CHAPTER – III

SEAMUS HEANEY AND JOY GOSWAMI

Representation of violence in the Poetry of Seamus Heaney and Joy Goswami

Violence is a volcanic, fissiparous force; an eclectic, elusive, elemental component in nature, human life and poetry. It is a *sine qua non* in the universal order of existence. Violence plays a paradoxical role, both as a destructive, menacing force as well as a robust creative catalyst. As a result, an emission of huge energy that gives new impetus to human driving motive and inspiration comes into existence. After destruction, reconstruction takes place; a new order, new culture, new creation emerges from the ashes of its former existence. Violence was there during the big bang, during the moment of creation of our universe; violence determines the complex atomic fission of elements that emanates huge energy. As an active determinant violence is never introduced, at least, metaphysically, in the unconfined territory of both our elemental as well as physical mental universe, for violence was there and will continue to remain as an inter-active component, throughout time. Violence is a ruling roost, both as resources as well as result which dominate nature, culture, character and colour of any work of art, particularly, painting and poetry. This is amply exemplified in the earlier two sets of comparative study of violence; first, in the poetry of T. S. Eliot and Jibanananda Das and second, in the poetry of Ted Hughes and Sankha Ghosh. A diachronic comparative reading in the poetry of Seamus Heaney (b. 1939-) and Joy Goswami (b. 1954-) would, I think, lead to a better understanding of violence as one of the most dominant features in their poetry. Heaney, though Irish by birth, is one of the finest English language poets and may be rightly regarded as a right heir and descendant to the literary cultural heritage of such great stalwarts as Eliot and Hughes. In fact, multiple layers and varieties of violence are ingeniously classified in Heaney’s poetry which lends him a unique status in the whole gamut of English language poetry.

Like Heaney, Joy Goswami is a reigning, living Bengali language poet. By virtue of his exceptionally gifted poetic art and vision; his brilliant technical mastery; his innovative stylistic and linguistic usage and above all, his superb magical power in translating violence in physical and metaphysical reality into violence in poetry,
Goswami also establishes him as a right heir and natural descendant to the literary
Cultural heritage of Jibanananda Das and Sankha Ghosh, in the post-Tagorean era.
Though Heaney and Goswami represent two different cultures, dissimilar sociopolitical milieu, diverse religious ethos and historical perspectives, there is a close
Affinity between them in unfolding physical and metaphysical violence which they
tend to translate into their poetry as well as linguistic violence of their verse. There is
Little biographical similarity between the two great poets. Heaney was born at the
Family farmhouse at Mossbawn, county Derry, in Northern Ireland, on 13th April,
1939. His father was a farmer and a cattle dealer. He is the eldest of the nine children
Of Patrick Heaney. In 1953 the family moved to Belaghy, a few miles away from
Mossbawn, which is now the family home. At the age of twelve he won a scholarship
And admitted to St. Columb’s college, a catholic boarding school at Derry. In 1957
Heaney was admitted to the Queen’s University at Belfast to study English language
And literature. From here Heaney got both the avenues of his literary career as well as
teaching career as professor. As a professor of English language and literature he
teaches in many colleges and universities, including the prestigious Harvard and
Oxford University. Goswami’s early life, on the contrary, is menaced by his father’s
death, his acute sense of detachment and exile and his lonely and desolate existence.
Throughout his life, till now, Goswami encounters beauty, simultaneously with dread
And fear. Born in Kolkata on 10th November, 1954, the family soon moved to
Ranaghat, the suburban town of Nadia district, West Bengal. His father was an active
Political worker who loved him dearly and influenced his early childhood. His father
died when the poet was only six. His mother was a school teacher. After his father’s
death, his mother was the only one to sustain the family. She passed away in 1984.
This shocked him so much that the poet was almost broken down. Unlike Heaney,
Goswami’s formal education was very limited. He just completed his matriculation.
He left school while he was in class XI and took writing as his only vocation, forever.
Thus in personal, professional and familial life both the poets remain far apart. But
Surprisingly enough, the poems of both uphold the same precarious nature of the
Existence; same psychological fear and dread; spiritual chaos and disintegration.
Throughout his poetic pilgrimage, Joy Goswami continues to construct, deconstruct
And reconstruct the theme, form and structure of his poetry.
In respect of thematic presentation, both the poets have vast range and versatility. The poems of Heaney contextualized the huge hoard of Anglo-Irish literary heritage; Irish cultural, mythical, literary lineage; historical, archeological, anthropological exploration of Ireland and the Irish Troubles. In his poetry, very often, violence erupts due to the dichotomy and dialectical state of his own person, place and linguistic cultural prepossession. As regard to the theme of Goswami’s poems, Man, Nature and the Universe come together. Most of his poems are the songs of life. Like a minstrel the poet sings the saga of the vicissitudes of life; its birth and death, failure and success, love and hatred, its deprivation and exploitation, its struggles and suffering, its ferocity and helplessness. All through his poetic pilgrimage Goswami endeavours to explore the place of man in the universal order. What he visualizes, is a chaotic, disintegrated, nihilistic, bleak force that continually destroy and destabilize the recreated universe. Each time, after his journey’s end, he discovers no peaceful abode of God or ‘Garden of Eden’, but an anarchic void, a shapeless, formless, nameless, complete blank. This is dreadful, nightmarish. Here all questions and meanings, all aims and endeavours, all aspirations and ideologies, all striving for come to halt, a stand-still, a deadlock. As a great poet Goswami’s credit is that he discovers numinous avenues through which nature and human psyche undertake a Pegasus-flight to the strange, awful world of beauty and brutality, mystery and anarchy, dread and void. In fact, throughout his voyage, both nature and human psyche are engaged in complex negotiation. Another aspect of Goswami’s exploration is the mysterious, precarious state of the cosmos and its ever volatile relation to man and nature.

Both the poets are highly sensitive to, keenly perceptive of and acutely concerned with the moving currents and cross-currents of history, from dim and distant past to the contemporary time. And as we have seen that the passage of history is bloody and murderous, violent and dreadful, both the poets, consciously or unconsciously translate violence in the physical reality into violence in their poetry. Heaney is one of the best among the contemporary poets and his poetry is marked by a strong element of violence and atrocity on and by humanity. Violence in Heaney’s poems comes as a natural consequence of a strange predicament of the poet in the historical, religious and cultural linguistic context. As a human being and as a sensitive poet Heaney is entangled in the vortex of ethno-religious, political clashes
and strange cultural crises of identity and linguistic lineage. Heaney’s tragedy is that as Irish by birth, he must have to remain loyal to his land; as a Catholic, he must have to be faithful and dutiful to his community and religious belief; as heir and descendant to English language and literature he must have to be grateful and respectful to the language which is not Irish, but English. The incentives of violence in his poetry come from these awful contradictory states where the poet is inevitably placed. In this regard, Ireland’s long history of imperialist coercion, exploitation, deprivation and torture come close to the mythical atrocities of the tribes of Iron Age and contemporary Irish troubles. The violence of past is used as metaphor for the violence of contemporary Ireland, particularly, Northern Troubles. Thus the distinction between past and present atrocities is blurred. The ‘Northern Troubles’ that started freshly as early as in 1969 with the civil rights protest march, continued till the ‘Good Friday Settlement’ of 1998.

Ireland has long, bloody history of struggles for liberation against colonial coercion. Centuries’ torture, exploitation, mostly through de-territorialization of the native Irish by brutish force led to occasional revolt against the colonizers or settlers or planters, as differently named in different times. This had led to violence and blood-shed, very often, in course of Irish history. The process of de-territorialization started as early as in the late 12th century with England’s first political involvement into Irish internal politics in the year 1170. Turlogh O’Connor, overthrew Dermot MacMurrogh, king of Leinster and the exiled, defeated king invited King Henry – II of England to help him regain his kingdom. For the first time England was directly involved in Ireland’s internal political matter. The defeated king could regain his throne with the help of the English king, but this opened up Pandora’s Box for the poor country Ireland. Immediate after the death of King MacMurrogh, Strongbow, the Earl of Pembroke proclaimed himself the king of Leinster in 1171. After this event the imperialist aggression continued through 13th century to the fourth decade of 16th century. The process of colonization was completed with King Henry –VIII’s complete control of Ireland in 1534 and his proclamation of himself as the king of Ireland in 1541. Throughout whole 16th century the British ruled Ireland. But in the first half of the 17th century there was a rebellion against the British barbarity and atrocity. The violence and bloodshed of Ulster rebellion of 1641 against British rule left many Irish people dead. To stop revolt the English King James - I started
plantation of English and Scottish Protestants to the counties of North Ireland, particularly, Ulster, in the year 1609-10. The British paramilitary force, with the help of the Ulster Protestants savagely put down the rebellions. Irish Catholics were terrorized throughout the 17th and 18th century; their homes, lands were seized and given to the protestant people of North Ireland. The notorious Penal Laws (1695-1728) passed by the British govt. almost totally de-territorialized the Catholics of Ulster and other North counties of Ireland. The second phase of violence in Irish national politics started with the Easter Rising of 1916 and the subsequent formation of IRA (Irish Republican Army) and the freedom fighters’ call for Irish independence through armed struggle. In the meantime the Protestants in Ulster had formed UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force) in 1913 to resist the Home Rule movement and complete freedom of whole of Ireland from British control. However, in December 1920 the Government of Ireland Act introduced the partition of Ireland. On 6th December 1921 the Irish Free State emerged with twenty six districts and Dublin having the capital of the new nation. The other six counties of Northern Ireland have got their own parliament in Belfast, but remained under the control of United Kingdom. The partition led to sporadic violence in the six counties as the Catholics opposed the secession. In early 1922 British forces began to leave and the civil war started with hundreds leaving dead and thousands injured. Finally the violence was ruthlessly put down by the Provisional Govt. and 1100 rebels were interned. On 21st December 1948 finally the Irish Free State is granted full independence under the terms of the Republic of Ireland Act. However, six northern districts still remained under the control of U.K. The partition of Ireland fails to establish peace in North Ireland as the Catholics never accepted this division of the country by the British Govt. The renewed ‘troubles’ started in 1968 with the civil rights protest march by the Catholic human rights activists which was turned into a bloody violence between the Protestants and the Catholics. Firing, bombing, arsenal, looting continue with bloody ethno-religious murders throughout seventies. British paratroopers were directly involved in this unrest and tension. On 30th January, 1972 they opened fire on a marching mob organized by NICRA (Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association) against internment and act of banning democratic movement. The firing killed 14 and injured thirteen others. This event is known in the history of Northern Ireland as ‘Bloody Sunday’. Religious disrespect, ethnic intolerance and political mistrust and
hatred among the people of Northern Ireland are so deeply rooted and strongly sustained that it seemed almost impossible to bring to a peaceful and amicable solution of the core issues of conflict and violence. Of course, the Good Friday Settlement (Belfast Agreement, 10th April, 1998) has finally brought about hope and prospect of a peaceful resolution of most of the outstanding issues of conflicts and troubles. But this is only an expectation of the optimists; my concern is historical and literary; that is, what happened and how it tells upon the mind and thought of the intelligentsia, particularly, poets and writers of the country.

Seamus Heaney, being a son of the soil and one of the greatest poets of the land after Yeats, could not help responding to the violence and bloodshed of the ‘Irish troubles’. Many of his poems bear testimony to the fact that he was profoundly concerned with the ethno-religious clashes, riots, political conflicts, cultural crises, Irish troubles and above all, historical and mythical atrocities on and by humanity. Heaney’s own statements amply support the view. He comments on the effect of violence and riots that had started with the civil rights march of 1968 and become bloody in 1969: “From that moment the problems of poetry moved from being simply a matter of achieving the satisfactory verbal icon to being a search for images and symbols adequate to our predicament.”\(^{160}\)

The same idea is echoed in his Berkley interview with James Randall, for the periodical ‘Ploughshares’ in 1979 when he says “that poetry was a force, almost a mode of power, certainly a mode of resistance.”\(^{161}\) Again to Seamus Deane, he unhesitatingly comments how the agony, the burn of his soil, his birth-place creeps into his poetry. He says, “I think that my own poetry is a kind of slow, obstinate, papish burn, emanating from the ground I was brought upon.”\(^{162}\) Heaney was severely shocked and shaken by the barbarity and brutality of the sectarian riots and violence. His fourth volume of verses, North (1975) is the culmination of his consciousness of political clashes, cultural crises, religious and ethnic conflicts, mythical atrocities and

violence of ancient past, and above all, the ‘Irish troubles’. Edna Longley makes a penetrating observation on Heaney’s private imagery of ‘rot’ and ‘smell’ and succinctly comments on North: “Heaney’s private imagery of rot and smells spills over into the public domain, perhaps also sniffing something rotten in the state of Northern Ireland.”\(^{163}\) Heaney summarized and assimilated P. V. Glob’s account of ‘ritual sacrifices to the Mother Goddess’ for the sake of fertility and set the mythical atrocity in the context of contemporary Irish political and ethno-religious sectarian violence. Heaney does neither praise nor censure violence; he does simply uphold the horror and dread of human sacrifices; in mythical past, in the name of fertility rites; in contemporary context, in the name of religious or political martyrdom. Heaney emphasized:

“Taken in relation to the tradition of Irish political martyrdom for that cause whose icon is Cathleen ni Houlihan, this is more than an archaic barbarous rite: it is an archetypal pattern. And the unforgettable photographs…blended in my mind with photographs of atrocities, past and present, in the long rites of Irish political and religious struggles.”\(^{164}\)

As to the roots of violence in Heaney’s poetry, Seamus Deane finely comments:

“Heaney’s dilemma is registered in the perception that the roots of poetry and of violence grow in the same soil; humanism, of the sort mentioned here, has no roots at all. The poems ‘Antaeus’ and ‘Hercules and Antaeus’ which open and close respectively the first part of North, exemplify the dilemma.”\(^{165}\)

In the same essay Deane makes a penetrating observation on Heaney’s technical mastery in transmuting mythical violence in the contemporary context. He asserts:


“When myth enters the poetry, in Wintering out (1972), the politicization begins. The violence in Northern Ireland reached its first climax in 1972, the year of Bloody Sunday and of assassinations, of the proroguing of Stormont and the collapse of a constitutional arrangement which had survived for fifty years. Heaney, drawing on the works of the Danish archeologist P. V. Glob, began to explore the repercussions of the violence on himself, and on others, by transmuting all into a marriage myth of ground and victim, old sacrifice and fresh murder. Although it is true that the Viking myths do not correspond to Irish experience without some fairly forceful straining, the potency of the analogy between the two was at first thrilling. The soil, preserving and yielding up its brides and bridegrooms, was almost literally converted into an altar before which the poet stood in reverence or in sad voyeurism as the violence took on an almost liturgical rhythm. The earlier alliance with the oppressed and the archaic survivors with their traditional skills now become an alliance with the executed, the unfortunates who had died because of their distinction in beauty or in sin. The act of digging is now more ominous in its import than it had been in 1966. For these bodies are not resurrected to atone, in some bland fashion, for those recently buried. They are brought up again so that the poet might face death and violence, the sense of ritual peace and order investing them being all the choicer for the background of murderous hate and arbitrary killing against which it was being invoked.”

Surprisingly enough, the diachronic comparative reading of Goswami’s poems with his Irish counterpart Seamus Heaney yields many similarities in their approach to violence. It is quite interesting to note that the Irish troubles of the last phase were escalated in 1969 with the civil rights march of 1968. This coincides with the foundation of C.P.I (M.L), the ultra-left revolutionary political party in India on 22nd April, 1969. Charu Majumder, one of the great naxalite leaders from West Bengal, became the Secretary of the Central Organizing Committee of the organization. In the meantime, C.P.I was split in 1964 and C.P.I (M) had been formed. The new party decided to participate in the parliamentary election. This angered the young

166 Ibid., p. 179.
enthusiastic revolutionary cadres and leaders who later decided to join the C.P.I (M.L). In the meantime, Charu Majumder had led the peasants’ uprising at Naxalbari village in Darjeeling district of West Bengal, in 1967. The C.P.I (M)-led United Front government put down the rebellion with cruel repressive measures. Within 72 days of the rebellion, one police inspector and nine tribal youths were killed. During 1971-72 the naxal movement in West Bengal took the most violent shape as hundreds of young revolutionaries were ruthlessly killed by police. Many were interned and later secretly killed in police custody. Police atrocities and tortures became savage, cruel and inhuman. Many young men went missing. Then the emergency of 1975 came with another phase of bloodshed and butchery of human rights and human beings. Thus it is found that in respect of violence and bloodshed, the immediate historical perspective of both Ireland and West Bengal were almost similar, although the contexts were different. As Heaney was deeply influenced by the troubles, so Goswami was influenced by the violence and bloodshed of the seventies and also of the universal socio-political, religious and cultural violence of past and present. In many of his anthologies Goswami translates socio-political violence into violence in his poetry. Goswami’s poetic vision depicts the agony and dissolution of time with all its wounds and scars, bloodshed and murder, oppression and tyranny. In his poetry people of past history, both victimized and victimizer reappear. Violence in Joy Goswami becomes at times personal, political and universal, but it can also be crude, sensational, awful and directly physical, for example, in *Hariner Jannya Ekak* (2002).

Linguistic and textual violence in the poetry of both Heaney and Goswami distinguished them as unique medium of transcending the extant poetic treasures to a culminating height. As an innovator in linguistic and stylistic usage, Heaney is unparalleled. So is Goswami in Bengali poetry. Goswami, in fact, revolutionized poetic discourse. His method and manner of handling diverse aspects of technique, style and segmental sequence of parole in verse are miraculously unique. The tradition set by Goswami has neither any predecessor, nor any follower. He is the sole inventor and proprietor of his magical creation that charm and spellbound millions of readers. Heaney’s admixture of Irish native vocabulary and many archaic Anglo-Saxon jargon with rich English diction is an outcome of his dialectical and ambivalent relation to the English language and his Irish cultural prepossession. This odd
combination of linguistic elements lends his verse an exotic colour and wild, striking force. About his innovative use of language Seamus Deane comments:

“The language of Heaney’s poetry, although blurred in syntax on occasion, has extraordinary definition, a brail-like tangibility, and yet also has a numinous quality, a power that indicates the existence of a deeper zone on the inarticulated below the highly articulated surface.”

Goswami’s dictions, on the other hand, are the metamorphosed, prismatic pearls. All jargon – poetic or prosaic; conventional or obsolete; slang or Sanskrit are transmuted in his text into a transcendentally meaningful, magical, cadence; sonorous, sensuous, shivering; composite, dialectical, distorted force; beauty, dread and void; a complete blank; a black force that holds all creation and destruction together. Words in Goswami are used as ‘Akshar Brahma Yoga’ of the Bhagabada Gita.

Both Heaney and Goswami are gifted with different modes of writing – lyric, narrative, dramatic and reflective. And very often these modes are exchanged so rapidly that the text seems to lose its singular identity and shape and appear as an arena. This technique helps locating the inter-textual and contextual references which again are the selection of undecided possibilities of getting a meaning out of many present, non-present and subjective and relative ‘meanings’. In a sense, the text body of most of the great poems of both Heaney and Goswami proffer only flashes or hallucinations of meaning rather than the meaning of what we commonly understand. In a sense, the textual violence helps unveiling an epiphanic universe, at least esthetically; and again antithetically, a destructive, demonic, dystopian universe, for creatures having philosophic rationality.

The text of both the poets are battle ground where we find a ravaging wresting of jargon – native, alien, obsolete; grammatical lawlessness among morphological and syntactical segments; imagistic shock and symbolic surprise; an inherent clash of competence and performance and an ever-shifting semantic possibilities. Of course, there are such critics as Conor Cruise O’Brien, who makes rather simplified statement about Heaney’s syntax: “Seamus Heaney’s writing is modest, often conversational, apparently easy, low-pitched, companionably ironic, ominous, alert, accurate and

167 Ibid., p. 178.
surprising.‖ But to me, as to Deane, Heaney’s ‘svelte diction’ seems to be an embarrassment, almost a verbal wrestling, in many of his poems till the North (1975) phase. Eamon Hughes sums up Heaney’s deftness of hieroglyphics, while assessing one of his poems in North:

“Heaney’s balancing of these two (English and Irish voices) is a mark of his confidence. English poetry, Irish poetry, Catholic schooling, sexuality, and the fear of living in a hostile state are the elements which constitutes Heaney’s identity…”

In Heaney we find frequent uses of short lines for the sake of compression. In fact Heaney himself argues on the effectiveness of short lines: “The shortness of a line constricts, in a sense, the breadth of your movement.” And his heavy use of consonant sounds very often over-ride vowel sounds, thus giving his tone a savage masculinity and dominance. In this respect Deane has raised the question of linguistic politics, through the metaphor of sexual distinction. According to him:

“… Even there, there is a sexual differentiation, the vowel being female, the consonant male; and in the sexual differentiation there is a political distinction, the Irish vowel raped by the English consonant. Thus a species of linguistic politics emerges, with pronunciation, the very movement of the mouth on a word being a kiss of intimacy or an enforcement.”

At the same time, he also makes abundant use of alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia, thus giving his verse a rare kind of sweetness, melody and cadence. Heaney thus combines two contrary elements in a single poetic work. This makes his

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poems strange, obscure and startlingly effective. Heaney’s poems follow such great predecessors as Hopkins and Dylan Thomas in his frequent use of compound words.

Both the poets do possess enormous potentiality in using innovative rhetorical and metrical devices to make their verse rich, attractive, weighty and all-encompassing. Heaney is very fond of such rhetorical devices like metaphor, synecdoche, alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia. He even uses zeugma and asyndeton. Goswami is also very much fond of using alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia recapturing both voice and silence. While reviewing Death of a Naturalist Christopher Ricks comments about Heaney’s dexterity in the use of rhyme and rhetoric:

“The deploying of rhymes and half-rhymes, the subtle taking up of the hints, the sardonic pitying puns – there can be no doubt about Mr. Heaney’s technical fertility, and it gains its reward in adirectness, a freedom from all obscurity, which is yet resonant and un-condescending.”

In Goswami’s verse stylistic and linguistic innovation takes an unbelievably amazing height. Readers are taken aback with the huge hoard of resourcefulness in discovering the unheard music, melody and cadence of a great art. Even he discovers many nameless, untitled discourses through continuous exploration of dark human psyche and anarchic human soul. His paroles often tend to translate the soul of langue, but the intense clashes and contradictions of self and subject dissipate into innumerable, exotic, impalpable possibilities of meanings. Thus meaning is obliterated from text as text itself takes arbitrary shapes and dismantles the possibility of a coherent, logical and a meaningful discourse that possesses a name and title of its own. Of course, cultural, ideological or contextual transaction with multiple possible meanings of dismantled discourse continues throughout. This is a never-ending process. Goswami’s construction, reconstruction and final deconstruction of form, structure and semantic of discourse is revolutionary in poetry. Similarly, Heaney endeavours to rediscover the linguistic, textual and stylistic possibilities in his poetry that is never done before. Both Goswami and Heaney are technical past-master. They

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endeavour to weave vacant shuttle; a bare wire. As Neil Corcoron quotes Heaney’s own statement regarding this most astounding task that he undertook to perform. He asserts, “There are some lines in poetry which are like wool in texture and some that are like bare wires. I was devoted to a keatsian woolly line, textured staff, but now I would like to be able to write a bare wire.” (Seamus Heaney to Fintan O’Toole, 1984) Goswami does it more perfectly and skillfully. He, as Heaney in his poetry, ‘travels a rich boundary between conscious and unconscious’ and ‘fuses physical and metaphysical exploration’. He, in fact, etched together the irrational, transcendental, epiphanic, mythic and the palpable, perceptible physical world. In his poetry readers are haunted by both the awful inspiration and dreadful threat as there always remains a risk of falling into the vortex of quick-shifting images, symbols and rhetoric. The image, symbol or rhetoric that carries forward the ideas, the ‘competence’, is so unsteady and fickle that they appear, reappear and again disappear within the twinkling of an eye. They are like the sinking stars in the distant sky. These images, symbols and figures of speech are self-destructive as they never proffer a fixed and decisive meaning and always ‘erases’ themselves only to reappear in a different shape and with new meaning, thus opening the vista of diverse colourful and exotic semantic suggestions and possibilities. Linguistic and textual violence in the poetry of both Heaney and Goswami take a new turn, a victory and jubilation of violent resurgence of a new and livid discourse, a phenomenon that can strike even the sun to ashes (Surya Poda Chhai, 1999).

Violence in the poetry of Seamus Heaney up to Field Work and Joy Goswami up to Bhutumbhagohan
A diachronic comparative reading of violence in the poems of Seamus Heaney and Joy Goswami depicts a surprising similarity in their poetic art and vision, linguistic dexterity, stylistic innovation and craftsmanship. In regard to translating external violence of the world into violence in poetry, both are conscious of and concerned with the violence of past as well as contemporary moving history. Right from his first publication Death of a Naturalist (1966), Heaney shows his genre. He gets huge

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applause and wide acclaim from the literary circles all over for his distinctive artistic vision, novelty of style, brilliant technical mastery and linguistic experimentation. This maiden work of him is a prelude to his famous *North* (1975). The anthology consists of 34 short poems and largely deals with his childhood experience of nature. Like a painter the poet upholds the rural panorama of his family firm Mossbawn, his close relationship with places and persons living there. The book also is an invocation to muse and his attempt to recognize the gradual transformation of self from innocence to experience, to guilt and alienation. With keen, penetrating observant eye he looks around and into. Like Blake and Wordsworth he visualizes both the beauty and dread in nature. At the same time, like Eliot and Hughes he drove back to the dim and distant anthropological past. Like Keats he is “abundantly and enchantingly sensuous”\(^\text{174}\) and like Eliot and Hughes his poems are cerebral and psychological, too. Goswami’s *Christmas O Sheeter Sonnet Guchchha* (1977), though a crisp anthology of eight poems, shows an astonishing potentiality for a young poet of only twenty three. All the poems are soul-searching expedition of an artist where he tries to explore his identity, both as a poet as well as a human being. Like Heaney, Goswami too, appears to be highly sensitive and sensuous. In all his poems art and craft go hand in hand. He is also a master of abstraction. As Heaney’s approach is archeological, anthropological, historical and journalistic, Goswami’s approach is both *deconstructive* and *new historical*. In his poetry art and nature; psyche and physic; archeology, anthropology, history, myth and cosmology are embedded, sometimes symmetrically, sometimes like a collage and sometimes dissipate away as warring forces of contradictions and conflicts. His extreme abstraction, in a sense, is a metaphor for capturing the impalpable, unintelligible disintegrating, self-destructive chaos and anarchy of the existence. Goswami journeys from macro to micro whereas Heaney from micro to macro. The approach is different but the summum bonum of their poetic pilgrimage yields the same fruit.

There is surprising similarity between Heaney’s ‘Digging’ and Goswami’s ‘Jotugriho’. Both the poems are prefatory work in the first book of both the poets. ‘Digging’ is a rhetoric tool, a poetic prism which creates vertiginous possibilities in

the semantic of the text. Digging denotes diverse possibilities. The connotation is more than specific metaphorical destinations. Through digging the poet unearths the violent cultural past. The ferocity, barbarity and brutality of man upon man in the name of religion and ritual are the focal point of ‘Digging’. The poet amazingly compares his pen to a gun: ‘Between my finger and my thumb/ The squat pen rests; snug as a gun.’ Digging, for his forefather, was a physical labour. The poet minutely observes the digging of land for potato plantation. The art of digging is applauded by the poet. The metaphor indicates a painful return to the root. For the poet, cultural digging replaces manual digging of his forefathers. It also connotes that the poet is digging deep into the soul and psyche, the racial memory of his people. Here Heaney uses poetry both as a divination and a dig. And he seeks to give an ‘Irish’ bend, a rural, Catholic, or more remotely Gaelic, on the English literary, cultural, imperial set up. To sum up the importance of ‘Digging’ David Lloyd finely comments, “‘Digging’, an instance still cited sometimes with the authority of an ars poetica, finds its satisfaction in a merely aesthetic resolution, which, indeed, sets the pattern for most of the subsequent work.”

Heaney himself upholds the significance of ‘Digging’ in the following memorable statement:

“…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 archeological 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.”

Goswami’s ‘Jotugriha’ bears multi-dimensional ‘undecidable’ connotations. The title brings back the reader instantly to the mythological past of the Mahabharata (Book-I of 18 Adiparva, Section-CXLIII, ‘Jatugriho Parva’). The ‘Kurus’ conspired to burn the five ‘Pandavas’ with their mother Kunti to death. To execute their plan they made a house of lac in Varanavata for the Pandavas. But with the help of wise Bidur they


escape unhurt. In place of them a ‘nishad’ (hunter or fisherman community or one belonging to the community who does the job of cremation) woman and her children and also the architect of the house were burnt to death. In the text plurality of place, persona and language are blurred like Heaney. It narrates the event of the *Mahabharata* and at the same time of an ordinary man of contemporary time. The identity of ‘you’, ‘I’ and ‘Shomi’ remains indistinct. In the context of the great epic the poet hints at the eternal violence between good and evil and the ultimate victory of virtue. The poet’s exploration of the violent history of man in the garb of epical context may be compared to Heaney’s famous statement in the ‘Digging’: ‘... I look down.’ The poet enters deep down to the archeological and anthropological past. This excavation is indicative of the discovery of violent and brutal deaths of the Iron age in the bog peat. The poet digs with his pen. This pen, as the poet says ‘snug as a gun’. This ‘gun’ may be compared to ‘dark blue bow-arrow’ (shyamal dhonuk-tir) of Goswami. Of course, Goswami’s ‘Jatugriha’ is more complex, multifarious and multifaceted. The text is compressed with diverse undecided possibilities that war against each other. The reference to person name ‘Shomi’ further lends to obscurity. His adventure is at a time surreal, natural, psychological or sexual. He may also represent the rebel who determines to struggle for justice and freedom like Arjuna in the *Mahabharata*. The surrealistic image of ‘tent’ on the bank of river and the nocturnal walking on the sand bank of the river may be indicative of the naxal rebel’s movement during seventies. The most striking image of Goswami in the poem is that of the ‘house’: ‘Sampurna khudhar niche bali ar sora ar gandhaker griha...’ This house is the house of lac in the *Mahabharata*. At the same time, this ‘house’ may be symbol for human body, human passion that destroys the purity of soul. The poet says ‘Under whole hunger remains the house of sand, wine and sulphur’. This discovery of the poet leads him to the ascetic path of salvation and final resurrection like Jesus Christ. Linguistically and textually the body of the poem becomes battlefield of elusive, obscure, plural persona, places and semantics. The link of langue and parole becomes indistinct and dissipating. The narrative and dramatic elements of the discourse further enlarges its domain. In the poem the poet does not give any direction but he upholds the mental and physical state of universal human existence.

The title poem ‘Death of a Naturalist’ and ‘Blackberry-Picking’, ‘Follower’ and ‘Personal Helicon’ - all journey from innocence to experience. In the poems we
encounter sad and pitiable death of the naturalist and emergence of the empiricist. The poems’ simple descriptive approach, superb suggestive measure, wonderful childlike observation, keen and minute looking into the depth of existence are unparalleled. The image and symbols; the rhetoric and semantic in the poems are more specific, concrete and definitive than Joy Goswami. As a child the persona encounters rude shock of the world, his innocence and child-like wonder is vanished. The world of violence and brutal physical force overpower his sense of beauty. The agony and exasperation become the state of mind. As a child the poet is drawn to nature by conflicting impulses of attraction and repulsion. The poet uses subtle metaphorical means to lay bare all serious issues of violence and ferocity that lie beneath the surface of apparent peaceful co-existence. In the same way, Goswami’s poems ‘Sheetghum’, ‘Aposwapno’, ‘Christmas’ are steeped in dissipating semantic suggestions. Extreme abstraction and symbolic suggestions are so volatile and quick-shifting in the poems that even the images and metaphors fail to give any decisive paradigm for them. Form, structure, rhetoric and semantic are maneuvered with high artistic skill to give birth to a metamorphosed, phoenix-like transcended state that provides and at the same time denies what it provides, creates and de-stabilizes what it stands for and finally leads to a deconstructive plurality of discourse, text, language and langue. Goswami’s credit lies in easy twinkling transaction between abstract and concrete; images and impalpable elusive existence; langue and parole; ideal, real and hallucinatory; psyche and physic; micro and macro; creation and chaos. Like ‘Jotugriha’, Sheetghum’ is another example of abstraction. The poem is multidimensional, multifaceted and prismatic. Here thematic and linguistic violence are interdependent and contributory elements which are woven fine. The only important character in the poem is the ‘old cobra’ whose identity remains indeterminate and indistinct:

Advut, shital kundo ghire sou provin keute.
Chhatfote kinnortike moddhye rekhe andhokar ber
Arektu sankirno chhoto kore ano….

[Old cobra, lie by surrounding strange, cold circle. Keeping the restless ‘kinnor’ (singer of the heaven, with human body and horse’s face) in the middle, close the circle into a smaller space…..]
What does cobra stand for? What does piercing its poison tooth into the body of its beloved one that turns the victim blue and renders her to clutches of death, suggest? What does the winter sleep of the cobra for thirteen lac years and its reawakening, indicate? The apparent meaning of the cobra’s action suggests sexual violence. But this semantic suggestion is deconstructed into an infinite number of suggestions. The ‘old cobra’ may be the Biblical snake that deceived Eve and Adam. The snake instigates them and they eat fruit from the ‘Tree of Knowledge’ by violating the order of God and are expelled from the Garden of Eden for their disobedience. Their innocence is lost as they gain Knowledge and eternal suffering simultaneously. Thus the ‘cobra’ may be used as a metaphor for sexual violence as well as newly acquired Knowledge. The idea is akin to the fiery sexual passion as enunciated in the Bhagabad Gita. In the holy book the passion for sex has been compared to burning fire that is never extinguished. The uncontrolled passion destroys both the body and soul of man. These religious connotations are embedded in the text as hidden locations. But these destinations are only tentative as the text proffers many other possibilities immediate after turning up to its present destinations. The concluding part of the sonnet sounds surprisingly closed semantic where the speaker uses the oxymoron ‘poison, knowledge’. But this again destabilizes the apparent definite meaning of the discourse. The speaker warns if the snake does not control its hood all will be erased and destroyed.

‘Aposwapna’ is another bleak, surrealistic, nightmarish poem where the image of demon is presented with detailed psychological sketch of dread and fear. The demon’s sharp, pointed claw, pierced upon the neck, face slightly curved to one side, multiple red spots on the face, penetrated log in eye, indistinct demon. This vision is shivering. The poet asserts that the vision vanishes immediately at the moment of one’s approach at it. Beside this menacing, blind, destructive force the poet presents the binary, antithetical, opposition of the beauty of nature through the metaphor of a ‘wedding girl’. The poem is also abstract personified. The syntactical symmetry with

the symbolic and imagistic presentation of abstraction, lay bare the psyche and soul of man. The dread and void, the disintegration and chaos of human mind is hinted at. The experience is shuddering. Let the readers have a glimpse of the demon:

...nokh
Bindhechhe gharer niche, ekpase bankano mukh, asposto pishach;
Sara mukhe lal daag, chokhe dal fute achhe, kachhe jao – nei……..

[…..nails pierced. Under the home, the face of an indistinct hag turning to one side. The whole face is marked by red spot and the eye is pierced by a log. Go near, no more there.]

(‗Apaswapno’, Christmas O Sheeter Sonnetguchchha (‗Bad Dream’, Christmas and Collection of Winter’s Sonnet)\textsuperscript{178}

Here too, like the other discussed poems of the anthology, linguistic violence and thematic violence become complimentary to each other. The segmental assembling of the syntaxes is tight and compelling. For compression, the poet takes in the use of plethora of punctuation marks such as comma, semicolon, dot, dash, exclamation mark, full stop and inverted comma. The unique use of his rhetoric and images creates much assonance towards something vast airy nothing. This weaving of bare wire or in the words of T. S. Eliot, ‘vacant shuttle’, culminates in the poem ‘Christmas’ of the anthology. The same superb abstraction do we find in Seamus Heaney’s Station Island phase. But the fundamental difference lies in between the two is that while Goswami’s approach is objective and impersonal, Heaney is subjective like Wordsworth. But his egotism is characteristically different from Wordsworth too, because he tells less about himself and more about the world he inhabits, its nature, man and culture, both of past and present. As a creator Goswami remains almost invisible behind his creation; he maintains an aesthetic distance to unfold the objective world. This technique helps him to let diverse threads of areas and issues

run at liberty. This renders his domain of thought and imagination indefinite and unconfined. The very first part of the poem ‘Christmas’ is sharp, unique and pointed:

Asole se moumachhibarger. Yake abujh kirat
Hathat ahoto kore niye elo aggan ratrir
Talai, kharer shayaya pete tar deho theke teer
Dhire tule nilo yei bhese uthlo kompito, birat
Africa, sheeter ratri, ghumanto mastul, dirgho dek……
Taro aage ude yai batase nirbhar balcony
Aro bharhin deho; ki ye halka! Samosto arponi
Takhun ulkai chhilo…

[Actually she/he belongs to bees. The foolish hunter wounded her/him and brought under ignorant night. As soon as the arrow has been picked out from her belly, the vast shivering Africa, winter night, sleeping mast, long deck started floating before the weightless balcony, away in the air, more weightless and airy. All dedication was then with the comet.]

(‘Christmas’, Christmas O Sheeter Sonnet Guchchha [‘Christmas’, Christmas and Collection of Winter’s Sonnet])^{179}

In a sense, the poem is a statement of violence through the passage of time. The image and symbols, never used before so powerfully in Bengali verse, are Goswami’s unique creation. The very first sentence is sharp, pointed and penetrating where he asserts that ‘in reality he belongs to the bees’ (Asale se moumachhibarger), here ‘he’ is a metaphor for Jesus himself. He gives honey to humanity, the eclectic manna for mankind. ‘Bees’ bears diverse suggestions of which honey (of life) is the most dominant idea. ‘Abujh kirat’ (ignorant hunter) wounds him and brings him under the ignorant night. Each of the words bears profound meaning. The hunter may be those who tortured and killed Jesus. They may also represent any man, in general with the murderous instinct killing the good and noble and numinous. Or it may be dark, killing psyche of man buried under the depth of human soul. Then comes the surrealistic images of ‘Africa’, ‘winter night’, ‘sleeping mast’, ‘long deck’,

‘weightless flying balcony’, ‘more and more ethereal body’ which bring back the readers to the dim and distant cultural past of mankind, ranging back to as early as the time of Creation. In a way, the readers journey from cosmos to chaos or vice-versa. The sudden transition from past to present shows Goswami’s brilliant technical mastery, innovative linguistic and stylistic dexterity, superb artistic excellence in compressing time and assembling events and ideas. All of a sudden, the readers are landed at Oxford, in London for a holiday trip in close companionship with a classmate girl’s friendly apartment. There the friends celebrate Christmas day with old and children. The word ‘children’ again brings him back to the dark, deadly, contrived corridors of time, to a huge ship, to the dark horizon of Africa and to Bethlehem. Linguistic and textual violence carry forward the ferocity of cultural, religious, ethno-political colonial (where ‘Africa’ is referred to repetitively) violence that drive forward to the eternal violence of good and evil. All these issues and many more are embedded in the deep structure of the text. In a way, the poem emerges as a universal statement of violence incarnation. This poem of Goswami may be closely compared to Heaney’s ‘Death of a Naturalist’. Both the poems cross the boundary of innocence and meet violence and dread. The poem has two parts of which the first part sings the songs of innocence and the second of experience. As Heaney voyages from micro to macro, he sees the universal state of dread in a grain of sand. Structurally the poem is consisted of rich diversities. Like Goswami’s ‘Christmas’, it is written in blank verse with plenty of caesura and is divided in two distinct parts. The texture of the poem is tight and compelling and the observation of nature is perfect and penetrating. He sees nature with the penetrating eye of a naturalist and wonder of a child. Like ‘Christmas’ this poem is also steeped in rich symbols and images. The poem, in fact, attains its perfection by picture and sound effect. The description unveils the picture of a ‘flax-dam’ with all its paraphernalia. The music, melody and cadence of nature with each movement of the frogs he observes yield perfect aesthetic satisfaction. Like this, Goswami’s poem is also sonorous, musical and melodious. Both tries to catch hold of the same experience, but their approach is reverse. Goswami’s poem is airy, ethereal and abstract concretized but in Heaney’s poem concrete, substantial, objective reality are deconstructed and dissipated towards diverse unknown directions. The diction and syntax in both the poems are sharp, pointed and innovative. The first sentence of Goswami’s ‘Christmas’ easily reminds
the startling, energetic expression of the great metaphysical poet John Donne. The central idea of both the poems is akin to each other. ‘Death of a Naturalist’ describes a painful departure from innocence to experience; from nature to culture; from instinctive sense perception to intuitive knowledge. This transition and transcendence lead to dread and fear. The undercurrent of violence erupts in the process of experience and knowledge. The death of a naturalist may indicate many possibilities. This may be the death of innocence and bliss of the beauty of nature. It may also be the death of natural, instinctive impulse of the naturalist observer. This invasion of experience and knowledge leads to chaos and darkness. This brings about the extinction of peace and tranquility, abolition of the abode of God. This experience of Heaney exactly resembles Goswami’s where he introduces the episode of the death of Jesus, the Naturalist. With the murder of Jesus the Innocence violence creeps into the world, at least Biblically. The same idea of awakening into experience is presented in Goswami’s ‘Sheetghum’, of course, through the metaphor of the Biblical Original Sin. What does the naturalist see in the first part of the poem? As a child he sees the flax-dam, takes its smell. He sees the bluebottle flies, buzzing around the flax-stems, ‘weaving a strong gauze of sound’. He describes how various insects like bluebottle, dragon-flies and spotted butterflies are attracted by the festering flax. However, the boy is fascinated most by the frogspawn growing ‘like clotted water’. In the second part of the verse the naturalist encounters horror and dread of experience. He describes how in a hot day the ‘angry frogs’ through the fields of grass and cow dung, made their almost military invasion. The boy ducks, as if to hide from the enemy. To the boy they appear menacing, with their ‘obscene threats’, bent on ‘vengeance’. The frogs made a clamoring sound as if in a battle field. The poet describes the frogs as ‘great slime kings’, ugly, sickening and dreadful to the boy. The last part of the poem describes a dreadful experience of fear and violence, the child encounters:

The slap and plop were obscene threats. Some sat
Poised like mud grenades, their blunt heads farting.
I sickened, turned and ran. The great slime kings
Were gathered there for vengeance and I knew
If I dipped my hand the spawn would clutch it.

(‘Death of a Naturalist’, Death of a Naturalist)
The menacing, dreadful, violent experience has layers of meanings like Goswami’s ‘Christmas’. The poet narrates the process of death of the naturalist. And he does not give any clue of how this metamorphosis takes place. But the symbols, images and metaphors of the concluding part of the poem, particularly the brazen, robotic movement and aggressive, violent action of the frogs are suggestive of the state of chaos and disintegration. The horror is indicative of violent state of Ireland as well as of the world. The image of war, aggression and ferocity of the frogs are suggestive of the state the material world as well as mental spiritual state of man. Heaney reconstitutes both the worlds by breaking through the existing pattern of rhyme, rhythm, rhetoric and linguistic usage. Moreover, his frequent use of native Irish as well as Anglo-Saxon jargon gives his poems an exotic shape and dimension. Heaney’s poems attains so high an artistic excellence by subtle psychological exploration and keen scientific observation of every details and assembling the experience in apparent order by linguistic and rhetoric tools. His symbols, images, metaphors, textual map try to bind together diverse facets of experience of life and world. He looks inside and outside; past and present through the metaphor of poetry. Like an archeologist he excavates the dim, distant, buried past. Like a historian he glimpses at the past recorded events of violence and brutality. And also he uses myth and rituals of past as metaphor for present religious and ethno-political conflicts in Ireland and abroad. His poems, apparently dealing with very small, insignificant theme of life like picking blackberry, in the poem ‘Blackberry Picking’, suddenly get high momentum and attain great and permanent truth of life. Even in such simple pastoral poem the undercurrent of violence is flashed. The readers are delighted with the innocence and sensuous beauty of nature but at the same time dismayed with the pitiable plight of the picked berries when they are dashed and rotten. This simple theme becomes metaphor for life’s transitoriness and sad ending. The poet also alludes to the violence of the Irish myth of Bluebeard:

    Round hayfield, cornfields and potato-drills
    We trekked and picked until the cans were full,
    Until the tinkling bottom had been covered
    With green ones, and on top big dark blobs burned
    Like plate of eyes. Our hands were peppered
With thorn pricks, our palms sticky as Bluebeard’s.

We hoarded the fresh berry in the byre.
But when the bath was filled we found a fur,
A rat-grey fungus, glutting on our cache.
(‘Blackberry Picking’, Death of a Naturalist)

A can full of blackberries takes after ‘a plate of eyes’; the ‘hands were peppered/ With thorns pricks’ and the palms of the pickers are compared to the bloody hands of Bluebeard, from the French folktale by Charles Perrault, La Barbe Bleue. The image of ‘a plate of eyes’, is horrifying and hands ‘peppered’ with thorns, red with blood imply something bloody, killing and painful. And the final analogy of picker’s palms with Bluebeard’s hands sends a distinct message to the readers. The simple pastoral metaphor of life’s inevitable transitoriness is further transcended towards many untraced dimensions of violence and barbarity of man upon man through the allegory of mythical atrocities and violence in the myth of Bluebeard. The ‘eyes’ may resemble the eyes of John the Baptist, whose head was brought upon a plate to Salome as a reward for her dancing before King Herod. The eyes may also be the eyes of innocent victims of those youths who fight for the cause of justice, liberty and noble ideal of life. The eyes may also stand for the rotten state of Ireland, ravished by colonial power for so many centuries. Bluebeard may represent the tyrant whose hands became gory as he butchered his wives one after another. Ireland takes after the innocent wives of Bluebeard and the tyrant represents the imperial oppressor who raped and killed the innocent Irish motherland. Political and sexual atrocities and violence is embedded in the context of the simple event of picking blackberry. This Bluebeard may be compared to the demon (pishach) of ‘Aposwapno’, ‘old cobra’ (provin keute) of ‘Sheetghum’ and ignorant hunter (abujh kirat) of ‘Christmas’ by Joy Goswami. Both the poets encounter violence and atrocities in their painful, strenuous journey from innocence to experience. Same digging, same excavation, same exploration of past history and psychic self continue throughout Heaney’s subsequent anthologies. Even in other remarkable poems of the present anthology like ‘Follower’, ‘Mid-Term Break’ and ‘Personal Helicon’, the poet is in search of identity and purpose of his writing. This he clearly proclaims in the concluding sentence of
‘Personal Helicon’: ‘………………………………… I rhyme/ To see myself, to set the darkness echoing.’ The poet speaks of soul-searching, discovering his identity. Of course, the epithet ‘darkness echoing’ leaves us to grope into darkness the multifarious implications and suggestions. The poem’s last part also leaves us at the entry point, the threshold of his second major collection Door into the Dark (1969).

The same spirit, tone and temper of violence is further intensified and escalated in the subsequent anthologies of both Heaney and Goswami. In Heaney self-searching is transformed gradually into a search for socio-political, cultural, psychological and spiritual state of place and people, of Ireland and of the world. Entering into the threshold of darkness and journeying through Wintering Out when the persona finally turns up to North he discovers himself evaporated, rather assimilated into third person. As he gradually enters, immerses and is enmeshed into the state of experience, he encounters both intrinsic and extrinsic violence of the world. His objective presentation of the world of violence is perfectly carried on by his linguistic and textual violence. Till turning up to North and finishing it Heaney is charged by the heat and fire of contemporary violence of the world as well as the turmoil and twister that makes a mess and chaos of the psychological state of a Catholic, living in Northern Ireland. Of course, Heaney is entangled by diverse contrary impulses and feelings of fear, dread, nausea and indignation. Even though he is drawn into the vortex of violence and turmoil of the world, he never loses his sense beauty and love for nature. All the while his sensuousness remains a telling phenomenon in his poetry. Sensuousness and love for nature remain two most important aspects of the poems of both Heaney and Goswami throughout the whole gamut of their poetic art. Starting from Christmas O Sheeter Sonnetguchchha (1977), journeying through Archeological Creature (1978), Aleya Hrad (1981), Unmader Pathokrom (1986) to Bhutumbhagoban (1988) Goswami is possessed by cosmic rage. His poems uphold the state of metaphysical abstraction as well as physical and psychological reality. As regard to the content of these collections, there is no fixed limit. The poet, like Wild West wind moves from chaos to cosmos, from big bang to the death of a star, the dark and bleak state of our universe and the strange predicament of all living creatures. Goswami does this through remote religious and mythical allegories as well by his keen scientific observations.

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The second collection of Heaney’s verse *Door into the Dark* (1969) is an artful surrealistic evocation of the physical and metaphysical world. Most of the poems of the anthology hang in between the two. The poet feels and is drawn towards the mystery, fear, beauty, dread of the psyche. At the same time the horrible happenings of human world around him was too painful for him to give an account of it in detail. He is at a loss to get appropriate word to paint the picture of huge wastages and meaningless loss of human lives and human resources. He therefore, tries to evoke the darkness through subtle hints and suggestion, symbols and signs, images and allegories, myth and rituals of distant past. John Wilson Foster criticizes Heaney for this method of poetic voyage: “the dark remains unchallenged by the end of the book. Heaney has a marked reluctance to strike inwards, to cross the threshold, to explore the emotional and psychological sources of his fear.” Heaney himself proclaims the strategy at this stage, ‘I rhyme/ To see myself, to set the darkness echoing.’ (‘Personal Helicon’, *Death of a Naturalist*). Whatever may be Foster’s opinion, I think this strategy of Heaney helps him opening up innumerable avenues of semantic suggestions in his poetry. He refuses to surrender either to any ‘ism’ or socio-political demand of the time. Moreover, the term ‘dark’ in the title of the book is steeped in multiplied suggestions. The ‘dark’ may hint at the mystery and horror of the unknown universe. It may also suggest the dark and distant archeological and anthropological past or the dark racial memory of the ancient forefathers. This may also imply the chaos and darkness of the disintegrated human psyche. The darkness may also be the spiritual darkness of the faithless modern man. The darkness may also assert the dark and bleak state of Irish political perspective which has met plethora of cold-blooded murders and pogroms throughout centuries. Instead of making any easy political conclusions, Heaney keeps numerous possibilities hovering over the threshold. This same technique is used by Goswami, too. Goswami’s *Archeological Creature* (*Archeological Creature*) enters into Heaney’s darkness. Both bear same suggestions. Both dip down to the primordial past to excavate the universal state of existence of which violence is a major phenomenon. In the poems of both the

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distinction between past and present is blurred. Both move with ease and spontaneity in between past and present, conscious and unconscious, physical and metaphysical.

One of Heaney’s famous poems in the second anthology is ‘Requiem for the Croppies’ which deals directly with a historical event of war and violence. The terrible battle of ‘Vinegar Hill’ (1798), fought between Irish rebels and the English colonial rulers is the subject of the poem. Although the poem upholds determinate political perspective, much against the obscurity and ambivalence enunciated elsewhere, it nevertheless has layers of meanings and suggestions. One cardinal theme, of course, is the barbarity, brutality and bloodshed of the meaningless and unwanted war and violence. One major achievement of the poem is that it craftily conjoins the centuries of Irish violence and political struggle and achieves an organic, indeed germinal resolution: ‘And in August the barley grew up out of the grave’. Heaney himself gives an elaborate account of the composition of the poem, its historical and political relevance:

“[It] was written in 1966 when most poets in Ireland were straining to celebrate the anniversary of the 1916 rising. That rising was the harvest of seeds sown in 1917, when revolutionary republican ideals and national feelings coalesced in the doctrines of Irish republicanism and in the rebellion of 1978 – itself unsuccessful and savagely put down. The poem was born of and ended with an image of resurrection based on the fact that sometime after the rebels were buried in common graves, these graves began to sprout with young barley, growing up with the barley corn that that the ‘croppies’ had carried in their pockets to eat while on the march. The oblique implication was that the seeds of violent resistance sowed in the year of Liberty had flowered in what Yeats called ‘the right rose tree’ of 1916. I did not realize at the time that the original heraldic murderous encounter between protestant yeomen and Catholic rebel was to be initiated again in the summer of 1969, in Belfast, two months after the book was published.”181

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At this point historical and political violence of Ireland is transacted into poetry. Heaney thus endeavours to present the ideological state of Ireland, then and now, coalesced into an organic whole. There is, of course, a complex interplay of voices and points of view in the poem which displaces the reader and introduces several levels of indeterminacy regarding context, identity of the personae and the poet and the complex relationship among them. The readers, while going through the poem are assimilated with the ‘requiem’. The deep attachment and bond between the soldiers (or the Irish republican patriots) and the readers is established immediately with the very close and intimate voice of agony, pathos and nausea of the butchered and buried rebels. The poem’s patriotic fervour, humanitarian zeal is noticeable. The first person narrator is a killed rebel who hails their uprising as resurrection. The rebels may be killed, but the struggle for justice and liberty would continue. The Jesus-like resurrection of the Irish struggle for independence from the divisive foreign force is heartily welcomed by the poet. Although, in many occasions he is accused of remaining passive and detached from the cause of Irish independence, this poem is a fitting reply to the unjust criticism of Heaney. As a poet as well as an Irish citizen he candidly criticizes the British policy in Ireland.

“In 1988 upon receiving the Sunday Times award, the skald turned into scold as he candidly told an admiring English audience that ‘policies which Downing Street presumably regards as a hard-line against terrorism can feel like a high-handed disregard for the self-respect of the Irish people.’”182

Although the topicality of the poem reduces and restricts its poetic nuances, it shows that violence is a major operative force in the poem of Heaney. But in ‘Bogland’ Heaney just reverses his approach and method of presentation. He gives up monologue and refuses to refer to particular historical-political event. Instead he takes recourse to symbol, metaphor, allegory and myth. He enters deep into ‘the matter of Ireland’. ‘Bogland’ stands as metaphor for Ireland. Person, place and action are thus one step removed from direct history. The poet speaks of voyage ‘inwards’, ‘downwards’: ‘Our pioneers keep striking/ Inwards and downwards.’ (‘Bogland’, Door into the Dark). This journey may suggest many possibilities. The foremost, of

course, is the strenuous receding back to the primordial Irish past, its folk history and myth, its hoary tradition, its honor and glory and its savage rituals and barbarity. The inward journey may indicate the psychic self-searching of person and people of Ireland. The psychic residue or the racial memory of a great people is excavated through the journey of the poet. This inward journey may also suggest a spiritual exploration of a plundered nation. It is noteworthy that the poet uses plural term for the great journey to ‘inwards’ and ‘downwards’. This subtle suggestion keeps us hovering over the indeterminate and inconclusive state of history and memory. The antithesis of first person ‘we’ and third person ‘they’ reveals the subversive state of a subdued nation. Through the allegory of ‘bogland’ the poet simultaneously lays bare the greatness and beauty as well as the suffering and agony of his motherland. Here text becomes an arena of expressing his anger and protest against foreign aggression and exploitation. The idea is manifested through the expression:

    Everywhere the eye concedes to
    Encroaching horizon,

    Is wooed into the cyclops’ eye
    Of a tarn.

    (‘Bogland’, Door into the Dark)

The ‘encroacher’ is definitely the alien colonial power who plunders, rapes, kills and makes slave of a free people. The allegory of ‘cyclop’s myth further intensifies the aggressor’s mindless, brutal and violent physical force. In Homer’s great epic the Odyssey ‘Cyclop’ is the giant son of the Greek god Poseidon whom Ulysses blinded inside his own cave. The suggestion hints at the imperialist aggression of England. The poet predicts that the predator nation will not excavate minerals for the prosperity of the country. On the contrary, the poet says:

    They’ve taken the skeleton
    Of the Great Irish Elk
    Out of the peat, set it up
    An astounding crate full of air.

    (‘Bogland’, Door into the Dark)
‘Great Irish Elk’ is symbolically used. It implies beauty, innocence, purity and soul of Ireland. ‘They’ have killed the ‘Great’ deer and then stolen its skeleton. The ferocity and underlying violence is excavated out of the dark swamp. Through the metaphor of ‘bogland’ Heaney posits the binary antithesis of nationalism and imperialism. His sympathy definitely goes with justice, liberty and humanism as he fondly speaks of the beauty and treasure of the bogland and makes a veiled attack on the imperialist aggressors. Here too, violence lies deep into the dark history of distant past as well as present and in the dark recesses of human psyche. As regard to the linguistic and textual violence, Heaney’s frequent use of native and Anglo-Saxon jargon gives his verse an exotic appeal. The syntax is compressed with the help of symbolic and imagistic shorthand. The lines have irregular metrical scheme within very short stanzas. The expressions are short, crisp but solid and suggestive. They bear the weight of serious and ponderous theme which Heaney excavates by roaming through the dark and unknown passages of history, myth and rituals.

Another technically accomplished poem in the series of Door into the Dark is ‘Relic of Memory’. Textual and linguistic violence is a tour de force in the poem. The poem is like an ancient stone – solid, permanent, beautiful. Language itself is condensed in the text. Almost all superficial traditional linguistic tools have been shorn off to give language and the ideas it endeavours to bring within its purview, an original shape sans ornament, for its readers. The poem has very few punctuation marks. And it almost abandons the most important linguistic tool, verb too, to play any role at all. He uses only a few weak verbs. The poem looks like the naked shape of the most original state of art. Tough dictions are tightened together with diverse symbolic suggestions and nuances of meanings. ‘Relic of Memory’ is a metaphor for the ‘lough’, the bog peat and the storehouse of images which unearth the universal state of physical and metaphysical universe as well as human soul and psyche. Let us have a look at the concrete linguistic matrix of the poem:

    The lough waters
    Can petrify wood:
    Old oars and posts
    Over the years
    Harden their grain,
Incarcerate ghosts

Of sap and season.

(‘Relic of Memory’, Door into the Dark)

Absolute abstraction leads to many undecided possibilities. Each noun in the extract is a prismatic symbol. ‘Lough’, ‘water’, ‘wood’, ‘oars’, ‘years’ render semantic suggestions into many undecided possibilities. The lake water, like the bog, preserves evolutionary history of creation and creatures.

Most of the poems of first phase of Goswami are creation of a cosmic rage and mad ravings at the medley and chaos, anarchy and void, disintegration and lawlessness of the universal state of man, nature and God. Goswamis’s canvas is therefore, infinite, indeterminate and inconclusive. All ideas, events, associations and experiences are fused in his artistic collage of verse. The title of Goswami’s second anthology Protojjeeb (Archeological Creature, 1978) echoes Heaney’s archeological excavation of past that starts with ‘Digging’ and continues throughout, as a leitmotif of his poetic pilgrimage. ‘Jiv’ (Tongue) is one of his remarkable poems in the collection. In the poem diverse facets are etched together to give a comprehensive view of violence and chaos in the universal state of existence. His surrealistic journey to the dim and distant cultural, anthropological, archeological and astronomical past reaches as far as to the creation of universe and life in our planet. At all levels and layers of his voyage he experiences violence and a nihilistic void, a bleak and blank nothingness that swallows everything. The tongue represents lust and greed that kills and destroys the poor, weak and wretched. He sarcastically states how civilization enriches with ores, iron and oil but cut the vein of the labourers and daily wagers. State becomes a mindless mechanical machine of exploitation and torture of the poor and downtrodden. Here I quote few lines:

Jege otho aro loha, aro khoni, aro tel!
Jege otho ogo petroleum, kahar
Duhita go tumi? Khinno
E shorire dau yatha-
Bihit jalani, jagao mithen
Aleyar e karunye
Chhindre dau shesh habar
Samukhe dandano sromiker shira.

[Wake up more iron, mines oil. Wake up dear petroleum. Whose daughter are you? Give proper fuel to this weak body, mithen to this weak will-o-the-wisp. Tear off the nerves of the labourer before their death.]

(‘Jiv’, Protnojeeb ['Tongue’, Archeological Creature])

The image of ‘sonar pakshri’ (golden bird) that licks its tongue upon the blood of the underdogs (chhotolok) is even more violent and murderous. Next, the image of torture and atrocity in police custody evokes the painful memory of state-sponsored terrorism in Bengal during seventies:

Chheleti kanpchhe, garode
Seu chhilo tin bachhor, chinyo
Ekhono shorire

[The boy is shivering. He also had been in jail for ten years. The sign of torture is still on his body....]

(‘Jiv’, Protnojeeb ['Tongue’, Archeological Creature])

In the concluding two lines of the first part of the poem Goswami gives the image of a blunt, corrupt, evil force that kills and eats up the health of our nation. The patriotic fervour and passionate love for motherland is expressed as he lays bare the true picture of destructive and exploitative force that wounds and weakens the health of the nation:

………………….jirno
Ei deshe jage, edesheri kole pithe
Jege othe ek jihva – lolup, dirgha, chapta, vonta.

[In this decayed land and and on its lap and back awake a tongue - lustful, long, flat, blunt.]

Immediate before this statement he gives the image of the white horse of Rana Protap Shingh, as a symbol of liberty against all sorts of tyranny and oppression. Goswami seems to sympathize with the cause of who were inspired with the noble ideal of communism and humanism and dreamt of liberating mankind from exploitation, oppression and tyranny. For the cause of their great mission they were even ready to sacrifice their lives. The poet never speaks of any political ‘ism’, he subtly hints at the state of communist struggle during seventies. Goswami gives a sad picture of poverty, exploitation and oppression; at the same time, he predicts the tempest of revolution that would sweep away the oppressive regime. Here we have a glimpse of Shelley:

edike ma o kanyai
pathor bhange, ghame
bhorechhe deho, kole
teen maser ekta…shakhe
dekona ar kono
ganer pakhi, jhar
aschhe oe santo gram perei, dekho mate
ki tandobe akash ar mohua gachh upre fele kope.

[Hither mother and daughter work as labourer in crushing stone. They are sweating. The mother has anther child of three months age, on her lap. Don’t sing singing bird, in the branches of the tree. The tempest is coming over the quiet village. Look, how destructive the wind is. It uproots the ‘mohua’ tree.]

(‘Jiv’, Protnojeeb [‘Tongue’, Archeological Creature])

The tempest of revolution gives birth to the fiery rebels who promise a new dawn; walk across the untrodden hazardous paths for salvation of mankind. Goswami universalizes the noble cause of the revolutionaries when he states that the comrades all dissipate to Chili, Bavaria, Srikakulam, etc with their hand on the ‘holy body’ of the pistol. Up to this the poem has a distinctive political tone and he leveled a trenchant criticism against capitalist’s exploitation of the poor and sympathizes with the cause of the liberation and resistance movement. Although perspectives are
different, the approach of Heaney takes after Goswami in regard to his sharp criticism of the oppressive colonial power and his love for the Irish people as depicted in ‘Requiem for the Croppies’ and ‘Bogland’. But Goswami’s tone becomes furious when he condemns the lust and greed of man that breeds violence and hatred and destroys peace, prosperity and beauty of our mother earth. He depicts how the black tongue of man poisons and burns the atmosphere; how the greed of man turns the earth to a battlefield:

********* Prithivi to taltal
Ekhon tarole, chal, Khanikta bad-tad
Diye pabo bohu dhatu, bhanga tin;
Hoyto ba fele yaoa
nupuri karo! Ar kichhu purono reactor, bomaru,
emon ki bhanga beena peye yet pari …

[The world is winking in liquid. Extracting a little we will get many metals, broken tin, may be someone’s tinkling ornament round the anklet, some old reactor, bombar jet, even broken lyre.]

("Jiv", Protnojeeb ['Tongue', Archeological Creature])

One of the most famous poems of the anthology Archeological Creature is ‘Kalo Tribhujer Astoron’. Comprised of ten sections, the poem has almost an epical expansion and depth. With keen scientific observation, philosophic vision and profound artistic realization, the poet endeavours to give verbal equivalent to the violent state of universal existence. Remote symbolic suggestions, imagistic associations and almost impalpable abstractions have been used to assemble together chaotic disintegration, horror, dread and almost a bizarre conflicting state of phenomenal universe as well as psychological and spiritual state of man. In a way, the poem is a monologue of the cultural-anthropological evolutionary documentation of creation and creatures. Sex and violence, as depicted in the poem, is a primitive basic instinct. And Goswami leaves no stone unturned to break into the forbidden garden of the dark, chaotic, violent human psyche. Dreams, fragmented memories and

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obsessions appear and reappear again and again in the poem. The poet tries to bind together distorted, dissipated warring forces of human predicament and universal chaos. His translation of the dark and disintegrating elemental forces is an attempted reconstruction and synthesis of the constantly volatile, shifting forces that only lead to final deconstruction of what is translated into poetry. Quick, smooth and easy movement of his verse; exceptional skilful arrangement of proper diction in proper place; the medium of blank verse mixing often with all sorts of innovative rhythm and metrical scheme, give Goswami’s verse a symmetrical beauty of art and craft. The title of the poem accelerates into plurality of suggestions for ‘kalo tribhuj’ implies infinite nuances of meanings. But whatever may be, it is an evil, demonic, menacing force which exists as an integral, intrinsic component of existence. In the very first section Goswami presents the universe as:

Kalo mahakash. Prachondo fyakase, thanda. Khub seete/
Pith diye sudhu grahoguli pode ache…….

[Vast dark sky. Extremely pale, cold. Only the planets remain laying their back.]

(‘Kalo Tribhujer Astoron’, [Layer of Black Triangle] Archeological Creature).\textsuperscript{185}

The description of so cold and dead a universe is shuddering and awful. Immediate after the first stanza the poet smoothly travels through the vast space and time to turn up to the milk woman who sustains her simple life from hand to mouth and in the next stanza again he reaches to the youth who is caught by police, tortured and killed in custody without any trial. All this happens at the black hour of deadly night. In section II the image of ‘black eagle’ is extremely alarming and fearful.

Kalo eaglera jege ache. Birat ratri. Anyatha holey
Jhanpabe. Chardike sudhu nokh protibimbito.

[The black eagles have remained awake. The night is vast. If happens otherwise, they will jump and everywhere the nails are reflected]

The black eagle may imply black hole which gives birth to our solar system and our mother earth and the whale of the sea and the man and woman, and the trees and other living creatures. At this stage the poet dreams of the world of love and beauty, but his dream is shattered at the very next moment when he hypnotically narrates the fall of man to a fiery lake that burns and destroys everything. The fall and the picture of sulphuric fire allude to Satan’s fall from Heaven to Hell and also the first Man Adam and first Woman Eve’s fall from Garden of Eden, to earth, in the Bible. Goswami, of course, gives a clue regarding his telescoping of time and man’s sin, crime and punishment:

……………. Santar na chhai! Porbi to
Par ekebare gandhole! O tarol, o pinonnata
Budbudrashi futonto, ei prithivir chorbi to
Pudiochho tumi, sei yedin lokta bolechhe ‘more pito
Khamo uhader’ - sei yedin manushera bhalobasto raan,
Hunkar, hresha, Nagasaki – akasher dike uchhrito
Hoye yeto poda mansho, haat. …………………
…………………………………………………
Budo eagalera yege ache, soloso bachhar sanchito
Ratrir niche. Jagchhe nokh, danter sabdo, shaas.

[This is no swimming. They have fallen on liquid sulphuric fire. O, boiled bubbles of fire, you have burnt the fat of this earth from that day when the man said, ‘ O father, forgive them’; when people loved war-cry, neigh, Nagasaki – burnt flesh and hand would evaporate toward the sky….The old eagles have remained awake under the preserved night of 16 hundred years. Wake up nails, sound of teeth, breathing. ]

(‘Layer of Black Triangle’, Archeological Creature)

Here violence and atrocity of past is fused with the violence in the First World War. The brutal crucifixion of Christ and the pogrom of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are brought within a compressed time frame. The distinction of time and perspective is blurred. What remains is violence and killing instinct of man. ‘Father, forgive them’ (more pito/khamo uhader) clearly evokes the whole episode of the Crucifixion of Jesus. Again, the sulphuric fire (gandhok) is indicative both of the fire of Inferno and the terrible atomic fire of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The poet is apprehensive of the fact that the old eagles still remain awakening under the cover of black night’s long gown and he can hear the sound of their deadly claws and teeth and fiery breath. In the third section, the poet draws the devilish picture of a terrible ‘black cat’ with yellow eyes. The ‘black cat’ is imagined as the merchant of death as we find picture of desolate, lifeless villages with decomposed dead bodies and the poisonous cloud and wind entangled the sky. The black cat, like the black eagle, is a symbol for dark primitive killing instinct. It may also stand for the oppressive tyrants on earth who reign by killing and destroying all antagonistic forces. Or it may be any ferocity and evil that destroys good and innocence. The image of black cat and eagle is akin to the images of cat and eagle in Ted Hughes’s poems, multidimensional, multi-faceted. They uphold the idea of a diseased world, threatened by evil force. In the fourth section the images and symbols become more telling and powerful. With minimal verbal application, he creates maximum effect. The linguistic dexterity is noteworthy as to how he achieves this in this section. Let us have a look at the deadly demon which Goswami depicts: ‘Protihato, aspasto, ferano…/ Pishacher rurho ek-chokh.’ The fierce, killing single eye of a demon is dreadful and menacing. The other pictures he sets are the vein of rose and sulphur, death of bright, fast horse, skin of a lecherous hag, night of bread, wine and grapes. In section five he presents plethora of images, all of which reveal the precarious state of human condition, the helplessness and forlorn state of human destiny. The images reveal the journey of man through the passage of time, beginning from the very early days of civilization. They reveal the dead body of fighting soldiers, attack of snow and frost. The image of ‘oil sea’, tempest of ‘sand and vulture’, ‘finger of lighting’, all indicate violence and struggle man had to encounter in past and has been encountering in contemporary time. In section six the image of barbarity and violence on woman in the Middle Age, their slavery and bondage is hinted at. The advancement of civilization shows little
progress in this respect. The emergence of communism and the process of bloody revolution through class-struggle, the death of a fairy by dynamite blast, the king and his ‘kafri’ slave, and the last question of the monologue, a poetic version of King Dhritorastra’s query to Sanjay, about the latest state of the battle of ‘Kurukshetra’ in the *Mahabharata* – all reveal a medley of history and cultural chaos. In section seven the image of hungry fox eating flesh of dead birds and the poet’s identification of the foxes with ‘us’ give a primitive trait of human mind, particularly its animal instinct. In section eight Goswami refers to the political violence and police atrocity during naxalite movement in seventies throughout India, particularly Bengal:

…..chheletir dan buke sajore
Pa chalalo officer: ‘solo bachharer
Yato achhe thentle dao boot diye, proti
Ghar theke tene ano, tarpar moore
Gele bane fele dio’ …somosto nirbodhi

Jane eta bhoyonkor ekattor saal.

[The officer kicked on the right rib of the boy with heavy force: ‘Bring all those above sixteen years and tread them with shoe. If they die, throw their body in the jungle’….Everybody knows that this is the horrible 1971.]

(‘Kalo Tribhujer Astoron’, *Protnojeeb* [‘Layer of Black Triangle’, *Archeological Creature*)\(^{187}\)

In Goswami’s canvas time, places and persons lose specific distinctive identity and character and heighten the idea of universal state of chaos, anarchy and disorder prevailing upon human soul and elemental world. In Heaney’s poem a single theme, idea or event is condensed and then transcended to the supreme form of art by the poet’s keen observation and thoughtful representation of world of violence. Though in comparison with Goswami, Heaney’s poems are short in length, they are in no way less significant and weighty. ‘Relic of Memory’ is such a short poem comprising of four stanzas of six lines only but it has a tight, compelling, construction. The

connecting link among ideas, events and themes are remote, impalpable and unintelligible. Here violence is less vibrant, robust and multifarious as in Goswami’s. But here too, symbols and images carry forward readers to grope into the treasure house of semantic suggestions but without any specific search result. The multifarious suggestions enrich the appeal of the poem. The poem is like a piece of diamond - solid, dazzling, bright and beautiful. A unique technique is employed in the poem to bind all four stanzas into a meaningful whole. Last line of each stanza runs into the next stanza to connect sense and thus all four stanzas form the rosary out of the bead as they are. Like Goswami, Heaney too dives deep into the mythical and cultural past and unearths the underlying violence and brutality of dark human psyche. He too, like Goswami connects past atrocities and violence to the contemporary. The last five lines of third stanza closely resemble Goswami’s cosmic view of violence:

   Dead lava,  
   The cooling star,  
   Coal and diamond  
   Or sudden birth  
   Of burnt meteor  

   Are too simple,  
   (‘Relic of Memory’, Door into the Dark)  

The images of Heaney in the above extract surpass even Goswami in his use of pure abstraction.  

   There is a strange similarity between the journey of Heaney from Wintering Out to North and Goswami from Aleya Hrad to Bhutumbhagoban through Unmader Pathokrom. The poems of this phase of Goswami record the spiritual and psychological voyage of an emerging artist. In most of the poems the technique of surrealism and magic realism has been deployed where dreams, memories, myths, hallucinatory visions come through the unhampered, free operation of the ‘deep mind’. Right to the tune of surrealism the poems violate logical reason, standard morality, social and artistic conventions and norms. Here, Goswami repudiates the conventional artistic norms and experiments with broken syntax, nonlogical and nonchronological order, dreamlike and nightmarish sequences, and the juxtaposition
of bizarre, violent, shocking and seemingly unrelated images. Here, we come across an ever-shifting pattern where a continuous fusion of sharply etched realism in representing events of phenomenal world with fantastic and dreamlike elements, as well as with materials derived from memory, myth and fairy tale, take place. The diving deep into the fantasy world, though painful and agonizing, unveils the picture of dread, fear, agony and helplessness of a chaotic, bizarre and ever volatile existence. Most of the poems of this phase are short and seem to represent different broken and disjointed states of human psyche and soul. In this sense, the poems are fragmented, presenting and developing varied traits of void and violence, of anarchy and unsteadiness of precarious human predicament. In comparison with Goswami, Heaney’s poems are less powerful both in art and craft, though technically innovative enough. In *Wintering Out* Heaney has gone beyond the themes of his earlier poetry and has made a giant step towards the most ambitious, most intractable themes of maturity. The power of this book comes from a sense of isolation and desolation from all controversial political and national issues which constantly demand from the creative poets an allegiance to the cause of Irish struggle for independence. The poet’s freedom of thought and expression is materialized in it. Though the poet tries to evade the issues of politics, he constantly touches the context through the use of symbols, images, myths and cultural, anthropological associations. In exploring the state of human condition on the backdrop of Irish trouble, violence and bloodshed come spontaneously in Heaney’s poems. In Goswami’s poems, in the like way, violence and bloodshed of seventies come spontaneously as phenomenal event of political atrocities on man by state, as a part of universal disintegration and violence in the chaotic and disordered state of existence. Heaney journeys very often from particular to general and Goswami from general to particular, though their themes and matter are alike in spirit and character. Of course, coming to *North* Heaney shakes off the mantle of artistic isolation and uses his pen to write ‘political poems’. To judge the book impartially and judiciously, it seems to appear a political manifesto of contemporary Ireland. In this regard Seamus Deane’s observation is pertinent:

“The sheer atrocity of the old ritual deaths or of the modern political killings is so wounding to contemplate that Heaney begins to show uneasiness in providing with a mythological surround. To speak of the ‘man-killing
Another contemporary critic Helen Vendler shares almost same opinion with Deane regarding representation of ‘troubles’ in Heaney’s poems. He asserts that the ‘troubles’ “forced Heaney (who had been raised a catholic) into becoming a poet of public as well as private life.”

The approach and attitude may differ but violence is the cardinal force in the poems of both Heaney and Goswami. A very simple poem of Heaney is ‘The Other Side’. The antithesis lies in the title, for ‘other’ implies another entity to which ‘self’ addresses. Here the poet attempts to bring about resolution to a long-standing conflict between the Catholics and the Protestants. The lines below indicate the speaker’s endeavour:

I lay where his lea sloped
To meet our fallow,
nested on moss and rushes,

(‘The Other Side’, *Wintering Out*)

Behind this sober attempt of a humanitarian resolution of sectarian conflict lies the bloody history of massacre and ruthless killing of fellow human beings in the name of religion. The poet implicitly reminds each of the contending parties, of their same Biblical lineage and of their same stern livelihood through ploughing. There remains no fundamental difference between people of each group as they all are progeny to Lazarus, Pharaoh, Solomon, David and Goliath. At the very beginning of the poem the poet sings of the sanctimoniousness of his land through the symbolical and Biblical flight to the past:

Thigh-deep in sedge and marigolds
a neighbor laid his shadow

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on the stream, vouching

‘It’s poor as Lazarus, the ground’,
and brushed away
among the shaken leafage.

(‘The Other Side’, Wintering Out)

The term ‘sedge’ brings the readers back to the ancient bog peat of pre-historical violence. The allusion to ‘Lazarus’ refers to the famous Biblical anecdote of Lazarus and King Dives. Lazarus was a poor beggar but a virtuous man with all noble qualities of heart and soul. After death Lazarus went to Heaven, whereas King Dives went to Hell. The ‘ground’, that is, land, or the country Ireland is compared to Lazarus. The poem is conversational in tone. There are three sections in the poem and each section is comprised of stanzas made of three lines. The syntax is tight, compelling and suggestive. There are many archaic jargon used in the poem to lend it a unique flavour and historical dimension. The words like ‘sedge’, ‘vouching’, ‘fallow’, ‘furrows’, ‘tares’ ‘rut’, ‘kirk’ are rarely used by any poet in the whole range of English literature.

Another great poem in the anthology Wintering Out is ‘The Tollund Man’. The poem is the first of the group of poems called ‘bog poems’. This is a prelude to the series of bog poems subsequently written and included in North. The poem is a great one in the sense that it has multiple layers and levels of meanings which Heaney excavates after the great archeologists and anthropologists of Europe. Each of the layers bears multifarious connotations and yet they are connected to other, by some common characteristics of atrocities and violence that had existed during the Iron Age, the Christian era and remain strongly operative in contemporary life. The immediate incentives to ‘The Tollund Man’ comes from the Danish archeologist P. V. Glob’s book The Bog People. The English translation of the book appeared in 1969, the year Irish troubles broke out. The book explained that the bodies of men and women recovered from the peat bog, buried since the Iron Age times, were sacrifices to the Goddess Nerthus. The belief was that she needed new bridegroom each winter, to ensure fertility of vegetation the next spring. Heaney himself gives an account on the relevance of the book in the contemporary context. The body of the Tollund Man was found preserved in a peat bog at Tollund in Denmark, on May 8th, 1950. The
mummified body has been dated around two thousand years, the time of the early Iron Age. He was found naked except for a cap and a belt. A noose had been tightly placed around his neck and he had been strangled to death, possibly as a sacrifice to the Goddess Nerthus, for fertility and better vegetation in the next spring. The significance of the Tollund Man lies in Heaney’s ‘search for symbols and images adequate to our predicament’, that the Tollund man typifies a ‘befitting emblem’ for the ‘man-killing parishes’ of Northern Ireland. As Edna Longley asserts:

“The prototype developed by ‘The Tollund Man’ is a scapegoat, privileged victim and ultimately Christ surrogate, whose death and bizarre resurrection might redeem, or symbolize redemption for,
‘The scattered, ambushed
Flesh of labourers,
Stockinged corpses
Laid out in the farmyards…’”190

The violence and atrocity of the present sectarian conflict is so ruthless and awful that Heaney takes recourse to the mythical barbarity and atrocity to give vent to the unredeemed agony of the Ulster situation. At the same time, Heaney can freely communicate messages through myths and legends, which otherwise he can’t due to his compulsion to identity, place and language. Goswami’s poems, like Heaney bear multifarious connotations. Even in such simple poem as ‘Romanchokahini’, the poet breaks into the dark channel of history and brought to light the bloody history of plundering, killing and conquering of Attila, the Hun. The image of Hun warriors riding fast on horseback with spear in hand with their leader Attila is awful. The image of arson, ruthless killing of women, child and old and the picture of greedy and lustful saints who capture the anguished and tortured women are really shocking:

Banka diganto fete berochchhe, o ki ek jhank kalo-sada ghoda!
Jhunke prai nue achhe sohiser, ar pithe ogulo to barshai-
Majhe ekjon haat tulechhe – taar pa duto bankano – Attila?
Sab chalaghargulo jole yai pithe sant kore ese lage chhora

Pase bodhuti ekhono chhutonto bhanga kapaler theke khun jhare
Giye achhre pade asrome, ok tule nei lovi santora

[The curved horizon is bursting out. There is a herd of horses, black and white. The riders remain almost bend down and on their back are spears. In the middle one raises his hand – his legs are bent up – Attila? All the huts are set on fire and the knife is pierced on the back. A woman is still running with bleeding forehead. After reaching the hermitage she fell on the ground. The lustful hermits took her away.]

(‘Romanchakahini’, Aleya Hrad [‘Tale of Romance’, Will-o’-the-wisp Lake])^{191}

In the last line the poet refers to the folktales of ‘Rana dacoit’. Even though the title hints at unfolding a beautiful love poem the anecdotes of Attila ironically belies the reader’s expectation. As regard to the barbarity and atrocity of past the poem stands in comparison with ‘The Tollund Man’ of Heaney, of course, the perspectives are different. Again, the expression of the poem is strong, masculine and shuddering. Words, phrases or clauses, broken or nonlogical syntaxes, representing varied phenomenological and metaphysical ethos of man, Nature, God and Cosmos are quick-shifting, remotely inter-linked and destructively dissipating. Such expression as ‘Banka diganto fete berochchhe’ (Curve horizon is bursting out) may be compared to Heaney’s “Cloudburst and steady downpour now/for days”. Goswami’s next poem ‘Shikar’ (Hunt) upholds a menacing picture. The poet offers no clue as to who is the hunter and who is the hunted. But a thorough reading of the poem depicts a shivering picture of ferocity and ruthlessness of the hunter and the gasping agony and pain of the prey to be hunted. The hunter is compared to different animals like fox, dog and wolf which take position and then run after their prey to kill it. Of course, the metaphor unveils the history of seventies of West Bengal when young revolutionaries were caught, tortured and killed by the police. The poem creates a beautiful cinematic effect by presenting the picture of a man fleeing through dense forest and blood dripping from his wound shot by bullet. Goswami does specify nothing, thus creates a universal effect of police atrocities. Everywhere and always the wretched of the earth

becomes victim of state power. The underlying violence of the poem is crude, sensational and awfully bloody. Let me show how the wounded rebel treads through dangerous path of dark and dense forest:

Amio to ekdin bane bane palie cholechhi ratribela
Jama chhire aghate bandhan
Pichhon chhare ni sudhu fonta fonta garom kumkum
Sukno patai, ghase, kadar upore, thik top top pa fele choleche
Epas opas theke duto ekta sheal berie
Chete nichchhe swadu fonta, tara dile dhuke yachchhe jhoper bhitor
Bhoreo firi ni, ei jangole to sandhe hoi shiggir.

[I had also been running through nocturnal forest one day. Tearing off shirt the wound is bandaged. Only drops of warm blood (kumkum) follow the fugitive. By treading dry leaves, grass and mud he is walking. One or two fox come out from both side of the path and lick the tasty drop. When they are driven away, they stealthily hide in the bushes. Even at dawn I have not returned. In the forest darkness descends soon.]

(‗Shikar‘, Aleya Hrad [Hunting, Will-o’the wisp Lake])

In its cruelty, ferocity and murderous nature the poem may rightly be compared to Heaney’s ‘The Tollund Man’ which too, dramatizes the atrocity of past and the violence in Ulster. Police or State power plays the role of assassin. The protector plays the role of killer. The intensity and seriousness of the situation is heightened by such symbols as jungle, night, blood, tooth, etc, each of which indicates the killing, mowing, mechanical force of state. Another poem of almost same tune and same strain is ‘Chhai’ (Ash). The effect of violence is achieved in the poem through the antithesis of love and hatred, life and death, pain and consolation. In the very beginning the poet invokes the ‘spring’ to perform its daring task through agony and endurance of pain. He says: ‘Falguner khoton, yao, andhokare paye kush fute/ Tara chine chine fire eso………………’ [Go, you wound of spring, nails pierced in foot in the darkness of night and come by following stars] (‘Chhai’, Aleya Hrad). The expression bears many suggestions. This may be an address to spring of life, the

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youthful excitement and enthusiasm to navigate through hazardous and dangerous paths of life to achieve its cherished ideal and goal. Eternal cold will arrest potency and performance of life very soon and darkness will descend in no time. The young must be the torch-bearer for posterity. He must combat with all odds and oddities of life and overcome all adversities and misfortunes to bring about an enlightened world of ours. The poet unhesitatingly declares that in this mission he will also participate and remain always ready to sacrifice himself, blood and flesh, for a new morning. Love and hope, through the metaphor of a maiden, wife or beloved lady ever inspire the youths. But the antagonists are so powerful that the young rebel patriots can’t go beyond danger and are stranded in the sand of river bank, pierced by pointed ‘kush’, caught, killed and burnt unceremoniously. Love is lost, hope is crushed and dream is dashed to dust as the ‘vulture’ and crafty ‘fox’ pounce upon the dead body to tear its flesh.

Another poem of ‘Aleya Hrad’ is ‘Shakti’ (Power). The poem is short, comprised of eleven lines and looks apparently simple and easy but in semantic suggestion and linguistic force, literally it becomes power emblem. Written in free verse, its compressed syntactical elements connect each other and thus even in a single line, idea is shifted with changing images within twinkling of an eye. And the process is smooth, easy and spontaneous. Each word in the poem bursts like thunderbolt. The very first sentence, comprised of six words only carries atomic force and energy: “Sono, beje othe kalo saktir jarau’ [listen, there rings the uterus of black force]. The expression bears plural connotations. The poet addresses someone, not identifiable to listen to the music of the birth of black force. ‘Kalo saktir jarau’ may suggest ‘black hole’; in Hindu religious connotation may imply ‘ma kali’, the deity of power; symbolically it may indicate the emergence of destructive force. This expression follows closely linked images coming in quick succession, varied in nature and identity yet embracing one central idea of a black, demonic, devouring force. The image of bursting night, bursting pyre, oozing blood from its log, keeping eye upon it and again bursting eye-ball falling on the fire of pyre, depict a mindless, mechanical, robotic power operating to annihilate life and burning it in fire. The picture is of sad mortality. The poet’s ego is also projected through the image as he proclaims that like butter he burns himself to continue the fire and thousands colourful insects sat on his body. They don’t bite or suck rather they continue to infuse fiery sulphur. This
evocation of gigantic creative force and invocation to the cosmic, dark force, come simultaneously to operate on earth and on human life.

Three other poems ‘Gridhini’ (Vulture), ‘Thaba’ (Claw) and ‘Rakto’ (Blood) reflect same murderous psychic force, disintegrated split self, spiritual chaos as well broken, bizarre, dissipating state of external universe. Of course, the essence of internal and external state of metaphysical and phenomenal world is presented through the technique of surrealist innovation. The meaning of the poems becomes pluralistic and suggestive as because of their extreme abstraction and remote innovative symbolism. ‘Gridhini’, like ‘Shakti’ is a short, highly suggestive, multi-dimensional poem with undefined, plethora of meanings and implications. The expressions are sharp and penetrating. The surrealist images unfold a stark, bleak and chaotic spiritual and psychic state. The symbols effectively convey an acute killing instinct. Constant lashing of crude jargon, in association with image of vulture, death, destruction, blood and flesh reveal a monstrous world of awful existence. The title ‘Gridhini’ itself bears multifarious connotations. Vulture (Gridhini) is a carnivorous bird that lives upon the flesh of dead creatures. Its sharp claws, strong beaks, ugly appearance and nasty food habit create nuances of meanings. Though the bird is labeled as scavenger bird and a friend to society for eating dead animals and thus cleaning the environment, the fact remains that the bird’s tearing off flesh from the dead beast and eating it is shivering. The underlying tone of brutality, ferocity and menace are communicated through the title. The poem is a short monologue where the identity of both the addressee and the addressed remain indistinct. The poet presents surrealist image of a shipwrecked navigator, severely injured against sea-bed rocks, blood dripping from his wounded face as he struggles hard to come up to the surface of water. The moon ascends on the peak of the hill and the vulture sat upon it. It waits there to pounce upon him to tear his flesh. Symbolic manifestation of vulture is that of its carnivorous nature, predatory habit and killing instinct. On the other hand, the whole poem may stand for the metaphor of a mind-set, a psychic pattern, a spiritual state. The deep structure of human mind is so disintegrating that one is stuck horrified to encounter it and when come to conscious mind, man is no more of his own master, rather operated mechanically by the monstrous force of five sense organs and six (in Christianity seven) deadly sins. These may be only some implications of many undecided possibilities of meanings. ‘Thaba’ is another example of extreme
abstraction. Like ‘Gridhini’ it is also a short poem. Yet the symbols and images are very rich in suggestion and implications. They unveil an ominous world of evil, menace and destruction. The title ‘Thaba’ (paw) itself suggests a blind, violent animal force which is aggressive and murderous. But like Gridhini, here Goswami does not define the domain of semantic; rather he lets the readers grope in darkness of psyche and soul to get infinite possibilities. But the interesting point is that Goswami’s human figures are mostly victims of distorted psychic. They all bleed and suffer the agony of soul as well as the disordered state of phenomenal world. A trenchant surrealistic effect is achieved by such dreadful images as ‘paws’, ‘dense forest’, ‘dead child of moonlight’, ‘its accumulated bones spotted beside the bushes with the call of wild jackal’. Then the more illogical, incongruous, disjointed images follow. Someone screams and struggles to escape from tight bondage of some dark, blind force. Someone runs across the cloud. And then drop of blood falls on the cemented pedestal of pond, creaking of earth with the heavy fall of blood, then the vision of the countenance of a dead child and finally the moon’s frantic attempt to clutch its blood-floating entrails. The undercurrent of violence can be realized with the violence in the last few lines of the poem:

.............Keo chhute gelo megh diye? Ghater poithate

Ek fonta rakto sudhu jhore podlo, maati fete gelo se aghate?
Shisuder mara mukh bheso uthlo ki ekbar?
Ta keo dekhon ni, bodo megh kore esechhilo. Noile dekha yeto ei fanka

Kheaghate
Chand chepe dhore achhe rakte bheso yoa nadi taar.

[Some one moves through the cloud. One drop of blood fell on the ground and the land is cracked. Does the face of the dead children appear once? None has seen that because the heavy cloud covered the moment. Otherwise it was seen that in this ferry-ghat the moon has tightly caught her flooded river of blood]

(‘Thaba’, Aleya Hrad ['Paw', Will-o’the-wisp Lake])

Same trend of tearing asunder the soft fibre of his soul; the turmoil and conflict among diverse disintegrating sinister forces of psyche and soul; the struggle to come out of the crisis and void; a nihilistic, impalpable, uncontrolled tragic order of state is manifested through abstract symbolism and imagistic shock in such poems as ‘Haar’ (Bone), ‘Gokhro’ (Cobra), ‘Rakto’ (Blood), ‘Sheshrate Khamarer Pashe’ (Behind Firmyard at Late night), ‘Jakhom’ (Wound), ‘Bondhuke Ratrir Chithi’ (Night’s Letter to Friend), ‘Khudha’, (Hunger )etc, in Aleya Hrad. The inner war among conflicting forces of soul continues and the persona bleeds. The ‘bone’ lying on the bed of sand is used as abstract symbol for diminished or almost extinguished passion. The ‘flying warm ash’ that falls upon his ‘wings’ implies lost passionate fervour. In all the above poems ‘moon’ is used as a potent symbol. It bears diverse connotations in different contexts. In ‘Bone’ the moon we find is a crescent. In far distant saliva oozing from its mouth falls on the trees. The image indicates desire or lust but weak or unfulfilled. The idea is condensed in the last line: ‘Ar bali bichhanai eka dhiki dhiki purte thake haar!’ ‘Rakto’ offers an abstract picture of a loveless world of violent sex. Here ‘moon’ is shown as possessing an ugly split up body that sits on the perch of a tree. In the darkness of night we discover a girl who is severely wounded due to sexual assault. She lays unconscious upon a stair, her long hair covering her face, her naked arm pierced by broken bracelet is stretched at the water. The long, sharp blood-stained knife of the persona on the stair of the pond is awful and this is further condensed in the last line of the poem where we have a fearful, violent, nightmarish vision of the girl scrubbing the blood-stained knife on the stair of the river with her feet. The image communicates a horrible feeling of inherent ferocity, primitive instinct of blood and sex, a violent and brutish state of existence. The symbols and images aptly bridge the gap of vision, imagination, hallucination and real.

In many ways, the tone and temper of Goswami’s ‘Gridhini’ and ‘Thaba’ take after Heaney’s ‘Summer Home’. The poem attains its artistic excellence by transmuting violence in external world and human psyche into violence in language. Undecidable plurality of semantic suggestions, lead to obscurity and ambiguity. There is an exchange of abstract metaphysics and linguistic usages, both are mutually profitable to translate the bizarre state of contradictions and conflicts, the dialectical
state of being. Behind apparent meaninglessness, the poem upholds logic, reason and rationality. The expressions are short, subtle, terse and suggestive and the logic and connectivity are very remote and ‘self-effacing’. The war of ideas and images continue without reaching any conclusive finality. As in ‘Gridhini’ and ‘Thaba’ by Goswami, here too, layers of meaning are embedded in the discourse. The ideological state and cultural construct, the power relation between the rulers and the ruled, exploitation of and atrocities upon the subdued, in a society, of present and past, is translated in the text. In the very first stanza of the poem we come across with such implicit hints:

Was it wind off the dumps
or something in heat
dogging us, the summer gone sour,
a fouled nest incubating somewhere?

Whose fault, I wondered, inquisitor
of the possessed air.

To realize suddenly
whip off the mat

that was larval, moving –
and scald, scald, scald.

(‘Summer Home’, Wintering Out)

‘Wind off the dumps’ indicates the rotten state and ‘Something in heat/ dogging us’ suggests blind menacing force pursuing to pounce upon and tear off fleshes of its prey. In the next phrase we learn that ‘summer gone sour’, that is, the atmosphere is vitiated and everything that belongs to it is decomposed. The fourth line shows the state of rottenness more vividly, ‘a fouled nest incubating somewhere?’ The pun in the ‘fouled nest’ brings out the resolution that the beautiful nest of love and peace is turned into corrupt, decomposed, foul smelling place. The interrogative mark at the end of the line further lets the reader hover over to grope into the source of this
rottenness. The term ‘somewhere’ indicates that the conspiracy must have been incubated abroad. Thus the symbols uphold that something is rotten in the state of Ireland. ‘Something’ also alludes to Shakespeare’s famous play ‘Hamlet’ where Marcellus says to Horatio, ‘Something is rotten in the state of Denmark’. This evokes the whole history of the play, its conspiracy, bloodshed and butchery. Through this subtle hint the poet speaks of the rotten state of his motherland. This is enough to highlight the poet’s concern for violence and bloodshed in Northern Ireland. The sectarian violence and England’s unwanted role to poke its nose in his country’s internal affair is too, subtly hinted at. Of course, part -1 of the poem closes with full consciousness and realization of the proper state of affairs and the final role to be played, repeated in the last line of the fifth couplet, ‘scald, scald, scald’. All of a sudden revelation takes place and the persona ‘whips off the mat’ and saw the ‘larval’ moving. This idea is utterly obscure to have a determinate meaning. But it is suggested that the larval moves to be burnt and blistered. The last words therefore, emphasize on the ritual of sacrifice for an ideal cause. The second part of the poem shows how feelings are soured and love gone rancid:

Bushing the door, my arms full
Of wild cherry and rhododendron,
I hear her small lost weeping

O love, here is the blame.
(‗Summer Home’, Wintering Out)

Love is lost, grace is vanished and the ‘loosened flowers’ between them would taint to a sweet chrism, consecrated oil used in Catholic Church. Loss of brotherhood, nationality and humane feeling would corrupt and poison the very fountain of life. ‘Chrism’ has a Catholic association but this has nothing to do with the love for the Catholic sentiments and hatred for the protestant. The term simply upholds the profound loss and agony that the enmity and hatred have bred in the mind of men, both the Catholics and the Protestants. The extreme abstraction of the poem leads to countless connotations. A reading from psychological point of view would reveal the chaos in human psyche. A dark and sinister force operating throughout and the result
is disintegration and distortion of human consciousness. The ‘nest’ may mean psyche, soul or physic which has been possessed by some dark, inscrutable power. The persona says that he is an inquisitor of ‘the possessed air’.

This indicates the irrationality, non-logicality and unpredictability of human mind whose structure is utterly chaotic and which is a prisoner to that power.

The very first line of the third part bears plural connotations, ‘O we tented our wound all right’. This universalizes the identity of both the speaker and the person spoken to. Both tented the wound, meaning nurturing, nourishing and sheltering the wound. The pun in ‘tented’ creates superb symbolic effect in the context. From political and cultural point of view, they themselves taint their existence by indulging in violence and fratricide. From psychological point of view, the conflict and confrontation of the warring forces within human psyche inevitably dissipate and dismantle the supposed logicality and rationality of human mind.

What Goswami does with surrealistic narrative images, Heaney does with superb symbolic suggestions. The violence and bloodshed which the country and her sons do endure are the cardinal concern of both the poets. The psychic disintegration depicted in the poems of both the poet is telling and realistic.

Thus the evil, destructive force ‘dogging’ the persona in Heaney closely resembles Goswami’s ‘Gridhini’, the bird of prey pursuing the ship-wrecked navigator. The predator bird may be the state power, enemy state, sinister psychic force that parallel the dark, disintegrating cultural chaos, communal or psychic force, in Heaney’s ‘Summer Home’. Like ‘Gridhini’ Goswami’s ‘Thaba’ also develops same concept. In place of a vulture here we find a beast of prey and the fleeing person to be killed. The violence and ferocity is developed by a number of images and a visionary effect they create. The images of beast, blood, bone, dense forest, paw, face of dead child, crafty fox, heighten the sense of murderousness and monstrousness.

Linguistic and textual violence in Goswami and Heaney have close affinity. ‘Gridhini’, ‘Thaba’, ‘Rakto’- all the cited poems of Goswami are written in free verse. Words, phrases and syntax do not follow the rules of grammar. Neither do they follow strict metrical scheme. Punctuation marks are used arbitrarily with frequent use of caesura. The expressions are sharp, pointed and lively but the extreme abstractions lead to semantic obscurity and plurality of voices. The ideas collide with one another and reveal the dark, chaotic state of existence. The rhetoric lends much of the ambiguities and ambivalences in his poems. On the other hand, Heaney’s ‘Summer
Home’ shears all linguistic tools and ornamentations and offers only the skeletal image, the essence of his thoughts, and that is too, infested with contradictions and self-destructive forces within their forms and structural pattern. All five parts of the poem is supposed to be product of Heaney’s poetic shorthand. They are written as if in code language. The lines start abruptly. The syntaxes do not have the regular grammatical order. Most of them are broken and disjointed having remote connectivity and logical order. The stanzas are very short and irregular. In the first part of the poem we have five stanzas of two lines in each stanza. In part – IV a single idea is expressed by eight short lines having the structure of a single sentence. There is no punctuation mark in the whole part, except a single comma in the seventh line. Yet the language of these lines carry forward apparently disconnected ideas. The readers grope into infinite, indeterminate possibilities when they read such lines:

With a final
unmusical drive
long grains begin
to open and split

ahead and once more
we sap
the white, trodden
path to the heart.

(‘Summer Home’, *Wintering Out*)

**A reading of patriarchal violence in Heaney and Goswami:**
Gender bias is a dominant aspect in the poems of both Heaney and Goswami. Consciously or unconsciously masculine identity in their poems makes subversive attack on women. Males very often assert their aggressive phallic selves and degrade women as submissive sexual objects. Women have been represented in the patriarchal cultural context in such a way as to subordinate them to men in all cultural domains: familial, religious, political, economic, social, legal and artistic. As Simone de Beauvoir put it, “One is not born, rather becomes, a woman…..It is civilization as a
whole that produces that creature.....which is described as feminine.”

In this way the masculine in our culture has come to be identified as active, domninating, adventurous, rational, creative; the feminine by systematic opposition to such traits has come to be identified as passive, submissive, timorous, emotional and conventional. To the male figures, the females, when they play any role, appear as marginal and subordinate, and are represented either as complimentary to or in opposition to masculine aggressions and enterprises. In many poems of Heaney and Goswami, the approach to women is similar. Both Heaney and Goswami tend towards synthesizing the opposite, yet complimentary contradictions of male approaches to woman. Women have been represented in the poems of both as mere sexual object to fulfill male desires, whims and eccentricities. Sometimes they have been presented as attractive, provider of pleasure, peace and consolation; sometimes as repulsive, detestable creature who dooms, destroys, puzzles and paralyzes male existence. Another dominant trait of women has been presented through religious and mythical metaphor as a destructive agent, in the poems of both. Mother spouse figure also appear sometimes. But the most shocking aspect shown in their poems is that very often women have been subjected to physical torture, sexual atrocity and violence by men. The contradictory approaches to women’s representation in poems of both Heaney and Goswami are the focal points in bringing about the complex relationship of man and woman as a whole. Explicit sexual image rendering women as mere sexual object and subordinate to male domination is presented in ‘Goswami’s ‘Haar’ and ‘Gokhro’:

Amar bichhana keu pete rekhe giyechhe balite.
Batase garom chhai ure ese amar pakhai
Lege yai proti ratre. Ami dana jhere fele dite
Pari na tader. Dekhi dure sab gachheder bankano shakhai

Lala jhare ek fali chander………………………………..”

[Some one has kept my bed prepared on sand. Every night warm ashes flew away and fell on my wings. I can not shake them. I see saliva of the crescent moon drops on the bending boughs of trees at a far distant place.]

(‘Haar’, Aleya Hrad [‘Bone’, Will-o’ the wisp Lake])

The implicit suggestion of male irresistibility is asserted where women are presented as mere passive, meretricious creature. The last line of the poem is even more forceful, ‘ar, bali bichhanai eka dhiki dhiki purte thake haar!’ The burning passion of male is shown where female figure remains silent. The image of cobra in ‘Gokhro’ renders women as a seductive creature that incites lust and desire of male. The image of serpent alludes to the Biblical serpent, Satan the deceiver in disguise. The subversive attack on women is noticeable in the last two lines of ‘Gokhro’, ‘Bhebe dekhi oi dale/ Genthe debo kina amar ei bhije, nijhum kankal!’ [I thought whether to penetrate my moist, silent skeleton on that bough](‘Cobra’, Will-o’-the wisp Lake). The last line asserts strong male domination and female surrender. It has close parallelism with Heaney’s ‘Digging’ where apart from anthropological and archeological reference, farming metaphor is indicative of male sexual organ ploughing female fertile land. The phallic symbol is strongly operative in two other poems ‘Rite of Spring’ and ‘Undine’ in ‘Door into the Dark’. The timid, passive yet willing female sex and psyche is presented through the image of a water pump: ‘It cooled, we lifted her latch, / Her entrance was wet, and she came’. This masculine narcissism is even more apparent in ‘Undine’, which ventriloquises the water-nymph’s voice:

...And I ran quick for him, cleaned out my rust.
He halted, saw me finally disrobed...
Then he walked by me. I ripped and churned...

He explored me so completely, each limb
Lost its cold freedom. Human, warmed to him.

(‘Undine’, Door into the Dark)

The degradation of women as erotic figure follows in the poems of both Heaney and Goswami. In Goswami’s ‘Khudha’ (Hunger) women are presented as explicit erotic object. Male irresistibility and female passivity are registered throughout the poem. As in ‘Undine’, in ‘Khudha’ too, male phallus is strongly operative. The language is suggestive more of carnality and primitive instinct of sex than of love:

Ratri hole bune diie ami oor shorire nimesh
O kokhono kanpe ar kokhono ba anunoi-dip
Haate niye chhute yai anya ghare –

[When the night falls, I sow the moment on her body. Some time she shivers, some time implores – with taper in hand she ran to other room.]

(‘Khudha’, Aleya Hrad [‘Hunger, Will-o’-the-wisp Lake])

In the fourth stanza of the poem, the woman is presented as a polygamist. She is depicted as a despicable traitor, a faithless, fickle creature, a serpent, enjoying sex with others: ‘…..tari bhitorgrihe amar sarpini/ Anya purusher sange sankhe mete achhe, aar tar paroner/ Garod lutoi dure.’[In the room within my serpent is in copulation with other male and her silken gown trails at a distance.] (‘Khudha’, Aleya Hrad). This is direct attack against woman in general. The language itself is supposed to reflect male prerogative and male bias. The conceit of language as erotically enabling joined in the skeletal passage of ‘Bone Dreams’ with the female body as landscape in a political conceit. The Irish poet colonizes a female England with his magical charm of language. He upholds himself as the phallic ‘chalk giant’:

Carved upon her downs
Soon my hands, on the sunken
fosse of her spine
move towards the passes.

(‘Bone Dreams’, North)

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The persona ‘estimate for pleasure/ her knuckles’ paving’, and begin ‘to pace’ her shoulder. Of course, in the process of amorous activities male plays the active role and women as a passive object. Representation of women as a degraded, submissive, sexual object is vividly manifested in such poem as ‘Come to the Bower’ which combines the commonplace image of disrobing with richly sensuous setting of landscape which is one of Heaney’s most characteristic features:

My hands come, touched

……………………………

To where the dark-bower ed queen,

Whom I unpin,

Is waiting…………………..

(‘Come to the Bower’, *North*)

The act of unpinning encodes her disempowerment and at the same time it creates a pornographic effect of disrobing the woman. This determines her role as an erotic object, used for fulfilling the lust of man. At the end of the poem the attack becomes uglier when the woman is reduced to a commercial commodity, presented in terms of market price:

I reach….

to the bullion

Of her Venus bone

(‘Come to the Bower’, *North*)

The same picture of woman as erotic object we find in Goswami’s ‘Bondhuke Ratrir Chitthi’:

Romosh jantur moto ese thaki tor ghare
Ek din ballom ese bindhechhilo sorire amar –
Tarpar, nijeku upre niye anya kono deher bhitore
Biddho hote chole gechhe. Aaj ei kho to sthane tar

Trikon falar mukh yeno fire fire ase dube yete mangsher garome!
Nirjon jantur moto tor ghare thaki, sara ratri kharon, kharon..
[I remain sitting in your room like some hairy animal. One day a lance had been pierced in my body. After that picking itself out it went away to be penetrated to some other body. Today it seems the sharp head of its triangle lance comes again and again to be emersed in the warmth of flesh. Like a deserted beast I remain sitting in your room, all night there is continuous oozing.]

(‗Bondhuke Ratrir Chithi‘, Aleya Hrad [‗Night’s Letter to Friend’, Will-o’-the-wisp Lake])

The image of lance penetrating into warm flesh suggests sexuality. However, the active, advancing position is the man’s; the female figure remains almost silent or non-responsive. The cutting edge of lance or spear and the warm flesh which is being penetrated suggests aggressive phalus-centric role of male being the actor, performer and female, a mere sexual object. The amazing phenomenon is that the poet compares the persona to brutish beast (romosh jantu) waiting silently for its prey. The predatory nature of primitive sexual instinct of man is asserted. At the same time, female is rendered as a prey to man’s desire; a victim, an erotic object to fulfill man’s carnality. The subversive sexual violence against women is asserted strongly in both the poems of Heaney and Goswami.

In Unmader Pathokrom (1986) Joy Goswami becomes frenzied God, further explicating and destabilizing the disordered state of psychic and phenomenal world. Like an angry God he demolishes, deconstructs and finally reconstructs the theme, form, language and style of his poetry. He breaks away radically from his predecessors and infuses demonic force, speed and spirit in his poetry. At the same time, he adds delicate beauty, sonorous cadence, and numinous taste to his discourse. His semantic is suggestive and ambiguous. Very often they bear plural connotations, steeped in dialectical divergence and violence. Goswami’s metrical experimentation and rhetorical manifestation of a universe beyond sense perception surpass the simple idea of violence and unveils a mysterious, cryptic, unintelligible mental physical world that he creates out of his fantastic creative imagination and profound philosophical insight. The world that appears before him offers with an epiphanic

experience and delights us with its abrupt, brilliant, flashing out. Although historical, socio-political, ethno-religious and cultural contexts are different, many poems of Heaney’s *North (1975)* closely resembles Goswami’s poems of violence in *Unmader Pathokrom* and *Bhutumbhagaban*.

The introductory poem of the anthology ‘12 May 84 Ratri / Samasto Swasanbondhuke’ sets the tone and temper of rest of the poems. The poem upholds the picture of cosmic rage through the images of mad ravings of the persona that declares war against eternal darkness of dreadful night. The whole poem is charged with extreme emotional intensity and personal loss and suffering:

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dhai ratri dhai ratri ai dhatri vando khuli tor
Likhechhi saat kando ami khando kore fal amake khondo haar khando uru
Dikhondito bostidgesh, andokata shikhondito mundualal deho
Jagatbhum kriya kare haat pa chhude nritya kare
Agnbhunri fatie shesh kriya kare tor
Kare na, keu karai take, othe re dhum laksha pake
Yaggobhum kata angul laklokie brikhsa anchrai
Ha loc loc ho loc loc bhune garai janto chokh
Ki anande skandho chhinre sharir hara kamano ek matha
Yai re yai sunya pathe kata galai agni pade
Shesh kamore kamre dhare bakshohara bhando tor louholala khai
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Dhai ratri dhai ratri matridhara yai re Gangai….

[Run night, run night, come mother earth, I open your chest. I have written seven cantoes, cut and piece me; cut off bone and thigh, divided slum, cut off phallus, eunuch body – dances on the earth, throwing hands and legs, celebrate your funeral by bursting your fiery belly. It doesn’t do, some one makes it to do and the smoke rises in thaousnads spiraling threads. In the sacrificial land cut off finger gently scratches the tree. ‘Ha lok lok ho lok lok’ living eyes roll on the ground. In what pleasure a bodiless bald head goes through the vacant path; fire falls on the cut off throat. In its last bite, the chestless container eats your iron saliva…. Run night, run night, the orphan goes to the Ganges.]
The poet invites darkness to unsex him and he will continue to dance till the destruction of her dark belly. The image combines allusions from literature and religion. It invokes Macbeth’s famous invocation to the darkness of night to unsex him so that he can shun his feminine softness of heart and kill the noble king Duncan. It also evokes the image of goddess Kali at the moment of her destructive dance after killing the asura Raktobeej. In her cosmic rage she was killing and cutting off head of everyone that appears before her. Again, ‘yaggobhume kata angul’ alludes to the anecdote of Eklabya in the Mahabharata. The sharp, swift, violent movement of the poem reveals its strength. First eleven lines of the poem runs without any punctuation mark except three comma; then there is a typographical gap and in the concluding line all rages and storms come to a rest and pacification follows, in the word of John Milton, “Calm of mind, all passions spent.” The image of last four lines portrays painful picture of a bereaved son in his way to burning ground beside the Ganges to perform last rites of his mother’s dead body. The date mentioned in the title of the poem clearly indicates the death of the poet’s beloved mother in the year 1984. An autobiographical association is clearly discernible. Blind rage and anger, an acute frustration and helplessness against the inscrutable destiny or Providence are directed through such forceful and fearful images of annihilation and extinction that it immediately evokes morbid feelings of fear, loss and void. In comparison with the above poem, Heaney’s ‘Mid-Term Break’ may be cited for analyses. Here the poet is narrating the experience of the day his brother Christopher had died. When the neighbors brought him home from his boarding school, he recalls how they were consoling him, how his father was lamenting bitterly and how his mother expressed her agony, pain and anger:

Whispers informed strangers I was the eldest,

---


Away at school, as my mother held my hand

In hers and coughed out angry tearless sighs.

(‗Mid-Term Break‘, Death of a Naturalist)

Both the poets convey same feelings of agony, remorse and bereavement. But Heaney’s expression is compressed, while Goswami’s is of tempestuous mad ravings. Goswami’s emotion is let loose to run freely while Heaney’s is controlled with utmost economy of expression as if the feeling of acute pain and loss shocked him to silence. The pain and agony are akin to each other though the approach to the event of death and mode of presentation differ.

‗Shiksha‘ in Unmader Pathokrom is a poem of patriotic zeal and humanistic fervour. It unveils fearful picture of a violence-ridden, poverty-stricken country. Sixth stanza of the poem may be quoted for illustration:

amar haat adhkhana, masto pet khudro pa
Khadyanal khandito ardheker ardheke
Ta satteo mangsho chai jhalsamet ragrage
Chhinno mukh bhinno jibh khadya chash ekshuni?
Khando jibh gaan dhare:

[My hand is of half-size, large belly, little legs, food track is cut off into half of the half. In spite of that, torn off face and tongue want delicious, richly cooked meat right now.]

(‗Shiksha‘, Unmader Pathokrom [‗Learning‘, Syllabus of Lunatic])

The extract shows desiccated parts of human body; picture of malnutrition, ill-health, decay, disease and death. Yet the alarming state of its character is that it is always prone to violence and riot. The symbols of ‘chhino mukh’, ‘bhinno jibh’, ‘mangsho, ‘jhalsamet’ imply greed, ferocity and brutal killing instinct of man. The poem reminds

one the philosophical outlook of Michel Foucault enunciated in his famous *Madness and Civilization*:

―Meaningless disorder as madness is, it reveals when we examine it, only ordered classifications, rigorous mechanisms in soul and body, language articulated according to a visible logic. All that madness can say of itself is merely reason, though it is itself the negation of reason. In short, a *rational hold over madness is always possible and necessary, to the very degree that madness is non-reason.*”

Illogical, apparently meaningless disconnected broken syntax, crude jargon, clash of symbolic suggestions and metaphoric implications and the images carrying riotous picture of conflicting ideas and warring associations reveal linguistic and textual violence; project bizarre state of our precarious living. Here the poet makes sense of the non-sense and addresses the readers to digest flesh and bones of ‘fine work’ or fine art that comes out of darkness and loud shouting: ‘Khadyahin mangshovuk, suksho kaj kamre khao/ Ei dilam andhokar chitkarer mangshohar. (‘Shiksha’, Unmader Pathokrom). Again, in the first line of the next stanza the persona proclaims that he himself eats flesh and bones of madness and he is quite satisfied with it. The expression is symbolic, ironic and epigrammatic. Underlying violence and ferocity of the poem are too, clear. The poem simultaneously speaks of poverty, sufferings of the poor and textual linguistic violence. Goswami’s picture of poverty resembles Heaney’s ‘At a Potato Digging’ and ‘For the Commander of “Eliza”’. Both the poems are greatly indebted to and inspired by Cecil Woodham Smith’s *The Great Hunger* (1962). The Commander of the poem withholds food from starving men in a rowing boat as he was ordered to do so by his higher authority. Later he was haunted by the images of skulls and dead bodies. The image anticipates the boneyard of ‘North’:

Next day, like six bad smells, those living skulls
Drifted through the dark of bunks and hatches
And once in port I exorcized my ship
Reporting all to the Inspector General.

(‘For the Commander of “Eliza”’, *Death of a Naturalist*)

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Heaney’s image of ‘living skulls’ is very upsetting. The image resembles Goswami’s poverty-stricken people with ‘masto pet khudra pa’. Of course, behind this telling image of poverty, hunger and starvation, there remains a long history of darkness and cruelty, of economic exploitation, social deprivation and political oppression of the poor and the downtrodden. Both Heaney and Goswami, through metaphors and symbolic suggestions, merely unveil that door of darkness, the rest remains for the readers to explore. The poor, unfed people of ‘At a Potato Digging’ also resemble Goswami’s starved people:

A mechanical digger wrecks the drill,
Spins up a dark shower of roots and mould.
Labourers swarm in behind……..

(‘At a Potato Digging’, Death of a Naturalist)

Of course, these lines are inspired by Patrick Kavanagh’s The Great Hunger:
Clay is the word and clay is the flesh
Where the potato-gatherers like mechanised scarecrows move
Along the side-fall of the hill

(Patrick Kavanagh, The Great Hunger)

The phrase ‘swarm in behind’ refers to ‘Les Septs Vieillards’ (The Seven Old Men) by Charles Baudelaire (1821-67), quoting the opening lines of the poem in French, ‘Swarming city, city full of dreams, / Where in broad daylight the spectre stops the passer-by.’ The phrase also echoes Dante’s ‘Inferno’ iii, ‘so long a train of people, that I should never have believed death had undone so many’. The nightmarish, dreadful image of Baudelaire or the swarming doomed souls of Dante proffer a pathetic picture of Heaney’s potato diggers and the labourers who ‘swarm in behind’ them to collect potatoes. Both Heaney and Goswami echo the infernal state of sufferings of the poor and exploited masses in consumer capital state system. The single phrase thus unveils historical cultural perspectives of domination and subordination, coercion and exploitation of the poor by the rich and the powerful, from dim and distant past to the present.
But language in ‘Shiksha’ takes a riotous turn. The jargon are violent and menacing; the delivery of the jargon is cutting and piercing; the raw, blunt, blistering syntactical shape; apparently self-destructive, ungrammatical, illogical discourse make the poem a battle ground of states and ideas of human existence. Goswami craftily employs language as metaphor for cultural and historical disintegration. Linguistic chaos helps upholding cultural chaos. Both plays complimentary role for each other. Such expression as ‘khadyahin mangshobhuk, suksha kaaj kamre khau/ Ei dilam andhokar chitkarer mangshohaar’ reveals amazing resourcefulness of linguistic politics. He asks or addresses the readers/ himself/ his friend to crunch fine work voraciously and he offers darkness, the flesh and bone of shouting, for his food. The varied identity of personae, the prismatic shades and colours of semantic suggestions, multifarious, mutually warring connotations of the discourse turn the text into a veritable battle field. Moreover, irregular rhyme and exotic rhetoric leads much of the obscurity and ambiguity. The same idea and ways of linguistic usage we find in Heaney’s famous poem ‘North’. Like Goswami Heaney unveils a long history of atrocity and violence, in terms of ‘...the word-hoard burrow/ the coil and gleam/of… furrowed brain.’ Like Goswami here too, persona possesses divergent voices. Past history of hatred, brutality, bloodshed and butchery pose as living entity and ask to ‘Compose in darkness’. Here darkness echoes past history. This parallels Goswami’s ‘andhakarer mangshohaar’. The compound ‘word-hoard’ implies wealth and rich linguistic cultural heritage of an ancient civilized race, though conquered and plundered throughout centuries.

The same mad raving against an unjust world is expressed in ‘Haba’ (The Fool):‘Agun chitkar kore bolchhe dau patro dau ami rakhte/ Parchhi na nijekte dhau ghantai duxo mile haau maheswar dharo’. [Fire is screaming loudly and tells give me container I can not keep restraining myself, run air-god two hundred miles per hour and catch.] The fiery, burning spirit, accompanied with delirious, almost frenzied force of tempestuous speed of the poem sweep away everything that comes across it. ‘Fire’ is personified as a potential destructive force in the poem. Abstract metaphors and symbols expand the dimensions of the poem to diverse directions. Fire may be violent creative force in the artist; it may be the huge energy located in the smallest part of the elements; it may also be the solar fire that destructs and creates everything, for sun is the source of life on earth. The fire may be used as devastating force of
volcanic lava, liquid fire that exists in and forms the very core of the earth. The fire may imply the fire of lust and passion, repressed male sexuality. The binary oppositions between the persona and numerous other figures including ‘Masheswar’, the supreme Hindu God and ‘ma shila’, that is, mother stone. This also hints at Oedipus complex the persona suffers from. The fire, uncontrolled fire, tempestuous fire, rolling liquid fire continues to burn. It is never put out. Even in the last line the expression remains ambiguous and the identity of the speaker remains a riddle. Amidst conflagration, rain, sweet rain starts falling, gently and by slow degree, extinguishing the blaze. Yet the persona strongly asserts and affirms that the flow-tide has no power to extinguish it: ‘jive sar nei tobu tomar khamota nei amake nebau jwalochchhas…’ This last line of the poem renders the semantic into more complex indeterminate possibilities. Almost same invocation to the destructive Viking spirit of the Danish ‘raiders’ is found in Heaney when the persona identifies himself as ‘Hamlet the Dane’ and addresses it thus:

Come fly with me,
come sniff the wind
with the expertise
of the Vikings –

neighborly, scoretaking
killers, haggers
and hagglers, gombeen-men,
hoarders of grudges and gain.

(‘Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces’, North)

The idea is further exalted when the poet glorifies the Scandanavian Viking turned settlers as ‘fabulous raiders’ whose ‘ocean-deafened voices’ paradoxically warns him and lifts him ‘in violence and epiphany’ in his North. Through the dichotomy of the phrase ‘violence and epiphany’ Heaney emphasizes that both historical and linguistic violence are exchangeable phenomena which produce huge energy- psychological, spiritual, artistic, that is, both dreadful and beautiful. The violence of the Viking attack had brought about cultural heritage and identity of present Ireland. But at the same time, it destroys the identity of native Ireland. The dialectic of cultural and
linguistic prepossession is strongly operative in the ambivalence of the poet’s expression. Goswami creates great poetry by violence and epiphany in ‘Haba’ when he makes violent outburst of his huge creative energy in the quoted couplet. The poet asserts that his emotive and creative impulse is fiery, tempestuous and untamed. It runs wild, turns everything upside down and makes a wild, fine mess of the world outside and inside him.

‘Kope’ is an explicit instance of violence in the physical world. The poem is explosive. In the very beginning Goswami speaks of different types of corpse in the shape of half-image, blood image and goat image. The image of bloody corpse rolling on the floor and rising in the sky is awful and ghastly:

Ardhomurti raktomurti chhagmurti dhore
Lash ghurchhe lash ghurchhe utture dakshine

Garai lash dhakdharash, jharai khun saane
Ta dhin dhin dharforing, lash uthchhe ashmane

[Taking guise of half-image, blood-image and goat-image the corpse is moving to and from north and south. The corpse rolls on the floor and rises in the sky.]

(‘Kope’, Unmader Pathokrom [‘Blow’, Syllabus of Lunatic])

The poet now gives details of the young man dead or killed. The poet does not state, only indicates that he must be from an underdog family living in some slum; his mother must be a maid servant and his father must be a patient of tuberculosis. The term ‘chest disease’, ‘blood vomiting’ implies the plight of the poverty-stricken family. The symbol of blood, mud, cough, and a pot-full dashed brain alive from underneath earth reveal the horrific picture of trenchant poverty, disease, death and secret murder of young men. The description of socio-economic disparity between the poor and the rich, the exploitation of the poor and the murder of the protesting youth present a ghastly picture of contemporary socio-economic and political state. Let us

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go through the candid picture of poverty and suffering of the poor and the downtrodden:

Ma kaj korto loker bari babar buke bamo

Raktobamo bajyebomi
Ei niye bas baser jomi
Kadai kafe talgolakar khunrchhi khunrchhi khunri

Matir talai janto ghilu peyechhi ek khuri;

[The mother was a maid servant and the father had disease of chest. Blood vomiting, blood-bowel was the part of their life. Mixed in mud and cough I have been digging and I have discovered a pot of fresh brain under earth.]

(‗Kope‘, Unmader Pathokrom [Blow’, Syllabus of Lunatic])

Such violent and awful picture is rarely presented by any poet in any language of the present century.

‗Sanghar‘ (Killing) is another short poem of Goswami that directly translates violence of the world into violence in poetry. Here the poet expresses his anger, nausea and disgust against the meaningless massacre of hundreds of young men who dreamt of changing the contemporary exploitative socio-economic set up to usher in an era of liberty, equality and fraternity. He does not specify but the place name indicates violence and atrocity of the state during naxalite movement of the seventies by the then West Bengal Govt. headed by Siddharta Sankar Roy as well the President’s rule declared by the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi:

......................................Ek churmar krodhe
   Howrah rastai ami, Barakar bridge e ami, narkoldangai
   Felechhi prothom lash, felechhi ditio lash, tin char, sahosro ayut
   Ujjal sohom lash fele ar ghar dhore enechhi shibire

[I am possessed by a destructive anger and killed at Howrah, Barakar bridge, and Narkeldanga – one, two, three, four – thousands more. Killing bright young person and holding by neck I brought them to the camp.]
The lines remind Goswami’s own reading of Sankha Ghosh’s poems, particularly his ‘Desh Amader Aajo Kono’ from *Mukh Dheke Yai Biggapone*. Joy Goswami reads the poem on the context of violence-ridden state of the nation. He asserts that the poem is

“a picture of blood-stained torn nation where thousands of bones on peak of sea-waves, cut off, mutilated human organs in jungles, blasted strayed organs by car-bomb and assassin attack shriek in chorus to find the corpse…”

Almost same effect is achieved in poems of Heaney’s *North* phase, though the context is different. In his ‘Kinship’ the poet lays bare the bloody picture of violence and riot-ridden country:

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.

(‘Kinship’, *North*)

The poem dramatizes the Catholic nationalist sentiments. Of course, like other issues, here too, his view is an ambivalent one. Many questions arise as to whether Heaney glorifies immolation of Ulster Catholics following the religious martyrdom or tribal savage ritual of sacrifice or lamenting the unnecessary death of so many innocent people, both Catholic and Protestant, in Ulster? Heaney’s sentiment for the land and her people is well expressed in the lines ‘our mother ground/ is sour with the blood/ of


her faithful.’ At the same time, the expression depicts how the country is bleeding by sectarian violence for so many years. The idea of immolation gets clarified by his paradoxical statement of ‘slaughter for the common good’ (‘Kinship’). ‘Kinship’ resembles ‘Kope’ in terms of presenting same picture of mud, blood and dead bodies. The ghastly picture of corpse dancing, moving to and fro and ascending upward is nightmarish. But Goswami’s ‘Sanghar’ resembles ‘Kinship’ more closely. Here Goswami expresses his agony and nausea at the death of hundreds of promising youth, mostly naxal revolutionaries. Different place names associated with the brutal murder of them gives the poem its historical value. Political violence on particular historical perspective is beautifully translated into violence in poetry. As in ‘Kinship’, here too, the poet glorifies ‘slaughter’ of man as an act of martyrdom, for the cause of common people. At the same time, the act of immolation and self-sacrifice calls up savage ritual of human sacrifice to the goddess Nerthus, by the ancient Irish tribes. In both cases violence of past is merged with violence of present. The perspective changes, the core issues and ideas remain unchanged.

In the next poem ‘Santo’ we come across different picture of violence and atrocity on women. Here Goswami gives a burning picture of wife beating and wife burning, mostly for dowry. It is a heinous crime and curse against human society. It is shameful that still today women are subjugated by male and used as commodity. The poet portrays pathetic picture of burning of a housewife in the following lines:

O parar meye gachho shosurer ghare kerosene veja sari niye, ei
Tomar samnei khata khule rakhlam, ei deshlaie dhorie
Tomar sangei yadi jole yaoa yai, jaloman

[You have gone to your father-in-law’s house with your saree wet in kerosene. I keep my exercise book open in front of you. Light up the matches so that I can also be burnt with you.

(‘Santo’, Unmader Pathokrom [The Saint, Syllabus of Lunatic])

The extract upholds the horrible picture of dowry death. It is shame to civilized society. The practice is still rampant. The poet conveys the message through the strong expression, ‘roj bhore raktopath sonar mandire’. Violence and atrocity against women get frightening in Heaney’s ‘Strange Fruit’. The poet presents awful picture of a murdered girl, ‘Here is the girl’s head like an exhumed gourd.’ The last four lines are terrifying:

Murdered, forgotten, nameless, terrible
Beheaded girl, outstaring axe
And beatification, outstaring
What had begun to feel like reverence.

(‗Strange Fruit’, North)

The bitter irony is lashed out at the words ‘beatification’ and ‘reverence’. Here Heaney does not play the moralist and a judge. He simply depicts the malady of human psyche and society which subjugate women as mere scapegoat throughout centuries. Brutal murder has been given the title of ‘beatification’ and compulsive submissiveness the name of ‘reverence’. Subtle hint at feminine vulnerability is asserted through such meticulous utterance and measured jargon. It is interesting to note that Goswami’s ‘Santo’ has exact semantic equivalence to Heaney’s ‘beatification’.

One of the finest poems of the anthology is ‘Kabondho Bibah’. The poem’s theme, style, language and structure proffer layers of symbolic suggestions and meanings. The poem is multi-dimensional and seems to sum up varied views and ideas presented through all the poems of the anthology. By its sheer plural semantic suggestions and complex linguistic applications, the poem becomes elusive and allusive. Its discourse dismantles logocentric and phonocentric assumptions of leading to a decisive, determinate signification of the text. On the contrary, the discourse appears as battlefield of internal linguistic forces, diverse states of figurative implications and ambiguities, grammatical definiteness that denies figurative plurality of semantic manifestations. The diction and syntax appear to destabilize the ordered and logical rendering of traditional poetic form. The structure of the poem too, is consciously vandalized by arbitrary intermixture of diverse mode of metrical and figurative schemes. Mode of discourse too, does not follow linguistic and
grammatical rules. Quick shifting, conflicting, warring ideas get transmuted through diverse changing stanza forms. Violent dramatic discourses, with crude and vulgar jargon, shatter the monument of traditional poetic linguistic matrix. The language sometimes seems to take after the language of absurd plays in its apparent irrationality and non-logicality. The poem also metaphorically exhibits the chaos and disintegration of incoherent human psyche and illogical, unreasoning metaphysical states. Through its magical linguistic intricacies, figurative fantasy, and semantic web formulations, ‘Kabandha Bibah’ becomes a unique creation. It may be cited as an ideal example of violence in poetry and the poetry of violence. The title of the poem alludes to classical Hindu mythology of Rahu and Mohini. ‘Kabandho’ suggests Rahu, the demon or Asura. During ‘samudra manthon’ he managed to drink a gulp of divine nectar. Gods in Heaven were alarmed with the consequence. God Bishnu appeared as Mohini and cut off the head of Rahu at the very moment of his drinking the nectar. The manna reaches up to his throat but fails to reach inside his stomach. The head of the demon thus becomes immortal whereas the body remains mortal. Now and then Rahu engulfs sun and moon but they come out of his slit throat. This causes solar and lunar eclipse. The title creates an ironic shock for marriage with demon implies something dark, ominous and evil. The first word of the title ‘kabandha’ arouses a feeling of devouring, destructive, bleak force, whereas the second word ‘bibah’ arouses a romantic association. But this feeling is shattered immediately as the marriage is to be done with the demon Rahu. In the Hindu myth Rahu is indicator of worldly desire for fame, high intelligence; greed, manipulation, obsessive behavior, foreigners, mass disease, dementia and inertia. Contrary to the conventional idea, Rahu becomes metaphoric figure for observer, recorder, preserver and creator. Rahu turns the world upside down or orders it? The world Rahu comes across is violent, chaotic, infernal; full of mud, dirt, blood and dead bodies. One after another questions comes, meaning disperses among innumerable alternative significations. In the beginning marriage is performed but who are the bride and the bridegroom? The riddle remains inconclusive. After marriage the experience is expressed frantically in blank verse, using inversion, exclamation and caesura:

O se kee anubhuti! Kee daho, jale deho, dujon stripurush uvochar -
Hok re pet theke sarpo hok tor sando hok, ei
Dilam biss dhele dichchhi ei oh: more e yai!
Tomar mukh theke sando janmak. Amar mukh theke shiba hok.

[O what a sensation of burning two bodies of amphibious man and woman! Let the snake, the ox come out of your belly. I pour poison, am pouring still; oh, I die! Let the ox be born from your mouth. Let Shiva from my mouth.]

(‗Kabondho Bibah‘, Unmader Pathokrom [‗Marriage with Rahu‘, Syllabus of Lunatic])206

In Heaney we find no marriage but forced sexual union in ‘Act of Union’, and the identity of the dominating male and surrendering female is more explicit and determinate than Goswami. ‘Phallogocentric’ metaphor is employed by him to explore imperial politics where England plays the male and Ireland the subversive second sex. Through this sexual-political revelation Heaney explores the critical state of vulnerable Irish identity. The speaker is a male, metaphor for England who gratifies his sexual desire upon Ireland, metaphor for helpless female victim. In this regard Patricia Coughlan makes a penetrating, cutting remark, “‘Act of Union’ rehearses narratives of rape and sexual violation.”207 The advancement of the speaker reveals the prerogative of imperial male coercion which resembles Goswami’s presentation of paradoxical good-evil identity of both male and female. Heaney’s persona narrates the whole process of the act of union:

…………………..I caress
The heaving province where your past has grown.
I am the tall kingdom over your shoulder
That you would neither cajole nor ignore.
Conquest is a lie. I grow older
Conceding your half-independent shore
Within whose borders now my legacy


Culminates inexorably.

(‘Act of Union’, North)

The English male colonial persona unhesitatingly speaks of his imperial prerogative where questions on ontological views of right and wrong, justice, reason and rationality have been rendered meaningless. The speaker is a tyrant, an oppressor, a predator, a rapist, a foreign imperial force who asserts his unchallenged authority. He proclaims:

And I am still imperially
Male, leaving you with the pain,
The rending process in the colony,

(‘The Act of Union’, North)

Of course, it is notable that Goswami’s protagonist is the male ‘Rahu’ with whom the marriage takes place. And more interestingly, here the union takes place through mutual agreement, not through rape. Traditional ontological assumptions of good and evil; virtue and vices; right and wrong has been turned upside down by Goswami. Thus a philosophical mesmerizing takes place. At the same time, Rahu represents evil, anarchy and chaos. The union with Rahu manifests a state cultural chaos and anarchy. Cryptic myth from classical Hindu religion is expressed metaphorically to voice forth the deepest, dark feeling of anarchy and chaos of metaphysical existence. The void and helplessness before a mysterious, inexplicable and meaningless universe is too much to bear. All beliefs, values, ideals, theories of life appear shallow, insignificant, inconsistent and temporal. The reference to snake, ox and Shiva relate to the Hindu God Shiva and his attendants snake and ox. At the same time, sexual union depicted in the first line of the stanza is of demonic nature. It is exciting, aerial and it gives birth to dumb, poisonous creatures. The union is indicated as devoid of love. It is lustful, exciting and crudely physical. This bears the incentives of creating progeny. The idea of love is false and imaginary. The indignation and agony is expressed in the third line of the stanza, ‘dilam biss dhele dichchhi ei oh: more e yai!’ Phallic domination and possessiveness is also indicated through the line. The union may be the metaphor for the poetic or creative process of a union between the poet and the
world and ideas he transmutes into art and creating robust, demonic energy. The persona plays plural role and rapidly changes identity.

After the introductory two stanzas are over, the persona promises to offer his head to the deity, Ma Kali. At the same time, he contradicts his promise on the ground of rationality that his existence would be at a stake if he is to fulfill his oath. The ambivalence is clear. He rolls back and decides his vocation to write, write what? ‘na likho kalo katha ma likho likho sato sato’ [Don’t write black words, write the name of mother hundred times]. In the next stanza he confirms his vocation and mode of writing:

Tomake dev bhasie dev esechhi Gangai
Gandhe chhinri chhande khai rakt-haar-mangso
Lupto hoye yabar aage tomar sangai
Dhukuk jal dhukuk tabe nivuk nishwas.

[I came back after your emersion, god. Now I tear with smell, eat with rhyme blood-bones-flesh. Before being unconscious with your definition, let water come in and stop breathing.]

(‘Marriage with Rahu’, Syllabus of Lunatic)

After the emersion of Shiva, the speaker determines not to write ‘kalo katha’ (black words) and continues to write of the Ma. The idea contradicts and wars against each other. It asserts, at the same time, denies the definite semantic signification of having a meaning of its own right. ‘Kalo katha’ connotes ‘kali katha’, that is speeches on Ma Kali or of Ma Kali? Words let the indeterminacy to prevail upon. At the same time, it also suggests evil, dark, ominous things. That means he will not write anything bad, vulgar and evil. The decision is inverted in the immediate next stanza where he says, before assimilating with Shiva’s identity he will eat with rhyme and tear with smell, blood-bone-skin. (Gandhe chhinri chhande khai rakt-haar-maas). After ‘Shiksha’ we are introduced again with linguistic violence. Of course, language is used as metaphor for robust creative force; dark, bloody history or essence of the phenomenal existence of universe or any ‘undecidable’ possibilities that may emerge by replacing the perceptible possibility of meanings. Both ‘Shiksha’ and this part of ‘Kabandho Bibah’ reflect the spirit of Heaney’s ‘Bone Dreams’. In ‘Bone Dreams’ a bone is found underneath earth – a dead relic of some human existence, once alive. This dead relic
is used as a mechanism to uncover the origin and evolution of language, as evidence of cultural evolution of mankind. The text unveils two facets of linguistic and anthropological violence and their evolutionary history. Religious and spiritual disintegration is manifested through contradictory, ambivalent functioning of the Gods and deities. On the other hand, religious, mythical, linguistic subtext is used meticulously to present the violence and disintegration of the physical world. Goswami announces that the immersion of ‘dev’, that is God, has been done. He is no more the devotee of sentimental numinous subjects. On the contrary, he says that he eats with rhyme and tears with smell ‘blood-bone-skin’, that means he consumes the eclectic or essence of theme, or language? ‘Bone Dreams’ unearths naked archeological past; stripped off artificial, false, imaginary ornamentation. At the same time, he shows supreme linguistic austerity in weaving his bone dreams through the use of dense, tough, disconnected jargon. The skeletal form of the text renders the text into much of its abstraction and obscurity. Linguistic violence creeps into through such exotic weaving of poetic lines:

Bone house:
a skeleton
in the tongue’s
old dungeons.

I push back
through dictions,
Elizabethan canopies.
Norman devices,

(‘Bone Dreams’, North)

The persona drove back to uncover the linguistic and archeological heritage of past. In the same way, he retrospects to ‘… the coffered/ riches of grammar’ and invokes linguistic past in the lines ‘Come back past/ philology and kennings’. Here language appears as a key to unlock the history of English and Irish language and culture.

In the next stanza of Goswami’s ‘Kabanda Bibah’ the speaker identifies him with devouring, menacing image of Ma Kali. The allusion refers to the emergence of
Ma Kali from the forehead of deity ‘Durga’ to destroy the demon ‘Raktobeej’ in Hindu religious myth. The poet says, ‘ma likho, na likho na, likhon jwale shyama rakto jive tor ki lekha’ [write mother and don’t write no, burning writing Shyama’s bloody tongue what writing of yours]. Linguistic complexity of such expression renders into prismatic semantic connotations. Does the poet think of writing doomsday dance? Will he write on the God Shiva in his addicted state of taking opium or on Bishnu in his famished state of devouring stars of the sky? He asserts to write ‘ma’ and repudiates to write ‘na’. In the next stanza the speaker further exchanges his identity and identifies him with ‘pagla bhola’ Shiva and Creator Brahma. And then the lines follow with trenchant irony to lay bare the ugly, ominous, hellish state of our mundane earth and the precarious condition of human existence:

na ami sando na, tirthobhumitale ha ha re hi hi ami pagla
Jale kee keshvar bhase re bhese yai Shiva ye ami dibanishite
Elo re elo beg ande fole jal ke achho dharo more e aglao
Chharchhi, chhari, ei, mutre vaso oho mukti vaso dashdishite

[No, I am not ox but lunatic on the holy land. What locks of hair float in the water, fleeting Shiva, I days and night! There comes impetus in the egg, catch me if there is anybody, guard me. Now I am releasing and you float on urine, oh freedom float toward ten directions.]

(‘Marriage with Rahu’, Syllabus of Lunatic)

The last line sets the ugly, precarious state of our existence, ‘mutre vaso oho mukti vaso dashdishite’ (float on urine oh freedom float to ten directions). In the next stanza the poet hints at the greedy, gluttonous, murdering instinct of man who perpetually fights with poverty, disease and death. Dreadful, repulsive picture of man’s destiny is portrayed in the following lines:

Peter mati booker mati mangsho maad ruti
Kheyey bodo holam, ami golam noi tor
Dudin baade asukhe podi dudin baade uthi
Ekhane khun okhane khun dudin antor
Meat, wine and bread (mangsho maad ruti) sustain the persona’s health. He is always at his liberty and never servant to any soul. Yet he suffers from ill health and is disgusted with the slaughter of men now and then. The persona is shocked, surprised and betrayed at the huge wastage of so many human lives. Day after day murder occurs here and there and cut off head is discovered beside canal (mundu lutoi khaler dhare). This implies violence and bloodshed in human society. The personae experience and boldly encounter all sorts of violence. But Heaney’s role is more defensive and evasive. Like Goswami he also encounters terrible experience of sectarian violence between the Catholics and the Protestants. He saw procession of dead bodies day after day. Northern troubles took its most ugly violent turn in early 1969. Many men of Ulster from both sides have been butchered. But interestingly enough, the poet confesses that his role was always that of a fence-sitter. England was directly involved with the riots and clashes, supporting the Ulster Protestants. Heaney’s confession reveals his divided loyalty; his love and respect for his community and his indebtedness to English linguistic cultural lineage. The poet’s candid confession brings him into clear light of truth, his crisis of identity and his complex relation to Ireland and her people:

I am neither internee nor informer;
An inner émigré, grown long-haired
And thoughtful; a wood kerne.

Escaped from the massacre.

(‘Exposure’, North)

The extract is testimony to the fact that like Goswami Heaney too, witnessed massacre and genocide. But only difference between them is that whereas Heaney inclined to escape from violence, Goswami transmuted it into robust creative force and translated into poetry.
The violence against women is specifically denoted in the lines: ‘Bhag ledki bhag ledki sosurghar theke/Jaag ledki aag ledki kerosene er chita’. (‘Kabondho Bibah’, *Unmader Pathokrom*). The dowry death is a very common phenomenon in the subcontinent. Very often a house-wife falls prey to husband and in-law’s greed for dowry. The innocent woman has to put up with brutal sexual assault and all sorts of physical tortures until she succumbs to physical assault. Among many other ways, death by burning is the cruelest one. The victim has to suffer the agony and pain of burning until she succumbs to her awful injury. The explicit narrative of Heaney’s ‘Punishment’ unveils diverse facets of violence, ranging from archeological past to the present turbulent history of Irish troubles. Apart from political, cultural perspective of violence, the poem explores the status of women in socio-political context, now and ancient past. Of course, atrocity and violence are committed to women very often in the name of savage ritual in prehistoric past and religion in civilized society. In this respect David Lloyd makes a convincing comment:

“The aestheticisation of violence is underwritten in Heaney’s recourse to racial archetypes as a means ‘to grant the religious intensity of the violence its deplorable authenticity and complexity’ (Preoccupations, pp.56-57). In locating the source of violence beyond even sectarian division, Heaney renders it symbolic of a fundamental identity of the Irish race, as ‘authentic’. Interrogation of the nature and function of the acts of violence in the specific context of the current ‘troubles’ is thus foreclosed, and history foreshortened into the eternal resurgence of the same Celtic genius.”

That women are always made sacrificial ‘scapegoat’, in prehistoric past as well as in the context of the present Irish trouble is made clear through the presentation of the ‘Winderby Girl’ whose body was discovered in the bog peat, at least few thousand years old by some Danish farmers in 1950. Heaney gives an account of the charming beauty of the ‘flaxen-haired’ girl who was brutally killed and made a scapegoat of savage tribal ritual. Heaney’s attitude to the girl is that of attraction and repulsion.

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That he was emotionally and instinctively attached to the predicament of the girl and felt pity and sympathy for her is evident from the statement:

Little adulteress,
Before they punish you

You were flaxen-haired,
undernourished, and your
tar-black face was beautiful.
My poor scapegoat,

I almost love you
(‗Punishment‘, North)

He even secretly loved her had she not been punished for ‘adultery’. Heaney plays the role of a ‘voyeur’, an escapist, in conformity with his Catholic orthodox prejudice of sexual purity of women. His ambivalence is registered in the next few lines:

I am an artful voyeur
.........................
I who would have stood dumb
When your betraying sisters,
cauled in tar,
wept by the railing

who would have connive
in civilized outrage
yet understand the exact
and tribal, intimate revenge.
(‗Punishment‘, North)

He confesses his playing the role of a ‘voyeur’ and remaining silent and passive (dumb) when the girl was being punished. Not only this, he passively supports and encourages the heinous act of atrocities on the girl. This he enunciates in the phrase ‘connive/ in civilized outrage’. The paradox ‘civilized outrage’ signifies archetypal
primitive psychic perversion and disintegration that lead to violence and atrocity on women in the name of ritual, religion and sexuality. At the same time, Heaney honestly exposes the truth of subconscious phallic allegiances to such act of violence and atrocity. Punishment for adultery should be rendered to both the male and female because the act of sexuality can’t happen without active participation of the male also. Here not only the male goes scot free, the mechanism of patriarchal domination punishes the woman, in the name of adultery. The concluding stanza is of profound self-division of the persona. He states that he connives in the criminal act of violence on the girl which is ‘outrageous’. At the same time, he confesses that civilized society of contemporary time also fails to come out of murderous tribal psyche that persists in collective unconscious of race and continues to operate still today in the name of religious rituals. The poem also opens up political dimension of violence. Does the persona sing the song of Irish liberation movement through the punishment of the ‘betraying sisters’? Who are these betraying sisters and to whom do they betray? The answer is easy to understand with their weeping ‘by the railings’ when they are ‘cauled in tar’. A few young girls from bordering area supposed to develop sexual relation with foreign soldiers and informed them secret movements and camouflages of the IRA. These girls were brutally punished by the IRA. The historical political perspective of violence is thus embedded in the deep structure of the text. Goswami presents this common phenomenon of violence against women. The picture bears terrible contrast to Ma Durga or Ma Kali as they are supposed to be the incarnation of that strength and power which were accumulated in their image to destroy evil and dark force. The lines therefore, are fraught with trenchant situational irony and the violence against women become all the more ugly and naked. It is a pity that the evils are destroyed in ritualistic Hindu religion, at least symbolically, whereas in reality, evil not only prevails upon the good and virtuous, it consistently defeats and destroys the innocence and the beautiful. This anarchy and disintegration can be expressed only through the mad ravings against the system or mechanism that denies their having any role at all in the cosmic physical and metaphysical order of existence. Though Blake Morrison contradicts the idea of having exuberant political motif behind the lines:

“It would be going too far to suggest that ‘Punishment’ in particular and the bog poems generally offer a defence of Republicanism; but they are a form of
‘explanation’. Indeed the whole procedure of North is such as to give sectarian killing in Ulster a historical respectability which it is not usually given in day to day journalism.\textsuperscript{209}

Coming to \textit{Bhutumbhagoban} (1988) Goswami directs his trenchant attack against economic exploitation and political oppression of the poor; social injustice to the deprived and downtrodden; loss of ideological values leading to socio-political instability and violence. Above all, Goswami voices forth the huge loss of ethical and humanitarian values that guide and control society and civilization. In one of his protest poems ‘Dhuni’ he sympathetic draws picture of deprived masses who are compelled to take up weapon as last resort to assert their right as a citizen. He shows that the revolutionaries are not born criminals rather they fight for liberation of the poor and the down-trodden. His candid depiction of the source of political and social violence is vivid and realistic. His images portray lively picture of this socio-economic inequality and its outcome:

bhore jege othe adha muslim para
Gorib morog ghore dana kunje kunje
Dal bendhe elo yato chhele chhokrara
Ora kee pocket bhorbe na cartudge e?

[The half-Muslim locality awakes at dawn. The poor cock searches for food. The young guys come in flock. Wouldn’t they fill the pockets with cartridges?]

(‘Dhuni’, \textit{Bhutumbhagoban} [‘Sacrificial Fire’, \textit{Bhutumbhagoban}]\textsuperscript{210})

The persona portrays picture of neglected remote village in rural Bengal having mixed habitation of both the Hindus and the Muslims. He shows how poverty and exploitation breed violence in society. When young men do not find work and fail to earn their livelihood, they take up weapon as last resort to fight against oppressive and


exploitative socio-political set up. Instead of fulfilling basic needs of poor people, State takes inhuman, repressive measure to suppress their grievances and voice of protest. This creates awful breach among the ruler and the ruled and violent clashes follow:

Lakloke shikha fatie uthlo chhand
Fulki urchhe pashe ausher khete
Garom dhonai keshe keshe mare chand
Palie cholechhe ora tara khete kheta…

[The moon rises up bursting tender flame. The spark of fire is in the paddy field. The moon dies coughing in warm smoke. They have been running by being driven up.]

(‗Sacrificial Fire‘, Bhutumbhagoban)\(^{211}\)

This is a burning picture of bomb blast, fire and smoke, retreating rebels being driven away by police or paramilitary forces. The picture calls up the bloody history of the naxalite movement of seventies when young revolutionaries were being hunted down by the police forces. Historical political violence is being revoked by Goswami and he warns people and the political managers of contemporary and posterity that history repeats itself. He left an implied message in the last line of the poem, ‗Pora gha abar pore amader doshe!‘ This resembles Heaney‘s account of the violence-ridden picture of Irish civil war:

This morning from a dewy motorway
I saw the new camp for the internees:
A bomb had left a crater of fresh clay
In the roadside, and over in the trees

Machine-gun posts defined a real stockade.

(‗Whatever You Say Say Nothing‘, North)

In the title poem of the anthology, ‘Bhutumbhagoban’ the persona sings an epic saga of man, nature and God. The poem simultaneously holds and stirs the whole of creation. Diverse ethos, issues, aspects and ideals of life get reflected in the poem. God or Providence asserts his authority like a tyrant. Elemental forces of Nature break all rules, customs and calculations of our invented order of the universe. The image of God is paradoxically exchanged with the image of demon or asura. The dichotomy prevails upon the existence and functioning of God as the benevolent father or a tyrant destroyer. Through his journey from creation to destruction the persona calls on chaos in medias res. The poem journeys from the beginning, passes through fire and flame of chaos and finally reaches to nowhere. It merges and mixes up innumerable voices and innumerable sentiments of excruciating pain, agony, anger and nausea. It evokes image of evils and devils, fire and burns, fear and darkness, creation and destruction, conflagration and pandemonium. It paints the picture of a lawless and chaotic dystopian existence where evils trod upon the bloody earth by killing, destroying and devouring seeds of life on earth. The poem lays bare a restless, lawless, aimless, meaningless, bloody, murderous dystopian universe where peace, love, consolation and hope do not exist. God is ironically presented as a dwarfish beside the monster it creates or himself an opposite part of it. This God is shown as no benevolent God of the Bible or the Geeta. He is presented as a malicious, mindless, cruel dwarfish ‘Bhutum’ in the image of bad and corrupt man:

Amader ghare bhagban janmalo. Amader ghare janmalo bhagoban.

Shaktopokto, ozon sathik, charkhana paye khur
Mathar pichhone shing beriechhe shing er pichhone kaan
Ghorar moton –

Bari bari yai ekhon se chhele, mayer badole masike peleo
Chhare na.
Mansho khai na ourosh khai, - dim dhekhlei paye pishe yai
Howar agei ya karar kare, amader moto asto manush
Mare na……
[God is born in our home. He is strong and has proper weight and hoof in four legs, horn on the back of the head and ear like horses on the back of the horn... That boy goes house to house now. He doesn’t spare even his maternal aunt instead of mother. He doesn’t eat meat but foetus and treads the eggs. He kills before death and doesn’t kill grown up human being like us...]

(‘Bhutumbhagoban’, Bhutumbhagoban)212

The poet makes pungent attack on the concept of essential goodness of man or the religious belief of man as ‘Naro Narayan’213. In fact, he ridicules the dictum, ‘god created man in his own image’214. He leveled trenchant irony on the concept by depicting the malicious nature and misdeeds of ‘bhagoban’ who is shorn of all goodness and virtues. He is depicted as an evil incarnation, dealer of desire, lust and death. He is corrupt, vicious, immoral and murderous. He is prone to lust and does not hesitate to develop incest. And he does not feel any qualm of conscience to kill the illegitimate fetus. The poet fervently expresses his acute indignation and says: ‘jeeban, saggane, atmatage noy, sarbograse/ Sarbobhuk kobi, sarbobhuk.’ The poet records the discord, anomaly, disease and disintegration which regulate life on earth. The expression is epigrammatic and ironical. We have learnt that great men very often earn their goal by devotion and sacrifice. History gives many examples of how great men sacrificed their lives for the sake of truth and noble ideal. But here the persona says that life does not mean conscious self sacrifice but devouring all. He becomes preacher of hedonism. He says that the poet is omnivorous, omnivorous poet. The embedded, underlying meaning suggests that the poet attains his goal by devouring all experiences, all sufferings and feelings, all ideas and ideals, of life. He not only sees man but reads and eats up his thoughts only to assimilate them and transmute into a beautiful work of art. Violence depicted in the above extract is matchless. Yet some poems of Heaney with violence, loss and suffering bring to the same plane of


214 “Genesis”, 27, the Bible.
Goswami’s ‘Bhutumbhagoban’. In ‘The Digging Skeleton’ the readers face violence of murderous hatred and arbitrary killing which is both archeological and temporal:

Some traitor breath

Revives our clay, sends us abroad
And by the sweat of our stripped brows
We earn our deaths; our one repose
When the bleeding instep finds its spade.”

(The Digging Skeleton’, North)

The ‘sweat of our stripped brows’ echoes the Biblical pronouncement of God to the fallen Adam and Eve after their disobedience:

“Our sweat of our brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and you will return to dust.”

Of course, the poet gives a subtle ironic twist in the next line, ‘We earn our deaths’, and not ‘bread’. Thus the glaring picture of violence and meaningless murder is unearthed. Anti-God, anti-Christ ethos of contemporary time is depicted. Although ethno-religious and political violence of Ireland are characteristically different from the political violence and clashes of Bengal in seventies, both had to endure the huge loss and wastages of human resources. Both the land became suicidal ground as sons of the same soil killed each other.

But coming to Field Work (1979) Heaney shakes off mythical garb and presents the naked picture of violence and bloodshed. In this regard Seamus Deane has made a very pertinent comment:

“In Field Work, all trace of consoling or explanatory myth has gone. The victims of violence are no longer distanced; their mythological beauty has gone, the contemplative distance has vanished. Now they are friends, relations, acquaintances. The violence itself is pervasive, a disease spread, a sound detonating under water, and it stimulates responses of an extraordinary, highly

charged nervousness in which an image flashes brightly, a split-second of tenderness, no longer the slowly pursued figure of the earlier books."

Three elegiac poems of the anthology, ‘The Strand at Lough Beg’, ‘Casualty’ and ‘In Memoriam Francis Ledwidge’ show how violence became ruling roost of contemporary Ireland. In one of the stanzas of ‘Bhutumbhagoban’ Goswami paints horrible picture of a young widow whose husband must have been killed by state police force, as in the next line image of a river of blood appears where mutilated human organs such as ear, finger, arm, child’s head, etc float. Similarly Heaney paints an appalling picture of dread, void and violence in ‘The Strand at Lough Beg’. Of course, in this short poem Heaney takes recourse to myth, both the Italian Inferno of Dante and Irish medieval myth of *Buile Shuibhne*. These mythical allusions are used as a kind of subtext to evoke the sense of loss, fear, void and violence. The poem is, in fact an elegy on the death of the poet’s cousin Colum McCartney. He was ambushed and shot dead by the Protestant gun-men in 1975. Heaney evokes the atmosphere of dread and fear by invoking Dante’s *Purgatorio* in the epigraph like T. S. Eliot and next the story of Sweeney from Irish medieval myth:

> Along that road, a high, bare pilgrim’s track
> Where Sweeney fled before the bloodied heads,
> Goat-beards and dog’s eyes in a demon pack
> Blazing out of the ground, snapping and squealing.

(‘The Strand at Lough Beg’, *Field Work*)

In the second stanza the symbols of ‘guns fired behind the house’, ‘before rising time’ and the spent ‘cartridges’ further heighten sense of violence and clashes that had gripped Ireland long before ‘Easter Rising’ in 1916. In the last stanza the persona addresses the victim:

> I turn because the sweeping of your feet
> Has stopped behind me, to find you on your knees
> With blood and roadside muck in your hair and eyes,

(‘The Strand at Lough Beg’, *Field Work*)

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'Casualty' is another powerful elegy on the death of a friend who was shot dead by Protestant gun-men on the day of ‘Bloody Sunday’. He was a common ordinary man. Heaney describes the row of coffins being brought to the burial ground from the cathedral in an austere and appalling manner. The horror of the event is sustained in the following lines:

It was a day of cold
Raw silence, wind-blown
Surplice and soutane:
Rained on, flower-laden
Coffin after coffin
Seemed to float from door
Of the packed cathedral
Like blossoms on slow water.

(‗Casualty’, Field Work)

The image of procession of dead bodies floating resemble Goswami’s picture of mutilated organs floating in the river of blood. Goswami further directs his attack on foetus-killing. This is a dreadful picture of the bleeding land and her suffering children.

Towards the end of the poem Goswami presents picture of a lawless state of society where violence, terror, extortion and murder become everyday incident. He paints a pathetic picture of the huge loss of values, human feelings and sensitivities. He shows how value of life becomes so cheap that man treads corpses without any feeling or pain. To suggest the indifferent attitude of society to violence and murder, he further says that even dogs and foxes do not touch the corpses. Different meanings are unfolded with trenchant ironic statements in the following lines of the poem:

Ya pachchhe hater samne tai niye berie porchhe tola uthchhe dokane
Dokane
Golite golite chakro, sudarshan kudarshan, eitake lagie de oitake
Mathai tolpar jal 7 samudra700 khal sabkata khaler dhare
Ekata kore haat bandha pa bandha
Upur, kamrachchhe mati, gograshe mrittika gilchhe gilte gilte gupta
[They come out from home with whatever weapons they find near hand. Extortion is
drawn from shops. In lanes and alleys therer are many ‘chakras’, both ugly and
beautiful. They target anyone they wish. Then water of seven seas and 700 canals are
in commotin head. There are dead bodies are laid on the bank of each canal with
their hands and legs tightly roped. They have been laid on the ground on reversed
mode and seems biting the ground. Now-a-days fox and dogs do not touch corpses.]

(‗Bhutumbhagoban’, Bhutumbhagoban)

Picture of armed men demanding extortion (‗tola uthchhe dokane/dokane’); inflighting
among the armed gangs; throwing dead bodies besides canal reveal a lawless,
anarchic and violent state of the socio-political condition of the country. Phenomenological, psychic and spiritual violence are played off in the backdrop of
textual, linguistic and figurative violence.

Violence in the poems of Seamus Heaney from Station Island till date and Joy
Goswami from Aj Yodi Amake Jiggshe Koro till date

Heaney’s Station Island (1983) is technically a departure from his earlier works.
Written in three distinct parts, the book may be called an allegory of spiritual
pilgrimage, disguised or ventriloquial, in search of proper state of soul in relation to
both phenomenological and ontological aspects and issues of life and universe. The
first part of the book deals with occurrences and memories of ordinary life. The
second part deals with the persona’s encounter with the spirit of dead, in dream or
imagination and the third part gives vent to the freedom of the newly released self
which asserts its presence and importance as a kind of anti-self or parallel self as
Heaney’s voice echoes the voice of the protagonist whose name rhymes with his own,
‗Sweeney‘. To record the gravity and seriousness of soul in crisis and critical scrutiny,
Heaney incorporates different voices – the lyric; the narrative and the dramatic. In this
respect Heaney follows his predecessor Eliot, both stylistically and thematically. Like
Eliot, Heaney too journeys through Dantesque Purgatorio and encounters with the
dead in dream or vision. The mythologized allegory is that of the famous Irish legend of Buile Suibhne which Heaney himself translated as Sweeney Astray. According to the myth, Sweeney was probably a 7th century Irish King who offended and humiliated the Catholic St. Ronan who was attempting to establish a church in Ulster. He first threw the saint’s Psalter in a nearby lake and killed one of his acolytes with his spear. Sweeney was cursed by the saint who in turn went mad at the battle of Moira in 637 A.D. and eventually turned into a man-bird, journeying through different regions of Ireland, England and Scotland. The king is cursed and exiled from his kingdom into the forest. He felt guilty of his misdeed. And a metamorphosis of self took place. Sweeney now introspects and retrospects; looks inward and beyond, to explore violence, anarchy and disintegration in the universal order of things, human soul and psyche. Through the guise of Sweeney, Heaney takes on his pilgrimage, quest, and migration to many strange and awful realms of existence. Like Sweeney he abandons his former self and began to transmute all sorts of experience impartially and objectively as a poet of English language as well as an Irish Catholic individual and a human being. The book is, in fact, a part of spiritual autobiography of an artist. All three sections are linked by the pervasive presence of Sweeney. Dillon Johnston makes a penetrating comment on the victims of violence in Station Island sequence:

“While the poems about victims of violence in the sequence Station Island’ are as meticulously formed and phrased as the three poems in Field Work, (‘The Strand at Lough Beg’, ‘A Postcard from North Antrim’, ‘Casualty’), they differ from these elegies, by conveying what Heaney ascribes to poets of witness, ‘the impulse to elevate truth above beauty’. He writes, “‘The Poet of Witness”’...represents poetry’s solidarity with the doomed, the deprived, the victimized, the under-privileged’ (Government of the Tongue, XVI), so that the poet who offered ablutions at the end of ‘The Strand at Lough Beg’, now yields to the victim’s viewpoint and voice which upbraids the poet because he ‘drew/ the lovely blinds of the purgatorial/ and saccharined my death with morning dew.’”217

The journey thus parallels Dante’s journey through Inferno and Purgatorio. Heaney thus aestheticised the brutal history of past Ireland. Here Heaney closely resembles Goswami’s famous lyric poems ‘Prolap Likhon’, ‘Aj Yodi Amake Jiggesh Koro’ (Aj Yodi Amake Jiggesh Koro, 1991) and ‘Atmajibanir Angsho’ (Bajrobidyut-bharti Khata, 1995). In all these poems Goswami journeys through the realm of violence and death; anarchy and chaos; disintegration and destruction and a bleak, dark, demonic force guiding and controlling the universe. In quest of his identity and his role in the universal order of existence, Goswami’s pilgrimage very often takes a precarious turn, losing its mission into an overwhelming, almost appalling state of void, emptiness and nothingness, a complete blank. Like Heaney Goswami’s persona too, takes on ventriloquial guise, to avert subjectivity. In course of their journey both the poets encounter same sort of appalling experience.

Sweeney narrates his love for nature; his fear, anxiety and anger at the violence and brutality of the world that pursue him throughout, day and night, even after his exile. The poet expresses the protagonist’s love of trees in the following lines:

I would live happy
in the ivy bush
high in some twisted tree
and never come out.

(‘Sweeney Astray’, Sweeney Astray)

Why does the poet decline to come out from the bower? Is he an escapist, or afraid of the harsh and crude reality of the world? Does the poet deny his responsibility to write against injustice and oppression for his political, religious or linguistic compulsion or determines to keep his art free from political or religious interferences? The questions remain unanswered. But the later experience he draws is awful and horrible:

Think of my alarms,
my coming to earth
where the fox still
gnaws at the bones,

my wild career
as the wolf from the wood
goes tearing ahead
and I lift towards the mountain.

the bark of foxes
echoing below me,
the wolves behind me
howling and rending –

(‗Sweeney Astray‘, *Sweeney Astray*)

The animal imagery of ferocity and violence indicates that even in exile Sweeney or Heaney couldn‘t blot out the memory of battle, riots or bloodshed which took over their time. Even in their exile they can feel the pernicious presence of crafty politicians, wild and murderous sectarian leaders of Ulster. The ‘fox’ which ‘gnaws at the bones’ and the comparison of his vocation as a poet with wolf’s ‘tearing ahead’ is suggestive of the agony and suffering of the protagonists due to unwanted meddling of others in the artist’s liberty in expression of thoughts and ideas and his liability to people. In the next stanza, the protagonist declares that hungry, wild foxes and wolves are running after him to tear his flesh and bones apart. The same we find in another Sweeney poem of Heaney where Heaney presents an introductory prose narrative of horror at the thought of approaching the assassin hand of his avenger from Ui Faolin race of whose king he once killed:

– This will be the outcry of the Ui Faolin coming to
Kill me, he said. I slew their king at Moira and this
host is out to avenge him.

(‗Sweeney Praises the Trees‘, *Sweeney Astray*)

The account reveals the truth that even in 7th century violence was the ruling roost of the then society and culture. Ethno-religious clashes and political violence were the root cause of bloodshed and carnage. The situation has not been changed rather aggravated in 20th century as exemplified in the sectarian violence and clashes in Northern Ireland during 70s of the 20th century.
In his confessional lyric ‘Aj Yodi Amake Jiggesh Koro’ Goswami journeys through the dark corridor of history and memory and brings back those painful, gruesome, awful experiences of past, both personal and historical. It is interesting that the persona in Goswami’s poems very often suffer the agony of separation, loss and failure. The world they visit is dark, chaotic and disintegrating and their posture also quickly changes. After recounting childhood experience in the introductory part of the poem, Goswami starts unfolding the agony and wound of riot, arson and partition. Of course, the protagonist who explores the vast stretches of dark, gloomy and bloody history of the land and her people may be any individual in search of identity, personal as well cultural. The division of the country in the name of religion and the Hindu-Muslim riots parallel the sectarian violence and riots in Ireland. Through subtle hints and suggestions, the poet unveils the picture:

Sei sankor upor diye ekdin enpar theke  
Opare chole giyechhilo Asgar Ali Mandal ra Babul Islamra  
Sei sankor upor diye ekdin opar theke  
Epare chole esechhilo tomar notun sari porte sekha ma,  
Tep jama para amar santumasi

[One day Asgar Ali Mandal, Babul Islam and others went that side from this over the bridge. Over that very bridge one day came your mother who learns first to wear a saree, my Santu aunt with tape-frock.]

(‘Aj Yodi Amake Jiggesh Koro’, ['If You Ask Me Today'], If You Ask Me Today)

The victim of riot-ridden violence is presented through the following lines:

Ekdin dui gal beye jhar jhar kore raktogorano abosthai  
Jale kadi dhanshet patksheter madhye  
Hatre hatre ami khunje firechhilam amar upre noa chokh

Ekdin pithe chhora gantha abosthai  
Rakto kashte kashte ami achhre ese podechhilam daoai.

(‘Aj Yodi Amake Jiggesh Koro’ If You Ask Me Today)
One day I was searching my torn off eyes in the paddy and jute field and blood was rolling down from my cheeks. One day I was fallen on the porch vomiting blood and knife pierced on my back.

(‘If You Ask Me Today’, If You Ask Me Today)²¹⁸

Heaney’s translation of political violence into violence in poetry explicitly parallels Goswami’s presentation of political and religious violence, though Goswami does this sans allegorical subtext like Sweeney of Heaney. Heaney’s journey through the realm of chaos follows Aeneas and Ulysses’ journey to the underworld. Is this comparison done consciously? If so, definitely Heaney indulges in irony and self-mockery because Heaney is not a heroic figure like Aeneas or Ulysses challenging death and danger for the sake of patriotism, idealism and truth. Neither does he possess their heroic determination and steadfastness for the noble mission. On the contrary, he always vacillates and oscillates due to his cultural, religious and linguistic compulsion. The dichotomy always remains central in Heaney’s thought and poetic discourse. The contradiction is striking. Again, his journey through chaos and his imaginary or visionary encounter with the spirit of assassinated friends, relatives or personages closely known or remote relate to Dante’s meeting with the damned souls in Inferno and Purgatorio. How Heaney is influenced by Dante is exemplified in ‘Envies and Identifications: Dante and the Modern Poet’:

“What I first loved in the Commedia was the local intensity, the vehemence and fondness attaching to individual shades, the way personalities and values are emotionally soldered together, the strong strain of what has been called personal realism in the celebration of bonds of friendship and bonds of enmity. The way in which Dante could place himself in an historical world yet submit that world to scrutiny from perspective beyond history, the way he could accommodate the political and the transcendent, this too encouraged my attempt at a sequence of poem which would explore the typical strains which the consciousness labours under in this country. The main tension is between two often contradictory commands: to be faithful to the collective historical

experience and to be true to the recognitions of the emerging self. I hoped that I could dramatise these strains by meeting shades from my own dream-life who had also been inhabitants of the actual Irish world. They could perhaps voice the claims of orthodoxy and the necessity to recognize those claims. They could probe the validity of one’s commitment.”

The statement suggests that Heaney was prone to invoke Dantesque inferno in contemporary Irish political, cultural and religious context. And here he resembles Goswami’s personae or protagonists who visit unnumbered unidentified victims of violence- political or religious in the long bloody history of Bengal and India. Thus in Canto VII of Station Island the persona encounters the ghost of a man who is a victim of brutal sectarian murder in Northern Ireland. The man is one of his football playmates, probably William Strathearn, killed by two off-duty policemen in county Antrim. The description of the victim’s blood-stained face closely takes after Goswami’s victim of violence as depicted above. Heaney presents his victim of sectarian violence thus:

And though I was reluctant
I turned to meet his face and the shock

is still in me at what I saw. His brow
was blown open above the eye and blood
had dried on his neck and cheek. ‘Easy now’,

he said, ‘it’s only me. You’ve seen men as raw
after a football match…

(Station Island, Canto – VII)

The image of ‘His brow/ was blown open above the eye and blood/ had dried on his neck and cheek’ is echoed in Goswami:

Ekdin dui gal beye jhar jhar kore raktogorano abosthai

Jale kadai dhankshet patksheter madhye
Hatre hatre ami khunjne firechhilam amar upre neoa chokh

[One day I was searching my torn off eyes in the paddy and jute field and blood was rolling down from my cheeks]

(‗Aj Yodi Amake Jiggesh Koro‘)

Heaney describes the victim as ‘the perfect, clean, unthinkable victim’. And the poet confesses his guilt of passivity, evasion and timorousness towards the savagery and brutality of the murderous act:

‗Forgive the way I have lived indifferent –
Forgive my timid circumspect involvement,‘

(Canto – VII, Station Island)

In fact, Heaney implicitly accuses himself as he is accused elsewhere in Canto VIII of the anthology by the ghost of his murdered cousin Colum McCarthy who appeared earlier in ‘The Strand at Lough Beg’. In the imaginary conversation that follows between Heaney and Colum brings out Heaney’s role as a fence-sitter. As a poet as well as a human being his role in the Ulster violence is questioned:

You confused evasion and artistic tact.
The protestant who shot me through the head
I accuse directly, but indirectly, you
who now atone perhaps upon this bed
for the way you white washed ugliness and drew
the lovely blinds of the Purgatorio
and saccharined my death with morning dew.

(Canto VIII, Station Island)

The vehemence and honesty of the confessional expression reveal the poet’s proper stand as a poet as well as an Irish Catholic. Contrary to Heaney, Goswami’s role is always unquestionable. His views and visions might be positioned by the ideological construct of the time and place, but his views as an artist as well as a human being, is always humanitarian.
Violence in Goswami’s poetry is very often universal, objective and impersonal. It is rendered into diverse aspects of phenomenological, psychic, spiritual, ontological as well as linguistic-textual spheres. Persons and places are played off against time and space with continuous shifting of identity and location. Personal experience becomes universal, subjective becomes objective and impersonal; locations are dispersed rapidly with no places but dystopian places of mind, and broken, shattered, bloody field of precarious human habitations. Cosmic instability uncertainty and unpredictability also play crucial part in Goswami’s poems, particularly, in *Bajrobidyut-bharti Khata* (1995). In the poems like ‘Atmajibanir Angsho’, ‘Alo Samparke Probondho’ and ‘Ek Brishtir Dike Moria’ Goswami recounts what he saw, felt, imagined or experienced since childhood to adulthood. He journeys through time and space, gives detail sketch of the anarchic state of human life- physical, psychological and spiritual. The material world and the dark, bleak and appalling cosmic force that regulates the universe whimsically and arbitrarily yet according to its own rule, become subject of Goswami’s many poems. Moreover, we notice his penchant to explore the evolution of human linguistic cultural phenomenon which is never static. The poem ‘Atmajibanir Angsho’ starts rather romantically. In a dramatic mode the persona speaks someone (Manabda) about himself and the world and also about the method he speaks of by receding back to the dark channel of memory or subconscious state of mind, recollecting and bringing back flashes of objects, events, relationship and the poet’s complex, ambivalent, oscillating interactions with and reaction to them. Thus plethora of images- broken, incomplete and evaporating, assemble one after another to register the incoherent and incongruous stream of consciousness through which the persona passes. In the beginning the images of water, wind, clay, road, and banyan tree, thousands of hanging bats from its branches, river and boat on the river-bank for repairing and then the image of young school girls going to the school with their simple ornamentation and beauty and the young boys following them, appear. Then the punishment by the teacher, his stick, pupil’s standing upon the bench, blackboard and from this blackboard the imaginary flight to the Ice Age take place. In Part II of the poem the poet reveals a diseased, decayed and distorted man-woman relationship and the spiritual aridity of the poet through the ‘objective correlative’ of unnumbered images,
like his fleeing home in the guise of ‘cave man with stone-weapon on shoulder’ in search of prey, and again comes back to the small tea stall (boudir dokan) frequented by anti-socials, her keeping the account of debt as well as bashing and then the letters of his manuscripts flew away overhead, surpassing many fiery states like the solar system. The surrealistic images of drying sea on the street of Kolkata which parallels Heaney’s ‘I felt like the bottom of a dried up lake’ (Canto VIII, Station Island), drowning houses underneath, sudden emergence of police van follows with many other images of diverse kinds and nature. Then the images of fire, sex woman and hell jostle together and the poet expresses his nausea, anger and despair at the conjugal relationship. Of course, here he mentions the opposite impulses of irresistible attraction and intense repulsion for sex. Goswami continues to explore and discover the world of virtual reality where even a stick becomes incentives to travel the unending span of time – from Oedipus to ‘income-tax’ raid. In between he portrays picture of different human figures using their sticks for different purposes. And the most interesting phenomenon is that Goswami does not use a single full stop till he enters in part- V of the poem where his protagonist visits the living hell on earth, in the following lines:

Yekhane sab bostibari, beshya bari
Hissa niye yakhun khushi khunkharab

Mayera sab nizer ghare lok basai
Shukno mukhe ghure berai bachchara

Bhanga barir ghare mojut bisforok
Ducharjon dinmojr chhatrokhan
Dala pakiye mangsho hoy
Seikhane,
Se-i lekhai premer kono yaiga nei!

[Where there is brothel-house, slum, killing on the share of extortion; the mother keeps men, the off-springs wander dry-mouth; the ammunitions heaped up in the broken room of dilapidated house; a few labourers are blasted and turned into lump of flesh.]
Slum, anti-socials, extortions, gang-fighting, bloodshed, murder, prostitution, ammunition and blasts present a sinister, ugly picture of the time. In part-VII of the poem Goswami presents remnant of ravaging war – rusty, deserted military cars, broken face of canon, tail of destroyed war-ship in sandy field and driving time to arrest life on earth, followed by cosmic dust storm and the final extinction of the sun, the end of life on earth. At the end of the concluding part-VIII Goswami announces:

Aj theke prem likhbo na ar
Sudhu mathar bhitor lukiye niye ghrubo ek
Bajrobidyut-bharti khata…

[From today I will not write of love any more. Only I will wander by hiding an exercise book full of thunder and fire inside my head.]

(‘Part of Autobiography’, Exercise Book Full of Thunderbolt and Electricity)

Same cruelty, ferocity, atrocity and savagery in human relationship is drawn alive in Part-VII of ‘Alo Samparke Prabandho’ where the persona runs by treading fire to be saved from fire and shielding shooting arrows with palms and back and catching them and singing the song of newer bloodshed and carnage and understanding blood-curdling summery of terrible shrieking and drip-drop oozing of blood and then the image of murdered man buried underground whose throat is slit by cutlass and that knife is thrown in a pond and the parts of dead body laid strewn in the agricultural field of the tenant farmer who might be killed in the strife with the landlord. The presentation of the violent phenomenon is shocking:

Ba: eibar aguner opor diye khasa tomar dour
Agun theke banchte
Dour dour haate ar pithe teer thekate teer lufte lufte
Nabo nobo khunkharapir udbodhoneeiti ebong rakto thanda kara

Atmachitkarer sarangsho
Bujhte bujhte khasa tomar chhutmantor dourbaaz rakto felte
Felte bahubidh

Hoihalla hallahoi galigalaz

Kada jamir bhut bolchhe
Amar punte rekhechhe, noli han kore diyechhe, vojali felechhe
Pukure

[Bravo: now your excellent running by treading fire, to be saved from fire; running and running through shielding arrows with palms and back and catching them and singing the songs of newer bloodshed and carnage and understanding blood curdling summery of terrible shrieking and drip-drop oozing of blood and then the image of murdered man buried underground whose throat is slit by cutlass and that knife is thrown in a pond.]

(‗Alo Samparke Prabondho‘, Bajrobidyut-bharti Khata [‘Poems about Light’, Exercise Book Full of Thunderbolt and Electricity])

The same historical violence of brutality, savagery and inhuman murder that continue throughout centuries, is impersonally expressed in ‘Ek Brishtir Deeke Moria’. The persona universalizes his identity when he says:

Yuddhe ar durbhikshe ar ganohatyai hatahoto amar sankhaheen sharir
Utthe boschhe jangoler anache kanache u: eto lok ke ami
Punorbason debo kothai

[My fearless body is the killed one in war, famine and genocide. They are emerging from various corners of the jungle and they sit. Where can I give rehabilitation to so many people?]
War, famine and genocide have taken many human lives in past and the poet identifies him with the victims and at the end of the part the poet depicts violence as an inherent force in nature and the eater-eaten relationship according to the Darwinian theory of struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest. The picture he draws upholds Tennyson’s ‘Nature red in tooth and claw’. The end of the poem follows thus:

Pahar dubiye gota prithivi gol ekta jalashoy
Tar jeebkul nischinno
Opor theke jhunke keu dekhuk dhoaranger masto ekta
Gamla
Yar madhye, ekta machh, tokhono tara korchhe
Arekta machhke…

[The world is a round-shape reservoir which thorns the hill and whose life is extinct. Let some one lean from above and see a grey-colour large pot inside which a fish is still driving away another fish.]

(‘Desperate toward a Rain’, Exercise Book Full of Thunderbolt and Electricity)

The picture of a fish hunting another fish for its food suggests the eater-eaten relationship in nature. The same happens in human world also. The rich and the powerful deprive and exploit the poor and the downtrodden. The practice continues since the inception of civilization and there is still no hope of redemption from the curse.

The expansion, variation and profundity of Goswami’s world are larger and deeper than that of Heaney. Yet the violence which Heaney encapsulates in Canto IX of Station Island is compelling and appalling. The journey through chaos, anarchy and disintegration and the persona’s encountering with appalling experiences are awful

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and shivering. The spiritual aridity and barrenness is measured against the dark, deadly and murderous world where he belongs. First fourteen lines of the poem form the imaginary, anguished monologues of one of the seven IRA hunger-strikers who died in Long Kesh between March and September 1981. Heaney probably thinks of Francis Hughes here, who came from his home district Bellaghy. The victim narrates his pain, agony and sufferings that he bears with during his starvation. At the same time, he gives voices to his experience of the terrible state of ethno-religious unrest and strife leading to political conflicts and violence that freshly started when the Troubles broke out in 1969 in Northern Ireland. The symbols and images are telling, the expressions are compressed and the presentation of self and surround is vivid, glaring and ghastly:

My brain dried like spread turf, my stomach
Shrank to a cinder and tightened and cracked.
Often I was dogs on my own track
Of blood and wet grass that I could have licked.

(Canto IX, Station Island)

In the next line he speaks of an ‘ambush’ under the prison blanket. The symbol connotes both the ‘blanket protest’ of the IRA hunger-strikers as well as many untold ambushes they conducted or have been targeted of outside the prison. The image of ‘blood on wet grass’ is equally appalling. Another image of ‘A hit-man on the brink, emptied and deadly’ gives picture of a cold blooded assassin. The personae as well as readers listen to the account of the narrator which unveils the murderous state of violence-ridden Northern Ireland. The subsequent part of the poem is all about the mental spiritual state of the persona passing through a profound feeling of guilt and remorse. In the second stanza the speaker tells all about the martyr who died of hunger-strike. He sees his corpse and imagines his past activities as a member of IRA. The words and phrases such as ‘firing party’, ‘woodworm’, ‘grenade’, ‘helicopters and curlews’ invoke the violent state of the nation. In the third stanza the persona and the poet exchanges identity and speaks:

......................................................‘I repent

My unweaned life that kept me competent
To sleepwalk with connivance and mistrust.’
Here Heaney seems to rebuke himself for his ambivalent role in the Irish Independence Movement. He always maintained aesthetic distance from political issues of contemporary Ulster violence. He thought that too much involvement with the issues of Troubles may interfere with artistic creativity. On the contrary, he could not deny his linguistic-cultural lineage to Britain and therefore, could not attack British imperial policy as strongly as the Irish Catholics of the country wished him to do. The above lines are sincere confession from the deepest core of the poet’s heart. Though now and then he criticizes Britain’s involvement in Ireland’s internal affairs, he himself thinks that his voice of protest was not enough strong as it should be. Here we discover Heaney within the circumference of specific issues, places and persons. The technique he employs is technically less innovative than Goswami. Though both try to explore the disorder, disintegration, and anarchy of the world they experienced, Goswami’s view is universal, cosmic and multi-dimensional. Heaney’s view, on the contrary, is confined within Irish Troubles, political unrest and violence of the time. Though he employs the allegories of Homeric and Dantesque myth of journeying through the Inferno, he failed to attain their epic grandeur in presenting the contemporary violent-ridden Irish political cultural milieu. In comparison with Goswami’s cosmic, universal views and visions, Heaney’s perception is very limited and confined, yet both the poets were acutely concerned with the issues of violence they felt, experienced and encountered with. Almost same sort of topical, factual violence Goswami translates into his famous ‘Na Hanyate’ and the title poem ‘Ma Nishad’ in the anthology *Ma Nishad* (1999). In fact, Goswami gives the news extract from the ‘Anandabazar Patrika’ as the heading below the title ‘Na Hanyate’. The news extract follows thus:

[ 61 genocide victims by landlord gundas in Jehanabad. Among the dead 35 are female and children. Due to be a stronghold of the Naxalites the landlord’s own armed force Ranabeer Sena had selected this Lachhmanpur Bathe village]^{223}

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^{223} Anandabazara Patrika, 2\textsuperscript{nd} December, 1997.
The extract opens up turbulent perspectives of the whole spectrum of socio-political clashes whose deep-rooted source lies in the ethno-religious intolerance, racial hatred, casteism and the curse of untouchability. In fact, the caste system has reduced the downtrodden masses into a sub-human race in Indian socio-religious set up. This led to wide economic inequality and exploitation of the poor, particularly the ‘Dalits’ – the Schedule Castes and the Schedule Tribes. Casteism is an age-old practice and the custom continues in the Hindu society since the Vedic civilization. The fact is that the system had determined not only the division of society according to the profession of the people it also had determined the division of power and labour in the society. The contemporary socio-political violence is generated due to this social injustice, economic exploitation and deprivation, casteist untouchability in the name of religion. When the ultra-left Naxalites approached these downtrodden, oppressed masses, they began to unite and organize themselves in the hope of emancipation from the barbarism and slavery of the landlords belonging to the ‘higher caste’. When they began to retaliate against exploitation, oppression and torture, the Ranbeer Sena committed the genocide of ‘Lachhmanpur Bathe’ in which 61 people have been brutally killed. Goswami gives an awful expression of the violence, the thirsty ‘corpse’ (lash) who had been denied water for their caste-identity. He voices forth this violence in such memorable lines as follows below:

Hingsha, rano hingsha, ghano hingsha-gola jal
Payer kachhe pukur, ar thentle yaoa ghas
Hater kachhe pukur, tate sataan shue pore
Jal khachchhe laash

[Violence and violence of war, water of thikly mixed violence, the pond near feet and the trodden grass, the pond near hand and a corpse laid straight on it and drinking water.]

(‘Indestructible’, Mother Hunter [‘Na Hanyate’, Ma Nishad])

Again the poet raises straight question against casteist violence in the following lines of the same poem:

Kon jater rakto eta? Yadab, na Dushad?
Kader dike jal chale na? Chamar? Dhobi? Kahar?
Lotar theke hater koshe egie yai jal –
Modhye othe pahar

Water from water pot comes nearer hand – hill rises in the middle.]

(‘Indestructible’, Mother Hunter) (Na Hanyate’, Ma Nishad)

But Goswami, like a rebel raises his voice of revolt against all sorts of tyranny, oppression and exploitation by the rich and the upper-class people. He not only protests against the oppressive socio-political, religious mechanism but calls for an armed resistance against the cruelty of the landlords belonging to the upper-caste community. The following lines are the poet’s unfaltering addressing to the deprived and oppressed masses to retaliate against torture and tyranny:

Akromon koro noyto akranto hobe
Jote banao, bondhu koro, firo na ek pa-o
Lukie thako pahare jale khonir gahbare
Uthe abar agune haat dao

[Attack or you will be attacked. Be united, make friends and don’t turn back a single step. Hide in hill, water, or under the depth of mines and rise again to keep your hand on fire.]

(‘Indestructible’, Mother Hunter [‘Na Hanyate’, Ma Nishad])

Violence, as depicted above has no parallel in Heaney, though he was acutely concerned with the ethno-religious and political violence in Ulster and translated into his poetry different experiences he encountered with during the Troubles. As an Ulster Catholic he found bloody riots between the Catholics and the Protestants where England was directly involved supporting the Irish Protestants. The plight of the Catholics is presented in many poems of North, Field Work and Station Island. ‘The
Ministry of Fear’ may be cited as an example. Though the poem possesses diverse ventriloquial voices of plural bind, one of the dominating aspects is the sectarian or ethnic issue. The persona presents the suffering and struggle of the Catholics against the fear of being a Catholic who would be subjected to interrogation by military men in every check post and definitely be humiliated for his identity as a Catholic. The feeling of coercion, hatred and humiliation breed the seeds of violence between the two communities. The poet does not elaborate the issue; he only presents the precondition and roots of violence that may be turned into conflagration:

...Catholics, in general, don’t speak
As well as students from the Protestant school.’
Remember that stuff? Inferiority
Complexes, stuffs that dreams were made on.
‘What’s your name, Heaney?
‘Heaney, Father.’
(‘The Ministry of Fear’, North)

The surname identifies the person to be interrogated and is ridiculed for having a Catholic surname. This suggests the enmity, hostility and hatred between the two communities. The atmosphere of fear and mistrust is heightened. Of course, coming to the title poem ‘Ma Nishad’ Goswami universalizes violence. Here he moves from temporal to timeless and specific to universal. He shows that progress of human civilization is based upon power and authority of one over the other. Since the dawn of homo-sapiens man’s history is blooded with massacre and butchery of the weak by the strong and powerful. The man with command, authority, arms and physical strength always snatches food from other’s mouth. This is an age-old practice and the tradition continues till now. In the following lines of the title poem the poet takes the readers to the history of conflicts, clashes, war and violence among men for power and pelf:

Adim astroyug theke tanatani
Mukher khabar mukh theke kede khaoa
Jir jire gaye balkol, kanthakhani
Mathar opore surya garom taoa
Since the primitive age tussling goes on with arms as to who can snatch food from other’s mouth. The rag is like bark of decayed tree. The sun is like a hot oven over the head. Killed corpses are dried up on sand and float on water, broken chariot, dead horse, arms in grip and their face is fixed on grass. They were neighbours.

(The ‘Mother Hunter’, *Mother Hunter* [‘Ma Nishad’, *Ma Nishad*])

The image of ‘primitive arms age’ and ‘snatching food from other’s mouth’ suggest the era of ‘might is right’. The image of corpses killed or wounded soldiers, broken chariots, dead horses strewn laying in the sandy field exhibit the picture of a battle field of the past. Violence translated in the above poems is through abstract images and symbols encompassing universal state of existence and warring history of man since time immemorial.

In his *Surya Poda Chhai* (1999) Goswami records the suspended state of a bleak and chaotic universe, governed by cosmic laws of nature. The anthology is comprised of 64 untitled short poems. Yet almost all the poems do possess atomic force. Thematically the poems recount the experience of hallucinatory encounters with blind, menacing forces of dread and void; chaos and disintegration; darkness and destruction; annihilation and extinction. The persona visualizes disintegrating, sinister forces which famish and menace external phenomenal world as well as the soft fibres of human psyche and soul. The riddle of time, place and space is further mystified by the persona’s harrowing of diverse levels and layers of consciousness as well as physical world and the universe. Moreover, his perfect synthesis of abstraction, metaphysical and physical reality in relation to the precarious state of human existence makes his poems elusive, allusive and shockingly obscure. The terse, precise, tight and compelling expressions are made of meticulously selected dictions. The random use of metaphysical conceits as well as innovative and distinctive symbols holds the heavy weight of cosmic disintegration. Each of the poems upholds each aspect of physical, metaphysical and cosmic disintegration. Ghastly, fearful,
demonic images heighten feelings of helplessness, emptiness and void. Goswami lays bare the mystery, horror and ugliness of an incomprehensible dystopian universe where murderous, demonic forces operate perpetually. In comparison with the colliding, chaotic, annihilating force man’s status appears meaningless, insignificant and meagre. Goswami’s observation depicts man as a helpless prey to the hand of a destructive destiny. Man is merely a passive, living object in the universal order of nature and is destined to play his role according to the dictates of the cosmic and natural laws which holds and regulates the whole creation. And this power is not benevolent but awful, menacing, anarchic and malevolent. Of course, this cosmic violence in Goswami’s poems relates man and nature as inseparable part of the precarious nature of existence. The images are shocking as they shake the idea of an apparent solidarity with a coherent and meaningful universe as well as the integrity and cohesiveness of human psyche and soul. Goswami in fact, turns the world upside down and shows the inherent clashes and violence within the universal order of existence. Surrealistic images and exotic symbols placed in shocking contrasts against each other uphold the violent, dystopian existence as exemplified in such lines of the anthology:

Amar bidyutmatra asha

tar dike ratri hole, dhire dhire mukh ghuriechhe
megher pichhone rakha purono Kaman

kalo gol gala diye uthe ase agnirang thutu –

[My electrifying hope only and when naght falls toward it, slowly, silently the old canon which was kept behind the cloud turns its face. The fiery spit comes through the black round throat.]

(Surya Poda Chhai, [Sun-burnt Ashes])225

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The image of primitive canon and its fiery shooting at hope destabilizes the idea of peaceful existence. In poem no.5 Goswami presents another fearful state of human existence:

Sheshrate, megher alpathe
ekti kankal feroala
henke yai: chai, doi chi…

chhade jarobharot santan, tar
khatkhate testai sango dite
pukure mukh diye ami khai –
jaler badole rakto – khai…

[At late night in the narrow field-dividing lane of cloud a poor vendor walks crying to sell curds. On the roof there is his lazy son. To accompany him I drink blood from pond instead of water.]

(Surya Poda Chhai, [Sun-burnt Ashes])

Here the images of skeleton and the persona’s drinking of blood, is shuddering. In poem no.8 he presents a bloody patch of earth where violence breeds ‘black grass’, instead of green and underneath earth he visualizes ‘bones’ and ‘dusty skull’. The skull is compared to round earthen pot (malsa) and to the earth where the persona spits his bleeding cough. The picture is horrifying.

Poems 17, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27 encompass the violence of war, punishment of the captured enemies, in past and present era. In poem no. 17 he speaks of war and thousands of corpses (yuddho shab, hazar hazar [battle corpses thousands and thousands]); in 21 there are images of weapons used and victims’ fallen prey to modern warfare like, cannon carrying vehicle, and the buried bodies of mother and child laying in the deep grave created by bombing; in poem no. 25 the image of slitting throat suggests the punishment of war victims or rebels against any military regimes or monarchy. In poem 27 the images of arrow (teer) and missiles (kheponastro) and the burning of refugee camps (udbastu shibir) reveal the war-

infested violent state from Ages to Ages. Time passes through and violence passes with time as an inseparable part of existence:

Ek yug theke anya yuge

Ure ase khepnastro, teer

Chhele bou meye budo janoni o shishu kolahal

Dou dou udbastu shibir

[From one age to another age comes flying misslile, arrow...son wife daughter mother and child shout... the refugee camps blaze.]

(Surya Poda Chhai [Sun-burnt Ashes]) \(^{227}\)

In poem no. 53 the poet imagines how the death of the sun would occur and what would be the effect of it on earth:

Fakashe holde surya biraat chakar moto chharie royechhe
700 koti bachhorer parer akashe
Samasto jalani pude shesh.

Balir samudra khate ami haat jor kore danrai
Amar kapale eso, jhore podo,
Roudro noy, surya-poda chhai!

[The pale yellow sun stretches like a great wheel in the sky after 700 crores of years. All the fuel is burnt. I stand upon the sand-divan folded hand. Come, sprinke upon my forehead not the sun rays but Sun-burnt Asheses.]

(Surya Poda Chhai [Sun-burnt Ashes]) \(^{228}\)

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Of course, the catastrophic end of our solar system is imagined with the cataclysmic images of destruction in poem no.62, before the concluding verse. The fearful image of a fiery tail in the sky, the fractured mass of star falling on the ocean; before that trees, lands and hills flashed with whitish colour; motion of birds, reptiles cease for moment. The picture is of the imagined end of the age of dinosaurs by sudden meteor shower:

……………………………………tarakhando samudre porchhe

tar aage akashe lamba aguner laz – ekpalok

tar aage ek jhaloke sada gachhpala bhukhando pahar

urte urte friz korchhe sarisrip pakhi

prithivi dhangsher thik ek palok deri

[Pieces of star are falling on the ocean. Before that there is a long tale of fire in the sky – twinkling of an eye. Before that there is white flashes on the trees, lands and hills. The snakes, birds are freezed in their flying motion. One moment left for the extinction of the earth.]

(Surya Poda Chhai, [Sun-burnt Ashes, poem])

There is no instance of this cataclysmic vision of destruction of our planet and extinction of life on earth in Heaney’s poems. The theme of Heaney’s poems is within the circumference of human civilization and human experience. Though now and then he dived deep into the dark channel of memory and history through mythical and archeological past, particularly in his ‘bog poems’, his poems are never placed against so huge and vast a background as Goswami’s. Yet the poems of both are dominated by pervasive presence of violence.

Since *Death of a Naturalist* to *Seeing Things* through *North*, *Field Work*, *Station Island* and *The Haw Lantern*, Heaney has been endeavouring to reconcile various orders of Knowledge such as, ‘practical’ and ‘poetic’. For this purpose his text is very often vandalized by violent issues of politics, religious and ethnic conflicts, cultural clashes and mythical, historical atrocities of past. The linguistic, aesthetic and poetic concern is finely balanced with practical, empirical, rational and all other knowledge of the world by Heaney. Heaney himself comments in this respect:

“…whatever the possibilities of achieving political harmony at an institutional level, I wanted to affirm that within our individual selves we can reconcile two orders of knowledge which we might call the practical and the poetic; to affirm also that each form of knowledge redresses the other and the frontier between them is there for the crossing.”

The idea is applied in many of his poems beginning from his maiden anthology. One of the explicit examples is ‘From the Frontier of Writing’ (*The Haw Lantern*, 1987) where issues of ethno-political conflict, the fear and tension to encounter ‘the trouble’ and struggle to liberate from this state of crisis is twined with aesthetic struggle of the artist to encounter fear and tension in the process of creation and final sense of release and liberation once the process is done.

In *The Spirit Level* (1996), surprisingly enough, Heaney is turned to extreme violence after the miraculous sojourn of *Seeing Things* (1991). Of course, Heaney’s attitude to experience of the objective world, the psychic-spiritual state of self as well as the cultural context is always complex and ambivalent. Here again, Heaney takes the mythical allegory of Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* which he transmutes into poetry in contemporary context. ‘Mycenae Lookout’ is the strongest poem in the anthology which translates external violence into violence in poetry. At the same time, linguistic violence is well maneuvered in the body of the text to give proper shape, strength and beauty to this external violence. In this regard Helen Vendler makes a penetrating comment:

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“Never during the quarter-century of hostilities in the North had Heaney written openly inflammatory or recriminatory verse: even the “bog poems” – some of which concerned medieval sacrificial victims – refrained from matching the violence of much Irish political sentiment with violence of poetic language. His own intelligence and distrust of propagandistic rhetoric kept Heaney scrupulously away from language expressing the mad exuberance – felt by many, and a temptation to all writers – of those seeking vengeance by violent means.

With the final quelling (as it seemed) of the actual hostilities in the 1994 cease-fire Heaney felt free at last to write violently of the war as it had been, to show what it had revealed of human nature, not least his own nature. In a totally unexpected move, Heaney published *The Spirit Level* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), a five-poem sequence of unprecedented linguistic violence called “Mycenae Lookout”.231

In *The Spirit Level* Heaney consciously liberates himself from topical and temporal issues of violence and war and concentrates upon permanent and universal aspect of violence. This we find in his presenting binary oppositions of St. Kevin’s blessed vision of a seer, philosopher, stoic and lover of humanity and the dimensions of brutality of the world, local as well as global in ‘St. Kevin and the Blackbird’. Heaney’s persistent attempt to come out from the sense of guilt, shame and detachment to one of “crediting the positive note”232 had started much earlier where he presents the image of witness to history in ‘Exposure’ and ‘Summer’, the fourth poem of ‘Singing School’ in *North*. Heaney’s struggle to come out from the concern of people to the concern of art turns his poems a battle field of his Irish self and his artistic self. In ‘The Flight Path’ of *The Spirit Level* we witness this war of words between an ardent Irish nationalist and the poet. The nationalist asks, “When, for

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fuck’s sake, are you going to write/Something for us?” The poet confidently replies, “If I do write something/Whatever it is, I shall be writing for myself”. In ‘The Catechism’ (in ‘Ten Glosses’ in Electric Light, 2001,) Heaney clarifies his stand more explicitly: ‘Q. and A. come back. They “Formed my mind.” / “Who is my neighbour?” “My neighbour is all mankind.” Heaney’s possessiveness with poetic manifestation of cultural condition and his constructive criticism of late-twentieth-century reading culture of dissociating human woes and agony from art is strongly presented in his Nobel lecture which is

“rightly suspicious of that which gives too much consolation “…the very extremity of our late twentieth century knowledge puts much of our cultural heritage to an extreme test...And when this intellectual predisposition co-exists with the actualities of Ulster and Israel and Bosnia and Rwanda and a host of other wounded spots on the face of the earth, the inclination is not only not to credit human nature with much constructive potential but not to credit anything too positive in the work of art.”

This indicates Heaney’s increased interest in and fascination for upholding both reality and art simultaneously and this would register the expanded territory of worldview, a global and universal phenomenon crossing the boundary of local/Irish political issues. He acknowledges the painful truth of ‘being incapable of heroic virtue or redemptive effect’ which he carries for years until, as he asserts, ‘finally and happily, and not in obedience to the dolorous circumstances of my native place, but in spite of them I straightened up’. This soothing realization leads him forward “to try to make space in reckoning and imagining for the marvelous as well as for the murderous.” This statement of Heaney confirms his attempt in synthesizing art and craft. This parallels his attempt in balancing between poetic responsibility and demand of people and place, local/irish as well as universal/world. Thus Heaney’s views and visions of violence, war and human suffering are expanded and enlarged throughout the world as he journeys through the labyrinth of chaos, crisis and conflict-ridden contemporary world. In 1988 Heaney is asked by an interviewer about

233 Ibid., 457-8.
234 Ibid., 458.
the continuous relevance of Coventry Patmore’s phrase ‘the end of art is peace’, which Heaney uses in ‘The Harvest Bow’ and places as epigraph to his *Preoccupations* (1980), Heaney’s reply confirms his preoccupation with the ‘world sorrow’:

“Can you write a poem in the post-nuclear age? Can you write a poem that gazes at death, or the western front or Auschwitz – a poem that gives peace and tells horror? It gives true peace only if the horror is satisfactorily rendered. If the eyes are not averted from it. If its overmastering power is acknowledged and unconceded, so the human spirit holds its own against its affront and immensity. To me that’s what the ‘end of art is peace’ means and understood in those terms, I still believe it”. 235

The statement reveals Heaney’s reciprocal concern with the textuality of history and historicity of text. Coming to ‘Mycenae Lookout’ again, Heaney inclines to present the whole of western cultural ethos in the backdrop of materially distorted, morally depraved and spiritually bankrupt civilization. Domination and subordination; exploitation and oppression; ethnic, religious and racial violence; predominance of lust, greed, treachery and betrayal and above all, the *modus operandi* of Trojan war that remains invisible and unmentioned background of Agamemnon’s voyage destination; the allusive, allegorical connectivity of past with the present world and its numerous injured spots – these and many other untraced aspects of violence – complex, multifaceted, conflicting and contradictory are projected. The raw, inflammatory, violent language projects the bloody, murderous, hollow civilization, contemporary as well as Homeric:

Some people wept, and not for sorrow - joy
That the king had armed and upped and sailed for Troy,
But inside me like struck sound in a gong
That killing-fest, the life-warp and world-wrong
It brought to pass, still augured and endured.
I’d dream of blood in bright webs in a ford,

Of bodies raining down like tattered meat  
On top of me asleep - and me the lookout

("The Watchman’s War’, Mycenae Lookout’, The Spirit Level)

The lines are from ‘The Watchman’s War’, the first poem of ‘Mycenae Lookout’. What do the lines imply? The Watchman is witness to history as the bird poet Sweeney in *Buile Suibhne* was with whom Heaney had identified himself with. Now the ambivalent, contradictory role of the witness as a passive observer or an abattoir to murderous crimes of history, past and present, local or universal, remains inconclusive and indecisive. The mythic framework through which Heaney presents his views of the world and the human psyche uphold the utter chaos and darkness of a disintegrated universe. The watchman’s observation of the ‘killing-fest, the life-warp and world wrong’ unveils a candid, naked picture of a diseased and murderous world that celebrates butchery and unjust acts committed upon others, at large. The phantasmagoric vision of dead ‘bodies raining down like tattered meat’ in line no.5 and 6 is too ghastly and fearful to give expression to which the watchman visualizes, ‘I’d dream of blood in bright webs in a ford, / Of bodies raining down like tattered meat’. This bloody picture is a universal one ranging from Ulster to Israel, from Bosnia to Rwanda as it was in Hellenic era. The tragedy of the watchman is that in spite of being aware of the treachery and betrayal of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus he could not raise his voice against the conspiracy of regicide and betrayal of a faithless queen and remains quite passive. He looks into the thrilling joy of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus when Agamemnon set out for Troy but fails to unlock the truth to the king or to anyone else. The sense of guilt and shame become a potent force operating the watchman’s feelings and expressions. The trend had started quite earlier, even before the poems of his *North* phase. Human atrocity and violence committed to his fellow beings is a universal and timeless phenomenon. This he presents through the colloquial, common and matter-of fact expression in ‘The Cure at Troy’ (reprinted as ‘Voices from Lemnos’ in *Opened Ground* (1999):

Human beings suffer,  
they torture one another,  
they get hurt and get hard.  
No poem or play or song
an fully right a wrong
inflicted or endured.

History says, Don't hope
on this side of the grave.
But then, once in a lifetime
the longed for tidal wave
of justice can rise up,
and hope and history rhyme.

(‘The Cure at Troy’, *Opened Ground*)

Even amidst human atrocities, cruelties, sufferings and agonies hope and optimism shine through Heaney’s exuberance and ecstasy. As in Sophocles’s *Pheloctetes* Trojan War constitutes the background, Heany’s poem dramatizes the ethno-religious and colonial conflicts surging violently in South Africa. The movement for independence gets stronger with the release of Nelson Mandela after decades of imprisonment. With his emergence, hope begins to emerge in the poem. So, unlike the devastating, catastrophic end of the Trojan conflicts in *Pheloctetes*, Heaney’s ‘The Cure at Troy’ strives to weave a balance of destruction and reconstruction, of disillusion and hope. Of course, violence and disintegration become the predominating voice submerging the light of hope and unification that dramatizes the wondrous return of Nelson Mandela.

But the watchman of ‘Mycenae Lookout’ seems to be imprisoned within his inertia and doomed will-power helplessly watching the dreadful, murderous and cataclysmic visions of bloodshed, holocaust and savage destruction of war. The images he draws to prop up adequate effect is so violent and fiery that the expressions may be cited as the best example of linguistic violence in poetry. Here Heaney seems to weave a miraculous garland of violence of poetry and poetry of violence. The watchman’s visions and views are presented thus:

If a god of justice had reached down from heaven
For a strong beam to hang his scale-pan on
He would have found me tensed and ready-made.
I balanced between destiny and dread
And saw it coming, clouds bloodshot with the red
Of victory fires, the raw wound of that dawn
Igniting and erupting, bearing down
Like lava on a fleeing population...

(‗Mycenae Lookout‘, The Spirit Level)

The image of ‘the raw wound of that dawn’ ‘igniting and erupting, bearing down/
Like lava on a fleeing population’ is dark, ominous and dreadful. The image recalls
violence and bloodshed of past history as well as contemporary conflicts and war
throughout the globe. Heaney articulates madness of civilization in the memorable
lines where men kill one another without purpose and reason. In section 4 of the poem
‗The Nights‘, the watchman says, ‘The war put all men mad,/ horned, horsed or roof-
posted,/ the boasting and the bested‘. Yet in the concluding lines of ‘The Nights’
Heaney poses himself as an optimist dreaming of a dawn of peace and tranquility that
may come through the path of violence and bloodshed, at the end:

I moved beyond bad faith:
for his bullion bars, his bonus
was a rope-net and a blood-bath.
And the peace had come upon us.

(‗The Night‘ Mycenae Lookout‖, The Spirit Level)

Of course, Heaney’s vision of peace is entangled in the labyrinth of ‘a rope-net and a
blood-bath’. But in the penultimate poem ‘His Reverie of Water’ Heaney seems to
dream of a regenerated world, a future shorn of holocaust, violence and meaningless
bloodshed in war. This optimism is enunciated in the introductory lines of the poem
where the watchman says,

At Troy, at Athens, what I most clearly
see and nearly smell
is the fresh water‘.

(‗His Reverie of Water‘, Mycenae Lookout‖, The Spirit Level)

Interestingly enough, Heaney’s views and visions of art and life; voices and
articulation on poet’s responsibility to art, himself and the world are so vividly and
accurately represented and reflected in Goswami’s *Hariner Janya Ekok* (2002) that one is sure to be taken aback with the range of similarity between them in presenting the violence-ridden world of war and terror; conflicts and riots; crises and chaos that had overtaken the last quarter of the last century. Both the poets respond to and react against propagandist, journalistic, on-demand poetry. The dialectic is distinctly pronounced and yet both Goswami and Heaney gave the most acerbic, bitter and fiery statement of the present cultural context/ideological state of the globe, in their poetry. Gosowami’s *Hariner Janya Ekok*, in fact, translates terror and fear from individual/personal, local/national and universal perspective. Heaney’s *The Spirit Level*, more particularly ‘Mycenae Lookout’ echoes voices of Goswami’s *Hariner Janya Ekok*, more particularly, ‘Hingsha Samporkito Dharabiboroni’. Both the poets sharply criticize, mock and ridicule the popular public demand of poet’s responsibility to his society, sect, creed, culture, community and country, yet ironically enough, both give in to the same demand as both the anthologies of Heaney and Goswami are wide statement of world-sorrow or world-violence and at the same time all other atrocities and violence wrought out by humans on their fellow beings, at large, personal, social, political, religious, cultural, national, etc. In fact, Goswami’s voice is more sensational, crude and nakedly inflammatory than his counterpart Heaney. In spite of having a purpose in writing Heaney takes the guise of allegory, allusion, history and myth of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, Goswami on the other hand, is more rapid and innovative in his technical maneuvering as his persons quickly shift locations and change identity to embrace universal state of violence and disintegration. As regard to public demand of writing purposeful poetry, Heaney’s criticism and response is registered in ‘The Catechism’ as well as in his ‘Nobel Lecture’. The same idea is registered in Goswami’s ‘Hingsha Samporkito Dharabiboroni’ where a statutory warning is read in a whispering tone to the persona about writing on violence which, the poet says can make a hell of his life/poetic career. The poem begins thus:

[Nicher line gulo fish fish kore porte hobe]

Soja byapar noi kintu ei hingshe, hingsher kathai bolchhi

E kintu life hell kore dite pare, na na anyer noi –

Tomar nijer

Eke samlanor janye dudando dhayan dite hoy, sabdhane

Dhorte hoy jinista –
Noile bipad, ekebare jwalie debe kintu, khub
Bhebechinte bolo!

[(The lines below are to be read in whisper). Its not easy thing this violence, yes, I am
telling of violence. Remember, this can make hell of a life, not other’s but yours own.
A few moments’ intense concentration is needed to control it. This thing is to be
captured with caution. Otherwise, there’s danger. It will burn completely; speak about it
after serious thought.]

(‘Hingsha Samparkito Dharabibaroni’, Hariner Janya Ekok [‘News Bulletin
about Violence’, Monologue for Deer])

The responding voice (presumably the poet) replies with annoyance ‘ki kore bolbo?
Sarakkhan sabai kebal riley shunte chai kabir kachhe’. Then again, dramatically the
history of partition, riot, famine, first general election, food movement, Indo-China
war, division of Indian Communist Party, etc come in quick sequence. Again, the
second voice expresses his antipathy to such demand of recording history in poetry,
‘Sarakkhan ei tukte hobe naki. Eri note nite hobe!’ The poet suffocates and becomes a
prisoner of own self losing his liberty of free-flowing writing as symbolized in ‘sonar
harin’ (golden deer). The poet makes it clear that one who mortgages his free will and
soul to the demand of the world is like a ‘fake golden deer’, the real one is taking tour
out in the deep and dense forest of beauty and mystery of nature and truth.

In the introductory part of the ‘dedication’ Goswami sets the tone and temper
of violence which pervades the whole poem. The last stanza of the poem concludes
the sad ending of the lovers who are blasted alive and crushed to death, with their
blood sprinkled to clouds and the birds strewn apart in the wide sky. The poem has
distinct story element with two lovers passionately loving each other, yet separated by
barbed wire. They clung to each other and wounded severely and finally they are
blasted to death. The lovers and the barbed wire bear multifarious symbolic
suggestions. The lovers may be literally two lovers or co-existing social, political,
ethnic, religious, cultural groups or may be peace-loving people of two neighboring
countries who are often led to clashes, conflicts, riots or war for the benefit of fanatic

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war mongers or scheming politicians. And the narrator recounts to the whole history of mankind with beautiful images of age-old dead locality with dilapidated houses, sand-sealed well, old bricks and rusty inactive tube well which breath around the lovers. Here, there is no hope, only death and defeat. In the next poem ‘Hariner Janya Ekok’ the persona takes plethora of guises and at the end the persona is presented as being wounded by police firing and carried to ‘dhapa’ by a garbage lorry of Corporation. Here too, the poet speaks of a murderous world of violence and insensitivity. After gaining consciousness he encounters two ‘hired murderers’in the ‘empty Bypass’ who, the speaker says, ‘sit upon my back supposing me broken bench, absent-mindedly rub blood on my cheek. They think it earth-quake the moment I shuddered. Run away towards next murder.’ This nocturnal journey of the persona reveals the horror and dread of a nightmarish existence without any hope, peace and love. Yet Goswami continues his quest for beauty, romance, love and peace. And the poem takes its tour from experience to experience, knowledge to new knowledge, physical to metaphysical reality. Here the poet speaks of love and peace; at least he endeavours to explore it. But Heaney’s ‘Mycenae Lookout’ is dark and bleak poem that illustrates only the sinister, evil and ominous aspects of human nature with treachery, betrayal and murderous cruelty of the personages presented. Though in the penultimate poem we have come across the redemptive effect of expectation when the persona dreams of getting fresh water, ‘At Troy, at Athens, what I most clearly / see and nearly smell/ is the fresh water’. Here Goswami and Heaney seem to voice forth same optimism and hope of a regenerated human world. The poem proceeds with the panoramic view of cinematic effect, constantly shifting places, persons and situations encountering the diseased and decayed state of human as well as phenomenal existence until comes to a deadly conclusion. At the end of part-4 of the poem (p-31) the ‘golden deer’ experiences the fire and fear and ferocity of atom boom. Does not this remind the holocaust, the ruin, ravages and destruction of the whole of World War-II? Again, in the next two pages (32-3) the poet shrewdly presents multiple layers of states, affairs and events of violence, war, and bloodshed simultaneously through the single presentation of an imaginary dialogue of a character of an open-stage theatre. Here comes Sultan Mamud, the notorious plunderer king treading upon earth capturing different countries. The words ‘durgam giri kantar maru’ reminds the great Bengali poets Kazi Nazrul Islam and his
inflammatory poems against the British rulers. Then the quick mentioning of the place
names ‘Noakhali, Dhaka, Chattogram, Kolkata’ implies the shameful riots of 1946-
47, throughout India, particularly Bengal. At the same time, marching and capturing
of various other nations like Palestine, Jordon, Egypt, Albania and Greece reveal the
violent state of world politics. The poet’s ventriloquial showmanship, his bantering
butt of ridicule at the attempt of creating Garden of Eden by the people who flees as
refugees, lives at the refuge-camps amidst rain and tempest, bullet and bombings and
survives with the help of ‘Red Cross Society’. After this presentation of the present
violence-ridden world, the poet comes to take note of his own performance and
purpose. A voice hails him as a great performer and wishes that he must win the
‘mrigya ratno’ award for this presentation. Of course, this is self-mockery as well as
mockery of any artist’s becoming a propagandist. Goswami confirms this in the next
page when he labels such poets as ‘nakol swarnomrigo’ (fake golden deer).

Coming to the concluding poem of the anthology, ‘Hinghsha Samparkito
Dharabiborini’ again we discover Goswami like his counterpart Heaney, torn apart in
between his artistic self and his human self. He mocks and laughs at, criticizes the
propagandist and reportorial mode of writing and at the same time gives in to it. Like
Heaney, he too, repudiates the popular culture of reading poetry dissociating it from
human, physical world. Goswami on the contrary, translates the world of violence
into the violence of his poetry, both literally and symbolically. In this respect, he
moves from personal to impersonal, local to universal, contemporary to timeless. As
Heaney takes the guise of allegory and allusion of Greek mythical history in
‘Mycenae Lookout’ or in ‘The Cure at Troy’, Goswami takes in more intricate
technique of maneuvering art through diverse innovative stylistic, linguistic-
textual tools. As regard to textual violence, Goswami’s Hariner Janya Ekok is a unique
creation. Here the poet demolishes hitherto known forms and structural pattern of
poetry. The shape and size of the text itself is epoch-making. Written in Square-size
full scrape art paper and all pages of the text painted with crimson colour the lines of
the poems are written on the painted papers. The shape and size of letters constantly
change with the change of references and the text is comprised of paragraphs mostly,
instead of stanzas. The colour and the sketches function as illustration of themes and
ideas. In each section of the poem different subtexts are embedded which dissipate
meanings into innumerable possibilities. Another prominent stylistic innovation is his
ventriloquial posture. In this regard Goswami proves to be a past-master. In search of identity he drives back to dim and distant past, of prehistoric and archeological evidences where the persona can see

Shilastup, chapa pada nagar ar snanagar, bhanga
Mritkalos, khoye yaoa mudra, mastokhina narimurti,
Amar nishwas theke beriye ase dhulo, amar
Panjorer modhye chuner khoni, lupto mahakay pranider asthiaboshesh,
Ar tel ar tel ar tel ar
Tel pawar janya pagol hoye etechhe khamota
Pipe, magoj funre dhoka matro finki deoa valok, samudrer modhye chulli
Uchhhasito chullir akash dhandhano sfulingo
Pratyek sfulingo par muhurte andhokar
Seo to ekta aleek, ekta rupantor paoar moto
Tarongo
Seo to ekta
Swash,

Yar benche thakbar janyo proti muhurte paroborti swashke darker

[Me? Who am I? On my back thousands feet of soil, broken earthen pithcer, worn-out coin, headless female statue. Dust comes out of my breathing, the bones of great extinct animals and oil and oil and oil. Power becomes crazy to obtain oil. The moment the pipe penetrates into the brain, there’s jet-like gushing. In the middle of the sea the reactor and the blazed reactor’s sky blazing spark. After each spark there’s darkness. That is also a miracle, a wave that likes to get metamorphosis. That is also a breathing that needs the next breathing for its survival.]

(‘Hingsha Samparkito Dharabibaroni’, Hariner Janya Ekok [‘News Bulletin about Violence’, Monologue for Deer])

Through this apparently short and simple part of the poem Goswami encapsulates the eclectic of history and the truth of human existence that solely survives upon the
Darwinian theory of ‘struggle for existence and survival of the fittest’. This scientific theory is philosophically, poetically and practically applicable to human history, too. The persona asserts how power becomes frantically mad for obtaining oil. The imperial role of oil politics in Middle-East is hinted at. In the next line he speaks of air-strikes and fiery blast in the sky (uchhhosito tuibir akash dhandhano sfulingo) and in the last line of the extract the poet stoically concludes the raw truth of eater-eaten relationship ‘yar benche thakbar janyo proti muhurte paroborti swaske darker’. This raw truth of diverse forms of violence and bloodshed throughout the globe is narrated in the subsequent part of the poem. The murderous nature of human instinct is manifested through communal riots:

Seo to ekta biswas
   Anya dharmer lokder mere fela
Seo to ekta naya
   Ekta discipline
   Ekta sadhona –
   Ye ekmatro amar malatei sabai jap korbe
   Tomar ki mane hochhhe oi gachhta bidhormi – kete felo

[That is also a faith to kill people of other religions. That is also a justice, a discipline, a meditation that every one will worship through the beads of my rosary. Do you think that tree is sacriligious? Then cut it.]

(‘News Bulletin about Violence’, Monologue for Deer)

In the next part the persona speaks of the atrocity and torture committed to a woman by soldiers in Afghanistan. Again, like a reporter, he brings in the death of a cow boy, Jhantu Barman at Tapan police station area who was shot dead by B.S.F in 1997. And in the next page (68) the persona narrates the picture of world violence where the imaginary victims give their identity

Koborer dhakna theke matha barie
   Ekjan bale, ami Jerusalem – ekjan bale, ami Palestine
   Ekjan bale, ami Baranagarer ’71, ekjan bale ami muktiyuddher
   Dhuloi bose yaoa paritakto tank er tala theke
   Morche dhara chainer dante atkano bhangachora kankalera bale
Amra Tien- Un- Mein Squarer… …

[By stretching head from the cap of grave one said I am Jerusalem, on said I am Palestine, one said, I am 71 of Baranagar, one said, I am the abandoned tank left in the dust of the Freedom movement under what’s teeth of the chain the distorted fixed skeletons said, we are of Tien – Un – Mein – Square…..]

(‗Hingsha Samparkito Dharabibaroni’, Hariner Janya Ekok [‘News Bulletin about Violence’, Monologue for Deer])

One after another, the persona refers to racial violence in Palestine and Jerusalem; war of independence in East Bengal; Naxalite movement during seventies in West Bengal; democratic movement in China and the mass murder of thousands of students in Tien – Un – Mein Square by the communist regime. The history of genocide culminates with the anecdote of terrorist attack on American twin towers killing more than three thousands innocent people by the terrorists trained by Osama Bin Laden and his ‘Al Qaida’. Goswami’s deductive method in this book helps bringing out panoramic view of world terror and violence whereas Heaney’s objective, allusive presentation of violence is an inductive method where impersonal image of violence and ghastly picture of death and destruction are rendered universal. The same extract used earlier may be cited again in support of this view

Some people wept, and not for sorrow - joy
That the king had armed and upped and sailed for Troy,
But inside me like struck sound in a gong
That killing-fest, the life-warp and world-wrong
It brought to pass, still augured and endured.
I’d dream of blood in bright webs in a ford,
Of bodies raining down like tattered meat
On top of me asleep - and me the lookout

(“‘The Watchman’s War’, ‘Mycenae Lookout’”, The Spirit Level)

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The evidence of violence wrought out by humans on their fellow human beings is clearly stated by Heaney when he says:

| Human beings suffer,  
| they torture one another,  
| they get hurt and get hard.  
| No poem or play or song  
| can fully right a wrong  
| inflicted or endured.  

(from ‘The Cure at Troy’ reprinted as ‘Voices from Lemnos’, in

*Opened Ground*).

The manner of presentation may be inductive or deductive, impersonal or factual but both Heaney and Goswami uphold the brutality, barbarity, chaos and callousness of human civilization that creates so many ‘wounded spots’ on the face of globe. Man suffers and will continue to suffer though both the poet hope of a regenerated, lovable and peaceful universe. Of course, both the poets conclude with the beginning of violence at the end. The end note of Goswami, in fact, makes a Yeatsean gyre of violence in the memorable lines of the last poem of the book that ends with:

Jale o matite pran suru hoye gechhe ta thoi  
Ar ar ar ar ar  
Ar beshi deri nei  
Hingsha suru hobe er paree.

[Life has begun at water and soil ‘ta thoi’. No more late, violence will start after this.]  
(‘Hinsha Samporkito Dharabiborani’, *Hariner Janya Ekok*).\(^{239}\)

*Hariner Janya Ekok* (2002) is a prelude to the bloody, violent time that shortly follows and the poet becomes more and more concerned with the social unrest and political violence that grips the whole country, particularly Bengal. The heinous crime that happened in Dhantala of Nadia District in 2003 shocked the poet very much.

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What happened there was a shame to civilized society. He wrote an open letter in the ‘Ananda Bazar Patrika’ protesting against sexual assault and molestation of teenage girls who were going by bus to attend a marriage party. Goswami, in fact, lashed at the government’s failure to protect civil rights of its own citizen and also he ridiculed and bitterly criticized the then ruling party for their alleged patronage of anti-socials who were supposed to be used as election machineries by the Communists in Bengal. Goswami, in fact, shakes off the garb of poetry and openly wrote inflammatory prose and poetry against all sorts of tyranny, oppression and inhumanity. The said treatise published in the Ananda Bazar Patrika is ‘Ei Mrito Nagarir Raja Hoye Tomar Ki Hobe’.

The poet expressed his agony, pain and anger at the impotency of the Government and total failure of the state:

“If the state power would like, were not these hooligans and criminals punished? Could not they be disarmed? Had not this same worthless police crushed and grind the Naxals as C.P, 30 years back in ‘72? They had done this for supporting the state? Because those youths questioned, had they remained alive…..”

Here the poet directly attacked the rotten political system and depraved ethical state of man in general, through the name of a particular political party and its government. After four years of writing this essay the notorious ‘Nandigram massacre’ took place on 14th March, 2007. The poet translates the ferocity, barbarity and inhumanity of the political violence of Nandigram into violence in his poetry in his Shashoker Prati (2007). The anthology is a burning deed of atrocity and violence wrought about by humans on his fellow human beings. The poems are precise, short and explicit but terse and forceful. Each poem records different event or experience with selected jargon. To uphold the suspended state of mortified, agonized soul, the articulation or expression of the state of affair prevailing upon the time and place, Goswami uses words with utmost economy and subtlety. Part of a poem may be cited, for example:

Chinte pere gechhe bole yar jiv kete nilo dharshoner pare
Du haate duto pa dhore chhhinre fello yar shishutike

Ghare duto kope mere yar swamike fele rakhlo uthoner pase
Mara abdi mukhe ektu jal dite dilo na
Seisab meyeder bhitore ye sokagni jwalchhen
Sei aguner pase

Ena rakho guli
r order deoa shashoker du ghanta bisad
Tar par mepe deko ke besi ke kam
Tar par bhebe deko kara bolechhilo
Jiban narok korbo, proyjone parne marbo, prane!

[After rape whose tongue is cut off for her recognition of the
rapist; whose child is torn apart by holding his two legs; whose husband is laid in one
side of the courtyard after two fatal blow on his shoulder and not a single drop of
water was permitted to give till his death; the fire of pain that you are lighting up in
those women; keep two hours’ sorrow of the ruler who orders fire beside that fire.
Then you measure who is more and who is less. After that you think who told that we
will make hell of your life and if needed, we will kill you.]

(‗Who is More Who is Less‘, To the Ruler [‗Ke Beshi Ke Kam‘, Shashoker Prati] )

Another poem of only four lines, with crimson ink is painted by Goswami with same
power, speed and cutting edge:

Dhulor upore rakto pade
Police pa dhore hinchre niye yai laash
Ajke 14th March – prachondo falgun
Gachhe thik i futechhe palash

[The blood is on the dust. The police snatches the corpse by pulling legs. Today is
14th March, daring ‘falgun’ (March). Definitely there blooms ‘palas’ in the tree.]

(‗Falgun‘, Shasoker Prati [‗Falgun‘, To the Ruler])

The same bloody violence is translated in Harmad Shibir of Goswami, published

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Heaney’s ‘Mycenae Lookout’ is a powerful poem of violence of different dimensions and nature though it lacks the intensity and vehemence of Goswami as encapsulated in Shasoker Prati and Harmad Shibir. In the poem of Heaney sexual, psychological and political violence are the main concern of the poet. But Goswami directly translates political violence of contemporary Bengal. Thus it is found that both Heaney and Goswami are acutely concerned with violence of varied forms and dimensions and endeavour to translate the experience horror, dread and fear in the violence in their poetry. Thus it is found that along with many other ideas, aspects and issues violence is one of the major forces in the poetry of both Heaney and Goswami. Moreover, there remains enough similarity in their approach to and presentation of violence which is embedded strongly in both the super structure and deep structure of their poetry. To assess their poems sans violence would loose much of its weight and appeal.