The Sense of Place: Divergent Responses in the Works of Seamus Heaney and Philip Larkin

Thesis Submitted to Vidyasagar University for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts (English)

Ujjwal Kr. Panda

Department of English
Vidyasagar University
Midnapore, West Bengal

2016

Dr. Indranil Acharya
M.A., Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of English
Vidyasagar University
Midnapore, 721102
West Bengal, India

Dated, November 2016

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "The Sense of Place: Divergent Responses in the Works of Seamus Heaney and Philip Larkin", submitted for the degree of Ph.D. of Vidyasagar University is a record of original work done under my supervision in the Department of English by Mr. Ujjwal Kr. Panda. I further certify that Mr. Panda has fulfilled the statutory requirements relating to the nature and period of research and presentation of seminar lectures on his thesis. This work, now submitted in partial fulfillment of his Ph.D. (Arts) degree in English, has not been submitted previously anywhere for any degree whatsoever either by him or anyone else. I also certify that he has complied with all the suggestions and made necessary corrections to his previously submitted thesis and this is a revised version of his thesis.

Declaration

I do hereby declare that the thesis entitled "The Sense of Place: Divergent Responses in the works of Seamus Heaney and Philip Larkin" submitted by me for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts (English) of Vidyasagar University is based upon my own work under the supervision of Dr. Indranil Acharya. This work is the result of original research and neither this thesis nor any part of it has been submitted previously anywhere for any degree or diploma. I further declare that I have worked on the necessary corrections suggested by an Adjudicator and this is a revised version of my previously submitted thesis.

Contents

Acknowledgements

First of all, I must acknowledge that I am grateful to a number of wonderful people without whom writing of this thesis would not have been possible. At the very beginning, I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Indranil Acharya, for his unstinting support, guidance and faith in my work. His dedicated attention and valuable suggestions have shaped the course of my research. I have learned a lot from his meticulous scholarship and editorial judgement, and, undoubtedly, this document would have been a great deal poorer without his intervention and guidance.

Thanks are also due to Dr. Sankar Prasad Singha, Professor of English, Vidyasagar University, Dr. Tirthankar Das Purkayastha, Professor of English, Vidyasagar University, Dr. Debashis Bandyopadhyay, Professor of English, Vidyasagar University and Dr. Joyjit Ghosh, Assistant Professor of English, Vidyasagar University, Midnapore for their support and constructive feedback through the years. Special thanks to my dear teachers, Mr. Radha Pada Sasmal, Head of the Department of English at Bajkul Milani Mahavidyalaya, Purba Medinipur and Dr. Ujjal Jana, former Assistant Professor of English in the Department of English at the same college and, now, an Assistant Professor of English at Pondicherry University, Puducherry, for being my anchors in my initial days as a student of English literature. I am also grateful to Shreelipi, Midnapore for their ready help with technical expertise, whenever needed, for typing the work.

I am deeply indebted to Prof. Edwin A. Dawes, Chairman, Philip Larkin Society, Southgate, U.K., for his encouraging email after coming to know about my work. Their brilliant website has been a great source of help for my research over the years.

Then there are debts of personal and non-academic nature that I have accumulated over the years. I remember the sacrifices done by my father, Bishnupada Panda, which have initiated me into the academic world. I am grateful to my mother, Gita Panda, for her unconditional love. Most of all, I am indebted to Payel and Upamanyu-fellow travellers-who have borne many hardships of my PhD journey with patience and good cheers, and whose love has been the food of my keeping going.

The thesis will also be immediately connected to the memory of those intimate human bonds which I have shared with my near and dear ones, family members and friends during its making. I am sharing the happiness as well as the emptiness of work completed with all of them. The errors in the project that follow, needless to say, are my own.

Introduction:

I

In recent times literary criticism has taken a spatial turn. There is a renewed interest in, as Edward W. Soja in *Postmodern Geographies* asserts, spatializing "the historical narrative, to attach to *durée* an enduring critical human geography" (Soja1). That the place is more than a cartographical location being a construct of complex socio-cultural interactions with its people, has been the focal point in the works of modern humanist geographers like Yi-Fu Tuan[i] and Edward Relph[ii]. The term "sense of place" is the result of so many complexities which encircle human being situated geographically as well as culturally. In the era of globalization where national boundaries tend to be blurred the sense of a particular place can be varied and full of dichotomy. The inherent crisis of identity that a place exercises upon an individual arises out of the sudden and drastic change in the overall perception and characteristic of the place in the post-colonial and global times. Modern poetry is heavily influenced by these intrinsic dilemmas of identity originating out of disturbing sense of place related to cultural and social xenophobia, series of emplacement and displacement in a liquid spatial milieu.

The term sense of place can be interpreted in various ways. Some humanist geographers consider it to be a typical characteristic that some geographic places display and some do not, while to others it is the feeling or perception of a place held by the inhabitants of the place itself. The sense of place then can be different to two different individuals of the same place given the context of his subject position, his

sense of place along with its various connotations, opines that the sense of a particular place cannot be inherently "positive" always, such as fear of living in a place. So, the sense of place is related to those features that render a place with some special or unique characteristics as well as to those that evoke a sense of reliable human attachment or belonging.

From the above discussion it is evident that the concept of sense of place is not confined to the sphere of humanist geography only. Truly speaking, nowadays, it has become an interdisciplinary buzzword used to signify a whole set of cultural pre-conceptions that structure the way we envisage and respond to the place. This lack of a common and universal definition of the concept has given birth to different definitions in different disciplines of study. For example, in anthropology the sense of place is often seen as "place attachment". Setha Low in "Symbolic Ties that Bind: Place Attachment in the Plaza" says –

> *Place attachment* is the symbolic relationship formed by people giving culturally shared emotional/affective meanings to a particular space or piece of land that provides the basis for the individual's and group's understanding of and relation to the environment … Thus, place attachment is more than an emotional and cognitive experience and includes cultural beliefs and practices that link people to place. (*Place Attachment* 165)

Again, the environmental psychologists like Fritz Steele have defined the sense of place as "the particular experience in a particular setting" (*The Sense of Place* 3). In this book he has also propounded the concept of spirit of place which is a

social elements. The famous landscape architect, John Brinckerhoff Jackson, considers the sense of place to be a construct created by human beings because "It is the result of habit or custom… A sense of place is reinforced by what might be called a sense of recurring events" (*A sense of place, a sense of time 23).*

David Hummon in his essay "Community Attachment: Local Sentiment and Sense of Place" has given a sociological definition of the term –

> By *Sense of Place,* I mean people's subjective perception of their environments and their more or less conscious feelings about those environments. Sense of place is inevitably dual in nature, involving both an interpretive perspective on the environment and an emotional reaction to the environment… Sense of place involves a personal *orientation* toward place in which one's understanding of place and one's feelings about place become fused in the context of environmental meaning. (*Place attachment* 254).

So, the concept of sense of place has been one of the most talked about topics in the post-modern interdisciplinary studies in a time which has experienced huge World Wars, fall of firmly cemented empires, human displacements, mass migration and globalization. The interpretation of literature as a spatially symbolic act is more potentially materialized. In the context of such a varied study of the sense of place it is difficult to locate the works of Seamus Heaney and Philip Larkin in relation to all the available definitions and interpretations of the works. In the present research I have accepted the humanist geographic point of view of the concept to be the focal point and examined how the sense of place of the two poets developed in course of

"outsideness" is also a point of interpretation here. What caused their feelings of being outsiders in their own country? The study also attempts to show their different subject positions and their opposite ways of dealing with the sense of transcendence of belonging and the crises of identity posed upon them by their respective places. The aim is to study the divergent responses of Larkin and Heaney with regard to a sense of belonging, unbelonging and transcendence of belonging. The work firstly tries to locate the socio-cultural contexts which structured their sense of place and then seeks to examine their contrasting ways of looking at the changes and compromises of the new world.

Actually, some of the major poetry of recent years focuses on place and the language used to evoke its setting. In fact, it forms a significant part of the contiguous traditions in Post-War British and Irish poetry. A study of the poetry of Heaney and Larkin is a project under these contiguous traditions. Both Heaney and Larkin are placed in the matrix of essential notions of place. While Larkin attempts through lyric to transcend the essential notion of place, Heaney remains in just the opposite direction. One highly influential work in this field is by James Booth. A chapter in his book entitled "New Larkins for Old" is set against Heaney's much maligned essay, "Englands of the Mind", in which he argues that Larkin shares a provincialism which stands for a covert Englishness, accompanying the era of decolonization. Actually, "Englands of the Mind" was written in 1976 in the wake of *Wintering Out* and *North* where Heaney himself was concerned with his own Irish identity. This was a time when sectarian clashes and the resultant sense of marginalization and transcendence of belonging arising in the mind of a Catholic minority like Heaney made him

and Philip Larkin. Actually, Larkin has been a towering presence in the post World War II British poetry and a critical study of the poetry of this time was almost impossible without a substantial take on Larkin. Heaney's words, "All three are hoarders and shorers of what they take to be the real England" (*Preoccupations 150)*, try to ascribe to these poets a sense of English nationhood that corresponds to Heaney's own sense of Irish national identity. Heaney here interprets England no longer as Ireland's colonial oppressor but as a place whose characteristic roots are obliterated by the Empire and subsequent cultural turmoil. Larkin has been a constant presence in Heaney's poetic and critical output. Larkin's sense of place is something that continued to haunt Heaney and he is the only writer whom Heaney has returned to quite regularly. His early collections like *Death of a Naturalist* and *Door into the Dark* show influences of Larkin and he deals with Larkin's poetry directly in "Englands of the Mind" (*Preoccupations*), "The Main of Light" (*The Government of Tongue)* and "Joy or Night" *(The Redress of Poetry*) . But his critical bafflement in describing Larkin as a "hoarder and shorer" of "the real England" like that of Hill and Hughes is quite evident in "Englands of the Mind." His interpretation of two poems commonly used to describe Larkin's sense of place and nationhood is often inconclusive too. For example, in relation to "I remember, I remember", Heaney writes –

> He too returns to origins and brings something back, although he does not return to 'roots'. He puts inverted commas round his 'roots', in fact. His childhood, he says, was a forgotten boredom. He sees England from train windows, fleeting past and away. He is urban modern man, the insular

> nationalism, and his voice is the not untrue, not unkind voice of post-war England, where the cloth cap and the royal crown have both lost some of their potent symbolism, and the categorical, socially defining functions of the working-class accent and the aristocratic drawl have almost been eroded. (*Preoccupations* 167).

Again, in the delineation of "The Importance of Elsewhere", a poem that quite interestingly deals with Larkin's experience of staying at Belfast, Heaney's homeland, Heaney follows the familiar stereotype of the formation of national identity in comparison and contrast to a foreign "other". But, as we will see, Larkin was always ill at ease with his own place, i.e., England.

So Larkin's sense of place has been a matter of concern for Heaney throughout his career. His own quasi-tribal sense of nationhood which he easily ascribes to Hill and Hughes cannot be ascribed to Larkin effectively. In fact, the question of England has infiltrated areas of debate as diverse as popular journalism, history, philosophy and literary theory. The present study has attempted to include humanistic geography as a new critical tool to look at the discourse of place and space. The critical foundation produces startling results that situate Larkin's and Heaney's sense of place in terms of geopolitical, social and cultural issues and the claims of multiple and competing local knowledge systems.

It is true that spatial insecurity, transcendence of belonging, crisis of identity related to places can easily be delineated in relation to the works of Seamus Heaney. The very place he belongs to has a turbulent past and an equally violent present which

Catholic in the Protestant North with its immediate feelings of dispossession, discrimination and marginalization. The sense of losing holds of the territory first by the historical phenomenon of British colonization and then by Protestant invasion has been a constant existence in Heaney's *oeuvre*.

But situating Larkin in such a framework of critical investigation may seem outwardly impossible. Because being associated with the so called "Movement Group" of poets of the 1950s Larkin remains a reticent observer of the everyday regional life of England. He belonged to the group of people scarcely going through experiences of being marginalized or displaced. Actually like his poetic personae Larkin was himself firmly rooted to his land except going to a tour to the Nazi Germany with his Nazi sympathizer father Sydney in childhood and to Belfast in a professional assignment in his early youth. But a close reading of his biographies by Andrew Motion and Richard Bradford and his posthumously published selected letters edited by Anthony Thwaite enlightens many unknown aspects of Larkin's personalities. His self professed peripheral identity comes to the surface of things when we judge his works in relation to his being right-wing thinker in a time of England's declining colonial power, his secret sympathy for the Nazi Germany like his father, his being a homosexual and transsexual etc. His being a life-long bachelor and xenophobic and a physically challenged person never allowed him to occupy the centre of socio-cultural existence. Here I have examined his early works like his two novels, *Jill* and *A Girl in Winter,* his collection of short stories, *Trouble at Willow Gables* and his poems from the above mentioned psycho-biographical details. The image of a displaced and unaccommodated individual trying to escape in the fast

But although the main objective of the thesis has been showing the divergence of response to the places they inhabit, a comparison of their respective "sense of place" becomes almost inevitable in course of the discussion of Heaney's and Larkin's sense of place in the individual chapters dedicated to their works. In his essay, "Place: An Experiential Perspective" Yi-Fu Tuan defines place as "a center of meaning constructed by experience" (152). He says that whenever a "specific location has special meaning" (153) to the individual it may be defined as a place. According to Tuan this "specific location" can be seen as different units which are "centers of meaning to individuals or groups" ranging from "fireplaces" and "rocking chair" to "neighborhoods", "towns", "cities", "distinctive regions" and "nations" (153). From this point of view, Heaney's idea of the Northern Irish region and Larkin's notion of England as centers "of meaning constructed by experience" were marked by some distinctive characteristics which are different in the contexts their separate subject-positions and experiences arising out of their different cultural and political allegiances.

Studies and criticisms of Irish literature, even today, succumb mostly to a number of well-known stereotypes. An artistic representation of Ireland and its landscape is expected to be dominated by the ethos of Romantic mysticism and exoticism, a constricting Celtic twilightism, notions of rural arcadia in the dramatisation of peasantry, Big Houses, patriarchy etc. This is largely a result of the purely Romantic construction of Irish otherness and the mystification of its "horrible beauty" in the 19th century British literary representations of Ireland like Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* (1800). Besides, the Irish Literary Renaissance which

a leitmotif and the essential soul of the so called "Wild West" myth. The strangeness and distinctiveness of Celtic culture has been extolled in the works of W. B. Yeats, J. M. Synge and Sean O'Casey where its folklores, beliefs, primitive rituals and myths have been given almost a surreal dimension. But this romanticisation of the landscape began to yield place to the realistic representation of the Irish place in the postcolonial time. Seamus Heaney's sense of place differs markedly from his immediate predecessors like Yeats. To Yeats the highly mythicised image of Irish place was deeply rooted to the cultural agenda of Irish nationalism where the lost Irish traditions became integral to the reclamation of an identity which is threatened. But Heaney's sense of place is remarkably regional or, to be more specific, local. His understanding of place is informed by a cultural as well as a religio-political perception which is far removed from the traditional romantic ethos attached to the Irish place being truthfully grounded in the history of marginalisation and reality of Northern Ireland. In the words of Edward Picot, in Heaney's poetry there is a tendency of "moving towards a more complex and troubled vision of Irish history than the usual Eden-myth" (231). Starting from the publication of *North*, Heaney tries to go beyond the repetitive use of the Eden-myth and emphasizes the importance of local in his poetry. His place is predominantly County Derry, his birthplace. Heaney's recurring references to the "local" address to the divided sensibilities of his place which resulted in the political rift between the Protestants and the Catholics. Actually, Heaney's portrayal of the local challenges the homogenous nature of Irish consciousness that we find in the traditional 19th century and the 20th century representations. Heaney's representation of Northern Ireland refers to the sense of

Heaney's poetry never feeds upon this history of segregation. His evocation of the local also rests upon a collective discourse of a shared history which could resist the separatist vibes of both politics and religion.

So Heaney gives vent to a union of the legendary and the local and reimagines its history, geography, culture in his place-based or place-bound poetry that is concerned with the personal experience of a place rather than with its overt political connotations. This experience is again deeply rooted in Northern Irish linguistic traditions. His highly distinctive use of language is often reminiscent of the Gaelic history of his place which reaffirms a local attachment beyond the contours of deracination of politics, ethnicity and religion. So Heaney's sense of place is committed to an intercultural difference but it always favours tolerance and peace because the local evolves into an identity which is more than a physical geography.

But unlike Heaney, Larkin's sense of place is deeply concerned with the changes, compromises and cultural crisis in the post-World War-II England. His sense of placelessness operates mainly on two levels- his personal life, his physical deformities and preferences and the immense sociocultural changes that England undergoes. From the very beginning of his life Larkin identifies himself with a peripheral place due to these factors which I have discussed in the chapters dealing with Larkin. Actually, Larkin belongs to a semi-urban or a semi-rural England (like his birthplace, Coventry and his workplace, Hull) which was far removed from the maelstrom of modernism, consumerism and urbanism and he maintains both an aesthetic and a physical distance from the centre in his life. This distance from centre

"dislike for the obscurity generated by modern allusiveness" (Draper 230). Standing in a time when both the English and the Anglo-American poetry eschewed modernist dictum in their complex, highly stylised, allusive and experimental tone, Larkin remained a staunch advocate of plainness and simplicity which is evident in his life-long devotion to the alternative, rather discursive, version of modernity given by his fellow Englishmen like Thomas Hardy, Basil Bunting and John Betjeman. This antimodernist stance and a defensive love for the native English idiom (which has later become famous as well as scandalized as "Englishness") characterise Larkin's poem. He attempts to show his negative sense of place in his uneasiness with the political and cultural ruptures of the 1950s and 1960s and tries to pose a resistance to the imminent threats of modernisation, consumerism, urbanisation and globalisation through his poetry deeply rooted in plain English style, English life and rural and semi-urban English places. Larkin never tries to create an alternative cultural place of vanishing British glories, nor does he provides a radical solution for this wretchedness. He only shows a strong denial to accept the uneasy truths- the gradual degeneration of the known English landscape, the threat of industrialization to the rural English places, the vanished community-based life in the English countryside, the consumerist penchant for sex and money etc. The encroaching power of establishment and modernity both in the personal sphere and in society in general is a prominent feature of Larkin's sense of place. This negative sense of place also led Larkin to prefer Hull to the big cities like London or Manchester because Hull provided him some glimpses of what is lost and it also gave him a quality of unfamiliarity and obscurity being "on the edge of things".

experiences. Heaney's sense of place is immensely informed by cultural, political and religious realities of Northern Ireland while Larkin's marginal place is a result of his physical and cultural indictments.

II

"A man's destination is not his destiny

Every country is home to one man

And exile to another." [iii] (T.S. Eliot, "To the Indians who Died in Africa", C.P. 1909-1962, 231)

"Deeper into the country than you expected

And discover that the field behind the hedge

Grew more distinctly strange as you kept stand

Focused and drawn in by what barred the way. [iv] (Seamus Heaney, "Field of Vision", *Seeing Things* 22)

Modern British and Irish poetry give vent to the sense of displacement and transcendence of belonging pungently and quite incessantly. The relation of the culturally structured self to the rapidly vanishing culture which produced it gives birth to the sense of loss and dispossession. Actually the devastations of the first and the second World Wars, and the vast demographic migrations, deportations, purges and ethnic cleansings that they caused, gave birth to exilic identities into the minds of the Europeans. Colonialism which incurred expatriation to the colonizers and the native colonized, the globalization of displacement in the post-colonial era with the

homeland and being exiled become endemic of modern British and Irish poetry under consideration.

To begin with the High Modernists, the poems of both T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound are informed by the inherent mechanism of being displaced, uprooted, deculturalised and resultantly marginalized or peripheral. Eliot's early poems including *The Waste Land* depict a cultural and spiritual waste land where the values have collapsed. The main examples of this collapse are sterile, unloving, sexual relationships, cultural confusion and spiritual desolation. Europe as a place has lost its real character with people living in a life-in-death condition –

"A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,

I had not thought death had undone so many. ("The Burial of the Dead", from *The Waste Land* 64-65)

The rise of capitalism which divided the society and the massacre of the First World War which left the world in fragments made the world devoid of values, ideals, and spirituality. The pictures of fragmentation and displacement come in galore in Eliot's early poetry and it is full of such representation of displaced and unaccommodated individuals like Tiresias in *The Waste Land,* Mr. Prufrock in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and Gerontion in the poem of the same name. But this uneasiness with place becomes doubly significant when we judge Eliot as a man suffering not only from cultural confusion but also from physical dislocation. His later poetry, written particularly after he was converted to Anglican Catholicism in 1927, is fraught with an urge to return to his lost American roots. His *Four Quartets*

symbolic of Eliot's new found hope under the institution of religion and his desire of going back to his native America. Although we know that Pericles is navigating through Europe the geographical description of the island where his ship has anchored resembles Cape Ann, New Hampshire, which Eliot had to leave in his childhood-

"What seas what shores what granite Islands towards my timbers
And woodthrush calling through the fog
My daughther." (28-30)

Again the poems of Yeats, as well as his plays, are firmly rooted in the Irish traditions. Closely related to the Irish Independence Movement, Yeats thought literature to be a tool of cultural resistance. He extensively used Irish folklores and cultural symbols to set a kind of cultural revivalism that will not only distinguish his works from that of the British poets but also will fittingly combat the British cultural hegemony. His sense of place is immensely influenced by his Anglo-Irish nationalism which finds mature expression in his early poems like "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" and "The Song of Wandering Aengus". These are some of the best examples of poetry of place. Again, the difference between his rooted Protestant ascendancy and nomadic modernism finds expression in a kind of crisis of identity in many of his poems. His poetry finds in the celebration of place a useful correction to the abstractness of conscious patriotism.

Again, no other poet was so obsessed with place among the modern British poets than W.H. Auden, the most prominent voice among the poets of the 30s.

of the shelter which all of this offered and while he naturally cherished it, he had a strong urge to divert himself of it."(*Government of Tongue* 116-17). Stan Smith in his book *Poetry and Displacement* thinks that "Auden's departure for the United States in 1939, on the brink of the Second World War, was not simply a personal choice, but also marked a decisive shift in the landscape of twentieth-century sensibility, the emergence of what came to be called 'contemporary'," as opposed to 'modern' and 'modernist', poetry, a phenomenon to be renamed, in the final decades of that century, as 'postmodern'."(23) His poetry which mixes the slangy, jazzy, Yankee dialect with poetic diction not only becomes an epitome of postmodern verse, it also stands, for a sense of crisis of a lost world marked by, in the words of Graham Greene, "a distrust of any future based on what we are "(*Journey Without Maps* 20). Auden's longer poems like "For the Time Being" (1944) and "The Age of Anxiety" (1947) are full of this confusion of place caused by the Great Wars. The rootless self "looks stranger" and in a relative, evanescent world travels with a foreign eye to catch glimpse of some known, familiar symbols. Auden's first American collection, *The Double Man (1941)* is marked by this nowhereness of the contemporary self. His essay, "The Wandering Jew", gives expression to his own emigration and to the mass exodus of Jews due to Hitler's and Stalin's extermination programmes. The role of place to mould identity is also a major theme in his later poetry.

Again the landscape of Wales became almost a living character in Dylan Thomas's poetry. The beautiful Wales landscape provided him a sense of frustrated pastoralism. The shock and disgust arising out of the violent destruction of the World War –II made him to explore the spiritual implication of the lost landscape of

quality in time of war which evoked desertion and transcendence of belonging. Walford Davies in his book, *Dylan Thomas,* says-

> *Deaths and Entrances,* his fourth volume of poetry (February 1946), illustrates equally the polarity between released lyricism (*Poem in October* and *Fern Hill)* and shocked assertion (*'Deaths and Entrances* and *'Ceremony after a Fire Raid*) that epitomized all his wartime writing. Both kinds were responses to an emergency. (Davies 143)

So Thomas's poetry is also informed by a sense of place that is marked by loss and desertion, quite typical to the War years.

The poetry of 1950s and 60s is marked by a sense of defeatism and frustration. In these decades England was changing fast. The imperial powers were on the wane and the society was going through a process of disowning the old values instead of new ones like consumerism, labour movements, globalization and the consequent mass migration of the people from the erstwhile colonies to England, sexual liberalization etc. The local, provincial poetry of the Movement Poets is, so often described as expression of defensive love for a territory which is fast losing its recognizable character. Seamus Heaney in his famous essay, "Englands of the Mind" judges the nationalist flavour in the poems of three modern British poets. Ted Hughes, Geoffrey Hill and Philip Larkin and says, "I believe they are afflicted with a sense of history that was once the peculiar affliction of the poets of other nations who were not themselves natives of England but who spoke the English language. The

Yeats, MacDiarmid, Carlos Williams. They are aware of their Englishness as deposits in the descending storeys of the literary and historical past. ... A desire to preserve indigenous traditions, to keep open the imagination's supply lines to the past, to receive from the stations of Anglo-Saxon confirmations of ancestry, to perceive in the rituals of Show Saturdays and race-meetings and seaside outings, of church-going and marriages at Whitsun, and in the necessities that crave expression after the ritual of church-going has passed away, to perceive in these a continuity of communal ways, and a confirmation of an identity which is threatened – all this is signified by their language." (*Preoccupations* 150-51)

But the problematics of place can be strongly noticed in Modern Northern Irish poetry. Patrick J. Duffy in his essay, "Writing Ireland: Literature and Art in the Representation of Irish Place", comments-

> In the context of emerging national consciousness in Ireland, the North has inherited intractable problems of identity which are well reflected in its literature, cultural nationalism in the South and its emphasis on Gaelic and dominant images of Irishness. Literature in the North reflects the ensuing confusions of identity and cultural uncertainties, best exemplified by poets like John Hewitt and Derek Mahon, whose work has been described as portraying the 'spiritual desolation' of Ulster Protestant culture (Longley 1984:17). In his post-partition search for

British, some Irish, some Ulsterman, usually with a degree of hesitation or mental fumbling'. (*In Search of Ireland* 77)

This "doubleness of focus" (Heaney) is the hallmark of Northern Irish sense of place. Though in the North Protestants are the dominating ethnic group, in the poetry of both Hewitt and Mahon it becomes clear that Protestant identity is principally a politically grounded (British) phenomenon, with a historically "siege" mentality which excluded the real inhabitants of the land, i.e., the Catholics.

If the Protestant poets of the place reflect their sense of place in terms of displacement and transcendence of belonging, the Catholic Poets like Patrick Kavanagh and Heaney also express their sense of dispossession being deterritorialized first by colonization and then by Protestant invasion.

So, such is the context of modern poetic responses towards the problematics of place against which I have to examine Seamus Heaney's and Philip Larkin's responses towards their places.

III

I would now submit my chapter plan for general convenience. In Chapter One, I seek to locate the evolution and definition of the sense of place in modern critical theory. In Chapter Two, I have judged Heaney's poetry in terms of the concepts like "primal landscape" and "secondary landscape" and "insidness" and "outsideness" which are so crucial to an understanding of the sense of place in the sphere of Humanist Geography (mainly the discussion of how the sense of place was developed by Yi-Fu

agrarian culture and then physically from his "primal landscape". I have shown his early poetry is full of an urge to reterrritorialize the profound sense of deterritorialization by attempting reclamation of what is lost. In Chapter Three I have judged Heaney's sense of "outsideness" in his own territory during the Ulster violence of 1960s and 1970s when "Catholic" became almost a racist term in the Protestant North . Unprecedented violence and unrest made Heaney to leave his country but his later poetry tries to create a "third space" from where to express the thoughts and ideas about the displaced humanity itself because the whole world is turning into a threatened place and the regional sense of place yields place to a global one. His later poetry, thus, expresses an affirmative sense of place unlike his early poems. As a place the whole world is becoming insecure and we must form a universal "human chain" to avert the threats. But in my study of Heaney's works I have deliberately avoided the chronological sequence of his works because his themes are often repetitive and he constantly used a thoughtfully designed self-referential textuality. For example, "The Conway Stewart" from his last published volume of poetry, *Human Chain,* refers back so aptly to "Digging", a poem published some forty five years back in his first collection, *Death of a Naturalist*. Again, there are some recurring and constant images in his poems like his father, his mother, the bogs, agricultural activities etc.

In my study of Philip Larkin's sense of place, I have preferred a chronological study to situate the development of his disturbed, rather a negative, sense of place. In Chapter Four, I have referred to his unhappy childhood, his sense of being alienated both from his family and the social sphere of Coventry, his physical deformities and

up to *The Less Deceived*. In Chapter Five, I have gone through his two best-known books *The Whitsun Weddings* and *High Windows* to show that this negative sense of place has only been consolidated in the time of rapid socio-cultural and political changes. The growing feeling of disgust that shrouds the poems of *High Windows* completes Larkin's stature of being an "eternal outsider". In the Conclusion, I have summed up my arguments and the divergent responses towards the concept of sense of place in the poems of Heaney and Larkin. Here I have pointed out the future relevance of my work and the possible fields or poets / writers to whom I can extend my study later.

Notes

i. Yi-Fu Tuan is one of the most important geographers of our time. Born in an affluent family in Tientsin, China in 1930, he moved to California in 1955. After a short teaching stint at the University of Toronto between 1966-1968, Tuan became a full professor at the University of Minnesota in 1968 and began extensive research on what he calls Humanistic Geography. According to Tuan, there is a basic difference between Human Geography and Humanistic Geography. In "Dear Colleague" letter in 2004, Tuan refers to the difference in the following manner-

> Human geography studies human relationships. Human geography's optimism lies in its belief that asymmetrical relationships and exploitation can be removed, or reversed. What human geography does not consider, and what humanistic geography does, is the role [relationships] play in nearly all human contacts and exchanges. If we examine them conscientiously, no one will feel comfortable throwing the first stone. As for deception, significantly, only Zoroastrianism among the great religions has the command. "Thou shalt not lie". After all, deception and lying are necessary to smoothing the ways of social life.

From this, I conclude that humanistic geography is neglected because it is too hard. Nevertheless, it will attract the tough-minded and idealistic, for it rests ultimately on the belief that we humans can face the most unpleasant facts, and even do something about them, without despair.

The interested reader may go through his books, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience(1977)* and *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values*(1974) for a better understanding of the concepts of humanistic geography, place/ space dichotomy and sense of place.

experienced. The book was a pioneering effort in the field of Human Geography as it is one of the first attempts to deal with the concept of place exclusively. It was one of the first phenomenological studies of geography also. It has widely been considered to be classic of Human Geography.

iii. To the Indians who died in Africa is one of Eliot's lesser known short poems published in *collected poems 1909-1962.* It was written at the request of Miss Cornellia Sorabji for Queen Mary's book for India (Harrap and Co. Ltd. 1943). Eliot dedicated it to Bonamee Dobree. The poem describes the dislocation that the World War-II made globally and points to the futility of such actions. But, metaphorically, it refers also to his own dislocation arising out of his long expatriation.

iv. Field of vision was published in Seamus Heaney's 1991-collection of poems, *Seeing Things.* The book is full of visions or 'seeing things' of a displaced individual. The present poem, through a vision of Heaney's mother in the field in the remote childhood, refers to the ground which is lost, deterritorialized and, now, almost a vision.

Chapter One

The Aesthetics of Place

In this chapter I would like to locate the area of my research in relation to the bulk of critical theory available already in the field of post-modern humanist geography focused on the concept of place and importance of it in the formation of identity of a group or an individual and also would try to review the considerable volume of critical material available on works of Seamus Heaney and Philip Larkin to situate the relevance and importance of my research.

To begin with I would like to refer back to Edward W. Soja's book *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*(1989) where he significantly says –

> Today, however, it may be space more than time, that hides consequences from us, the 'making of geography' more than the 'making of history' that provides the most revealing tactical and theoretical world.(1)

The possibility of an interdisciplinary study of literature and geography has been considered to be a reality. How literature ekes out from and reveals the very place it belongs to is a matter of analysis in such studies. The complexity and contradiction of literary response towards a place is writ-large in literature and such studies are very much evident in post-modern literary theories, post-colonial criticism and geo-

> In many cases, 'place' does not become an issue in a society's cultural discourse until colonial intervention radically disrupts the primary modes of its representation by separating 'space' and 'place'. A sense of place may be embedded in cultural history, in legend and language, without becoming a concept of contention and struggle until the profound discursive interference of colonialism. Such intervention may disrupt a sense of place in several ways : by imposing a feeling of displacement in those who have moved to the colonies; by physically alienating large population of colonized people through forced migration, slavery and indenture; by disturbing the representation of place in the colony by imposing the colonial language. (177-78)

Undoubtedly, post-colonialism is at bottom a sub-genre of culture studies dealing extensively with the change in the sense of a particular place that experiences layers of liquidations being represented by the dominant colonial discourse. In this connection we can quote Jacques Derrida who described Western metaphysics as "the white mythology which reassembles and reflects the culture of the West : the white man takes his own mythology, Indo-European mythology, his own *logos,* that is, the *mythos* of this idiom, for the universal form of that he must still wish to call Reason". ("White Mythology", *Margins of Philosophy* 18). The way in which this dominant metaphysics of ideology structures the sense of place of a colonized subject, has been famously delineated by the Algerian-born theorist Frantz Fanon in his books, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) and *Black Skins, White Masks* (1967). Fanon, a

primitive, uncivilized to establish his own superiority over the other. Although this view is overtly prejudiced and racialized, the incessant manipulation of this idea gradually breaks the cultural self-esteem of the colonized and he begins to see himself through the eyes of the white world. The native begins to emulate the culture of the white man because his own culture means to him nothing at all. Going through a process of continuous mimicry of the white the wretched of the earth slowly becomes a man with black skin and white mask. This deliberate attempt to portray the colonized space and its people in a negative colour through some familiar stereotypes like primitivism, savagery, superstition, cannibalism, magic, criminality has been the main argument of Edward Said's monumental work, *Orientalism (1978)*. Said was, as the title essay of *The World, the Text and the Critic (1983)* states, interested in the 'worldliness' of texts. No text is removed from its world. A text cannot be imagined only as a language which is ageographical, apolitical and acultural. In his writings on Palestine, his homeland which he has left behind, he time and again returns to the questions of imaginations which is based on mapping of resistance against imperialism. In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) he concentrates on the hegemony of dominant discourse that prevails to thwart the voice of any resistant culture. His later writings heavily come back to his own sense of dispossession being an exile from Palestine. He sought to invent a universal principle directed to the years of injustice the people of Palestine have undergone. In *Peace and its Discontents (1995)* Said directly addresses to the Palestinians and the Arabs conveying his sense of disgust at the peace process that never strives to solve the age-old problems continuing to plague the place. His works on Palestine constantly refer to the issues that mark the

discourses of displacement in connection with Said's early life – his exile from Palestine to live in the United States. The book is an insightful study of the psychological and cultural grounds responsible for a displaced, alienated and often a liminal subject position.

Homi K. Bhabha, another esteemed figure in the sphere of post-colonial criticism provides in-depth studies of the interpellation of the native subject. Using the post-structuralist theories of Foucault and Derrida and the psychoanalytic theories of Lacan and Klein, Bhabha examines the "experience of social marginality" to show that the identity and uniqueness of a place chiefly depends on its culture and the cultural changes of a colonized space brought upon it by the colonizers were never stable, fixed or monolithic. The reciprocal relationship between colonizer/colonized gives birth to a culture of a place which is "mimic" to each other and consequently the native, uncontaminated culture becomes "hybrid". The "hybrid" subject position also led Bhabha to emulate the concept of "Third Space" which was later conceptualized by Edward Soja. In the "thirdspace", thinks Soja,

> Everything comes together-subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history. (*Thirdspace 57*).

He goes on to explain –

> spatial awareness that is appropriate to the new scope and significance being brought about in the rebalanced trialectices of spatiality-historicality-sociality. (*Thirdspace 57*).

Soja, however, formulated his theory of a Thirdspace for the self expression of the social other, from the spatial trialectics established by Henri Lefebvre in his book, *The Production of Space,* and Foucault's concept of heterotopias. He also used the place-related theories of the post colonial thinkers like Spivak, Bhabha and Said. Social alienation, according to Soja, incurs into the mind of the so called "other" a kind of awareness that is at once inside the space and outside. The pressures, marginalization and dichotomies of a place become solved into a "thirdspace" that is free from the inherent politics of power that a place exerts into the other.

The Foucauldian concept of the exercise of power and the role of the dominant discourse to structure and consolidate the subject position of the dominated also led Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak to formulate the theory of "Worlding". It refers to the dominant practice of rendering a "World" on a dominated subject that makes his subject position taken for granted. For example, the "third world" automatically makes an inhabitant of it acceptedly inferior and suffering socially and culturally.

So, place and culture remain integral to the postcolonial criticism. With the rise of postmodern theories the possibility of a literary criticism related to geography became materialized. Geocriticism[i] is such a theory or a method of literary analysis which involves a study of geographic space. The concept of "geocritique" was first elaborated by the French theorist Bertrand Westphal in his 2007-monograph *La*

Tally translated Westphal's book in English as *Geocriticism:Real and Fictional Spaces(2012)* and has been instrumental in spreading the geo-critical practices in the study of English texts. The basic concern of a geocritic is with the locale of a text. Tally considers literature as a spatially symbolic act –

> An approach to narrative as a spatially symbolic act enables us to navigate literature and the world in interesting new ways, by asking different questions, exploring different territories, and discovering different effects. As writers map their worlds, so readers or critics may engage with these narrative maps in order to orient ourselves and make sense of things in a changing world.(Nanocrit 23)

In the twenty-first century, this approach may be all the more pressing, as many of the former guideposts or prints of reference (including even geographical ones, such as national borders) have disappeared or become less reliable.

Navigation is thus a figure for one's existential condition and for literature. From a phenomenological perspective, the subject must attempt to understand the world by performing a kind of cartographic activity. Fredric Jameson has called this sort of cartographic activity "cognitive mapping", a relational framework that enables "a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to the vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society's structures as a whole "(*Postmodernism* 51-54). Mapping establishes a meaningful framework for the subject, with points of reference for thinking about oneself and one's place in the

cartographic function by creating a figurative or allegorical representation of a social space, broadly understood. This I refer to as "literary cartography" ("On Literary Cartography: Narrative as a spatially symbolic Act", published in *Nano Journal of New York City college of Technology*, January, 2011).Therefore, geocriticism is a multi focal approach to space and its relationships with the observer on different levels-social, cultural, political etc.

But such attempts to interpret literature in terms of geography would not have been possible unless the recent development of humanist geography from the 1970s onwards. The sense of place is itself a term taken from the field of Humanist Geography. The term has been interpreted in different ways by different geographers.

> It may refer to some traits or characteristics that some geographic locations show and some do not. It may also be a feeling or perception held by people who experience their living. A place becomes unique or attains some specific qualities being continuously interpreted by this sense of place that lies latent in it. This often leads to a place's authentic human attachment. But, as Yi-Fu Tuan says, the sense of a particular place cannot be always "positive", like "fear" of living in a place.

The human geographers think that like other fields of knowledge, geography is also structured by specific social, political and economic circumstances. D.N. Livingston in his book, *The Geographical Tradition (1992)* considers geography as

his book, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*(1977), thinks that there may be no existence of place outside the consciousness of geographers "who, by their eloquence, are able to create place" (Tuan, "Language and the Making of Place : A Narrative-descriptive Approach", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 81; 684-96).

Again D.E. Cosgrove in *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape (1984)* locates human geography in the context of a complex social construction where the cultural landscape is pitted against the multiple and overlapping aspects of social differentiation. From this point of view the cultural landscape becomes a symbolic act of identity formation-an allegory to be enacted in multifocal and multicultural texts. A socially constructed place, therefore, "is intrinsic to renditions of individual and group identity, which often embody particular readings or narratives of a people's interaction with their cultural landscape"(Brian Graham, *In Search of Ireland: A Cultural Geography* 3). But as an individual is always a subject to his national and ethnic identity, the individual rendition of place becomes symbolic responses to social inclusion and exclusion. This perspective makes the possibility of an interdisciplinary study of humanist geography a potential reality. As Tuan in "Humanistic Geography"(generally considered to be the treatise of humanistic geography by many) notes, humanistic geography seeks to achieve "an understanding of the human world by studying people's relations with nature, their geographical behaviour as well as their feelings and ideas in regard to space and place." ["Humanistic Geography", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers 66.2* 266 – 276]

Literary responses towards culture and identity, naturally, become saturated

hegemonic landscape denies them. The concepts of Feminist Geography, Gay Geography and Queer Geography, Lesbian Geography are directly related to the urge to formulate an alternative space for the socially and culturally marginalised. The subject-position of the author expressed in his literary output, then, becomes inevitably an expression of his relation to his place or his spatial identity. An understanding of how sense of place develops and changes is pertinent to understand the way in which people interact with their environment in general. Human geographers and social psychologists consider the development of a sense of place to be the product of a number of decisive factors like comparisons between places, learning from elders, observing natural disasters etc. The environmental psychologists R.D. Bixler, M.F. Floyd and W.E. Hammitt in their article, "Environmental Socialization: Quantitative Tests of the Childhood Play Hypothesis" have quantified "links between exposure to natural environments in childhood and environmental preferences later in life" [*Environment and Behavior* 34 (6) 795]. A child learns about his surrounding environments by direct encounter with it through playing as well as through different role-playings in family, culture and community. This special bond between children and childhood landscape is called "primal landscape" by human geographers. This primal landscape constitutes people's identity and forms a focal point of comparison for considering subsequent places in later life. The child grows up and the adult person begins to consider new places in relation to this primal landscape experienced during childhood.

Edward Relph's idea of "Phenomenology of Place" is also very pertinent in this context also. Relph in his 1976-book, *Place and Placelessness,* probed the role of

interpretative study of human experience. Many trifles of our everyday life which remain unnoticed under the haze of our conscious awareness become a subject of examination and clarification in phenomenology. To show how a place has an almost inescapable dimension in shaping human experience and life, Relph tried to draw a clear-cut distinction between "space" and "place". According to Relph the relationship between "space" and "place" is complex. "He argues that space is not a void or an isometric plane or a kind of container that holds places. Instead, he contends that, to study the relationship of space to a more experientially-based understanding of place, space too must be explored in terms of how people experience it. ... On one hand, he identifies modes of spatial experience that are instinctive, bodily and immediate for example, what he calls pragmatic space, perceptual space, and existential space. On the other hand, he identifies modes of spatial experience that are more cerebral, ideal and intangible - for example planning space, cognitive space and abstract space. Relph describes how these modes of space as experienced have varying intensities in everyday life." (*Key Texts in Human Geography* 44). Relph thinks that our understanding of space depends on our place and the place orders human intentions, experienced and actions spatially.

The influence a place exerted upon an individual is brilliantly dealt by Relph through his theory of "insideness" and "outsideness". When a person feels inside a place his relation with the place and its culture will be profound. On the other hand, one who feels alienated or separated from his place will sense a lived division between themselves and the world like the feeling of homesickness in a new place. "Outsideness" and "insideness", therefore, constitute the fundamental dialectic in

> It is a direct and genuine experience of the entire complex of the identity of places – not mediated and distorted through a series of quite arbitrary social and intellectual fashions about how that experience should be, not following stereotyped conventions. (Relph 64).

But it is true that Relph prefers dwelling to detachment, rootedness to journey. It is right, as Yi Fu Tuan has said, that a place can generate negative vibes like fear, xenophobia, parochialism etc.

The humanistic approach to geography has its roots in the Renaissance era. In this period the world view changed from centered on religion (God) into where human beings are the center of the world. This was the basic tenet of Renaissance Humanism.

Humanist Geography is a reaction to strictly scientific positivist approaches to geography. Positivist approaches try to grasp human action in laws and models, as if Geography was a "hard" science like physics. Humanistic geographers however did not see this approach as the way forward for Geography as a science. They argued that human action could not be displayed simply as dots on a map or a bunch of statistics. The things that mattered according to these geographers were actually the meanings, values and interpretations that people give to space and place.

The school of humanistic geography was initially formed as part of behavioural geography. But it fundamentally disagreed with the use of quantitative methods in assessing human behavior and thoughts in favour of qualitative analysis.

subject(s). Furthermore, cultural geography was revived due to humanistic geography and new areas of study such as Feminist Geography, Postmodernist and Poststructuralist Geography began to emerge.

While recent New Historicist scholarship has alerted the readers to the socio-political underpinnings of early modern European literary genres, the present study inquires into the geopolitical dimensions of the evolution of sense of place from the point of view of two 20th century British poets. While some New Historicist critics have called the reader's attention to the crucial role that Renaissance Humanism played as 'colonial discourse' in the European discovery and conquest of America, this study asks why colonial Irish poets such as Seamus Heaney, like Prospero in the last scene of Shakespeare's last play, renounced Renaissance Humanist rhetoric and wrote as the eminent Cuban writer Jose Lezama Lima observed in his seminal essay, "La expression Americana"(1959) – "in the prose of a primitive who receives the dictate of the landscape".

Humanistic Geography examines the social constructions of place, landscape or region as the outcome of the interplay between people and the contexts which they inherit. In a way, humanistic geography brings into its purview the idea of postcolonial place. In its resistance to a pervasive reductionism and its insistence on a geography with actors, it initiated the discussion of human agency, anticipating a central theme in the theoretical discourse of the 1980s.

Furthermore, in its depiction of place, landscape and region, it established the importance of local difference or geographical contingency. This realization is now

distinctively humanistic geography in the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century. Many of those who were closely associated with the development of humanistic geography have also embraced postmodernism and postcolonialism, particularly on the issue of social constructions of place.

Depending on all these theoretical materials available on different connotations of place in modern times, mainly the concept of sense of place in humanistic geography, I, in the present research, opt to show the divergent responses towards their respective places in the works of Seamus Heaney and Philip Larkin. The work seeks to examine the development of this response in the course of their career – how they cope with the dichotomies latent in their places – the strife-torn Northern Ireland and the post-imperial Britain on the verge of globalization respectively. How do they envisage the change of their primal landscape in course of time when it poses serious crisis as spatial identity? What makes them apprehensive of their transcendence of belonging? What makes them feel "outsideness" despite being insiders in their countries? How do they solve their disturbed sense of place to create a space of self-expression? These questions are attempted to arrive at a point of definitive conclusion.

But to establish the novelty of my argument, first, it is necessary to examine the already existing critical documents on Heaney and Larkin. Early critical studies on Heaney mainly deal with the representation of bucolic life and the use of Northern language and images in his early poetry. Blake Morrison's *Seamus Heaney* (1982) is a brief introductory work that points out the major modern Irish poet. The book deals with the recurring images of homecoming and estrangement in Heaney's poetry that

Heaney, *The Art of Seamus Heaney* (1982) includes some substantial essays on Heaney's early poetry-his cultural background, his place, his language-by critics like Tim Kendall, John Goodby, Helen Phillips, to those by Helen Vendler, Douglas Dunn, Edna Longley, Bernard O'Donoughue etc. Roland Tamplin's *Seamus Heaney* (1989) also deals with the major themes in Heaney's early poetry-mainly his rootedness to his culture. These themes were also discussed brilliantly in Thomas C. Foster's *Seamus Heaney* (1989) and in John Wilson Foster's *The Achievement of Seamus Heaney* (1995). The books beautifully situate Heaney in main flow of modern European poetry and show the essential Irishness of his utterings. Especially in *The Achievement of Seamus Heaney* John Wilson Foster shows how Heaney's poetry becomes an important document to understand the cultural history of Northern Ireland. Henry Hart's *Seamus Heaney: Poet of Contrary Progression* (1992) is a meticulous and exhaustive study of Heaney's poetry seeking to establish Heaney's changing and often self-contradictory responses to his homeland and its political upheavals in the course of time. It also treats Heaney as a major modern poet along with Yeats, Eliot, Lowell and Others. Neil Corcoran's *The Poetry of Seamus Heaney: A Critical Study* (1998), which is a revised version of his book *The Poetry of Seamus Heaney* (first published in 1986) was, in the real sense, a welcome addition to the already existing critical responses on the poet. It covered the poems up to *The Spirit Level (1996)* and brilliantly captured the development of Heaney as a poet. The book mainly focuses on Heaney's unmistakable sense of being an Irish and a Catholic minority in the Protestant North to see his poetry in the light of cultural complexities. *The Poetry of Seamus Heaney: Essays, Articles, Reviews* (1998), published under the

running through the veins of his poetry. Much in the same line is a more recent book, *Seamus Heaney*: *Poet, Critic, Translator* (2007) edited by Ashby Bland Crowder and John David Hall delineating many aspects of Heaney's poetry- the place/space dichotomy, liminal poetic representations and political divisions, regionalism and universality in his poetry etc. But perhaps, two most important books from the canon of critical writings on Heaney are Eugene O'Brien's two books, *Seamus Heaney: Searches for Answer (2003)* and *Seamus Heaney and the Place of Writing* (2003). Fraught with thematic and structural clarity the first book explores the main characteristics of Heaney's writing: politics, language, myth, identity, notions of Irishness etc. The book beautifully examines the development of Heaney's sense of a separate Irish Identity throughout his oeuvre. In the second book O' Brien examines Heaney's works in the light of the complicated relationship between home and the individual. Here he re-examines Heaney's personal history of dislocation, his changing sense of "home", and the complicated relationship between identity and place. Using the theoretical basis of Bakhtinian "polyglossia" and Derrida's notions of borders as both limiting points and openings to alterity the book becomes a brilliant study of Heaney's concept of home and identity. But, perhaps, one of the most helpful books to understand Heaney's development from an agrarian village boy to a poet of world-wide reckon is Michael Parker's biographical study of Heaney's works, *Seamus Heaney: The Making of the Poet*[ii] (1993). The book is lucid, simple and full of insight and records Heaney's development as a poet in terms of the important happenings in his national and personal life. Another important book that in its huge corpus covers almost every aspect of Heaney's poetic creed is Dennis

ideas that developed through the years of his journey from a modest childhood to a famous manhood. He here gives vent to all his ideas and thoughts that contributed to his making into a poet. At the same time, Heaney's own works of critical writings included in books like *Preoccupations: Selected Prose 1968-1978* (1980), *The Government of the Tongue: The 1986 T.S. Eliot Memorial Lectures and other Critical Writings (1988) and The Redress of Poetry: Oxford Lectures* (1975) are incidentally very important for understanding his poetic practice, his biographical and political incidents and his appreciations of the other poets also.

The bulk of criticism on the poetry of Philip Larkin is clearly divided into two groups-the works published before 1992 and the works that come after that year. In 1992 Anthony Thwaite edited an almost exhausting version of Larkin's letters in *Selected Letters of Philip Larkin 1940-1985* which not only became immensely controversial instantly due to Larkin's uninhibited language, misogynist and racist comments and homosexuality. This controversy way further accelerated with the publication of Andrew Motion's biography of Larkin, *Philip Larkin: A Writer's Life*[iv] (1993). The book portrayed Larkin as a rightwing thinker with almost a reactionary tendency towards women, the black people and the third world. Actually Motion's biography has been a seminal book in the sphere of Larkin-criticism where he has gone through the smallest available materials on Larkin to portray him as a man of peculiar contradictions. Remarkably enough, the publication of these two books results in a radical and decisive alteration of Larkin scholarship. The so far carefully reared image of a lovable, reticent, morbid and amicable poet of the metros who became an unacknowledged Poet Laureate of the post-imperial and post-World War-

The first major delineation on Larkin's poetry appears in P.R. King's *Nine Contemporary Poets* (1979). Here King had written introductory pieces on nine modern poets like Hughes, Larkin, Tomlison, Gunn, Plath, Heaney, Dunn, Paulin and Mills. The book mainly rests on Larkin's status as a spokesman of contemporary Britain, his overall pessimistic view of life very much in the line of Thomas Hardy etc. Although David Timms tried to capture these trends in Larkin's poetry as early as in 1973 in his slim book *Philip Larkin.* Roger Day's book *Larkin* (1987) also studies Larkin's "basic human desire to escape from life and awareness" (136). The modern evaluations of Larkin from the political postcolonial and gender-based points of view are missing in these early studies.

Actually, Philip Larkin became an easy aim of incessant critical tirade after the publications of the two books which I have already mentioned. This shift in critical responses is brilliantly captured by John Osborne in his book *Larkin, Ideology and Critical Violence: A Case of Wrongful Conviction (2007).* The book belongs to, what may be said to be, the third generation of Larkin scholarship where after more than a decade of attack on Larkin's poetry in terms of his personality, the critics sought to separate Larkin the poet from Larkin the man. Actually such a defence of Larkin was necessary to counter the undue blackening of Larkin's poetic personality. The books on Larkin after 1992 have concentrated on the politics of Larkin depending heavily on his biographical materials. The changing trend is first located Stephen Regan edited *Philip Larkin: Contemporary Critical Essays* (New Casebooks Series, 1997) where the essays deal with hitherto untouched issues like Larkin's sexual politics, national identity and post-colonialism. The book features those

is threatened, Steve Clark's " 'Get out as Early as You Can': Larkin's Sexual Politics", Janice Rossen's "Difficulties with Girls", Tom Paulin's "Into the Heart of Englishness", Stan Smith's "Margins of Tolerance: Response to Post-War Decline" and Andrew Swarbick's "Larkin's Identities". The same year also witnessed the publication of Andrew Swarbick's *Out of Reach: The Poetry of Philip Larkin* which contains a kind of reappraisal of Larkin's poetry in terms of new revelations. In *Such Deliberate Disguises:* The *Art of Philip Larkin* (2008), Richard Palmer has examined Larkin's Jazz criticisms to show that his alleged racism failed to overshadow his love for Jazz, an essentially African art form. But in recent time, there are some good books where the criticism of Larkin's poetry remains unbiased with more attention on his poetry than on his prejudices. Stephen Cooper's *Philip Larkin: Subversive Writer (2004)* is such a book. Here Cooper works with hitherto neglected materials like his early fictions and poetry to show the internal self-contradiction of Larkin and his complex sexuality. James Booth in his *Philip Larkin: The Poet's Plight* (2005) has developed new and startling perspectives on Larkin's poetry like his sense of history, his political views, his attitude towards place in many poems and his nationalism etc. Laurence Lerner's *Philip Larkin* (2005) and Nicholas Marsh's *Philip Larkin: The Poems* (2007) are two other books that deal with Larkin's verse from cultural and historical perspectives. At last, Richard Bradford's biography of Larkin, *First Boredom, Then Fear: The Life of Philip Larkin*[v] (2009) deserves a special mention. The book describes the development of the personality of Larkin to show that such serious allegations against him remain almost inconclusive from the view point of his literature.

novelty of my work lies on basis of the critical background on which the work is structured. Depending on the theory of the sense of place, a prominent concept in the sphere of humanist geography, I have tried to show the responses of the two poets, coming from two fundamentally contradictory locales and basically contrasting subject-positions. I have tried to show their responses to the changing face of their countries and the ways in which they attempted to cope with those changes. In an attempt to capture the difference between "primal landscape" and "secondary landscape", I have studied and examined almost the whole range of their published works and have shown the gradual development of the concept of their own places. At the end I have tried to show the difference of their responses to the challenges that the places pose on them. Very recently the literary criticism has taken a spatial turn and my study of Seamus Heaney's and Philip Larkin's divergent responses to their own places, I hope, will be a fresh addition to the already existing vistas of scholarship available on their work.

Notes:

i. Geocriticism is a method of literary analysis or criticism that involves a study of geographical space. The term refers to a proliferation of critical practices. In France, Bertrand Westphal, for the first time, elaborated the theory in his books on géocritique. Later, Robert Tally elaborated his theory of literary cartography which is based on the argument of Westphal. According to Westphal, geocriticism is based on three theoretical notions: spatio-temporality, transgressivity and referentiality. From this point of view, geocriticism is an interdisciplinary method of literary analysis because the continuum of space-time is a tenet of modern physics. Interested readers may go through Westphal's seminal book, *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces(2011)* which was translated by Robert Tally with a brilliant introduction. They may find some interesting theory in Tally's own book, *Spatiality(2013).*

ii. An interested reader may read Michael Parker's book, *Seamus Heaney: The Making of the Poet*(1993). The book is a comprehensive study on Heaney's literary development in relation to his biographical details. The beginning of Heaney's life in a Northern Irish Catholic family, his cultural beliefs, his education, his becoming a poet and, overall, his dilemma and crisis in the civil war years- all are delineated by Parker with lucid detailing and close analyses of the works that respond to that development. The book becomes an unofficial biography describing Heaney's journey from a village boy to a Nobel Laureate.

iii. The genesis of Dennis O'Driscoll's *Stepping Stones: Interviews with Seamus Heaney* (2008) is marked by a rare novelty. Here O' Driscoll has interviewed Heaney at different times and as a result it quite fascinatingly charts Heaney's personal life in relation to his works. The book is a great revelation on the artistic and ethical crisis he faced during the bleak years of Ulster Troubles. The book offers an original, diverse, and intimate store of

iv. *Philip Larkin: A Writer's Life(1993)* is the most illuminating study of Larkin's life and beliefs. The book became immensely controversial due its uneasy revelations on the hidden perspectives of Larkin's life like his Right-wing thoughts, his homosexuality, his xenophobia and his misogynist prejudices. Actually, this book along with Anthony Thwaite's edition of Larkin's Selected Letters changed the course of Larkin-criticism in the beginning of the 1990s.

v. Richard Bradford's *First Boredom, Then Fear: The Life of Philip Larkin*(2009) is another substantial study of Larkin's world. The study is important because it belongs to the second generation of Larkin-criticism in the post-1993 time which are more generous and tolerant to Larkin's prejudices. The book reveals how Larkin treated his prejudices with detached circumspection.

Chapter Two

Heaney's Sense of Place: Education, Displacement and Emplacement

Childhood and its discontents form a substantial role in Seamus Heaney's disturbed sense of place. Growing up into a big agricultural family and in the midst of a sense of marginalization typical to a Catholic in the Protestant North Heaney was struck by a sense of liminality –

> From the very beginning I was very conscious of boundaries – I seemed always to be a little displaced; being between was a kind of condition from the start. (Corcoran 236)

The marginalized Catholics in the North were predominantly agricultural people. Farming was like a vocation for them. Michael Parker in his biography, *Seamus Heaney: the Making of the Poet,* has pointed out three liabilities the Catholic minorities were proud of- the Catholic Church, the farming and the Gaelic football team. There was an unflinching propensity to keep these allegiances intact in the minorities because they held tight their essential difference with the liberal, more Anglicised and educated Protestant majorities. There was a curious sense of togetherness in the Heaney household but –

> This togetherness inside the walls of the home was not reflected, however, in the world beyond those walls, where

This sense of division was very prominent in the education system of the Northern Ireland. The system was separatist in its execution. The Protestant and the Catholic students went to different schools with separate syllabi which refer to their separate religious beliefs. So, a mingling rarely was found in Northern Ireland with its predominantly sectarian schooling. Examples are plenty – the Catholic students were taught – "Up the long ladder and down the short rope / To hell with King Billy and God bless the Pope" while the Protestant students chanted "Up with King William and down with Pope." In an interview for *Les Lettres Novelles* in 1973, Heaney explains how these chants, "semi-religieuses, semi-politiques", constituted an early layer in the formation of two "sub-cultures".

As I have already pointed out earlier, the ideology of power politics had naturally posed the problem of identity to the colonized Irish. "Othering" is essentially a colonial policy. It is a fact that "colonized" is the umbrella term which includes the Protestants and the Catholics alike. A difference between them naturally weakens the anti-colonial resistance. So, like other colonial spaces, educational system was tactfully used to perpetuate what is called by the Palestine born critic Ghassan Kanafani, "cultural hegemony". It reminds us Gouri Viswanathan's interpretation of the introduction of English Education in the colonial India through Macaulay's 1835-Minute in terms of cultural imperialism. Louis Althusser, the French Marxist thinker, opines that in a certain colonial space the colonial Policy operates on two potent ways of repression-

1) RSA or Repressive state Apparatus-the process of chocking the anti-colonial resistance by sheer political muscle force

2) ISA or Ideological State Apparatus-a more powerful way of oppression through which to grasp and belittle the ideologies and cultural traditions of the colonized.

It is not very difficult to find out vestiges of cultural hegemony and ISA in the Separatist Educational system of the North which effectively thwarted any unionist attempt. During the Ulster violence in the late 1960s and the 1970s this separatism reached its zenith. The nuanced difference across the range of the colonized world(s) can be called "worlding", an intentional formation of "spaces" to eternalize difference, to use the term of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak from her essay, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism."

Education had exerted a distancing effect on Heaney. This distancing effect was three-fold. First, it separated him from his agricultural background, it caused his physical dislocation from the village to the big cities like Dublin, London and New York and finally it led him to the practice of literature- a verbose art contrary to the innate reticence of a Northern Catholic. From the very beginning of his colonial education, Heaney was very much conscious of his difference from the English people and the Protestant majority of Ulster. His title, Heaney, was closely associated with the old Gaelic ecclesiastical affairs in the diocese of Derry, and had some kind of rights to the stewardship of a monastic site at Balaghar in the north of the country. So, he was proud and possessive about his religious identity. Again, a deep sense of place and its culture thwarted him to accept full-heartedly the Colonial education. In his essay, "Mossbawn", included into *Preoccupations* he clearly states –

The literary language, the civilized utterance from the

> echo our own speech in formal and surprising arrangements. (*Preoccupations* 26)

But, every decontextualization is also a kind of recontextualization. In the same essay Heaney comments –

> I also knew the whole of Keats's ode 'To Autumn' but the only line that was luminous at that time was 'To bend with apples the mossed cottage trees', because my uncle had a small orchard where the old apple trees were sleeved in a soft green moss. (26)

In his essay "Belfast" (from *Preoccupations*) he more clearly situates these differences-

> I suppose the feminine element for me involves the matter of Ireland, and the masculine strain is drawn from the involvement with English literature. I speak and write in English but do not altogether share the preoccupations and perspectives of an Englishman. I teach English literature, I publish in London, but the English tradition is not ultimately home. I live off another hump as well. (*34)*

This dilemma is congenial to Heaney's poetry, especially to the poems included in his first two collections, *Death of a Naturalist* and *Door into the Dark*.

So, education caused into Heaney a kind of deculturization or cultural dislocation. The initial fame of Heaney as a bucolic poet after the publication of his

background which has been lost as a result of education and the resultant physical and cultural dislocations.

In this connection, I would like to refer back to Chapter One where two terms were given their due significance. Throughout his life and poetic career, Heaney was in a search of "imaginary homelands"[i], to quote the term of Salman Rushdie or of a "third space" (Bhabha). According to Bhabha, there is always a dialectical relationship between the self and the other. The inherited space of Heaney is marked by a transcendence of belonging and through his poetry he tries to repossess that "third space" or the "Imaginary homelands", although the failure to achieve that ideal leads him to that. Poetry, itself, becomes that "third space" where only images are deconstructed to reconstruct what is lost. In this context I would like to quote Heaney himself from *Stepping Stones: Interview with Seamus Heaney* by Dennis O'Driscoll –

> O'Driscoll – You have said that, having so often read that you were born on a farm in County Derry in 1939, you scarcely believe it anymore. Can public life as a prominent writer rob you of your private life? If no, does poetry restore that missing life or at least provide some recompense?
>
> Heaney: Many of the poems are doing something like that. You end up dropping back through your own trapdoors, with a kind of 'they-can't-take-this-away-from-me' feeling. There's a paradox, of course, since the poems that provide the recompense are the very ones that turn your private possessions into images that are – as Yeats once

about not believing I was born on a farm comes less from the poems than from reading too many 'Notes on contributors'..."(3)

This attempt to repossess the homeland which is only imaginary is very prominent in Heaney's *oeuvre*, especially in his early poetry. Lost images of Mossbawn and County Derry recur in his early works. Digging potatoes and turf, picking blackberries, churning butter and ploughing are all captured in nostalgic details in his early poems. Another unflinching figure in his early poems and his works till date is his father who stands for a lost way of life or what he fails to attain.

The "place-space dichotomy" is integral to Heaney's sense of place. The "place" here is the Northern Ireland of his childhood, a particular way of life etc. The "space", on the other hand, is his newly achieved identity, which is a construct of his education and learning. It is a circumscribed identity of a public figure which is created and obvious also. The dilemma of "place" and "space" in Heaney is a rift between two contradictory feelings of liberty and cagedness or natural and forced. But this newly possessed "space" is also a vantage point for Heaney because it provides him the necessary scope to look upon the place which is no more "illiterate and unconscious" but "literate and conscious." Heaney comments, "I began as a poet when my roots were crossed with my reading."(*Preoccupations* 37). This "third space" of liminal identity will later be strongly captured in the image of Sweeney, the birdman with a share of both the ground (the place) and the sky (the space) in his 1983-work *Sweeney Astray*.

Actually, this dilemma of actual and acquired identities is the focal point of

"Digging", the opening poem of Heaney's very first collection of poetry, *Death of a Naturalist,* is an overt declaration of this dispossession. Actually, the first poem of a poet's very first collection of poetry can be read as a kind of self-introduction on part of the poet to the world and "Digging" is a perfect preamble of Heaney's future preoccupations as a poet from that perspective. The poem is full of autobiographical vibes where the poet himself is "crossed" between "education" and "roots". The poem itself begins with an assertion of the poet's acquired educated selfhood. He is a poet who has a pen in his hand- an instrument mightier than sword-

"Between my finger and my thumb

The squat pen rests; snug as a gun." (1-2)

But in the very next lines appears the poet's father who has a spade instead of a pen in his hand and he digs with it. Suddenly the poem goes twenty years back where the father is seen digging in the potato turf. The poet also discovers his farmer self where he along with his brothers, is picking scattered new potatoes "loving their cool hardness in our hands."(14) Digging potatoes becomes a family core or, more appropriately a continuation of the agrarian way of life of the Northern Catholics. Interestingly, the old father only continues his father's mastery with spade. The poet gives a picture of his grandfather cutting turf when he "carried him milk in a bottle."(19) –

"My grandfather cut more turf in a day

Than any other man on Toner's bog." (17-18)

He went "down and down/ for the good turf. Digging". (23-24)

This flashback to the agrarian part of the family and the soft, nostalgic tone with which Heaney describes it, stand for the loss of correspondence with his natural belonging or what he could have been. The point of dispossession lies in the pen/spade dichotomy because the educated man with pen in his hand is separated from the activity of digging deeper into the soil by the four walls and the farming goes on outside his "window" which he can hear and think of but cannot participate into. Heaney has used the word "root" twice in the poem. First, his father "rooted out tall tops"(12) of the potato plant simultaneously symbolizing the "uprooted" status of the poet and the groundedness of the father.

But the word "root" returns towards the end of the poem with a different connotation altogether –

"The cold smell of potato mould, the squelch and slap

Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge

Through living roots awaken in my head.

But I've no spade to follow men like them."(25-28)

The poet, uprooted from his place physically, so, remains rooted through a ritual digging by pen. Poetry itself becomes the "third space" between belonging and non-belonging – a kind of reconciliation between negation and reaffirmation of place.

In "Follower", this wish to continue the lost way of life is more openly expressed. The poem is a clear assertion of the self-revealed truth that you can take a man away from his place but cannot take the place away from him. The opening lines

"An expert. He would set the wing

And fit the bright steel-pointed sock.

The sod rolled over without breaking.

At the headrig, with a single pluck

Of reins, the sweating team turned round

And back into the land."(5-10)

The enthralling performance of the "expert" ploughman was a source of wonder to the toddling little poet who now feels –

"I was a nuisance, tripping, falling,

Yapping always."(21-22)

He recalls how his father took him on his back while ploughing.The memories of fatherly love is mingled with the sense of awe at the easy persecution of hard work at ease by that "stout" man. The mesmerized boy looks upon this man with a sense of hero-worshipping. The poet says-

"I wanted to grow up and plough,

To close one eye, stiffen my arm.

All I ever did was follow

In his broad shadow round the farm." (17-20)

so adept in the agricultural activities that his craft can easily be termed an art. What the little boy wanted to follow was overtly the physical performance – laborious yet graceful and resultantly attractive. He wanted to be his father's follower.

But, separated by learning, the educated poetic self can hardly attain his childhood ambition now. Achieving the craft of his father is a far-off dream now. He has no spade in his hand and the spade finds a substitute in the pen. Interestingly, the role of a follower has also been counterfeited now. The little poet followed the father and now the shadow of the father becomes an unflinching follower of his son. This reversal of roles is quite complex because both are followers of a broader culture in their different but complementary manners. So the poem ends with a reassurance of that continuation –

"...But today

It is my father who keeps stumbling

Behind me, and will not go away." (22-24)

In "Death of a Naturalist" the clash between two contradictory selves, i.e., the "illiterate" and "unconscious" and the "literate" and "conscious" contributes to the end of innocence or uncontaminated imagination of a little boy. But the poem with its suggestive language and deceptive simplicity denies to be just a study of the "death" of innocence. Rather, it tends to become a study of violence that remains always a surreptitious presence under the innocuous and outwardly normal nature. This consciousness of a continuous presence of violence gives the poem a deeper significance when it is seen from the perspective of the place it comes out, Northern

encountered the frog eggs and, then, the jellied tadpoles. The biology teacher, Miss Walls's information about a bullfrog, a mammy frog, a frogspawn and about how you could tell the weather by a frog because they are "yellow in the sun and brown in rain"(20-21) are innocuous but interesting. The world of the frogs is a world of curiosity and joy to the boy and this joy is informed by the words of Miss Walls. The boy collects frogspawn for her and his education creates a make shift protected world for him which will be destroyed on a "hot day" in the following stanza.

But, ironically enough, the boy creates a world of make-belief in a place which has a smell of constant fermentation. There are unpleasant words like "festered", "sweltered", "punishing Sun"". There is the uneasy presence of "dragon-flies" with "butterflies". But what the matured and educated self can understand now, the boy, then was not able to mince at. So, the innocent world crumbles in the second stanza –

"Then one hot day when fields were rank

With cowdung in the grass the angry frogs

Invaded the flax-dam; I ducked through hedges

To a coarse croaking that I had not heard

Before." (22-26)

Now the grown-up frogs become "obscene threats" to the boy and they invade the flax-dam to declare that it was their territory where the poet is an intruder. The frogs now "poised like mud grenades"(30) and "were gathered there for vengeance"(32).

place has a hidden layer of violence and a consciousness of boundary. Education can instill into the mature mind the reason of that day's fear and running away from the site of innocent terror.

The matured and educated mind's formulation of meaning out of insignificant childhood memories is also the theme of "The Early Purges". The poem, although not given so much attention as other poems from *Death of a Naturalist* like the title poem itself, "Digging" and "Mid-term Break", is one of the most powerful poems of Heaney. The poem records the six-year-old boy's first encounter with violence and totalitarianism. The poem begins in the innocent tone of distant recollection –

"I was six when I first saw kittens drown.

Dan Taggart pitched them, 'the scraggy wee shits',

Into a bucket;..."(1-3)

The rest of the poem shows how this experience of cruel drowning of kittens affected the little boy. Dan Taggart's description of the kittens as "the scraggy wee shits" refers to the callousness with which he treats the helpless animals. The little boy sympathized with the helpless kittens –

"...a frail metal sound,

Soft paws scraping like mad. But their tiny din

Was soon soused. They were slung on the snout

Of the pump and the water pumped in"(3-6)

The grown up poet now recalls his innocent fear at the sight of first murder and how "I sadly hung/ Round the yard, watching the three sogged remains."(11-12) Then he forgot them but fear returned when Dan Taggart "trapped big rats"(16),"snared rabbits"(16),"shot crows"(16) and "pulled old hens' necks"(17).

The voice of education knows now that these are "false sentiments" but –

" 'Prevention of cruelty' talk cuts ice in town

Where they consider death unnatural

But on well-run farms pests have to be kept down."(21-23)

In time of wide-spread sectarian violence now the educated poet can relate the meaning of that fear to the animosity between the Protestants and the Catholics in Northern Ireland. As the kittens are mere intruders into the farm, so an ethnic group also must declare its territory and one who crosses that line would be treated like the kittens.

"Mid-Term Break" is an elegy written after the accidental death of Heaney's younger brother, Christopher, when "the bumper knocked him clear." But a close look into the poem makes the fact quite clear that it is in a way a discourse on education, distance and exile when a family tragedy takes place in a remote manner – unidentified and unsought. The title of the poem itself has a multilayered significance. Firstly, schools in Ireland are obliged to open for 183 days per year at primary level and 167 days per year in the post primary level. Three important vacations in Irish schools are Easter, Christmas and mid-term break which come halfway through the educational session. From this point of view, mid-term break carries the joys of

hope of coming back. The poem, so, gives expression to the divided self of the poet torn between education and exile and the rootedness to his own soil.

The poem itself describes that attempt of compromise and it begins with the description of the poet literally imprisoned into the four-walls of classroom –

"I sat all morning in the college sick bay

Counting bells knelling classes to a close.

At two o'clock our neighbour drove me home."(1-3)

Bells bringing classes to a close sound like a death-knell. Education and the resultant suffocation is contrasted with the freedom of home and countryside. But back home that suffocation persists and the poet is also treated as a stranger among many strangers-

"Whispers informed strangers I was the eldest,

Away at school, as my mother held my hand"(11-12)

Coming back to the "omphalos" (a Greek word meaning "navel" which Heaney uses to describe his attachment with his birthplace, Mossbawn) is often painful and the baby, he remembers, "cooed and laughed and rocked the pram/ When I came in"(7-8) but, now –

"He lay in the four foot box as in his cot.

No gaudy scars, the bumper knocked him clear.

Education, therefore, fetches a village boy away from his home. The class-room seems to be a prison in comparison to the liberty of the home sky. But, it also displaces the self and, then, coming back becomes a passage from one exile to another.

But if education exerts a distancing effect upon the poet, it gives the gift of creativity which enables him to express those dilemmas into words. "The Play Way" is a poem on the act of education itself. Heaney records the experiences of a trainee-teacher who tries to encourage creative writing by using a piece of Beethoven's music. He makes them listen to the music and tells them to write what comes to their minds. He is pleased by the small boys' attempts and interests but feels that they are not so much equipped linguistically and culturally to express their minds fully.

The poem is a commentary on Heaney's education and creative impulses. Northern Ireland is the integrar on which education exercises its linguistic expertise. So, he lives in-between his Northern Irish beginning and his British education.

Heaney, however, imagines his Northern Irish self as his land of rest and his educated self as his flight. He compared himself with the mythical Antaeus, the son of Poseidon and Gaia, who was a half-giant and half-god. He was at the same time half-bird and half –man. Heaney considers his flourish in terms of his Northern Irish beginning –

"When I lie on the ground

I rise flushed as a rose in the morning." (1-2)

I am cradled in the dark that wombed me

And nurtured in every artery

Like a small hillock.(9-12)

But this flight is fatal and inevitable. He will fly but only to descend down to the ground –

"He may well throw me and renew my birth

But let him not plan, lifting me off earth,

My elevation, my fall." (18-20)

Like Antaeus, Heaney's identity is also liminal. His elevation is his fall and his going away is, in a way, a coming back.

The kept bull of Kelly in "The Outlaw" from *Door into the Dark* is the example of another liminal being. It is unlicensed and Kelly asks for high fees if a cow is "serviced" there. As a little boy the poet once went to Kelly to breed a cow. The little boy had the least idea about what is going to happen -

"I gave Old Kelly the clammy silver, though why

I could not guess. He grunted a curt 'Go by.

Get up on that gate.' And from my lofty station

I watched the businesslike conception."(7-10)

His knobbled forelegs straddling her flank,

He slammed life home, impassive as a tank,"(16-18)

The bull is also a creator who "slams life home" but it is unlicensed and forcefully detained. Living in the periphery of society the bull, thus, remains a fountain head of life. It is a metaphor for the poet himself who is away from his agrarian culture but whose education makes him a creator from outside.

Again, education is transmitted through language and being educated in British language is also going away from Northern Irish language and culture. Language, however, has been a hot issue in the post-colonial discourse. No one can forget the Kenyan writer, Ngugi wa Thiong'o's famous assertion in his book, *Decolonising the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature*[ii] that-

"Bullet was the means of physical subjugation; language was
the means of cultural subjugation."(Thiong'o 9)

Language is the integrar through which culture reaches the mass. Being away from the nuances of a vernacular language is, then, being detached from the native culture also. Ngugi, so, decides to decolonize his mind by a total rejection of the colonizer's language, i.e., English to accept Gikuyu, his native language, as the medium of literary expression. Again, Gauri Viswanathan in her book, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India (1990)* recounts how the famous 1835 – Minute of Macaulay to introduce English education in the Indian academia was a typical strategy of cultural hegemony because through the English education the colonizers aimed to break the congregated anticolonial resistance by dividing the

British language, literature and publications. He cannot do without the English language but he can use it in a way which is different from the standard British utterances. He is not in favour of rejection (which, in the context of his Irish upbringing, is no more possible); he is rather in favour of appropriation[iii] and by doing so, he is in the same league with Raja Rao who in his introduction to *Kanthapura* favoured an Indianised English and with the Nigerian poet-novelist, Gabriel Okara who in his novel, *The Voice* (1962) had used a typically Africanised English. The most remarkable aspect of Heaney's language is its distinctly Gaelic tone and it provides the reader a firm and unflinching sense of place. In his essay "Feeling into Words" Heaney writes –

> … the few poems I have written that give me any right to speak: poetry as divination, poetry as revelation of the self to the self, as restoration of the culture to itself; poems as elements of continuity, with the aura and authenticity of archaeological finds, where the buried shard has an importance that is not diminished by the importance of the buried city; poetry as a dig, a dig for finds that end up being plants. (*Finders Keepers 14)*

This so-called "divination" or "restoration of culture" is only possible through a separate Irish linguistic practice and Heaney has given his poetic language a separate treatment which stands for its Gaelic origin. But recreating a separate Irish language is no more possible but, as Thomas Kinsella says in his essay "The Divided Mind",

> An Irish poet has access to all this (English literary tradition)

home in it. (Kinsella, "The Divided Mind", included in *Two Decades of Irish Writing* ed. Douglas Dunn 209)

Heaney's task of creating a separate Irish voice in his language is quite complex in the pretext of deterritorialization and the consequent reterritorialization the Irish culture has experienced in the hand of the dominant British culture. Heaney's attempt of restructuring an alternative literary cannon, therefore, involves deterritorializing the already reterritorialized Northern Irish space and then, reterritorializing it. The attempt becomes more problematized because of Heaney's marginal subject-position of a Catholic in the Protestant North. If he, then, vies for a restoration of the culture, he has to reclaim both a pre-colonial and a Catholic past in his poetic language. But, in Irish condition where the past Gaelic traditions are almost obliterated, he finds the recreation of an uncontaminated cultural past almost impossible. But something there is which is deposit of the past and remains intact in the face of cultural hegemony or hegemonic onslaught. It is the "sense of place" in the words of Yi-Fu Tuan, the Chinese-American Humanist geographer.

The term, "Sense of Place" was first coined and popularised by Yi-Fu Tuan in his 1977-book *Space and Place:The Perspective of Experience*. According to Tuan, "sense of place" is a trait that some geographical locations have and some do not. It is a feeling or, perception of a particular place held by people. It is often used in relation to a set of assumptions that give a place some special or unique characteristics, as well as to those that foster a sense of authentic human attachment and belonging. Tuan has upheld his concept of the "sense of place" in relation to his definition of "space". To understand "sense of place", the geographical concept of space needs

space" and "inner space". One definition of place, proposed by him, is that a place comes into existence when humans give meaning to a part of the larger, undifferentiated space. Every time a location is identified and given a name, it is separated from the undefined space that surrounds it. Some places, like Heaney's place, have been given stronger meanings owing to the cultural, political, ethnic dichotomy related to it. Therefore, the "sense of place" is related to the personal psychological impression of a place. Naturally, it varies from one individual to other. However, a commonality of response can be easily found in terms of race, community, ethnic and cultural groups.

So, Heaney's art is located on a terrain which enforces him in a negotiation between the magical, folkloric and sacred sense of place and a historical colonialism and encroaching modernity which have made the hinterland of Mossbawn in Mid-Ulster a politically and metaphysically problematized place. A sense of belonging or affinity to the native place can be described by the German term, "Heimat". As a term, "Heimat" is considerably loaded. It refers to the deep-rooted emotional ties which people feel when they speak about their homelands. It stands for a melange of community feeling, descendance and tradition that forms a person's identity. The specific aspect of Heimat-love and attachment to homeland – have been given negative and destructive treatment, though, during the Nazi period. For example, it was supposed by the Nazis that the Volk community is deeply rooted in the land of their Heimat through their practice of agriculture and their ancestral lineage going back thousands of years. So, those were taken to the infamous concentration camps who, in the opinion of the Nazis, are enemies of the Volk community and thus a

related to a place. But, these feelings of love, affinity and belonging have divergent implications in different stages of a man's life. Education, political equilibrium and environmental changes, so, guide Heaney's response to a place.

Education has caused his spatial change but it is the factor that has helped him to perceive the hidden layers of dichotomy latent in the simple bucolic Mossbawn of the childhood. The hidden violence that surfaced in the 1960s, the multilayered loss of the Catholic Community, both physical and cultural, is now struck by an inevitable modernisation and urbanisation of the known rural landscape. So, changes are writ large, from without to within, and ways of recuperation are hazy.

Childhood experiences contribute largely in the development of a sense of place . Environmental psychologists have found relations between exposure to natural environments in childhood and environmental emplacement later in life. A child grows up in a particular landscape and gradually begins to identify himself/herself with his/her immediate surroundings. The human geographers like Yi-Fu Tuan have called the special bond between children and their childhood environments a "primal landscape". This "primal landscape" becomes so much saturated with the identity of the growing child that it turns into a constant focal point by which he/she begins to compare and contrast his later places of stay. From this point of view, "sense of place" refers to the experience of a place which an individual or a community acquire from the collective senses of different livings.

So, in the face of a widespread loss Heaney searches for his belongings as an Irish and a Catholic minority in a changed modern and mechanised local which he is

Irish language began early from the very first volume, *Death of a Naturalist (1966)* and it is continued to the recent volume *Human Chain (2010).* "Traditions", the much anthologised poem from the first volume, clearly shows how the language question is also a question of identity. The poem deals brilliantly with the feeling of indignation which the speakers of the marginal languages like him suffer from. The poem in its succinct canvas beautifully captures the fact of linguistic hegemony that the British colonization exerted upon the Gaelic linguistic tradition and which gradually tended to obliterate them. The poet exposes the linguistic situation that minority languages like Irish are living now as opposed to the canonical languages like English. The poem, thus, begins with a note of cultural loss –

"Our guttural muse
was bulled long ago
by the alliterative tradition,

her uvula grows
vestigial, forgotten
like the coccyx
or a Brigid's cross
yellowing in some outhouse
while custom, that "most
sovereign mistress",
beds us down into
the British isles."(1-12)

"allow". Even they have registered "some cherished archaisms" and "correct Shakespearean" utterances. They have taught the Irish –

"Not to speak of the furled

consonants of the lowlanders

shuttling obstinately

between bawn and mossland."(21-24)

This linguistic hegemony leaves a negative impact on the Irish nationalism itself. But minority culture must be nurtured seriously. So, towards the end of the poem, Leopold Bloom, Joyce's hero from *Ulysses,* declares his identity proudly –

"What ish my nation?"

And sensibly, though so much

later, the wandering Bloom

replied, "Ireland", said Bloom,

"I was born here. Ireland". (32-36)

The rise of the marginal to occupy the centre is, incidentally, a favourite theme of Heaney. In his translations, also, this theme looms large. For example, his translation of the Old English epic, *Beowulf* (2000), is an attempt to portray the rise of a nomadic hero and *The Cure at Troy*[iv], the verse drama based on Sophocles, is a brilliant document of the search of place of a displaced hero.

poems. These names not only stand for something that remain intact under an overwhelming effect of colonization and the Protestant uprising in North, they also stand for the verbal matter strange yet familiar to the mouth and ear of Anglicised Irishman. The poet departs from the locale being uprooted from a language also. But he departs with a store of Gaelic words – "Rannfast", "Errigal", "Annaghry", "Kincassalagh", "Analiorish", "Broagh", "Toome", "Moyola", "Derrygrave" etc. The names not only tell of a Catholic and Gaelic past; they perpetuate the past with their history, myths and cultures. Language itself becomes a weapon for reterritorialization . Heaney through his language and images wants to reterritorialize a Catholic past in his poetry. An alternative canon is formed which is non-British and non-Protestant. For an expatriate, poetry itself becomes the third space for the reconstruction of what is lost. In early Celtic culture this onomastic (place-name traditions) and aetological (origin legends) discourses form the idea of *Dinnshenchas.* Heaney in his poetic career repeatedly uses *Dinnshenchas* to represent Irish places and landscapes with all their distinctiveness and uniqueness. According to Heaney, each place in Ireland has its own unique characteristics and linguistic tradition that become instrumental in expressing Irishness and metaphors of identity. Actually, language is integrally related to national identity. In the words of Benedict Anderson-

> What the eye is to the lover-that particular, ordinary eye he or she is born with-language-whatever language history has made his or her mother-tongue-is to the patriot. Through that language, encountered at mother's knee and parted with only at the grave, pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures dreamed

Again, M. Mianowski thinks that "language and landscape are consistent"(28) or landscape can be interpreted into language or the *vice versa.* Heaney consciously creates a sense of place through his highly distinctive use of language.

Heaney considers language with marked Irish characteristics as a signifier of landscape itself. It stands for an Irish nationalist resistance against the British linguistic and cultural hegemony. His place-name poems remind, quite aptly, Relph's view that "place-naming represents the humanizing of the landscape, space is claimed for by naming it"(12). When he uses a Nothern Irish place-name like Mossbawn or Anahorish or Moyola he intends to refer to the cultural connotations attached to the places- rituals, legends, mythologies, memories etc. Heaney's belief in the nationalist and resistant potentials of Irish language is beautifully given vent in the brilliant introduction to his translation of the Old English epic, *Beowulf.* Here he in his inimitable chatty style conveys his views about giving the translation of an Anglo-Saxon epic a typically Irish flavour so that it establishes the claim of his nation on the Anglo-Saxon language which has long been denied or neglected. Heaney writes-

> Joseph Brodsky once said that that poet's biographies are present in the sounds they make and I suppose all I am saying is that I consider *Beowulf* to be part of my voice-right. And yet to persuade myself that I was born into its language and that its language was born into me took a while: for somebody who grew up in the political and cultural conditions of Lord Brookeborough's Northern Ireland, it could hardly have been otherwise (xxiii)

> Sprung from an Irish nationalist background and educated at a Northern Irish Catholic school, I had learned the Irish language and lived within a cultural and ideological frame that regarded it as the language that I should by rights have been speaking but I had been robbed of. I have also written, for example, about the thrill I experienced when I stumbled upon the word *lachtar* in my Irish-English dictionary, and found that this word, which my aunt had always used when speaking of a flock of chicks, was in fact an Irish language word, and more than that, an Irish word associated in particular with County Derry (xxiii-xxiv).

Such linguistic semblances with Old English syntax with that of Irish led him to rethink the nature of linguistic traditions itself-

> I tended to conceive of English and Irish as adversarial tongues, as either/or conditions rather than both/and, and this was an attitude that for a long time hampered the development of a more confident and creative way of dealing with the whole vexed question- the question, that is, of the relationship between nationality, language, history and literary tradition in Ireland (xxiv).

The process of translating *Beowulf* made him reintroduced with many words which are still existent in his native Northern Irish colloquial language. Heaney, so, quite consciously used words of Irish origin to make the translation sound distinctly northern in tone. He says-

> relatives"(xxvii). He confesses the political possibility of language used and continued to use it to reveal a sense of place throughout his career and "to come to terms with that complex history of conquest and colony, absorption and resistance, integrity and antagonism (xxx).

Again from the doubly dispossessed point of view of a colonially and ethnically peripheral person, Heaney always rests on images of cultural continuation. His early poems, "At a Potato Digging" from *Death of a Naturalist* and "A Lough Neagh Sequence" in *Door into the Dark,* configure the forces within Irish culture which operate uneasily alongside a technological modernity. The mechanistic potato-digger in the potato fields and sluice gate on the Bann estuary are in tension with the power of elemental agrarian, religious and historical life. Moreover, the ruins of Catholic religious sites which Heaney celebrates in his *Station Island* (1984) is a kind of return to the Catholic past of the place which is now changed as a result of Protestant uprising. In a way, this retreat is also a kind of attempt to subvert the centre and relocate the margin.

Education is, so, the significant factor which has removed Heaney physically from his place only. It has enlightened his thought to go deep into the culture, tradition and problems latent in the locale. It has provided him the voice against the victimization of the Irish and the Northern Irish Catholics in the hands of the British colonization and the Protestant domination respectively. At the same time, the physical alienation caused by education has given him that sufficient distance to look into the dichotomies of place objectively and in relation to the greater world. He is

"Two buckets were easier carried than one.

I grew up in between.

My left hand placed the standard iron weight.

My right tilted a last grain in the balance.

Baronies, parishes met where I was born.

When I stood on the central stepping stone

I was the last earl on horseback in midstream

Still parleying, in earshot of his peers."

("Terminus" *15-22)*

Education is thus aptly compared and contradicted to the dim light of a lantern which, as a little boy, he saw in the nights in his grandmother's house. It is, again, the bright electric light which in the title poem of his 2002-collection of poems, *Electric Light,* had made the boy look into the corners of his room distinctly.

This light is the light of wisdom and the light of education now helps the poet refer back to his own childhood with more intensity and insight. There are many poems in Heaney's 1991-book, *Seeing Things,* which show this "literate" and "conscious" backward look. In "The Journey Back", which is a declaration of his

Bore the drained and laden through the city.

I might have been a wise king setting out

Under the Christmas lights - except that

I felt more like the forewarned journey back

Into the heartland of the ordinary.

Still my old self. Ready to knock one back."(7-13)

This newly achieved insight is very beautifully expressed in "Casting and Gathering" where the sounds of casting and gathering heard in the childhood or the sounds of cultivation where seeds are cast (thrown) and subsequently gathered (harvested) come back with renewed meaning. It can also refer to the casting of the fishing net by a fisherman into the river and the gathering of the net afterwards. The process is, thus, a symbolic act of gathering knowledge by casting childhood experiences. The poet brilliantly expresses the process-

"I am still standing there, awake and dreamy,

I have grown older and can see them both

Moving their arms and rods, working away,

Each one absorbed, proofed by the sound he's making.

But neither is anybody. Watch it! Be severe.'

The other says, 'Go with it! Give and swerve.

You are everything you feel beside the river.'

I love hushed air. I trust contrariness.

Years and years go past and I do not move

For I see that when one man casts, the other gathers.

And then *vice versa,* without changing sides." (10-21)

Childhood memories and the sense of a lost way of life here merge to create the new identity of the educated self. The past has cast memories and experiences upon him and the poet now uses those gems in his poetry. The unavoidable cultural gap often threatens a kind of disowning of the agrarian past but the poet can well understand that his identity is integrally related to that belonging. The process of "casting" and "gathering" is continuous and it will never cease to exist. So, knowledge comes in the way of realizing the experiences fully and the distance caused by education provides the poet the scope for this cardinal realization. In *Seeing Things* the image of his dead father recurs and various childhood experiences become the initiatives for varied educations of life. It becomes clear that physical displacement has failed to drive him away from his roots. For example, in "Man and Boy" the description of the day Heaney's grandfather died becomes symbolic of an unending family tradition-

"My father is a barefoot boy with news,

On the afternoon of his own father's death.

The open, black half of the half- door waits.

I feel much heat and hurry in the air.

I feel his legs and quick heels far away

And strange as my own - when he will piggyback me

At a great height, light-headed and thin-boned,

Like a witless elder rescued from fire." (23-31)

Actually, the title, "Seeing Things", stands for "seeing into the seed of time" with a "literate" and "conscious" eye. In the title poem itself the poet refers back to the memory of his father to situate this vision-

"Once upon a time my undrowned father

Walked into our yard. He had gone to spray

Potatoes in a field on the riverbank

And wouldn't bring me with him. The horse-sprayer

Was too big and new-fangled, bluestone might

Burn me in the eyes, the horse was fresh, I

Might scare the horse, and so on. I threw stones

But when he came back, I was inside the house

And saw him out the window, scatter-eyed

And daunted, strange without his hat,

His step unguided, his ghosthood immanent.

When he was turning on the riverbank,

The horse had rusted and reared up and pitched

Cart and sprayer and everything off balance

So the whole rig went over into a deep

Whirlpool, hoofs, chains, shafts, cart-wheels, barrel

And tackle, all tumbling off the world,

And the hat already merrily swept-along'

The quieter reaches. The afternoon

I saw him face to face, he came to me

With his damp footprints out of the river,

And there was nothing between us there

That might not still be happily ever after." (39-63)

The ghost of the father-figure is the beginning of this journey through experience and education. His rejuvenated image is the reassertion of a beginning that began long before but is still going on. Heaney's description of a day in his childhood when his

utterly disturbed by the reckless horse remind us the poem, "Follower". The little poet wanted to follow his father and, now, he still follows his unavoidable presence through literature. In “The Ash Plant”, so, the poet says that he now sees his own image in the mirror-like presence of the father-figure-

“He'll never rise again but he is ready.

Entered like a mirror by the morning,

He stares out the big window, wondering,

Not caring if the day is bright or cloudy. (1-4)

Again the father now comes back in the poet's imagination as a guiding force with the characteristic ash plant stick in his hand which used to help him as a farmer and a cattle-dealer before his death. But this stick now becomes a " silver bough" which not only connects this world to a lost one but rejuvenates the father-son relationship. The father becomes the perennial symbol of Adam and the poet can easily go back to his lost roots where the beginning is unfulfilled without the end. Heaney says -

" As his head goes light with light, his wasting hand

Gropes desperately and finds the phantom limb

Of an ash plant in his grasp, which steadies him.

Now he has found his touch he can stand his ground

Or wield the stick like a silver bough and come

God might have said the same, remembering Adam." (13-20)

This continuing tradition becomes more conspicuous in two short poems, "1.1.87" and "An August Night". In the former poem Heaney says-

"Dangerous pavements.

But I face the ice this year

With my father's stick". (1-3)

In "An August Night" the ghost of his father becomes a source of knowledge-

"His hands were warm and small and knowledgeable.

When I saw them again last night, they were two ferrets,

Playing all by themselves in a moonlit field." (1-3)

Actually all these reminiscences stand for a sense of place which is reinvented and has taken up newer meanings seen and thought from a distance. This place has a definite cultural identity, a tradition that made the poet-person of the present. The educated self can decipher the meanings of many experiences of the "primary landscape" which were "illiterate" and "unconscious" at that time.

In "The Schoolbag" this renewed identity of a place becomes very conspicuous-

"My handsewn leather schoolbag. Forty Years.

Poet, you were *nel mezzo del cammin*

When I shouldered it, half-full of blue-lined jotters,

The wallmap with its spray of shipping lanes

Describing arcs across the blue North Channel…

And in the middle of the road to school,

Ox-eye daisies and wild dandelions.

Learning's easy carried! The bag is light,

Scuffed and supple and unemptiable

As an itinerant school conjuror's hat.

So take it, for a word-hoard and a handsel,

As you step out trig and look back all at once

Like a child on his first morning leaving parents." (1-14)

Here the image of the village school comes back and the poet feels the pain of a little boy who is about to leave his parents. Surely, like parents it also plays the role of a stepping stone that will help him to express in words the sense of a place which the parents stand for. If the school is the place of first encounter with education, poetry is the second school which gives that education a new identity and a new understanding. It forms his sense of place. In "Fosterling", this aspect of education becomes evident-

"At school I loved one picture's heavy greenness -

Still more in place when mirrored in canals.

I can't remember never having known

The immanent hydraulics of a land

Of *glar* and *glit* and floods at *dailigone.*

My silting hope. My lowlands of the mind.

Heaviness of being. And poetry

Sluggish in the doldrums of what happens.

Me waiting until I was nearly fifty

To credit marvels. Like the tree-clock of tin cans

The tinkers made. So long for air to brighten,

Time to be dazzled and the heart to lighten." (1-14)

The poem is an excellent example of this shaping spirit of education. The beauty of the heavy greenness felt in childhood now becomes an experience being synthesized by education. In a way the poem refers to the importance of roots and traditions for a poet because the images of belonging turn into poetic expression of late. Again, in the poem no. xix of the sequence "Settings", the poet beautifully expresses the way how, seen from a passage of time and place, the primary landscape becomes an image pregnant with myriad meanings –

"Memory as a building or a city,

Tableaux vivants and costumed effigies -

Statues in purple cloaks, or painted red,

Ones wearing crowns, ones smeared with mud or blood:

So that the mind's eye could haunt itself,

With fixed associations and learn to read

Its own contents in meaningful order,

Ancient textbooks recommended that

Familiar places be linked deliberately

With a code of images. You knew the portent

In each setting, you blinked and concentrated." (1-12)

The poem brilliantly shows the preoccupation of humanistic geography with some marked characteristics which make a place special. These characteristic features of a place constitute the sense of place. Again, Heaney's references to the familiar images of his place include "statues in purple cloaks, or painted red" as well as "ones smeared with mud or blood" signifying Tuan's assertion that the sense of a particular place cannot always be "positive". In poem no.xlviii of the sequence, "Squarings" the poet, so, says-

Convert to things foreknown;

And how what's come upon is manifest

Only in light of what has been gone through". (1-4)

The power of education and literature to reinvent a place and identity is reasserted in *The Spirit Level* (1996). "Keeping Going" is a poem on his brother, Hugh, who was a childhood hero in the area. As the elder brother, Heaney was protective of him and this is evident in the following lines-

" 'Don't go near bad boys

In that college that you're bound for. Do you hear me?

Do you hear me speaking to you? Don't forget!'

And then the potstick quickening the gruel,

The steam-crown swirled, everything intimate

And fear-swathed brightening for a moment,

Then going dull and fatal and away." (44-50)

Again, the description of Hugh's adventure, and deeds refers to an agricultural rural place that is now lost as Hugh is also lost along with the known sense of place-

"I see you at the end of your tether sometimes,

In the milking parlour, holding yourself up

And wondering, is this all? As it was

In the beginning, is now and shall be?

Then rubbing your eyes and seeing our old brush

Upon the byre door, and keeping going." (75-82)

How the experiences of detachment, displacement and transcendence of belonging become the materials of creativity is very much evident in the famous poem of the collection, "St Kevin and the Blackbird". St. Kevin is surely a figure from the Irish mythology and is a Catholic symbol. Kevin of Glendalough is known as the founder and first abbot of Glendalough in country Wicklow, Ireland. He is known for his asceticism. In the poem Kevin becomes the symbol of a poet petrified by intense suffering but turning that suffering into creativity he turns into an ascetic at the same time. Kevin is kneeling with arms stretched out symbolizing suffering and the blackbird laying eggs in the nest built upon his shoulder stands for the seeds of creativity-

"And then there was St. Kevin and the blackbird.

The saint is kneeling, arms stretched out, inside

His cell, but cell is narrow, so

One turned-up palm is out the window, stiff

As a crossbeam, when a blackbird lands

Kevin feels the warm eggs, the small breast, the tucked

Neat hand and claws and, finding himself linked

Into the network of eternal life,

Is moved to pity: now he must hold his hand

Like a branch out in the sun and rain for weeks

Until the young are hatched and fledged and flown." (1-12)

Now, the poet equates his own displaced self to that of Kevin. Education and literature have surely caused his physical displacement but it has provided him the resolution of something to write about home-

"And since the whole thing's imagined anyhow,

Imagine being Kevin. Which is he?

Self-forgetful or in agony all the time

From the neck on out down through his hurting forearms?

Are his fingers sleeping? Does he still feel his knees?

Or has the shut-eyed blank of underneath

Crept up through him? Is there distance in his head?

A prayer his body makes entirely

For he has forgotten self, forgotten bird

And on the riverbank forgotten the river's name." (13-24)

I would like to sum up the chapter with a short discussion on the poem, "Conway Stewart", from Heaney's last collection of Poems, *Human Chain (2010).* The poem can be considered to be a twin poem of "Digging", his first anthologised piece, written after a gap of almost fifty years. The poem again deals with a pen as its central metaphor. The poem is a memory poem telling the story of the poet's first spatial change due to his education – his going to hostel when he was in class-V. The day before he departs, his father gifts him a Conway Stewart pen. The shopkeeper shows the boy how to pour ink into the barrel. The pen has a barrel and a nib like a gun. The newly opened ink-bottle looks like a store of bullets to be shot. The pen-gun analogy of "Digging" returns. The next day the poet departs- the first step towards his life-long exile. The pen, as if, was waiting for a blast on that day –

"Giving us time

To look together and away

From our parting, due that evening,

To them, next day."(13-18)

The pen, thus, he uses to give vent to his expatriate identity. Interestingly, the pen was given to the poet by his father who digs with spade. Two different identities, therefore, merge and become inseparable.

For instance, the symbols of dilemma and placelessness become rare in his latest volumes. There is a tendency to look at the whole world as his place in *District and Circle* (2006) and *Human chain (2010)*. As if a circle is completed, lost beliefs are restored to experience a fuller identity. In 2006 Heaney survived a severe stroke. *Human Chain* is interestingly full of celebration of life and his spatial identity-

"Between heather and marigold,

Between sphagnum and buttercup,

Between dandelion and broom,

Between forget-me-not and honeysuckle,

As between clear blue and cloud,

Between haystack and sunset sky,

Between oak tree and slated roof,

I had my existence. I was there.

Notes:

[The line references to the poems in this chapter are mainly from *Opened Ground: Poems 1966-1996 (*Faber and Faber. London, 1998). The line references to the poems, "The Early Purges" and "Traditions" are from m.poemhunter.com / seamus-heaney-3/ and from mural.uv.es /mablazce/ heaney respectively. The other poems are from *Seeing Things*(Faber. London, 1991),*The Spirit Level*(Faber. London, 1996) and *Human Chain (*Faber. London, *2010).*]

i. The term, "imaginary homelands" became popular in the sphere of Postcolonial theory with the publication of Salman Rushdie's book, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* in 1991. The book is a collection of Rushdie's essays, papers, seminar papers written between 1981 and 1991. The book focuses mainly on the theme of migration - going away from one's own country, language, and culture and being forced to come to terms with an alien place, another way of linguistic behaviour, speaking and thinking. In the words of Rushdie himself-

> It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. ...we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind (10).

ii. Ngugi wa Thiong'o in his 1986-book, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* deals with the politics of language, particularly in colonial and postcolonial Kenya. The book is his official farewell to English, the colonizer's language, as the medium of his literary expression in favour of Gikuyu, his

him cultural hegemony operates through language and even after achieving independence we are hardly able to shirk off our psychological colonization through language.

iii. The "language debate" in postcolonial studies mainly stems from a confusion between language as a mere tool for communication and language as a carrier of culture. The postcolonial thinkers consider language as a signifier of cultural hegemony by dint of which the colonizers exercised power and cultural domination over the colo subjects. Ngugi adopts the more radical way to battle this linguistic hegemony, i. e. , to shun the colonizer's language altogether. But as a strategy it is not always viable. A more realistic theory is the appropriation of the language that accentuates the process of "writing back" and, at the same time, questions the exclusiveness of any language. Raja Rao's famous Foreword to his novel, *Kanthapura*(1938) advocates an Indianised English. Gabriel Okara, the noted Nigerian poet-novelist, in the introduction off his1962-novel, *The Voice,* expressed the same view.

iv. Seamus Heaney's *The Cure at Troy: A Version of Sophocles's Philocretes*(1990) is based on Sophocles and tells the story of Philocretes whom the Greeks marooned on the island of Lemnos and forgot about him until the ending phase of the Siege of Troy. He was abandoned because of a foul wound on his foot but without his invincible bow the Greeks cannot win the Trojan War. The classical story is symbolic of the alienation of an exile which dramatizes the conflict between personal integrity and political turmoil.

Heaney's Sense of Place: Ulster Events, Distance and Negation of Contested Territory

> This is not the scene I dreamed of. Like much else now-a-days I leave it feeling stupid, like a man who lost his way long ago but presses on along a road that may lead nowhere. (J. M.Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*[i] 170*)*

His first stroll along the street littered with glass from bomb-shattered windows shakes his faith in the naturalness of his world. (Czeslaw Milosz, *The Captive Mind*[ii] 26*)*

The inherent transcendence of belonging typical to a Catholic Minority in the Protestant North which I have discussed in the previous chapter sharpened between 1969 and 1975 when the socio-cultural equilibrium of the Northern Ireland was suddenly vitiated resulting in violent sectarian clashes and huge casualties. The sudden transformation of an outwardly eventless, bucolic and placid world into a deliberately contested territory has been authentically represented in Heaney's essay, "Belfast" from *Feeling into Words* (later included in *Finders Keepers: Selected Prose 1971-2001.)* The outwardly, or rather overtly, peaceful and leisurely life of the North has been given vent in literary meets, friendly drinks, great time of the new Irish writers in the company of Philip Hobsbaum in the mid-sixties etc. Heaney has evoked this milieu at the very beginning through a line quoted from Derek Mahon

> 'If a coathanger knocked in a wardrobe / That was a great event' – Derek Mahon's evocation of the unfulfilled expectancy of an old man living in Belfast could be extended to the young men around Queen's in the late fifties and early sixties. (*Finders Keepers* 39)

But such cosy atmosphere was challenged suddenly by unprecedented political turmoil -

> But by then the curtain was about to rise on the larger drama of our politics and the writers were to find themselves in a play within the play. (41)

The "Christmas, 1971" section of "Belfast" recreates in astounding details the pros and cons of a contested territory and that of a police state. Heaney retorts –

> I am fatigued by a continuous adjudication between agony and injustice, swung at one moment by the long tail of race and resentment, at another by the more acceptable feelings of pity and terror. We live in the sickly light of TV screens, with a pane of selfishness between ourselves and the suffering. We survive explosions and funerals and live on among the families of the victims, those blown apart and those in cells apart. (41)

The condition of his native place has been given vent –

> At night, jeeps and armoured cars groan past without lights; or

> sured in hours, searches and signings among the guns and torches. (41)

Or,

> There are few enough people on the roads at night. Fear has begun to tingle through the place. Who's to know the next target on the Provisional list? (42)

Heaney's Christmas is marred by horrible dreams –

> …I remembered a dream that I'd had last year in California. I was shaving at the mirror of the bathroom when I glimpsed in the mirror a wounded man falling towards me with his bloodied hands lifted to tear at me or to implore. (44)

The existence of a Catholic in the Northern Ireland has lost its share of joy now -

> There isn't much predictable now, except that the sirens will blare out the old and blare in nothing very new. In some parts of the country they will have killed the wren on St. Stephen's Day. In some houses they will still be hoping for a first-footer to bring a change of luck. (44)

There is a continuous theme in Heaney's works that refers to the very topography of Northern Ireland symbolic of divisions and in-betweenness. The surreptitious tension between the ethnic groups or the sects is, as if, a matter of the landscape itself. In "Something to Write Home About", actually a Television script

Chronicle, 1998, he refers to the narrow and shallow river, Moyola and the stepping stones in it which appear in many of his poems. Heaney says –

> Now a days when I think of that child rooted to the spot in midstream, I see a little version of the god the Romans called Terminus, the god of boundaries. .... I knew in my bones from very early on that Moyola itself was a very definite *terminus*, a marker off of one place from another. (48-49)

The river separated the Catholic village from the Protestant one and, as Heaney states, Irish place-names are often tinged with the connotations of a boundary like Tearmann. Heaney writes –

> I grew up between the predominantly Protestant and loyalist village of Castledawson and the generally Catholic and nationalist district of Bellaghy. In a house situated between a railway and road. Between the old sounds of a trotting horse and the newer sounds of a shunting engine. On a border between townlands and languages, between accents at one end of the parish that reminded you of Antrim and Ayrshire and the Scottish speech I used to hear on the Fair Hill in Ballymena, and accents at the other end of the parish that reminded you of the different speech of Donegal, speech with the direct, clear ring of the Northern Irish I studied when I went to Gaeltacht in Rannafast. (50)

"other". In the deeply fractured culture of the Northern Ireland it is all the more clear. Heaney, so, first refers to this particular theme in his two celebrated poems, i.e., "Terminus" (from *The Haw Lantern*) and "The Other Side" (from *Wintering Out)* and then goes on to assert the inevitability of a confrontation –

> It's hard to grow up in Northern Ireland and not to be *forced* into second thoughts, sooner or later. With so much division around, people are forever encountering boundaries that bring them up short. Second thoughts are an acknowledgement that the truth is bounded by different *tearmanns*, that it has to take cognizance of opposing claims. (51)

Although, as I have discussed it in the earlier chapter, "Terminus" being a poem written in 1987, when "the political situation in Northern Ireland was totally locked and blocked; in the post-hunger-strike world, when the IRA's campaign showed no sign of abating and the Thatcher government was prepared to live with what was termed an acceptable level of violence"(56) , ends in a kind of stalemate with no possibility of a union, "The Other Side" being an early poem "ended up suggesting that a crossing could be attempted, that stepping stones could be placed by individuals who wanted to further things." (57)

The tone of "The Other Side" is predominantly ironical and humorous which deals with the difficulties of improving cross-community links. The poem reminds us of Frost's "Mending Wall" when Heaney meets the old Protestant neighbour and refers to the unflinching nature of hatred and disbelief gathered between the two

"Thigh-deep in sedge and marigolds,

a neighbour laid his shadow

on the stream, vouching

'It's as poor as Lazarus, that ground' ", (1-4)

Age-old prejudices led the protestant neighbour to brag of his own land and to belittle that of the poet to be "scraggy acres" –

"When he would stand like that

on the other side, white-haired,

swinging his blackthorn

at the marsh weeds,

he prophesied above our scraggy acres,

then turned away

towards his promised furrows

on the hill, a wake of pollen

drifting to our bank, next season's tares." (13-21)

The old man's frequent use of Biblical allusion is often baffling to the little boy but

Protestantism and tells of a boundary between his assumed sense of superiority and the other space of inferiority-

" 'Your side of the house, I believe,

hardly rule by the Book at all' ". (29-30)

But the poet expects the old man during the evening rosary and litany when the little boy hears his footsteps outside he wants to go out and meet the old man disregarding the words of his parents –

"Should I slip away, I wonder,

or go up and touch his shoulder

and talk about the weather

or the price of grass-seed?" (49-52)

The images of "weather" and "grass-seeds", perhaps, stand for a better future when such animosities will be liquidated.

Heaney's third collection of poems, *Wintering out,* was published in 1972 when the Troubles had already broken out and the sense of place of the poet being a Catholic in Northern Ireland became disturbed. But the poems in the book are not so radically nationalist and resistant in tone as they will come out to be in the next volume, *North* (1975). The poems, here, are rather elegiac in tone reminiscent of a known and deeply experienced past which is now lost. The title, "Wintering out",

fattening them in the spring and summer." (Parker 90) In his essay, "Mother Ireland" published in *The Listener* on December 7, 1972 Heaney had confessed his debt to the poet W.F. Marshall for borrowing this phrase from one of his poems in which a servant boy who has suffered a lot during the winter under a cruel master expects a better future –

"I wintered at Wee Robert's

I can summer anywhere".

In the same essay Heaney relates the title with the opening lines of Shakespeare's Richard-III – "Now is the winter of our discontent" and says that it was "a gesture towards the distresses that we are undergoing at the moment." (Parker 90)

The poems of *Wintering out* are often criticised by the contemporary Catholic poets and critics for Heaney's indecisiveness about taking a firm stance. The reason behind it was, perhaps, the poet's sense of bewilderment at the sudden change of situation and the truncation of the innocent bucolic atmosphere of childhood. The very opening poem, "Fodder", through the beautiful use of metaphor related to temperature, expresses this sudden change and a hope for return to that lost world.

"Fodder" can be seen as a kind of tribute to the sacredness and innocence of a childhood in Mossbawn which is equated with the warmth felt by a little boy lying in the fodder. In the widespread winter of a troubled time the poet aspires for that warmth again –

"Or, as we said,

fother. I open

In this context the poet painfully recollects the richness of his native place -

"last summer's tumbled

swathes of grass

and meadowsweet

multiple as loaves

and fishes, a bundle

tossed over half-doors

or into mucky gaps". (10-16)

But now in a cold, black present the poet recalls that memory to comfort him –

"These long nights

I would pull hay

for comfort, anything

to bed the stall". (17-20)

The same hope of healing and recuperation comes back in "Servant Boy". The poem is about a marginal character- a servant boy probably in an 18th century Protestant Big House. It refers to the historical transformation of the Catholic North into a predominantly Protestant place by the first decade of the 18th century when Protestants of English and Scottish descent began to settle down. With this apt

troubles. The poet clearly identifies his own transcendence of belonging with the solitary peripheral protagonist –

"He is wintering out

the black-end of a bad year,

swinging a hurricane-lamp

through some outhouse," (1-4)

If the term "wintering out" refers to the boy's pathetic servitude under a bad master all through the winter and his being half-fed, the use of the wrestling-slang "jobber" meaning a wrestler who loses almost routinely in the next stanza directly relates the boy with the poet himself. Being powerless in his own land and being colonized are an experience common to them both –

"a jobber among shadows.

Old work-whore, slave-

blood, who stepped fair-hills

under each bidder's eye

and kept your patience

and your counsel, how

you draw me into

The servant boy is full of resentment at being "a straggle of fodder/stiffened on snow"(14-15). But he hopes for a better future when he carries "warm eggs" which will be hatched for good. The boy so now –

"Comes first-footing

the back doors of the little

barons: resentful

and impenitent,

carrying the warm eggs". (16-20)

Actually, *Wintering out* explores the sense of a place which has become threatening and in this connection reaffirms an identity which has been relegated to the margins from its past central position. As I have already pointed out, starting from the early 1970s, the "humanist geographers" like Yi- Fu Tuan, Anne Buttimer and Edward Relph examine place as it plays an integral role in human experience. In his book *Place and Placelessness* (1976), Edward Relph questions the taken for granted nature of place and its significance as an inescapable dimension of human life and experience. In an in-depth examination of place Relph throws light on people's identity of and with place. Identity of a place, according to him, is its "persistent sameness and unity which allows that [place] to be differentiated from others" (Relph 45) Relph's theory of "insideness" and "outsideness" can be applied here. If an individual feels inside a place, he or she is here rather than there, safe rather than than attacked, enclosed rather than exposed, at ease rather than stressed. Relph opines that

"insideness" and "outsideness" form a fundamental dialectic in human life and that, through numerous layers of "insideness" and "outsideness", different places take on different identities for different individuals and groups, and human experience takes on different traits of meaning, ambience, action and feeling. The sudden change of known and cosy world into something unknown and uneasy made Heaney feel an outsider in his own land. In the depth of the "Troubles" from the autumn of 1970 till September 1971 Heaney worked as a Guest Lecturer at the University of California. In an interview with Caroline Welsh for *The Irish Times* published on December 6, 1975, Heaney described his homeland to be exotic like California now –

> I got in there through the black alley of poetry, rather than through the front door with a doctorate. California was an exotic place after Belfast.(Parker 92)

Actually, Heaney's stint at the University of California was also responsible for the gradual "politicization" of his poetry and Heaney's present fame as a predominantly political poet began to take shape from this time onwards. Again this spatial change enabled him to see the chaos crippling his own place in terms of the larger drama of a kind of violent politics taking place in the world outside. There is a tendency to evade the regional sensibilities to accept the whole world as the stage of endless killings in his later poems and the poetic endeavour to heal the whole world (not only his mother land) is a constant leitmotif there. I will come to the point later in this chapter. However, in America Heaney discovered in his undergraduate students and the young white generation a reverence for the old, indigenous Red Indian culture which has been lost due to the physical and cultural hegemony ascribed upon them by their fore

the same time it was the time of the opening-up of American canon of literature- African, Asian, Hispanic or Chicano etc. The marginal communities began to assert their rights making Heaney more and more conscious of the same need for the Catholic minorities back home. His earlier stance of a unionist opposing "partisan politics" began to yield place for a belief that poetry can turn out to be "a force, almost a mode of resistance" (interview with Caroline Welsh in *The Irish Times* December 6, 1975). The poems of *North* (1975) are resultantly more professedly Catholic in tone where "Worlds could in some beneficial way affect events" (Parker 93). His encounters with American poets, Gary Snyder and Robert Bly, who were using written words as a movement against the Vietnam War, confirmed the shift of looking at his place.

Actually, the Ulster events played an important role in Heaney's attempt to redefine the idea of his place. The close introspection, rather retrospection, of a placid, family centered and agrarian life which characterised Mossbawn in *Death of a Naturalist* and *Door into the Dark* is now replaced by a close and complex analysis of the history, geography and culture of a place which reveals layers of violence and strife beginning from the pre-historic bog-killings, the 1798 Catholic revolution and the 1969-formation of IRA (Irish Republican Army) that were to pose a resistance on the part of the Catholics against the aggressive and exploitative policies of the British Government and the Protestants of the place.

Actually, as the humanist geographers like Yi Fu Tuan or Edward Relph have pointed out, the "sense of place" is a feeling or experience of a place born into the mind of people living in it. Tuan has pointed out to senses of place that are not

space" from "inner space" (inside the mind). Therefore, the "outer space" is an easily identifiable locale with its stock people, linguistic habit, religion, food habit and topography. It is hardly changeable. The "inner space" on the other hand, is a liquid concept because it depends upon individual variance of looking upon a space. The sense of a particular place, so, can be different to two individuals. It can change from positive to overtly negative with the change of events. So the sense of place is not a subject to something rigid and imperturbable. It changes with the change of time. Heaney's change of view of the Northern Ireland can be seen from the point of view of Tuan's theory about the difference between the "outer" and "inner" spaces.

Referring to this change, I am not saying that Heaney's themes took a drastically new course. The recurring themes of his poetry, such as his childhood, his father, his memory of a lost past are still there but they are now saturated with a wider sense of history, geography and culture that does not always remain local or regional but responses to the larger perspectives of the whole world. I will come to the point later.

The Ulster violence and the growing victimization of the Catholics led Heaney to discard his unviable Unionist prejudices and to take an ethnic stance. This also led him to judge the tempestuous history of his own community in their own place which they lost time and again and are unable to reclaim in the pre-historic time and in 1798. The *Bog Poems* are his primary attempt at this historical scrutiny. P.V. Glob[iii]'s book on this helped him write "The Tollund Man". One of the most remarkable among the Bog Poems, "The Tollund Man", is an initial attempt to enquire the sense of a violent place. The picture of the moustached man (Tollund)

"He seemed like an ancestor almost, one of my old uncles one of those moustache archaic faces you used to meet all over the Irish countryside' (Interview with James Randall, *Ploughshares,* Vol.5, No.3 7-22)."

These words refer to a crucial point. The comparison between a distinct past and present is the constant leitmotif in these poems. The bog killings are ancient ritual sacrifices that were performed every winter to ensure fertility in the following year. The sacrificial men were informed of their selection before the day of sacrifice and, so, they got immense opportunity of preparing themselves. But the present descendants of the Tollund Man are backstabbed suddenly, shot down and blown by a bomb. The ritual sacrifices had religious significances while the present sectarian violence is blind-ended. The poem, so, begins with the invocation of the iron-age character-

"Some day I will go to Aarhus
To see his peat-brown head,
The mild pods of his eyelids,
His pointed skin cap.

In the flat country nearby
Where they dug him out,
His last gruel of winter seeds

Naked except for

The cap, noose and girdle,

I will stand a long time."(1-11)

The description of the man as "bridegroom to the goddess"(12) refers to Nerthus, the fertility goddess to whom the sacrifices were made and the sacrificial object became one with the league of gods. Heaney wrote a four-line poem in the name of this goddess in *Wintering out*-

"For beauty, say an ash-fork staked in peat,

Its long grains gathering to the gouged split;

A seasoned, unsleeved taker of the weather

Where kesh and loaning finger out to heather" (1-4)

The lines epitomize death as the prime agent responsible for regeneration. So the pre-historic bog-killings were firmly rooted in a communal belief which had a purpose of betterment of the society. This contrast becomes writ large in the second part of the poem –

"I could risk blashphemy,

Consecrate the cauldron bog

Our holy ground and pray

The scattered, ambushed

Flesh of labourers,

Stockinged corpses

Laid out in the farmyards,

Tell-tale skin and teeth

Flecking the sleepers

Of four young brothers, trailed

For miles along the lines." (21-32)

So, the poet towards the end of the poem feels "lost" in a "home" which is "unhappy"-

"Out there in Jutland

In the old man-killing parishes

I will feel lost,

Unhappy and at home." (41-44)

But this historical retrospection does not tell the story of physical hegemony unleashed upon the Catholics down the ages; it also refers to their cultural and linguistic dispossessions. There are many poems in *Wintering out* which deal with

through deliberate cultural hegemony resulting in linguistic and cultural extinction. The poem describes the flight of a snipe –

"A stagger in air

as if a language

failed, a sleight

of wing."(1-4)

Interestingly the sniper's flight is not a passage from forgetfulness to knowledge because it flies constantly from its 'nesting ground' to –

"that we live off, his flight

through the sniper's eyrie,

over twilit earthworks

and wallsteads,

disappearing among

gleanings and leaving

in the combs

of a fieldworker's archive."(21-28)

The numerous dialects and variants, literary and cultural troves gradually became marked by an eery absence and the snipe, an evidently Catholic symbol passes its

Heaney's poetry becomes that "third space" or an alternative arena where he constantly "gleans" and "leaves" with a comb to appropriate what is natural and what was ascribed. Again the poems like "Anahorish", "Toome" and "Broagh", with their conscious use of Irish place names, not only enacts an uncontaminated linguistic existence in the post-colonial time; it also connects the modern poet with his primeaval ancestry. In "Toome", for example, Heaney reiterates the word "Toome" that gives him a kind of solace because it is one of the remnants of a lost time and lost vocabulary –

"My mouth holds round

the soft blastings,

Toome, Toome,

As under the dislodged

Slab of the tongue" (1-5)

The dislodged linguistic heritage drives the poet into a Souterrain (a small underground chamber of the kind scattered throughout Ireland which was used to hide valuable things from invaders) which helps him to enquire his cultural reserves. Towards the end of the poem the poet so imagines himself to be Medusa-

"…I am sleeved in

bogwater and tributaries,

and elvers tail my hair." (12-16)

Such stories of cultural dispossession are saturated with the sense of being victimized during the Troubles. Heaney's professional assignments kept him mostly outside his homeland (first in the United States and then Dublin). This expatriation had a guilty sensibility exercised in his mind but at the same time living outside the place also helped him to see the whole panorama in comparison and contrast with other incidents in the world history. His later volumes of poems have a wider perspective where he finds affirmation of his own subject position amidst the series of negations around. The heavy, sad and sarcastic tone of his early poetry is cast away and a newly achieved sense of place has been celebrated.

In *Wintering out* the cultural exploitation is given vent through a forceful repression of linguistic practices which results in a lack of communication and silencing of voice. In the poems like "Limbo" and "Bye-child" and again in "Land" and "Oracle" he describes his complex relationship with his own place. In "Land" the poet is about to leave a troubled country but feels that he has to stay there to experience the whole complexities to the fullest extent possible –

"I composed habits for those acres

so that my last look would be

neither gluttonous nor starved.

I was ready to go anywhere." (10-13)

a small drumming

and must not be surprised

in bursting air

to find myself snared, swinging

an ear-ring of sharp wire." (29-34)

In "Oracle", he again hears the call of his native place –

"You can hear them

draw the poles of stiles

as they approach

calling you out:" (7-10)

"Westering" records the feeling of guilt at leaving the country in trouble immediately after going to America. He left for America on a Good Friday not performing the Catholic rites. Now he sits in an alien country but it is only an "outside" and his "inside" echoes the tunes of a distant homeland-

"Six thousand miles away,

I imagine untroubled dust,

A loosening gravity,

Therefore, *Wintering out*, as the title indicates, situates a preparation for a better future- a stock-taking for the upcoming fight which we will see in the following volumes like *Stations* (1975) and *North* (1975).

The prose-poems of *Stations,* written in America have a direct and resistant tone which points to the beginning of a kind of "writing back", an equivalent of fighting back. The influence of the contemporary American anti-establishment thoughts is evident in this change of response to the Troubles. I have already pointed out this fact in this chapter. The prose-poems or what Heaney describes as "verse paragraphs" of the book deal with varied experiences of growing up rural and Catholic in an industrialised Protestant-dominated culture. The title has a biblical allusion referring to the contemporary equivalent of the Stations of the Cross, the passion of Christ and his death. The poems deal with terror of Ulster Movement and his decision of leaving the country. The constant images of blood and suffering characterize a place which is equated with Dante's "inferno", a continuous image in Heaney's later poetry. In "Nesting-Ground" the poet's "arms going into the armpit" in the sand martin's "loopholes of darkness in the riverbank" do not find throbbing life into it but "felt the cold prick of a dead robin's claw". In the rally of death there is only a stunning silence –

> "As he stood sentry, gazing, waiting, he thought of putting his ear to one of the abandoned holes and listening for the silence under the ground." (11-13)

In "July", the sound of a drum resembles that of a hammer and –

> "The air grew dark, cloud-barred, a butcher's apron. The night hushed like a

The Catholics' being mocked as Germans even though they suffered equally when the Germans bombed Belfast during the Wars, the continuous attacks on the minorities form the theme of these poems –

> "I have seen halls in flames, hearts in cinders, the benches filled and emptied, the circles of companions called and broken. That day I was a rich young man, who could tell you now of flittings, night-vigils, let-downs, women's cried-out eyes." (" The Wanderer" 10-14)

The book, therefore, takes a radically Catholic stance to depict their plight in the time of the Irish Civil War. The Unionist prejudices are disowned in favour of a vividly sectarian sensibility which becomes fulfilled in *North (1975)*.

Michael Parker writes in his book *Seamus Heaney: The Making of the Poet* –

> The period between September, 1971, when he dispatched his third collection to his publisher, and June 1975 when his fourth volume, *North*, appeared, witnessed dramatic changes in the poet's life. His year-long 'exile' had unsettled him. In an interview from November,1971, Heaney described coming back to Northern Ireland as being 'like putting on an old dirty glove again.' America, he went on to say, "gave me the idea that I would have to come back and say that this place is a kind of disease preventing personality from flowering gracefully. It is a very graceless community, a very scared and

December, 1971 was a month of terror with the menacing presence of soldiers, police, vigilantes, cocked guns, roadblocks and fifteen people were blown up on December 4, at Patrick McGurk's bar in Belfast. The ministry of fear, therefore, forms the background of *North*.

North, at the same time, introduces the favourite leitmotif of focusing the past and the present simultaneously to represent a sense of place which is firmly rooted in historicity and contemporaneity. Going back to the prehistoric atrocity it situates the present terror. Again the fond reminiscence of an innocent and simple childhood recreates the shock of being displaced or the sense of being defeated. Referring to the varied responses a place incurs into one's mind, Heaney tries to create into his mind an assertive sense of place which will enable him to fight with the series of displacement and transcendence of belonging. His poetry becomes an alternative space of negotiating the losses and gains. This tendency of searching an affirmative sense of place begins in *North* and continues in *Human chain* (2010).

North, therefore, begins with the childhood memories in "Mossbawn: Two Poems in Dedication" consisting of "Sunlight" and "The Seed Cutter" to compare the place that was with the place which is. Then as a stark contrast to this beautiful world comes "Funeral Rites", a poem about death, where Heaney journeys from the history to the contemporary world of "unnatural savagery" with "a dream of forgiveness". The poem is divided into three parts that capture the changing sense of place of a person with the change of his known surroundings. The poet who in the first part shares the experience of carrying a coffin –

of dead relations." (1-3)

is awestruck by the uncertainty of "funeral rite" in his maturity. It becomes just a custom when large scale deaths are an everyday reality –

"Now as news comes in

of each neighbourly murder

we pine for ceremony,

customary rhythms:"(33-36)

In the present world of damnation Heaney searches for resurrection in the precolonial, pre-sectarian and even the pre-Christian Ireland where a long funeral procession came out with apt ritualistic performances which were, in turn, bound with grief and mourning. There was no division between communities in case of honouring a dead. But the procession in the direction of the sacred river, Boyne, "the fountain of all knowledge" now ends in "emptied kitchen of Belfast" –

"Quiet as a serpent

in its grassy boulevard,

the procession drags its tail

out of the Gap of the North

as its head already enters

the megalithic doorway". (55-60)

The third part thus ends with the poet's sealing of the sepulchre with the false hope that it will resurrect in life. Perhaps a better time will ease off the burden of the present.

The technique of seeking analogy and contrast between the Dark Age and the present is very much present in the title poem, "North", "Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces", "Bone Dreams", "Bog Queen", "The Gaudable Man" etc.

"North" immediately recreates the horror of the present –

"I returned to a long strand,

the hammered curve of a bay,

and found only the secular

powers of the Atlantic thundering." (1-4)

The poet's memory is littered with the "unmagical invitations of Iceland" (3-4) and "pathetic colonies of Greenland"(5-6). The age old memories of violence relive themselves-

" those in the solid

belly of stone ships,

those hacked and glinting

in the gravel of thawed streams

were ocean-deafened voices

in violence and epiphany." (13-19)

He finds "memory incubating the spilled blood" (28). In such a condition a poet who remains always in favour of peace becomes helpless –

"Compose in darkness.

Expect aurora borealis

in the long foray

but no cascade of light." (33-36)

This baffling relationship between art and violence forces the poet to compare himself with Hamlet in "Viking Dublin" and in "Bone Dreams" the poet-persona ascribes the responsibility of violence on the cultural and linguistic hegeomony practised by the British but later get enchanted by the same language to use it for the purpose of "writing back". Again, in the *Bog Poems* like "Bog Queen", "The Gaudable Man" and "Punishment" the poet goes back to the literal and imagined territories of Denmark and Iceland to highlight the variances of ritual killing and naturally comes back to Ireland, his homeland, in the last poem of the sequence, "Kinship". The poem with its continuous backward and forward movements seeks the history and cause of dispossession ['to the strangled victim" (120)]. The poem clearly declares the wish to reclaim a free cultural and political identity for the Irish after centuries of British colonization. He ventures after a Catholic reawakening- a cultural resistance –

"I grew out of all this

like a weeping willow

He defines this burning need of the time to be the demand of history. He thus in the part-vi of the poem asks the ancient Roman historian, Tacitus, to visit his native place-

"And you, Tacitus,

observe how I make my grove

on an old crannog

piled by the fearful dead:

a desolate peace.

Our mother ground

is sour with the blood

of her faithful,

they lie gargling

in her sacred heart

as the legions stare

from the ramparts.

Come back to this

Read the inhumed faces

of casualty and victim;

report us fairly,

how we slaughter

for the common good

and shave the heads

of the notorious,

how the goddess swallows

our love and terror." (124-147)

Now, I would like to wrap up my discussion of *North* with Heaney's most powerful reaction to the *Troubles* with the simple poem "A constable Calls". Living within the unabated terror of a police state of the 1970s, here, the poet recalls his first meeting with an armed constable in his childhood. The little school boy was cold with fear at the sight of the man who came to enquire whether there is any illegitimate plantation in their fields –

" 'Any other root crops?

Mangolds? Marrowstems? Anything like that?'

In the potato field? I assumed

Small guilts and sat

Imagining the black hole in the barracks." (8-14)

The fear persists until his bicycle vanished. But the poem's representation of fear becomes pertinent in the context of present when the police shoots the innocent dead and even use bombs. The policemen of the childhood who were not so threatening transmute into cold-blooded murderers.

This change is the crux of *North* that paved the way for the overtly sectarian tone of *Whatever You Say, Say Nothing.*

Field Work (1979) is a collection of shorter poems that seeks repose in the little happinesses of family life amidst violence like his marriage and the birth of children but these little joys are tinged with the sad memories of the murders of near and dear ones, the friends and the neighbours. Writes Parker –

> The elegies to his three murdered friends, Column McCarthey (The Strand at Lough Beg), Sean Armstrong ('A Postcard from North Antrim') and Louis O'Neill ('Casualty'), similarly demonstrate Heaney's refusal to allow bullet and the bomb to have the final word. (159).

The book also situates Heaney's obsession with Dante which is to rule his later poems. The motif is quite evident. The man who has experienced "paradiso" in childhood and "inferno" in the youth upon the same ground is now relying on the "purgatorial" power of poetry to ascertain an identity which has been continuously

explored till *Human chain* (2010). The last poem of *Field Work,* "Ugolino" is itself a nightmarish representation of Dante's "inferno" –

"Your atrocity was Theban. They were young

And innocent: Hugh and Brigata

And the other two whose names are in my song." (104-106)

Again, the opening poem of *Station Island*, "The Underground", recreates the same. *Station Island* records the pains of being away from home - first in Dublin and then at the Harvard. His mother and father died within short intervals in the 1980s and the shadows of his parents symbolizing a lost culture are writ-large in his later poems. They became a source of constant poetic energy by dint of which he had to negotiate a disturbed sense of place.

The title, "Station Island" itself refers to Lough Derg, the lake of the cave, in County Donegal. "There, according to tradition, in a cave, during a fast that lasted forty days, St. Patrick had a vision of the Otherworld and actually experienced the pains of purgatory. Subsequently, one of his disciples, St Davog, established a penitential retreat on this island, which from medieval times onwards was referred to as 'St Patrick's Purgatory.' In the mid-twelfth century, one knight called Owein visited the site, and had 'visions of souls being tormented by devils'." (Parker 181). The place of pilgrimage for the Catholics demanded fasting reminding us of the H-Block hunger strike of 1979 for justice and human rights. The past and present co-relate to give new meanings to the loss of significance of the synonymous actions. At

creates this passage. He now can evade his regional self for a more enlarged global identity where people are suffering and the poetry is becoming a purgatory for cleaning the ills –

"Everywhere being nowhere,

who can prove

one place more than another?

We come back emptied,

to nourish and resist

the words of coming to rest:

birthplace, roofbeam, whitewash,

Flagstone, hearth,

like unstacked iron weights

afloat among galaxies". (" The Birthplace" 25-34)

Actually, *Seeing Things* (1991) situates a fresh start in Heaney's career. Heaney says O'Driscoll about this-

> me then and now. But freedom of a sabbatical year and a renewed access to Glanmore also had a mighty positive effect. For once, I'd taught the full academic year at Havard, from September 1987 until June 1988, so when we got back I had a clear space of eighteen months, since I wasn't needed back in Havard until the spring term of 1990. (O'Driscoll 322)

But those years also witnessed some of the most atrocious incidents in Northern Ireland, including the Remembrance Day bombing in Enniskillen and the vicious murders of two British army corporals in West Belfast. But Heaney expressed his reluctance to return to the violent themes again-

> I was in America at the time of those incidents, but visited London shortly after the murder of the soldiers in West Belfast to receive the *Sunday Times* Literary Award I mentioned before – the one at which I protested about the way the incident had been handled in the British Press. I was still involved with 'the most distressful country that ever yet was seen', but as a subject it has just gone flat. .... There's an interesting passage, all the same, in a poem called 'A Royal Prospect', about a couple who 'are borne downstream unscathed, / Between mud banks where the wounded rave all night/ At flameless blasts and echoless gunfire': those lines clearly register a disjunction between the unscathed life I was living in Harvard and Dublin and the conditions being experienced on the ground in Northern Ireland. (O' Driscoll 323)

It is a kind of looking back to the "primary landscape" from the vantage point of the "secondary landscape" with a continuous process of comparisons and contrast which helps a better understanding of the place itself. At the same time, the words "as a subject it has gone flat" refer to a new trend in Heaney's poetry where the sense of place no longer remains homogenous. There begins a tendency to look at the violent contemporary world to be a place into which the regional Northern Irish identity loses its separate voice.

The long distance lens enables the poet to revisit the violent past of his place with more insight and renewed intensity. Now when Heaney is giving vent to the violence of a place, it is no more confined to his native North. For example, Poem No-xx of the sequence, *Settings*, describes the violent scene of 1940s in the 1990s and the whole world of incessant warfare begins to correspond it. The poem stands for Heaney's life-long reverence for Russian literature and his attempt to examine the plight of an artist oppressed under a dictatorial social set-up. In the context of endless political domination a Pasternak in the Russia of 1940s becomes one with the modern-day Northern Irish Catholic poet. The poem journeys across time and space to locate this eternally existent "negative" sense of place of an artist -

"Above the old cart road, with all the air

Fanning off beneath my neck and breastbone.

(The cloud-roamer, was it, Stalin called Pasternak?)

Terrible history and protected joys!

The newsreel bomb-hits, as harmless as dust-puffs."(7-12)

Again, in Poem no. xxi of the same sequence, the poet's only experience of shooting becomes symbolic of an initiation into a world of violence -

"A whole new quickened sense of what rifle meant.

And then again as it was in the beginning

I saw the soul like a white cloth snatched away.

Across the dark galaxies and felt that shot

For the sin it was against eternal life-

Another phrase dilating in new light." (7-12)

In Poem no. xvi numerous memories of death are jumbled up. Death has become so frequent and all-pervasive that the dazzling red of rat poison which the poet had seen in his childhood, now, turns into the stains of blood that is everywhere -

"Rat-poison the colour of blood pudding

Went phosphorescent when it was being spread:

Its sparky rancid shine under the blade

Brought everything to life –like news of murder

The rat-poison is surely a symbol of violence unleashed by man on animal but its connotation is more severe than the anger of Achilles expressed by a poet. The coldness of death, the helplessness of an artist in the face of widespread panorama of blood in the modern world exist unmistakably in that vibrant red element-

"If a muse had sung the anger of Achilles

It would not have heightened the world-danger more.

It was all there in the fresh rat-poison

Corposant on mould, dried-up crusts.

On winter evenings I loved its reek and risk.

And windfalls freezing on the outhouse roof." (7-12)

Moreover, in Poem no. xxxvi, Heaney casts a backward look on the contested territory from the distance of an expatriate self. Present feelings of anger become fused with the horrible memories of the "Trouble" -

"And yes, my friend, we too walked through a valley.

Once. In darkness. With all the street lamps off.

As danger gathered and the march dispersed.

Scene from Dante, made more memorable

By one of his head-clearing similes –

Clustered and flicked and tempted us to trust

Their unpredictable, attractive light.

We were like herded shades who had to cross.

And did cross, in a panic to the car

Parked as we'd left it, that gave when we got in

Like Charon's boat under the faring poets." (1-12)

Many poems in *The Spirit Level* (1996) are shrouded by the memories of the destruction of the human possibilities during the Second World War which correspond not only to the events of Ulster but to the fear and atrocity of the contemporary wars like the Gulf War. Heaney himself states –

> Very strongly influenced. I was writing just after the first Gulf War, when the oil wells were burning in the desert, like an infernal contradiction to all that Sonja understood herself to be doing. She once called the work of glazing 'bringing down the Sun'- because the silicates in the grass and glass and ash have been derived originally from the solar light. The phrase gave a slightly angelic aspect to her ceramics, and suggested 'bringing up the earth' as a complementary description of her modeling in clay. And the diabolic opposite of bringing it down which is how I regarded the firing of the wells. That's the kind of association that was going

The poems like "To a Dutch Potter in Ireland" deal with the sense of displacement caused by the World War-II but, simultaneously, give vent to the global displacement caused by the violent contemporary history. In the poem a Dutch soldier feels the pangs of spatial alienation in the Northern Ireland during the Second World War-

"The soils I knew ran dirty. River sand

Was the one clean thing that stayed itself

In that slabbery, clabbery, wintry, puddled ground.

Until I found Bann clay. Like wet daylight

Or viscous satin under the felt and frieze

Of humus layers. The true diatomite

Discovered in a little sucky hole,

Grey-blue, dull-shining, scentless, touchable -

Like the earth's old ointment box, sticky and cool." (1-9)

The pain of losing a serene "primary landscape" is beautifully revealed when the soldier becomes homesick-

"At that stage you were swimming in the sea,

Or running from it, luminous with plankton,

A vestal of the goddess Silica,

She who is under grass and glass and ash.

In the fiery heartlands of Ceramica". (10-15)

But, now, no place is immune from the violent influence of the War-

"Night after night instead, in the Netherlands,

You watched the bombers kill; then, heaven-sent,

Came backlit from the fire through war and wartime

And ever after, every blessed time,

Through glazes of fired quartz and iron and lime." (23-27)

The war-memories, towards the end of the poem, thus, continue to haunt the soldier who has survived with the intense suffering of a cursed individual. But war realities are not everlasting because life is sure come out from the heap of death -

"Turning tides, their regularities!

What is the heart, that it ever was afraid,

Knowing as it must know spring's release,

Shining heart, heart constant as a tide?

Omnipresent, imperturbable

Now that the rye crop waves beside the ruins." (50-57)

Again "A Sofa in the Forties" which describes the child's play of the brothers making a train on a sofa instantly brings into the mind memories of holocaust-

"Ghost-train? Death-gondola? The carved, curved ends,

Black leatherette and ornate gauntness of it

Made it seem the sofa had achieved

Flotation."(14-17)

Now the poet can make an association between innocent gestures of childhood and the violent present –

"We entered history and ignorance.

Under the wireless shelf. *Yippee-i-ay*,

Sang 'The Riders of the Range'. HERE IS THE NEWS,

Said the absolute speaker." (26-29)

This associative tendency, too look at the larger spectrum of the world-history is a constant tendency in Heaney's later poetry. His poetry eschews the beauty as well as the atrocity of the place. It becomes evident in "At Toomebridge", the opening poem of *Electric Light* (2001) –

Came pouring over the weir out of Lough Neagh

As if it had reached an edge of the flat earth

And fallen shining to the continuous

Present of the Bann.

Where the checkpoint used to be.

Where the rebel boy was hanged in '98.

Where negative ions in the open air

Are Poetry to me. As once before

The slime and silver of the flattened eel. (1-10)

In the later books like *The Spirit Level* (1996), *Electric Light* (2001) and *District and Circle* (2006) there are frequent references to the Gulf War, the London Tube Rail blast and the attacks of 9/11. "Anything Can Happen" from *District and Circle* goes thus-

"Anything can happen. You know how Jupiter

Will mostly wait for clouds to gather head

Before he hurls the lightning? Well, Just now

He galloped his thunder cart and his horses

Across a clear blue sky. It shook the earth

Anything can happen, the tallest towers

Be overturned, those in high places daunted,

Those overlooked regarded. Stropped-beak Fortune.

Swoops, making the air gasp, tearing the crest off one,

Setting it down bleeding on the next.

Ground gives. The heaven's weight

Lifts up off Atlas like a kettle-lid.

Capstones shift, nothing resettles right.

Telluric ash and fire-spores boil away.(1-16)

To this uncertainty the world has reached. Man is terror-struck in anticipation of a nuclear war where the world is as vulnerable as " a kettle lid " and can end in "telluric ash" and "fire spores". The abruptness of destruction is, perhaps, shown in the powerful image of the overturned "tallest towers". The natural world that he once adored becomes menacing. In "In Iowa", there are the images of "melting ice" and "rising water". In "Höfn", the poet is afraid –

"The three-tongued glacier has begun to melt.

And the miles-deep shag-ice makes its move?" (4-7)

The earth itself is a threatened place; uncertainty of living has relegated people across nations to the margins. Being a Catholic in the Protestant North does not imply marginalization anymore. In the age of international wars, and global warming people become marginal throughout the earth itself. In his later poems, thus, Heaney attempts to disregard markings of "districts" and "circles". In "Mint" from *The Spirit Level*, the poet, so, says-

"My last things will be first things slipping from me.

Yet let all things go free that have survived.

Let the smells of mint go heady and defenceless

Like inmates liberated in that yard.

Like the disregarded ones we turned against

Because we'd failed them by our disregard." (*11-16*)

Surely, the innocent and creative world of childhood is lost. "Two Lorries" in *The Spirit Level* deals with two lorries– one that carried coal for the household-kitchen for the homes in Northern Ireland and the other that blasted in the bus station. The world in the Northern Ireland had changed but it changed world-wide. There is no escape from threatened identity but we have to keep going. In "The Aerodrome" from *District and Circle*, Heaney, th

Bearings taken, markings, cardinal points,

Options, obstinacies, dug heels and distance,

Here and there and now and then, a stance." (29-32)

In the poetic self a new space is created, a new identity what is no more regional. The shadow of his father comes back with the persistence of roots as I have said in the previous chapter. The poet, thus, no more negates his national self but he knows he represents the entire human civilization-

"Were we not made for summer, shade and coolness

And gazing through an open door at sunlight?

For paradise lost? Is that what I was taught?

That old sense of a tragedy going on

Uncomprehended, at the very edge

Of the usual, it never left me once ..." ("Known World", *The Electric Light 48-53*)

In an interview with Dennis O'Driscoll, a cardinally ill Heaney, after undergoing a stroke in 2006, said –

"... William Wordsworth said long ago: that it is on this earth 'we find our happiness, or not at all'. Which is one reason for keeping going". (O'Driscoll 475*)*

Lost world of possession thus yields place to the possession of the whole world. This repossession constitutes his sense of place –

Flowing with the dirt

Of blurbs and the front pages.

My only drink is meaning from the deep brain,

What the birds and the grass and the stones drink,

Let everything flow

Up to the four elements

Up to water and earth and fire and air"

("The First Words", *The Spirit Level* 1-9)

Notes

[All line references to the poems in this chapter up to the collection, *The Haw Lantern* (1987) are from *Opened Ground: Poems 1966-1996*. For the other references the books used are- *Seeing Things* (Faber and Faber. London, 1991), *The Spirit Level* (Faber and Faber, London, 1996), *Electric Light* (Faber and Faber. London, 2001), *District and Circle* (Faber and Faber. London, 2006) and *Human Chain* (Faber and Faber. London, 2010).]

i. In J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*, the Magistrate had been leading a leisurely life until, suddenly, the interrogation experts come and begin a frantic witch hunt for rebels against the Empire. Incidentally, the Magistrate is imprisoned due to his sympathy for the oppressed blacks. The concluding sentence of the novel, in a way, expresses the resultant bewilderment of a person at the sudden change of a known "primary landscape".

ii. In *The Captive Mind,* the Polish author, Czeslaw Milosz picturizes the utter frustration of an artist in a totalitarian Communist regime. His brilliant representation of an emergency influenced Heaney a lot to understand the Ulster problem.

iii. P. V. Glob is a Danish archaeologist famous for his investigations of the bog bodies of Denmark. These bodies are actually mummified dead bodies of Iron and Bronze Age people which were found preserved within peat bogs. His most famous investigations include that of Tollund Man and Grauballe Man. Heaney became very much interested in the fact of pre-historic ritual killings when he came across Glob's book, *The Bog People: Iron Age Man Preserved* (1965) and used the killings as a metaphor for the violent present of his country with a continuous comparison and contrast between antiquity and contemporaneity.

Larkin's Sense of Place: Early Displacements and Negation of Homogenised Place

> To know who you are means to know where you are. (James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: 20th Century Ethnography, Literature and Art 6)*
>
> How are subjects formed "in-between", or in excess of, the sum of the "parts" of difference (usually intoned as race/class/gender etc.)? How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities where, despite shared histories of deprivation and discrimination, the exchange of values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable ?
>
> (Homi K.Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 2).
>
> It (poetry) springs apparently from an occupation of the land, from long, busy and quiet tracts of time, wherein a man or nation may find its soul. To have a future, it must have had a past.

(Edward Thomas, quoted in Edna Longley's *A Language not to be Betrayed: Selected Prose of Edward Thomas* iv).

The modern problematics of place, of identity, of belonging is outwardly quite difficult to apply on the works of Philip Larkin, the most prominent voice of the post World War–II British poetry, known for a staunch provincial "Englishness[i]". The term "Englishness" has been almost synonymous to Larkin's poetry and his poems are sad lyrics of short-length where he repeatedly appears as a detached observer of Post-World War II and post-imperial Britain, its changes and compromises–sometimes participating and sometimes not participating into it. This "Englishness" is marked by its orthodoxy and an unflinching solidarity and Larkin himself once admitted that he is simply incurious about other places. Judged from this point of view, an individual who carries with him an air of self-sufficiency over his national identity is hardly to express a kind of nowhereness. But the new findings on Larkin have opened up the possibility of such a kind of interpretation of Larkin's *oeuvre*. Since his death in 1985, Philip Larkin's status as a writer has undergone a radical and dramatic change. The publications of three books–*Collected Poems* (1988), *Selected Letters* (1992) and the comprehensive biography, *Philip Larkin: A Writer's Life* (1993) have contributed considerably to this change. *Collected Poems* edited by Anthony Thwaite added to Larkin's output eighty-three more poems, almost doubling the number of poems that had previously represented Larkin's poetic authority. The unpublished poems, especially the early poems composed between 1938 and 1945 were projected to be published as a volume called *In a Grip of Light.* The poems with their hidden layers of socio-political and cultural enquiry were, as if, awaiting the publication of Andrew Motion's *Philip Larkin: A Writer's Life* and *Selected Letters of Philip Larkin 1940-1985* edited by Anthony

Larkin: Contemporary Critical Essays (New Casebook Series), has rested upon the images of Larkin as a poet before and after 1993 in England –

> At the time of his death in 1985, Philip Larkin's reputation as a writer seemed unblemished and secure. Although his high esteem rested largely on three volumes of poetry – *The Less Deceived* (1955), *The Whitsun Weddings* (1964) and *High Windows* (1974) – Larkin enjoyed both critical acclaim and immense popularity. Widely acknowledged as the nation's unofficial Poet Laureate, Larkin came to be identified with an essential and enduring Englishness. … In the decade following his death, however, Larkin's reputation underwent a profound and dramatic transformation. (1-2).

Actually, the publication of *Selected Letters* has divided the critical fraternity into supporters and detractors of Larkin. A remarkable tendency of many critics after 1993 is to judge many poems of Larkin in the light of uneasy revelations. As if, a god has fallen and mired his whole body. They frequently charge the poet of guarding or insinuating the purpose of his works. Resultantly, the Larkin criticism took a U-turn and the fields of studies, hitherto not interested in Larkin, like imperialism, post-imperialism, postcolonialism, feminism, queer studies etc., began dissecting the New Larkin who is a racist and imperialist, a misogynist, a fascist, a reactionary etc. The poems for which Larkin achieved the status of the most prominent spokesman of England in the last half of the 20th century are now interpreted in the light of Larkin's prejudices which are not only new but, to a large extent, baffling also. The epithets of praise suddenly transmuted into carping words of tirade. The shadow of a frank and

by his staunch belief in the British proverb, "An Englishman's home is his castle" and he himself stated in a rare newspaper interview –"I think it's very sensible not to let people know what you are like." The critics mainly feast upon such statements to emphasize a gap between Larkin the man and Larkin the poet. And, here lies their mistake. I shall come to the point later.

So, what follows the publication of Larkin's letters is a sheer form of "critical violence", to borrow the term of John Osborne from his book *Larkin, Ideology and Critical Violence: A Case of Wrongful Critical Conviction*[ii] *(2009).* A review of this book by Roy Johnson published on 13 July, 2009 in the British book-review website www.mantex.co.uk puts it as follows –

> During his lifetime, Philip Larkin, the self-effacing 'Hermit of Hull' (where he was the University Librarian), was held in Public affection as an 'accessible' poet, minor novelist, and quirky Jazz critic. His death in 1985 was mourned as the passing of – in W.H. Auden's phrase –'a master of the English language'. But with the publication of his *Selected Letters*, edited by Anthony Thwaite (1992) and Andrew Motion's biography, *"Philip Larkin: A Writer's Life"* (1993), the tide began to turn.

The post –1992 Larkin is "a Parnassian Ron Glum" (Andrew Motion), "a foul mouthed bigot"(Peter Ackroyd), "a provincial grotesque" (Bryan Appleyard), "anti-intellectual, racist, sexist and rotten with class consciousness" (Germaine Greer). Such invectives arise not from Larkin's poetry, but from his letters which are written

must be, a clear distinction between public and private correspondence. But, the letters have contributed a lot to stigmatize the image of Larkin as a poetic institution of modern times. So much so that, I found that an auction of the famous online store, eBay, listed Motion's biography under the key-words : "Homosexual Pornography poet Philip Larkin Nazi".

A study of Philip Larkin's disturbed sense of place in 2013 is hardly possible without any reference to the three books I have mentioned earlier. In the present chapter I will surely use those biographical details. But, at the same time, my main attention will be on his works- his novels, poetry and prose because I agree with Osborne that –

> a narrator of invented experiences is not to be confused with an actual author and real ones. (Osborne 13)

For this purpose, I have preferred the recently published, *The Complete Poems of Philip Larkin* (2012) edited by Archie Burnett because Burnett has accumulated almost every line of poetry available from Larkin's diaries, journals and letters in a proper chronological order because Larkin had a habit of dating even a poetic scrap. Many hitherto unpublished poems have been found essential for constituting an idea about Larkin's latent socio political dilemmas in the war-years, the narrowing of his family and academic space, his physical deformities and sexual preferences that formed the basis of his oddly cynical and overtly self contradictory views of life. In this chapter, I would like to deal with Larkin's novel and stories and early poetry up to The *Less Deceived* (1955) to capture the development of his sense of place with the

Larkin lived between 1922 and 1985. He was born into a period when Britain was going through a chaotic and turbulent political phase heading towards the World War-II. It was a time when the British imperialism in Asia, Africa and the Americas was in the wane and inside the country revolutionary labour dispute and trade unionism left the ruling upper class frightened. The pathetic condition of the coal-miners when the employers eyed for increased productivity and were simultaneously cutting wages, also resulted into serious agitations. The whole affair reached a stalemate when the country became standstill for twelve days in 1926-General Strike. There was a huge possibility of another Bolshevik War, a violent class confrontation, until all ended suddenly when after secret negotiation with the Baldwin Government the unions mysteriously receded. This was followed by the Wall Street crash of 1929 and the subsequent Great Depression. The First World War had already left Britain devastated. Industrial areas turning waste land, unemployment rising like never before, poverty looming large were some constant images during Larkin's days of growing up.

However, the pathetic condition into which England had fallen hardly vitiated the family unit of Sydney Larkin, Philip's father who was a city treasurer in Coventry. Sydney was a domineering kind of man in his office and in his family and at the same time reared some radical views about life, society and politics. He had a taste for Victorian novels and it is he who introduced Larkin with the works of the modern stalwarts like James Joyce. Larkin was full of awe for this strict man in the family and this continued in his years of growing up and his reminiscences of his family life is often full of praise for this "big" man and scorn for the "nagging" mother, Eva and

and a common mother later made him cynical about family and marriage in general. Family becomes a suffocating and restricting space which thwarts the development of individualism and the dichotomy between two contrasting spaces, constricting and free, looms large. Richard Bradford in his biography, *First Boredom, Then Fear: The Life of Philip Larkin* (2005) writes:

> When Philip was born they lived at 2 Poultney Street in a suburb of Coventry. It was a council house but not the type to be mythologized in histories of Labour movement. Poultney Street had been built by Coventry Corporation as an investment to provide housing for the skilled workforce of the locality. For the Larkins it was a temporary residence until Sydney found something that befitted his status as Treasurer. This would be 'Penvorn', Manor Road, closer to the city centre. They moved in when Philip was five, and the house would be the locus for his memories of childhood and adolescence. It was almost new and its combination of Tudor and Gothic features gave it an incongruously sinister aspect, fully reflected by life within. (Bradford 27-28)

The house with "its front gate overhung by trees, its dark-painted window-frames and bristling mixture of brick and pebbledash looked like a suburban version of Thomas Hardy's Max Gate" (Motion 10). The fort-like dark house later was described by Larkin in the imagery of "forgotten boredom" in "Afternoons". At the same time the class-consciousness of Sydney never let his children to be mixed up with other boys of the locality. So, Larkin's childhood days at Coventry were mostly lonely. Larkin

made was perhaps "Not the Place's Fault" which was actually a commentary on his famous poem "I Remember, I Remember". It was published in the "obscure Coventry-based magazine, *Umbrella,* in 1950" (Motion 500) and was full of his nostalgic reminiscences of his childhood in Coventry – his family, his friends etc. But Larkin always discouraged the idea of including it in any collection of his prose pieces. Before the publication of *Required Writing: Miscellaneous Pieces 1955-1982* in 1983, writes Motion, "[Blake] Morrison's main recommendation was that Larkin should include the essay about his childhood, 'Not the Place's Fault'. Larkin replied gratefully but insisted ... I think I said just a little more about myself than I really want known. These are reasons why I should prefer it to remain in obscurity. He was equally adamant to Thwaite and Monteith. 'I feel', he told Monteith in November, 'in some curious way that [the essay] exposes more of me than I want exposed, although heaven knows there is nothing scandalous in it' " (Motion 500-501)

Some fifteen years after his death it was finally included in *Further Requirements: Interviews, Broadcasts, Statements and Reviews* edited by Anthony Thwaite in 2001. In this essay Larkin gives vent to the loneliness of his childhood days at Coventry. He says – "In childhood friends are necessary, you cannot bowl to yourself". (41). He tells of Sydney's liking for "Teutonic and Scandinavian areas" for holidays and at the same time exposes his xenophobia by informing us that "I am not a natural traveller: a place has to be pretty intolerable before it enters my head that somewhere else might be nicer."(FR 42) These observations are somewhat interrelated. In an interview published in *The Observer* in 1979 Larkin told Miriam Gross (the interviewer)-

> It was perhaps not a very sophisticated childhood, although the house

place. And he took us there twice; I think this sowed the seed of my hatred of abroad - not being able to talk to anyone, or read anything."(*Required Writing* 47)

Larkin's words describe his own childhood in terms of a lack of communication and it continued throughout his life. He was never satisfied with his place and position. But curiously he was unaware of any other option. Resultantly, self-contradiction became his second name. I will come to this point later. But, at this point I will like to quote Larkin's description of his displacement in childhood from his poem, *"Coming"* (from *The Less Deceived)* –

"And I, whose childhood

Is a forgotten boredom,

Feel like a child

Who comes on a scene

Of adult reconciling,

And can understand nothing

But the unusual laughter,

And starts to be happy ." (12-19)

What Larkin wanted to hide was the fact that Sydney was a Hitler-sympathiser. His veneration for the German was quite open and he always kept a small mantle-piece of Hitler in his office. He even attended a number of Nuremberg

incident became the subject of Alan Pollock's famous play *Philip and Sydney* (2010) which was broadcast on Radio4 on 11 June, 2010. The right-wing and pro-fascist ideas of Sydney influenced his son to some extent. Larkin's letters during the wars are often full of comments that eulogise Germany and Hitler and prophesy the utter debacle of his own country. In a letter written on 6 July 1943 to J.B. Sutton, Larkin first consoles him for the fact of Sutton's joining the army against his choice and says–

> If there is any new life in the world today, it is in Germany. True it's a vicious and blood-brutal kind of affair – the new shoots are rather like bayonets. It won't suit me. By 'new' life I don't mean better life, but a change, a new direction. Germany has revolted back too far, into the other extremes. But I think they have many valuable new habits. Otherwise how could D.H.L. be called Fascist? (*Selected Letters* 36)

Again, in a letter to Kingsley Amis written on 20th Aug. in the same year Larkin writes –

> ….Hitler could have made Germany 'the finest country in the world'. (SL 43)

The towering figure of Sydney also made Larkin class-conscious and high-headed to some extent. It was also the cause of his hatred for woman-sex because he idolized Sydney who used to belittle Eva very often. The unhappy married life of his parents damaged his attitude to love, marriage and family in general. Larkin's work never mentions Sydney but this man made his ideas. He was an unseen presence throughout.

Sympathizer from public awareness. The aversion was so strong that a passing reference to it by his school-friend, Noel Hughes, in the essay "The Young Mr. Larkin" included in *Larkin at Sixty* (ed. by Anthony Thwaite in 1982) led to the end of their long time friendship. The possessive behaviour towards England or the so called "Englishness" that we find in Larkin's works can be an alter expression of this terror because if we judge his work closely, we would find this Englishness self-contradictory and deceiving.

Richard Bradford in his book, *First Boredom, Then Fear: The Life of Philip Larkin (2005)* writes –

> Sydney ran the household in the same way that he presided over the finances of the City Corporation, and Eva and Kitty became more like possessions than sharers. (28)

The frightened and passive images of Eva and Kitty made Larkin distasteful to the fair sex in general and the family life became a prison for him. Early childhood memories made Larkin cynical about marriage and it lasted throughout his life. In a letter to Kingsley Amis on 20 August, 1943 Larkin writes –

> 'The whole business of sex' annoys me. As far as I can see, all women are stupid beings. What is more, marriage seems a revolting institution, unless the parties have enough money to keep reasonably distant from each other- imagine sharing a bedroom with a withered old woman! (*Selected Letters* 63)

This hatred for women remained with Larkin and at Oxford he wanted to build an

"a boy who went to public school just for the one summer term, but on account of his extraordinary beauty completely and farcically wrecked the place" (*FR 41)*. However, the gay tendencies in Larkin had a lot to do with his insurmountable bashfulness which was a direct result of the way Eva, his mother, kept all girls sternly away from the periphery of the house. The pressure of having been pent up within the four walls made Larkin somewhat unsocial. He had grown a kind of approach-avoidance attitude towards the girls. He liked them but had not mustered enough courage to approach them. The diaries of Larkin during the Oxford days are full of graphic details of masturbation. He, as we find in Motion's book, had recorded ninety five dreams in 1942 which are marked by his complexity with sexual preference. His in-between subject position becomes writ large in these descriptions. On 26 October, 1942 he dreamt that he entered a public urinal at Covered Market in Central Oxford. He writes–

> 'I started to piss, and simultaneously a man on my left started to piss across my legitimate section and with a long malformed penis. This annoyed me. After a time a woman came up on my right and also started pissing, also with a penis, but normally shaped. This surprised me.' (*A Writer's Life* 81)

Motion refers to two other dreams-

> ….dream number fourteen: 'I was trying to toss off a boy with a penis like a Turkish cigarette. I had dreamt about him before that night and thought that he was a Russian'(81) and

> back to the first room and she lay on the floor. She was wearing a flame coloured skirt and brilliant yellow knickers. I began fucking her and she talked dreamily about copulation. After a while I stopped fucking, not feeling I was getting anywhere, and we both stood up. She maintained her dreamy indifference.' (81)

Again, in a short story written between January and July 1941 Larkin shows the queer friendship of three undergraduates, David, Patrick and Christopher Warner (a name he used again in *Jill*). " 'Are you courting?' One asks at one point; 'Still waiting for the right man, my dear', another replies" (63). Writes Motion –

> .... when Larkin first arrived at Oxford, he was sharply aware that his ignorance of girls was remarkable. As time passed, this had started to weigh on him more heavily, especially after he began to play an active role in the English Club. Accordingly to Philip Brown, 'most of the officers of the Club were girls, and they used to lionize Philip a bit, asking him to tea and so on. It was hard to say why, since he wasn't writing very much or very well, but he was charismatic, you see. Girls wanted to find out about him'. Larkin, in turn, now wanted to find out about girls, but felt incapable. His shyness quickly turned into the sneering he had learnt from his father. 'Women (university) repel me inconceivably', he told Sutton. 'They are shits'. (61)

Motion then asks a very significant question –

> If Larkin found girls so difficult, was it partly because he was really

> his admiration for Julian Hall's novel *The Senior Commoner,* which deals directly as well as obliquely with its Estonian hero's 'not very romantic' feelings for a junior boy called Murray Gawthorne ('there was something altogether immodest in [his] figure').(62)

Significantly, from his Oxford days Larkin's life-long penchant for pornography started. His voyeurism is quite clear in his early poems and in the Juvenile novels later collected in *Troubles at Willow Gables.* Stories in the latter book are often soft porns and in the league of a little known genre of the 1930s known as the School Girl Fiction. Angela Brazil (1868-1947) pioneered the genre. As a writer Brazil is almost forgotten now but this English writer was a literary trailblazer for more than forty years. Her "school girl fiction", like *A Patriotic Schoolgirl, The Youngest Girl in the Fifth, The School in the South, Monitreas Merle* etc. moved away from the Victorian idea of teaching moral principles and ethics to young girls, and simply entertained the reader. Actually, Larkin dealt with lesbianism because, perhaps, it gave him a "third space" for revealing his own sexual preference with which he had a sense of guilt because world was not so much open to homosexuality in those days as it is now.

In the interview with Miriam Gross published in *The Observer* in 1979 Larkin says –

> You must remember that I was very short sighted and nobody realized it, and also that I stammered, so that really classes were just me sitting with bated breath dreading lest I should be called on to say something (*Required Writing* 47-48).

physical deformities resulted into his famous shyness and to some extent, effeminacy too. In his Oxford days he found the classes boring and tried to escape. So, Larkin's sense of place is marked by a crisis of identity that emanated from the stringent sense of displacement that occurs to a disabled person. Modern fields of Disability Studies and Medical Humanities can be a proper theoretical basis for looking at this aspect of Larkin's work. Even Larkin had a terror concerning his being called up to join the army during the Second World War. His weak eye-sight saved him however.

All these psycho-biographical details will help to understand Larkin's displaced identity in a time when England as a country was going through rapid and rabid changes. Larkin's early works naturally are full of pictures of departure from a socio-cultural milieu which is reactionary and claustrophobic. Incidentally Larkin's oeuvre is littered with pictures of departure.

Seventeen years after his death James Booth edited Larkin's early novels and unpublished scraps in a book named *Trouble at Willow Gables and Other Fictions.* It was published by Faber in 2002. The book includes works written under the pseudonym, Brunette Coleman, which consist two novellas, *Troubles at Willow Gables* and *Michaelmas Term at St Bride's*, the unfinished drafts of two novels, *No For An Answer* and *A New World Symphony* and the poem sequence *Sugar and Spice.* Obviously the pseudonym, Brunette Coleman, refers to a subversive sexuality and the works depicting the school-girls are mainly known for "...Voyeurism, Sado-masochism, and a pleasure of taking advantage of those who... cannot easily defend themselves." (Motion 92). The works are often semi pornographic and on the verge of lesbianism. John Carey in his essay on the Brunette Coleman novels included in *New*

> ...the stories are clearly written to produce male sexual arousal, and ...seem to have been partly for the entertainment of Larkin's male friends – the male and female elements or voices [in Larkin's work] here co-operate in an unusual way - the imagined female self subordinates itself to and gratifies the male. (55)

But at the heart of these novels there is a strong urge to escape from the constricting social order and the orthodox school regulation. From this point of view, the novellas reflect the young novelist's sense of displacement at Oxford and a provincial boy's complexity to cope with the ways of the great cities. The description of the Willow Gables in the first Coleman – novel *Trouble at Willow Gables* refers to an order which is orthodox, constricting and claustrophobic –

> an eighteenth–century house–it has since been altered... extensively in order to make it into a school. (*Trouble at Willow Gables and other Fictions* 7).

Interestingly, the prologue to the novella elaborately describes the postman's journey through the scenic countryside with his bicycle which emphasizes the existence of a world beyond the restrictions of classrooms and boarding house. He is also a link between the world outside and the world inside. Just after this description of vast open grounds, we enter directly inside the asphyxiating world of Willow Gables where the Head Mistress Ms. Holden behave authoritatively and her words of rebuke to Marie Moore for repocketing a confiscated five pound note that her aunt had sent her are overtly dictatorial –

Again through the character of Margaret Tattenham, the novella shows an almost antiestablishment fervour. Her description of Willow Gables as a "God forsaken hole" (11) mocks the established school-culture. From this point of view the story forms the ground for John Kemp, the hero of his later novel, *Jill.* The stolen money and the mystery around the thief which is at the centre of the story reveal episodes of corporal punishment and Marie is since restricted to solitary confinement. In contrast, when Marie's "loyal friend", Myfanwy, plays the sleuth and ferrets out the truth about the stolen money, her speeches mimicry official detective genre. She behaves in contrast to the official school –culture. Towards the end when Myfanwy swims, her words convey an utter disregard for "text-book" learning –

> In the water, Myfanwy, was in her element. Though shy of hockey, timid at netball, incompetent at cricket, as soon as her limbs felt the sharp coldness of water she became another being. She had never learnt to swim: it seemed to come naturally. She had only used text-books to correct a few minor faults in her technique, and to learn new methods which increased her speed. (*64*).

Natural behaviour contradicts the orthodox learning, which signifies an unease with place itself.

Michaelmas Term at St. Bride's is an unfinished novel. But in its unfulfilled span the book shows a kind of disregard for stifling norms which expresses Larkin's own feelings of unease with the ways of Oxford during his university days. The novel tells the story of two erstwhile adversaries in school, Mary Burch and Hilary, who

Putron whose arrogant behaviour was a cause of terror to the staff and student alike. There is also a sub-plot dealing with Moore sisters from *Troubles at Willow Gables* who are renamed as Woolf and who involve themselves in Marie's attempt to cure Philippa's almost obsessive knack for belts. Like the former novella this work also deals with the anomalies in conventional cultural and sexual identity and attacks the accepted modes of socio-cultural understanding. For example, toward the beginning, Mary's orthodox middle-class upbringing has been given vent –

> In the vacations she had helped her mother in their house in Yorkshire, read books from the local Boots', and gone walks and pony rides: for a fortnight she had had a girl friend from school to stay with her, and she knew that this friend - Marie Woolf - would even now be writing for her at St. Bride's, along with several other of her old school-chums. Everything was as it should be, and her only anxiety was whether her china had survived the long journey...(132)

The Pony rides, "local Boots" stand for a privileged upbringing or a conformist cultural milieu which is now confronted with an open alternative cultural environment. Again when Mary is apprehensive on hearing her new room-mate, Hilary, Marie informs her –

> She'll probably influence you a good deal – teach you things you didn't know before, you know, and give you new ways of looking at things. After all, that's what Oxford is really for - they say that half one's education comes unofficially, from the people one meets. (143)

Mary complete and rounded. Hilary's glamorous and captivating personality is a result of quality to break free from conventionalism. She says -

> As soon as I left school, I went to a divine school near Paris for a year. That was marvellous. I learnt more there than I learnt in six years at Willow Gables – and my French was perfect. Then I lived a bit in Switzerland, and finally my mother took me round the world. My mother's a big-game huntress. We stopped in Africa for some time, and she caught a little lioness for me. (148)

Larkin is generally believed to be a rooted orthodox British nationalist but his sense of place was no less problematic. His protagonists are mainly displaced individuals seeking departures. They actually express their creator's sense of transcendence of belonging in a time when the socio-cultural scenario of England was changing fast.

Larkin published *A Girl in Winter* in 1947 as a part of a rather loosely interlinked trilogy. *Jill* (1946), his first novel represented innocence, *A Girl in Winter* stood for the loss of innocence and its outcome and the third which never came out was supposed to mark a return to life. In a letter to Jim Sutton Larkin described this proposed trilogy as his "soul history"(SL 110). Although, these two novels are widely read as Juvenilia today which help to understand his early poetry, both of them are literary works of considerable worth. One identical theme in this two novels is that its protagonists are displaced individuals living within the devastations caused by two great wars and in a time of fast urbanization and globalization resulting in the accelerated drift of rural population to the metropolis. Description of these two works

Andrew Motion has presented an interesting discussion on how Philip's title, "Larkin", caused a feeling a displacement in your Larkin's mind. "Larkin", writes Motion, "is general all over Ireland, and at various time of his life - especially during his five years in Belfast (1950-55) – it was widely believed that Philip Larkin the writer came from that country. George Fraser, for instance, possibly remembering James Larkin (1876-1947), the well known Irish nationalist and the leader of the Irish TGWU, featured him in the anthology, *Spring time* (1953) as a 'Northern Ireland Regional Poet' "(3). This crisis of identity led Larkin to search for his family roots. His uneasiness with his father, being a Hitler-sympathizer is already noted. Was Larkin's so-called "Englishness" a reaction arising out of the psychological crisis which threatened him to carry towards things non-British or rather anti-British?

Although it is almost forgotten today, Larkin's *Jill* is a significant work for a number of reasons. First, it is an early example of the genre known as the campus novel[iii], to be popularized later by Larkin's best friend, Kingsley Amis's book, *Lucky Jim* (1961). Second, as James Gindin suggested in his book, *Postwar British Fiction* (1962), it held the first example of that particular characteristic landmark of post-war British novel, the displaced working class hero. Although Larkin strongly denied any such possibility in the introduction to first Faber and Faber reprint of the book in 1964 by saying, "in 1940 our impulse was still to minimize social differences rather than exaggerate them" (*Jill* vii), no one can miss the displaced identity of the provincial hero John Kemp, a prototype of young Larkin himself in the context of a big city (here Oxford). Larkin wrote the book in 1943/44 at the age of twenty-one when he himself was at Oxford as a student of Oxford University. The novel can be deemed

Larkin, "Public schoolboys terrified me. The dons terrified me. So did the scouts" *(Required Writing 40)*. Similarly, John Kemp is a boy from a working class family in Lancashire who comes across two contrasting and hostile worlds in war-time Oxford. The two worlds, as described by Larkin, are the world of those who eat carefully and that of those who eat carelessly. The leitmotif of eating in the novel intensifies the difference between social classes. His sense of being displaced starts from the very beginning of the novel when Kemp throws the egg-sandwich prepared for him by his mother before his journey out through the train –window because he was confused about whether it would be a good manner to eat in a full compartment. Comically enough, everyone in the compartment begins to eat just after and an aged lady offered Kemp some food sensing that he is hungry. The first portion of the novel beautifully encapsulates the nervousness and anxiety of being young. Social inexperience of a young provincial boy has been expressed by the author through wry humour, pathos and very concise prose and Larkin creates situations around Kemp that occur naturally but with which he cannot cope and falls apart. The problematic of class-existence also gives control to the novel. There is merely an intrinsic difference between the strongly working class Coventry-based Kemp and the London bred Walker and his friends. The novel is also a faithful representation of the war-time Britain where there was a great gulf between those who stay at home and those who fight. Surely, *Jill* is not a "war novel", but the backdrop of war refers to the privileged few – Walker, Elizabeth – who go about as they like, while Kemp struggles to luxuriate at such an important point in history in which others are experiencing much worse. Larkin highlights this gap in terms of the displaced identity of Kemp -

> him, measuring it against the trifle he had already experienced . How much pleasanter it would be to go back, though the past was even by this time unemphatic and twilit. (*Jill* 22).

There are a series of embarrassing events, career-minded attitude of the working classboy, Whitebread and the patronising contempt of his roommate, Warner. However, John craves for Warner's approval of him because his "rich insouciance arouses awe and envy in him" (Learner 7). The rude and arrogant treatment which John receives from Warner makes him desperate because he thinks that if Warner is impressed his out of place existence will be grounded. So, Kemp invents a younger sister, Jill, who stays at the boarding school, Willow Gables and, although, this catches attention of Warner for a short period, John himself becomes obsessed with Jill- writing her letters, starting to keep her diaries filled with school- girl stories etc. Later, Kemp finds a girl who is very much like Jill in a book shop and his heartbreak follows. But Jill is more than an imagination to impress Warner, it is the object which stands for the emplacement of a displaced identity. It is also the "third space" for self-expression.

The representation of displaced identity is more stringent in *A Girl in Winter* which directly delineates the life of an exile in the war-time Britain. There is surely an obvious difference between Larkin's two novels. While *Jill* aspires to the conditions of real life, *A Girl in Winter* moves to allegory. The novel mostly depends upon non-distinct and hazy references to the locale, to the time and to the past of the heroine, Katherine Lind. The reader is never informed who she is, where she comes from, but during the first third of the novel we learn that she is exiled in England, banished from

> Like Kemp her innate awkwardness is exacerbated by wider social upheaval. (Motion 160-61).

Carol Rumens in an article in *The Guardian* on 20 December, 2011 attempts to solve the riddle about the setting of the novel and the national/ethnic identity of Lind. The anonymous war-time town, she thinks, may be Coventry, Larkin's own hometown, relying upon his description of the locale minutely. But the most interesting part of her conjecture is that Katherine seems to be a German –Jew evicted from her country to live the life of an expatriate. "On her first evening with the Fennels", comment Rumens, "Katherine dresses for dinner in a dark brown uniform including a tie to which is pinned a small Olympic badge. These details evoke Hitler's Germany. During her conversation with Robin, we learn that he has been studying her language at school (hardly likely to have been Swedish, then). Later, when the two are having a romantic evening on the river Robin tells Katherine that in prehistoric times he could have taken her all the way home, since the Thames used to flow into the Rhine. The surname Lind is found in Germany, too. It means 'lime'. One of the ways in which the German Jewish population tried to assimilate was by giving themselves neutral names from the ordinary words for animals, fruits and vegetables." If Katherine is a German – Jewish, the novel's portrayal of displacement extends its entire range and depth. It is also thought that Larkin created Katherine after the exiled German artist, Berthold Wolpe, who designed the cover of the 1965-Faber edition of *A Girl in Winter*. Has Larkin expressed his terror for his father's being a strong supporter of Hitler by making a German-Jewish girl his heroine?

A Girl in Winter is divided into three sections. The first and last sections

Lind's pre-war experiences in England when she came to stay with the family of her pen-friend, Robin Fennel. The beginning of the novel with its graphic and intensely poetic description of the dark winter evokes the alienated and lonely existence of Katherine in England. She hates her job of an assistant in a small provincial library with an unpleasant boss, Mr. Anstey. Katherine is tough. Her displacement and loneliness never make her a helpless and pathetic figure as it is expected to be. The second half of the novel transports us to the past when Katherine came to spend a fortnight of summer holidays in England following an invitation from Robin Fennel, a boy who became her pen friend following a letter-writing competition in English in her school. But nothing interesting happens. Surely, Robin's parents remain cordial and amiable, Robin and Jane, his sister, spend quality times with her but they are not able to come out fully of the shell of their British reserve. The unfamiliarity and exoticism of the landscape, the gap between two cultures never allowed Katherine to overcome her sense of being an "other". For instance, she receives a "shock" in the drawing room –

> When she pulled open one of the drawers to pull away a handful of clothes she found it lined with English newspapers, which gave her an unreasonable shock. It was like the money: unfamiliarity where she was not prepared for it.(82)

This same unfamiliarity marks the awkward kissing between Robin and Katherine which is more disturbing than loving. Moreover, when they meet again towards the end there remains no sign of an amicable bonding between them. Perhaps Katherine agrees to make love with Robin to familiarize the burden of defamiliarization heavy

Again, like Katherine, Robin is, to some extent, displaced too. He believes in some traditional family values which are not open to the modern changes and compromises. Mr. Fennel says -

> But it's the same all over England – good arable land being turned into pasture, pasture turning into housing estates. It'll be the ruin of us … . Suppose there's another war? What are we going to live on? Christmas crackers and ball bearings? (79).

Incidentally, the fast vanishing provincial England as a result of large scale urbanization and industrialization is a theme of Larkin's many poems including "Here" and "Show Saturday".

Stan Smith in the chapter on Larkin in his book *Poetry and Displacement* (2007) comments -

> In a channel 4 television documentary broadcast in 2003 Philip Larkin observes of Hull, the city in which he had lived and worked for many years, "It is a bit on the edge of things. I rather like being on the edge of things". (20)

Not that living and working there implied some absolute attachment to place. On the contrary, being on the edge licensed a semi-detached relationship with the place the poet happened to inhabit: he was always just passing through, just as, in his famous poem from *The Less Deceived* (1955) "I Remember, I Remember" he dismissed Coventry, his birthplace, not as somewhere he had his "roots", but "just where I started"(20). This negation of

mentioned. It is evident in his very first collection, *The North Ship*, which was published by The Fortune Press in 1945. Larkin himself was not very satisfied with these poems and in a letter to James Sutton on 10 Dec., 1944 he wrote -

> I detect in them certain impurity, a certain writing for writing's sake, and lack of real inspiration. I felt like making a vow not to write anything until it is really forcing the hat off my head, at least in the poetry line. (112)

A sense of failing and desertion ending in an unsuccessful attempt of departure during the war in Coventry (which was heavily bombarded as I have already mentioned) become evident in the poems of this collection.

In the second poem of this book, Coventry becomes a metaphor of negation on both the physical and the spiritual levels. It becomes a place which is literally devastated by the Second World War and which has some not so encouraging childhood memories in store for him. The poem begins with a decent description of his place -

> "This was your place of birth, this daytime palace,
>
> This miracle of glass, whose every hall
>
> The light as music fills, and on your face
>
> Shines petal-soft; ..." (1-4).

But in the sestet of the sonnet the mood changes into desolation and fear hinting at both the nightly bombings and the dilemmas of his growing years which was only

Are you prepared for what the night will bring?

The stranger who will never show his face,

But asks admittance; will you greet your doom

As final;" (8-12)

Again, the poem called "Dawn" (no. iv) is reminiscent of his lonely days devoid of woman's love at Oxford and before as a result of his conservative upbringing, physical disabilities and homosexual leanings -

To wake, and hear a cock

Out of the distance crying,

To pull the curtains back

And see the clouds flying –

How strange it is

For the heart to be loveless, and as cold as these. (1-6)

The very next poem, dedicated to James Sutton named "Conscript", deals with the fact of Sutton's being called to join the army. Larkin had a fear of being called too but his weak eyesight saved him. The poem criticizes the very practice of endangering innocent lives of young students in the names of nationalism and fake patriotism. The poem goes thus –

"But one Spring day his land was violated;

A bunch of horsemen curtly asked his name,

A war was on for which he was to blame,

And he must help them. The assent he gave

Was founded on desire for self-effacement

In order not to lose his birthright; brave,

For nothing would be easier than replacement,

Which would not give him time to follow further

The details of his own defeat and murder". (5-14)

Actually, images of people living "on the edge of things" or on the margins or liminally nowhere recur in many poems of *The North Ship*. The desolations of the poet as a child, a boy and a student are described in several poems which culminate in an unfulfilled wish to escape in the final poem, "The North Ship". This desolation is sometimes personal and sometimes national or socio-cultural. The poem no. vii goes thus -

Here, where no love is,

All that was hopeless

And kept me from sleeping

Is frail and unsure;

Nor so unearthly, has

Earth grown before." (9-16)

Again, "Nursery Tales" (Poem No. XIV), which begins with "All I remember is the horseman, the moonlit hedges…", describes the place as follows -

"… for though

His place was set, there was no more

Than one unpolished pewter dish, that bore

The battered carcase of a carrion crow." (7-10)

The baffled quest of the horseman's journey awaits the poet too -

"So every journey that I make

Leads me, as in the story he was led,

To some new ambush, to some fresh mistake:

So every journey I begin foretells

A weariness of daybreak, spread

With carrion kisses, carrion farewells" (11-16)

In Poem-XXII, the images of "one man walking a deserted platform" and "one man restlessly waiting a train" bring out the concept of a "nowhere man" as Larkin himself was. The poem describes his wavering between acceptance and disregard of the social norms, codes of behaviour etc. The man who is waiting restlessly on the platform to

consequently, family oriented. The journey, thus, takes place, at an odd time of the day ('before dawn') and a cataclysmic environment ("rain driving across a darkening autumn"). But this wish to escape is also without a clear objective –

"Who can this ambition trace,

To be each dawn perpetually journeying?" (9-10).

This is the dilemma that is typical to Larkin. He rejects a thing but is never sure of what to accept. This constitutes his sense of place which corresponds to his liminal and in-between identity between acceptance and non-acceptance, existence and non-existence.

It is with the publication of *The Less Deceived* in 1955 that Larkin's flight as one of the major poets of the 20th century begins. The poems come out at a time when Larkin has already experienced a spatial shift by going to Belfast as a librarian in the university there, lost Oxford-friends and gone through broken affairs with women like Winfried Arnott and Ruth Bownan at Belfast. The poems with their cynical altitude to social institutions in general describe the range of displacement in Larkin. Writes Motion -

> Early in the afternoon of Saturday, 16 September 1950, Eva waved Larkin off on the train which would take him from Leicester to Liverpool, where he would catch the night ferry to Northern Ireland. He had been bewildered by smaller dramas in the past; now he was glum but self-possessed. This was the beginning of his new life, in which he would make himself a writer or not at all. (Motion 195-196).

Ulster Duke named "Single to Belfast" brings out the pains and problems of a displaced individual -

"And my life committing itself to the long bend

That swing me, this Saturday night, away from my midland

Emollient valley, away from the lack of questions,

Away from endearments,"(196)

The poem was never published and Larkin began to feel at ease at Belfast. *The Less Deceived* was a mature outcome of all these factors. But the poems have all the dilemma and dichotomies of Larkin's growing years in them. Let us analyse those factors which I have mentioned earlier in some of his major poems from the collection.

"Wedding – Wind" is a dramatic monologue which explores the fear and anxiety of a village girl on the stormy day and night of her marriage –

"The wind blew all my wedding - day,

And my wedding-night was the night of the high wind;" (1-2)

The first stanza of the poem describes the havoc that the wind was wreaking on "a stable door …banging, again and again"(3) and "restless" "horses". The husband goes to shut the door willy-nilly leaving the afraid girl wait before a "twisted candlestick"(6). The second stanza, on the other hand, describes the impact of the storm the next morning and the boredom and loneliness that follow -

"Now in the da

He has gone to look at the floods, and I

Carry a chipped pail to the Chicken-run,

Set it down, and stare. …" (11-15)

Although the girl is the speaker here, she is a dormant and minimal existence all through the poem. In the first stanza the dominant images are that of the storm, the horse and "he" and in the following stanza the images are "the sun", "the floods" and "he" again.

The poem is an exception in typical Larkin canon because it is perhaps the only occasion where Larkin deals with a rural character outside his life-long obsession with the life in a metro. But the poem with its terrific description of storm on the wedding day perhaps, refers to the stormy married life of his parents and the subsequent loss of identity of Eva. The poem also refers to Larkin's own fear of marriage. But, interestingly, Larkin here assumes the persona of a woman again, the girl who fumbles for her identity –

"Stupid in candlelight, hearing rain,

Seeing my face in the twisted candlestick,

Yet seeing nothing." (5-7)

The inability of seeing stands for the loss of identity – probably hinting at Larkin's own dilemma about his own identity.

The crisis of spatial identity and sexual identity becomes writ large in "Places, Loved Ones". The first lines of the poem mark the speaker's staunch denial of having

The place where I could say

This is my proper ground

Here shall I stay;" (1-4)

The next four lines, again, deny the existence of a special person who -

"Nor met that special one

Who has an instant claim

On everything I own

Down to my name;" (4-8)

The poem stands for the poet's not-so happy experiences of different places and his lonely, marginal life.

But the following lines of the poem express the view that being nowhere is also being everywhere -

"To find such seems to prove

You want no choice in where

To build, or whom to love;" (9-11)

Finding "a proper ground" is no more possible and, so, it is better to be cynical about it -

"And wiser to keep away

From thinking you still might trace

The tendency of the modern-day critics after the publications of the three books already mentioned, to portray Larkin as an orthodox British nationalist is thwarted here. Actually, Larkin's attitude towards his place is self-contradictory and it constitutes his "sense of place".

The Less Deceived contains many pessimistic poems about death and oblivion like "Dry-Point", "Next, Please", 'Going" and "Wants". But, at the same time, the image of an outsider to the society or of a marginalized and peripheral individual looms large. For example, the image of a bubble in "Dry-Point" not only symbolizes the evanescence of life, it also stands for the cut-off milieu within the bubble itself. The suffocating existence of a nowhere man and his lonely identity have been given vent in the poem -

"And how remote that bare and sunscrubbed room,

Intensely far, that padlocked cube of light

We neither define nor prove,

Where you, we dream, obtain no right of entry". (13-16)

In "Next, Please" life becomes only a boring waiting for death -

"Only one ship is seeking us, a black-

Sailed unfamiliar, towing at her back

A huge and birdless silence. In her wake

No waters breed or break". (21-24)

"Where has the tree gone, that locked

Earth to the sky? What is under my hands,

That I cannot feel?

What loads my hands down?" (7-10)

Again, in the poem "Wants', the speaker wishes "to be alone" amidst the changing panorama of modern England.

In "Church Going", Larkin tries to explain how religion as an umbrella –term has also lost its significance and how it fails to provide the ray of hope to an individual who has lost faith in life itself. "Church Going" is a famous poem and here Larkin is at his best. David Timms says that "Church Going" "is arguably Larkin's best poem, and undoubtedly his best known, most anthologized, and most discussed" (Timms 79). In the poem Larkin says that one day he visited a church while no ritual was going on inside it and it was free from human presence. The description of the church resembles a haunted house and the poet asks -

"A shape less recognisable each week,

A purpose more obscure. I wonder who

Will be the last, the very last, to seek

This place for what it was; one of the crew

That tap and jot and know what rood-lofts were?" (37-41)

class. The poem also expresses the economic depression of the time also because the speaker of the poem is hatless and he went to the church not by a car but on a bicycle. The ruination of the church also refers to the German bombing of Coventry.

A comparative reading of two famous poems, "Toads" and "Poetry of Departure" conveys to the hilt the self-contradictory attitude of Larkin towards the idea of personal space. The drudgery of office-work makes Larkin to compare him with a toad- self-sufficient, although with enough defeatism, in his circumscribed space. A cry for liberty from this is only dreamt of, but never materialised. The poem refers to Larkin's own sense of asphyxiation at the beginning of his professional life at Queens University, Belfast and his intrinsic insecurity about displacement. The known, conformist life-style is seen in contradiction with another kind of life -

"Lots of folk live up lanes.

With fires in a bucket,

Eat windfalls and tinned sardines-

They seem to like it." (13-16)

But, an escape from this lure of so called security is not easy always -

"Ah, were I courageous enough,

To shout *Stuff your pension*!

But I know, all too well, that's the stuff

That dreams are made on:

Its hunkers are heavy as hard luck,

And cold as snow,

And will never allow me to blarney

My way to getting

The fame and the girl and the money

All at one sitting."(21-32)

Here lies Larkin's self-contradictory sense of place. He is uneasy, about his present place, intends to escape but without any notion of a better place.

This dilemma becomes more stringent in "Poetry of Departures". The poem begins with the portrayal of a rebel or a non-conformist who can depart for a vague destination at anytime -

He chucked up everything

And just cleared off,

And always the voice will sound

Certain you approve

This audacious, purifying,

Elemental move. (3-8)

The poet is to some extent attracted to the call of the road when he says -

"We all hate home

And having to be there:

The good books, the good bed,

And my life, in perfect order:

So to hear it said

He walked out on the whole crowd

Leaves me flushed and stirred

Surely I can, if he did?"(11-22)

But, this is "artificial" in comparison to "a life reprehensibly perfect". This dilemma of "to be" or "not to be" is a formidable presence in Larkin.

The poem, "I Remember, I Remember" is a work of much significance because it is rare that in any of his poems Larkin becomes so up close and personal. The poem is obviously autobiographical in so far it contains a glimpse of Larkin's boring, uninspiring and uneventful childhood under the rude supervision of an eccentric "old hat" (Sydney). The title of the poem Larkin derived from Thomas Hood's (1799-1845) poem "Past and Present" which starts with the refrain, 'I remember , I remember' –

"I remember, I remember

The house where I born

The little window where the sun

Came peeping in at morn". (1-4)

Larkin parodies the poem's robust celebration of childhood memories and the poet

Coventry station. Coventry is his place of birth and here, as we have already seen he led a bitter childhood. But when initially he recognises Coventry he is elated -

"Coming up England by a different line

For once, early in the cold new year,

We stopped, and, watching men with number- plates

Sprint down the platform to familiar gates

'Why, Coventry!' I exclaimed. 'I was born here' (1-5)

His description of Coventry through some stereotypical images reminds us of a childhood, which is "a forgotten boredom". When his friend asks -

" 'Was that,' my friend smiled, 'where you "have you roots"?'

No, only where my childhood was unspent,

I wanted to retort, just where I started:" (13-15)

The following lines comically describe the place of memory in depressing images where there were child's play and unfulfilled love. Startled at the poet's stoic denial of any allegiance with his birthplace the friend asks him if he likens the place with hell -

" 'You look as if you wished the place in Hell,'

My friend said, 'judging from your face'. 'Oh well,

I suppose it's not the place's fault,' I said.

'Nothing, like something, happens anywhere' ". (33-36)

"nothing, like something, happens anywhere", lasts with him forever. And his subject-position, resultantly, remains liminal between a world that is bad and a future world which is hopeless.

Judged from this point of view Tom Paulin's interpretation of the discarded race-horses in "At Grass" as symbols of Britain's lost imperial power in the 1950s seems to me somewhat forced and superficial. Rather they remain creatures living on the edge of things where past is oblivious and future is hazy.

Therefore, Larkin's sense of place is disturbed and lacks a firm foundation. His unhappy childhood, controversial political views, confused sexuality and physical disability thwarted him to occupy the centre. He remained marginal without any right on some place. But at the same time he had no solution to this dilemma and depended on self-contradiction all through his *oeuvre*. He liked women but did not believe in marriage. The image of an individual lonely even in a crowd is, so, very prominent in his works –

"This empty street, this sky to blandness scoured,
This air, a little indistinct with autumn
Like a reflection, constitute the present
A time traditionally soured,
A time unrecommended by event.

But equally they make up something else:
This is the future furthest childhood saw

An air lambent with adult enterprise,

And on another day will be the past,

A valley cropped by fat neglected chances

That we insensately forbore to fleece.

On this we blame our last

Threadbare perspectives, seasonal decrease".

("Tripple Time" 1-15)

Notes

i. The term, "Englishness", is frequently used to describe Philip Larkin's poetry to emphasize his interest in typically British themes, his deep-rooted provincialism etc. Literally, "Englishness" stands for some traits which are characteristically English. But, nevertheless, Larkin's penchant for the provincial British themes and characters became a matter of much debate after the publication of his selected letters and his controversial biography. This obsession with things British began to be interpreted as a defensive love for a territory which struggles hard to keep its characteristics intact in the age of decolonization, globalization, mass migration and industrialization.

ii. John Osborne's book, *Larkin, Ideology and Critical Violence: A Case of Wrongful Conviction*(2008) is a must read for an interested reader. The book brings about fresh air in the corpus of Larkin-criticism which was mainly confined to the biographical approach adopted by his champions and detractors alike, particularly after the publication of Larkin's letters and Motion's biography. The book, after a long time, dealt with the poetics of Larkin to situate his importance as a major poet which was long been forgotten as a result of the tendency to begrime his personal images.

iii. The term, "campus novel", refers to a novel set in the university campus. Usually, the novelists were involved in the academia and it provided them a profound understanding of the hopes and aspirations of the campus population. Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim*(1954) and David Lodge's *Changing Places*(1975) are two classic examples of campus novel in English literature. Amis and Larkin became friends at Oxford and their friendship continued till Larkin's death in 1985. Many episodes in *Jill* and *Lucky Jim* are identical due to the commonality

Chapter Five

Larkin's Sense of Place: Distance, Growing Disgust and Negation of Spatial Identity.

> "Place is security and space in freedom: we are attached to the one and are longing for the other" (Yi Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* 13)

Philip Larkin's two most remarkable collections of poems, *The Whitsun Weddings* (1964) and *High Windows* (1974) appeared in a time when England as a place was going through a phase of incessant and radical socio-cultural changes. It was the famous "swinging sixties[i]". The boon of consumerism and commercial media, the sexual revolution resulting from the invention of contraceptives and birth control devices began to unsettle the age-old British values. Nicholas Marsh writes in his book, *Philip Larkin: The Poems*–

> Society became permissive; the advertising, television and broadcast media, and industry, boomed selling fashionable clothing, make-up, records, gramophones; the older generation tutted loudly in shock; homosexuality was legalized; and the decade ended with the phenomenon of hippies withdrawing from conventional society, 'dropping out' and attempting communal forms of living away from the commercial economy. In the last years of the decade the younger

> culture blossomed. At its most idealistic, however, the hippy movement was purist: these enemies of capitalism eschewed drugs and other toxins, loved nature and believed that their peaceful, anti-competitive life-style and behaviour, or 'love', would eventually shame and overcome those still dominated by the fear and envy generated by a corrupt economic system. (193)

Then there was huge student protest in the university campuses and Larkin himself was once caught in such a protest at Hull University and which, writes Motion, made him to keep up "a barrage of complaints about the demonstrating students to anyone who would listen" (Motion 377). Again, with the introduction of the independent universities, the academic life came under the direct impact of commercial consumerism. A large number of students coming to these new universities were, according to Larkin, like customers participating into business practices. He described them as "dutiful mob that signs on every September" and in a letter to the famous contemporary novelist, Barbara Pym, he wrote with overt contempt – "The universities must now be changed to fit the kind of people we took in: exams made easier, places made like a factory ---" (Motion 377). The compromise with quality in favour of quantity was a constant problem with Larkin. Actually the Movement poets were chiefly academic persons with allegiance with colleges and universities and anything happening in the academia naturally left impressions on their lives. The surge of students in the universities and the resultant compromise with quality grieved the poet very much.

In personal life there are some positive developments too. In 1955 Larkin left

beginning he faced problems with lodging. Richard Bradford writes in *First Boredom Then Fear: The Life of Philip Larkin-*

> When he arrived in Hull Larkin went through a well-rehearsed ritual of finding the most convenient and consequently disagreeable place to live and then repeating the act. In March 1955 he moved into Holtby house, a student residence, in Cottingham, once a village but now part of the northern suburbs of Hull. To Ansell and Judy Egerton he wrote of his 'not suitable' lodgings 'small, bare floored and noisy', and comparable with 'some penurious doss house at night, with hobos snoring and quarrelling all around me' (24 March 1955). How very similar this is to his report five years earlier to Jim Sutton on the 'bleak "Hall of Residence" ' opposite Queen's , Belfast, with its noisy trams outside, minimum furniture within and '42 blundering students, who are always coming in pissed or waking me up in some way or another (an outburst of hammering from the next room)'(5 Nov. 1950) (149)

Changing his places of stay was frequent in the beginning of his stint at Hull and the uneasiness of spatial existence was of the same kind in Belfast and in his own country alike. This restlessness with place is an unchanged characteristic feature of Larkin's personality throughout his life.

Although in personal life Larkin was now more stable. He is now in his own country close to his old mother, Eva, and his life-long love

beginning of their live-in relationship. Larkin's cynicism with marriage and family remained unchanged and his poems in *The Whitsun Weddings* (1964) and *High Windows* (1974) refer to his separateness from others either directly or through the representations of different poetic personae.

Larkin's angry and sardonic reaction to his own country on his return is very much evident in many letters written during the time. Here are some examples –

i) "I'm passing through an anti English phase at present- they are miles uglier and noisier and vulgerer than the Irish: the Pubs here are nightmares of neo-Falstaffianism, coughing laughter well soused with phlegm … And the young folk, all indulging in healthy mixed activities. And the university staff OOYA BUGGAR..." (To Patsy Murphy, 28 July 1955, SL 248)

ii) "I'm feeling a bit out of sympathy with England at present … [its] people, delivered over gagged and bound to TV, motoring and Makeson's stout!" (To Robert Conquest, 24 July 1955, SL 245)

iii) What an impossible place it is, really: everyone eating rubbishy ices and drinking coca-cola, disregarding the beer and ham sandwiches. Home along the still-sweating tarmac …." (To Ansell and Judy Egerton, 31 May, 1955, SL 242)

iv) "I expect you'll wonder why I'm going there: well, I hardly know myself. It just comes of making unguarded applications. I feel terribly regretful at leaving Belfast" (To Robert Conquest, 13 March

As we have already seen in Chapter Four Larkin's attitude towards different places he inhabited during his life-time is never affirmative. Laurence Lerner in his book *Philip Larkin* writes –

> Since Philip Larkin never married, and never owned a house until he was over 50, he spent most of his adult life in rented accommodation. This began in Wellington, where his first lodgings were small, chilly, and lacking in privacy, as he grew more prosperous his lodgings naturally became more spacious, culminating in the comfortable flat in Pearson Park where he lived for eighteen years; but he never lost the feeling of rootlessness, and out of it came one of his bleakest and most powerful poems, "Mr. Bleaney:" (21)

Actually, "Mr. Bleaney" remains an illuminating piece of writing as far as Larkin's sense of place is concerned- focusing on his boredom, listlessness and nowhereness. It originated from Larkin's intermitten changes of lodgings after coming to Hull and his subsequent meetings with numerous landlords for rented accommodations. I will come to the poem later. Failure to cope with the ever-changing demands of different places and the socio-cultural and socio-political issues associated with them made Larkin deny a firm root and negate a proper emplacement.

As I have already referred to his confession of a "hatred for abroad" in an interview with *The Observer* in the previous chapter, there is no doubt of the fact that he is always "abroad" in his own country. His existence was marginal and he in the

Gross: Do you like living in Hull?

Larkin: I don't really notice where I live: as long as a few simple wants are satisfied –peace, quiet, warmth – I don't mind where I am. As for Hull, I like it because it's so far away from everywhere. On the way to nowhere, as somebody put it. It's in the middle of this lonely country, and beyond the lonely there's only the sea. I like that" (*RW* 54)

Or,

Gross: So you don't ever feel the need to be at the centre of things? You don't want to see the latest play, for instance?

Larkin: Oh no, I very much feel the need to be on the periphery of things. I suppose when one was young one liked to be up to date. But I very soon got tired of the theatre. I count it as one of the great moments of my life when I first realized one could actually walk out of a theatre. I don't mean offensively - but go to the bar at the interval and not come back…" (54)

In this connection, I would like to refer to Seamus Heaney's opinion on the sense of place of three of his great British contemporaries – Ted Hughes, Geoffrey Hill and Philip Larkin in his famous essay, "Englands of the Mind", included in *Preoccupations: Selected Prose, 1968-1978*. Throwing light on the nationalist fervour in the works of these three poets, Heaney writes –

All three are hoarders and shorers of what they take to be the real

> they are afflicted with a sense of history that was once the peculiar affliction of the poets of other nations who were not themselves natives of England but who spoke the English language. The poets of the mother culture, I feel, are now possessed of that defensive love of their territory which was once shared only by those poets whom we might call colonial –Yeats, MacDiarmid, Carlos Williams. They are aware of their Englishness as deposits in the descending storeys of the literary and historical past. Their very terrain is becoming consciously precious. A desire to preserve indigenous traditions, to keep open the imagination's supply line to the past, to receive from the stations of Anglo-Saxon confirmations of ancestry, to perceive in the rituals of show Saturdays and race-meetings and sea-side outings, of church-going and marriages at Whitsun, and in the necessities that crave expression after the ritual of Church-going has passed away, to perceive in these a continuity of communal ways, and a confirmation of an identity which is threatened – all this is signified by their language. (150-151)

Heaney as an exponent of the Catholic minorities in the Protestant North viewed geography as a located political history. He had to show a defensive love for his own community to challenge the cultural hegemony. Naturally, he saw Larkin, Hughes and Hill as three post- imperial poets commonly sharing a "new sense of the shires, a new valuing of the native English experience"(*Preoccupations* 169). But this opinion may be true to Hughes and Hill but not to Larkin fully and Heaney, perhaps, sensed

> What we hear is a stripped standard English voice …that leads back neither to the thumping beat of Anglo-Saxon nor to the Georgian chant of the Middle Ages. Its ancestry begins, in fact, when the Middle Ages are turning secular … (165)

Heaney proceeds to elaborate further –

> Larkin's tones are mannerly but not exquisite, well-bred but not mealy mouthed. If his England and his English are not as deep as Hughes's or as solemn as Hill's, they are nevertheless dearly beloved. (167)

So, as James Booth asserts in *Philip Larkin: The Poet's Plight* -

> The Englishness of Larkin's personae–Mr. Bleaney, the lighthouse-keeper, the old fools – is of no consequence compared with their common humanity. Larkin's England is not like Heaney's Ireland, an ideological territory. His poetry digs deep but not beneath a proper flag in a proper place. (Booth 139)

There is a growing tendency among critics in the post-1992 period to portray Larkin as a person who is immensely upset with the loss of imperial power of Britain, the rise of multicultural Britain and the change of traditional British topography as a result of large-scale industrialisation. But this is the most misleading kind of interpretation of Larkin's nationalism and his sense of place because he was never optimistic about his country's present, nor past and future. Surely, there is an ever present political undercurrent in Larkin's later poetry. During the Second World War

> I've always been right-wing. It's difficult to say why, but not being a political thinker, I suppose I identify the Right with certain virtues and the Left with certain vices. All very unfair, no doubt. (RW 52)

His letters are often full of his extremist thoughts. But here is also his famous self contradiction operating. So, the man who can wryly declare, "Kick out the niggers" and becomes readily angry with the "bloody Paki next door", is of all praise for the black Jazz[ii] musicians. The man who ridicules Salman Rushdie, attempts to help the young Vikram Seth into print and becomes a good friend of R.K. Biswas, Monica Jones's Indian colleague in Leicester University's English Department. But although he strongly denied any firm political and ideological allegiance, he was ill-at-ease with the post-war Labour government. All these unsettling facts concerning his own place evolved in *The Whitsun Weddings*. Let us go through some of the poems of the book from this view point.

Like "I Remember,I Remember", "Dockery and Son" and "The Whitsun Weddings", the opening poem of the book, "Here" is about a train journey (in the very opposite direction of "The Whitsun Weddings", i.e., from London to Hull). Although the poem is often considered to be a celebration of Hull as a place, it is actually about celebration of otherness and being "on the edge of things". It aspires after an "unfenced existence" which is "out of reach". The earlier title of the poem, "Withdrawing Room", conveys the main theme more appropriately. When Larkin was asked by John Haffenden in a 1979-80 interview if " "Here" is "brief for retirement in the simpler life", he said. "Oh no, not at all..... well, it all depends what you mean by retirement. If you mean not living in London, I suppose it might be

126-27). This loneliness is the feature of Larkin's sense of place as we have seen in the earlier chapter. He here describes Hull as a place which is removed from the din and bustle of industrialisation and big city activities. It is a place that does not render a man affirmation but it makes a place nowhere, ironically making him everywhere.

This marginal existence becomes more poignant in "Mr. Bleaney", a bleak poem about not belonging to a particular place that originated out of Larkin's incessant search for a suitable accommodation just after coming to Hull from Belfast. Andrew Swarbick writes about the changing of the title of the poem –

> Originally, it was entitled 'Mr. Gridley'; the change to 'Bleaney' reinforces the bleakness described in the poem.(Swarbick 96)

The poem begins with the monotony of daily existence when the landlady casually informs the speaker that he is being shown the room recently vacated by one Mr. Bleaney –

> " 'This was Mr. Bleaney's room. He stayed
>
> The whole time he was at the Bodies, till
>
> They moved him'." (1-3)

The sheenless, uninteresting description of the dingy room gradually forms the image of an unambitious man who is not the centre of attraction but is deliberately unsuitable as a literary character. Interestingly, the description of the middle-aged, lonely man is ironically a self-mocking and self-caricaturing portrait of Larkin himself–homeless and always on the move. If the previous occupant "warranted no

existence of Mr. Bleaney makes him an outsider in the society. There is, therefore, a deliberate attempt to subvert the very notion of home in general –

"But if he stood and watched the frigid wind

Tousling the clouds, lay on the fusty bed

Telling himself that this was home, and grinned,

And shivered, without shaking off the dread" (21-24)

In the very next poem, "Nothing to be Said", having a home or the lack of it has been treated as the same as everything is inevitably heading towards degeneration and death. The idea of a spatial identity is discarded because –

"For nations vague as weed,

For nomads among stones,

Small-statured cross-faced tribes

And cobble-close families

In mill-towns on dark mornings

Life is slow dying." (1-6)

This vacant and bleak picture of home is described as "sad" in "Home is So Sad". The poem is often interpreted as an indictment of the post-war and post-imperial England which has lost its past glory, but the poem is more about a gradual degeneration of the institutions like family and home. The theme has been constant in Larkin's *oeuvre*.

poem of "Church Going". The former is the voice of a non-believer about the supernatural powers of healing diseases ascribed upon a priest which "all time has disapproved" and the latter gives the poet's own idea of what religion should be –

"If I were called in

To construct a religion

I should make use of water.

Going to Church

Would entail a fording

To dry, different clothes;

My liturgy would employ

Images of sousing,

A furious devout drench,

And I should raise in the east

A Glass of water

Where any-angled light

Would congregate endlessly." (1-13)

The water-like liquidity of religion will naturally undermine the regulations of conventional practices. "Water", therefore, gives the hint of an alternative religious place beyond the futility of church going and faith healing.

all the aloofness of a casual onlooker journeying by train from Hull to London on a Whitsun Saturday when in the scorching heat of late noon marriage-parties thronged the stations to see the new-weds off for honeymoon. The poem therefore captures a journey's fast changing window and refers to an important British wedding ritual. The poem often is shown as an instance of Larkin's "Englishness" which aptly illustrates the British society of the time and its fast metamorphosis from a rural /agricultural to an industrial culture. The gradual change of British topography is writ large in the following description-

"A slow and stopping curve southwards we kept.

Wide farms went by, short-shadowed cattle, and

Canals with floatings of industrial froth;

A hothouse flashed uniquely: hedges dipped

And rose: and now and then a smell of grass

Displaced the reek of buttoned carriage-cloth

Until the next town, new and nondescript,

Approached with acres of dismantled cars." (13-20)

The empty train becomes gradually peopled by new couples on each stations and the speaker's initial response to them is one of unease and discomfort. This is very much evident from his descriptions of "grinning and pomaded, girls /In parodies of fashion, heels and veils, /All posed irresolutely, watching us go" (28-30). The "fathers with broad belts under their suits/ And seamy foreheads" (36-37), "mothers loud and

Success so huge and wholly farcical"(50-51) reveals this ironical attitude too. Marriage is likened with a "happy funeral"(54). But with the passing of time the speaker's growing involvement with the parties is quite evident. He turns one of them rather than being a detached observer. The "I" of the narration, so, becomes "we". But he becomes a co-passenger without being a part of them. He remains removed from the impending process of recreation that marriages imply. The speaker is like Mr. Bleaney who "warranted no better" being an unambitious middle-aged bachelor. He is an alter-ego of Larkin also-unmarried, transsexual to some extent and, therefore, incapable of begetting children. The question remains, whether these deformities made him cynical about love and marriage in general. The imagery of the arrow-shower reminds us of Cupid, the Greek God of love who at least pricks the couples, where the speaker remains with his odd, barren existence –

"A sense of falling, like an arrow-shower

Sent out of sight, somewhere becoming rain."(79-80)

The word, "somewhere" is important here because the existence of such a place is uncertain and hazy to the speaker who lives a peripheral life cut off from the accepted institutions of society.

Close on the heels of "The Whitsun Weddings" stands another famous poem, "Dockery and Son", which describes another train journey and the subsequent contradiction about a different kind of life which is deliberately chosen. The occasion of the poem is described by Motion in *A Writer's Life* –

... it describes a visit Larkin had made to his old college at Oxford,

the date of composition of the poem, for Agnes Cuming had died on 8 March 1962] (Motion 333)

Motion also says –

> Bitterly funny and grievously melancholic, 'Dockery and Son' is a compressed autobiography. It encapsulates Larkin's views about the effect of his parents on his personality, it reports spiritedly on his undergraduate career, it grimly sketches the attitudes which dominated his adult life. (Motion 334).

The poem is obviously the emotional centre of the book. The poem begins with a lazy tone when the poet comes back to his university after a long time and informed that the son of his contemporary, Dockery, now lives in the same room he once stayed. On his return journey to Hull Larkin glooms on the different kinds of life of Dockery and himself-

> "In'43, when I was twenty one.
>
> If he was younger, did he get this son
>
> At nineteen, twenty?..." (14-16)

The tone changes and the conventional life style is substituted by the poet's unconventional one –

> 'To have no son, no wife,
>
> No house or land still seemed quite natural". (25-26)

The boring and bleak life of the poet often makes him and the reader

Our lives bring with them: habit for a while,

Suddenly they harden into all we've got

And how we got it; looked back on, they rear

Like sand-clouds, thick and close, embodying

For Dockery a son, for me nothing," (38-43)

But such wretched thoughts are finally countered by pessimism and meaninglessness of life –

"Life is first boredom, then fear.

Whether or not we use it, it goes,

And leaves what something hidden from us chose,

And age, and then the only end of age." (45-48)

The poem, therefore, shows the possibility of a different space which is not attained often deliberately.

Two dominant tones in Larkin's later poetry are pessimism and anger. Many poems of "The Whitsun Weddings" muse on the end of a boring and unimportant existence like "Days", "Talking in Bed", "Ambulances","Afternoons"etc. Interestingly, Tom Paulin has interpreted "Afternoons" in terms of the loss of British imperial power. Leaves falling in ones and twos become symbolic of colonies falling from the British Empire, Paulin says. But such interpretations are forced and responses to the tendency after 1992 to judge Larkin's works in such a light.

critics to portray Larkin's Englishness or the British nationalist zeal. But as I have already said in the previous chapter, relating Larkin with nationalism can be erroneous, often dangerous too. Because, he is always uneasy with some social or political issues of the time and there is never any indication that he knew a better past and eulogised that. In *The Whitsun Weddings*, there are many poems which refer to the uneasy reaction of Larkin to many topical issues. For example, "MCMXIV" catches the poet's bitter and angry reaction to the decision of the British Government to withdraw the army from a certain front on account of meaningless wastage of fund. Larkin considers such a move to be an act of defamation to the supremacy of the Nation –

> "Never such innocence,
>
> Never before or since,
>
> As changed itself to past
>
> Without a word – the men
>
> Leaving the gardens tidy," (25-29)

The surge of commercial tendency in the university sectors and the widening of education stood for Larkin a compromise with quality and poems such as "Naturally the Foundation will Bear your Expenses" and "Posterity" deal with this fact. But Larkin's tone is never one of violent protest, but of a mild disapproval. The rise of advertising media and the consequent consumerism become the subject of poems like "Sunny Prestatyn","The Large Cool Store", "Take One Home for the Kiddies".

Larkin's nationalist idol. The poem shows how as an abroad Belfast was welcoming to him and how on his return he feels out of place in his own country –

"Lonely in Ireland, since it was not home,

Strangeness made sense. The salt rebuff of speech,

Insisting so on difference, made me welcome:

Once that was recognised, we were in touch.

Their draughty streets, end-on to hills, the faint

Archaic smell of dockland, like a stable,

The herring-hawker's cry, dwindling, went

To prove me separate, not unworkable.

Living in England has no such excuse:

These are my customs and establishments.

It would be much more serious to refuse.

Here no elsewhere underwrites my existence. (1-12)

So, Larkin's professed "hatred for abroad" is not always grounded because he was ill-at-ease with his own place.

The slim last volume *High Windows* (1974) represents the poet's attitude to

growing unrest for and distance from society at large. The theme of retiring into a self-made recluse is evident in them. In the last ten years of his life Larkin wrote nothing and he made few public appearances. This negation of a social self and contempt for social institutions are evident in the frequent use of the words like "fuck" and "ass" in the poems like "High Windows" and "This be the Verse".

"To the Sea", the very opening poem of the volume is a beautiful example of poetry of place. The poem refers back to a remote visit Larkin made to the Norfolk coast with his mother Eva during a summer holiday. Interestingly, the poem in a way celebrates family values and the importance of providing the old necessary company the virtues which will come under scathing attack in many poems which follow it. The self-contradictory attitude towards life and place is very pertinent in the poems of *High Windows*. The visit to the Norfolk beach with his mother becomes doubly significant when we come to know that this is the very place their parents met for the first time-

"As when, happy at being on my own,

I searched the sand for Famous Cricketers,

Or, father back, my parents, listeners

To the same seaside quack, first became known". (19-22)

From this point of view this holiday is a kind of coming back or a continuation –

"Still going on, all of it, still going on!" (10)

The poem, so, ends with the reassertion of a son's responsibility to his old mother.

although not knowing the certainty of this destination. So the poem again refers to the necessity of family responsibilities in terms of a worn out habit –

"...If the worst

Of flawless weather is our falling short,

It may be that through habit these do best,

Coming to water clumsily undressed

Yearly; teaching their children by a sort

Of clowning; helping the old, too, as they ought." (31-36)

So the search for a happy place or a happy past is also ambiguous because the unhappy present is unaware of a suitable alternative.

Interestingly enough the concept of a dignified old age has been discarded completely in "The Old Fools". The weak, amnesic, pitiable old age which the poet is gradually heading towards and which Eva is now experiencing is given a satirical treatment here. But into the veins of this representation runs a sense of place that is depressing and claustrophobic. A forgetful and drooling old fellow, according to Larkin, belongs to "nowhere". His position is liminal marked by an incessant effort to build a bridge between an elusive past and a broken present. The placeless existence of an old man is given vent –

"..... That is where they live:

Not here and now, but where all happened once.

Yet being here."(34-38)

The growing age of the poet himself has led him to sense a spatial identity that is marked by an alienation and a transcendence of belonging. But like many other poems of Larkin the expected passage is hazy. The old man has lost his present share of his place but he is not aware of a better alternative to go which was full of happenings or which will be so. The description of old age to be "the whole hideous inverted childhood" (47) makes this dilemma clear. We have already seen Larkin's estimate of childhood to be a "forgotten boredom."

The change that time incurs into the socio-cultural sphere very often poses a challenge on the growing old age. The first stanza of the title poem of the collection, "High Windows" refers to the sexual revolution with the advent of several birth-control devices in the late sixties. The poet, now well past his prime at 45, feels the generation gap and voyeuristically thinks of the carefree sexual intercourses which, the birth-control devices helped the couples of this generation indulge in. The poem begins with the assertion of this drastic change in the sense of place in general –

"When I see a couple of kids

And guess he's fucking her and she's

Taking pills or wearing a diaphragm,

I know this is paradise

Everyone old has dreamed of all their lives -

And everyone young going down the long slide

To happiness, endlessly...” (1-9)

But, surely, this gap is not a cause of regret because every generation feels its own sense of oppression posed upon by the contemporary socio-cultural milieu. To express this sense of oppression Larkin refers to his own generation where religion itself was at its oppressive best –

“... I wonder if

Anyone looked at me, forty years back,

And thought, *That’ll be the life;*

No God any more, or sweating in the dark.

About hell and that, or having to hide

What you think of the priest. He

And his lot will all go down the long slide

Like free bloody birds.” (9-16)

So, the poem ends in the typical self-contradictory style of Larkin. If the previous generation enjoyed liberty from the religious oppression the present generation is enjoying it from the taboo called sex. Larkin is cynical about these socio-cultural liberations because all these drastic changes will yield place to another radical one and the former change gradually poses its significance. So, socio-cultural changes go

The sexual revolution is also frankly dealt with in "Annus Mirabilis" where Larkin comments –

" Sexual intercourse began

In nineteen Sixty-three

(Which was rather late for me)-

Between the end of the *Chatterley* ban

And the Beatles' first LP". (1-5)

The poem elucidates the change in overall attitude towards the matters of sex of the society.

Actually, the prominent tone in *High Windows* is one of disgust and wish to escape from the society which remains unfulfilled. The poems in this collection are often quite uncharacteristic of Larkin. The genteel utterances of the earlier collections yield place to angry, slangy vocabulary here. Larkin's odd life-style, his unconventional beliefs, perhaps, began to bother him in his old age and his sense of place became cynical and full of denunciation of the contemporary society. But this denunciation is self-contradictory as he is unknown of a better past or future. The image of a lonely resident alien looms large in many poems of this collection who frantically searches for "home" but does not know whether something like "home" ever existed. The image of the deserted ball-room of the Royal Station Hotel after the party is over in "Friday Night in the Royal Station Hotel" becomes symbolic of a person who is isolated and placed no-where in his own land and craves to escape to an

Isolated, like a fort, it is –

The headed paper, made for writing home

(If home existed) letters of exile: *Now*

Night comes on. Waves *fold behind villages.*" (10-14)

Two poems, "Going, Going" and "Show Saturday", are often cited as instances of Larkin's so called "Englishness" and his being an orthodox British nationalist feeling unabating grief at the gradual destruction of the characteristic English landscape and culture in the post-imperial time and in a place which is frantically industrialised, urbanised and globalised. But, these views are mostly forced and baseless. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Larkin has never been very celebratory of England's past and he is equally ill-at-ease with its present. So, if he shows his disgust at the gradual loss of the characteristically English symbols, he has to be aware of a better past or a better place. The problem is – this never happens. Again, "Going, Going" is a poem which Larkin was commissioned to write by a government functionary in 1972. Roger Day writes about the genesis of the poem-

> 'Going, Going' ....commissioned by the Department of the Environment, originally formed a prologue to a government report entitled 'How Do you Want to Live?' A Report on Human Habitat."
>
> (Day 70)

So, the views expressed in the poem can hardly be considered to be Larkin's own. The poem's brilliant representation of the gradual encroachment of the beautiful English countryside by rapid industrialisation and urbanisation is rather a part of the

"Show Saturday" is a poem that Larkin was quite heady to include when *High Windows* was already in proof. Andrew Motion writes –

> It's easy to see why Larkin was eager to include 'Show Saturday', even awkwardly and at the last minute. The eight large stanzas provide the solidity he felt *High Windows* lacked, and its subject lovingly summarizes some of the collection's major themes. It celebrates pastoral pleasures that seem 'ordinary' but are in fact ancient and sanctioned by custom. Dogs, ponies, horses, side-shows, and people crowd the verses of a huge hymn to old England... (Motion 437)

The "Show" referred to here is Bellingham Show in Northumberland that he and Monica witnessed. The sense of a community or a tradition is exemplified in these street-shows. In a time marked by complications in socio-cultural relationships such performances stand for an unhindered flow of ordinary joys. The bleak place looks regenerated –

> "Let it stay hidden there like strength, below
>
> Sale-bills and swindling; something people do,
>
> Not noticing how time's rolling smithy-smoke
>
> Shadows much greater gestures; something they share
>
> That breaks ancestrally each year into
>
> Regenerate union. Let it always be there." (59-64)

But, this place has lost its simple ordinary image and this changed face of England is very much evident in the satirical representation of the contemporary society in "Vers de Societe".

Larkin's sense of place is, so, marked by that sense of not belonging to anywhere. In *High Windows,* this alienation has taken the shape of almost an angry disgust. This disgust has often gone to the extent of negating spatial identity altogether.

This attitude will be best explained in the triptych "Livings" which derides the main-stream social responsibilities. The"Livings1" deals with the growing dissatisfaction of a rural businessman with the futile routine of his family business and aspiration to quit –

"… Father's dead:

He used to, but the business now is mine.

It's time for change, in nineteen twenty-nine." (22-24)

The celebration of a cut-off life of the light house keeper on the height of seventy feet can be a proper allegory of this attitude –

"By day, sky builds

Grape-dark over the salt

Unsown stirring fields.

Radio rubs its legs,

Barometers falling,

Ports wind-shuttered,

Fleets pent like hounds,

Fires in humped inns

Kippering sea–pictures-

Keep it all off!" (11-21)

So, Larkin's position of an outsider in the society is retained. If there was a craving for the accepted norms of life initially, it is overruled finally. This egoistic rejection of place constitutes his sense of place.

Notes

[The line references to the poems in this chapter are from *The Complete Poems: Philip Larkin* (ed. by Archie Burnett. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. New York, 2012)]

i. The term, "Swinging Sixties", refers to the massive socio-cultural changes that Europe witnessed in the 1960s. It is often labelled as the most defining decade in the history of Britain. The decade is marked by counter-culture and revolution in social regulations about clothing, music, sexuality, drugs, schooling etc. The orthodox social taboos were falling apart and a flamboyant generation arrived to break the inhibitions related to racism and sexism. The concept of individual freedom became foremost and the youth broke free of social constraints of the previous age through radical deviation from the norms. The spirit of the age is easily discernible in the songs of the legendary British Rock-band, The Beatles.

ii. As a genre of music, Jazz is of Afro-American origin. It emerged as a form of independent popular music style that received a world-wide acclaim. Philip Larkin had been a huge Jazz fan throughout his life. "I can live a week without poetry", he said in 1965, " but not a day without Jazz." He used to write a weekly column on Jazz in the Daily Telegraph and those writings were later anthologised in the collection, *All What Jazz.* Richard Palmer's *Such Deliberate Disguises: The Art of Philip Larkin* (2008) is a substantial study of Larkin's Jazz-criticism.

Conclusion

In his essay, "The Sense of Place" Seamus Heaney refers to two ways of knowing a place- "One is lived, illiterate and unconscious, the other learned, literate and conscious" (*Preoccupations 131)*. He, at the very beginning of this essay, makes his objectives clear by emphasizing an integral relationship between poetry and the place it comes out from-

> In the literary sensibility, both are likely to co-exist in a conscious and unconscious tension: this tension and the poetry it produces are what I want to discuss. I want to consider how the different senses of Ireland, of Northern Ireland, and of specific places on our Island, have affected poets over these last hundred years. (131)

A place, from this point of view, is not just a geographical dot on the map. It is a construct of a number of factors-historical, cultural, political, environmental, economic etc. So, a place is lived as well as experienced and it unmistakably depends upon an individual's subject position in his/her place. This is the key concept of the term "sense of place", a buzz-word from the sphere of the modern Humanist Geography. The place where an individual is born (Primary landscape) remains with him for the rest of his life and structures the ways of looking at the subsequent places of living (Secondary landscape). Heaney says-

> We are no longer innocent, we are no longer just parishioners of the local. We go to Paris at Easter instead of rolling eggs on the

> history. Yet those primary laws of our nature are still operative. We are dwellers, we are namers, we are lovers, we make homes and search for our histories. And when we look for the history of our sensibilities I am convinced, as Professor J. C. Beckett was convinced about the history of Ireland generally, that it is to what he called the stable element, the land itself, that we must look for continuity.
>
> (*Preoccupations* 148-49)

In the present research I have attempted an analysis of the poems and fictions of two major English-language poets of the modern time, Seamus Heaney and Philip Larkin, from the point of view of the problematics of place discussed by the post-modern humanist geographers. The feelings of belonging, unbelonging and transcendence of belonging which are so prominent in their works have made the works of both Heaney and Larkin considerably responsive to their respective places. The sense of alienation from their places is a marked characteristic in their works despite their radically different subject positions. Surely, the problematics of place, belonging, unbelonging and transcendence of belonging is not to be very natural as far as Philip Larkin's works are concerned because he, as an exponent of the mother British culture and orthodox British provincialism, never is supposed to have a sense of being displaced or marginalized. But different psycho-biographical factors contribute to his sense of being alienated and alone. Again, Heaney experienced the mechanisms of marginalization and alienation in the North because of his peripheral subject-position of a Catholic in the Protestant North and it also led to his physical dislocation during

their contrasting socio-political and cultural positionings and their personal surroundings. My chief aim in the present research, naturally, remains a study of those personal, socio-political and cultural factors that constituted their sense of place and how they dealt with the dilemmas of place posed upon them by the difference between “primary” and “secondary” landscapes.

The concept of sense of place has been an important topic in the post-modern interdisciplinary studies. The dilemmas related to place become writ large in a time which has experienced huge World Wars, fall of imperial rules, human dislocations, mass migration and globalization. This time made possible the interpretation of literature as a spatially symbolic act. From this point of view, the sense of place can be a focal point in dealing with the literary texts because by " sense of place" we often refer to the feeling or perception of a particular place held by the inhabitants of the place itself. As the sense of place, according to Tuan, cannot be positive or affirmative always(like fear of or hatred for a place), there comes the question of factors responsible for such a " negative " sense of place. As I have already pointed out, situating Heaney in such a discussion is not very difficult, given his subject-position of first a colonized Irish and, then, a minority Catholic in the Protestant North. But what made Larkin so insecure about England? In which way his famous "Englishness " is not out of doubt? Such questions are answerable only when we have a close look into his letters and biography. Larkin's self-professed peripheral identity comes to the fore when we discover him as a Nazi sympathizer, a homosexual and a transsexual etc. Again his being a life-long bachelor, a xenophobic, and a physically challenged person never let him occupy the socio-cultural centre. His early literary

dilemmas very lucidly. Such personal revelations became saturated with the socio-cultural changes of the England of the 1950s and the 1960s.

In doing this in Chapter Two, I have examined the nature of "primary landscape" in the case of Seamus Heaney. His rural agrarian upbringing, his Catholic background and beliefs came to form his "primary landscape" which later sensed the threat of change and displacement as a result of Heaney's encounter with colonial education. The agrarian background of a Northern Catholic was dismantled first due to the education that initiated him to the professions alien to his family's farming activities and later became the cause of his physical displacement too. At the same time education formed Heaney's sense of place and the "illiterate" and "unconscious" place turned into "literate" and "conscious". It provided him the necessary insight with which to understand the marginalization and the repression of a person who is at once a colonized Irish and a peripheral Catholic in the Protestant North. Moreover, education led Heaney to the practice of literature, a verbose art, which is contrary to the characteristic reticence of Northern Catholic. But, education is treated by Heaney as a doubly significant agent – a phenomenon that at once deterritorializes and reterritorializes. In his delineation of his early education Heaney has shown how the colonial education itself was separatist in nature drawing a strong demarcation line between a Protestant and a Catholic pupil. Now his education helps him understand what he could not in his childhood-the segregation, the marginalization and the surreptitious violence that his place does signify. His sense of being a liminal entity in a Protestant-dominated North and the realization of being deterritorialized in his own territory are very prominent in the poems of *Death of a Naturalist* and *Door into the*

distancing effect on Heaney's sense of home, it is the language itself which paves the way for him of coming back. His use of language which has a distinct Northern flavour not only conveys his Irish identity but also reasserts his status of a minority Catholic. Literature, for him, so, becomes the so called "third space" where he is to express the ways of repossessing the lost territory or venturing afresh to a battle ground which was long lost. Heaney's recent poetry, thus, is more positive in terms of his sense of place. The expansion of thought that education incurs into the mind of an individual now leads Heaney to consider the whole world to be the home where the regional sensibilities are shirked off. So, education and literature are agents of displacement as well as emplacement of going away and coming back.

In Chapter Three, I have attempted to throw light on Seamus Heaney's threatened sense of place in the wake of the Ulster violence of the late 1960s and 1970s. The socio-political turmoil and the victimization of his fellow Catholics led Heaney to shirk off his earlier Unionist prejudices and the poems of *North* openly support a radical Catholic nationalism. In this chapter I have tried to show the operation of the gradual disillusionment about place in Heaney. The loss of a candid, innocent place is the theme of many poems in *Wintering Out* and *North.* Heaney takes an overtly ethnic stance and judges the violent history of his own community. This technique of simultaneous use of antiquity and contemporaneity enables him incessantly to compare and contrast the "primary landscape" and the "secondary landscape". It also situates the journey of a native Catholic from "insideness" to "outsideness". The immense sense of being deterritorialized is a prominent tone in the "Bog Poems." The pre-historic ritual killings are set against the purposeless

poems like “The Other Side.” Again, in the poems like "A Constable Calls", some innocent events of childhood come back with a changed implication. The violence inside his place curiously co-existed with Heaney’s going outside his country-to the Irish Republic, to England and to the U.S. Heaney’s going away was the beginning of another way of looking at his place. The hidden dilemmas of his native place turned more conspicuous being looked at from a distance. This shift also helped Heaney to remove the tag of “regional poet” from his back to some extent. Many poems of *The Spirit Level, Seeing Things, Electric Light, District and Circle* and *Human Chain* try to look at the whole world as a place torn by violence and strife. This expanded outlook makes Heaney’s poems examples of a new sense of place where the search for a Utopia is meaningless. Rather, we have to seek the ways that can make our planet habitable.

The problematics of place, identity and belonging is outwardly not very easy to apply on the works of Philip Larkin, the most significant voice of the post World-War-II British Poetry. The common tendency of the critics, particularly after the publication of two controversial books, i.e., Andrew Motion’s comprehensive biography of Larkin in 1993 and Anthony Thwaite's edition of Larkin’s Selected Letters in 1992, has been to portray Larkin as an orthodox, a reactionary and an imperialist thinker, who inevitably suffers the setback of waning British domination over the world and his right-wing thoughts shatter. But there are enough evidences in these two books that establish a radically different point of view. In Chapter Four I have tried to capture all those details that from the very beginning contributed to his marginalized existence and a so called “negative” sense of place. The constricting

general. Again, his childhood (later famously described by him to be a "forgotten boredom" in "Afternoons") was mostly lonely partly due to Sydney's stern denial to let his children to mingle with other children of the locality and partly for Larkin's own physical deformities (his failing eyesight, stammering, immature baldness etc.). This peripheral existence of a child, perhaps, left a lasting impression on Larkin he began to live the life of an outsider-displaced and "on the edge of things." These early complexities, perhaps, were responsible for his status of an eternal antagonist to the accepted rules and regulations of the society- also a homosexual, an effeminate, a lifelong bachelor, a misogynist etc.

The displaced identity as a child was later merged with his sympathy for right wing political beliefs and sympathy for Nazi Germany which he owed to his father. A not very encouraging picturization of England in the time of decolonization, waning British imperial power, labour uprising was,so, natural for Larkin from these view-points. In this chapter, I have tried to show how displaced and marginal individuals frequent Larkin's early fictions and poetry in the first two collections, *The North Ship* and *The Less Deceived.* The characters seem to be the prototypes of the writer himself who wishes to escape but there is a hazy past and an equally frustrating present.

The next chapter on Larkin which deals with his two most remarkable works, *The Whitsun Weddings* and *High Windows,* attempts to concentrate on the acute sense of dilemma about place in the 1960s and 1970s when England as a place underwent radical and drastic changes. Although Larkin's life was now more stable as the Librarian at University of Hull, the reluctance to compromise with the way of the world remains the same. The humane, suave tone of his early poetry here yields place

Weddings and *High Windows*. The poems are often backward looking to situate the dullness of the present. But Larkin does not know a better future. He wishes to escape but where is his destination he has the least idea about it. The disgust about place goes to the extent of negating a firm spatial identity to the hilt as in the famous, triptych, "Livings". This dilemma and self-contradiction is the hallmark of Larkin's sense of place. He is not ready to seek a newer world or a better alternative.

So, the discussion on the sense of place of Heaney and Larkin, at least, comes to a common point of negotiation, that is, their sense of being displaced in and alienated from their own places. The humanist geographic point of view of "insideness" and "outsideness" in relation to a place was prominent in their works. The personal feelings and socio-cultural dilemmas related to a place left lasting impressions on their original sense of the place (or the "primary landscape")and the place they were made to experience ("secondary landscape") surely, the feelings and issues were different given their different subject positions and national and socio-cultural identities. But the crisis of spatial identity and a sense of transcendence of belonging were common to them both. Surely, their ways of dealing with these crises posed on them by their respective places were contradictory. While Heaney tried to seek an alternative place (may be a subjective one) as the recompense of the lost one, Larkin's altitude to his place is inconclusive, self-contradictory and, ultimately, full of disgust. He openly negates his place or roots as we find it in "I Remember, I Remember" and finally ignores the responsibility of inheritance. Here, lies the divergence of their responses to their respective places.

Again, the inferences made in this thesis require to be qualified by the

identity can also be the focal point in the study of the works of the British and Irish poets who were contemporaries to Heaney and Larkin like Ted Hughes, R.S. Thomas Geoffrey Hill, Brian Friel and Patrick Kavanagh. The poems of the immediate predecessors like Carol Ann Duffy and Simon Armitage can also be seen from the humanist geographical point of view. The proliferations of Humanist Geography like Feminist Geography, Gay Geography and Lesbian Geography can also be used as the critical basis for modern poetry, fiction and drama. The crisis of place is also an important topic of research when it is a study of Australian Aboriginal Writing, Indian Dalit Literature and ethnic American texts.

Works Cited

Books

Abraham, Taisha. *Introducing Postcolonial Theory*: *Issues and Debate*. New Delhi: Macmillan India Ltd, 2007. Print.

Acharya, Indranil. Chapter-1: Introduction .*Beyond the sense of Belonging: Race, Class and Gender in the Poetry of Yeats and Eliot.* New Delhi: SSS Publications, 2011.1-14. Print.

Agnew, J.A. *Place and Politics: The Geographical Meditation of State and Society,* Boston : Allen and Urwin. 1987. Print.

Allen, Michael, ed. *Seamus Heaney (New Casebook).* New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2003. Print.

Althusser, Louis. *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.* trans. and ed. G. M. Goshgarian. London: Verso, 2014. Print.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* . London:Verso , 1991. Print.

Anderson, J. "Nationalist Ideology and Territory". *Nationalism, Self-Determination and Political Geography.* Ed. R.J. Johnston, D.B Knight and E. Kofman. London: Croom Helm. 1988. Print.

Andrews, Elmer. ed. *The Poetry of Seamus Heaney: Essays, Articles, Reviews.* New York : Columbia University Press. 1998. Print.

Anzaldua, Gloria. *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* San Francisco: Spinters / Aunt Lute, 1987. Print.

Armitage, Simon and Robert Crawford. eds. *The Penguin Book of Poetry from Britain and Ireland since 1945.* London: Penguin, 1998. Print.

Artega, Alfred. *Chicano Poetics: Heterotexts and Hybridities.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Print.

Ascroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. "Issues and Debates: Introduction". *The Post Colonial Studies Reader.* Ed. Bill Ascroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 1995. 7-11. Print.

... . eds. *Post-colonial Studies: The Key Concepts. 2nd ed.* London: Routledge, 2007. Print.

... . *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post Colonial Literatures.* London: Routlege, 1989.Print.

Auden, W. H. *Collected Poems.* London: Vintage, 1991. Print.

Bachelard, Gaston. *Poetics of Space*. Trans. Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon, 1958. Print.

Barnard, Ian. *Queer Race: Cultural Interpretations in Racial Politics of Queer Theory.* New York: Peter Lang, 2003. Print.

Bejel, Emillo F. *Jose Lezama Lima: Poet of the Image.* Florida: Florida University Press, 1990. Print.

Bersani, Leo. *The Culture of Redemption*. Berkeley: University of California Press,

Bhabha, Homi K. *Identity, Community, Culture.* London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990. Print.

... . *The Location of Culture.* London: Routledge, 1994. Print.

... . ed. *Nation and Narration.* London: Routledge, 1990. Print.

Bloom, Harold. *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry.* New York and Oxford: OUP, 1984. Print.

... . *The Western Canon.* London: Creatspace Independent Publishing Platform, 1995. Print.

Bloomfield, B.C. *Philip Larkin: A Bibliography 1993-1976.* London: Faber and Faber , 1979. Print.

Booth, James. *Philip Larkin: The Poet's Plight.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Print.

Boyce, D.G. "Past and Present: Revisionism and the Northern Ireland Troubles". *The Making of Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy.* Ed. D.G. Boyce and A. O'Day. London: Routledge. 1996.1-8. Print.

Bradbury, M. The Social Context of Modern English Literature. New York: Schocken Books, 1971. Print.

Bradford, Richard. *First Boredom, Then Fear: The life of Philip Larkin.* London: Peter Owen Publishers, 2005. Print.

Brandes, Rand & Michael J. Durkan. *Seamus Heaney: A Bibliography 1959-2003.* London: Faber and Faber, 2008. Print.

Breen, Peter Thomas. *Place and Displacement in the Works of Brian Friel and Seamus Heaney.* Warwick, 1993. Wrap.Warwick.ac.UK/---/WRAP-Thesis----.Web.13 December, 2013.

Brooker, Jewels. ed. *T. S. Eliot: The Contemporary Reviews.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Print.

Brown, Terence, *Northern Voices: Poets from Ulster,* Dublin: Gill and Macmilan, 1975. Print.

Cavanagh, Michael. *Professing Poetry: Seamus Heaney's Poetics.* Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010, Print.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Habitations of Modernity*: *Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies*. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004. Print.

... *Provincializing Europe*: *Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. New Delhi: Oxford, 2001. Print.

Chatterjee, Sisir Kumar. *Philip Larkin: Poetry that Builds Bridges.* New Delhi: Atlantic, 2006. Print.

Childs, Peter. ed. *Post-colonial Theory and English Literature: A Reader.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999. Print.

Chinitz, David E. *T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. Print.

Clifford, James. *The Predicament of Culture: 20th Century Ethnography, Literature and Art.* Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1988. Print.

Collins, Floyd. *Seamus Heaney: The Crisis of Identity.* Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 2003.Print.

Cookson, Linda and Brian Loughrey. eds. *Critical Essays on Philip Larkin: The Poems.* London: Longman, 1989. Print.

Cooper, Stephen. *Philip Larkin: Subversive Writer.* Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2004. Print.

Corcoran, Neil. ed. *The Chosen Ground: Essays on Contemporary Poetry in Northern Ireland.* Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1992. Print.

… . *The Poetry of Seamus Heaney: A Critical Study*. London: Faber and Faber, 1998. Print.

Cosgrove, D. E. *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984. Print.

Crawford, Robert. *Devolving English Literature.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992. Print.

Crowder, Ashby Bland and John David Hall. eds. *Seamus Heaney: Poet, Critic, Translator*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Print.

Cullen, L.M. *The Emergence of Modern Ireland, 1600-1900*. London: Batsford, 1981. Print.

Cunningham, V. *British Writers of the Thirties.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1988. Print.

Curtis, Tony. eds. *The Art of Seamus Heaney*. Dublin: Wolfhound, 1994. Print.

Derrida, Jacques. *Margins of Philosophy.* trans and notes by Alan Bass. Chicago. Chicago University Press, 1985. Print.

Draper, Ronald P. *An Introduction to Twentieth-century Poetry in English.* New York: St. Martin's, 1999. Print.

Duffy, Patrick J. " Writing Ireland: Literature and Art in the Representation of Irish Place ". *In Search of Ireland: A Cultural Geography.* Ed. Brian Graham. London: Routledge, 1997. 64-83. Print.

Duncan, J.S. and D. Ley. eds. *Place/Culture/Representation.* London: Routledge. 1993. Print.

Dunn, Douglas. Ed. *Two Decades of Irish Writing.* Manchester: Carcanet, 1975. Print.

Eagleton, Terry. *Criticism and Ideology.* London: NLB, 1976. Print.

Ekins, Richard and Dave King. eds. *Blending Genders: Social Aspects of Cross-dressing and Sex-changing.* London and New York: Routledge, 1996. Print.

Eliot, T.S. *Collected Poems 1909-1962.* London: Faber and Faber, 1974. Print.

Emel, Jody and Jennifer Wolch. eds. *Animal Geographies: Place, Politics, and Identity in the Nature-culture Borderlands.* London: Verso, 1998. Print.

Emig, Rainer. *W. H. Auden: Towards a Postmodern Poetics.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999. Print.

Evans, E.E. *The Personality of Ireland,* 2nd ed. Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1981. Print.

Fanon, Frantz. "National Culture". *The Post Colonial Studies Reader.* Ed. Bill

... . *Black Skin, White Masks.* 1952. Trans. C.L. Markmann, with Foreword by Homi K. Bhabha.London: Pluto, *1986.* Print.

... . *The Wretched of the Earth* . 1961. Trans. Constance Farrington, with Preface by Jean Paul Sartre.London: Penguin, 2001. Print.

Finn, Christine. *Past Poetic: Archaeology and the Poetry of W. B. Yeats and Seamus Heaney.* London: Duckworth Publishers, 2004. Print.

Firchhow, Peter E. *W. H. Auden: Contexts for Poetry.* Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 2002. Print.

Forster, R. F. Modern Ireland: 1600-1972. London: Penguin, 1988. Print.

Foster, J. Wilson. The *Achievement of Seamus Heaney.* Dublin: Lilliput, 1995. Print.

Frame, R. *Colonial Ireland, 1169-1369.* Dublin: Helicon, 1981. Print.

Fuss, Diana. ed. *Inside/Out*: *Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories.* New York and London: Routledge, 1991. Print.

Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial* Theory: *A Critical introduction.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998. Print.

Garrat, Robert F. *Modern Irish Poetry: Tradition and Continuity from Yeats to Heaney.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986. Print.

Gates, Louis Henry Jr. ed. *Writing and Difference.* Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1985. Print.

... . *The Signifying Monkey: Theory of Afro-American Criticism.* 1988. Oxford:

... .(ed.), *Figures in Black: Words, Signs and The 'Racial' Self.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. Print

... .(ed.). *Black Literature and Literary Theory* .London: *Routledge,* 1984. Print.

... . *The Third World of Theory.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. Print.

Gibbon, P. *The Origin of Ulster Unionism.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975. Print.

Gillian, Rose. *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. Print.

Gilroy, Paul. *Between Camps: Nations, Cultures, and the Allure of Race.* London: Penguin, 2001.Print.

... . *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Doubled Consciousness.* London: Verso, 1993.Print.

... . *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation,* London: Hutchinson, 1987. Print.

Glob, P. V. *The Bog People*, trans. Rupert Bruce-Mitford. London: Faber and Eaber, 1969. Print.

Glover, David and Cora Kaplan. *Genders.* London and New York: Routledge, 2000. Print.

Goldberg, David Theo and John Solomos. eds. *A Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies.* Oxford: Blackwell, 2002. Print.

Greene, Graham. *Journey without Maps.* First Pub. 1936. London: Penguin Books, 1980. Print.

Haffenden, John. *Viewpoints: Poets in Conversation with John Haffenden.* London: Faber. 1981. Print.

Hart, Henry. *Seamus Heaney: Poet of Contrary Progression.* New York: Syracuse University Press, 1992. Print.

Heaney, Seamus. *Beowulf.* London: Faber and Faber, 1999. Print.

... . *Death of a Naturalist.* London: Faber and Faber, 1966. Print.

... . *District and Circle.* London: Faber and Faber, 2006. Print.

... . *Door into the Dark.* London: Faber and Faber, 1969.Print.

... . *Electric Light.* London: Faber and Faber, 2001. Print.

... . *Field Work,* London: *Faber and Faber,*1979. Print.

... . *Finders Keepers: Selected Prose 1971-2001.* London: Faber and Faber, 2002. Print.

... . *Human Chain.* London: Faber and Faber, 2010. Print.

... . *North.* London: *Faber and Faber,* 1975. Print.

... . *Opened Ground: Poems 1966-1996.* London: Faber and Faber, 1998. Print.

... . *Place and displacement: Recent Poetry of Northern Ireland.* London: Faber and Faber, 1985. Print.

. . . . *Seeing Things*. London: Faber and Faber, 1991. Print.

. . . . *Station Island*. London: Faber and Faber, 1984. Print.

. . . . *Sweeny Astray*. London: Faber and Faber, 1983. Print.

. . . . *The Cure at Troy: A Version of Sophocles' Philocretes*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1991. Print.

. . . . *The Government of the Tongue: Selected Prose*. London: Faber and Faber, 1978.Print.

. . . . *The Haw Lantern*. London: Faber and Faber, 1987. Print.

. . . . *The Midnight Verdict*. London: Faber and Faber, 1993. Print.

. . . . *The Place of Writing*. London: Faber and Faber, 1989. Print.

. . . . *The Spirit Level*. London: Faber and Faber,1996. Print.

. . . . *Wintering Out*, London: Faber and Faber, 1972. Print.

Hederman, M. P., and Richard Kearney. eds. *The Crane Bag Book of Irish Studies: 1977-81*. Dublin: Blackwater Press, 1982. Print.

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*, trans. by John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper and Row, 1962. Print.

Hoare, Quintin and Smith Nowell Geoffery .eds. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971. Print.

Hubbard, Phil, Rob Kitchin and Gill Valentine. eds. *Key Texts in Human Geography*. New York: SAGE Publications, 2008. Print.

Hummon, David. "Community Attachment: Local Sentiment and Sense of Place". *Place* Attachment, ed. by Irwin Altman and Setha Low. New York: Plenum Press, 1992. 253-278. Print.

Jackson, John Brinckerhoff. *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994. Print.

Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1992. Print.

Jung, Carl. *The Archetype and the Collective Unconscious*, trans. by R.F.C. Hull. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969. Print.

Kavanagh, Patrick. *Collected Poems,* London: Martin Brian and O'keeffee, 1972. Print.

. . . . *November Haggard: The Uncollected Prose and Verse of Patrick Kavanagh,* Ed. Peter Kavanagh, New York: The Peter Kavanagh Hand Press, 1971. Print.

Kearney, Richard. *Transition: Narratives in Modern Irish Culture*. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1988. Print.

Kiberd, Declan. *Inventing Ireland.* Cambridge: Havard University Press, 1995. Print.

King, P.R. *Nine Contemporary Poets,* London: Methuen, 1979. Print.

Kumar, Narendra, *Poetry of Seamus Heaney: A Critical Study.* New Delhi: Sarup Book Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2009. Print.

Larkin, Philip. *A Girl in Winter.* London: Faber and Faber, 1975. Print.

... . *The Complete Poems of Philip Larkin.* Ed. Archie Burnett. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012. Print.

... . *The Less Deceived* . London : Faber and Faber, 1955. Print.

... . *The North Ship.* London: Faber and Faber, 1945. Print.

... . *The Whitsun Weddings.* London : Faber and Faber, 1964. Print.

... . *Trouble at Willow Gables and other Fiction 1945-53.* London: Faber and Faber, 2002. Print.

Lee, J. J. *Ireland 1912-1985: Politics and Society.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. Print.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space.* trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith. New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991. Print.

Lerner, Laurence . *Philip Larkin (Writers and their Work Series).* Devon: Northcote House, 2005. Print.

Livingston, D. N. *The Geographical Tradition: Episodes in the History of a Contested Enterprise.* New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992. Print.

Longley, Edna. *A Language not to be Betrayed: Selected Prose of Edward Thomas.* Manchester: Carcanet, 1981. Print.

Longley, Michael. ed. *Causeway: The Arts in Ulster.* Belfast: Arts Council of Northern Ireland, 1971. Print.

Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism.* London and New York: Routledge,

Low, Setha and Irwin Altman. "Introduction". *Place Attachment.*ed. by Irwin Altman. New York: Plenum Press, 1992. 1-12. Print.

Low, Setha M. "Symbolic Ties that Bind: Place Attachment in the Plaza". *Place Attachment*, ed. by Irwin Altman and Setha Low. New York: Plenum Press, 1992.165-186. Print.

Lucas, J. *The 1930s: A Challenge to Orthodoxy.* London: Barnes and Noble, 1978. Print.

Lucas, John. *Modern Poetry- From Hardy to Hughes: A Critical Survey.* New Jersey: Barnes & Noble, 1986. Print.

Lyons, F.S.L. *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland, 1890-1939.* Oxford: Clarendon, 1979. Print.

Marsh, Nicholas. *Philip Larkin: The Poems.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Print.

Martin, G and N. Furbank. eds. *Twentieth- Century Poetry.* London: Milton Keynes, 1975. Print.

Massey, Doreen. *Space, Place and Gender.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990. Print.

Mendelson, Edward. *Later Auden.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999. Print.

Mianowski, M. Ed. *Irish Contemporary Landscapes in Literature and the Arts.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print.

Moi, Toril. *Sexual/Textual Politics*: *Feminist Literary Theory*. London: Methuen, 1987. Print.

Moody,T.W., and F. X. Martin. eds. *The Course of Irish History*. Cork: Mercier Press, 1984. Print.

Morrison, B. *The Movement: English Poetry and Fiction in the 1950s.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980. Print.

Morrison, Blake. *Seamus Heaney.* London: Routledge, 1993. Print.

Moss, Pamela. *Feminism in Geography: Rethinking Space, Place and Knowledge.* Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007. Print.

Motion, Andrew. *Philip Larkin: A Writer's Life.* London: Faber and Faber, 1993. Print.

Mytum, H. *The Origins of Early Christian Ireland.* London: Routledge, 1992. Print.

Nagel, Joane. *Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality: Intimate Intersections, Forbidden Frontiers.* New York and Oxford: OUP, 2003. Print.

Nandy, Ashis. *The Intimate Enemy*: *Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*. Delhi: OUP, 1983. Print.

Nayar, Pramod K. *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory*: *From Structuralism to Ecocriticism*. Delhi, Chennai and Chandigarh: Pearson, 2010. Print.

Nichols, Sandra. *A. Seamus Heaney's Parental Wellspring: The Father as Aesthetic Source.* Madison, 2004. https://minds.wisconsin.edu/---. Web. 10 April, 2013.

... . *Seamus Heaney and the Place of Writings*. Florida: University Press of Florida, 2002. Print.

Okara, Gabriel. *The Voice* (First Pub. 1962). New York: Holmes & Meier, 1970. Print.

Osborne, John. *Larkin, Ideology and Critical Violence: A Case of Wrongful Conviction.* London: Palgrave, 2008. Print.

Palmer, Richard H. *Such Deliberate Disguises: The Art of Philip Larkin.* London: Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd., 2008. Print.

Parker, Michael. *Seamus Heaney: The Making of the Poet.* Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993. Print.

Perkins, David. *A History of Modern Poetry: Modernism and After.* 1987. New Delhi: ABS Publishers & Distributors, 2006. Print.

Picot, Edward. *Outcasts from Eden: Ideas of Landscape in British Poetry since 1945.* Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997. Print.

Pinto, Vivian de Sola. *Crisis in English Poetry.* London: Oxford University Press, 1955. Print.

Prasad, Birjadish. *A Short History of English Poetry* (Revised Edition). New Delhi: Macmillan India Ltd., 2001. Print.

Rao, Raja. *Kanthapura* (First Pub. 1938). New Delhi: OUP, 2001. Print.

Regan, Stephen. ed. *Philip Larkin (New Casebook).* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997. Print.

... . *Place and Placelessness (Research in Planning & Design)*. London: Pion Ltd. 1976, 2014. Print.

Richter, David. *The Critical Tradition.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989. Print.

Rossen, Janice. *Philip Larkin: His Life's Work*. Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1990. Print.

Rushdie, Salman. *Imagining Homelands*: *Essays and Criticism*, 1981-1991. London: Granta, 1991. Print.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism.* London: Chatto and Windus, 1993. Print.

... . *Orientalism.* London: Routledge, 1978. Print

... . *Out of Place: A Memoir*. London: Granta, 1999. Print

... . *Peace and its Discontents: Essays on Palestine in the Middle East Peace Process.* London: Vintage, 1996. Print.

... . *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays.* London: Granta, 2001.Print

... . *The Edward Said Reader.*eds. Mustafa Biayoumi and Andrew Rubin. London: Granta, 2001. Print.

... . *The World, the Text and the Critic.* Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1983. Print.

Salwak, Dale. ed. *Philip Larkin: The Man and His Work* . Iowa: The University of

Sanders, Andrew. *The Short Oxford History of English Literature* (Second Edition). London: Oxford University Press, 2003. Print.

Sandfort, Theo, Judith Schuyf, Jan Willim Duyvendak, Jeffery Weeks. eds. *Lesbian and Gay Studies*: *An Introductory, Interdisciplinary Approach*. London: Sage, 2000. Print.

Sarker, Sunil Kumar. *A Companion to Philip Larkin* (Vol. I & II). New Delhi: Atlantic, 2009. Print.

Seager, J and L. Nelson. eds. *Companion to Feminist Geography.* Williston: Blackwell Publishing, 2004. Print.

Sharkley, John. *Celtic Mysteries: The Ancient Religion*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1975. Print.

Shinfield, Alan. *Faultiness*: *Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident* Reading. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. Print.

Sinfield, Alan. *Literature, Politics and Culture in Postwar Britain.* London: Continuum, 1989. Print.

Smith, Jonathan Z. *Map is Not Territory* . Leiden: E.J. Bull,1978. Print.

Smith, Stan. *Poetry and Displacement*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007. Print.

Soja, Edward. W. *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory.* New York: Verso, 2011. Print.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakraborty. *Death of a Discipline.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2003 Print

... . *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present.* Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999.Print

... . *Outside in the Teaching Machine.* London: Routledge, 1993.Print

... . *The Spivak Reader: Selected Writings of Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak.* Ed. Donna Landry and Gerald Maclean, London: Routledge, 1996.Print.

... . *In other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics.* London: Routledge, 1971.Print.

Steele, Fritz. *The Sense of Place.* Boston: CBI Publishing Company Inc, 1981. Print.

Swarbick, Andrew. *Out of Reach: The Poetry of Philip Larkin* .London: St. Martin's Press, 1997. Print.

Tally Jr, Robert. *Spatiality.* London: Routledge, 2013. Print.

... . *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies.* New York: Palgrave, 2011. Print.

Tamplin, Roland. *Seamus Heaney.* London: Open University Press, 1989. Print.

Thiong'o, Ngugi wa. *Decolonising the Mind:The Politics of Language in African Literature.* London: James Currey, 1987. Print.

Thwaite, Anthony.ed. *Selected Letters of Philip Larkin 1940-1985.* London: Faber and Faber, 1992. Print.

Timms, David. *Philip Larkin.* Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1973. Print.

Tolley, A.T. *My Proper Ground: A Study of the Work of Philip Larkin and its Development.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991. Print.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Dear Colleague: Common and Uncommon Observations.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002. Print.

... . *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977. Print.

... . *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values* .New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974. Print.

... . *Who am I?: An Autobiography of Emotion, Mind and Spirit.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999. Print.

... . *Landscape of Fear.* NewYork: Pantheon Book , 1979. Print.

... . *Romantic Geography: In Search of the Sublime Landscape*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013. Print.

Veeser, H. Aram. ed. *The New Historicism*. London: Routledge, 1989. Print.

Vendler, Helen. *Seamus Heaney.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000. Print.

Viswanathan, Gauri. *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India.* New Delhi: OUP, 1989. Print.

Walford, Davies. *Dylan Thomas.* London: University of Wales Press, 2014. Print.

Westphal, Bertrand. *Geocriticism: Real and fictional Spaces.* Trans. Robert. T. Tally Jr. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Print.

Williams, Raymond. *Keywords.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1983. Print.

Young, Robert J. C. *Postcolonialism*: *An Historical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. Print.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. *Gender and Nation*. London: Sage, 1997. Print.

Journals, Articles, Magazines and Newspapers

Ackroyd, Peter. "Poet Hands on Misery to Man.", *The Times.*1 April 1993 : 35 . Philip Larkin Society . Web. 6 Dec. 2013<http://www.philiplarking.com/content/essays//html>

Andrews, Elmer. "The Gift and the Craft: An Approach to the Poetry of Seamus Heaney". *Twentieth Century Literature* 31. Winter 1985. Print.

Balakian, Peter. "Seamus Heaney's New Landscapes." *The Literary Review 41,* no. 4 (1988): 501-505.Print.

Bidwell, Bruce. "A Soft Grip on a Sick Place: The Bogland Poetry of Seamus Heaney". *Dublin Magazine* 10, no.3 (1973/74): 86-90.Print.

Bixler, R. D., M. F. Floyd and W. E. Hammitt. " Environmental Socialization: Quantitative Tests of the Childhood Play Hypothesis. *Environment and Behaviour* 34 (6): 795-818. <www. treesearch. fs. fcd. us> pubs. Web. 6 Dec 2013.

Brett, R.L. "Philip Larkin: A Psycho Literary Sketch". *About Larkin* 7 (1999): 28-33.

Cavanagh, Michael. "Tower and Boat: Yeats and Seamus Heaney". *New Hibernia Review,* Vol.4, No.3 .Autumn, 2000: 17-38. JSTOR. Web. 22 Sep. 2014.

... . "Walking into the Light: Dante and Seamus Heaney's Second Life." *South Carolina Review* 32, no.1. Fall 1999:119-31.Print.

Corcoran, Neil. "Seamus Heaney Obituary". *The Guardian*. 30 Aug.2013. Web. 4 sep. 2013. <http://www.the guardian.com/books/2013/aug/30/Seamus-heaney.html>

Dan, Duc. "Seamus Heaney's Religion Redress". *Literature and Theology,* Vol.17, No.1 (March -2003): 32-43. JSTOR, Web. 22 Sep. 2014.

Dixon,Frances."The Examined Life: Heaney's *The Haw Lantern."* .*The Critical Review* 32(1992):5-28. Print.

Durkan, Michael J. "Seamus Heaney: A Checklist for a Bibliography". *Irish University Review* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 48-76. Print.

Fox, Margalit. "Seamus Heaney, Irish Poet of Soil and Strife, Dies at 74". Web. 30August 2013. <http://mobile.nytimes.com/2013/08/31/arts/seamus heaney-acclaimed -irish-poet-dies-at-74.html?referrer >

Fumagalli, Maria Cristina. "Station Island: Seamus Heaney's *Divina Comedia."Irish University Review* 26, no.1.Spring-Summer 1996:127-42.Print.

Hart, Henry. "History, Myth, and Apocalypse in Seamus Heaney's *North* " *Contemporary Literature*30, no 3.Fall 1989: 387-411.Print.

Hibbelt, Ryan. "The Hughes/Larkin Phenomenon: Poetic Authenticity in Postwar English Poetry". *Contemporary Literature,* Vol.49, No.1. Spring 2008: 111-140.

... . Philip Larkin, British Culture, and Four-letter Words. *The Cambridge Quaterly,* Vol 43. No. 2 (June 2014): 120-138. JSTOR. Web. 19 Sep 2014.

Kiely, Benedict. "A Raid into Dark Corners: The Poems of Seamus Heaney". *The Collins Critic 4, no. 4* (October 1970):1-12.Print.

Llyod, David. "Pap for the Dispossessed: Seamus Heaney and the Poetics of Identity,"*Boundary2* 13, nos.2-3 (1985):319-42.Print.

Mahony, Philip. "Seamus Heaney and the Violence in Northern Ireland". *Journal of Irish Literature* 11, no. 3 (September 1981): 20-30. Print.

---"Hoarder of Common Ground: Tradition and Ritual in Seamus Heaney's Poetry". *Boundary2* 13, nos. 2-3 (1984-85): 319-42.Print.

O'Gradys, Thomas B. " "At a Potato Digging": Seamus Heaney's Great Hunger". *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies,*Vol. 16, No.1 (Jul. 1990):48-58. JSTOR. Web. 22 Sep. 2014

Parini, Jay. "The Ground Possessed." *Southern Review* 16 (1980): 100-23.Print.

---"Pastoral and Anti-Pastoral Attitudes in Seamus Heaney's Poetry." *Southern Review* 23, no.3 (1987): 569-88.Print.

Porteous, J. Douglas. "Northernman", *About Larkin*(1999) :35-41. Philip Larkin Society.web.6 Dec. 2013<http://www.Philiplarkin.com/content/essays//html>

Rumens, Carol. "The Winter Book". *The Guardian* 20 December 2011. Web. 21 August 2013.<http://www.the guardian.com/Review/2011/aug/21/winter-book-rumens.html?>

Tally, R. T. Jr, " On Literary Cartography: Narrative as a Spatially Symbolic Act ". *Nanocrit: Nano Journal of New York City College of Technology* January 2011. Web. 23 August 2013. <http://www.nanocrit.com>issue-1-navigation-all.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. " Place: An Experiential Perspective". *Geographical Review* 65. 2 (1975): 151-165. JSTOR. Web. 5 November 2013.

... . " Humanistic Geography ". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66. 2: 266-276. JSTOR. Web. 3 November 2013.

... . " Language and the Making of Place: A Narrative-descriptive Approach ". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 81: 684-696. JSTOR. Web. 3 November 2013.

Reference Books

"Deterritorialization". *Wikipedia-the Free Encyclopedia.* Web. 6 Sept. 2013.

<http:// en.m.wikipedia.org / wiki/ Deterretorialization.html>

"Heimat". *Wikipedia-the Free Encyclopedia.*Web. 6 Sept. 2013.

http://en.m. wikipedia.org/wiki/heimat.html