Chapter - II

Oppression in Family in *The Killdeer* and *The Easter Egg*

In *The Killdeer*, Reaney presents three cruel mothers who stand as contrastive figures to the sanity of motherhood. These unusual characters live in the alienated children world of Reaney and play their demonic roles. Mrs. Budge the extraordinary mother kills her son by pushing him into a river which runs through a forest. Mrs. Gardner and Madam Fay suppress and illtreat their sons, Harry and Eli and keep them as slaves under them.

Kenneth, a twenty one year old boy is suppressed by his step mother from achieving complete manhood. He suffers out of traumatic shock that has robbed him both of memory and speech as a result of witnessing his father’s suicide. When Kenneth is seven years old his father commits suicide leaving him his property and Bethal, his second wife as a caretaker. Bethal is not so much concerned about his well-being.

When he is not voiced properly or does not articulate his words in response to her she comes to a conclusion that he is retarded and gets him to live in a lonely room in the house. At the end of the play, Kenneth is brought back to the world of reality from the alienated, dark world of illusion. The first miraculous event is that Kenneth is completely transformed, and recovers his human (memory) power and the second miraculous event is that Kenneth finds the lost Easter egg.

Eli, the nineteen years old young man, suffers out of lack of maturity and maturity is restored to him by the efforts of Rebecca (Becky). Harry also plays the role of a redeemer along with Becky. Eli who had been playing with the toys like a
child realizes himself and attains his true maturity at the end of the play. Reaney's children plays are based on the willing suspension of disbelief which provides him the materials to build his dramatic world. Reaney presents himself in an alienated world to create a world for children. He brings out a conflict between illusion and reality in his children world.

In general, in Reaney's children world a remarkable transformation takes place from darkness to light and illusion to reality. He deserves a unique place in the field of drama in Canadian literature for characterizing with children as heroes. The human characters symbolize good and evil, and devil and fairly. The conflict between illusion and reality is turned into conflict between devil and fairy. The negative and destructive demonic world is more appealing to the audience rather than the positive fairly world.

Reaney's children heroes, Eli in *The Killdeer*; and Kenneth in *The Easter Egg* are victimized by the demonic power. They fall as victims in the hands of devil like mothers and they are restored to their original state by the fairy like characters. The children heroes Kenneth in *The Easter Egg* and Eli in *The Killdeer* appear on the stage with some sort of psychic problems. The problems grow with a full swing into a struggle. The minds of the individuals are caught up in a war like condition. The audiences are left with thrill and excitement they are eagerly awaiting for the end of the plays which puts an end to the psychic war of the individuals.

The theatrical experience of the audience is designed by the colour spectrum of Reaney's crayoning book. His plays are structured apparently with casual devices as a colour spectrum as randomly put together as a child's colour selection in a creative book. His children world is devoid of love. Lack of love causes mental
depression. The depressed and the disturbed psyche struggle to become normal by erasing the abnormal. Young love is needed for the survival of good. When young love is supplied to the larger extent the abnormal psyche is transformed into a normal one.

The audience enjoys a feast like exhibition with toys, animals, and games in the children world of Reaney. Reaney's aspiration for the delight of children is expressed of through his presentation of toys, animals and games. Richard Stingle in his comments:

There is a complex and pervasive sense of play to be seen in Reaney's emphasis on toys, pet animals and games and other play activities as pivots of the actions. In *The Killdeer* the audience see Eli with the normal psyche till he faints. He tells his mother before he faints "Your house is going round. It won't ever come back. *(TKD 284)*

The location of the play *The Killdeer* is a cottage somewhere in rural Ontario. The rural atmosphere provides the opportunity for self observation and self assertion. Self-observation develops self assertion and self assertion creates the chance for freedom and restoration. After fainting Eli's normal psyche is robbed off and is possessed by the evil powers, which prevent the growth of the psyche. Lack of mental maturity creates psychic struggle.

The external physical growth becomes nothing when there is a check for the internal growth of the human mind. Eli's mind is caught up in tension and is filled with fear for the external world. There is an internal psychic conflict between childhood and maturity. Becky and Harry make attempts to make Eli realize and
restore his maturity. The innocent mind is possessed by the devilish force and Eli's psyche floats in the river of fear, control and threatening. Richard Stingle observes:

Self assertion is a way to freedom for those whose souls are possessed by the figures of black magic. Madam Fay plays on her son Eli's lack of it in *The Killdeer* and on puerile fears. When she threatens Harry is aware of Fay's evil tactics, he forces Eli to assert himself by pitting the boy' developing trust in him against the possessive play of the mother. Eventually Eli, thus moved, strikes Harry who response; yet Eli fears even if he can free himself and fly from his mother, he will be possessed in turn by Harry. (284)

In the plays *The Easter Egg* and *The Killdeer* Reaney presents the eccentric children characters with the collapsed psyche which suffers out of oscillation, imbalance and disorder, Gerald D Parker comments:

Reaney's sympathies for the child for creative sometimes visionary, eccentrics for the imaginative, end for the victims of society are well defined, are in fact entirely unmistakable as authorial sympathies always are in Melo-dramatic vision and structure. (285)

The above mentioned comment of Gerald D. Parker on *The Easter Egg* and *The Killdeer* provides the proof for the fact that, in these two plays Reaney projects two kinds of visions, the melo-dramatic vision and the tragic vision. These two visions are brought out by two kinds of psychic transformation, one is positive and the other is negative. The first level transformation takes Eli and Kenneth to the abnormal, devilish dark world from the normal world of light. Eli lives in the abnormal world of darkness where there are obstacles which bar the normal growth
of the psyche. Kenneth enters the illusive world where he survives without speech and memory.

The first level transformation is negative in the sense it imprisons the psyche and keeps it darkness. The imprisoned psyche which lives in darkness loses its vision and function. The inactive mind becomes active and the non-functional psyche starts functioning sometimes in the case of Kenneth, whereas there is no sign of function of psyche and action of mind in the case of Eli till the second level transformation takes place.

The second level transformation reviews the mind and restores the psyche of Kenneth and Eli and brings them back to the normal world of light. In the first level transformation the psyche undergoes sufferings and pains but the second level transformation puts an end to it. The pitiless demonic force robs of the mental maturity of Eli and he is pathetically left in the dangerous world of tension and fear. Eli's ship of psyche takes its voyage in the temporary dark world of sea and it stops when it dashes against the rock of light provided by Harry and Becky. Kenneth's psyche travels in the train of oblivion and absence of speech.

The journey is stopped by Polly, the new passenger and she shifts him to a new train where there is memory in perfection and speech in sense. A kind of psychic war starts in the minds of Eli and Kenneth during the process of psychic journey between the first level transformation and the second level transformation. Kenneth's psychic journey is mild and gentle but Eli's journey is fearful and dangerous.

The two negative elements of forgetfulness and loss of speech make Kenneth's journey a mild one. Just like Kenneth, Eli's journey is also controlled by the two negative elements of fear and tension. But these two elements make Eli's
journey riot a mild one but a wild and crude one. There is one common factor which unites the two children heroes of Reaney that is oppression. Oppression is exercised by two kinds of mothers, the real mother and the step-mother.

In *The Killdeer*, the environment entraps the psyche of Eli. The entrapped psyche is oppressed by the external force of his mother. Entrapment and oppression cause the loss of self-identity. Harry and Becky slowly untie the ties of the entrapped psyche. The mental struggle progresses on the one hand and recovery of self progresses on the other. Reaney employs the special lighting stage technique to highlight the symbolic significance of the psyche which is progressing and transforming.

In Act III, the scene of the recalled encounter between Eli and Clifford affirms the progress and transformation in Eli's psyche. The recalled encounter scene is one of the most fascinating scenes which make the audience more emotional and sensitive. Hence Reaney lights the special light on the stage to signify the significance of the scene. Gerald D. Parker comments on the recalled encounter scene:

In the first version of *The Killdeer* for example, the oppressive environmental entrapment that Mrs. Gardener's room, Becky’s is cell and the court room represent and which is to some degree scenically evident, a challenged when special lighting is employed to establish a suggestion of symbolic space and time or the flash back lighting effects in Act III in the recalled encounter between Eli and Clifford. (*TKD* 135)
Situational emphasis and scenic significance are brought out by scenic symbols. The scenic symbol turns the attention of the audience towards the future progress of the plot of the play. In Reaney's plays, especially in children plays like The Killedeer and The Easter Egg scenic symbols play an important role when the plot progresses. Kenneth's speeches in Act III throw light on Kenneth's self which is caught up in darkness. Kenneth's psyche takes up a new journey with the help of the special lighting, and continues with struggle for ‘self-exploration.’

The special lighting on first stage of it formed effect serves as an important scenic symbol by providing strength to the emerging ‘self’ of Kenneth. Polly supplies Not only light and strength to Kenneth's psyche which has taken up its Journey in to darkness but also the stage adds strength and light and makes the journey a fruitful one belongs to the world of fantasy. But his image and psychic transformation suit the real world.

According to Gerald D. Parker, the play The Easter Egg is the most realistic of all the plays of Reaney. He says, The Easter Egg, on one level perhaps, the most realistic of the earlier plays in terms of its general economy of scale, its single set, a on few characters and sense of time. As Reaney observes in a note to the play:

Stage time is continuous even though audience intermissions, and stage time is real time; the whole action of the play takes place during the time it takes to perform the play except for some of Kenneth's speeches in Act III which are flash fronts and should be specially lit and emphasized. These lighting effects scenically assist in expressing the temporal dimensions of Kenneth's
emerging sense of 'self and momentarily disrupt the linearity of
the plays narrative. On the whole however the play's strictly
special language is dependent upon a family, conventional
perspective arrangement of figures and objects men and women
within a recognizable 'real room'. For this reason the play is less
complicated on theatrical terms. (136)

Theatre language is very important for dramatic performance. Reaney
sometimes converts signs into the theatre language. He uses varied kinds of theatre
languages and signs as vehicles to reach his dramatic world, the spectators hear the
voice of Reaney through the actors. Signs and symbols bridge the gap between the
playwright and the actors. As far as Reaney's plays are concerned, signs and
symbols are as significant as the actors. He deliberately uses symbols to create signs.

The special lighting scenic symbol in Act III of The Easter Egg creates a non
verbal sign of indication. The non-verbal sign indicates the progress of Kenneth's
psyche. The verbal symbol creates a non-verbal sign which increases the anxiety of
the audience for proceeding actions. When Gerald Parker talks about the signs and
symbols used by Reaney for dramatic purpose he says:

Reaney's attempt to place the spectator-auditor at the centre of the
art-act from which vantage point he can hear most immediately
something of his own voice and something of the speech of the
place. Reaney's spectator is urged to move towards recognition of
creative accord with the playwright and the actors, the multitudinous
theatre languages and signs are meant to act in performance as
creative vehicles through whose vital energy the spectator
readersless hidden less circumscribed his own creativity. (13)

In the play *The Killdeer* not only Eli’s psyche takes up, the voyage toward success but also the ‘self’ of Harry takes up the voyage towards the success of freeing itself from the cruel hands of his mother and wife. He is also in the chaotic dark world. There is a quarrel between the ‘psyche’ and the ‘self’. The ‘self’ which is aware of its slavery and loss of freedom starts a quarrel with his psyche which is totally kept in control by the joined force of the mother and the new wife. Harry’s ‘self’ goes in search of release.

He lives in a hell-like atmosphere because his mother and wife exercise domination and control over him. Both the women with devilish attitude disturb his ‘psyche’ and control his ‘self’. Gerald Parker quotes from a letter written by Reaney to Stingle’ “Harry, like Satan is left in darkness and Chaos”. Parker says:

The voyage towards success to *The Killdeer* is conducted in different levels as Reaney expressed in a letter to Stingle, "this play was intended to contain lots of symbolism and poetry with an exciting story. So it moves on all the old levels like Satan in Chaos. When Harry says I must find my source soon or fall I circle and circle in the dark and cannot sense the next below where I must be born. He is seeking release from the unaccommodating and domineering worlds of his mother and his new wife, Vernelle, as much as he is desiring active and positive disclosure of sexual, social, and spiritual identity. Consequently Reaney turns his attention, especially in Act-1 to the depiction of a rural and small town world from which the autocratic values of
his mother and wife are derived and within which their power is firmly rooted. (197-198)

In *The Easter Egg* and *The Killdeer* words have dramatic effect. The words of Polly in *The Easter Egg* and Harry and Becky in *The Killdeer* are uttered with the purpose to make Kenneth and Eli speak words. Polly attempts to recall and restore the temporal dimension of the loss of words for Kenneth. Harry and Becky voice their words to alter the words of childhood into the words of maturity. The mind which is the store house of words becomes temporarily empty for Kenneth.

The step-mother Bethel, the devil like woman, strives hard to keep Kenneth's mind in eternal emptiness for her selfish motive and sadistic attitude. But Polly, the good tries her best to fill in the empty mind with the lost words. Through the psychic transformation, the lost words are replaced in the empty mind of Kenneth. The hidden words emerge from darkness to light when he hears the words of Polly. When Eli undergoes the psychic transformation, the immature words are changed into matured words. By the sincere attempts of Harry and Becky, Gerald D. Parker comments, "In *The Killdeer* and *The Easter Egg*, words draw attention to themselves for different reasons" (194).

Reaney brings out a contradiction between the psyche of Harry and Becky on the one hand and Madame Fay and Mrs. Gardner on the other. The psyche of Madame Fay and Mrs. Gardner is ruled by the perspectives of modern materialism which is devoid of traditional values and humane sense. They aspire for power, supremacy, slavery and elegant exposure of their individual ‘self identity’. To strengthen their ‘selves’ they weaken others ‘selves’ to make their selves float in happiness they suppress other's ‘selves’ and rob their happiness.
Their crude psyche derives happiness from violence and disorder. They violate the moral and spiritual values against God and morality. They endanger the familial atmosphere and social condition. Eli’s self flies in the world of immaturesd imagination which prevents him from being aware of the surrounding society in which he lives. His self is fully masked his psyches. Eyes are hidden. The psyche loses its vision and struggle in blindness and darkness.

It starts a journey towards light where it can restore its vision, which can place him in the world of maturity through which we can be fit for normal survival. Harry is fully aware of his slavery. He firmly believes that 'time' which is the deciding authority for all kinds of transformations will one day provide him freedom and happiness. Harry is aware of his slavery. But Eli is not aware of it. He becomes aware of his condition through the external forces of Harry and Becky. Gerald Parker states,

The generally lighter, often satiric tone of much of act one signifies that although the stifling settled surface of Mrs. Gardner's world can endanger the urge towards sexual and moral growth, it is more readily, overcome, then finally accepted into and by the 'play' of the mature imagination, because it is but surface. In the effective and quiet reiteration of images that concludes the play. Harry recalls a small front room crowded with million things, our first glimpse of a social order as just such a mask is provided through Madam Fay's lively encounter with Mrs. Gardner as she tries to sell beauty- - an endless range of cosmetics design to sustain and to flatter the duplicitous surface of things after relating her version of her violent story to Mrs. Gardner and dismissing all thoughts of forgiveness. She directly
challenges Mrs. Gardner and her society on the question of belief, giving expression to some of the play's central issues, the relationship between belief and action, between an entropic moral code and genuine spiritual illumination and between a surface of common order and an insatiable appetite for accounts of dis-order and violence. (197)

In Act III of *The Kildeer* Reaney presents a powerful word game. Occasional code words and symbols are so dominant throughout Act III. Effective word-play makes the play so serious and exciting. The colloquial words used for dramatic utterance are replaced by the most polished and most attractive code-words which remain one of the sources of the transformation of psyche, The psychic transformation and the journey of the 'self continue throughout the third act. It starts with Harry's confrontation with Eli's fear for sex. Gerald Parker says:

> Throughout the last act of the play especially Reaney's verse seems abstract in this way directed more towards the expression of the Play's overtiding concerns with symbolic patterns of thought, feeling and experience except on rare occasions. The livelier colloquial tones of dramatic utterance are replaced by more purposeful words and images. These are intended to direct out attention to the level of argument, statement, counter-statement altogether neatly synthesized.... (212)

Reaney's theatrical vocabulary is sometimes replaced by some effective sounds. In *The Easter Egg* and *The Kildeer* many objects and variety of sounds function as theatrical language they produce more effect than the verbal theatrical language. The non-verbal sounds successfully work with the abnormal characters,
Eli and Kenneth. The sounds assist the human characters for the restoration of psyche and recovery of self. They awake the 'selves' of Eli and Kenneth which are in deep sleep. They do act as ‘the third voice’ to redeem the lost voice of Kenneth and the matured voice of Eli.

The sound produced by the breaking of the window in *The Easter Egg* and the sounds produced by the clock, rain, thunder, wind, frog, in *The Killdeer* are more suggestive expressionistic, surrealistic and powerful, than the theatrical language. They surpass the first voice of the playwright and the second voice of the actors on the stage. Reaney's children theatre acts with the function of two different worlds, the world of imagination and the world of nature.

As far as his children plays are concerned, the theatrical values are also divided by sounds and symbols. They bridge the gap between the two words, sounds and symbols remove the mask of the ‘self’ and ‘psyche’. Code-words are supplied by the human characters. Symbols serve as non-human characters and sounds act as nonverbal characters. The 'self' and the 'psyche' of the children-heroes start their journey from the imaginative world which is dark, bitter and unpleasant to the normal world of nature which receives them with tender, care, warmth, strength, love and light.

The 'selves' of Eli and Kenneth start their Journey towards recognition by self-assertion. Self-assertion is a way to freedom. To obtain freedom their souls travel though the labyrinth of the dark world. Their souls are possessed by the figures of black magic. Madam Fay, like a witch, plays black magic on her son Eli and on his puerile fears. She threatens him in order to maintain the same degree of
fear in him. When she threatens, Harry is aware of her evil tactics. He forces Eli to assert himself against the evil play of the mother.

Eventually Eli moves slowly towards self-assertion. As a sign of self-assertion Eli strikes Harry and shows his response and reaction to the action of Harry. Yet Eli fears even if he can free himself and fly from his mother, he will be possessed in turn by Harry. Love becomes as fearful a force as hatred and evil if it results in possession of the loved one. Reaney’s concept of the best sort of love harks back to the conventional comedy in which fruitful love fights against evil and wins over it at the end only a love which stems from a mutual sense of self-esteem can grow without enslavement.

Reaney's children plays are full of relationships which are based on enthrallment. Reaney’s children plays contain considerable elements of Gothic dramas. His greatness as a special artist of children playwright is highly measured by his two visions of melodramatic vision and imaginative vision. He builds up a separate world for children with the help of these two visions. His melodramatic vision is extended into an imaginative vision. The imaginative vision is split into two visions of good and evil. Hence there is a progress in his dramatic vision.

Critics say that Reaney's dramatic vision, as for as the children plays are concerned has its root in his childhood. When the imaginative vision is split into two visions of good and evil, a conflict starts between good and evil. The conflict becomes serious and forceful in the last act at the end of the last act. The conflict comes to an end. A radical revolution takes place in the ‘selves’ which involve themselves in conflict. The disordered and misplaced selves are brought back to
their own place. They are restored and reinstated in their original state. At this context Reaney's imaginative vision becomes a victorious vision.

His vision of victory is the victory of good over evil. This victory of good throws not only light on the darkened 'selves' but also provides happiness to the audience and the dramatist. The dramatist’s ambition is fulfilled when he sees the blissful victory of good over evil. His vision changes from darkness to light and illusion to reality. Hence Reaney has three kinds of visions to construct his children world; the melodramatic vision, imaginative vision and the vision of victory (of God).

The journey of the soul starts when the dramatist’s vision changes from one level to another level. When the dramatist views his victorious vision the journey the soul stops. The victory of good provides freedom, recognition and light to the soul. The liberation of the self takes place in three levels which are associated to the three vision of the dramatist. The playwright views the entrapped self with his melodramatic vision which can be considered to be the first level vision of the dramatist.

In the second stage the melodramatic vision blooms into full length imagination where the dramatist visualizes the light thrown on the self. In the third level there is a revelation like transformation in which the light takes the soul towards freedom and recognition. The dramatist’s vision changes from melodrama to imagination and imagination to victory.

Reaney's melodramatic vision sets the soul in darkness. His imaginative vision grows and marches towards victory. In this vision the soul starts its journey towards light and freedom. There is light during the journey but it is not bright. The
dim light gradually becomes bright and attains its perfection at the end of the play. The victorious vision of the dramatist liberates the soul from slavery. Polly, Harry and Becky are serving as the liberating sources and forces for the enslaved souls.

The journey of the souls proceeds with the triangular dimension. Eli and Kenneth are entrapped and enslaved in darkness in the first act of the plays *The Killdeer* and *The Easter Egg*. They take their journey with the guiding light of Polly, Becky and Harry. The selves of Eli and Kenneth start fighting against slavery when they are induced by the external forces of Polly, Becky and Harry, The proceeding acts of the plays from the second act show the serious and sincere struggle taken by the souls for their freedom and enjoyment.

In the last act of the plays the struggle comes to an end victoriously. The souls are transformed and transported to the normal world where there is freedom and enjoyment. Eli and Kenneth are physically present in the normal world. But their selves are left in a forlorn world. The external stimuli (Polly, Harry and Becky) enter the forlorn world and activate the selves which remain motionless. After getting activated by the external stimuli, the selves start moving towards their original place (the real world).

The activating force of the external stimuli makes the selves realize their position that they have come far away from the real world and now they are in the forlorn world. They march towards success where they can establish their personal identity. During the reverse journey, the selves are caught up in between the two vital worldly forces of good and evil. They are pressurised by both the forces. The evil force of Bethal and Madam Fay pressurizes them in order to keep them in the state of slavery. The good force of Harry, Becky and Polly pressurize them to be
aware of their existence and free themselves from slavery. To accept the pressure of
good and avoid the pressure of evil, the soul has to fight against the pressure of evil.

During the fight, the self projects itself with the individual dignity and
crosses the boundary of a small circle of imprisonment. Every step of the self
towards the normal world provides strength to it. As the self gains strength, the fight
becomes vigorous and powerful. When the selves of Eli and Kenneth become
powerful, Bethal and Madam Fay lose their power and they are reduced to the state
of accepting their defeat.

The critic Ajay Heble makes the following comment on Reaney's dramatic
vision in the play *The Killdeer*:

His (Reaney's) own Gothic dramas, which include *The Killdeer*
owe an enormous debt to the melodramatic vision which he first
encountered in the evangelical world they are in large measure, that
world raised to the level of imaginative vision. His fondness for
melodrama, his extremely simplified characters that at times
nearly personify a rather childlike vision of good and evil is
radical reversals in the last act that in their own way are informed
with the certain evangelical giddiness are destructive features of
Reaney's drama whose roots are in the religious world of his
childhood. (9)

The above comment is applicable not only to Eli and Madam Fay, Harry and
Becky in *The Killdeer* but also applicable to Bethal, Kenneth and Polly in *The
Easter Egg*. Reaney builds up two kinds of worlds. He constructs a peaceful world
for good which is ruled by God and creates a world of terror and confusion, which is
ruled by a demon. His children characters are transported from the divine world to
the demonic world and from the demonic world to the divine world. They lose their
divine blessing temporarily and become victims to the spell caused by the witches
like Bethal and Madam Fay.

They manage to keep their children characters as slaves and practice their
evil spell on them for some time. But, when god turns his eyes towards the innocent
sufferers, their evil power vanishes. They are unable to withstand the divine power.
The children, though they survive on earth, they belong to the kingdom of God.
Hence their psychological conflict against oppression and slavery is supported by
God. Whether it is Polly or Becky or Harry, these characters remain the
representatives of God and reflect divinity. The critic Ajay Heble says:

For Reaney, the entire experience of theatre is the creation of a
peaceful kingdom which is indeed the kingdom of God viewed as
a kingdom within, itself the image of a little child. Thus the
demonic work of one version of The Killdeer suddenly dissolves
when Rebecca takes Madam Fays hands and gives her the world
she has always wanted. (19)

When he talks about Kenneth and Polly, he considers Polly as a fairy and
Kenneth as Adam in paradise. He observes:

Bethal, yet another of Reaney's witches has, with the support of
every plea to common sense managed to preserve him in a state
of oblivion for special reasons of her own. Polly, the good fairy,
has however, nursed him during Bethal's absence back to life by
deiowing him again with his lost human power, which is to say,
the power of naming originally given to Adam in paradise. Polly
restores the word to Kenneth and by the power of the word he is
released from the evil spell which Bethal had cast upon him. (19)

Reaney satirizes the people who have malignity for the mere sake of deriving
sadistic pleasure. Madam Fay wants to keep her son Eli under her control in the state
of slavery. As a mother she does not aspire for the change in the condition of her
son. She does not take any steps to recover him from the state of his mental illness.
This attitude of Madam Fay proves the bitter fact that she wants to keep her son in
the same condition for her personal reasons. Both Madam Fay and Bethal are
equally bad in their altitude of ill-treating Eli and Kenneth. Both are malignant
towards them.

When the reason for their malignity is analyzed, Bethal has reason for her
malignity towards Kenneth. Since Kenneth is not her own son it is the attitude of
the step-mothers in general to be malignant and to be devoid of affection towards the
children who are born to other women. But Madam Fay’s malignity towards her son
Eli is inhuman, unusual, abnormal and brutal. A mother’s aspiration to keep her own
son as a slave under her control is against the way of the world. Hence the critics
call the malignity of Madam Fay towards her son is a motiveless malignity.

She is not a mother but a witch who is practicing witch-craft on her son.
Hence she can be considered as the worst witch among the witches created by
Reaney for his dramatic purpose. Madam Fay serves the purpose of the dramatist
more than any other negative characters created by him. The critic Ajay Heble
comments on Madam Fay, "In the published version of The Killdeer, Madam Fay is
allowed a certain motiveless malignity and the children of light who are
momentarily trapped in her darkness have a lyrical splendor" (19).
From this page onwards, she deals with the use of symbols rich is not the fifth of the chapter upto 125. In general, Reaney uses the most evocative symbols to exhibit the common affairs of (modern) human existence. There is a wider contrast between the naturalistic, real world and the fantastic hostile world. Reaney creates the world of fantasy not for children not for sophistication, thrill or enjoyment but for slavery, confusion and sufferings. He contrasts the real world with the world of fantasy to expose the hard realities of human life.

There is a great irony on the part of the children characters, Eli and Kenneth that they are not aware of the oppression of their oppressors and the sufferings undergone by their souls. In Reaney's plays, the art of symbolization serves the purpose of the dramatist in two-fold angles of insisting individual importance and collective significance. In the last acts of the plays *The Killdeer* and *The Easter Egg* there is a war between the natural world and the fantastic world.

At the end of the play the fantastic world dissolves in fantasy after a vigorous, long struggle against the natural world throughout the last act. Certain symbols remain unchanged by the passage of time or a change of context. Toys and nature remain the unaffected source of happiness to children and adults. Toys provide happiness to children and nature provides happiness to adults.

In Reaney’s plays symbols are used to grasp cognitive meaning. Collective symbolization is used for the social manipulation and individual symbols are used for personal applications. Symbols are used not as a mere extrapolation in the plays. They are used in various levels for various meanings. Sometimes, social groups and individuals are identified with symbols by the function of symbols.

By means of symbol identification Reaney reveals the viability of social groups in the society and the inter-personal relationships among the individuals in
the family. Sometimes the playwright expresses his philosophical ideas through the natural and positive symbols. In most of the plays of James Reaney, especially in his plays, symbols serve as the main source of substance to add artistic flavour to the theoretical performance. In his plays, society, family, home, academic institutions natural objects and the church stand for some symbolic meanings.

Madam Fay’s crude attempt to possess her son in the state of immaturity and Bethal's cruel intension of keeping Kenneth in the state of oblivion symbolize the oppressive attitude of the mother and the stepmother who want to enjoy sadistic pleasure by exercising power over others. To Eli and Kenneth, the house becomes a symbol of prison. They are physically imprisoned and enslaved by their mother and step mother at home.

The physical oppression affects the psychic condition of the self and causes damage to it. Redeeming the self from oppression and restoring its condition start from Act II of the plays. This Holy service is done by the God like figures, Polly, Harry and Becky. They teach and coach the victims in order to set right their damaged and disordered selves. Their teaching and coaching serve as the chemical and mechanical devices to bring remedy to the diseased selves.

The major characters in the plays, The Killdeer and The Easter Egg are divided into three categories. The three groups of characters stand for symbolic meanings in two levels. In the first level, Bethal and Madam Fay stand for oppression, Eli and Kenneth stand for victimization and Slavery Harry, Becky, and Polly stand for motiveless service. In the second level Bethal and Madam Fay stand for 'evil', Eli and Kenneth stand for 'divine mercy' (children of God) and Harry. Becky and Polly stand for 'good' releasing the self from imprisonment and recovering it to its original state are symbolic of the war between good and evil.
The emotional response of the selves of and Kenneth is symbolic of two kinds of physic wars: one is positive and the other is negative. The selves of Madam Fay and Bethal want to control the selves of Kenneth and Eli and keep them as their slaves. But at the same time the selves of Harry, Becky and Polly attempt to release the selves of Eli and Kenneth who are caught up in slavery and darkness.

In this context, the selves of Eli and Kenneth receive pressures from either side. The pressure given by Bethal and Madam Fay is negative but the pressure given by Harry, Becky and Polly is positive. The selves of Eli and Kenneth are sickened by the negative characters, Bethal and Madam Fay, and they are strengthened by the positive characters, Harry, Becky and Polly. The selves of Eli and Kenneth show their reaction and emotional response in the positive way to the positive pressure enforced by the good characters. They show their emotional response and reaction in the negative way to the negative pressure entrusted by the evil characters. At last the journey of the souls stop when the psychic war comes to an end.

The end of the play is also symbolic of the realization and redemption of the mother and the step-mother for their follies committed against God and innocence. In the kingdom of God, 'good' is symbolic of victory and 'evil' is symbolic of defeat or loss. This universal fact is also proved on the part of the good and evil characters in the play. In general both the plays, The Killdeer and The Easter Egg achieve its greatness with its psychic problems and the psychological analysis made by the critics. In the play The Killdeer, Madam Fay’s motiveless malignity is erased by the motiveless service rendered by Harry and Becky.

The innocent soul of Kenneth in the play The Easter Egg is redeemed by Polly, the embodiment of good. The house becomes symbolic of a prison, on the one
hand and hell on the other hand. When David God Fray analyses the characters, Eli and Kenneth, he observes that they are driven to the womb like dark place to them. According to David God Fray, “they are retreated into the womb like world to remain at the age of twenty-eight like Eli in *The Killdeer* and Kenneth in *The Easter Egg* an emotional infant” (11).

The loss of *The Easter Egg* remains symbolic of the loss of human power and self-identity. *The Easter Egg* also remains a concrete symbol of love to Kenneth. Cocoanut, the pet cat of Kenneth is symbolic of his tenderness and vulnerability. The bird Killdeer and Eli’s angora rabbits convey the symbolic meaning of purity, passivity and love of childhood. But the world of games is controlled by the figures of evil, which manipulate their malignity towards the innocent figures and play their trivial and cruel games for their sophistry. Hence, the above mentioned symbols are proved to be subverted to their nefarious purposes.

The symbolization of pet animals has deep meaning and connection with the 'selves' of Eli and Kenneth. The selves of Eli and Kenneth are identified with the pet animals, because they become as defenseless as the pet animals after their entrapment. When a deep analysis is taken on the roles of toys and pet animals in the children plays of Reaney, they possess equal importance to the human characters. In the play, *The Easter Egg*, Bethal reinforces her control over Kenneth either by killing his pet animal cocoanut (a cat) or by hiding his toy *The Easter Egg* which remains the most valuable possession and the source of happiness to him.

The toys and pet animals stand as symbols for warmth, comfort and happiness to Kenneth. They serve as the embodiment of human power and understanding, and love and tenderness. They became the deciding factors for the successful survival of the innocent beings. The loss of either the toy or the pet
animal drives the innocent children to the 'fallen' world of Adam the world of evil against the kingdom of God. The inversion of the fallen world endows them with an evil capacity. The evil capacity makes them deprived of objectification of their communication with the world around them. They are not aware of present or past or future. They are placed in a sort of pre-Adamic existence.

The selves of Eli and Kenneth are associated with the operation of meanings generated from both the animate beings (the pet animals) and the inanimate objects (toys). These symbols of toys and pet animals serve as the mode of communicable sense to the internal function of the selves. The problem in the play *The Easter Egg* is in getting Kenneth to trust him to a degree which will permit him to take over from the lost and defiled images of the pets.

After knowing the fact that the loss of symbols has caused the loss of communicative human power, the witch Bethal makes all sorts of attempts to keep Kenneth in the same condition. Since she does not allow Polly to bring improvement in his condition, Polly teaches him during the absence of Bethal. To further her control over Kenneth and keep him in the same condition, Bethal also uses the mode of objectification of symbols.

In order to enjoy the property with monopoly power she wants to keep Kenneth in the other world of darkness which has taken him far away from the world of reality. Bethal’s aspiration for material pleasure makes her to be highly inhuman towards the innocent boy. She moves the garden to the other side of the house to cause disturbance and confusion to the confused soul which is caught up in the world of chaos.

The woman, who should be the symbol of motherhood, becomes a witch because of her selfish motive. It is an obvious fact that the salvation of the child can
only come through the trust and sharing of his associations with the symbols. The innocent soul believes and lives with the trust on the symbols. Hence certain beautiful and fruitful symbols keep the soul in healthy condition and maintain the psychic order in perfection. The soul is damaged and the psychic order collapses when the symbols are lost. It is trustworthy to take the point that there are some symbols which show the significance and the existence of the 'self.'

The sequences of communication produced by symbols are vitally positive like the positive human characters in the plays. To Eli and Kenneth, happiness is derived from nature and art through the selection of appropriate symbols. The original perception of the symbols sticks in the mind and the soul perceives the communication promptly and spontaneously. When the specific associative experience of the symbol is obstructed and bared, the communicative experience is temporarily forbidden in darkness.

The nursing treatment of Polly and the recovery of the lost Easter egg are the vital sources of communicative power and emotional response. Therefore symbols are rooted in memory and they serve the individual purposes. The healthy condition of the self is conditioned by the presence and absence of certain symbols which reflect the joy and innocence of children. The symbols also remain as objects of fantasy.

Reaney presents an enclosed world of innocence for children in the plays. This private world is guided and guarded by fairy like characters. When Polly tells Kenneth the story of Anna Karenina, she uses some symbols to renew and regain his emotional response to speech and memory. She uses a doll and toy railroad to relate
the story of Anna's adulterous love for the soldier when the story proceeds. Anna goes to Moscow and sees an old railway worker pinned down by a train.

Polly tells the story in order to teach new words to Kenneth and make him reminded of his father’s suicide. The story told by Polly to Kenneth records a notable advance and Kenneth immediately responds to the tale through drawing upon his own emotions to identify with a fantasy. Kenneth who is not able to respond to events with equanimity in the present comes out of his private world and emerges into the public, normal world by yielding emotional response to the external stimuli Polly gives a pictorial description of the starting of a train in the railway station.

The train moves up and down in the darkness and Anna also walks up and down beside the railway tracks. Polly, the story teller, expresses her at most emotional response to the happening in the story. This is a sort of emotional response shared between the narrator and the listener. This shared emotional response produces re-enactment on the part of Kenneth who is basically ruled and victimized by emotions. Through her dramatization of the story, Polly attempts to evoke and bring out the lost emotions to Kenneth.

Stories are used as communicative sources between past and present. They drag the dead events from the past and keep them alive in the present. Stories, by their evocation of undying human attitudes and emotions, possess the potential for bringing change and emotional response in any human being. Stories, with the recorded past events, advocate for reconsideration and communication between past and present. This kind of communication or reconciliation shifts an experienced fantasy from the narrator to the listener.
Reaney's world of fantasy, with its fantastic symbols provides perfect happiness to children who live within. Knowing the fact that Kenneth is fond of toys, Polly makes an attempt to set right his disturbed and distorted psyche which is temporarily arrested by oblivion. The symbols mentioned in the story rouse emotional interest on Kenneth. The emotional interest advances to the maximum degree and makes the psyche functions.

The function of psychic re-enactment brings necessary connection between past and present. The filled and bridged connection between past and present renews and restores the forgotten identity to the self of Kenneth. The restored self regains the human power of speech. A sequence of communication is slowly developed between Polly and Kenneth through the vital power of symbols. A more sophisticated and elaborate vision is visualized by Reaney from his perception of a dark world for the fallen people. By using the art of storytelling scene Polly attempts to teach new words to Kenneth.

Fantasies and symbols have special and specific pleasure for children in the vision of James Reaney. The psychic function collapses when the inverted world of symbols collapses or disappears. Kenneth’s psychic function collapses with the loss of The Easter Egg and it comes to order with the restoration of The Easter Egg. In the story-telling scene, Polly narrates the events of horrors with the effective symbols of train, railway track, etc to make Kenneth recollect the horrors of the past and keep him looking back to it.

Bethal uses the source of symbols for her devilish purpose of keeping Kenneth in the same condition. But Polly uses symbols to redeem him from the dangerous, entrapped world which is powerfully ruled by the demonic power,
Bethal. She metaphorically locks Kenneth in a room in order to stop his communication with the external world and keep his psychic function in disorder. Kenneth's survival is confined to the four walls of a room where his expression and exposure are bared.

The confinement of locking inside the room serves as a successful preventive measure for Bethal to keep Kenneth in the same state of oblivion and dumbness. The preventive measure is removed and the confinement is broken by the entry of Polly who brings the entire external world of communication to Kenneth and connects him with the current events. Hence Reaney uses collective symbolization to bring social manipulation between a society and an individual.

The viability of the health of the social structure and survival of the individuals are to some extent dependent on the vitality of some symbols which control both the society and the individuals and make them function. In Reaney's plays symbols are used not as mere exploration for artistic purpose they are used by individuals and societies for various levels of meanings for different kinds of social groups. Symbols gain great significance in Reaney's plays.

Reaney attempts to find personal orientation in symbols. In the play The Easter Egg, the religious symbol remains the sources of happiness for the individual Kenneth. The loss of this symbol affects the normal function of the psyche of Kenneth. His love for the symbol goes deep into the inner mind and dominates the psyche. The presence and absence of The Easter Egg place Kenneth on two different worlds of fantasy and reality. The presence of The Easter Egg keeps him in the
world of reality and the absence of The Easter Egg drives him to the world of fantasy. The restored presence of The Easter Egg brings him back to reality.

In Reaney's plays, the symbolism of the inverted world disappears or collapses. When the symbol disappears or collapses, it affects the psyche of the children, who have attached themselves to it. A vital force of evil harnesses the psyche of children who have enclosed themselves in the circles of nature and fantasy. Symbols produce both positive and negative effect on the children characters.

Both the plays, The Killdeer and The Easter Egg end with the positive note. The positive note has proper connection with the symbols (The Easter Egg and The Killdeer). Reaney's children world problematizes the power of understanding, growth of knowledge and communicative power with the external world. This kind of monumental problematization either stops the growth of psyche or robs its function temporally. Reaney facilitates an important process of denaturalization.

Eli and Kenneth are critically caught up between problematization and denaturalization. Both the aspects of problematization and denaturalization are complementary to each other in their roles against the children heroes (Eli and Kenneth). Their problematised psyche is denaturalized. The denaturalized psyche becomes abnormal. Their mindscape refuses to collaborate with the external landscape. The self and innocent mindscape are attacked by the external horrors and cruelties.

Their mindscape which is totally ruled and dominated by utter confusion becomes a victim to the oppressors. The mindscape of Eli and Kenneth suffers out of psychic imbalance which denaturalizes their human power. Regarding Kenneth, his
human power of speech and memory are denaturalized. Regarding Eli, his physical and mental growths are denaturalized. The problematized and denaturalized psyche makes an attempt to relieve itself from problematization and to restore its natural state, with the help of the good souls. The attempt is initiated by Polly, Harry and Becky.

The natural process and function of the psyche is violated by oppression. Kenneth and Eli become aware of their oppression after receiving necessary teaching and coaching from Polly, Becky and Harry. The constructed sharing experience between the victims and redeemers becomes ideological fruitful and hegemonic when it produces tremendous, valuable effect on the oppressed selves.

The oppressed selves are forced to the condition of fighting against the oppression by effective coaching and teaching of the redeemers. The struggle of the oppressed psyche gradually becomes powerful. When the power of the psychic struggle increases the psychic imbalance decreases. At the end of the psychic struggle the denaturalized psychic imbalance is reduced to the state of natural balance.

The characteristic structural element in Reaney's drama is an act of transformation in which a deprived being—perhaps a child in somehow released into a new free and essentially intelligible world from the world which is full of threatening, uncontrollable fears and evil figures. The protagonists of the plays in *The Easter Egg* and *The Killdeer* are characterized by the real psychological dynamics. The psychic process is leveled and decided by the external surrounding atmosphere in which the individuals (the protagonists) live. Techniques and devices became the part of the characters movement.
Reaney uses the recorded bird's sound to achieve theatrical effects. The performance of Roy Peterson’s recorded birds sound in *The Killdeer* not only provides theatrical effect but also awakes the ‘sleeping self’ of Eli which has been taking long rest in a world beyond reality the world of immaturity. Eli’s self is unable to fix itself in the centre of its psyche and reacts to the happenings around it. The psyche is left in an imbalanced position of the conflict between physical growth and mental growth. It suffers out of the contradiction between physical maturity and mental immaturity. The effective coaching of Harry and Becky bridges the gap between the mind and the body of Eli.

Reaney’s theatrical devices like the recorded bird's sound adds positive effect to coaching of Harry and Becky to make the weak self of Eli a more matured and strengthened one. According to Gerald D. Parker, in Reaney’s plays, sound effects have more importance in bringing character change or development. When he talks about the sound effects used by Reaney in *The Killdeer* he says, "Reaney suggests that Roy Peterson’s recording of the bird's sound is also a brief moment in the play when the theatrical expressiveness of sound is surrealistically manifested and suggestive of the sort of effect threat Reaney will strive for in his later plays" (221).

Reaney, in the plays *The Easter Egg* and *The Killdeer* discovers a new world for self-exploration and self-assertion. The selves of Eli and Kenneth fail to assert themselves in the centre of their psyche. Hence they collapse and thrust to the margin of their psyche from the center. They are unable to stabilize themselves on the centre of their psyche. The psyche keeps balance which is fixed itself on the centre, functions with normal process within its circle and also reacts to the happening outside the circle.
The selves of Eli and Kenneth exchange their places from centre to margin and from margin to centre. The misplacement of psyche causes survival problems. The decentralized psyche makes a journey to go to the center. The journey becomes a war when it is pressurized by both the oppressors and the redeemers. The misplaced psyche is again brought to the center when the war comes to an end.

The function of the psyche regarding Eli and Kenneth operates in three levels for its exploration and recognition. The self, for its exploration crosses three kinds of dimensions; ontological dimension, participational dimension and phenomenological dimension. According to Gerald D. Parker, the self explorative function is both ontological and phenomenological but it is participational according to Bachelard. In the following words, Gerald D. Parker expresses his views on the journey of the self and self-exploration in the plays *The Easter Egg* and *The Killdeer* and also adds the words of Bachelard who insists on the participational function of the self.

In the ontological dimension, the suppressed self becomes aware of its oppression by the light thrown on it by the external force of a group of redeemers and it starts its journey towards recognition and assertion. In the participational dimension, the self fights vigorously with the oppressive force to explore identity and achieve strength. In phenomenological dimension, the self expresses itself in the original state with the success of exploration and recognition.

Parker considers the psychic process from obstruction to recognition as a parody which becomes an effective theatrical event. Parker says:

In Reaney's earlier plays, the concept of the theatre – as identifier is evident in the settings, the characters, the structures of the stories where in the personalities as of Fay, Harry and Rebecca in *The Killdeer*, Kenneth in *The Easter Egg* are released. However the
phenomenological, anthological dimensions of such explorations, place and self remain largely discursive rather than experimental a matter of theme and argument as Bache lard observed, of the participational dimensions of the art act expressions of our own creativity expressing us by making us what it expresses the recognition of the parody in phenomenological dimension of the theatre event. (293)

In the plays, The Killdeer and The Easter Egg the self and the psyche of the protagonists become the centre of attraction to the audience. A new kind of evocative world against reality is built up by Reaney to present his self diseased characters, who, in a way completely new and different from the other dramatic personalities and reflect the psychological aspects, self-consciousness and self-centeredness.

The projective activity and extensive activity of the self is barred by the sudden attack or excessive fear and tension. Eli and Kenneth are deprived of self-consciousness and self-centeredness. They are dragged to the known and forlorn world which operates with the force of the wave of word blindness, dumbness and immaturity. The development and transformation of the psyche and self decide the degree of theatrical expressiveness and literary effect.

The success of the play is the success of the psychic war. The oppression caused by Madam Fay and Bethal cause depression to the soft and innocent psyche of Eli and Kenneth. When the plays progress, the encounter between Eli, Kenneth, Polly, Harry and Becky becomes more and more powerful and it produces a fruitful effect to reinstate the self in its original state.
In *The Easter Egg*, Polly attempts to bring speech to Kenneth. She recollects the past events to bring him back his memory power. Harry and Becky attempt to make Eli aware of his physical maturity. Loss of speech, loss of memory and lack of maturity act as the force of oppressive weapons to Bethal and Madam Fay. According to Parker Reaney creates a collage of linguistic modes to enforce his self-conscious concept of his characters.

Parker observes, "*The Killdeer* and *The Easter Egg*, but, rather, to create a theatrically and verbally self-conscious collage of linguistic modes that draws attention to speech” (224). The dramatist's linguistic modes are used to draw attention to speech. The speech referred by Parker here refers to the speech of the characters who play the role of teachers also to make the victimized selves become self-conscious. The self conscious condition referred by parker refers to the transformation, recognition, stability and assertion of the self.

In the plays, *The Killdeer* and *The Easter Egg*, the theme of loneliness is given strong expression. The selves of Eli and Kenneth are isolated from the normal world. The isolated self is driven to the cold sea of loneliness and sterility. The fertility of the self dissolves in the sea water. The sea of isolation and sterility is symbolic of the obstruct pattern of human life to which Eli and Kenneth are closely associated. These two young protagonists are taken from the world of actuality to the world of cruelly and mystery where the self becomes frozen and loses its warmth by which it can contact with the outer world. The alienated world of cruelty and mystery is headed by the tyrannical adults who want to exercise power and domination over their young victims.

In the plays, *The Killdeer* and *The Easter Egg*, Reaney creates two different worlds for the victims and victimizers: one world is the world of eccentric
step-mother and stepmother who aspire for unusual pleasure by suppressing their son and step-son who live in the other world of eccentricity and victimization. The mother and the step-mother become foes to the children. The home becomes a hostile place for them since they are treated as slaves by Bethal and Madam Fay. These two kinds of worlds are subtracted from reality and submitted to illusion.

Eli suffers out of the existential problem of mental immaturity when the play states. The same condition is preceded throughout the play but with some changes. He exists in the illusive world throughout the play and he is shifted to the real world from the illusive world only at the end of the play. The teaching and coaching of Harry and Becky produce emotional response and sensational effect on Eli’s. He is caught up between childlike innocence and matured adulthood. Harry and Becky slowly make Eli is self a matured one. Eli appears on the stage in the beginning of the play as a child like young man with oddity and eccentricity.

At the end of the play, he appears as a transformed figure of a matured young man. When his self attains its normal state, Madam Fay, who remains a heinous blot to the motherhood, loses her demonic power. She is shifted from the eccentric and villainous world to the real world when she becomes on ordinary mother with flesh and blood. She is relieved from the mechanical exercise of power and domination. Through the transformation of the self, a childlike young man attains his manhood. He becomes a completely transformed figure with the maturity of the self.

Kenneth, a happy boy, becomes a victim to the psychological disorder. The loss of The Easter Egg and the sudden death of his father affect the condition of the self and psychic position. The psychological, traumatic shock causes self-identify crisis and psychic disposition. The devil like step-mother Bethal wants to safeguard these aspects of self-identity crisis and psychic disposition for her sadistic self
satisfaction and material power. She has the fear that the normal condition of the boy will be an obstacle for her exercise of power and enjoyment of wealth left by her dead husband. Hence she wants to keep Kenneth in the same condition and she becomes more cautious in not allowing him to recover himself from his mental illness.

His mindscape is emptied from memory power and his mouth is obstructed from speech. Polly fills his empty mind with the memory power drop by drop and unties his mouth which was tied by the sudden shock. At the end of the play, the closed mouth becomes open and Kenneth regains and restores his human power of articulation. The wave of word blindness disappears in the restored fountain of speech, Bethal’s attempt of keeping Kenneth in the world of darkness becomes a failure at the play.

The restored Easter egg brings light to the darkened self of Kenneth. His mouth operates speaking after receiving the inspiration and encouragement from the enlightened ‘self’. The enlightened ‘self’ puts the psyche in order and position. The normal, perfect function of psyche discovers its memory power which is suppressed and arrested in its sub-conscious layer. There is internal conflict between the conscious layer and sub-conscious layer. Bethal makes a serious attempt to keep the memory power in the sub-conscious layer and Polly makes a vigorous attempt to place the memory power in the conscious layer. Kenneth's memory power sleeps well in the sub-conscious layer because of oppression and depression.

The memory power which lies in an inactive condition in the subconscous layer emerges towards the margin of the conscious layer with the external support aided by Polly. There is a conflict between memory and oblivion. Memory is
supported by Polly and oblivion is supported by Bethal. Bethal attempts to keep memory in the subconscious layer and oblivion in the conscious layer. But Polly makes a positive attempt to make memory precede its journey towards the region of conscious layer.

At the end of the play, Polly becomes successful in bringing memory to the conscious layer. The discovery of the ‘self’ and the function of the psyche are achieved by the success of memory and its fixation on the conscious layer of the mind. The exchange of places of oblivion and memory makes the psychic function a perfect one. Though the journey taken by memory towards the conscious layer is hard and long, it gains a fruitful effect of the end of the play.

The power of memory is encouraged and strengthened by the remarkable coaching at Polly. Through the quarrelsome journey made by memory against oblivion. The psyche of Kenneth recollects the memory power, collects it from the sub-conscious layer and fixes it on the conscious layer. Bethal layers her power when Kenneth’s memory power attains success against oblivion and they are brought seeks to the world of by the force of protest. Thus the children hewer Eli and teams are trans fried and transported to the cavel world by the force of oppressed.

In The East Egg Kenneth, in the first phase of protest starts realizing his slavery under his stepmother. In the second phase, he starts uttering a few words end in the third phase; his memory and speech are restored. The second phase of resistance brings him the awareness that he is totally disconnected with the outer world and so he expresses his willingness to attend the party, "If I'm over twenty-one, I'm old enough for the party" (TEE 67). These words prove the fact that
Kenneth has attained self-realization. This self realization provides him the power of resistance and with the power of resistance he wants to connect himself with the outer world.

In the third phase Kenneth becomes rebellious against his step-mother, and declares, “I'm not afraid of you Bethal I can get out of the room I can get out new, no matter how you lock the door” (TEE 69). In The Killdeer Harry and Rebecca who play the role of redeemers to Eli, provide enough courage to protest against his mother, Madam Fay. Oppression causes the lack of awareness of manhood and maturity in Eli. In the first phase, the operation of protest force makes Eli realise his manhood and maturity. As an indication of this realisation Eli speaks, "Speech, I've never made a speech in my life" (TEE 258). Eli completely overcomes the oppression in the second phase and asks the question to Madam Fay, "Are you afraid of me? For the first time? (TEE 275).

In the second phase Eli accuses Madam Fay of his loss of happiness and realises the fact that his achievement of self-realization has come through the efforts of Harry and Rebecca. The third phase of wild protest not only provides him the total resistance power but also leads him to the extent of striking Harry. He tells Madam Fay, "I've never been happy in my life "(TEE 263). Kenneth overcomes the oppression of his stepmother by restoring his speech and memory. Eli overcomes the oppression of his mother Madam Fay by restoring his manhood and maturity.

As an important articulate part of the society Reaney understands the social milieu and shows his response to the power structure in the family in the Canadian society. In the family structure, either the wife is dominated and oppressed by the husband or the children are dominated and oppressed by their parents. As a social
dramatist he shows his response to the family power structure in the form of contempt against the oppression of child-like persons.

Reaney's literary realism displays the contradiction between the parents and children. Though literature is an art and it is created with fictional notions and characters it cannot avoid reflecting social milieu and social realism. Hence from family to society, there is always contradiction between individuals or groups and reflecting this contradiction becomes unavoidable to a writer who is conscious of the social milieu. So power contradiction between the mother and the son causes domination of mother over her children.

The mothers remain power holders and the sons remain powerless victims. Hence, this contradiction affects the unity and relationship between the mother and the sons *The Easter Egg* and *The Kildeer* reveal the antagonistic ambivalence within the family, the mother's antagonism towards her son. When the mother wants to exercise of power over her son beyond boundary, it results in cultural difference in the family structure. Bethal and Madam Fay practise unusual power over their children and are exposed by themselves. Hence the family is not an exception of the operation of power. The mother (Madam Fay) and the step mother (Bethal) become power holders by using the atmosphere of the absence of fathers

Polly has taught him to write these words in chalk all over the walls of his room. Era also wants to make Kenneth better. When she expresses her thought to Bethal, Bethal stresses her not to do so. The following dialogue between Era and Polly reveals the ill-intension and the devilish attitude of Bethal:

ERA. I want to help Kenneth better.
BETHAL. I and Polly are making him worse and you will too leave
my Kenneth alone. Kenneth is fond of playthings. If he gets more
number of playthings, here is possibility for him to get recovered
from the psychological illness. *(TEE 6)*

Kind words also will pave way for recovery. New toys will compensate the
loss of *The Easter Egg*. There are many playthings of Polly at home. But Bethal
does not provide him any of the playthings. She wants to make him sicker and sicker
and keep him under her control in the same condition for ever. She treats him as a
clog and calls him a pig. When she talks about Kenneth to Era, she says,

A black pig (Kenneth) in king granting
I will not have him Polly’s
Playthings, And he’s
Getting sicker and sicker. *(TEE 15)*

Polly is the only companion in the isolated world of Kenneth. She is the gift
of the divine power to him. Kenneth's isolated world is ruled by mental darkness.
Polly makes a vigorous attempt to free him from the clutches of the world of
isolation. In order to erase the mental darkness Polly teaches many words which are
forbidden in the waves of his memory. She teaches him the words, house, door,
room porch, floor, hall, entry, stair case, wardrobe, parlour, closet, pantry, kitchen,
window, cupboard, threshold, dining room, bath room, garret, attic, cellar, chamber,
bed room, library, veranda, balcony and piazza.

The mental hollowness makes Kenneth forget even the word tumbler which
is one of the elementary words in the children vocabulary. Polly repeatedly asks
Kenneth to say the word tumbler. She says "oh Kenneth once more say tumbler"

(\textit{KD 240}). She further says:

I'll be teaching you
Just as I am today and
I'll ask you as I did
Today-what a tumbler is
You'll pass, then suddenly
Say, I know Polly what
A tumbler is a threshold and a Plaza. And then you'll be a grown
Kenneth and lessons - my lessons will be over. Let's do etiquette
rhyming and dancing next. \textit{(TEE 25)}

A little bell serves as a communicative source between Kenneth and Bethal.
Whenever Bethal wants to call Kenneth she rings the little bell. On hearing the bell
sound Kenneth comes down immediately to answer her call like a dog or cat. The
little bell kept by Bethal to call Kenneth is a symbol of slavery and reflection of
oppression. Kenneth's life in the hands of Bethal is worse than a dog which remains
a pet animal to people.

Polly hates this inhuman attitude of Bethal. She considers Bethal's bell as a
cat bell or a dog bell or a slave bell. But Polly uses Diano to call Kenneth. She plays
a piano to call Kenneth. Music is an art through which one can derive happiness.
Here, in the case of Kenneth, the instrumental music awakens the sleeping 'self' of
Kenneth. The piano music also produces its positive effect on Kenneth in the
improvement and recovery of his self along with the teaching of Polly. It enlightens
Kenneth’s soul which is far away from the worldly affairs.
Bethal's calling bell stands for horror and Polly's piano music stands for harmony. Whenever Kenneth hears the sound of Bethal's little bell he comes to her with fear and tension. But when he hears the piano music of Polly he comes to her with affection and happiness. Polly tries to bring him back the absence of memory and speech. Polly wants to change Kenneth by affection and kindness against the cruelty and hatred of Bethal. She says:

I'll never ring Bethal’s
Little bell.

Never it is a Dog and cat bell, a
Slave bell. *(TEE 30)*

During the conversation between Polly and Bethal, Polly explains the reason for her sympathy towards Kenneth. Bethal who is the stepmother and guardian of Kenneth has to be doubly affectionate and kind to him. But she does not even consider him as a human being and neglects him totally because of her oppressive attitude. Polly points out the folly of Bethal in the following words, "You know why Bethal? Because I found him so neglected by you. And you are his guardian" *(TEE 32)*.

Polly makes two attempts to change the oppressive attitude of Bethal and restore the less of speech and memory to Kenneth. She not only wants to change Kenneth but also wants to change Bethal into a genuine stepmother and responsible guardian. Whenever she talks to her, she never fails to point out her malicious attitude and cruelty towards Kenneth. She becomes annoyed with Bethal's treatment of Kenneth. She accuses her,

You don't try love
You did n't treat him like
A boy
You don't like him
Bethal answers
I am afraid of love
And Kenneth at his age. (TEE 33)

From these words of Bethal it is dear that she has fear for Kenneth's
maturity. She has the wrong assumption that she may lose the chance of enjoying the
properties of her dead husband and may be dominated by Kenneth if he is curved
from his psychological illness. Polly strongly believes that she can from his illness.
But Bethal assures her that no one can free or separate Kenneth cure him from her.
She declares to Polly,

No one's going to take Him (Kenneth) from me Not you not the
Mental doctors. (TEE 34)

After noticing the gradual improvement in Kenneth, Bethal plans to take
Kenneth to a far off place. In order to keep him in the same condition, she tells
Polly, "I might just go off with him to some place where we'd all be and quit from
you all" (TEE 38). In order to keep Kenneth under her control she becomes like a
witch. When she becomes aware of here witchcraft, she tells George, "Look at me or
look/ At me I am a witch" (TEE 62).

Bethal exercises her witchcraft on Kenneth in order to increase his mental
illness. Kenneth's pet white kitten is killed by George and it is buried. Bethal
recollects the past incidents and tells George, "You poor dear, do you remember
Kenneth's white kitten? And you hit it with stick and threw it back over the fence.
And I buried Kenneth's kitten" (TEE 58).
After the death of the white kitten, Kenneth collapses more and his mental breakdown increases to the maximum degree as expected by Bethal. On seeing the collapsed condition of Kenneth she derives sadistic pleasure from it. When she talks to George, she refers to Kenneth's reaction to the death of his white kitten, "When the kitten disapproved, Kenneth really went crazy. It most made for his mental breakdown" *(TEE 59)*.

Bethal thinks that the music by Polly to get Kenneth come down will produce some kind of remedial measures in Kenneth. So she asks Polly not to use the piano music to call Kenneth. Even a dog is petted and taken care of by people. But Kenneth is treated worse than a dog. Battered Bethal asks Polly,

Why don't you ring my

Little bell I use for him (64)

Polly answers,

Because I detest ringing for him as if he’s a pet dog. *(TEE 64)*

The protest force starts working in Kenneth from the middle of the second Act and it reaches its perfection at the end. On seeing the profound and remarkable improvement in Kenneth, Bethal wants to separate Kenneth from Polly and Era who work with dedication and commitment to bring a miracle in Kenneth. She wants to take him to a far off place in order to keep him in the same condition. Bethal threatens Kenneth that she will take him to a far off place but Kenneth looks of her with rebellious eyes and says that he is not afraid of her.

The following dialogues between Kenneth and Bethal prove the protest force of Kenneth. Bethal shouts with anger: “I shall run away with you tonight on a train or boat to some place; where Era and Polly will never find you. I am your legal mother Kenny. Never forget that” *(TEE 69)*. On hearing the threatening words of
Bethal, Kenneth boldly speaks in opposite tone: "I am not afraid of you, Bethal. I can get out of the room. I can get out now no matter how you lock the door" (TEE 69).

According to the will written by the dead father of Kenneth, Bethal has power of attorney for Kenneth's properties until he marries. Bethal's guardianship will be over and she can get a portion of the properties which will be decided by Kenneth. After reading the content of the will, in order to get complete freedom for Kenneth, Polly decides to marry Kenneth if it is necessary. She tells Bethal, "Now Bethal, I shall/ Marry Kenneth" (TEE 70). She further says: “I checked the will yesterday. Bethal. According to it you get the power of attorney and a nice income until the time that Kenneth marries. After that your guardianship whatever reward Kenneth decides upon” (TEE 72).

Before the recovery of Kenneth's psychological illness, it is indirectly revealed that the loss of The Easter Egg has helped out of the witch crafts of Bethal. Bethal becomes over ambitious to inherit all the properties of Kenneth. Hence she employs her cunning tricks on Kenneth to increase his illness. First she steals the glass Easter egg and next she asks George to kill the white kitten and she buries both The Easter Egg and the white kitten in the same place in the garden. Polly suspects that she might have stolen The Easter Egg and so she watches the activities of Bethal.

One day miraculously she finds out the skeleton of the white kitten and the glass Easter egg wrapped by a piece of yellow paper. The Easter Egg had been kept inside a box. After finding out The Easter Egg Polly tells Bethal:

Last night I went and with a lantern when you were all asleep, And I dug when you had dug. I found cocoanut’s (cat) skeleton and then
underneath this box. The blacksmith broke the lock today. Did you bury them Bethal? (TEE 76). After opening the box Polly takes out the glass Easter egg and gives it to Kenneth and shouts with joy: "It's a glee Easter egg Kenneth, The inscription says; “To Kenneth, from his loving god mother. Happy Easter. Here Kenneth and I found it back for you" (TEE 77).

On seeing The Easter Egg, Kenneth shouts with joy, picks it up and says that someone has turned the house back again. Having observed the happiness of Kenneth George accuses that Kenneth will have a verbal change. A verbal change referred by George refers to the psychic process of Kenneth. The swept away memory enters his mindscape with the recollection of ‘his father suicide.’ The verbal hemorrhage makes him utter the words “Abyssal-nothingness”.

The following speech of Kenneth to Bethal assures the restoration of speech and memory of Kenneth, "And also I remember that indeed it was not Bethal who had said Abyssal nothingness to me, but it was the last thing my father said just before he killed himself” (TEE 84). Kenneth realizes his maturity as a young man and wants to attend the party along with George. The verbal hemorrhage makes him realize his manhood. So he speaks out of his maturity," If I over twenty-one I m old enough for the party. All the words I know and did not know" (TEE 83).

The physic process end transformation makes Kenneth realize his physical maturity as a young man, In order to make George and Bethal realize the fact that Kenneth has been fully cured from his psychological illness, Polly asks following question to Bethal and George, "Don't you two people see that he's changed" (TEE 89).
George has hatred and enmity towards Kenneth from his age of seven. So Bethal and George work as joined satanic forces to safeguard the psychological illness of Kenneth as long as he is alive. George, the clergy man, violates divinity and acts against the moral code. At the end of the play, like the Shakespearean tragic heroes, they realize their follies, Bethal realizes her folly and speaks with the words of redemption to Kenneth, “my dear one, I have been a harsh mother I locked you in a room” (ibid).

In *The Killdeer*, like Madam Fay, Mrs. Gardner ill-treats her son Harry and restricts his individual freedom. Though Harry is a young man he has fear for his mother. The following dialogue between Harry and Mrs. Gardner indicates the fact that Harry remains very submissive to his mother Mrs. Gardner,

MRS. GARDNER. I wish you would come in the backdoor with your bicycle, if a piece of mud dropped off it on this floor I would skin you.

HARRY. Yes mother. *(TKD 234)*

Harry's individual freedom is suppressed by his mother. As Harry earns his livelihood by being an employee in a bank, he deserves to be independent. But the dominantly and oppressive attitude of Mrs. Gardner makes him remain as a slave to his mother. Though he has deep love for Becky, an egg girl, he is compelled to marry the daughter of Mr. Loon, the manager of Royal Bank, Canada.

Because she fears that she may be abandoned by Harry and she may happen to suffer out of loss of affection if Harry becomes totally independent. Harry starts revolting against the oppression of his mother when he becomes aware of his individuality. Mrs. Gardiner watches all the activities of Harry. She reads his letters and diaries. He speaks to his mother with a rebellious tone in order to free himself
from her domination. He raises rebellious questions “why do you read my letters and diaries and my bank book” (TKD 211).

After observing the change in Harry, Mrs. Gardiner guesses that Harry will not take care of her in her old age but she considers him as a little boy. She tells Harry, "I am losing my little boy. He's changed. He will put me in the street, his poor old mother” (TDE 217). Mrs. Budge, the friend of Mrs. Gardiner has killed her son. She tells Madam Fay, "I pushed the son of Mrs. Budge into a river that slid through a jungle. Harry was a friend of my son” (TDE 257).

Eli has deep hatred for Madam Fay. There is no smooth mother-son relationship between Madam Fay and Eli. Madam Fay clearly understands that she is totally hated by Eli. During the conversation between Mrs. Gardiner and herself, she says, "Eli won't look me straight in the eye” (TKD 207). After marrying Eli, Rebecca celebrates Eli’s birthday for his age of twenty-one, Eli's marriage with Rebecca brings out a change in his life. Rebecca cuts the birthday cake and gives him a slice.

Eli enjoys the birth day party with Harry and Rebecca. He speaks sensibly for the first time out of his extreme happiness: "This is my first birthday party" on hearing the speech of Eli, Harry shouts in joy speech." (TKD 257). On hearing the joyous words of Harry, Eli asks the question what is meant by speech. The following speech of Eli indicates the remarkable change in Eli: “Speech I’ve never made a speech in my life. What is it like?” (TKD 258). Hopkins the friend and guardian of Eli is stabbed and murdered by Madam Fay with a pair of scissors.

Eli knows the truth from cliff. When the police suspects Becky as the murderer, Eli wants to reveal the truth. But he fears that he may be killed by his mother. He tells Madam Fay, "I've never been so happy in my life" (TKD 263). The
last threatening words of Madam Fay bring forth a revolution in Eli. Madam Fay says that even if she is betrayed by Eli and Harry to be the police, she will come as a ghost and take revenge on him. She threatens him by saying that even after her death her ghost will come and possess him. She says, "Eli! You'll be me, you'll be mine" (*TKD* 264).

On hearing these threatening words of Madam Fay, Eli collapses and falls down. He asks Harry to bring the killdeer. He feeds and waters the killdeer. He rises up after cleaning the cage. But he faints and falls down. Harry comes to his help. There is dim light and a passage of time which indicate the transformation of Eli. After a passage of time, the light comes up again. The dim light indicates the past dark life of Eli, and the bright light indicates the change in Eli and the new dawn of his life.

After recovering from fainting Eli gets up slowly. On seeing the change in Eli, Harry says that he looks like a stranger. On hearing this comment, Eli strikes Harry. This action of Eli proves his complete transformation of his manhood and awareness of his maturity. When Eli restores his manhood, he is reminded of the past when he is a boy. Before Madam Fay run away with Lorrimer, Eli brings a dead bird to Mrs. Fay when she was in the pasture in order to buy it. On seeing the dead bird, Mrs. Fay striks him, kicks him and curses him. Eli tells Harry about the ill treatment of his mother,

I came to her
In the pasture with a dead bird
I found, she struck me
Down, kicked and cursed me. (*TKD* 268)
The external oppression of Madam Fay disturbs the 'psyche' of Eli. When he becomes aware of his loss of individual freedom and slavery, he raises a protest voice and wants to free himself from the domination of his mother. He thinks that he can free himself from his mother with the help of Harry. The following words of Eli to Harry indicate the psychic transformation and his vigour for freedom:

I am caught by her...

If I free myself from my

Mother, if I can do that

I must love you. (TKD 268)

After the psychic transformation the suppressed manhood of Eli comes out in full swing. After recovering from fainting, Eli hits Harry forcefully. Harry does not become annoyed with the happening. Instead he feels happy for Eli's realisation of his maturity. At the end of the play, there is an overwhelming conversation between Eli and Harry: “Harry, I've waited a whole summer for you to do that, get mad. Hit those you hate Eli, shouts I am sorry, I am sorry, I am sorry, I don't know why I hit you like that, I wish, I hadn't done” (TKD 267).

On seeing the through change in Eli's character, Madam Fay becomes shocked and surprised. Her facial expression exposes the hidden fear in her. Having observed the mental disturbance of Madam Fay, Eli asks an embarrassing question, “You -mother -are you/ Afraid of me? For the / First time? Not of me?” (TKD 275).

The above question raised by Eli assures and affirms Eli's psychic transformation and individual freedom. The awareness and realisation of mental maturity provides the gift of the realisation and awareness of his physical maturity. Eli's nineteen years old maturity is proved when Eli is for the happy life of Harry and Becky and presents them his toys for their children in future. Becky is thrilled to hear the final words of Eli, "Becky some day. You and Harry will have children.
They can have all my toys” (TKD 275). After these final words of Eli, hears the cry of The Killdeer along with the blowing wind.