



DIANE WAKOSKI AND THE POETRY OF SAVAGERY

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Abstract

This paper studies the poetry of the American poetess Diane Wakoski and its elements of violence and grotesque .

The paper begins with an introduction in which different treatments of poets to the concept of violence are outlined . This is followed by a close investigation of forms of violence found in Wakoski's poetry and the poetess reaction, treatment and methods of coping with violence in its different forms .

المستخلص:

يدرس هذا البحث قصائد الشاعرة الأمريكية (دايان واكوسكي) و ما فيها من عناصر تتعلق بمفهوم العنف ويستهل البحث بمقدمة يستعرض فيها الباحث مفهوم العنف كما يعالجه عدد من الشعراء في أشعارهم. يلي ذلك دراسة مستفيضة لأشكال العنف وصوره الموجودة في قصائد الشاعرة , وطريقة تعاطي الشاعرة مع هذا الموضوع بأشكاله المختلفة.

Key Words : Violence , electrical power, animal imagery , death , injury ,cruelty .

Introduction

Wakoski was created throughout Whittier, California and researched with the School involving California, Berkeley and graduated throughout 1960 with a Bachelor's involving Disciplines, where the girl enjoyed throughout Thom Gunn's poetry work spaces. It had been there where the girl studied most of the modernist poets who affected her style . The woman's first writings were being regarded as part of the deep impression activity which also included the works of Jerome Rothenberg, Robert Kelly, and Clayton Eshleman ,to name a few. She also cites William Carlos Williams, Allen Ginsberg and Charles Bukowski because has a bearing on. Her poetry occupation started throughout New York ,to where she migrated throughout the 1960s , and stayed until 1973. In her future work she is actually much more individual in the Williams function. Wakoski is actually wedded to the photographer Robert Turney, and is particularly School Known Mentor Emeritus in The state of Michigan Condition School throughout East

Lansing, The state of Michigan Wakoski's fictional works are already identified and underlined in the state of Michigan. (Wikipedia).

The woman's work has been posted throughout more than thirty choices and a lot of slender volumes involving poetry. Her chosen verses, Emerald Ice, earned this William Carlos Williams Treasure from your Poems Society involving America throughout 1989. She's most common for a few verses collectively called "The Motorbike Betrayal Poems.

Frederick L. Hoffman articulates involving two types of violence: emotional and impersonal. Sentimental violence is actually that which is actually "in overabundance expectation" (Hoffman 1964: 12). It's also called transgression passion (ibidem: 154), that may be, violence committed in the grasp of a powerful belief or ideological belief. Impersonal violence is by which statements are not required and is particularly focused versus not guilty get-together. Warfare, for instance, can be a sample involving impersonal violence. Hoffman believes the two different types, the emotional and impersonal, may overlap in the event that an agent performing sentimentally versus a prey also eliminates or harms some others. (ibidem: 150). In much the same, Lawrence Third. Ries articulates involving "natural" violence and "human" violence. Natural violence is described as "the natural and strong energy which belongs to the normal order" (which, incidentally, may also be a life force) and man violence will be the personal injury which person inflicts upon his or her other adult men (Ries 1977: 5). The actual contention involving Ries is actually as a result comparable to which involving Hoffman: both agree which violence may possibly always be committed for emotional or for impersonal good reasons. It may well have got because it's focus on possibly somebody or perhaps a full class involving culture. Regarding this former, it could be referred to as specific violence yet in the case of this last option it's group violence (of what type experienced because of the Jews at the hands of this Nazis, for instance)².

The actual specialist would choose to add to the two types of violence-sentimental and impersonal-a third form of violence which known much of this last one hundred year poetry. It is the violence generated once the two sexes battle. In such a battle, shared fascination includes using the wish to have control. Appreciate and loathe move in hand and express themselves in several methods. The actual appearance of the inconsistent emotions may be known as erectile violence. On this category, this specialist could mean much of this poetry involving Sylvia Plath, Ted Hughes, and Diane Wakoski.

Associated with the technique of violence is actually which involving electrical power. Some sort of that may be strong has got to, involving must, be a earth involving violence. This sort of violence regarding electrical power gets into the majority of man interactions and something offers to deal with this process or this surpass this whilst getting together with the entire world. On this practice this reaction of somebody is actually possibly violence or regression. Guys, because Freud shows you, are not passive critters exactly who just shield themselves when bombarded; "a strong way of measuring wish to have violence should be reckoned within their implicit instinctual endowment" (Freud 1 q5 7: 85). It's that perspective which David Stuart Generator facilitates when seeing which throughout human beings you'll find 2 says involving inclinations-"one this desire to exercise electrical power over some others; this other- disinclination to have electrical power worked out over themselves" (Arendt 1969: 9). It's mankind's nature to meet up with his or her aggressive intuition in his or her neighbour and lead to your ex ache and

being made fun of. People may perhaps respond to violence how Ted Hughes and Thorn Gunn carry out, agreeing to this as an obstacle and rising to meet up with this. Nevertheless, it is usually probable to act in response in a very diverse way and self-conscious far from just about all violence, withdrawing straight into oneself. Poets exactly who convert aside in this fashion typically getaway within their inner surface, to their the child years or a risk-free safe place. For example, one could report Wordsworth getting out this prison property with the tedious earth into the earth involving nature³.

Hannah Arendt (1969: 41-42) distinguishes between electrical power and violence. Quoting Engels, Arendt highlights which violence usually relies on tools while electrical power is dependent on figures. Nevertheless, despite the fact that violence and electrical power are wide and varied, these people look jointly and "loss involving electrical power gets to be an enticement to replace violence for power" (ibidem: 54). As opposed to electrical power, violence cannot be rationalized; this just causes much more violence. Now involving look at, however, may be questioned if we come back to this portrayal involving violence in a very poet including W. T. Yeats. Yeats distinguishes in between violence that may be evil and violence that may be great. Referrals on the "blood-dimmed tide"⁴ along with the colossal using the human body of a lion along with the go of an person throughout his or her work use a diverse strive because. In Yeats: belief, violence which reasons a dissolution involving culture is actually bad while that which boosts and elevates human beings is actually great.

This kind of review is actually confined on the following volumes involving verse by Diane Wakoski: *Bouncing on the Grave of an Kid of an Bitch* (197B); *The actual Magellanic Ouds* (1973a); *Motorbike Betrayal Poems* (1971); and *Smudging* (1973b). Diane Wakoski's poetry shows a tricked, worrying love-poet, seeking moorings. At the same time, your ex individual lament is actually extensive to include a greater area to ensure your ex verses, including those involving another great poet, grow to be insights in man interactions. Wakoski's verses are not only full of appreciate and yearning, but in addition contain intense product descriptions involving the sun's rays, plants, diamond jewellery, and rubies. You can find referrals to mankind's getting on the silent celestial body, to politics results including George California, to physical specifics, on the Buddha, to dark-coloured magic and witchcraft, to horticulture, astronomy and astrology. Nevertheless, underlying all of the twinkle, glitter, the sun's rays and factuality, a prolonged ominous remember that which in turn usually continues to be unsuppressed. Diane Wakoski's poetry is a lot like a volcano which erupts fire every now and then, unleashing fury, interest and loathe by way of persistent graphics involving violence. The woman's self-portrait is actually which of an lady that is both difficult and poor, vindictive and hurting, eager not just to "own" but in addition to "belong." The impression driving these types of contrary wants is intensive so it imparts to this poetry a seething, vibrant vitality⁵.

This kind of vigour is usually produced by man interactions. These interactions smoulder having violence a mixture of this emotional along with the erectile. The actual enemy throughout Wakoski's verses involving betrayal is usually a person who has power-power to appreciate, get over, injure, and eventually betray. The actual prey will be the poet himself exactly who publishes articles in the 1st man or women, articulates with no inhibitions in relation to your ex bruises and surgical marks. However occasionally this roles are usually reversed: this prey gets to be this enemy and vice versa. Next the persona no more continues to be trampled decrease; the girl goes up just like a fury to wreak vengeance on her oppressor. Such violence, resulting thwarted or rejected appreciate, is actually the main topic of a majority of Wakoski's verses. In

addition, Wakoski represents violence throughout a different, much more understated way by deliberately dismissing true feelings and sentiments⁶ of those injure or hurt. This technique is actually a sort of "dehumanization," a violence versus man pride. There is a cold-bloodedness about it which not only offends but in addition causes larger violence compared to is actually caused by a strategic laceration involving feelings. Often the enemy isn't identified, and the reason for hurting isn't given.

Diane Wakoski dedicated your ex Motorbike Betrayal Poems (1971) "to hundreds of adult men exactly who tricked myself formerly or a different, in the expectation that they may slide down their bicycles and crack their necks." This kind of commitment amounts the impression with the enemy because he / she looks usually throughout your ex work. Often he / she is known as "the Master involving The world," the sole person the girl desires (Wakoski 1973a: 129), and whoever actions the girl confirms whenever the girl goes (Wakoski 1978: dedication). This kind of person, that "king involving The world, or the man I established our head of hair in fire/ for" (*ibidem*: 36), is usually regarding graphics with the sunshine along with the Buddha-both taking light-weight right into a dim earth. Being a "king" or because George California, he has the facility to overpower hundreds of thousands. At times he or she is this wizard having mesmeric capabilities:

But, oh Mr. Magician, most of all you turned me into a different woman
one who could make tables move with only the blood pulse moving in
my right wrist (Wakoski 1973b:86).

In a more familiar guise, he appears as a mechanic riding a motorcycle. The motorcycle, again, is a vehicle that throbs with life and energy and can be handled only by one who has the ability and courage to do so. Such a man attracts Diane Wakoski

(*ibidem*:106):

a strong man who builds, thinks, designs,
a mechanic and architect,
an important freeway in my life.

But the King of Spain, the god who rides a motorcycle, can be cruel. Associated with images of tigers and panthers, he is a predator, an invader, a cruel master:

King of Spain, one of your names breaks my heart....

one of your traitors ... tries to slash me in the night one of your words has
driven a nail through the instep of my foot, one of your elaborate rituals
has permanently masked my face.

("The Imaginary Print of Your Spanish Foot," *ibidem*: 1261

He is ... the sun god (who)

walks in the body of a yellow panther.

("The Acts of Devotion," Wakoski 1973a:701

Here the image of the panther is reminiscent of a poem by Sylvia Plath in which she depicts death as a panther stalking its victims slowly, but surely (Plath 1981:22). In Wakoski's vision, however, it is a perversion of love that tracks a woman down with the same inexorable uncertainty. There are other animal images associated with man:

... it was not until I met you ...

whose boldness lifted me as a hawk would a snake

before he flings it

down on the ground

to bash the life out of its
("Love Passes Beyond the Incredible Hawk of Innocence,"
Wakoski 1973a:931
the jaguar holdmg the rabbi I In his thick paws,
started with the head, working a hole open until
he nad the brains exposed, and he continued to lick,
eating at the red mass
I ... looking at all the great cats, the black leopard,
the lion with her two cubs, the two large jaguars,
felt myself dead and limp, felt myself the rabbit,
thrown into the cage

("The Birds of Paradise Being Very Plain Birds," *ibidem* :87)

The panther, the hawk and the jaguar are symbols of power that keeps them much above the rest of their kind and also makes them capable offering others into submission. As such, Diane Wakoski feels that they are the best symbols⁷ for men who can not only master but also coerce.

The same symbols are used by Ted Hughes in a different manner. In "The Jaguar," Hughes speaks of:

... a jaguar hurrying enraged
Through prison darkness after the drills of his eyes
On a short fuse
His stride is wilderness of freedom:
The World rolls under the long thrust of his heel.
(Gunn and Hughes 1962:39)
And in "Hawk Roosting," a hawk asserts its powers:
I sit in the top of the woods, my eyes closed ...
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.
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 sun is behind me.
Nothing has changed since I began.
My eye has permitted no change.
I am going to keep things like this
(Hughes 1972:39)

The difference between the perceptions of Hughes and Wakoski, to my mind, is that between a masculine sensibility and a feminine one. Hughes sees in his animals their power to rise above adversity. Their strength to survive is what he emphasizes. His crow, too, is not just an ordinary bird of the scavenger variety. It is a life-force in the midst of death and decay. If there is violence in Hughes' perception, it is only to emphasize that in order to conquer the violence of the present world one needs greater violence, greater energy and greater ruthlessness. On the contrary, Diane Wakoski views animals the way a *victim* would, fearing that their power

and fury would be a threat to her being. Hughes' hawk holds creation in its feet and permits no change whatsoever. It can even kill brutally. Wakoski's hawk also has the same power. But, unlike Hughes, Wakoski fears it because its destructive propensities may be directed towards herself. Similarly, Hughes' jaguar too, though caged, is a majestic animal. And, again, Wakoski fears it for the same reason as she fears the hawk. On the imaginative level she identifies herself with the rabbit that the jaguar feeds on. The jaguar and the hawk both symbolize man the predator, the plunderer, and the tyrant.

The quotation from "Love Passes Beyond the Incredible Hawk of Innocence" needs to be looked at again:

It was not until I met you ...
whose boldness lifted me as a hawk would a snake.
(Wakoski 1973a:93)

The hawk is in conflict with a snake, a stealthy, swift, and venomous creature. If the hawk can kill with its beak and claws, the snake can do so with its poisonous fangs. In this poem (unlike the second example where the conflict is between a jaguar and a rabbit) the struggle is between the two forces which are dangerous in their own ways. Even though the snake is usually a symbol of masculinity, here it stands for womanhood caught in, and struggling with, the vice-like grip of a male world. This is also the theme of "Vulture:"

Sitting across the bar from me,
you turn into a vulture wearing a black raincoat.
Your beak would snap a mouse in two.
Your claws would rip open a goat.
Yet I trust you.
Have we met before and found that we are common birds?
(Wakoski 1973b: 120)

The vulture's beak and claws are as destructive, as threatening as the hawk's. And yet-and yet-there is a feeling of camaraderie that the poet experiences: "Yet I trust you." Is it because there is something common between the vulture and its victim? Between the assailant and the assaulted? "Have we met before and found that we are common birds?" Probably here, too, the victim is not a weak creature of little consequence. He seems to be an equal-or almost equal-match to the assailant⁸. The victim (woman) may not be physically so strong as man but, at the same time, she is strong enough to put up a befitting fight:

A man says, 'It is mine',
but he hacks,
chops apart the mine
to discover,
to plunder,
what's in it / Plunder,
that's the word.
Plunder.
A woman wakes up
finds herself
scarred
but still glinting
in the dark.

("Movement to Establish My Identity," Wakoski 1973a:12G-7)

Woman may be "scarred" but she is still capable of "glinting." She may suffer but, like the phoenix, she comes back to life whenever an effort is made to destroy her.

In her craving for love, Diane Wakoski's woman makes herself vulnerable to all kinds of brutality. In "To an Autocrat" the title itself is self-explanatory (Wakoski 1973b:57), whereas the cruelty of a husband is the subject of "Love Passes Beyond ... :"

You hurt me.

You locked me in a room and took away my glasses when you found me reading a book by a man you hated;

you pounded my head against the floor when I wouldn't change my name;

you tried to lock me away in a mental institution when I wanted to

go to a writer's conference for two weeks

(Wakoski 1973a:95)

that is what love is,

for all its trouble,

all its pain,

all its difficulty, it IS a man

and a woman

who are opposites but cannot exist

without

each other.

(*ibidem*:129)

In short, love-or the object of one's love-can cause pain "because love is a crippled foot that makes you walk slower and more / painfully; because love cannot win at the races" ("Ten, the Number of My Fingers:" Wakoski 1971 :122). The conflict arises because man and woman, though dependent on each other, are also antagonistic forces:

In this battle of the sexes it is not surprising that power should pass from the hands of one to another. There is a reversal of roles. Woman becomes the assailant and man her victim:

Will she cut your throat one night as you sleep

or take off : our balls?

Will she steal you blind

and leave you with your stockbroker

or debilitate you with your own weaknesses

and jump in to mastery after

she's spoiled you for anything but drink and talk?

("To An Autocrat," Wakoski 1973b:58)

This reversal of roles is explicitly stated in "The Old Impossibilities" (Wakoski1973a:98). It is a strange tussle in which one cannot always distinguish between the two parties. There is, in Wakoski's role as a woman, a curious blend of magnanimity and submission. In "Smudging" she likens herself to a golden fruit that breaks open and can be "owned" by a prince. The fruit is "waiting" to be owned; it does not offer itself. On the contrary, the "prince"⁹ has to make an effort to come to it. Thus the fruit is superior to the prince. At the same time, it can be "owned"- and hence inferior. The fruit, a symbol of womb and womanhood, can dictate and be dictated to, command and obey:

.... There is part of me that trembles,
and part of me that reaches for warmth,
and part of me that breaks open
like mythic fruit,
the golden orange every prince will fight
to own.

(Wakoski 1973b:13)

Wakoski offers love but when it is rejected, she is capable of resorting to violence.

When rising in revolt to wreak vengeance on men, Diane Wakoski sounds very much like Sylvia Plath in "Daddy" and "Lady Lazarus." In "Lady Lazarus," Sylvia Plath's woman is a vengeful fury who cannot be cowed down: "I eat men like air." And "Daddy" is a ritual enacted by a woman to kill the master who holds her in thrall" (Plath 1981 :244-47,222- 24). Similarly, in "Exorcism," Diane Wakoski expresses her anger against a man (here a husband):

I will shake you angrily to make you see movement.
I will shout at you to hurt your eardrums and
make you remember
pain, the first sensation of living,
I will slam your sloppy open door and scold you
for your messy habits

(Wakoski 1973a:138)

And in the title poem of *Dancing on the Grave of a Son of a Bitch* she, like Plath's persona in "Daddy," ritually destroys the memory of her oppressor:

God damn it,
at last I am going to dance on your grave,
old man;
you've stepped on my shadow once too often,
you've been unfaithful to me with other women,
women so cheap and insipid it psychs me out to think
I might
ever
be put
in the same category with them;
and I will dance, dance, dance
on your grave, grave, grave,
because you are a son of a bitch, a son of a bitch ...
and dance dance dance on your grave
one step
for every time
you done me wrong.

(Wakoski 1978:57-59)

It would be worth its while to compare Diane Wakoski's foreword to this poem (which, incidentally, is dedicated to her "motorcycle betrayer") with Plath's note to "Daddy." Wakoski's foreword tells us that the poem is "a performance to drive away bad spirits perhaps." It expresses the fury of a woman against the man from whom she has parted: "She is furious. She kills him mentally She decides to prove to herself that she's glad he's gone from her life. With joy she will dance on all the bad memories of their life together." Similarly, Plath's "Daddy" is also a sort

of ritual of exorcism, an effort to stamp out the memory of an aggressor¹⁰. The poet tells us that the persona has to "act out the awful little tragedy once over before she is free of it" (Rosenthal1970:70). This poem too

ends with the same kind of ritualistic dancing and stamping:

There's a stake in your fat black heart
And the villagers never liked you.
They are dancing and stamping on you.
They always *knew* it was you.
Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through.
("Daddy," Plath 1981:224)

The underlying similarity between the two poems cannot be ignored. Wakoski's poem, like Plath's, professes to be the incantation of a woman performing a ritual to kill her husband/lover/father. The fury contained in the poem is similar-vindictive but, at the same time, suppressed and contained within the poetic form. Both resort to hurling invectives at their oppressors while giving vent to their anger. There is violence in both action and words: Sylvia Plath's betrayer is a bastard while Wakoski's is a "son of a bitch."

The kind of sentimental violence portrayed in "Daddy" and "Dancing on the Grave of a Son of a Bitch" is an example of what Hoffman calls "crime passionel." The victim is killed but the passion does not subside and hence the assailant must dance and stamp on his body (or his grave). This leads to the catharsis of anger and hate that the victim evokes. It is to be noted that in both poems the victim is inert, dead, and does not strike back. The persona does not view her enemy as an animated being capable of retaliation because she does not want her assault challenged¹¹. For this reason, it is necessary that the assailant should first deprive his victim of all human traits and thus mitigate the magnitude of his crime. Violence can also be perpetrated by deliberately ignoring the feelings and sentiments, the humanity of a person, and merely reporting the suffering. This kind of violence is also found in Wakoski:

as the thin small poet stood on the beach
in the light of the torch and was
run down and immediately killed
that night, on the beach, the sand
soft and cool, like his breath, just a few
minutes before.

("Poet at the Carpenter's Bench," Wakoski 1973b:30)

Here the event is a death-without cause, consequence or meaning. There is violence not just in the killing of the poet but also in Wakoski's account of it which deliberately assumes an impersonal tone and deprives the victim of all humanity. This death is an example of violence against human dignity such as Joseph K's death in Kafka's *The Trial*. There again, the cause of Joseph K's suffering is not given, his assailants are not identified and his death is sudden and violent. There is no dignity involved; in fact he dies "like a dog" (Kafka 1973:286). Wakoski's poet too dies like a dog though it is not explicitly stated as in *The Trial*. The victim is "run down," the way a dog would be run down, and "immediately killed." He is not given a chance to understand why he is killed or even to grasp what is happening to him. He is denied humanity. And when he falls on the beach, the sand is "soft and cool, like his breath, just a few / minutes before." In these two examples, it may be noted, the assailant remains anonymous. We do not know who slits the throat of Joseph K. or who runs down the poet on the beach. Invariably, in

Wakoski,
the assailant is an impersonal "they."

Sometimes in Wakoski the sun that is associated with violence, in this respect, too, Wakoski may be compared with Sylvia Plath who invariably associates sunshine with all that is hostile to human life. In Plath's "Suicide Off Egg Rock" the sunshine brings out all the glaring imperfections of the world:

Behind him the hotdogs split and drizzled
On the public grills, and the ochreous salt flats,
Gas tanks, factory stacks-that landscape
Of imperfections his bowels were part of-
Rippled and pulsed in the glassy up draught.
Sun struck the water like a damnation.
No pit of shadow to crawl into
(Plath 1981:115)

This sunshine is a "damnation" that makes one desirous of "crawling" out of it and also out of the world of imperfections that is lit up by it. The persona of the poem is driven to suicide and we get the impression that it is the sun that goads him into putting an end to his life. It makes him look for a "pit of shadow" to crawl into. He is milder(s), as if stone- deaf, blindfold," that is, it robs him of his senses, sucks the humanity out of him. He sees that "Everything shrank in the sun's corrosive / Ray," and finds the will to live shrinking, withdrawing, and finally leaving him as he walks into the ocean to put an end to his life.

This kind of sunshine that provokes one into violence against oneself can also result in violence against others. For example, in Camus' *The Outsider* (1957:65,67) the same kind of corrosive sunshine deprives Meursault of his sanity and makes him kill a person who has no way offended him:

The light seemed *thudding in my head* ... I could *feel my temples swelling* under the impact of the light. It *pressed itself upon me*, trying to check my progress. And each time I felt a *hot blast strike my forehead*, I gritted my teeth, I clenched every nerve to fend off the sun and the *dark befuddlement it was pouring into me* ...
I was conscious only of the *cymbals of the sun clashing on my skull*, and less distinctly, of the *keen blade of light flashing up from the knife, scarring my eyelashes, and gouging into my eyeballs*.
Then everything began to reel before my eyes, a fiery gust came from the sea, while the sky cracked in two, from end to end, and a great *sheet of flame* poured down the rift. Every nerve of my body was a steel spring, and my grip closed on the revolver

The images and phrases emphasized here inflict injury on the senses. This violence comes from the sun and is responsible for the murder Meursault commits. As in some of the examples cited earlier, this violence too is of unknown origin, the motive is not given and the whole action takes place in strange circumstances and has a trance-like aura about it. The character does not seem to act of his own free will: it is the sun, the cruel sun, that controls his volition and guides his actions.

In Diane Wakoski, "the evil eye comes from the sun" ("Stories from Buffalo," Wakoski 1973b:122). Again, the sun is not benevolent but malevolent; it can burn and scorch:

Walking across the desert,

he puts his scorching hands over our eyes
and turns vision into sounds, waves as the ocean,
drawing the pupils away from rattlesnakes and blurring the hawks
that sail so unconcerned with heat above our heads.

("Reaching Out With The Hands of the Sun," Wakoski 1973a:28)

The heat of the sun can blur one's vision and even cause hallucination. It can make one blind to rattlesnakes, hawks and other dangers lurking about.¹² The hawk imagery surfaces once more: the hawk, unlike man, is unaffected by the heat and continues to fly overhead majestically. Again, there is a stress on the superiority of the animal world when compared with the human world¹³, and this superiority is highlighted by the sunshine. The sun may also be looked upon as a boy, a lover, as Diane Wakoski does in "Anger At the Weather:"

I *have* come here for sunshine,
as I said before
I want that beautiful young boy, the sun,
to take off all his clothes,
let the heat scorch down on us
rubbing the hard head of temperature *over* our bellies
around our mouths, against the jugular vein
in the neck last of all,
across the lips of my female body¹⁴.
(Wakoski 1973b:71)

The sun here becomes a lover, Wakoski's "King of Spain," someone loved but cruel¹⁵. The description of love-making has an element of brutality in it as seen in the poet's use of words like "scorching" and "rubbing" instead of "caressing," "touching" and "loving." But this brutality is welcomed by the poet and there is something masochistic in her sensuous acceptance of the sunshine on her body, even if it is harsh. Again, the sun is the active force as compared with the passivity of the poet. Life without the sun will be nothing short of horror¹⁵:

Do you know the horror of my lizard life and no sun
to run long fingers down the vertebrae?
("The Pterodactyl," *ibidem*: 115)

And finally, there is one more reason why the sun is so important in Diane Wakoski's poetry. Diane is the moon-goddess and the moon is lit up by the sun. The sun, the male factor, gives life to the moon while the moon, the passive partner, "receives" its light. Like the fruit in "Smudging," it waits to be assaulted, to be owned, to be invaded and conquered by the male force. Its relationship with the sun (the male force) remains an ambivalent one. Like the woman of the poems, the moon remains "scarred" but "glinting/in the dark."

End Notes

1. ¹Diane Wakoski, The butcher's apron: new & selected poems, including "Greed: part 14". (Boston, Massachusetts: David R. Godine Publisher. 2000). P. 12
2. ²Diane Wakoski, Argonaut Rose. (Boston, Massachusetts: David R. Godine Publisher. 1998). P. 35
3. ³Diane Wakoski, The Emerald City of Las Vegas. (Boston, Massachusetts: David R. Godine Publisher. 1995). P.41
4. ⁴Diane Wakoski, Jason the Sailor. (Boston, Massachusetts: David R. Godine Publisher. 1993). P.16

5. ⁵Diane Wakoski, Medea the Sorceress. (Boston, Massachusetts: David R. Godine Publisher. 1991). P.22
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