CONCLUSION

The force and vigour of Hughes's poetry could be traced to the dramatic tensions, inherent in his verse, between the outer and the inner man. Underlying his poetic career, there is a stream of deeper dedication to the ultimate realities of life, deriving from spiritual experience. Through poetic exteriorization, Hughes seeks a lasting method of exorcizing the spectres of death and decay increasingly haunting the psyche of a whole generation. Unable to build his "sorrow into a monument and walk away from it," he found expression to the invisible terrors of the unknown through his art, using precepts and ritualistic procedures to give them concrete form.

Mortified at the barrenness in the life of the ordinary human being, a state of existence bleak and bereft of spirituality, Hughes seeks an alternative in the world of nature. But despite its infinite capacity for survival, the animal world fails to satisfy him. Turning next to the world of imagination, he conjures up non-existent beings and supplements them with creatures that have their source in various mythologies. The confusion of a wodwo, the self-assurance of the Promethean demigod, the disillusionment of the Hebraic God confronted with his miscreations, and the waywardness of a Crow or trickster reincarnated, subsequently lead up to the path inwards.
This study of the characters in his poetry, both the human and the non-human, has aimed at highlighting the dramatic qualities of his poetry towards unveiling the poet's intimate negotiations with the world at large and with his inner world whose imaginative deeps infold the vital energies.

The human beings peopling Hughes's poetry being numerous, only the more important of them have been identified for detailed discussion. Of the two categories, female and male, discussed in Chapter II and III respectively, the women have been given greater prominence by me as they appear to be peculiarly significant in the Hughesian system. Though robustly masculine in tone, manner and language alike, Hughes's poetry highlights the role of the women and envisages a holistic universe, where women provide emotional harmony and natural balance. As women are the earthly representatives of the Moon Goddess, the fertility principle, their degraded state, according to him, will be disasterous for civilization. In his poems he portrays a large variety of women from differing backgrounds, both young and old, single and married, who lead sterile and stereotyped lives. On the other hand, there are the women who indulge in meaningless sex, a whole series of adulterous orgies, in a misdirected venture. In such a corrupted society, even the innocent are made to suffer and have to be sacrificed at the altar of misconceptions.

In the masculine world, matters are a little better, for though several of the men are either too fearful of the natural world or are excessively rationalistic in their approach
to it, there is a dawning awareness of the existence of the instinctive energies. While Hughes applauds the capacity to identify with nature among the rural folk, he warns against the excessive outbursts of energy through the war victims. He seeks a religious organized solution to the dilemma, but finds conventional religion, particularly the church, lacking, as evident from his portraits of the priests and Crag Jack.

Apart from studying the relations between men, Hughes explores the relations between man and the animal world. Initially he is full of admiration for the animals who have a natural fortitude and an innate capacity to survive against all odds, unlike the human beings. But the divine animal spirit he envisages, develops into the rough beast with a beauty that turns terrifying. The complex but inadequate relations between man and the beasts are unfolded through a variety of semi-mythical creatures. Though the animals are used to provide a foil to the human beings, they retain their animal characteristics and display their uniqueness and alienation from the human world.

But in the domestic framework of Hughes's later poems, the man-animal relations are not so strained. Though the animals retain their animal distance and sense of "alienation" and are initially wary of human assistance, they gradually learn to turn to their human helpmate. Their dependence on the human being increases gradually until they find themselves at a loss when their human associate departs for ever.
To find expression for a whole range of emotions that could not be expressed through human beings and animals, both real and imagined, Hughes portrays a variety of unnatural beings. These range from the friendly and loving creatures of the children's poems to the grotesquely terrifying beasts or even the naively confused beings of the Wodwo poems. The character of Prometheus with his infinite capacity for suffering and fortitude provides hope for mankind. He serves as the perfect example for mankind, being an individual who tries to find courage and solace within himself.

God, in the Hughesian system, is a dull and ineffectual being, particularly in the Wodwo poems and Crow. In What is the Truth He develops into an authoritarian patriarch nurturing a few romantic ideals, but unable to give them concrete form. Like all the other characters in the poems, particularly the terrifying ones, once His appearance has become known and familiar, His authority is diminished and He becomes an ordinary man with all the fallibilities of an average human being.

God's son, on the other hand, brings in a different note with his enthusiastic optimism and faith in the future of human kind. The fact that he chooses to stay with men rather than retreat to his Heavenly Abode, indicates new hope for mankind.

Dylan Thomas's dictum that "The joy and function of poetry is, and was, the celebration of man, which is also the celebration of God" is fully realized in the poetic characters
of Ted Hughes. But the God Hughes celebrates is the one within man that gives him superhuman, godlike ability. Thus it is upto man to exploit his inner resources to the full and move to godhood from his present fallen state.