Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal
(ISSN: 2278-9529) Vol. 15, Issue-III, May 2026
https://www.galaxyimrj.com/

Megalomaniac Leaders and Power-mongers as Revealed in Ted Hughes's Poem *Hawk Roosting*

Dr. Ananthavalli. A
Assistant Professor,
apananthavallieng@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0009-0004-4756-4599
https://doi.org/10.66376/galaxy.v15.n3.9

Abstract:

A dramatic monologue, Ted Hughes's *Hawk Roosting* is voiced by a hawk perched on the highest branch with closed eyes. Through the hawk's monologue, Hughes creates an archetype of megalomaniacal leaders and power-mongers whose rule rests on absolute control, egotism, and a complete lack of empathy. The poem functions as a postcolonial ideology of controlling others and with dictatorship and autocracy by exposing the psychology of tyrants who equate power with divine right. The hawk declares, "I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed. / Inaction, no falsifying dream / Between my hooked head and hooked feet." This opening line echoes spatial and moral sovereignty. The "top of the wood" becomes a throne. The hawk creates its own reality: "It took the whole of Creation / To produce my foot, my every feather." Here Hughes critiques leaders who view history, nature, and society as instruments designed solely to produce them. The megalomaniac sees no power above or before himself. He is both creator and destroyer: "Now I hold Creation in my foot / Or fly up, and revolve it all slowly." This reflects authoritarian rhetoric in which the leader presents himself as the embodiment of the state, the people, and nature itself.

Keywords: Ted Hughes, *Hawk Roosting,* Megalomania, Power-mongers, Totalitarianism

Article History: Submitted-05/05/2026, Revised-14/05/2026, Accepted-18/05/2026, Published-31/05/2026.

Ted Hughes' *Hawk Roosting* is a dramatic monologue delivered in the first-person 'I', giving direct access to the psyche of a tyrant. The hawk describes the world around it but its description reveals a false belief since it believes the entire universe, "the whole of Creation", exists solely to produce its "hooked head and hooked feet". This false intentionality elevates the hawk to a godlike status. It alone decides the survival or destruction of other creatures, exercising power without guilt, doubt, or moral questioning. Perched "in the top of the wood" with its eyes closed, the hawk contemplates a world made for its convenience. It feels neither panic nor fear. Its position allows it to look down on all other forest inhabitants, a spatial metaphor for authoritarian hierarchy. Hughes' diction, "Between my hooked head and hooked feet", foregrounds the hawk's deadly beak and claws, weapons that require no justification. The hawk kills simply "because it can". There is no immorality in its instinct, only the unprincipled judgment of complete force. Hughes contrasts this predation with the human power-monger. While the hawk's violence stems from instinct, megalomaniacal leaders in human society justify and institutionalize their dominance under the guise of leadership. They pose as guardians and well-wishers while pursuing imperialism and hidden political agendas, often imposing Eurocentric worldviews on subaltern populations. The hawk thus becomes a symbol of the arrogance, brutality, and dominance of deadly political leaders. The poem's most chilling line, "I kill where I please because it is all mine," exposes the egotistical nature of power-mongers. It captures their desire to enslave the 'inferior' with pride and conceit. The hawk's lust for control, its claim over all life, mirrors the human tyrant's greed for wealth, fame, and unquestionable superiority. Both destroy others to maintain dominance. Through the hawk, Hughes reveals how megalomaniac leaders transform instinct into political doctrine, making violence the sole argument for power.

A defining feature of Hughes's poetry is his persistent use of animal imagery. Animals in his poems are rarely simple decorative elements or conventional symbols instead, they function as embodiments of primal consciousness and instinctual energy. Critics have often noted that Hughes's animals possess a vivid autonomy that challenges anthropocentric perspectives. Through these figures, Hughes explores forces that lie beyond rational human thought, exposing a world governed by instinct, power, and primal energy. (Sagar 21).

Hughes's poetic philosophy is intricately connected to his belief that modern society has become increasingly detached from the instinctual energies that once linked humans to the world. According to Hughes, poetry serves as a means of reconnecting with these deeper forces. By presenting animals as manifestations of pure vitality, his poetry attempts to recover a more authentic relationship between human consciousness and the environment. Terry Gifford notes, Hughes's poetry foreshadows key concepts in ecocriticism, especially the notion that nature has its own agency apart from human interpretation. (Gifford 54).

Terry Gifford approaches "Hughes forces his readers to confront the otherness of nature, free from romanticised ideals. The hawk is not a symbol of human power, nor is it to be judged by human ethics. It is, simply, itself a creature of instinct whose violence is neither good nor evil, but necessary." (Gifford 33). According to him, Hughes' animals are not symbols of human psychology. The hawk's declaration "Now I hold Creation in my foot" comes across as pure megalomania, the same kind seen in politicians and authoritarians who proclaim themselves indispensable to the nation. Nevertheless Terry Gifford's eco-critical approach warns us against collapsing the bird into a mere human allegory. The hawk's "aggressiveness" is not political manipulation but ecological function. Hooked beak and claws are evolutionary tools, not instruments of ideology. Hughes forces us to confront the 'othernesses of nature, a realm without

guilt, debates, or elections. The danger, then, is not that the hawk behaves like a tyrant but that the tyrant wants to behave like the hawk. When human leaders adopt the raptor's unprincipled grammar, "I kill where I please because it is all mine", they launder choice as instinct. Gifford shows us that real nature does not explain or censorship. The hawk cannot help its violence; the power-monger can. Thus the poem indicts megalomania in two ways: it exposes the dictator's envy of nature's exemption from ethics, and it reminds us that human rule, unlike the hawk's, is always a decision for which we remain accountable. The God Complex: Creation as Self-Justification

I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed.

Inaction, no falsifying dream

Between my hooked head and hooked feet:

Alternatively in sleep rehearse perfect kills and eat.

"Inaction" / "my eyes closed" (Gifford 97) tells the poem sounds calm and factual, which makes the hawk seem sure of itself. People get distracted but the hawk is not. It just stares ahead with complete, cold focus. Hughes' clinical diction underscores the hawk's absolute self-assurance. While human consciousness is marked by deviation and doubt, the hawk inhabits a state of undistracted, inherent focus. The matter-of-fact tone amplifies the hawk's authority. Unlike humans, whose attention scatters, the hawk exists in a condition of unbroken concentration. The unemotional, report-like style shows how confident the hawk is. Humans are plagued by doubt and distraction; the hawk is not. Its indifference to its surroundings and its fixation on the target produce a voice that resembles a dictator's: doubtless, noiseless, distilled to pure intent.

"Falsifying dream": This diction Hughes uses to make the hawk look cold and practical. The hawk's vocabulary is all bone and muscle. No poetry, no excuses. Reality is reduced to

what can be gripped, killed, and kept. Hughes presents a worldview in which survival serves as the sole justification, and dominance stands as the only validation. According to Gifford, the diction refuses anthropomorphism. The hawk is not cruel; it is ecological. It discards human concepts like “imagination” or “illusion” because they have no function in a food chain. The brutality is not personal; it is biological and pragmatic.

"Hooked": Repeated for both its "head" and "feet," this word serves as a violent reminder of the bird's anatomy. It creates a physical, inescapable trap that emphasies the hawk is built entirely for capturing and tearing apart flesh. Gifford notes that a hawk’s beak and talons are “hooked” because that shape maximizes hunting efficiency. So Gifford tells it, the word does not reveal the hawk’s brutality. It reveals our inability to see a predator without moralising it.

The phrase “rehearse perfect kills” makes the hawk’s hunting sound deliberate and skilled, not frantic or desperate. It is more like the bird treats slaughter as a craft it has mastered through practice. The verb “rehearse” reframes predatory instinct as calculated praxis. Rather than depicting survival as chaotic or desperate, Hughes presents killing as a disciplined, aestheticised performance. Rehearse” makes the hawk sound like a general or a dictator running drills. This is not messy survival; it is cold, prepared violence. It turns bloodshed into routine, into a skill that gets perfected. That is how power-mongers operate: violence is not an accident, it is policy practised until it looks natural.

The convenience of the high trees!
The air’s buoyancy and the sun’s ray
Are of advantage to me;
And the earth’s face upward for my inspection.

The hawk's relationship to the world is purely extractive. "The convenience of the high trees! / The air's buoyancy and the sun's ray / Are of advantage to me." Nature exists only as "convenience." This parallels how megalomaniac regimes treat land, resources, and people as raw material for the leader's benefit. The final lines, "My eye has permitted no change. / I am going to keep things like this," expose the dictator's core fear: change. Power-mongers maintain immobility through violence because any movement threatens their monopoly. The hawk's single-minded focus on "killing" reflects a political system where the leader's survival depends on unending subjugation of others.

The lines "The air's buoyancy and the sun's ray / Are of advantage to me" reflect a discourse of convenience, in which natural forces are framed as instrumental to the speaker's power. Like Said's Orientalism, which frames land, labor, and culture as "resources," the hawk reduces nature to utility. The hawk's language is managerial. Sun and air are not beautiful but they are useful.

The diction of "convenience" and "advantage" replaces instinctual language with the vocabulary of rational calculation. This rhetorical move casts the hawk as a sovereign or aristocrat, reframing ecological elements as instrumental resources arranged for its exclusive utility. Hughes does not give the hawk growls or snarls. He gives it boardroom language. "Convenience" and "advantage" are terms politicians invoke when justifying the privatisation of rivers or the destruction of forests. The hawk sounds like it wrote a five-year plan for the sky. That is how megalomania works: the world is not a home, it is an inventory. According to Gifford, we hear "convenience" and think of human aristocrats because we invented that word. The hawk has no concept of "tools." The sun warms, the wind lifts, and these are physics, not privileges. The "sophistication" is our projection.

The term "buoyancy" draws on scientific precision to emphasize the hawk's evolutionary adaptation to its environment. It conveys a sense of effortless dominion, positioning the bird as a being for whom the laws of physics operate not as constraints but as extensions of its will. "Buoyancy" does not sound like an animal word. It sounds like an engineer's note. The hawk is not flapping or fighting gravity. That is how dictators want to be seen: not struggling for power, but floating above everyone else, with the system itself holding them up. It is effortless superiority disguised as nature. The hawk's "control" is in fact such alignment with physical laws that it appears as command. Political leaders replicate this strategy: they present rigged systems as natural order, and their dominance as effortless.

"Inspection" makes the hawk sound like a king checking his land, or a general reviewing troops. Gifford would call this the poem's most explicit anthropomorphic moment, and that is deliberate. Hughes knows hawks do not "inspect." They scan for movement. The diction is ours, not the bird's. The "reversal" exposes human hierarchy, not in order. The earth has no face. The hawk has no throne. We supply both. So the "godlike perspective" indicts us: we recognize the tyrant's logic because we invented it. The hawk becomes a mirror for human systems of surveillance and judgment.

My feet are locked upon the rough bark
It took the whole of Creation
To produce my foot, my each feather:
Now I hold Creation in my foot.

“Locked” converts grip into governance. Hughes selects a verb that connotes mechanism and captivity rather than mere contact. The hawk’s claw does not hold the earth; it annexes it. What is “locked” cannot be shared, debated, or returned.

"Creation" (Capitalised): Hughes writes “Creation” with a capital C to make nature feel like a person with a plan. The hawk says the entire universe was used to build and facilitate it. That makes it sound like it is not just another animal. Gifford’s point: the hawk is not the masterpiece of existence. It is one successful iteration in a blind process. The real “elevation” happens in our heads. Morover that is exactly how cults of personality work.

"My each feather": Repeating “my” for each feather makes the hawk sound obsessed with itself. It is not just proud. The hawk catalogs its own anatomy as if each part were evidence of its perfection. When leaders talk like this, the country stops being a shared space and becomes a personal estate. “My each feather” becomes an instrument. Hughes uses pronominal saturation to fuse self-knowledge with self-sovereignty. The hawk does not inhabit its body; it audits it. Each feather becomes a titled possession, and the cumulative effect is a creature who cannot distinguish between being and ruling.

"Hold Creation in my foot": Hold Creation in my foot” is the hawk’s biggest boast. It shrinks the whole universe down to something it can step on. All of nature, all of existence, ends up pinned under one talon. Hold Creation in my foot” says: the world is not shared. It is seized. The foot is the stamp, the flag, the boot on the neck. Gifford would point out the absurdity we are meant to notice. A hawk’s foot can hold a mouse, not “Creation.” The hyperbole is ours. The bird does not conceptualize cosmos; it grips branch, prey, perch. “Hold Creation in my foot” exposes the anthropomorphic trap: we grant the hawk theological reach because we recognize the language of conquest.

Or fly up, and revolve it all slowly -

I kill where I please because it is all mine.

There is no sophistry in my body:

My manners are tearing off heads.

The hawk's philosophy is brutally pragmatic: "There is no sophistry in my body: / My manners are tearing off heads – / The allotment of death." Hughes strips away moral or spiritual justification. The hawk kills not for survival but for the declaration of will. "No arguments assert my right" reveals the power-monger's contempt for law, ethics, or debate. Power is its own argument. This echoes postcolonial critiques of Western imperialism and fascist leaders who discarded theology for a materialist cult of force. The hawk's "godless thinking" is literal: he permits "no change" because "I am going to keep things like this." Progress, empathy, and dissent are threats to be eliminated.

The line "My eye has permitted no change" enacts Said's concept of "freezing the Other". The Orient is represented as timeless and unchanging. Similarly, the hawk enforces stability because change would disrupt its established order.

Like Said's Orientalist, Hughes' hawk produces the forest as 'text' rather than place. Its monologue is a form of epistemic violence. It knows the world only by asserting ownership over it. The hawk's refusal of 'sophistry' echoes imperial administrators who dismissed native law as irrational, replacing it with the blunt fact of force."

"Revolve it all slowly": "Revolve" rewrites cosmology as autocracy. Hughes replaces order with personal orbit, casting the hawk as both astronomer and anomaly a creature for whom the planet performs, rather than one who belongs to it.

"Kill where I please": “Kill where I please” is the language of impunity. “Please” is the giveaway. That is not survival. That is a despot on holiday. No court, no ethics, no restraint. Just appetite with a throne. It turns death into a hobby, and law into a suggestion. That is how absolute power talks when it stops pretending to answer to anyone.

"Sophistry": “No sophistry” is the dictator’s favourite line: I do not debate, I decide. Sophistry is what lawyers, diplomats, and ethicists do. The hawk says it is above all that. No spin, no justification, no committee. Just will made flesh. That is how authoritarians brand themselves, not as cruel, but as honest. My boot is on your neck, and I will not insult you by explaining why the horror is that people read this as virtue.

"Manners" and "Tearing off heads": This is the line that hits you hardest. “Manners” refers to conventional courtesies such as saying “please,” holding doors, and behaving politely. “Tearing off heads” is savage and bloody. The hawk smashes them together and calls them the same thing. It implies that, within its world, tearing things apart constitutes proper conduct. There’s no guilt, no apology. Violence is not wrong here. It is just how you act. This is how fascism rebrands itself. “Manners” are the rules of polite society. “Tearing off heads” is state terror. The hawk puts them in the same sentence and calls it normal. That is the trick, once you declare that cruelty is the custom, you cannot be accused of breaking rules.

I kill where I please because it is all mine.

There is no sophistry in my body

My manners are tearing off heads.

"Sophistry": By denying “sophistry,” Hughes elevates instinct to ideology. The hawk’s claim to rhetorical absence becomes rhetorical itself, a meta-justification that frames cruelty as

authenticity. Thus, the rejection of deceptive reasoning paradoxically installs a new, totalizing logic: power that refuses to explain itself cannot be argued with.

"My manners": “Manners” conventionally signifies cultivated human decorum, When the hawk says tearing off heads is its manners, it is doing what every regime does when it calls censorship “responsibility” or a purge “housekeeping.” Politeness ceases to be a restraint on power and becomes its costume.

"Allotment": The word ‘the allotment of death’ casts the hawk as a sovereign bureaucrat of mortality, Gifford’s eco-critical frame reveals the term as anthropomorphic projection: the bird hunts opportunistically, whereas we impose the ledger, exposing how human political structures reimagine ecological chance as divine administration.

The sun is behind me.

Nothing has changed since I began.

My eye has permitted no change.

I am going to keep things like this.

"behind me": The sun behind me’ positions the hawk as a cosmic eclipse that asserts supremacy over life itself, Gifford’s eco-critical lens relocates the illusion to human rhetoric: the bird is ecologically minute, and the image of planetary shadow reveals our own readiness to frame nature as a stage for political self-deification.

"permitted": Permitted” transposes causation into autocratic consent. Hughes replaces physical law with sovereign will, recasting the universe as a polity that persists only by the hawk’s continuous legislative act. The diction thus collapses the distinction between being and bureaucracy.

The word "began" mythologizes the hawk's birth as the origin of time itself. Through Gifford's ecocritical lens, the verb becomes an anthropomorphic imposition: the bird simply hatches into a pre-existing biosphere. The line reveals how human discourse transforms ecological succession into narratives of sovereign origin. Reading the hawk through Fanon casts it as the native dictator who internalizes and reproduces colonial violence, Gifford's eco-criticism complicates the allegory: the bird enacts no ideology, and our rush to label it 'dictator' exposes the very Fanonian pathology Hughes critiques the human habit of sanctifying political brutality by misreading it as law.

Although 'I kill where I please because it is all mine' articulates the settler's logic that Fanon identifies as internalized by the postcolonial dictator, Gifford's eco-criticism reframes the claim: the hawk exercises no proprietary claim, and the line exposes how human regimes naturalise territorial violence by attributing it to a raptor that, in reality, knows no borders.

While "No arguments assert my right" reflects Fanon's warning that decolonising violence can harden into coups and purges, Gifford's ecocritical reading shows the hawk's silence is non-ideological. The bird has no discourse; human regimes co-opt that silence to justify abolishing argument as a political form.

According to Fanon, the hawk ceases to allegorise European empire and becomes the postcolonial autocrat Fanon predicted: 'hooked head and hooked feet' formalise the army and police as domestic instruments, while 'no sophistry in my body' enacts his caution that liberation, un-decolonised in mind, reproduces the coloniser's maxim that force alone governs the native. (Fanon 40-41)

Through Said's lens, the hawk adopts the coloniser's posture: it surveys from above, maps the terrain, and deems the forest "convenient," as if the world existed solely for its use. From Fanon, it gets the dictator's tragedy: it kicked the old boss off the perch, then sat there and ruled the same way. When it says all of Creation leads up to itself, that is Said's Orientalist ego. When it says "no change," that is Fanon's warning about leaders who freeze the revolution. Same bird. Foreign or local, the tyrant rules by turning the world into his story and violence into his punctuation.

Hughes's hawk embodies undeniable, self-authorizing power, whereas Orwell's colonial officer in *Shooting an Elephant* dramatizes power as compulsion. The "mask of tyranny" exposes imperial agency as illusory. The officer's violence is compelled by the anticipatory gaze of the subjugated, reducing the oppressor to a slave of public expectation. Orwell thus diagnoses empire as a corrupting system that traps both coloniser and colonised in a reciprocal cycle of performance, revealing tyranny as the complete destruction of the tyrant's own freedom.

While Hughes's hawk represents a chilling portrait of autocratic supremacy, Orwell's essay depicts the psychological prison of enforcing political dominance over others. Both texts reveal the dark underpinnings of political control, whether it is driven by animal instinct or human societal constructs.

Both Hughes and Achebe are writing about what happens when power has no brakes. Hughes shows it as a hawk, pure instinct, no excuses, just "I kill because I can." Achebe shows it as a country, Kangan, where soldiers with guns think they are gods and the nation pays for it. One uses a bird to make dictatorship look natural. The other uses a broken state to show how unnatural it really is.

Although Hughes composed Hawk Roosting without reference to India or Nigeria, its reception in postcolonial contexts is over determined by the recognisability of its authoritarian psyche. The hawk's proprietary violence, "I kill where I please because it is all mine", plots onto historical and contemporary modes of sovereignty familiar to both nations.

Conclusion

Hughes never set his hawk in Delhi or Lagos. "I kill where I please," "no arguments assert my right," "no change." What Said called the Orientalist's map, Fanon called the native elite's tragedy, Orwell called the mask that eats the face, and Achebe called the general's ruin Hughes condensed into one roosting bird. The poem endures in postcolonial classrooms not because it explains empire but because it exposes the fantasy every empire sells: that power is necessary, and eternal. The hawk believes Creation culminates in its foot. The Emergency believed Indira was India. The bulldozer believes due process is "inconvenience." The statue believes it is history. All of them borrow the bird's voice to make violence sound like weather. Gifford reminds us that real hawks do not stage coups. They hunt, they perch, and they die. The danger is never the bird. The danger is when we mistake the bird's silence for a constitution and teach ourselves to call that constitution "stability." Orwell's officer knew the lie and killed anyway. Achebe's Kangan lived the aftermath. Hughes gives us the dictator without makeup, mid-monologue, so we can recognize the script before the curtain rises. When a leader says the forest is "of advantage to me," hear the land bill. When he says "no arguments," hear the ordinance. When he says "the sun is behind me," hear the cameras. The hawk's only power is our agreement to call its perch a throne. The poem does not tell us to shoot the bird. It tells us to stop calling it king. The moment we hear "there is no sophistry in my body" and answer back with law, with history, with a crowd that is not afraid to look foolish that is when the roost empties. That is when decolonisation, in Fanon's

hardest sense, actually begins: not with a new flag on the perch but with no perch at all. So we teach Hughes not for the hawk but for the silence after it. The silence where arguments are permitted, where change is expected, and where no single foot claims to have taken all of Creation to produce it.

The hawk's inaugural utterance is authoritative: "It took the whole of Creation / To produce my foot, my each feather." This constitutes megalomania's foundational myth, whereby teleology is retroactively imposed on history, evolution, and society to culminate in the sovereign self. The invocation of "the whole of Creation" appropriates biblical cosmology to effect self-deification. The subsequent claim, "Now I hold Creation in my foot / Or fly up, and revolve it all slowly," reifies the world as a manipulable object, echoing the "founder myth" central to authoritarian theory. Like Mussolini's figuration of the state's rebirth through his person, or Mao's selective cultivation and excision of "a hundred flowers," the hawk's logic subordinates existence to control. External arbitration law, divinity, demos is nullified by the dictum "I kill where I please because it is all mine." Here, ownership supersedes ethics, and sovereignty is defined as the prerogative to demarcate life from death.

Gifford would say: real hawks do not do "sophistry" because they do not do language. "Tearing off heads" is how they eat. It is not a metaphor for a dictator until we make it one. Hughes knows this. Hughes has the bird reject rhetoric, revealing what politics becomes in the absence of discourse. "No arguments assert my right" is where Orwell's officer ends up when the crowd wins: no debate, just shoot. But the hawk is not insecure. It is programmed. The danger is when humans borrow that programming and call it governance. "Allotment of death" is ecological for a raptor. It is Arendt's "banality of evil" when a bureaucrat signs it. The hawk's

closed eyes are not peace, they are the same calculation a drone operator makes: stasis, target acquired, no change. We are, when we file the hawk's instincts as national policy.

The poem's spatial semiotics are overtly political: the hawk's position "in the top of the wood" figures altitude as an allegory for hierarchy. "The convenience of the high trees! / The air's buoyancy and the sun's ray / Are of advantage to me" reconstitutes nature as instrumental "convenience" rather than relational ecology, instantiating an extractive epistemology. In postcolonial terms, this replicates Orientalist surveillance as theorised by Said, wherein imperial power surveys territory to "dominate, restructure, and have authority over" it. The hawk enacts precisely this panoptic domination: it abstains from ecological participation in favor of ecological subordination, rendering elemental forces sun and air as subservient to its flight. Similarly, megalomaniac leaders use the nation as a tool rivers become dams named after them, people become workers, and culture becomes propaganda. The hawk's decree that its "eye has permitted no change" thus codifies stasis as the preservation of monopolistic elevation; transformation would entail redistribution of the "top branch.

Gifford would say: real hawks do sit still, and it is not politics. It is hunting. "No falsifying dream" means the bird is not imagining it is calculating wind, distance, weight. But Hughes gives that calculation a human voice, and suddenly it sounds like a coup memo. The hawk rehearses "how to kill and eat without clumsiness" because evolution punishes waste. The dictator rehearses for the same reason: messy violence looks weak. Thus the closed eyes function as a metaphorical backroom in which purges are planned and constitutions are dismantled. The refusal to "recognize others" is animal for a raptor. It is pathological for a president. "Hooked head and hooked feet" are tools in nature. In the cabinet, they are policies with a body count. Gifford's

warning: do not call it just because it sounds like a bird. The only thing here is hunger. The rest is us, taking notes.

The hawk's violence is amoral and instinctual, exempt from ethical judgment due to the absence of moral agency. The political peril emerges when humans "embrace the qualities of hawk for their self-glory and lust on power," thereby transposing avian amorality into ideological legitimation. The concluding line, "I am going to keep things like this," articulates tyranny's constitutive dread of temporality. While ecological systems presuppose evolution, dictatorial regimes prevent it. Consequently, the hawk's stasis is transmuted into censorship and claims of genetic sovereignty. The raptor's predation is metabolic; the megalomaniac's is preservative, killing not to subsist but to perpetuate rule.

Hughes reveals megalomania as postural rather than ideological, a configuration of closed eyes, hierarchical elevation, and proprietary seizure of creation. The poem's efficacy inheres in its eschewal of sophistry: it exhibits tyranny without exculpation, thereby delegating moral adjudication to the reader that the hawk refuses. For postcolonial contexts especially, the warning is unambiguous. The hawk's monologue is seductive insofar as it pledges simplicity, the abolition of argument and mutability. Acquiescence to that pledge constitutes the inaugural movement from citizenship to prey. "Hughes leaves the hawk on its branch, unrepentant and unchanging. The question is not whether the bird will move. The question is whether we will, before the 'convenience of the high trees' becomes the only law left, and 'no others' becomes the last census." A real hawk kills to eat and then it dies. Hughes's hawk kills to stay, and promises it never will die. That is the human part. That is the part Gifford warns us about when we take what is instinct in nature and make it law in the state. The poem's final line is not about birds. "I am going to keep things like this" is the inscription on every emergency, every dynasty, and every ordinance

that arrives at midnight. Nature permits no stasis. Only tyrants do. They borrow the hawk's voice to make violence sound like weather and succession sound like heresy. Postcolonial classrooms return to Hughes because the hawk keeps getting re-elected. Different feathers, same perch. The curriculum, then, is not about identifying hawks. It is about refusing the perch. Fanon wanted the nation, not the strongman. Achebe buried his General. Orwell walked away from the elephant. Indian classrooms cannot always debate living politicians directly. Hughes gives you a safe proxy. The hawk's lines, "no arguments assert my right," "my eye has permitted no change," This poem lets you teach Hughes, Fanon's Wretched of the Earth, Ambedkar on constitutional morality, Arendt on bureaucracy and so on. The poem shows what happens when that sentence wins. For a generation that will inherit climate policy, data policy, and federalism fights, recognizing the hawk's voice in history books.

Works Cited:

Arendt, Hannah. Eichmann in Jerusalem. Viking, 1963.

Fanon, Frantz. The Wretched of the Earth. 1961. Use "Concerning Violence" "The pitfalls of National Consciousness".

Fanon, Frantz. Black Skin, White Masks. 1952. Use Ch. 5 "The Fact of Blackness" for the closed-eyes rehearsal idea.

Gifford, Terry. Ted Hughes. London: Routledge, 2009.

Gifford, Terry. Green Voices: Understanding Contemporary Nature Poetry. Manchester University Press, 1995.

Hughes, Ted. Lupercal. Faber, 1960.

Said, Edward. Orientalism. Pantheon, 1978.

Sagar, Keith. The Art of Ted Hughes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

Said, Edward W. Orientalism. Vintage Books, 1979.