant, 1989, p.28). In this Thomas agrees with many authorities quoted by Walker whom he sees as supportive of gnosticism, including Nietzsche; Professor Grant, who called gnosticism 'passionate subjectivity'; Solon of Athens ('know thyself'); and 'the Arabian gnostic teacher Monoimus' who wrote:

'Take yourself as the starting point in every search for the divine principle. Discover what abides within you and you will find all things'. (Walker, 1983, p.100)

Like the alchemists<sup>2</sup>, the gnostics sound elitist in that 'many are called but few are chosen', and there is something of that in both philosophies. Poetry itself might be regarded as being similarly elitist excepting that, as again is true of alchemists and gnostics, 'the

one who seeks the truth...is also the one who reveals it' (Pagels, 1980, p.131). The gnostic religion is not, therefore, entirely solipsistic. No one gnostic can tell another which way to go because each gnostic maintains 'his own independence of anyone else's authority' (Pagels, 1980, p.132), again paralleling the alchemists, but there are hints and guides to be found in written texts, such as the many gnostic gospels, for those who seek them. These gnostic gospels are approximately contemporary to the four that Irenaeus, who 'had seen that gnosticism was a holy anarchy' (Romer, 1988, p.202), chose at the expense of all others at the end of the second century, and it is their insistence upon individual and creative experience that could be mistaken for solipsism:

Only on the basis of immediate experience could one create the poems, vision accounts, myths, and hymns that gnostics prized as proof that one actually has attained gnosis. (Pagels, 1980, p.145)

This sounds like the sort of justification the alchemists found for their works, and also, as such, the sort of justification behind the otherwise potentially self-indulgent works of both Hughes and Thomas. Subjectivity can be justified to an objective critical world on the grounds of mythological and historical precedent by both poets. Finally, this attitude is in common with that of Jungian psychology, although it is anathema to any Freudian:

This religious perspective differentiates gnosticism not only from orthodoxy, but also, for all the similarities, from psychotherapy,

for most members of the psychotherapeutic profession follow Freud in refusing to attribute real existence to the figments of the imagination. They do not regard their attempt to discover what is within the psyche as equivalent to discovering the secrets of the universe. But many gnostics, like many artists, search for interior self-knowledge as the key to understanding universal truths--"who we are, where we came from, where we go." According to the Book of Thomas the Contender, "whoever has not known himself has known nothing, but he who has known himself has at the same time already achieved knowledge about the depths of all things." (Pagels, 1980, p.134)

One gnostic teacher is quoted by Pagels as saying "I did not cease seeking a place of rest worthy of my spirit" (Pagels, 1980, p.135), which sounds exactly like Thomas' notion of 'Abercuawg':

Abercuawg! Where is it?  
Where is Abercuawg, that  
place where the cuckoos sing?

Abercuawg is a lost Welsh village that Thomas postulates as an ideal, 'a town or village where the cuckoos sing' (Thomas, 1983, p.155), and in the essay of that name Thomas puts forward an idea of creativity, via Coleridge, that has interesting parallels with both the Jungian theory of individuation and the gnostic idea of the Self:

It is not merely the mind nor yet the senses which bring reality before us, but some other faculty which is both higher and older than these, and which brings it before us sub specie aeterni, as Spinoza terms it. (Thomas, 1983, p.160)

If 'the mind' can be likened to the conscious and 'the senses' to the unconscious, then the other faculty might be said to be 'the Self', an idea that is common both to Jung and the gnostics. This then is the creative faculty--the Self--and by this one gains further insight



into the idea quoted earlier that creativity is (potentially) evidence of gnosis.

Intellect (or as Thomas terms it, 'the brain') alone is not enough:

It is overwhelmed by the nature of things. The secret of life is beyond its grasp...who would wish to live in a world where the sound of bees is a series of small notes, and the smooth movement of the sea is a pattern of small, static pyramids? But that is what the brain wants to do--it wants to say: See. Here. Now. (Thomas, 1983, p.162)

This complaint sounds very much like the complaint of Jung when he talks of the one-sided emphasis on consciousness and logic he sees as epidemic in the Modern West, but also like the gnostic who seeks answers that come from within and are subjective.

The essay 'Abercuawg' continues with a further parallel, one that was noted with regard to Hughes:

Abercuawg therefore is something like the moment at which the few grow into many. It has to do with the process of becoming. It cannot be grasped by the mind alone. And this, as I see it, is where the Greek philosophers went wrong. (Thomas, 1983, p.162)

Here, not only does the phrase 'the process of becoming' sound much like the individuation process, but there is also an echo of Nietzsche's recognizing 'Socrates and Plato as symptoms of decay' already quoted with reference to Hughes<sup>3</sup>. This echo is seemingly confirmed in 'Pre-Cambrian', where Thomas states that 'Plato, Aristotle,/ all those who furrowed the calmness/ of their foreheads are responsible/ for the bomb'.

Abercuawg, it should be noted, has additional resonances for Thomas concerning, particularly, a

nostalgia for a Wales that is gone or fast going, and also a Romantic love of Nature. Thomas' idea is nothing new, of course--Blake's Jerusalem or the various Edens can stand for an ideal past and postulated future (the two Horuses of Egyptian myth)--and it is also relevant to the gnostics. Campbell, for example, cites Mann, who:

calls upon the Gnostic myth...of creation as a function of the soul's descent or "fall" before the beginning of time--to suggest that the actual garden of Paradise inheres in the soul itself and antecedes creation. (Campbell 4, p.655)

And so, Eliade can write that 'although Christianity may be ruled by the nostalgia for Paradise, it is only the mystics who obtain, in part, the restoration of that state' (Eliade, 1960, p.68).

Thomas postulates a mythical distant past and future in the opening poem of Laboratories of the Spirit, 'Emerging':

Circular as our way  
is, it leads not back to that snake-haunted  
garden, but onward to the tall city  
of glass that is the laboratory of the spirit.

But this future is the seemingly unachievable aim of individuation (except, perhaps, for the imaginary 'residents' of 'Out There') just as there is also a distant and almost forgotten memory of a time before the conscious split itself off from the unconscious and meandered away into time and history (again, it is interesting to note how the persona of the first three poems in H'm transcends time). Once again the subjective is the universal. Abercuawg is to do with the secret desire to find the peace of the distant past and the

peace of full individuation in the future, and it is to do with finding these things in the present:

Occasions

on which a clean air entered our nostrils  
 off swept seas were instances  
 we sought to recapture. One particular  
 time after a harsh morning  
 of rain, the clouds lifted, the wind  
 fell; there was a resurrection  
 of nature, and we were there to emerge  
 with it into the anointed  
 air. ( 'That Place' )

That Abercuawg is also unachievable (unfindable) is made clear by Thomas in his essay, but he adds that:

Here is no cause for disappointment and despair, but rather a way to come to know better, through its absence, the nature of the place which we seek. How else does a poet create a poem other than by searching for the word which is already in his mind but which has not yet reached his tongue?...This is man's estate. He is always on the verge of comprehending God, but insomuch as he is a mortal creature, he never will. Nor will he ever see Abercuawg. But through striving to see it, through longing for it, through refusing to accept that it belongs to the past and has fallen into oblivion; through refusing to accept some second-hand substitute, he will succeed in preserving it as an eternal possibility. In what other way did miracles take place in the history of the world? In what other way have people ever succeeded in carrying on in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties. (Thomas, 1983, p.164)

Again there appear in this extract parallels with individuation and a gnostic search for self-knowledge ('an eternal possibility'), and some of the above ideas are also put forward in the poem 'Abercuawg':

An absence is how we become surer of what we want. Abercuawg is not here now, but there. And there is the indefinable point, the incarnation of a concept, the moment at which a little becomes a lot.

'Abercuawg' here is also a plausible metaphor for God (as are the goals of gnosticism and individuation--'The High God' concept in Egyptian myth), and this idea is one that has been noted by critics with regard to Thomas' poetry of the 1970s:

The poems of the four most recent volumes, H'm (1972), Laboratories of the Spirit (1975), The Way of It (1977), and Frequencies (1978), are dominantly concerned with the quest for the deus absconditus, a search which takes the poet into new realms of science, philosophy, and theological speculation. The sense of place has changed, mutated like a gene, and the poetry's concern with the objects of the physical world is less particular, less directly exegetic. (Anstey, ed., 1982, p.151)

Thomas' concerns are, indeed, 'less particular' about the concrete 'physical world' in the 1970s, but with this move comes the danger of rambling abstractions, something the poem 'Abercuawg' itself is, I suspect, harmed by:

I am a seeker  
in time for that which is  
beyond time, that is everywhere  
and nowhere; no more before  
than after, yet always  
about to be...

Incidentally, in this passage, there is again the idea of 'becoming' and the impossible dream of full individuation in the phrase 'yet always/ about to be', but this sort of sub-'Four Quartets' abstract speculation is surely one reason why 'Abercuawg', whose content is so central to Thomas' concerns in the 1970s, is one of only twelve poems from Frequencies omitted from Later Poems. The same fate occurs to the poem 'Semi-Detached', about which John Mole complains in a similar way:

R.S.Thomas's strength has always been in his deployment of metaphor, and when he relies on

plain statements of position he can teeter on the brink of the absurd--as in the grand-old-duke-of-Yorkery of 'Semi-Detached' ("I am/ neither down here, nor/ up there. I am where/ I am...")... (Anstey, ed., 1982, p.135)

Thomas and the gnostics, then, in accordance with Jungian theory, both seek a place or state of being which is impossible to attain. The gnostics who held such ideas offended orthodox Christians, such as the young Tertullian who:

complains that they refused simply to accept and believe the rule of faith as others did: instead, they challenged others to raise theological questions, when they themselves claimed no answers... (Pagels, 1980, p.109)

This questioning that appears antithetic to 'the rule of faith' is everywhere present in the later poetry of R.S.Thomas, and is a central part of gnosticism:

The gnostic understands Christ's message not as offering a set of answers, but as encouragement to engage in a process of searching...Those who merely believe the preaching they hear, without asking questions, and who accept the worship set before them, not only remain ignorant themselves, but "if they find someone else who asks about his salvation," they act immediately to censor and silence him. (Pagels, 1980, pp.112-3)

The last phrase of the above hints at the brutal demise of the gnostics at the hands of orthodoxy<sup>4</sup>, something that demonstrates the brutishness of extroverted systems (whether they be political, religious, academic or scientific) in contrast to the enlightened introverted individual:

gnostics tended to regard all doctrines, speculations, and myths--their own as well as others'--only as approaches to truth. The orthodox, by contrast, were coming to identify their own doctrine as itself the truth--the sole legitimate form of Christian faith. (Pagels, 1980, p.114)

Thus 'gnosis was thought to be best expressed in the manner of imaginative myths', the orthodox Irenaeus complaining 'that the Gnostics make it their business to invent some new opinion every day', and gnostics had 'the gift of creative insight: the hallmark of being a gnostic was to be an 'original'' (Churton, 1987, p.53).

This is in line with many of Thomas' utterances in prose, for example, that 'the muse is not to be browbeaten into singing an accompaniment to an ideology', and although he admits that 'there is the temptation to propagandize on behalf of one's beliefs', he also says that 'this has to be resisted' (Thomas, 1983, pp.34 and 93).

These opposing ideas of orthodoxy and gnosticism appear to be put forward in a number of poems by Thomas, such as 'Petition' from H'm:

One thing I have asked  
Of the disposer of the issues  
Of life: that truth should defer  
To beauty. It was not granted.

'Truth' in this context would seem applicable to objectivity, science, and orthodox Christianity, whereas 'beauty' relates to subjectivity, poetry, and gnosticism. Thomas' ambiguity seems to be a concession to the individuality of his readers--they can choose whether to read an atheist or Christian meaning into a poem, to find their own 'truth' or 'beauty'. Similarly, the epithet for God 'disposer of the issues/ Of life' is ambiguous enough to steer clear of any single doctrinal position. At face value it seems to mean merely he who judges

important matters, but 'issues' can also mean progeny and 'disposer' could imply the act of throwing away or abandoning. Another poet, Geoffrey Hill, finds much the same conclusion, steering clear again of any single doctrinal position:

If poetry has any value, that value must presuppose the absolute freedom of poetry to encompass the maximum range of belief or unbelief...the grasp of true religious experience is a privilege reserved for very few, and...one is trying to make lyrical poetry out of a much more common situation--the sense of not being able to grasp true religious experience...I do not see why the making of lyric poetry out of one's mixed feelings of attraction and repulsion should be dismissed in some obtuse way as a failure to grasp true and passionate religious experience. (Haffenden, 1981, pp.88-9 and 91)<sup>5</sup>

If truth does not defer to beauty in 'Petition', it can, at least, in a poem such as 'The Kingdom', a poem illuminated by an extract from the Gospel of Thomas, where Jesus is speaking, quoted by Pagels:

"Rather, the Kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you...the Kingdom of the Father is spread out upon the earth, and men do not see it." (Pagels, 1980, pp.128-9)

Pagels adds that 'that "Kingdom", then, symbolizes a state of transformed consciousness' (Pagels, 1980, p.129)<sup>6</sup> or, it could be added, the goal of individuation and gnosis:

It's a long way off but inside it  
There are quite different things going on:  
Festivals at which the poor man  
Is king and the consumptive is  
Healed; mirrors in which the blind look  
At themselves and love looks at them  
Back; and industry is for mending  
The bent bones and the minds fractured  
By life.

In this way both the inner and the outer Abercuawg are sought simultaneously, and this reflects Jung's idea that individuals (rather than states) are responsible and capable of adjusting imbalances in social interaction. By sorting out the kingdom within, the adept necessarily makes steps toward sorting out the kingdom without, that kingdom (the state) being made up of individuals like himself. Dyson has some interesting things to say concerning 'The Kingdom':

That this vision resembles neither the Church of Christ in any of its visible branches nor any perceptible realities in the world that we know is likewise apparent, with a poignancy impossible to miss. Is the poem's indictment chiefly of the Church, or of Christ's original vision? A real question--yet, if the kingdom is impossible, how comes its power to haunt unnumbered lives (including Thomas's own)? (Dyson, 1981, pp.307-8)

The answer to Dyson's last question must depend upon the individual reader, but also suggest to that reader these various alternatives, thereby bringing him or her to active consideration of his or her own position. Dyson also says that Yeats, Eliot and Thomas:

All seek, through continuous interplay of image and resonance, the 'status' of human existence and creativity, opting for 'hints and guesses/ Hints followed by guesses', not for dogma, as their continuing mode...Unless we turn our back on knowledge, the movement away from dogma is irreversible, and the doctrines announced by Blake, Wordsworth and other early nineteenth-century prophets, based on belief in individual uniqueness and celebration of individual creativity, are doctrines by which man's future will be shaped. (Dyson, 1981, pp.xiii and xv)

This sort of optimistic, for the gnostic introvert if not for the orthodox extravert, attitude to the future of humanity is to be found everywhere in Jung's works,



although Jung also warns of the more catastrophic possibilities if there is no such revolution as Dyson here postulates. Hughes and Thomas also present such optimistic possibilities, but are equally cautious with their warnings, often combining the two, as Hughes was seen to do in his Armageddon poems of Crow.

Also related to 'The Kingdom' is the idea of the 'inner' and 'outer', spoken of earlier in connection with Hughes. Churton speaks of the gnostic aim 'to unify the inner and the outer worlds', and sees 'the possibilities, once one had established correspondence between the inner and outer worlds', for both the gnostic and 'the Hermetist', as seeming 'positively infinite' (Churton, 1987, pp.98 and 105). For Hughes, this 'correspondence', as I argued earlier, was to be found in myth and in imagination, which is exactly the solution Thomas proffers, the 'some other faculty' that is 'higher and older' than 'the mind' or 'the senses':

myth--man's capacity to create figures and symbols which convey the truth to him in a more direct manner than could plain colourless facts. What name shall we give this faculty? For many it is the imagination. (Thomas, 1983, p.160)

The idea of seeking God within oneself is one that occupies a good number of Thomas' poems of the 1970s:

Was the pilgrimage  
I made to come to my own  
self, to learn that in times  
like these and for one like me  
God will never be plain and  
out there, but dark rather and  
inexplicable, as though he were in here?

This, from 'Pilgrimages', again puts the subjective above the objective for Thomas in his search for God, and in 'Groping', an escape from possible charges of purely private concern is found, one that is in keeping with gnosis:

The best journey to make  
is inward. It is the interior  
that calls. Eliot heard it.  
Wordsworth turned from the great hills  
of the north to the precipice  
of his own mind...

In this way Thomas appears to portray a certain tradition of poetry in the same way that the gnostics might portray their own tradition. As with individuation, Abercuawg and gnosis are not, in the end, fully achievable, so, Thomas addresses God (whom he has 'wrestled', as Jacob did God's angel) in 'The Combat' with, 'We die, we die/ with the knowledge that your resistance/ is endless at the frontier of the great poem'. Allowing for a possibly mischievous pun on 'endless' (meaning 'pointless' and/ or 'eternal'), creativity does at least provide a frontier for combat. In both gnosticism and poetry, there are texts that are there as guides or aids to self-exploration, but these are only useful in as much as they bring the individual to a point where he or she can create for themselves (or fight at the frontier)<sup>7</sup>. For the gnostic, the fact that the author of a gnostic gospel had 'broken through the images that are visible in the material world to the invisible, spiritual world... constituted authority enough', and in the exploration of this 'universe within', there were 'no limits to the

fathoming of the divine being'. 'Each new item of information would...make the previous one obsolete' (Churton, 1987, pp.25-6), a view in obvious contradiction to the Orthodox church and its four Word of God Gospels. Thomas himself has a useful metaphor for this gnostic path in 'Relay' where the individual mountaineer:

needs some breath  
from the summit, a stench rising  
to him from the valley from  
which he has toiled to release  
his potential; a memory rather  
of those bright flags, that other  
climbers of other mountains  
have planted and gone  
their way, not down but on  
up the incline of their choosing.

The 'breath/ from the summit' might be the aim of gnosis, 'a stench' the evils of society and history, and 'those bright flags' the inspiration or guiding markers for the new initiate to reach a point where he or she can go 'on/ up the incline of their choosing', where 'incline' itself seems to echo the idea of 'inclination'. In this way, the subjective explorations of the God within by poets past become aids to the poet in releasing his own potential for creativity, a creativity which in turn will become a 'bright flag' for others. This is an idea that also concludes the poem 'Groping':

for me, too,  
it is dark. But there are hands  
there I can take, voices to hear  
solider than the echoes  
without. And sometimes a strange light  
shines, purer than the moon,  
casting no shadow, that is  
the halo upon the bones  
of the pioneers who died for truth.

The subjectivity of certain forms of art takes precedence over the objective world ('the echoes/ without') and the 'strange light' seems indicative of mystical experience-- a momentary Abercuawg, perhaps, 'casting no shadow'.

The idea of the God within allows Thomas to address God in a personal way:

Not as in the old days I pray,  
 God. My life is not what it was.  
 Yours, too, accepts the presence of  
 the machine?

In this extract from 'Emerging', the characteristic mischievous pun on 'presence' ('presents', meaning 'gifts' and possibly also suggesting that 'present possibilities'--'presents' as opposed to 'futures'--all necessarily involving the machine) demonstrates an intimacy Thomas can assume with God because of his 'interior journey', allowing the poet even to hold 'Dialogue' with his God and to arrive at the extraordinary address found in 'Waiting':

Face to face? Ah, no  
 God; such language falsifies  
 the relation. Nor side by side,  
 nor near you, nor anywhere  
 in time and space...

Young  
 I pronounced you. Older  
 I still do, but seldomer  
 now...

The obstinate refusal of God, whether inner or outer, to respond leads to combat, as already noted, and throughout Thomas' work of the 1970s, there are occasional explorations of the conflict between man and God, in 'The Hand', 'Emerging' and 'Play', for example. Perhaps the

most extraordinary display of this combative stance taken by the poet occurs in the poem 'At It':

And I would have  
things to say to this God  
at the judgement, storming at him,  
as Job stormed with the eloquence  
of the abused heart.

Such a position, from the point of view of orthodoxy, is unthinkable, so that even the sympathetic D.Z. Phillips can sometimes object, as he does with 'an extremely harsh poem, The Calling', saying that 'here, the poem is not found in the pain, but adds to it' (Phillips, 1982, p.187). But for Thomas, contemplation of the outer world of science and history frequently leads to a negative view of the world and of God. Indeed, Wilson goes so far as to suspect that if Thomas 'wasn't a priest he would dismiss God with the same scorn he lavishes on invading tourists' (Anstey, ed., 1982, p.68) and Dyson wonders of 'Amen', 'what poet or sceptic could write a more effective anti-Christian poem' (Dyson, 1981, p.316). Thomas himself puts forward the interesting possibility 'that the poetic persona can be compensatory' (Thomas, 1983, p.75), but also puts a negative view of God into the context of religious experience as a whole, avoiding the charge of one-sidedness, in his 'Introduction to 'The Penguin Book of Religious Verse'':

Without darkness, in the world we know, the light would go unprized; without evil, goodness would have no meaning. Over every poet's door is nailed Keats's saying about negative capability. Poetry is born of the tensions set up by the poet's ability to be "in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason". Without the section entitled 'Nothing' I feel

that the contents of this anthology would have been incomplete and its poetry the poorer. (Thomas, 1983, p.66)

This many-angled approach also answers Graves' suspicion that 'it has become impossible to combine the once identical functions of priest and poet without doing violence to one calling or the other' (Graves, 1961, p.425) since, in his poetry, Thomas writes of a Christianity far-removed from that of the orthodox church.

Neither the God within nor the God without is always dominant, however, in Thomas' poetry, and the dichotomy of the inner and outer search for God finds its home in the image of another border or boundary in 'The Porch':

He had no power to pray.  
His back turned on the interior  
he looked out on a universe  
that was without knowledge  
of him and kept his place  
there for an hour on that lean  
threshold, neither outside nor in.

This balance would seem to correlate to the holding of opposites together, a state advocated by much of the mythology explored in this thesis, including gnosis, just as concentration on the God within aims to redress, by compensation, the self-same balance. Thus Abbs can write:

In H'm R.S.Thomas was seeking to create a radical mythology for the 20th century, a mythology dependent for its vitality on...war between polarities...conceived within the mechanical and artificial environment created by the Industrial Revolution. (Anstey, ed., 1982, p.106)

'The Island', also from H'm, however, uses a similar device to 'The Kingdom' to demonstrate the more common



What is this? said God. The obstinacy  
 Of its refusal to answer  
 Enraged him. He struck it  
 Those great blows it resounds  
 With still. It glowered at  
 Him, but remained dumb,  
 Turning on its slow axis  
 Of pain, reflecting the year  
 In its seasons. Nature bandaged  
 Its wounds. Healing in  
 The smooth sun, it became  
 Fair. God looked at it  
 Again, reminded of  
 An intention...

An interesting parallel can be drawn here with the 'two  
 Gods' aspect of gnosticism if the earth and/ or Nature  
 can be seen as the second God, or, perhaps, Goddess.

Pagels in her book quotes from The Secret Book of John:

he said..., "I am a jealous God, and there is  
 no other God beside me." But by announcing  
 this he indicated to the angels...that another  
 God does exist; for if there were no other one,  
 of whom would he be jealous?...Then the mother  
 began to be distressed. (Pagels, 1980, p.58)

In this way the distressed mother (who in gnostic myth  
 has withdrawn) is the earth and/ or nature of 'Echoes'  
 which God strikes in frustration and which 'glowered at/  
 Him, but remained dumb' and which also, however, is seen  
 to have 'bandaged/ Its wounds'. Lovelock in his Gaia  
 theory puts forward a similar notion, which fits in well  
 with the Jungian view of compensation from the  
 unconscious, that 'a mixture of instinct, observation,  
 and tribal wisdom' has helped lead to the environmental  
 movements of today:

As a result, the churches of the monotheistic  
 religions, and the recent heresies of humanism  
 and Marxism, are faced with the unwelcome truth  
 that some part of their old enemy, Wordsworth's  
 Pagan, 'suckled in a creed outworn', is still  
 alive within us. (Lovelock, 1979, p.144)



Thomas himself can be seen to be responding instinctively ('it makes the blood boil') to Dee Brown's Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee, seeing the book, in his review, as demonstrating healthy attitudes to 'the living earth':

The redskin respected the earth. Although he hunted, he did so for food and clothing. He never killed for the sake of killing. He would never damage the living earth. To an age such as our own which is beginning to wake up to the need to look after the environment, the Red Indians appear in a new light, as environmentalists...Here was yet another of the primitive peoples of the world who had followed a particular way of life since time immemorial; a way of life which was beautiful and in keeping with nature itself. It was confronted by the mechanised way of life, a money-gathering life based on the machine and the gun, and like every other culture, it collapsed before this soul-less Leviathan. (Thomas, 1983, pp.177-9)

Similarly 'the sea' of 'Pouf' might be regarded as a withdrawn deity ('The town/ Was a thousand years old,/ But the sea/ Had refused to live with it'), as it is in 'He':

He holds out his two  
Hands, calloused with the long failure  
Of prayer: Take my life, he says  
To the bleak sea, but the sea rejects him  
Like wrack.

However, Thomas also, in some poems, regards Nature as revelatory of God himself (again highlighting his many-angled perspective in common with the attitude of gnosticism), as he does in 'Alive', for example:

Many creatures  
reflect you, the flowers  
your colour, the tides the precision  
of your calculations. There  
is nothing too ample  
for you to overflow, nothing  
so small that your workmanship  
is not revealed...

The poem finishes, however, with a hint (in the words 'metabolism' and 'process') at a belief which is more progressive than that of a static faith, where Thomas speaks of 'the silence' as 'a/ process in the metabolism/ of the being of love'.

The idea of the deity's metabolism occurs again in 'In Context', where 'the importance of what Thomas/ should say now' is challenged by the idea that 'It was not/ I who lived, but life rather/ that lived me':

There was no developing  
structure. There were only the changes  
in the metabolism of a body  
greater than mine, and the dismantling  
by the self of a self it  
could not reassemble.

This poem would, at first, appear to argue for the passive rather than the active, and against the often intellectual quest of gnosticism, except that the sort of fatalism evident here is also evident in gnosticism. Further, the term 'self' is used to describe both the deity and 'Thomas', which seems to imply more interaction than might at first be noticed. The word 'dismantling', incidentally, hints interestingly toward an idea of undressing or 'laying bare'. Similarly, in 'Adjustments' Thomas' plea to 'change the mood/ to the passive', of 'surrendering the ordering/ of the ingredients to a wisdom that/ is beyond our own' is balanced by the idea of asking 'for the transformation of the will/ to evil' and 'for the better ventilating/ of the atmosphere of the closed mind'.

A poem that definitely posits the active at the expense of the passive is 'Emerging', which is worth quoting in full:

Well, I said, better to wait  
 for him on some peninsula  
 of the spirit. Surely for one  
 with patience he will happen by  
 once in a while. It was the heart  
 spoke. The mind, sceptical as always  
 of the anthropomorphisms  
 of the fancy, knew he must be put together  
 like a poem or a composition  
 in music, that what he conforms to  
 is art. A promontory is a bare  
 place; no God leans down  
 out of the air to take the hand  
 extended to him. The generations have  
 watched there  
 in vain. We are beginning to see  
 now it is matter is the scaffolding  
 of spirit; that the poem emerges  
 from morphemes and phonemes; that  
 as form in sculpture is the prisoner  
 of the hard rock, so in everyday life  
 it is the plain facts and natural happenings  
 that conceal God and reveal him to us  
 little by little under the mind's tooling.

In this poem Thomas finds a perfect metaphor (of sculpture) for the via negativa, and idea which will be looked at shortly, and in it he rejects the past methods of worship (the waiting 'with patience' and faith) in favour of the more active 'tooling' (a concept not without its ambiguity, as will be made clear when I come to discuss 'A Tool', for example) advocated by the gnostics. The poem provides a good example of Thomas' recurring idea that Christianity needs to be brought up to date, transformed from the futile watching of 'the generations' into something new, an acknowledgement of 'matter' as well as 'spirit' combined under the artistic

'mind' in a chipping away process that reveals God  
'little by little'.

The Gospel of Thomas, which was quoted earlier  
continues with a dialogue between Jesus and his  
disciples:

They said to him, "Shall we, then, as children,  
enter the Kingdom?" Jesus said to them, "When  
you make the two one, and when you make the  
inside like the outside and the outside like  
the inside, and the above like the below, and  
when you make the male and the female one and  
the same...then you will enter [the Kingdom]."  
(Pagels, 1980, p.129)

This extract might recall the abstractions or 'grand-old-  
duke-of-Yorkery' noted earlier in 'Abercuawg' and 'Semi-  
Detached', but these ideas of united opposites find echo  
in Thomas' poetry of the 1970s, as well as in much of the  
Hughes material already examined, and can be seen to  
relate to many of the mythological sources already  
explored, such as alchemy and Ancient Egyptian myth and,  
of course, the Jungian notion of individuation.

'The Tool' is a poem that would seem to demonstrate  
the necessity of uniting opposites in order to approach  
God, but also demonstrates the difficulty Thomas' time-  
transcendent and universal persona has in understanding  
such phenomena:

God  
spoke to him out of the tree's  
wholeness, but the sound  
of the tool drowned him. He came forth  
in his nakedness. 'Forgive me,'  
he said, suffering the tool's  
insolence in his own body.

The 'tool' here is, plausibly, consciousness--and Jung  
uses the same metaphor (Jung 6, p.57)--unable or

unwilling to perceive the 'wholeness' presented. When first handed the tool, the poem says that for 'the creature' who 'stood up' (a plausible description of man evolving from the ape) 'The alternatives/ of the tree sharpened' on receiving 'the tool'. The symbol of the tree can be one of wholeness, as I observed when talking about Hughes' poem 'Your tree--your oak', with a stretching for the sun above and the earth below. Since the triumph of Plato over Heraclitus, however, and the increasingly one-sided nature of the psyche, there are 'The alternatives/ of the tree' and the holding apart of contraries. There are two biblical trees that spring immediately to mind, that of Eden where 'The alternatives' of good and evil are acquired, and the tree upon which Christ was crucified. The presence of this latter tree allows for an ambiguity at the end of 'The Tool' where God, having withdrawn himself earlier in the poem due to nakedness (an interesting adaptation of the Genesis story in which Adam and Eve hide their nakedness after plucking the fruit) reappears naked here to atone for the previous withdrawal as Christ on the cross. But 'the tree's/ wholeness' could refer not only to the tree of Eden before its fruit was plucked, but also to the restorative image of the cross where once again opposites can be united in the single image of the crucifix, 'suffering the tool's/ insolence in his own body' literally through the nails and Roman spear of the crucifixion story, but also the presence of man's logical tool of consciousness within the body of His church.

This 'tool' might conceivably see the cross as another symbol of duality rather than wholeness, missing the point, and creating a heaven and hell dichotomy.

In 'The Tool', it might be argued, Thomas restores the archetype from its one-sided interpretation, where 'the images speak for themselves rather than spell out a message' (Dyson, ed., 1990, p.246). Thomas' use of opposites united into a symbol again parallels Jungian archetypal theory and the attitude of the gnostics, so that, for example, 'the Morning Star signifies Christ as well as the Devil' and 'the Serpent represents the Saviour' (Walker, 1983, p.125), and Walker says of the Valentinian sect of gnosticism that:

Valentinians held that dualism pervades the universe. There is a dualistic rift between God and Satan; it is found in nature, it dwells in man. Achieving unity between these conflicting opposites is essential for salvation. (Walker, 1983, p.148)

'Dialogue' too hints at the necessity of man coping with unified opposites or non-logical phenomena:

'When does a little  
become a lot? There was a moment  
you recognized me...'

The word 'There' can be understood generally, but if understood specifically then it would seem that God recognizes his worshipper at the point where the worshipper considers something beyond the normal understanding of consciousness. The idea is one that Thomas looks at in his essay 'Abercuawg':

When do a few become many?...the understanding fails to discover the exact moment of change. It is overwhelmed by the nature of things. The secret of life is beyond its grasp...Abercuawg

therefore is something like the moment at which the few grow into many. It has to do with the process of becoming. (Thomas, 1983, p.162)

Incidentally, in this 'Dialogue' between God and worshipper, the final lines (spoken by God) echo alchemical ideas and the unification promised by alchemists, with all the potential psychological repercussions that such a philosophy was demonstrated to have in my Cave Birds chapter:

'It is not bone  
that I need now, but the chemistry  
of the spirit. The heart has become  
hard; I must experiment  
with it a little longer in  
the crucible of the adult mind.'

One gnostic, Allogenes, also provides a basis to another common Thomas theme--the idea of absence and the via negativa:

Allogenes teaches that, first, one can come to know "the good that is within", and second, to know oneself and "the one who exists within," but one cannot attain knowledge of the Unknown God...One's own experience and knowledge, then, essential for spiritual development, provides the basis for receiving understanding about God in negative form. Gnosis involves recognizing, finally, the limits of human knowledge... (Pagels, 1980, p.139)

In the poem 'Via Negativa', Thomas would seem to hold the same view:

Why no! I never thought other than  
That God is that great absence  
In our lives, the empty silence  
Within, the place where we go  
Seeking, not in hope to  
Arrive or find. He keeps the interstices  
In our knowledge, the darkness  
Between stars. His are the echoes  
We follow, the footprints he has just  
Left.

Perhaps one can imagine the main part of Thomas' body of work in the 1970s adopting this idea, seeking out all

possibilities concerning the nature of God to better arrive at an understanding of God through the discovery of what He is not. And this idea would certainly help explain the numerous poems in which God appears in a negative light:

It is this great absence  
that is like a presence, that compels  
me to address it without hope  
of a reply.

In this opening to 'The Absence' Thomas moves toward a position where he is able to transcend the logic of 'absence' in order to find 'presence' just as the writer is seen to be doing in 'Henry James':

It was the significance  
of an absence, the deprecation  
of what was there, the failure  
to prove anything that proved his point.

Another mystical notion Thomas has in common with the gnostics lies in the idea of silence, 'the empty silence' of 'Via Negativa'. In The Gnostic Gospels, Pagels considers this idea, drawing in particular on instructions to an adept given in the gnostic source known as the Discourse on the Eighth and the Ninth:

Now that he is ready to go beyond vicarious knowledge, the two join in prayer "to the perfect, invisible God to whom one speaks in silence."...The master tells him to sing in silence, and to "ask what you want in silence"... (Pagels, 1980. pp.136-7)

This idea of silence is one that finds repeated use in Thomas' later poetry: 'Silence is best' in 'Petition'; 'wise men/ Were not silent' in 'Period', 'but stifled / By vast noise'; 'Silence/ Was out of date' in 'Digest'; Cain's offerings of 'things that did not publish/ Their



hurt' are rejected in 'Cain'; God is 'the empty silence/  
 Within' of 'Via Negativa'; fish in 'The River' are  
 'Silently singing'; God in 'The Hand' 'fought on in/  
 silence'; the painter in 'Degas: Woman Combing' 'gave us  
 this silent/ music'; the prophet-like persona of 'The  
 Flower' 'dwelt/ in a soundless darkness'; the church of  
 'The Moon in Lley'n' is 'full only/ of the silent  
 congregation/ of shadows'; and God is addressed in 'The  
 Combat' as 'belabouring us/ with your silence'. I quote  
 so many examples to illustrate the importance of the  
 concept as what almost seems a touchstone for Thomas in  
 his later poetry (and these examples are drawn only from  
 the Later Poems selection from H'm and Laboratories of  
 the Spirit). This compares with far fewer occurrences of  
 the word 'silence' in the pre-1970 volumes, appearing  
 three times in The Bread of Truth (1963) and only twice  
 in Pieta (1966). The reason for this increase in  
 occurrence may well be an insecurity on Thomas' part  
 about the difficulty of the existentialist task he sets  
 himself in the 1970s, with a constant reminder of that  
 difficulty whose only alternative is silence. Or it may  
 be that the worries in 'Now' test his conscience to the  
 point where he feels it necessary to continually remind  
 himself and the reader of the option of silence. Also,  
 of course, the repetition of the word serves as a  
 reminder of the difficulty of reconciling opposites, in  
 this case, poetry and silence. Finally, there seems to  
 be an idea that silence is somehow symbolic of the  
 transcendent moment (so frequent in Thomas' poetry of the

1970s, and to be discussed shortly) so that 'eternal/  
silence...is the repose of God' ('The Gap'), there is  
'the silence beyond right and wrong' ('At It') and, in  
'Alive', where Thomas addresses God:

The darkness  
is the deepening shadow  
of your presence; the silence a  
process in the metabolism  
of the being of love.

Towards the end of her book, Pagels makes the point  
that:

certain creative persons throughout the ages,  
from Valentinus and Heracleon to Blake,  
Rembrandt, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Nietzsche,  
found themselves at the edges of orthodoxy.  
All were fascinated by the figure of Christ--  
his birth, life, teachings, death and  
resurrection: all returned constantly to  
Christian symbols to express their own  
experience. And yet they found themselves in  
revolt against orthodox institutions. (Pagels,  
1980, p.150)

Thomas, in his writings, seems (almost despite himself,  
remembering that he was a vicar) to be in revolt against  
not only orthodox views of Christianity, but also the  
extroverted, objectivized and mechanized Western society  
he finds himself in, as has been observed<sup>9</sup>. In 'Bravo!'.  
for example, Thomas puts forward a version of the  
fatalism already seen in 'In Context':

Oh, I know it and don't  
care. I know there is nothing in me  
but cells and chromosones  
waiting to beget chromosones  
and cells...

I accept I'm predictable,  
that of the thousands of choices  
open to me the computer can calculate  
the one I'll make.



understanding fails to discover the exact moment of change. (Thomas, 1983, p.162)

The explosive moment of a work of art can, I think, relate to 'the still point', a frame, perhaps, but one that is hardly static--as if the frame held a masterpiece as explosive as any of the many that Thomas composes poems to. The moment is 'still', but 'do not call it fixity'. Perhaps, then, this moment of time, as found in 'In Context', for example, is indeed 'something like the moment at which the few grow into many', and this points toward an, albeit extremely brief and local, achievement of Abercuawg, gnosis and individuation, pointing again to the great significance of Art for Thomas, the gnostics, and Jung, who thought that the artist:

enthrals and overpowers, while at the same time he lifts the idea he is seeking to express out of the occasional and the transitory into the realm of the ever-enduring. (Jung 15, p.82)

Thomas certainly finds in 'the occasional and the transitory' moments of transcendence which, in his poems, he attempts to make 'ever-enduring', 'Occasions/ on which a clean air entered our nostrils/ off swept seas...' which are, he asserts in 'That Place', 'instances/ we sought to recapture':

One particular  
time after a harsh morning  
of rain, the clouds lifted, the wind  
fell; there was a resurrection  
of nature, and we there to emerge  
with it into the anointed  
air. I wanted to say to you: 'We  
will remember this.' But tenses  
were out of place on that green  
island, ringed with the rain's  
bow, that we had found and would spend  
the rest of our lives looking for.

As with the Eliot quotation earlier, 'tenses/ were out of place', and a life which is otherwise mundane (the poem starts with the line 'I served on a dozen committees') is here made divine ('anointed') even if only for a moment-- a moment, however, not forgotten, in the attempts by memory to recapture it, as symbolized, and perhaps actualized, by the poem itself.

Transcendent moments are many in Thomas' poetry of the 1970s, and their artistic representation, and possibly Abercuawg itself, find a metaphor in other (presumably genuine) Welsh places such as 'Casgob' in 'The Signpost' or 'Llananno', where Thomas finds a 'serene presence/ that waits for me till I come next'. Thomas has also used this idea in interview with John Ormond when talking about 'these sudden glimpses of eternity':

The half-glimpsed turrets, the glimpses of this eternal ultimate reality which one gets in Wales when the sun suddenly strikes through a gap in the clouds and falls on some small field and the trees around. There is a kind of timeless quality about this, one feels. Well, this is eternity, if one could only lay hold on it. And, of course, then the cloud closes up again and the light fades and the scene's gone. But I firmly believe this, that eternity is not something over there, not something in the future; it is close to us, it is all around us and at any given moment one can pass into it; but there is something about our mortality, the fact that we are time-bound creatures, that makes it somehow difficult if not impossible to dwell, whilst we are in the flesh, to dwell permanently in that, in what I would call the Kingdom of Heaven. But that it is close and that we get these overtones, that we get these glimpses of it, is certainly my most deeply held conviction. (Dyson, ed., 1990, p.247)<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, elsewhere Thomas makes the same point, here in his essay 'Where do we go from here?', himself using the Eliot and Wordsworth examples:

Some of us, like Francis Thompson, know moments when "Those shaken mists a space unsettle". To a countryman it is the small field suddenly lit up by a ray of sunlight. It is T.S.Eliot's "still point, there the dance is", Wordsworth's "central peace, subsisting at the heart of endless agitation". It is even closer. It is within us, as Jesus said. That is why there is no need to go anywhere from here. (Thomas, 1983, p.152)

The idea that 'it is within us' again points to Thomas holding a subjective gnostic viewpoint as opposed to that of the traditionally more objective orthodoxy.

At times for Thomas it seems that such moments are all there is, in 'The Bright Field', for example:

Life is not hurrying

on to a receding future, nor hankering after  
an imagined past. It is the turning  
aside like Moses to the miracle  
of the lit bush, to a brightness  
that seemed as transitory as your youth  
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.

The 'lit bush' here sounds very much like Eliot's 'still point', and its 'miracle' is Eliot's dance ('there is only the dance'), and the moment can be related to the third falcon (Horus) discussed with regard to Hughes' 'The risen', not the Horus of 'a receding future' nor that of 'an imagined past' (incidentally, an arresting inversion by Thomas), but the messenger sent from the sun god to Osiris, from consciousness to unconsciousness, awakening the source of primordial images that is 'the eternity that awaits you'.

Thomas, however, feels he can't leave his speculation at that and in 'Now', a poem placed opposite 'The Bright Field' in Laboratories of the Spirit, Thomas asks two difficult questions of this whole attitude:

Is it  
sufficient for us  
that we, like that minority  
of our fellows in the hurrying  
centuries, turning aside  
re-enter the garden? What  
is the serenity of art  
worth without the angels  
at the hot gates, whose sword  
is time and our uneasy conscience?

The awkward question being asked is whether those of artistic (and introverted) temperaments (the 'we' in this context is interesting) can do any more than find a certain serenity in art or whether art itself, and that Edenic serenity, might possibly depend on the continuing and bloody ('sword') passage of history--hence the 'uneasy conscience'. Incidentally, although it might be pushing at the limits of interpretation, the word 'conscience', if split, can read 'against science'--perhaps an admission that science has a value for those unable or unwilling to 're-enter the garden'.

Certainly moments of transcendence, in keeping with the compensatory mythologies discussed here, are of a personal, private and introverted nature, and in 'The Hearth', such a situation is again put in the context of the outside world:

eternity  
Is here in this small room...  
    ...and outside  
Us is time and the victims  
Of time, travellers  
To a new Bethlehem, statesmen

And scientists with their hands full  
Of the gifts that destroy.

Most interesting here, I think, is what amounts to admission on the part of Thomas, through his religious metaphor, of science as the new orthodoxy, but also that Christianity itself, in its orthodox form, also brought 'gifts that destroy'.

A good number of these transcendent moments in the poetry of Thomas, however, are to do with art, despite the caution noted in 'Now'. In 'Scenes', for example, 'a Bach fugue' leads to Thomas speculating broadly and grandly:

There is a language  
beyond speech we are given to learn  
by a suspension of the categories  
of the present. Hurrying to and fro  
in the imagination, we find its furniture  
is of no period, yet all its rooms  
blend to accommodate the restlessness  
of the spirit. So in the huge night,  
awakening, I have re-interpreted  
the stars' signals and seen the reflection  
in an eternal mirror of the mystery  
terrifying enough to be named Love.

The 'language/ beyond speech' might recall the ideas discussed concerning the notion of 'silence' in the 1970s poetry of Thomas, where 'the silence' is 'a process in the metabolism/ of the being of love'. 'The being of love', or Love, or, perhaps, God, as represented by 'silence', then, seems to bear a close resemblance to the moment of Abercuawg. But also, the 'language/ beyond speech' whose 'furniture is of no period' which can 'accommodate the restlessness/ of the spirit' in the 'huge night' is a pretty good description of the language of archetypes, and Jung's description of them is worth



repeating here, especially as, toward the end of the extracts I quote, Jung answers, in part, the awkward questions of 'Now':

The primordial image, or archetype, is a figure...that constantly recurs in the course of history and appears wherever creative fantasy is freely expressed...when an archetypal situation occurs we suddenly feel an extraordinary sense of release, as though transported, or caught up by an overwhelming power. At such moments we are no longer individuals, but the race; the voice of all mankind resounds in us...Whoever speaks in primordial images...transmutes our personal destiny into the destiny of mankind, and evokes in us all those beneficent forces that ever and anon have enabled humanity to find a refuge from every peril and to outlive the longest night...The unsatisfied yearning of the artist reaches back to the primordial image in the unconscious which is best fitted to compensate the inadequacy and one-sidedness of the present. (Jung 15, pp.81-3)

Incidentally, Jungian archetypal theory seems to best fit Dyson's struggle to articulate his view of Thomas' poetry as a 'pattern' which 'always had two sides' (Dyson, 1981, p.322) or as 'bifocal', asking, for example, whether there is 'something in the Cross...which by its actual nature bypasses theology and...testifies to itself?' (Dyson, 1981, pp.322 and 304).

Hughes too deals with the idea of a poetic moment, seeing it as to do with the two hemispheres of the brain, 'a moment of total co-operation between the full activity of the left side, and the full activity of the right':

The balanced and sudden perfect co-operation of both sides of the brain is a momentary restoration of 'perfect consciousness'--felt as a convulsive expansion of awareness, of heightened reality, of the real truth revealed, of obscure joy, of crowding, indefinite marvels, a sudden feeling of solidarity with existence, with oneself, with others, with all

the possibilities of being--a momentary effect, which is the 'poetic effect'. (Hughes, 1992, p.160)

In this way, Thomas' writings are themselves a parallel with gnosticism:

Like circles of artists today, gnostics considered original creative invention to be the mark of anyone who becomes spiritually alive. Each one, like students of a painter or writer, expected to express his own perceptions by revising and transforming what he was taught. Whoever merely repeated his teacher's words was considered immature. Bishop Irenaeus complains that

every one of them generates something new every day, according to his ability; for no one is considered initiated [or: "mature"] among them unless he develops some enormous fictions!

He charges that "they boast that they are the discoverers and inventors of this kind of imaginary fiction," and accuses them of creating new forms of mythological poetry. (Pagels, 1980, p.19)

Thomas might be said to have created one of these 'new forms of mythological poetry', but in this creativity the gnostics demonstrated a remarkable openness and humility (interpreted by Irenaeus as arrogance!) in a way that reminds me of Jung's candid confession that what he wrote was not to be taken as absolute, but was there to be superseded by further research and new scholarship:

the gnostics anticipated that the present and future would yield a continual increase in knowledge...They argued that only one's own experience offers the ultimate criterion of truth, taking precedence over all secondhand testimony and all tradition--even gnostic tradition! They celebrated every form of creative invention as evidence that a person has become spiritually alive. On this theory, the structure of authority can never be fixed into an institutional framework: it must remain spontaneous, charismatic, and open. (Pagels, 1980, pp.21 and 25)

When Thomas addresses the future he is prepared even to accept the possibility of the demise of (orthodox) Christianity, as he does when addressing a reader of the future in 'Poste Restante':

I want you to know how it was,  
whether the Cross grinds into dust  
under men's wheels or shines brightly  
as a monument to a new era.

The idea of Christianity 'as a monument to a new era' might imply that Christianity itself might require being made new in order to fulfil that role, and this is an idea further explored in 'The Moon in Lleyrn' where Thomas considers Yeats' ideas in A Vision that history has its phases, like the phases of the moon, and that the Christian phase is drawing to a close:

The last quarter of the moon  
of Jesus gives way  
to the dark...

The persona in the poem is kneeling in 'this stone/ church', and, in the second half of the poem, strives to counter the pessimistic speculation of the first part:

But a voice sounds  
in my ear: Why so fast,  
mortal? These very seas  
are baptized. The parish  
has a saint's name time cannot  
unfrock. In cities that  
have outgrown their promise people  
are becoming pilgrims  
again, if not to this place,  
then to the recreation of it  
in their own spirits...

In this extract it would appear that God or, perhaps, Christ (who addresses Thomas' persona as 'mortal') communicates directly with the praying acolyte and in doing so would appear to put forward a future mode of

Christianity that relies less on creed and Christianity as it is today ('if not to this place') and more upon the subjective and immediate experience of the individual ('in their own spirits'), just as Yeats' scheme involved similar (circular) changes of approach and personality, a fact remembered in the closing phrase of the poem, that 'prayer, too,/ has its phases'.

Allchin, in talking about 'The Moon in Lley'n' remarks that 'if there is to be a religion of the future it will be something wholly new' (Anstey, ed., 1982, p.125). Thomas himself seems to feel this need for a new view of Christianity in defending his selection for The Penguin Book of Religious Verse:

The presentation of religious experience in the most inspired language is poetry. This is not a definition of poetry, but a description of how the communication of religious experience best operates. Yet it is some of the poems in this book, which purport to do this, that will arouse the indignation of the religious, more especially of the Christian, reader...I have attempted to broaden the meaning of the term "religious" to accommodate twentieth-century sensibility. And yet the interesting question arises as to how much good poetry could have been assembled, had one been confined to more orthodox and conventionally religious poems. (Thomas, 1983, p.65)

Equally, Dyson reports that:

Thomas has recently said that institutional religion is dead and fated to stay so; like all great moderns, he lives in the world where dogma is gone. The gain in realism and honesty is unquestionable, but, as he and the poets I have grouped him with all demonstrate, there is strain, as well as joy, in the personal quest. (Dyson, 1981, p.319)

Jung would agree, finding that the problem with 'institutional religion' is that 'the Christian puts his

Church and his Bible between himself and his unconscious' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.92). To 'his Church and his Bible', Campbell would add 'history', the 'doctrine of the unique historical importance of the Incarnation and the Crucifixion', concluding that 'the whole myth, to make any sense, must be totally reread--with honest eyes' (Campbell 4, p.630). For Campbell 'the Catholic' needs somehow:

to unbind...archetypal symbols from their provincial Christian, pseudo-historic references and restore to them their primary force and value as mythological-psychological universals' (Campbell 4, p.369)

With this Jung agrees:

I am...convinced that it is not Christianity, but our conception and interpretation of it, that has become antiquated in face of the present world situation. The Christian symbol is a living thing that carries in itself the seeds of further development. It can go on developing; it depends only on us, whether we can make up our minds to meditate again, and more thoroughly, on the Christian premises. This requires a very different attitude towards the individual, towards the microcosm of the self, from the one we have adopted hitherto. (Jung 10, p.279)

This is, of course, not an entirely new idea, and it parallels closely the gnostic approach and that of Eckhart, whom Campbell cites as being in opposition to the orthodox Innocent III in his 'reading of the Christian symbols':

Eckhart's reading I would term poetic, and so, proper to the character and function of the symbol, which is not of value as a fact but as an awakener of the soul; for in more modern terms, symbols are energy-releasing and -directing signs: stimuli, which, if not effective, are of no more use than a battery gone dead. Whereas Innocent's reading of the Christian myth, I would term literal, rational,

and improper to the character and function of the symbol, therefore dead, and to be enforced only by violence and (if I may say so) madness... (Campbell 3, p.515)<sup>11</sup>

The idea of a new form of Christianity is certainly a radical one for a country vicar, but many poems in the 1970s bear witness to a search for just this 'quest for truth/ I was here for' ('The Casualty'). Talking of the gnostics, Walker writes that 'Christ declared, 'The kingdom of God is within you'...and gnosis is essentially a quest for that kingdom' (Walker, 1983, p.99), and Dyson sees 'the quest for self-knowledge' as pertinent to 'many moderns' (including Yeats, Eliot and Thomas) linking this further to Christianity:

My personal contact with Christianity has eventually persuaded me that the teaching of Christ himself, and also I would argue of the later Old Testament prophets and of the major New Testament writers, rests on a mixture of witness, enigma and vivid personal experience which--if, and when, the dogmas of the surviving 'visible' churches are ignored and the texts looked at afresh--is closely akin to the explorations of our finest modern writers (ironically, to the allegedly 'post-Christian' era). (Dyson, 1981, p.xvi-xvii)

Dyson also says that Thomas' theology 'seems strange against any known traditional norm' (Dyson, 1981, p.296), although I hope this chapter has shown that it seems less 'strange' when compared to the ideas of Jung and the gnostics.

The idea of such a quest is explored in several poems, often with evasive titles such as 'Perhaps' or, from Laboratories of the Spirit, 'Somewhere':

the point of travelling is not  
to arrive, but to return home  
laden with pollen you shall work up  
into the honey the mind feeds on...

...Surely there exists somewhere,  
 as the justification for our looking for it,  
 the one light that can cast such shadows?

One interesting possibility here is that the poem itself is both the quest and the prize, the 'travelling' and one of the 'shadows' cast by 'the one light' (which I take to mean a form of unity subsumable, for the sake of brevity, under the name God). The 'shadows' mentioned are, in the poem, sometimes metaphorical ('pollen' and 'honey'), and sometimes mythical ('a shirt of fire' or 'some rare fleece'), but all could be metaphorical of the finished poem, as could 'a photograph of the garden/ of the spirit' (the idea of 'the garden' being common to many poems of this decade, with Eden often being meant particularly), especially bearing in mind the previous discussion regarding the achievement of momentary transcendence.

The notion of a quest finds a further metaphorical context in 'Perhaps', where 'His intellect was the clear mirror/ he looked in and saw the machinery of God/ assemble itself'--or it may do since Thomas evasively qualifies these lines by ending them with a question mark, demonstrating the difficulty and provisional nature of Thomas' task:

Looking in that mirror was a journey  
 through hill mist where, the higher  
 one ascends, the poorer the visibility  
 becomes. It could have led to despair  
 but for the consciousness of a presence  
 behind him, whose breath clouding  
 that looking-glass proved that it was alive.  
 To learn to distrust the distrust  
 of feeling--this then was the next step  
 for the seeker?

The complex nature of the combination of these two metaphors, and the cautious 'learn to distrust the distrust/ of feeling' (instead of 'learn to trust feeling') points to the difficulties Thomas finds in seeking language appropriate to his quest, but it would seem that, at times, learning 'to distrust the distrust/ of feeling' is an answer, although it is surprising to find a poem that looks at the problem ('Is there no way/ other than thought...') called 'The Answer':

There have been times  
when, after long on my knees  
in a cold chancel, a stone has rolled  
from my mind, and I have looked  
in and seen the old questions lie  
folded and in place  
by themselves, like the piled  
graveclothes of love's risen body.

It is, of course, wholly appropriate for Thomas to find a metaphor in Christ's resurrection for his 'Answer'.

Thomas' quest for a new religion ('Not as in the old days I pray' he states in the first line of 'Emerging', the first poem of Laboratories of the Spirit) takes place in part because God seems lost among 'the dumb cogs and tireless camshafts' ('God's Story') of the late twentieth century. But Thomas also sees the problem as to do with history in the very broadest sense ('Seven empires went under/ the blown sand) in 'The Problem':

Son of God  
or Son of Man? At Jerusalem  
the problem was given a new shape.  
The Cross offered its gaunt solution  
to the Gentiles; under its shadow  
their bones whitened. The philosophers  
christened  
their premise. The problem reposed  
over the cellars of the alchemists.



The 'gaunt solution' of the cross does not seem to be enough, and it is interesting that the poem ends with the alchemists. Alchemy appears not infrequently in Thomas' poetry of the 1970s, sometimes seeming to give credence to the importance Jung placed in their potentially metaphorical status, and it is interesting that here 'The problem reposed'. 'Reposed' is a word that can have a number of possibilities, all of which seem positive or, at least, neutral in import. It can mean that the problem was placed there (as if for the alchemists to attempt resolution), or that it rested there (was no longer such an active or difficult problem) or, perhaps, that it was redefined there (a question that was 'posed again').

If Thomas now needs 'a faith to enable me to out-stare/ the grinning faces of the inmates of its asylum' ('Pre-Cambrian'), it is in part because of the continuation of the supposedly civilizing human history (sometimes known as "progress") from the time of the alchemists into the present day, something expressed without evasion in 'Shadows':

I will open  
my eyes on a world where the problems  
remain but our doctrines  
protect us. The shadow of the bent cross  
is warmer than yours. I see how the sinners  
of history run in and out  
at its dark doors and are not confounded.

The poem expresses determination to seek this new faith ('I will open/ my eyes') because orthodoxy ('our doctrines') protects its followers from reality 'the problems', a reality that has become too much for such

orthodoxy to bear ('The shadow of the bent cross/ is warmer than yours'--a bitter statement assuming that the bent cross is Hitler's swastika).

That a new form of Christianity is required, one that is 'warmer' than the atrocities of this machine-age's history, seems clear for Thomas, and much of his work in the 1970s seems in one way or another aimed toward that mark. That he is unable to find it outside brief but transcendent moments in the garden of Abercuawg is in keeping with many of the philosophies discussed in this thesis, and, especially with gnosis. The position of worship Thomas finds himself in during the 1970s is one of probing from all angles, testing out all possible approaches at least provisionally, and pushing at the borders (a common metaphor) of understanding. This in itself would seem to be a form of Christianity, one that finds its closest precedent, it seems to me, in the beliefs of the gnostics. This new form of Christianity would also entail a new psychology, a new attitude to life, and one that Jung would argue is necessary:

Man is constantly inclined to forget that what was once good does not remain good eternally. He follows the old ways that once were good long after they have become bad, and only with the greatest sacrifices and untold suffering can he rid himself of this delusion and see that what was once good is now perhaps grown old and is good no longer. (Jung 6, p.185)

1. Jung did, however, have some limited access to the newly discovered gnostic gospels, since in August 1951 his Bollingen Foundation purchased what is now known as Codex 1, after which he is reported to have said 'I have worked all my life to know the psyche--and these people knew already' (Churton, 1987, pp.14-6 and Walker, 1983, p.187). Indeed, Jung felt that some might suspect the document as being a falsification or forgery by a Jungian!

2. Rexroth, quoted by Walker, goes so far as to say that 'alchemy was gnostic through and through' (Walker, 1983, p.186), and there seem to be close links between gnosticism and alchemy (Churton, 1987, pp.59-60). Other such connections between gnosticism and subjects covered elsewhere in this thesis have been made such as with 'Arthurian romance, the Grail legend' (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.124) and Ancient Egyptian mythology (Churton, 1987, p.126). Equally, many of the various authorities used here (including Jung) have been linked with gnosticism, such as Blake and Nietzsche (Pagels, 1980, p.150), Yeats, Mann (who 'speaks of gnosticism as 'Man's truest knowledge of himself') and Kierkegaard (Walker, 1983, p.186).

3. Jung contrasts 'the attitude' of thinking 'of God as becoming' to the idea of God 'as eternally being' and quotes Eckhart's idea of 'God's birth as a continual process' (Jung 6, pp.91 and 253). The first and the third of these attitudes would seem most pertinent to Thomas, and also to Hughes, so that perhaps Craig Robinson's book on Ted Hughes should have been subtitled The Shepherd of Becoming. On this point, Campbell quotes Dewey:

Christianity proffered a fixed revelation of absolute, unchanging Being and truth; and the revelation was elaborated into a system of definite rules and ends for the direction of life...In contrast with all such beliefs, the outstanding fact in all branches of natural science is that to exist is to be in process, in change... (Campbell 4, p.621)

4. The horror of the persecution by the Christian Church is well testified (see, for example, Walker, 1983, p.172), and Jung provides a possible explanation for the 'fate of the Gnostic movement' at the hands of orthodoxy which is in line with much that was said about the persecution of witches in my Gaudete chapter in that 'the devil is, of course, the voice of the anchorite's own unconscious, in revolt against the forcible suppression of his nature' (Jung 6, p.54).

5. Hill often seems to use ambiguity in his poetry in much the same way as Thomas does, allowing potentially opposite attitudes towards the religious stand within the same phrase, so that 'Our God scatters corruption', from 'Annunciations' (Hill, 1985, p.63) can indicate several

conflicting attitudes depending on the inflection of 'Our' and whether 'scatters' is read in the sense of 'driving out' or of planting, as it is in the hymn 'We plough the fields and scatter'.

6. Many authorities quote exactly this passage and arrive at similar conclusions, such as Campbell (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.121; Campbell 3, pp.368-9; and Campbell 4, p.484) and Walker (Walker, 1983, p.99), and Jung quotes a passage of similar import from Eckhart, which says that 'the soul is all things because she is an image of God, and as such she is also the kingdom of God' (Jung 6, p.246).

7. Kierkegaard too used the metaphor of a frontier or border, and Walker in his Gnosticism talks of 'The Boundary':

an intermediate region...which prevents entry into the higher realm, conceals what occurs there, and admits only those who are elected to pass...it is a realm of paradox that is everywhere and no-'where'. Here we bid farewell to time and space. (Walker, 1983, p.34)

Equally, Dyson sees a part of Thomas' method as being 'trial exploration...on the very edges and outer boundaries of faith' (Dyson, 1981, p.317).

8. Churton gives one variation of this cosmogony:

Sophia forms a 'demiurge'--a creator--to make something out of the mess that has come about. He organizes heaven, earth and the creatures which live on it. Most importantly, we can see that this 'demiurge' is a rather poor copy of the eternal archetypes, and is identified with the God of the Old Testament--a deficient being who seems unaware of his deficiency and is determined that his creatures shall remain unaware of their source. (Churton, 1987, p.55)

Furthermore, a spiritually enlightened gnostic 'is superior to the demiurge' (Churton, 1987, p.55), and for some Gnostics the demiurge God is basically Satan (Walker, 1983, p.42).

9. In this, Thomas would seem to be agreeing not only with the gnostics, but also Nietzsche, who saw 'the Church' as 'constructed...out of the antithesis to the Gospel' (Nietzsche, 1968, p.148); Campbell, who sees 'all religious organizations' as 'definitely secondary, and finally ineffectual' against 'the universal triumph of the secular state', and who calls for a more individualistic form of religion which 'is not a work that consciousness itself can achieve' (Campbell, 1949, p.389); and Graves who talks of 'poetic integrity', which is antagonistic to 'non-poetic activities':

By non-poetic activities I mean those that prejudice the poet's independence of judgement; such as a religious life which imposes ecclesiastical control on his private thoughts; or politics, which bind him to a party line; or science, if it is old-fashioned enough to deny the importance of magic; or philosophy, if he

is expected to generalize about what he knows to be personally unique; or schoolmastering, if he must teach what he considers neither true nor necessary. Ideally, poets should avoid enrolling themselves in any club, society, or guild; for fear they may find themselves committed to group action of which they cannot individually approve. (Graves, 1959, p.122)

As should be obvious by now, Graves is here putting forward the classic introverted view, and the suggestion is that poetry itself is an introverted art. Perhaps this is because of the role of the unconscious in poetry, creating a compensatory movement against the extraverted orthodoxy of recent history.

10. Thomas is not alone in holding these views, of course, and, for example, Nietzsche writes about:

those miraculous moments when a great power voluntarily halted before the boundless and immeasurable--when a superfluity of subtle delight in sudden restraint and petrification, in standing firm and fixing oneself, was enjoyed on a ground still trembling. Measure is alien to us, let us admit it to ourselves; what we itch for is the infinite, the unmeasured. (Nietzsche, 1973, p.135)

11. Campbell goes on to quote Alan Watts:

Christianity has been expounded by an orthodox hierarchy which has consistently degraded the myth to a science and a history...when myth is confused with history, it ceases to apply to man's inner life...Thus the Incarnation is without effect or significance for human beings living today if it is mere history; it is a "salvic truth" only if it is perennial, a revelation of a timeless event going on within man always. (Campbell 3, pp.515-6)

Here, again, is the divide between history and myth that was noted first in my introduction. Eliade cites Jung's view in similar terms:

Jung...believes that the crisis of the modern world is in great part due to the fact that the Christian symbols and "myths" are no longer lived by the whole human being; that they have been reduced to words and gestures deprived of life, fossilised, externalised and therefore no longer of any use for the deeper life of the psyche. (Eliade, 1960, p.29)

CONCLUSION

The gigantic catastrophes that threaten us today are not elemental happenings of a physical or biological order, but psychic events. To a quite terrifying degree we are threatened by wars and revolutions which are nothing other than psychic epidemics. At any moment several millions of human beings may be smitten with a new madness, and then we shall have another world war or devastating revolution. (Jung 17, p.177)

Both Hughes and Thomas in the 1970s seem to concern themselves very much with the individual and to react, as Jung did, against collective solutions to moral dilemmas:

The State is expected nowadays to accomplish what nobody would expect from an individual. The dangerous slope leading down to mass psychology begins with this plausible thinking in large numbers, in terms of powerful organizations where the individual dwindles to a mere cipher. Everything that exceeds a certain human size evokes equally inhuman powers in man's unconscious. (Jung 10, p.226)

By one method or another, Hughes and Thomas confront the gods and demons within themselves which, in the view of many, such as Jung and Campbell, is the only truly integral thing to do:

The profession of views that are not one's own and the living of life according to such views--no matter what the resultant sense of social participation, fulfillment, or even euphoria may be--eventuates inevitably in self-loss and falsification. (Campbell 4, p.86)

The societies of the Western World, with their National Socialism and world-destroying weapons, are thus self-perpetuating. Even those who, like Eagleton, seem to possess an ideology apparently in conflict with the "progress" of Western Civilization are, in the eyes of any Jungian, a part of that very process. Equally, Eagleton would accuse Jung's emphasis on mythological and

psychological factors as supportive of "bourgeois" ideals and, as Jung himself would accept, through his theory of psychological types, both are right. But Eagleton, at least in the world of literature, is of the mainstream orthodoxy which, like all orthodoxies, appears jealous of antagonistic views. Many who read literature, and perhaps the majority who write and read poetry, would share an attitude closer to that of Jung, suffering, however, within the field of literary theory from the simple fact of complexity. Campbell, for example, assumes 'the root of mythology as well as of religion to be an apprehension of the numinous' and then quotes Rudolf Otto:

This mental state...is perfectly sui generis and irreducible to any other; and therefore, like every absolutely primary and elementary datum, while it admits of being discussed, it cannot be strictly defined. There is only one way to help another to an understanding of it. He must be guided and led on by consideration and discussion of the matter through the ways of his own mind, until he reach the point at which "the numinous" in him perforce begins to stir, to start into life and into consciousness. (Campbell 2, p.45)

In my introduction I pointed out that Hughes and Thomas, and many other poets conveniently listed for me by Eagleton, turned in the 1970s away from the historical and toward the mythical, and in doing so moved toward the Jungian view:

heaven preserve us from psychology--~~that~~ depravity might lead to self-knowledge! Rather let us have wars, for which somebody else is always to blame, nobody seeing that all the world is driven to do just what all the world flees from...True, the archetype of the spirit is capable of working for good as well as for evil, but it depends on man's free--i.e.,

conscious--decision whether the good also will be perverted into something satanic...Can we not understand that all the outward tinkering and improvements do not touch man's inner nature, and that everything ultimately depends upon whether the man who wields the science and the technics is capable of responsibility or not? (Jung 9, Part 1, pp.253-4)

Hughes and Thomas are also poets concerned with Nature and its relationship to man. Bodkin cites a similar attitude in Coleridge, and it is an attitude common to many poets, especially those of Romantic persuasion:

'In looking at objects of Nature,' he writes, 'I seem rather to be seeking, as it were asking for, a symbolical language for something within me that already and for ever exists, than observing anything new.' This is a typical expression of that attitude which Abercrombie describes as characteristic of the romantic poet--the projection of the inner experience outward upon actuality. (Bodkin, 1934, p.34)

Abercrombie's description is equally characteristic of the introvert who always places the subjective above the objective (an extravert would reverse the formula). The alchemists had no problem in asserting that from Nature 'and through her and in her our art is born and in naught else' (Campbell 4, p.265), and the historico-political attitude's dissociation from Nature is in itself an unnatural attitude, and part of the dualist inheritance:

in analytical fashion we rigidly distinguish between the natural and the supernatural, between the waking and dreaming, between the factual and the imaginary. Early man probably was more the synthesist who put everything together... (Day, 1984, p.34)

There is something wrong, then, in viewing alchemy as a mere forerunner to Science, for 'the alchemist was still continuing the behaviour of primitive man', whereas



'modern science could only come into its own by divesting Nature of...sacred attributes' (Eliade, 1962, p.174). And until quantum mechanics came to recognize that the scientist in observing quantum mechanical effects changed those effects, the tendency of observation and experimentation was to see natural phenomena as separate and detached events from which the scientist was apart or even above, in other words, that Man was observing Nature as something separate. Jungian theory places the conscious ego back into the natural world, partly because 'dreams and myth' pertain 'not so much to history and biography as to biology' (Campbell 4, p.652). Religion, therefore, has to be adaptable to the growth and change 'biology' implies, an adaptability found to be present in Gnosticism but, at best, painfully slow in Orthodoxy and, at worst, static:

If we cannot deny the archetypes or otherwise neutralize them, we are confronted, at every new stage in the differentiation of consciousness to which civilization attains, with the task of finding a new interpretation appropriate to this stage, in order to connect the life of the past that still exists in us with the life of the present, which threatens to slip away from it. If this link-up does not take place, a kind of rootless consciousness comes into being no longer oriented to the past, a consciousness which succumbs helplessly to all manner of suggestions and, in practice, is susceptible to psychic epidemics. (Jung 9, Part 1, p.157)

Both Hughes and Thomas face this problem full square, Thomas often painfully scrutinizing his own religion to see where it might adapt, and Hughes bringing together mythological precedents for a more flexible system of religious belief and reflecting this with his own many

treatments of standard myths, such as the Genesis variations in Crow.

If the poets have found a way to the mythical side of the divide, the critics might find such a move more difficult since Jung's work 'goes against the grain of our intellectual tradition':

Life is very widely dominated still by the belief that rational solutions exist for all problems, and that problems which don't respond to reason cannot be real; or that their inability to be resolved is attributable to human weakness or failure. Jung once noted:

The true problems of life are never really solved, and if ever we think they are, that is probably a sign of deeper difficulty.

(Segaller and Berger, 1989, p.38)

But in this way, Jung's opus itself can be viewed as a compensatory move against the one-sidedness of the twentieth-century:

All my writings may be considered tasks imposed from within...They represent a compensation for our times, and I have been impelled to say what no one wants to hear...I knew that what I said would be unwelcome, for it is difficult for people of our times to accept the counterweight to the conscious world. (Jung, 1971, p.249)

However, accepting such a view will always be difficult:

for the compensation always makes its appearance just where one would least expect it, and where, objectively considered, it seems least plausible. (Jung 10, p.143)

One example of compensation noted in this thesis that seems, at first glance, implausible, is the return of the Great Mother. Derek Walcott refers to the 'rage' of Hughes' poetry as one of 'concern' whose 'genius is feminine, that of the female we call Mother Earth' (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.42). Equally, Jung, Redgrove,

Graves, the co-authors of In All Her Names, Lovelock, Campbell and many other authorities cited here call for a return to acknowledging the feminine aspects of both outer (ecology) and inner (psychology) life:

The study of depth psychology has shown that consciousness with its acquisitions is a late "son" of the unconscious, and that the development of mankind in general and of the human personality in particular has always been and must be dependent on the spiritual forces dormant in the subconscious...in the generating and nourishing, protective and transformative, feminine power of the unconscious, a wisdom is at work that is infinitely superior to the wisdom of man's waking consciousness, and that, as source of vision and symbol, of ritual and law, poetry and vision, intervenes, summoned or unsummoned, to save man and give direction to his life. (Neumann, 1972, p.330)

One of the most interesting developments from this research was that the varied and various mythologies researched were often found to be linked together in some way by their commentators. By way of illustration, here are some examples from The White Goddess:

Hercules...may for all practical purposes be identified with the demi-god Dionysus of Delphi, whose totem was a white bull. Plutarch of Delphi... compares the rites of Osiris with those of Dionysus. (Graves, 1961, pp.133-4)

Graves further links Proteus, Dionysus and Osiris; and Jehovah, Adonis, Dionysus and 'Cronos (Bran)' (Graves, 1961, pp.275-6 and 336). Campbell throughout his The Masks of God series does the same, here from his Creative Mythology:

There is therefore an actual, archaeologically documented, family relationship to be recognized between the mythic harpists of the Celtic otherworld and those of the Orphic and Gnostic mysteries. Furthermore...there is evidence as well of a generic kinship of the classical mystery cults...with the grandiose

Egyptian mythic complex of that dying god Osiris... (Campbell 4, p.203)

in Wolfram's Castle of the Grail...Celtic, Oriental, alchemical, and Christian features are combined in a communion ritual of unorthodox form and sense... (Campbell 4, p.454)

One idea behind these linkages of occult and mystical phenomena is the idea that there is an underground tradition, something Hughes calls 'that rejected, subterranean, heretical tradition' (Hughes, 1992, p.349), an alternative history for humanity. This history runs parallel to and compensates the more usual understanding of history with its politics of nations. Campbell refers to 'the secret stream, below ground' (Campbell 4, p.109) and quotes Schaefer:

history is the interaction of power, on the one hand--its establishment, maintenance, and increase--and those counterforces, on the other. Various names have been given to the latter--of which the simplest and most inclusive is love...Meaning is then sought no longer in the organized powers of a state, the domination of the governed by their masters, but in individuals, giving and welcoming love. (Campbell 4, pp.386-7)

This 'secret stream' has its temporal manifestations in many of the mystical and mythological traditions cited in earlier chapters, and might be described as the unconscious history of humankind, as opposed to the conscious history found in most history books:

our history is a progression on two levels--conscious and unconscious, a manifest and a latent level. The manifest level provides all the plausible rational justifications and excuses for the wars, revolutions and disasters inflicted on men in their collective and private lives. But in reality it is this other latent level where, unrecognized, the real instigators and conspirators against too narrow and rigid a conscious rule are to be found...

The answer, as Jung saw it, was to abolish tyranny, to enthrone the two opposites side by side in the service of the master pattern, not opposing or resisting evil but transforming and redeeming it. These two opposites in the negations of our time are turned into tragic enemies. But truly seen, psychologically, and perhaps best defined in the non-emotive terms of physics, they are like the negative and positive inductions of energy observed in the dynamics of electricity. They are the two parallel and opposite streams without which the flash of lightning, always the symbol of awareness made imperative, was impossible. (van der Post, 1988, pp.216-7)

For Jung, however, the conscious history had got out of hand, leading to the modern day problems discussed earlier in this thesis, and repeatedly in his work Jung stresses that 'the bettering of a general ill begins with the individual' and that 'it is...a hopeless undertaking to stake everything on collective recipes and procedures':

The tempo of the development of consciousness through science and technology was too rapid and left the unconscious, which could no longer keep up with it, far behind, thereby forcing it into a defensive position which expresses itself in a universal will to destruction. The political and social isms of our day preach every conceivable ideal, but, under this mask, they pursue the goal of lowering the level of our culture by restricting or altogether inhibiting the possibilities of individual development...It remains to be seen whether this experience of degradation and slavery will once more raise a cry for greater spiritual freedom. (Jung 9, Part 1, p.349)

Eisler provides an answer to Jung's query in terms that have relevance to both Hughes' ecological concerns and Thomas' preoccupation with nature:

There is today much talk of a new spirituality, of an evolving high consciousness, not only as a passport to a better life after death, but as a prerequisite for sustaining and enhancing life on this Earth...women and men all over the world are reclaiming our most ancient

consciousness--the consciousness of our oneness with one another and our Mother Earth. We see how the leading edge social movements of our time--the peace, feminist, and ecology movements, and all the modern movements for social and economic justice--are deeply rooted...in the original direction of our cultural evolution. (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, pp.20-1)

But this tradition also has relevance to the individual since each individual partakes, through the collective unconscious, of the unconscious history. This underground history therefore presents a potential for transformation to both social and psychological areas of concern:

in the very depths of the unconscious, processes occur which bear an astonishing resemblance to the stages in a spiritual operation--gnosis, mysticism, alchemy--which does not occur in the world of profane experience, and which, on the contrary, makes a clean break with the profane world. In other words, we are in the presence of a strange solidarity of structure between the products of the 'unconscious' (dreams, awakened dreams, hallucinations, etc.) and those experiences which, by the very fact that they are outside the categories of the profane and desanctified world, may be considered as belonging to a 'trans-consciousness' (mystical, alchemical experiences, etc.).. (Eliade, 1962, p.223)

This unconscious tradition, as has been noted, is compensatory to the conscious attitude, and closely involved with it is the Jungian concept of the collective unconscious. For Jung it is the poet who can 'fathom and read the collective unconscious':

They are always the first to divine the darkly moving mysterious currents and to express them, as best they can, in symbols that speak to us. They make known, like true prophets, the stirrings of the collective unconscious or, in the language of the Old Testament, "the will of God," which in the course of time must inevitably come to the surface as a collective phenomenon. (Jung 6, p.190)

Hughes deals with Shakespeare in much this way, seeing in his work mythological motifs that find their way into the English Civil War, and both Hughes and Thomas deal with ecological concerns before such issues became such a prominent feature of political life at the end of the twentieth century. What both Hughes and Thomas show is that humanity has the potential either to condemn itself to a rigid, mechanical and ultimately self-destructive future, or to adapt and redeem itself by ridding itself of its one-sided attitude. This potential is presented to humanity as a whole by nature, and to each individual by the unconscious:

The unconscious is pure nature, and, like nature, pours out its gifts in profusion. But left to itself and without the human response from consciousness, it can (again like nature) destroy its own gifts and sooner or later sweep them into annihilation. (Jung, ed., 1978, p.297)

Lovelock in his Gaia theory warns that Gaia will survive but that, unless humanity re-orientates itself to a less one-sided stance, humanity might no longer have a role to play. Eisler too says that 'ours is a time' where 'our Great Mother Earth', if the necessary 'paradigm shift' is not made, 'will no longer tolerate a species that has so vilely turned against itself and all life' (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.20). Humanity overlooks nature, both inner and outer nature, at its peril:

No one can overlook either the dynamism or the imagery of the instincts without the gravest injury to himself. Violation or neglect of instinct has painful consequences of a physiological and psychological nature for whose treatment medical help, above all, is needed. (Jung 10, p.290)

Jung himself, as well as many poets, is largely responsible for examining again 'the imagery of the instincts', and at the end of an essay finished in the last month of his life, 'his legacy to the broad reading public' (Jung, ed., 1978, p.xii), Jung writes:

This modern standpoint is surely one-sided and unjust. It does not even accord with the known facts. Our actual knowledge of the unconscious shows that it is a natural phenomenon and that, like Nature herself, it is at least neutral. It contains all aspects of human nature--light and dark, beautiful and ugly, good and evil, profound and silly. The study of individual, as well as of collective, symbolism is an enormous task, and one that has not yet been mastered. But a beginning has been made at last. The early results are encouraging, and they seem to indicate an answer to many so far unanswered questions of present-day mankind. (Jung, ed., 1978, p.94)

Everywhere in the researches done for this thesis, various authorities cite two different worlds pertaining to human existence, two worlds which stand in opposition:

between the individual and the multitude, a man's integrity and his society, the inward and the outer, categorical and contingent worlds of experience and commitment, there is indeed an opposition, as deep as to the ground of being. (Campbell 4, p.320)

These two worlds are variously described and labelled, and a few examples (an exhaustive list would be long indeed) might help illuminate both their range and fundamental opposition. Frye talks in terms of myths of concern and freedom (Frye, 1983, p.156); Campbell of 'critical-intellectual faculties...over the lyric-instinctual'; and Mann, quoted by Campbell, of '"solar worship, the religion of fatherly, masculine light"' in opposition to '"Romanticism...linked to all those mythic



mother and lunar cults...this general lunar world-view"  
(Campbell 4, pp.378 and 361-2).

Many such oppositions have been examined in this thesis, such as that of the introvert and the extravert, subjective and objective views, and the unconscious and conscious minds:

we have a right on purely empirical grounds to treat the contents of the unconscious as just as real as the things of the outside world, even though these two realities are mutually contradictory and appear to be entirely different in their natures. But to subordinate one reality to the other would be an altogether unjustifiable presumption. (Jung 6, p.168)

This unconscious world relates to what Frye calls 'the imaginative world of the artist', as opposed to 'the intelligible world of the thinker':

This world is frequently called (in Buddhism, for example) an unborn world, a world that never quite enters existence. Its presence, however, or, more accurately, the lively feeling of its absence, is what accounts for the quality of pleasure in the arts. (Frye, 1983, p.168)

This 'unborn world' and 'the lively feeling of its absence' has obvious relevance to Thomas' 'Abercuawg', and Campbell also talks of the two 'mutually repellent' and 'opposed hemispheres' of 'individual and group values' (Campbell 4, p.314). Eliot finds a concise expression for the attitude of the two different worlds:

We have a mental habit which makes it much easier for us to explain the miraculous in natural terms than to explain the natural in miraculous terms: yet the latter is as necessary as the former. (Eliot, 1957, p.123)

Both Hughes and Thomas in the 1970s 'explain the natural in miraculous terms', but, as Eliot observes, in the end

both views and both worlds are necessary to human existence.

The two worlds can meet, in Eliot's 'still point', in Thomas' various Abercuawgian moments, and in the cooperation of conscious and unconscious in the process of individuation:

Every event in every individual life must then be implicated in two fundamentally different orders of relationship: first, in the objective, causal order of the course of nature, and second, in a subjective order relevant only to the experiencing individual himself and as subjective, consequently, as his dreams--where the sequence and content of the occurrences are as predetermined as the scenes of a drama, and, indeed, in the same way, namely, by plan of the author. However, that these two sorts of relationship should exist together, and in such a way that every event must be a link simultaneously in two completely different chains with the two conjoining perfectly, the fate of each thus harmonizing with the fate of every other, each the hero of his own drama and yet an actor in all the rest: this is certainly something that surpasses our comprehension, and can be imagined as possible only in terms of the most miraculous harmonia praestabilita. (Campbell 4, p.344)

Perhaps, as with the gnostics, one day Christianity will find its way to the more satisfactory position of 'the integration of the Lord and the Devil' (Russell, 1977, p.31), for it is in the assimilation of opposites that any hope seems to lie. Jung speaks of the need of a 'mediating standpoint' (Jung 6, p.51) between these worlds, although the difficulty here, at least for the conscious ego, is that 'this conflict cannot be solved by an either/or but only by a kind of two-way thinking', Jung further describing this as 'doing one thing while not losing sight of the other' (Jung 10, p.251). This

difficulty with terminology helps explain why the two worlds find so many different metaphors and labels, Jung himself using 'body' and 'spirit':

But if we can reconcile ourselves to the mysterious truth that the spirit is the life of the body seen from within, and the body the outward manifestation of the life of the spirit--the two being really one--then we can understand why the striving to transcend the present level of consciousness through acceptance of the unconscious must give the body its due, and why recognition of the body cannot tolerate a philosophy that denies it in the name of spirit. (Jung 10, p.94)

Jung's answer to the problem of the two worlds, then, as already noted, 'was to abolish tyranny, to enthrone the two opposites side by side in service of the master-pattern':

The solution of the conflict of opposites can come neither from the intellectual compromise of conceptualism nor from a pragmatic assessment of the practical value of logically irreconcilable views, but only from a positive act of creation which assimilates the opposites as necessary elements of co-ordination... (Jung 6, p.321)

Creativity and art, then, in Jung's view, hold supreme positions as mediators between the opposites, and this view finds assent elsewhere. Joseph Campbell, for example, sees the twelfth century troubadours as having 'the goal in this life...to balance heaven and earth' (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.138), and also quotes Mann to this effect:

The boon of art proceeds from the circumstance (to use diplomatic terms) that it maintains equally good relationships to life and to pure spirit, that it is simultaneously conservative and radical; from the circumstance, that is to say, of its mediate and mediating place between spirit and life. (Campbell 4, p.331)

Equally, Eliot talks about Yeats in much the same way:

Born into a world in which the doctrine of 'Art for Art's sake' was generally accepted, and living on into one in which art has been asked to be instrumental to social purposes, he held firmly to the right view which is between these, though not in any way a compromise between them, and showed that an artist, by serving his art with entire integrity, is at the same time rendering the greatest service he can do to his own nation and to the whole world. (Eliot, 1957, p.262)

The creative minds engaged in uniting opposites in the process of individuation are concerned particularly with individuals, and are, Jung argues, the last defence against 'totalitarianism and State slavery':

The integration of unconscious contents is an individual act of realization, of understanding, and moral evaluation. It is a most difficult task, demanding a high degree of ethical responsibility. Only relatively few individuals can be expected to be capable of such an achievement, and they are not the political but the moral leaders of mankind. The maintenance and further development of civilization depend upon such individuals... (Jung 10, p.221)

No one can make history who is not willing to risk everything for it, to carry the experiment with his own life through to the bitter end, and to declare that his life is not a continuation of the past, but a new beginning. (Jung 10, p.130)

Dyson refers to Hughes and R.S.Thomas in similar terms, seeing them both as:

poets engaged on a lifetime quest, in matters of religion, psychology and consciousness which affect their own, and our, humanity. In addition, they are masters of their craft, and poets of vision; possibly, our nearest approach in the poetry written in English in the second half of this century, to prophets. (Dyson, ed., 1990, p.283)

For Jung, the idea of individuation 'is the answer to the great question of our day':

How can consciousness, our most recent acquisition, which has bounded ahead, be linked up again with the oldest, the unconscious, which has lagged behind? The oldest of all is the instinctual foundation. Anyone who overlooks the instincts will be ambuscaded by them, and anyone who does not humble himself will be humbled, losing at the same time his freedom, his most precious possession. (Jung 9, Part 1, p.350)

For Jung, equally, it is 'culture' that is 'our only weapon against the fearful danger of mass-mindedness', and Jung helps clarify what Dyson might have meant by his idea of 'prophets' when he says that 'all art intuitively apprehends coming changes in the collective unconscious' (Jung 10, pp.237 and 83). This view is in line with the primitive view of the artist as 'the vehicle for divine communication to humanity' and works of art as 'coded messages from god to man' (Day, 1984, p.89). This is, why dreams may be prophetic (Jung, ed., 1978, p.66), and Walcott sees Hughes as a prophet (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.44). This is why society, although it would scarcely like to admit to it, desperately needs its artists, today perhaps more than ever:

Whereas formerly, for generations, life so held to established norms that the lifetime of a deity could be reckoned in millenniums, today all norms are in flux, so that the individual is thrown, willy-nilly, back upon himself, into the inward sphere of his own becoming, his forest adventurous without way or path, to come through his own integrity in experience to his own intelligible Castle of the Grail--integrity and courage, in experience, in love, in loyalty, and in act. And to this end the guiding myths can no longer be of any ethnic norms. No sooner learned, these are outdated, out of place, washed away. There are today no horizons, no mythogenetic zones. Or rather, the mythogenetic zone is the individual heart. Individualism and spontaneous pluralism--the free association of men and women of like

spirit, under protection of a secular, rational state with no pretensions to divinity--are in the modern world the only honest possibilities.... (Campbell 4, p.677)

The artist is not only the supreme example of this, but also the one who keeps this eternal possibility alive, who 'will inspire and help the rest' (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.139), and Campbell finishes his four volume The Masks of God speaking of:

an intelligent "making use" not of one mythology only but of all of the dead and set-fast symbologies of the past, will enable the individual to anticipate and activate in himself the centers of his own creative imagination, out of which his own myth and life-building "Yes because" may then unfold... And in this life-creative adventure the criterion of achievement will be, as in every one of the tales here reviewed, the courage to let go the past, with its truths, its goals, its dogmas of "meaning," and its gifts: to die to the world and to come to birth from within. (Campbell 4, pp.677-8)

For Campbell, as for Jung, the redeeming hero of the modern age is the creator, and 'it is not society that is to guide and save the creative hero, but precisely the reverse' (Campbell, 1949, p.391). This point cannot be emphasized enough, since it implies a complete re-orientation of everything. Campbell quotes Strindberg on this point:

"As poet, one has a right to play with ideas, to experiment with standpoints, but not bind oneself to anything: for freedom is the life breath of the poet." And the real good of humanity, as he then believed, was served in art, not in manifestos; for the curse of politics, mass politics, so-called democratic politics, derived from its reduction of all life, art itself, and religion as well, to politics, the marketplace, newspaper thinking. (Campbell 4, p.316)

One is reminded of Thomas' wonderful description of newspapers as 'the day's droppings' in The Echoes Return Slow (p.4), waste-products of a wrongly oriented society. Perhaps, if society is to be redeemed, it should be poetry books dropping through the letter-box in the morning:

That is why, when the mere routine of life predominates in the form of convention and tradition, there is bound to be a destructive outbreak of creative energy. This outbreak is a catastrophe only when it is a mass phenomenon, but never in the individual who consciously submits to these higher powers and serves them with all his strength. The mechanism of convention keeps people unconscious, for in that state they can follow their accustomed tracks like blind brutes, without the need for conscious decision. (Jung 17, pp.178-9)

In this task of redemption, myth and poetry are at the forefront, although often they can be so closely linked as to be indistinguishable. Ruthven quotes two examples of how each supports and is supported by the other:

Nobody has yet proved that literature is or is not myth. Nor has anyone been able to resolve the difference in emphasis between Mark Schorer's 'myth is the indispensable substructure of poetry' and Richard Chase's 'poetry is the indispensable substructure of myth'... (Ruthven, 1976, p.58)

Equally closely linked to these two is the idea of dream, especially the sort of dreaming implied by Eliot, quoted by Bodkin, those visions that are 'a more significant, interesting and disciplined kind of dreaming', which Bodkin rightly associates with Jung's idea of fantasy and the individuation process (Bodkin, 1934, pp.177-8).

The idea and process of individuation can be examined in most, if not all, great artists, and Thomas' only truly sequential book, The Echoes Return Slow can be examined in this way. Equally, an examination of his entire oeuvre from the point of view of individuation would be illuminating, and Hughes approaches Plath's work and life in this way, saying that 'one can compare what was really going on in her to a process of alchemy', for example (Plath, 1982, p.xi). Equally, Hughes himself can be examined in this way, whether in terms of single volumes (as has been done here with Cave Birds) or from a wider perspective<sup>1</sup>. It is by following such difficult and arduous spiritual paths that Hughes and Thomas have earned the scorn of some but the adulation of others:

almost the entire content of Laboratories of the Spirit, which, together with H'm and Frequencias, establishes him now without doubt, in my view, among the five or six greatest poets to have written in English in this century. (Dyson, 1981, p.303)

Crow is a majestic success of creative insight and imaginative reach...it belongs in the select group of works worthy of Nobel Prize scrutiny. (Scigaj, 1991, p.84)

River will one day be recognized as one of the central literary masterpieces of the world; it should be required reading for all humans on our planet to help them attain responsible adulthood. (Scigaj, 1991, p.133)

Dyson also refers to Thomas as 'the outstanding poet, to date, of the second half of this century' (Dyson, 1981, p.xix), and both poets seem to attract both high praise and mocking scorn in terms which often say more about those commenting than those commented upon, as might be expected with poets for whom myth is paramount.



Myth looks both backward and forward, 'telling of origins and destinies' (Righter, 1975, p.5) or 'remembrance of a non-historical happiness' (Eliade, 1960, p.71), which is kept alive and potent by the very existence of myth:

Unorganized matter neither records its past nor anticipates its future; whereas every organism has both its past and its potential future built into it...Anxiety, prophetic apprehensiveness, imaginative anticipation, which came first perhaps with man's consciousness of seasonal changes, cosmic events, and death, have been man's chief incentives to creativity...Man's potentialities are still more important, infinitely more important, than all his present achievements. This was so at the beginning and it still holds. (Mumford, 1967, pp.44-5)

Jung says that the questions facing modern man must be faced honestly:

In order to find valid answers to these questions a complete spiritual renewal is needed. And this cannot be given gratis, each man must strive to achieve it for himself. Neither can old formulas which once had a value be brought into force again. The eternal truths cannot be transmitted mechanically; in every epoch they must be born anew from the human psyche. (Jung 10, p.217)

When Hughes calls Jung 'the philosopher of the next hundred years', he is anticipating this new age, and Jung too felt that the right time was approaching for such fundamental changes:

We are living in what the Greeks called...the right moment--for a "metamorphosis of the gods," of the fundamental principles and symbols. This peculiarity of our time, which is certainly not of our conscious choosing, is the expression of the unconscious man within us who is changing. Coming generations will have to take account of this momentous transformation if humanity is not to destroy itself through the might of its own technology and science. (Jung 10, p.304)

This last sentence points to why this 'new age' might be upon us, since, as Muses puts it, 'the earth could actually be rendered unlivable if the processes that have dominated past human history are not now modified' (Campbell and Muses, ed., 1991, p.176).

In the pages of the book that began this thesis, there is talk of seeing 'ourselves as a pre-culture' (Schmidt and Lindop, ed., 1972, p.231), and perhaps humanity, with the help of its prophets, such as Hughes and Thomas, is approaching, not global destruction, but the flowering of a new age well-prepared by pioneers and prophets from the past:

Frobenius called this new age, now upon us, the period of World Culture...And the distinguishing feature of its new mankind--as heralded in the lives and works of those through whom it was announced--has already been suggested in Wolfram's Parzival: that is to say, a mankind of individuals, self-moved to ends proper to themselves, directed not by the constraint and noise of others, but each by his own inner voice. (Campbell 4, p.575)

1. Thus Scigaj speaks of Hughes':  
 quests to integrate the inner self and connect that self with the outer world of change and limits. As such they offer important guides toward understanding ourselves and enriching our experience. (Scigaj, ed., 1992, p.26)

Bo Gustavsson sees this idea of the quest going beyond the three volumes of Hughes' poetry considered here:

In the two books published after Crow, Cave Birds (1978) and Gaudete (1977), Hughes as mystic quester undergoes the ritual of the purgation of the soul. The aim of this ritual is the spiritual transformation of the poet: the death of his old self and the birth of a new spiritual self. (Scigaj, ed., 1992, pp.232-3)

Bishop too finishes his volume on Hughes with exactly these thoughts, saying that:

the poet becomes--as if for the first time--not merely a word-arranger but a complete human being, with his own vital signature. (Bishop, 1991, p.251)

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