Chapter – IV

Struggle for Survival with Society in *The Donnellys Trilogy*

“It is too great a tragedy. It is a story full of levels and generations of people.” These are the words of James Reaney about his play *The Donnellys Trilogy* when he was interviewed by the editors of *The Globe* and *Mail. The Globe and the Mail* published the interview under the heading ‘Canada's Own Greek Tragedy.’

Reaney finds proper affinity between the Donnelly story and the novels of Faulkner and Greek tragedy. He says, “The closest thing is to the Faulkner novels and Greek tragedies” (qtd. in Noonan 2).

*The Donnelly Trilogy* was first premiered at the Tarragon Theatre in Toronto on November 24th 1973. After its premiere it not only attracted the attention of the audience but also the critics. The history of the Donnelly family has become a great legend and myth of Canada. James Noonan in his introduction to the Donnelly trilogy states, "There was a great sense of sticks and stones. Here started the poet dramatists celebration and conclusion on the province's most favoured folk legend” (3).

*The Donnellys Trilogy* was first published in 1975. It has epic and tragic proportions. It depicts the struggle for survival. In Trilogy, Reaney has re-examined the historian's record about the Donnelly legend. He has transformed the history of the Donnelly’s story into a work of art and has depicted the life of the people in south west Ontario. In general Reaney’s the trilogy has universal appeal since he has recounted the history of the Donnelly's legend with contemporary relevance and newness. The play with its historical account remains both as legend and reality. The fusion of legend and reality provides fascination and illumination to the audience.
The critic James Noonan states in his (title of the source), "Reaney has taken the Donnelly story both the legend and the reality and has fashioned it into a remarkable and fascinating play. The result is an illuminating experience in total theatre" (3). From this critical reception of the play, it is clear that Reaney has not simply recounted the history of the Donnellys of Lucan Ontario, with lot of difficulties, he has transformed the history of the Donnellys and dramatized the horrible events actually happened in Middlesex county, in the township Biddulph, in and around the small town of Lucan which is eighteen miles north of London.

It was a wonder that no poet or dramatist or novelist came along earlier to recreate the past history of the Donnellys into the work of art and give life to the Donnellys. The history of the Donnellys was documented by two writers, Orlo Miller and Thomas Kelly. Orlo Miller wrote a book titled The Donnelly's must Die. Thomas Kelly wrote a book titled The Black Donnellys Heavy, did some corrections and modification, dramatized the historical document and staged it in the Tarragon Theatre.

James Reaney's Donnelly's Trilogy contains three plays Sticks and Stones, The St. Nicholas Hotel WM Donnelly Prop and Handcuffs. Act I of Sticks and Stones depicts James Donnelly settling in Biddulph and killing Farrel at Logging Bee. Act II shows the struggles faced by Mrs. Donnelly and her seven children till James Donnelly returns from prison after seven years imprisonment. Act III shows the attempts of neighbours to drive the Donnellys from the township and Donnelly's final decision never to leave Biddulph.

The play The St. Nicholas Hotel W.M. Donnelly Prop deals with the race between the Donnelly boys and their enemies. Michael Donnelly and William Donnelly get victory and defeat the enemies with the help of their brothers by
smashing through most of the tollgates. Though the Donnelly boys get victory over
the enemies and build stronger barriers to drive the enemies Michael Donnelly is
suddenly and brutally murdered. In a certain hotel there is a stain which cannot be
washed away forever.

In *Handcuffs*, the murdered Donnellys rise from their graves to confront the
duel minded materialists who have gathered in the graveyard in Biddulph on the
anniversary of their deaths. The climax of the story is the massacre by the vigilante
group made up of some thirty men. They, the dead, bless the people with divine
power and Holy Spirit.

The story of the Donnellys is familiar to all Canadians since it has been
immortalized in the three forms of history, legend, and drama. Five members of the
family, the father and mother, the two sons, John and Thomas and the niece Bridget
were murdered by the masked men shortly after midnight on February 4th 1880. In
the two trials no one was convicted of the murder though six men were charged. No
judge brought justice for the brutal crime. The story was included “as no VII The
Biddulph Tragedy” in a series of famous Canadian Trials. The murder and trial of
the Donnellys is the most famous unsolved murder in the history of Canadian law.

Reaney has divided and dramatized the Donnelly story in three parts. Part I
shows the family establishing themselves in Biddulph, after the migration of their
parents to Canada in 1844 up to the year 1867. Part II focuses on the Stage Coach
Company runs by the Donnelly boys and their rivalry with the other stages of their
enemies. It covers the period from 1867 to 1879. Part III concludes the saga with
events immediately preceding and following the massacre at 1880, the trials and the
vindication of the Donnellys as perceived by Reaney.
The news of murder spread everywhere in Canada and the murder of the five Donnellys became the subject of the sensational newspaper articles. The critic James Noonan says:

The murder of the five Donnellys on February 4th 1880 was the subject of sensational newspaper articles in Canada and elsewhere for month after that faithful night what was then called *The Globe* in its edition of Thursday February 5, 1880 followed on its front page "A story from our own report" which had not less than seven head lines as follows.

1. Horrible Tragedy at Lucan.
2. Five persons murdered by masked men.
3. An entire household sacrificed.
4. The House fired and the remains consumed.
5. Result of a family feud.
6. The story as told by a child witness of the crime
7. 20 masked men engaged in the bloody work. (4)

The Donnellys were cruelly murdered because of social and religious oppression. The crime of murder still remains the blackest crime in the Canadian history and law. As the result of a family feud they were brutally butchered and annihilated like animals by the animal like people who lived with the attitude of bias. The history of the Donnelly family has made a bloodstain in the Canadian history. As James Noonan comments:

The story (Donnelly story) Lucan awoke this morning to shock the country with intelligence of the blackest crime ever committed in the Dominion, The crime consisted of the murder, or rather, butchery, of
a family of five, father, mother, two sons and a girl. The victims were named Donnelly, a family that has lived in the neighbourhood for 30 years. They resided on lot 18, 6th concession of Biddulph, the farm consisted of 50 acres, and they bore the unenvitable reputation of being. (4)

The sensational tragic account of the Donnellys creates horror and terror on the stage. The audiences are shocked to see the biased attitude of the enemies of the Donnellys. Reaney has become successful in presenting the horrors of the nineteenth century town ship of Biddulph on the modern Canadian theatre. Reaney’s staging of the visual account of the drama is more appealing to the people rather than the written or spoken account. The biased attitude paves way for oppression and oppression paves way for protest.

The play includes a variety of characters, their sons and daughter, Andrew Keefe, the taverner, Jim Feeney the traitor, George Stub, Tom Cassaleigh, Brimmacombe, Mr. and Mrs. Pat Farl, a medicine showman, Constables, Census takers, Goalies, Negro settlers, Surveyors, Pyramaniae eight gallaghe boys, Bishop and other characters. Reaney has made the precise historical fact of the Donnelly story into a moving drama with these characters.

Each character is flexible enough to shift at times from being a Donnelly to a friend or enemy of the Donnellys, Even though the performance of the play runs up to three hours, the audience never feels bored. Because the play covers the most exciting, thrilling and sensational events like sudden quarrels, sudden murder, scene
of fantasies, suspense regarding the hidden plots and treachery of the enemies of the Donnellys.

All these kinds of events arrest the attention of the audience and make them waiting for the further happening with curiosity and interest. There is a family feud between the Donnellys and their enemies. The family feud is presented between the two groups of adults, the Donnellys and their enemies. In *The Sticks and Stones* and it is continued between the two groups of children, the Donnelly boys and the children of the enemies of the Donnellys in *The St. Nicholas Hotel*.

There is oppression and protest between two groups of adults in *The Sticks and Stones* and there is oppression and protest between two groups of boys in *The St. Nicholas Hotel* W.M. Donnelly pro *P*. The family feud starts in the first part of the trilogy - *Sticks and Stones* and it grows to the largest extent in the second part of the trilogy *The St Nicholas Hotel* W-M Donnelly Prop, The effect of the enlarged enmity and extended feud between the Donnellys and their enemies come to an end with the brutal murder of the Donnellys.

The biased attitude of power supremacy and religious controversy between Roman Catholics and Protestants becomes the cause for feud and enmity between the Donnellys and their enemies. Reaney brought the dead Donnellys fully alive family on the stage and presented the Donnelly tragedy with the magnificent performance of eleven actors who made flexible adjustment among themselves to enact the tragedy successfully. As James Noonen says:

Reaney, as a dramatist has achieved greatness up to the level of the greatest dramatists like Shakespeare and Aeschylus by staging the black life of the Donnellys with his unique, dramatic technique and
distinctive theatrical aspects. Reaney’s technique in *Sticks and Stones* is something quite unique in Canadian drama. It is a combination of many things, poetry and prose, realistic action and time, song and dance, games and rituals, fantasy and dream, past, present and future. The work has been compared to that of diverse playwrights as Aeschylus, Shakespeare, Brecht and the Victorian melodramatist. (7)

In staging the history of *The Donnellys Trilogy* Reaney cannot keep up the unity of time and place. Time and place are often changed. The twentieth century audience in 1974 is taken to the nineteenth century in 1884 whether it is nineteenth century or 20th century. The social evil of oppression and domination is operative and dynamic among the settlers in Canada. Scene shifting takes place in the four places of a farm house barnyard, a church, a court and a country road. These four places play vital role regarding the oppression and domination of the enemies towards the Donnellys.

Enmity is evoked and domination is established by burning the barn of the Donnelly. Authorities of the church fail to practice honesty and the authorities of the court fail to provide justice to the Donnellys who are struggling for their survival. The country roads of Roman line and Protestant line are symbolic of oppression and domination exercised by the enemies on the Donnellys on the basis of religious controversy.

Reaney changes the scene setting from the barnyard to the church, from the church to the court and from the court to the country road with the help of ladders, sticks, stones, wheels, clothe lines, hay forks, barrels, chains, noisemaker, maps,
candles and lanterns. James Noonan remarks, time and place frequently dissolve. So that the spectator finds himself in 1884, at one moment 1974 at another in Tipperary, London, Lucan or Goodrich in a farm house barnyard, a church or a court, on a country road, a wagon or a train. All the changes are evoked with the help of props, ladders, sticks, stone, shirts, and wheels, clothe lines, barrels, hammers, chains, noise makers maps, candles, lanterns.

As in his other plays, Reaney’s structural approach is to just oppose many, many sequences of different times, settings and moods, in Sticks and Stones he has perfected this method over anything he has ever done before. So that one sequence flows easily into another for the separation and humbling of scenes. Reaney as a social reformer tries to eradicate all kinds of social evils bared on society, politics; religious imperialistic attitude and academic jealousy. The Donnelly family struggles for survival because of the oppression caused by the three oppressive forces of society, religion and law.

The Donnellys face the social oppression focused by their neighbours. To overcome the social oppression they go to the Bishop, the Father and the church authorities in Biddulph. The Church Authorities not only deny justice to the Donnellys but also try to oppress them because of religious controversy. The church authorities who are supposed to be the representatives of the divine force by being on embodiment of mercy, courtesy, kindness and impartial attitude, fail to support the new sellers (The Donnellys).

George Stub, a protestant in the nearby village and Tom Cassaleigh, a neighbour who was tried several time for killing an English man named Brimma Combe are the local magistrates. These two men are the first enemies to the
Donnellys. Mr and Mrs. Fat and Mr. and Mrs. Pat Farl are the other enemies to the Donnellys. Not only the parents but also the children face problems for their survival. While Mr. Donnelly faces problems with men, Mrs. Donnelly faces problems with women and the Donnelly boys face problems with the children of the enemies of the Donnellys. The well developed enmity results in a quarrel between Mr. Donnelly and Pat Farl.

During the quarrel Mr. Donnelly kills Pat Farl and he is arrested and kept in prison for seven years. Jim Feene acts as a traitor to the Donnellys. Mrs. Donnelly suffers a lot during the seven years imprisonment of Mr. Donnelly. During the absence of Mr. Donnelly, the condition of survival for the Donnelly family becomes worse day by day. When Mr. Donnelly is in prison there is problem between Ms. Donnelly and Mrs. Ryt. James Noonan says:

Reaney criticizes and satirizes the Canadian society, church and the court. Mrs. Donnelly reports the problem to Father Connolly. But Father Connolly does not consider it. Reaney examines the life of the contemporary society in Ontario where also people suffer out of oppression and domination. He satirises the contemporary society by reshaping the documentary material of the Donnelly history. His visual thinking and dramatic art reflect the modern movements which aspire for liberty, equality and fraternity. These three social entities are required for the harmonious society.

When any one of their entities is missing in any society a struggle arises for survival and the social harmony disappears. Through the Donnelly trilogy, Reaney not only wishes to depict the brutal society in Biddulph in nineteenth century but also to portray the modern Canadian society in Ontario where the harmony of the
society is missing to certain extent. Gerald D Parker, one of the most famous critics of James Reaney, comments:

Reaney's desire to disclose what was most alive in the community from which he had come.... Reaney's almost gluttonous archival impulses to depict the "essence of country life in Ontario" are outlined and some of the ways in which a fidelity to documentary material (The Donnellys) informed and shaped his theatre are examined. Reaney's propensity for what Rudolf Arnheim calls visual thinking is evident in his poetry and his drama and has important analogies in the theory and the art of two distinct but related modernist movements. (18)

Reaney, for dramatic purpose to create social awareness, to criticize and satirise the contemporary Canadian society and to uproot the deep rooted social follies, changes some facts of the Donnelly history. For example the houses of the Marssey family and Tom Cassaleigh are not in the real history of the Donnellys. He has increased the inhuman attitude and the brutal behaviours of Tom Cassaleigh and Marssey family for his own purpose. Regarding the changes of names and facts James Noonan remarks:

Reaney actually changes facts for his dramatic purposes. One oblivious change is the use of names, some of which Reaney changes for humanitarian reasons. For example, the names of the Morssey family and Tom Cassaleigh in the play are not the real names of the originals on whom they are based. The correct names of these and
other characters can usually be found in Orlo Miller's *The Donnellys*

*must Die.* (277)

The enemies of the Donnellys first try to suppress and subdue the Donnellys as they wish to exercise power over them. But the Donnellys make up their mind to fight against their enemies. After knowing the fact that the Donnellys will not bow to their pressures and prejudices, the enemies try to drive the Donnellys from Biddulph. Tom Cassaleigh, a criminal who has committed the crime of murder, becomes the leader for a group of enemies to the Donnellys. It is a great irony that a man who is a criminal against law becomes the first Catholic Magistrate in the township of Biddulph.

After attaining power he becomes the master of enmity and oppression to the Donnellys. He leads the enemies of the Donnellys towards their goal of driving the Donnellys from Biddulph. Reaney, to make his vision clear about the contemporary Canadian society, reshapes the history, modify the roles of the historical figures and highlights certain events according to the artistic requirements and dramatic visual effect. The extrapolation of history becomes unavoidable to Reaney even though the historians might object. James Noonan Comments:

The man who had been an accomplice in the murder of Brimma Combe, who had been refused absolution by the Friar because he had not repented of his crime, who had been prevented by Mrs. Donnelly from cutting ears of Donegon, who then tried so hard to drive the Donnellys from Biddulph, who later became the first Catholic Magistrate in the township should be the one to lead the mob. The
irony in his leading the mob is so dramatically brought that Reaney is justified in the extrapolation from history to art of this point. Historians might object, living relatives of the historical parrel of Cassaleigh might cry of foul, but the answer to all of them is simple; *Sticks and Stones* is not history, it is drama. However important its base in history there remains a play and an artistic view of the possibilities, these facts lend to his inner vision. However much Reaney is fascinated by the history he need not and will not be bowed by it in his play. The importance of using history as a base for the dramatist is that it gives him a starting point in common with his audience. The historic authenticity of a play like *Sticks and Stones* opens the inner eyes of the readers to the wiser landscape that the artist wishes to point. When the audience realises that the events described have a base in history, they are disposed to be deceptive to the poetic vision. (278)

By giving form and shape to the barebones of history Reaney provides life to the dead Donnellys and make them appear on the stage with heroism and potentialities. The audiences are surprised and satisfied with the heroism of the Donnellys who are the minority group in Biddulph. They revolt against the oppression of their enemies by focusing on the Donnelly's awareness against oppression. Reaney cautions the contemporary Canadians to be aware of their position in the society and warns them to be cautious of not being subdued or subverted or suppressed by the oppressors on any ground.
The importance of history and the authenticity of the play lie in how Reaney arranges events, highlights events, focuses and strengthens the historical figures. Reaney as an egalitarian artist attempts to bring out awareness, awakening, upliftment end transformation. His purpose of reshaping the history of the Donnellys and staging it is more social than artistic. By making use of the Donnelly history, Reaney constructs a triangular inter-connection among the three elements of history, art and society.

There is gradual development and change in the three kinds of visions of the dramatist; the historical vision, artistic vision and the social vision. Historical vision is converted into artistic vision and artistic vision is converted into social vision. A powerful artistic insight of the dramatist exposes a wider social vision. Reaney's artistic dynamism originates from his inner longing for an egalitarian society in Canada. The Donnelly history serves as an instrument to visualize his social vision, operate his artistic dynamism and to set up an egalitarian society in Canada.

The critics of Reaney evaluate his dramatic vision as a valid one because it presents socio, political, and psychological vision of Reaney. According to James Noonan, *The Donnelly Trilogy* should be judged not on the ground of history but on the ground of art. He says, "Even if some later historians come along and discount Reaney's facts, the dramatic vision would remain valid and would still have to be judged on its artistic, not its historic merits" (278).

The survival of the Donnellys becomes a question mark because of domination, oppressive attitude and power supremacy. They are pressurized and prejudiced to submit themselves to the enemies. For their survival in Biddulph, there are two choices laid before them; either they have to join their enemies or they have
to be driven off from Biddulph. As the Donnellys are ruled by their 'ego' they refuse to submit themselves to the enemies, but at the same time they decide not to leave Biddulph.

Reaney with his effective dramatic techniques and artistic presentation has made the audience unite themselves with the characters. When the Donnellys are on the stage the audience find themselves in them. When the enemies of the Donnellys are on the stage they view them as their enemies, when Mr. and Mrs. Donnellys decisively declare that they will not leave Biddulph They reflect the collective voice of the audience on the one hand and the individual voice of the dramatist on the other.

Audience is anger and the emotions reach the height, whenever they see men with sticks. The men who appear with sticks are the enemies of the Donnellys. Regarding *The Donnelly Trilogy*, the critics judge and praise the fact that Reaney has succeeded in evoking emotion and curiosity in the minds of the audience for further happenings. They become excited and feel sympathy for the Donnellys and they become angry and revengeful towards the enemies of the Donnelly’s. James Noonan remarks:

> By the way Reaney relates the audience to the Donnellys we made to feel that the enemies of the Donnelly figures on stage are our after egos. An example is, this is seen at Gallegher's Bee when "Suddenly we (the audience) and Donegohe are faced by a gang of men with sticks". The sticks which stand for the foes of the Donnellys are a reminder that they are our foes too even when Donnelly himself is not on the stage. (279)
The oppressive and dominating attitude of the enemies blasts out in action of burning the barn of the Donnellys when they are at dance. Though the Donnellys belong to minority group they are more courageous and powerful than their enemies. Since the oppressors are afraid of the Donnellys they employ some shortcut methods to execute their cunning plans against the Donnellys in order to drive them from Biddulph. The Donnellys’ uncontrollable spirit and authentic ego support them to be free and independent.

The egoistical spirit provides them enough courage to face the problems caused by their enemies and fight against their domination and oppression. The oppression of the enemies is indirect and cunning but the protest of the Donnellys is direct and vehement. The Donnelly’s barn is burnt without the knowledge of the Donnellys. But Mr. Donnelly fights against Farl and kills him by striking him. The murder of Farl stands a lesson to the oppressors and proof for the courage and heroism of the Donnellys.

The Donnellys show their protest against oppression not only in voice but also in action. Mr. Donnelly’s criminal action of murder is justified by both the dramatist and the audience. The spirit of liberty is firing in their blood till their death. Their spirit of liberty still persists in the minds of the Canadians. They have secured the everlasting place not only in Canadian history and myth but also in the minds of the modern Canadians who aspire for liberty and equality. James Noonan admires the spirit of the Donnellys in the following words, "As the play goes on we realise that the Donnellys will never die that they are the part of indomitable spirit of man in all ages" (279).

Reaney, by using modern theatrical techniques, makes the audience to be impressed by the heroism of the Donnellys in Handcuffs. After Mr. Donnelly’s
returns from prison after his seven years of imprisonment. He meets his sons the shadows of all the seven Donnellys grow larger upto the level of touching over roof of the theatre. Reaney uses the modern dramatic techniques in order to prove the heroism of the Donnellys.

The enlarged shadows of the Donnellys strengthen the expectations of the audience regarding the reaction of the Donnellys towards their enemies. This fantasy scene thrills the audience on the one hand and threatens the enemies on the other. The extraordinary shadows of the Donnellys serve as the symbol of the indomitable spirit and the unparallelled heroism of the Donnellys, The critic, James Noonan comments on the fantasy scene of shadows:

The heroic nature of this family is further impressed upon us when Mr. Donnelly returns from prison to meet his boys after seven years and we see the shadows of the seven Donnellys grow huge and by themselves towering over the theatre. (279-280)

In *Sticks and Stones* Reaney brings out the religious enmity between the Donnellys and their enemies. He satirizes the religious follies and discriminations which pave way for partial treatment. He passes ironic comments on the institutional church of Biddulph. To the Donnellys social oppression is caused by the neighbours and religious oppression is caused by the religious authorities. There is the church of Biddulph which has its own rules, rites and ceremonies. It is entirely different from the other churches in Canada.

A test is conducted to the Donnellys by the religious authorities for receiving Baptism and to become members of the church. Though the Donnellys have read the catechism book they fail in the test and membership is denied to them. Because, the
nature of the sacraments of Baptism, confirmation and Holy orders of the church of Biddulph are different from the other churches.

*Sticks and Stones* opens with the preparation for receiving the sacrament of confirmation and membership in the church of Biddulph. It ends with the Donnellys failure to pass the test for Baptism and membership in the church of Biddulph. The church of Biddulph which stands as a religious symbol oppresses and ill-treats the Donnellys by denying membership. James Noonan comments,

> The institutional church becomes an important source of the religious symbolism in the play. One of the patterns on which part I of the trilogy is built is the Christian sacraments of initiation, Baptism and confirmation. But in *Sticks and Stones* there are churches other than the institutional one. There is the church of Biddulph with its own initiation, rite, and there is the church of higher world to which the Donnellys properly belong. The play opens with Will Donnelly, catechism in hand, preparing for his reception of the sacraments of confirmation in the hands of the Bishop; it ends with the Donnellys’ heavy failed to pass the test for confirmation in the church of Biddulph. (280)

The above quoted words of James Noonan clearly express the dramatist’s deliberate use of religious symbolism. Reaney is failure emphasizes the failure of the Donnellys to gain membership in the church of Biddulph which functions for a broader community with satirical purpose. The Donnellys as a minority group wants to gain membership in the church of Biddulph in order get the support of the
religious authorities. But the religious authorities deliberately deny membership for
them in their church by declaiming the result for the test as a failure.

The authorities of the church of Biddulph are the final authorities for passing
result for the test for membership and Baptism or for any other execution of action
in the church. If the authorities are impartial and neutral, if they have humanitarian
concern for the minority group, if they are the real, honest representatives of Jesus
Christ and the guardians of Christianity, they would have given membership to the
Donnellys by issuing them ‘pass’ for the test for membership in the church of
Biddulph.

By presenting the church scene as a religious symbolism Reaney passes
vehement satire on the activities of the church and the authorities of the church. In
Reaneys vision the authorities of the church are the modern materialists and not the
pious souls. The religious authorities who declare themselves to be the monarchs of
Holy order should be the possessors of global perspective, social attitude and
humanitarian outlook. But the religious authorities of the church of Biddulph are
lacking these unavoidable requirements. Hence they refuse to give Baptism and
membership to the Donnellys.

The Donnellys are denied membership in the church of Biddulph because of
the partial attitude of the religious authorities. They do not want to treat the
Donnellys as their equals. The denial for membership is deliberate and dishonest.
The religious authorities’ purposeful denial for membership to the Donnellys is
ironically expressed by Jennie. As she says:

We were up for confirmation in a church called the Roman line no, it
was a bigger church than that for it involved protestants too. We were
going to be tested for confirmation in a church called Biddulph our
confirmation came up and although we had known our catechism well, we failed. (SS 42)

Reaney uses irony, satire, symbol and imagery to highlight the enmity between the Donnellys and their enemies. It is quite ironic that Will Donnelly is on trial for stealing six fleeces of wool. Mrs. Ryan lays charges against Mrs. Donnelly for receiving the wool as stolen goods. The Donnellys never fail to fight against their enemies for their successful survival in Biddulph. Whenever there is necessity, they do not hesitate to struggle for their survival. Just like Mr. Donnelly strikes Farl, Mrs, Donnelly attacks Mrs. Ryan for degrading her and framing charges against her.

Mrs. Ryan is one of most noticeable foes of the Donnellys, who are trying their best to drive the Donnelly from Biddulph. The Donnellys with will power make up their minds to fight against the heaped enmity exercised to them by their foes. James Noonan sees Mrs. Ryan as a vital, forceful foe who is exercising enmity towards the them with the motive of driving the Donnellys from Biddulph. He declares: "Mrs. Ryan becomes the focus of much of the scorn heaped upon the Donnellys" (284).

Rural imagery plays a vital role in illuminating the theme of the play and developing the plot. Sometimes, the characters are characterized by imageries. Imagery gains the central focus in Reaney’s works in general when James Noonan talks about the role of imagery in the Donnelly Trilogy, he says, "Rural imagery, too, is used to contrast the Donnelly and their enemies. It reminds us of the centrality in Reaney's works" (284).

The imagery of barley corn in Sticks and Stone plays an equal role to the characters in the play. The Barley corn Ballad song in Sticks and Stones opens and closes the play. It is a moving song that characterizes the combination of simplicity,
lightness, fatality and strength of the play, with the use of the Barley Corn imagery. Reaney brings out the contrast between the Donnellys and their enemies by the use of Barley Corn imagery. The Barley Corn ballad is a moving song of melody which sings the glory of the Barley Corn. Repeatedly attempts are made to stop the growth of the barely corn. But every time it emerges and grows.

Reaney symbolically compares the growth of the barley corn to the heroic survival of the Donnellys in Biddulph. When the Donnellys refuse to submit themselves to the suppression of the enemies, the enemies make all attempts to drive them from Biddulph, When they come to know the bitter truth that it is not easy to drive them from Biddulph, they kill them. Critics compare the heroic nature of the Donnellys to the heroic growth of the barley corn. When James Noonan analyses the essence of the Barley Corn Ballad songs, he comments:

The Ballad is so fitting to illustrate the fate of the Donnellys that if you substitute Donnelly for 'Barley corn' grain, you have the story of the Donnellys told in Ballad form. This association with the old Ballad form is another way in which Reaney gives heroic stature to the Donnellys. Every possible effort is made to suppress the life and growth of the barley corn... it like the Donnellys always emerges defiant and triumphant. (285)

The above words of James Noonan confirm the significant role of the Barley corn which is used for an effective imagery to bring out the heroic nature of the Donnellys. By singing the glory of the barley corn, Reaney exposes the defiant and triumphant heroism of the Donnellys. The Barley Corn Ballad ironically symbolizes the family feud which was originated in the old world itself. It not only symbolizes
the enmity among people in the old world, but also symbolizes the modern, materialistic antagonism among the Canadians in the contemporary society.

Whether it is ancient or modern, the society is set up on discriminations based on economic status, race, religion, caste, creed etc. Men's mind has not yet become cultured to treat his fellow men as an equal and regard his individuality. The barley corn not only brings before the audience eyes the background of the society in which the Donnellys lived in nineteenth century, but also shows the social condition in twentieth century modern Canada. The entire plot of the play is brought out by the Barely Corn Ballad song. According to James Noonan the barley corn underlines and emphasizes the feud of both the old and the modern world. He says:

The Barley Corn Ballad underlines the opening sequence of the play that reminds us of the background of the Donnelly story. During the action each verse is repeated until the scene shifts from Ireland to Canada. As a ballad which originated in Ireland, it serves to emphasize old world feud that will take its toil in the new land (Canada). (286)

The Donnellys strive hard to stabilize and affirm themselves in Biddulph in order to establish their name, the family name, the name of the Donnelly family. The Tarragon Theatre becomes a battle field for the Donnellys and their enemies. Often in the trilogy, sudden quarrels, violent actions and murders take place. The dramatist shows the horrible events and sensational happenings with careful attention to maintain the enmity between the Donnellys and their enemies, by which he can hold the interest of the audience. The Donnellys think that if they submit themselves to
the enemies, their family name will lose its dignity and honour. Reaney has given the devastating pride and extraordinary power to the family name of the Donnellys.

The awareness and pride of the Donnellys make them safeguard their family name. The reputable family name ‘The Donnellys’ strengthens their will power and provides enough courage to fight against their enemies. They feel proud to be the successors of the Donnelly Family. They try to establish their family name with power and authenticity. But the farming community in Biddulph tries to suppress them and wishes to treat them as their subordinates.

Hence there is a clash between the Donnellys and their enemies and it becomes unavoidable for the Donnellys to protest against the oppression caused by their enemies. The name ‘The Donnellys’ stands a challenging and threatening one to the enemies. One can go to a further step and say that it is the basic source which infuses courage in them. The Donnellys do not search for their identity. They try to establish their identity as ‘the Donnellys in Biddulph’. They strive hard to establish their family identity by affirming their ‘self identity’.

For the Donnellys the identity of their family name ‘The Donnelly’ is more important than their individual identities as Jim Donnelly or Will Donnelly or Mrs. Donnelly. They come as Donnellys to Canada from Ireland and they die as Donnellys in Canada. The Donnelly's struggle against their enemies and their cruel death remain a model and lesson to the oppressors and the oppressed. James Noonan examines the importance of the Donnelly name and highlights its dignity The name Donnellys with its uniqueness provides moral support, honour and dignity to the Donnellys.
The following words of James Noonan bring out the uniqueness and dignity of the family name which also has its vital role in making the Donnelly's protest against their enemies. In the first part of the trilogy, *Sticks and Stones*, Reaney glorifies the Donnelly name as the highest one. Noonan says:

*Sticks and Stones* thus becomes the struggle for a name, and by the end, we are aware that one name (Donnelly) stands above all other names and opposing names in the play the name Donnelly. Finally, the theatre itself becomes a metaphor in the play to suggest, paradoxically, both the quality of the lives of these depicted in the play and the performance which the dramatic work will confer on these same lives. (227)

The family name ‘The Donnelly’ is a new name that is added to the Canadian mythology legend and history. But the new name stands unique, supreme and everlasting by surpassing all other names. The Donnelly name cannot be spoiled forever. Whether it is Stick or Stone or any other power it cannot fight against the rebellious heroism of the Donnelly's and spoil their name. In the Canadian history, the Donnelly name stands as a terror to the oppressors and source of rebellious spirit to the oppressed.

The family name dominates throughout the first part of the trilogy. To bring out the heroism and the dignity of the family name of the Donnellys, Reaney uses the literary forms like symbolism, metaphor and irony. James Noonan says:

Reaney has given us a play, that while coming to life only on stage, can be studied as literature on the many levels of symbolism, metaphor and irony that gives *Sticks and Stones* such a rich texture.
At the end of part I of the trilogy a new name ‘Donnelly’ has been added to our mythology. It is a name of which neither sticks nor stones for any other power on earth will be able to blacken again.

(288)

To create dramatic villainy and to increase the tension and sensation of the audience Reaney creates some artistic villains like Tom Cassaleigh to parallel and equal the heroism of the Donnellys with effective villainy. In order to fulfill the artistic requirements, the Donnellys become much cautious and heroic when Tom Cassaleigh exposes his villainy towards them. He becomes a leader to the mob which has turned against the Donnellys. He extends his villainous arm to the mob which is very anxious either to destroy the Donnellys or to drive them from Biddulph.

Reaney, in order to present a complete and effective conflict between the Donnellys and their enemies, changes the completeness, accuracy and totality of the history of the Donnellys. He creates and strengthens the character. Tom Cassaleigh and presents him as a perfect villain whose role brings out the dramatic irony and adds to the progression of the play. Tom Cassaleigh the original artistic creation of Reaney plays a more significant role than the real historical figures.

Though he receives abuses from the audience he gives much importance for his vital and serious role in the play. Without his presence the play may not be a grand success. The conflict between the Donnellys and their enemies may not be a complete one, and the oppression of the enemies and the protest of the Donnellys may not be identified. The social oppression of the farming community in Biddulph towards the Donnellys is supported and strengthened by the legal oppressors like
Tom Cassaleigh and the religious oppressors like the Bishop of the church of Biddulph.

James Noonan analyses Reaney’s dramatization of the history of the Donnellys and the artistic creation of Reaney’s character Tom Cassaleigh. He remarks:

From the above words of James Noonan, it is obvious and clear that Tom Cassaleigh is behind the murder and with his leadership and support the horrible action of murder is executed. But it is a great irony that he is not convicted of the murder. The foul play of Tom Cassaleigh is hidden behind the stage. But the audiences are aware of the fact that Tom Cassaleigh the villain who is the cause and source for the horrible happening of murder is behind the screen.

They are just acting like friends, later turn into enemies and betray them like Judas betrayed Christ Jim Feeney pretends to be a good friend to Tom Donnelly. He makes a false promise to Tom Donnelly for his friendship with him. But in the real sense, he is not a genuine friend to Tom Donnelly but a spy to the enemies of the Donnellys. Under the attractive mask of pretension he manages to make Tom Donnelly trust on him. But, later, when time comes for the exposure of his real personality, he uncovers his mask, and betrays Tom Donnelly to the vigilant mob.

James Noonan compares Jim Feeney to the Judas for his disloyal action of betrayal. The hidden disloyalty and betrayal of a friend is more unbearable and harmful. Tom Donnelly does not become discouraged on knowing the disloyalty of Feeney. He faces the betrayal boldly. James Noonan says, “Jim Feeney swearing fidelity in blood to Tom Donnelly is a preparation for his Judas figures, later betrayed of his friend, whom he will hand over to the vigilante mob” (280). He further says,
The Donnellys neither have fear nor become disgusted on knowing the disloyalty of people who preferred to be friends. During a quarrel between Mrs. Ryan and Mrs. Donnelly, Mrs. Ryan drops her sword over the fence. At this context Mrs. Donnelly does not feel frightened. She declares that the Donnellys with their unique glory will live in the heroic world which is contrasted to the dull materialistic world of their enemies. She is proud of being a Donnelly. She says; "I shall throw the sword over the fence and I am ashamed to see that glory used to chop things. But the fox has so long fouled the badgers den. I shall be surprised what glory becomes an emblem of the heroic world in which the Donnellys live as contrasted to the earth found, material one inherited by their neighbours. (SS 84)

Not only Mr. and Mrs. Donnelly feel proud of themselves to be the Donnellys but also the children have pride for being the Donnellys. By birth, the Donnellys are heroic and bold and they can withstand any kind of contempt or attack which is caused by the external world. The inborn heroism is felt and acknowledged by Jennie' when she pays tribute to the Donnellys who were murdered, she says:

From the eye of God in which you will someday walk, you will see that once long before you were born, you chose to be a Donnelly and laughed at what it would mean... you laughed and lay down with your fate like a bride even the miserable fire of it. So that I am proud to be a Donnelly against all the contempt of the world. (SS 80)

Jennie and Patrick leave Biddulph not out of their fear for their enemies but out of their personal reasons. Jennie persuade her parents to leave Biddulph. But the Donnellys refuse to leave Biddulph. Because, they are very much attached to their
house and farm Mr. Donnelly has a special enthusiasm for farming. He becomes more delighted whenever he sees the harvest. The success of harvest is symbolic of the successful survival of the Donnellys in Biddulph.

Their attachment to the farm and house also makes them revolt against the enemies James Noonan finds affinity between the harvested ‘grain’ and the Donnellys family. ‘Grain,’ as a source of food provides life to humanity. But the Donnellys remain a source of encouragement to the people who are oppressed and whose survival becomes a question mark. On seeing the Donnellys, the oppressed people will inculcate courage in them to fight against their oppressors. The grain symbolizes the regeneration of the Donnellys and the harvest symbolizes the heroic survival of the Donnellys in Biddulph though they face problems caused by their enemies.

On this ground some critics find similarity between the grain and the Donnellys. James Noonan remarks, "The identification of the family with the grain is complete when the father (Mr. Donnelly) rejoices.” Mrs. Donnelly I was thinking what fair seed we have sown and I have come back at last to harvest" (284). In the first and the second part of the Donnelly Trilogy, the struggle between oppression and protest is exhibited in the physical world. But in the third part of the trilogy, the struggle is shifted to the spiritual world. Reaney follows a pattern of ascending and descending of the Donnellys.

In *Handcuffs*, the murdered Donnellys ascend to the spiritual world. But they descend to the physical world to meet their relatives in the graveyard on their death anniversary day. The rise of the dead Donnellys from their graveyard is highly symbolic of their revenge motive. The re-appearing and regenerating of the spirits of
the Donnellys reveal the inner spirit of their revolt against their enemies and their intention to take revenge on them.

Reaney makes the dead Donnellys rise from their tombs in order to assert the fact that though the Donnellys are dead, their spirit which is the undestroyable, eternal force will never fail to take revenge on enemies. The spirits of the Donnellys still possess the rebellious spirit in them and their will power cannot be destroyed by the human power. The fall and rise of the Donnellys are related to the ascending and descending of their souls from the physical world (earth) to the spiritual world (heaven) and from the spiritual world to the physical world. Their travels from earth to heaven and heaven to earth are highly symbolic of their spirit of revenge. Richard Stingle, one of the critics of James Reaney makes the following comment on the third part of the trilogy, *Handcuffs*:

In the beginning of Act III of *Handcuffs* this pattern of ascending and descending is repeated, as the murdered Donnellys rise from their graves to confront the dull minded materialists who have gathered in the graveyard in Biddulph on the anniversary of their deaths and they, the dead, do so with the sexual imagery of the divine creation and the wind of the holy spirit or word. They try to awaken soft-taught and his friends to regeneration. (35)

The title of the play *Sticks and Stones* is highly symbolic. It symbolizes the hard-hearted nature of the enemies of the Donnellys. It reflects the cruelty of the political authorities and embodies the unpaid and unsympathetic attitude and behaviour of the religious authorities who are acting against the Holy order. It emphasizes the violent and horrible actions which would take place in the proceedings of the play.
The Donnellys withstand the attacks caused by sticks and stones with vehement protest. Just like the title the opening scene of the play also indicates the facts that the play contains conflicts and violent actions. When the play opens a drunken rowdy appears on the stage. By presenting a rowdy on the stage during the opening scene Reaney makes the audience guess that the play contains violence, terrors and horrors. The Donnellys face both mental and physical violence. Bitter and degrading words are used against the Donnellys.

The audience became highly sympathetic towards the Donnellys. They wish that the Donnellys should survive successfully in Biddulph till their death. But they are cruelly murdered by the stick and stone like people. In the Showman's version of the Donnellys, the Donnellys are referred to the mad dogs and Mrs. Donnelly is referred to an axe woman. Richard Stingle analyses the symbolic significance of the title of the play *Sticks and stones* and the use of words, and says:

Words also reflect the degree of oppression. The title of *Sticks and Stones* suggests the physical violence to come but the assumed comfort in names not hurting turns into bitterness as words becomes the heavy dangerous weapons against the Donnallys in the legend about their mad dogs and of Mrs. Donnelly as the axe women in the Showman's melodramatic version of their lives. (35)

The title of the third part of the trilogy, *Handcuffs* symbolizes the power of the enemies of the Donnellys. In the first part of the trilogy *Sticks and stones*, the struggle between the Donnellys and their enemies starts and grows to a larger extent when Mr. Donnelly kills Farl. The Donnellys struggle with their enemies becomes serious in part II of the trilogy. After the arrest of Mr. Donnelly in part II of the trilogy, *The St. Nicolas W.M. Donnelly Prop*, the seriousness of the struggle is
reduced into a mild one. Because the major struggle of the Donnellys does not take place between the adults but it takes place between the Donnelly boys and the children of the enemies. Though Mrs. Donnelly faces some problems with the enemies, it is not as serious as Mr. Donnelly’s serious struggle with the enemies, which ends in murder.

In the third part of the trilogy, Handcuffs, after the release of Mr. Donnelly, again the struggle becomes serious with the presence of Mr. Donnelly. The power of the Donnellys is highlighted and strengthened in part I of the trilogy. In part III, the power of the enemies is highlighted and strengthened. In part I the protest is more than the oppression. But in part III, oppression is more than the protest. In part III, the full-length oppression of the enemies brings out the tragedy of the Donnellys. Some critics like Richard Stingle, parallel the power of the Donnellys and their enemies.

The beginning part of the trilogy enhances the power of the enemies but the end of the trilogy, shows the strength of the Donnellys against their enemies. The Donnellys achieve freedom, assert their power and safeguard their family name at the end of the trilogy. Pat Donnelly strikes the Handcuffs of Tom. This event proves the heroism of the Donnellys. Their heroism is unsurpassable and it stands against the testimony of time. Throughout the trilogy, the Donnellys struggle hard to free themselves from oppression caused by their enemies.

Even in Handcuffs, the Donnellys survive with heroism and will power. They never allow themselves to be suppressed by their enemies. Richard Stingle analyses the degree of oppression caused by their enemies and the opposite reaction shown by the Donnellys towards their enemies. He says:
The title *Handcuffs* evokes first the power of the mob's force in imprisoning Tom Donnelly's hands, only to have physical force reversed by the powers of the Donnellys story as pure myth to free their names from their physical oppressor's group with Pat Donnelly striking the Handcuffs of Tom at the end of the trilogy. (36)

The state authorities and the religious authorities who are supposed to be the guardians of the new settlers exercise partial treatment to the Donnellys. The farming community in Biddulph turns against the Donnellys after knowing the fact that the Donnellys are supported neither by the state authorities nor by the religious authorities. The farming community shows direct enmity towards the Donnellys. But the religious authorities and state authorities show their enmity towards the Donnellys with cruelty and cunningness. Since the religious authorities do not accept the Donnellys as their equals, they deny membership to them in the church of Biddulph.

Divinity turns into enmity in the hands of men who belong to the Holy Order. Even after experiencing oppression and knowing the fact that they are oppressed in various levels by various groups of people, they do not lose hope for their survival in Biddulph. Father Connolly is cruel and cunning towards the Donnellys. Critics pass satirical comments on Father Connolly. As a religious authority, he should be an embodiment of compassion, mercy and kindness. But, Father Connolly lacks all these qualities. He does not show his hatred and enmity towards the Donnellys directly but he shows it indirectly like a wolf.

According to Richard Stingle the coat worn by Father Connolly does not reflect Holiness or divinity but it reflects cunningness and oppressive attitude. He says:
It is that the church of Biddulph composed of state authorities and the
Roman Catholic Church headed by Father Connolly who wears a
wolf skin coat, first subdue the Donnellys; only to be subverted by
the church of the Donnellys. (36)

In the Donnelly story, both the aspects of oppression and protest are balanced
sometimes protest becomes more powerful than oppression. When the enemies
realize the fact that they can no longer oppress the Donnellys they employ cunning
methods to kill the Donnellys. But the Donnellys hold the central focus of the
audience and stand as victors with will power and dignity. They do not fall, but they
are made to fall. They want to be free like a bird in the new land. Bridget sings a
song about a bird winging to freedom in a new land.

The Donnellys aspiration for freedom is emphasized by a bird image. Even
in a new land, the Donnellys live and die like a bird. The enemies want to put the
Donnellys in their cage of slavery in order to keep them as their subordinates. But
the Donnellys, though they struggle for their survival, they do not allow them to be
subdued and to be kept as subordinates. A hunter shoots a bird for his selfish motive.
Like the hunters, the enemies kill the Donnellys for their personal vengeance.
Throughout the trilogy, Reaney has not given a hint that the Donnellys have fear for
their enemies.

Even after knowing the bitter thing that it is very hard for them to survive in
Biddulph they make up their mind to face the problems caused by their enemies and
decide not to leave Biddulph. Richard Stingle appreciates the heroism and will
power of the Donnellys in the following words;

Birdget’s song is of a bird winging to freedom in a new land
Williams fiddle scores away vigilantes while it attracts the girl from
her house, dancing with sword, the symbol of the genuine heroism of
the creative life. The Donnellys and their friends are energetic and
full of life. (39)

During their survival, the Donnellys become victims to their oppressors.
During the time of their death they become ritual victims to the fire God. Even in his
historical plays, Reaney’s dramatic impulse is dominated by his secular, spiritual,
satirical impulses which largely focus on the social milieu, political and the religious
condition of the contemporary society. Reaney, with his use of documentary
material expresses his egalitarian attitude. He becomes an artist teacher by his
radical creativity.

He wishes that the communally rooted Canadian society should be
transformed into a secular one by which a new social order could be framed. As a
folk dramatist, Reaney allows the historical document to speak in its own voice. In
the Donnellys Trilogy many of the documentary details, characters, and geographical
description are brought in as it is in the historical document. But Reaney generates
some characters and events.

Reaney's social vision pierces though the dramatic mirror and it places its
reflection on the audience. In order to enlarge his personal social vision Reaney adds
and extends the documentary material. Gerald D. Parker observes in his How to
Play: A Study of the Plays of James Reaney:

Reaney, in his guise as folk historian, allows the documents to speak
in its own voice permitting them to be seen and felt in the
surrounding with its pictorial depiction and evocation of a particular,
regionally fixed world. Geographical surveys, maps, public and
private letters, legal documents, poster, ecclesiastical papers,
newspaper headlines and stories, trial transcripts and sometimes simply dozens of place names chalked on the walls of the playing and watching spaces all such archival material in the trilogy provides both foreground and background, both protagonists and chorus alike, with the shape and voice. (72)

Parker further says that Reaney adds artistic flavour to the documentary matters to some degree. According to Parker, in the documentary plays, "place, characters and event remain largely generic poetic as opposed to documentary constructions" (72). Reaney has immersed himself in the study of the historical document of the Donnellys story in order to point out, expose and eradicate the follies of the society and in the fields of religion and politics by which the individuals are suppressed for various social, political and religious reasons.

He dreams for the practice of socialism which would promote social harmony and communism which would bring economical balance in the society. In *Handcuffs* there is a conversation between the Bishop and Father Girard about the troubles faced by the Donnellys in Biddulph. The following inquiry made by the Bishop to Father Girard telecasts the life led by the Donnellys since their settlement in Biddulph:

Father Girard, what is going on in your Parish? I see from my tower the twinkling lights of burning burns, I see crops rolling in the field, I hear a constant gnashing of teeth and of one family (Donnelly family) I hear I see in the daily press constant reference. (39)
The election of 1870 is to be held, and the bishop wants to change the voting pattern of Girard’s parish. He particularly asks Girard to ask the Donnellys to vote for the election according to his instructions. The Bishop tells Girard:

You see, we are hoping for a Catholic conservative member of parliament. So the Donnellys must change their voting pattern. It is unfortunate for them that this riding cannot be won unless a party takes a majority of the votes, the catholic votes in the ward, and the conservative party shall take a majority of these votes. They must kneel with the rest of the Parish. (SS 39)

These two passages clearly indicate the interlocking relationship between the political authorities and the religious authorities existed during the nineteenth century in Canada. The act of kneeling was a must for the Parish people to the religious authorities. Those who refused to kneel were ex-communicated from religion. The act of kneeling is focused and stressed in Sticks and Stones, through a private secret society and in Handcuffs, it is indicated through the Bishops reference to a Parish mass.

During the nineteenth century, people were forced to obey the orders passed by the political authorities and the instructions given by the religious authorities. Sometimes, instructions were turned into warnings which troubled and threatened the lives of the Parish people. In Canada, people suffered under internal colonisation caused by their own government. They were expected and compelled to obey the official and ecclesiastical orders. There was no oneness among the Canadians since they belonged to different nationalities and communities.

Individual aspiration and freedom were not taken into account and considered by the official and religious authorities. People were conditioned to kneel
to the political administrators and religious authorities. The Bishop possessed more power than the political administrator. Gerald D. Parker checks the political and religious condition in Canada in the nineteenth century and comments:

Terms of the feud have broadened to encompass the increasingly fixed values of a particular ecclesiastical social, political, commercial and legal world to which the Bishop along with other major representatives of society is fully committed. Kneeling is no longer nearly, the command of one belligerent faction to another. The action has also become a sign of belonging to an established society, confident in its moves, determined to maintain its outward manifestations of order and its instruments of control. (87)

Parker brings out the fact that people in the nineteenth century Canada were controlled to the larger extent by the manifestations of order of the society which was surviving under the instrumental government. The Donnellys become victims to such a society which forces the act of kneeling. The act of kneeling destroys individual aspirations. This society moves accordingly to the political power and religious force. When the Donnellys refuse to kneel their personal problems is converted into a broader social one.

Personal welfare was sacrificed for social welfare. Personal rights were restricted and individual freedom was not only curtailed but also the individuals were exploited by the society which followed the policy of co-aheadism (submitting and working for social welfare). The Canadian government did not try for polarization of various groups of people belonging to different nationalities instead it was very cautious in keeping them in segregation for its own benefit.
Gerald D. Parker, after his deep analysis, satirizes the religious and political authorities who made the individuals suffer a lot for their basic survival like the Donnellys. When the Donnellys try to assert their survival in Biddulph, they were victimized by the powerful weapons of politics and religion. The following word of Gerald D. Parker expresses the political and religious atmosphere and social condition in Canada in nineteenth century:

The victimization of the Donnellys... shifts from an essentially private context to a broader social one in which political power is invested with sectarian religious sanctioning, in which predetermined, socially authorized roles supersede individual aspirations, particularly those which derive from spiritual and natural impulses. (87)

These words of Parker give a crystallized picture of the life led by the Donnellys in a broader authorized society which superseded individual rights and freedom. To make his comments more valid and authentic, Parker calls Raymond Williams, another critic of James Reaney in support of himself and says "such a society, Raymond Williams observed, was an impersonal process, a machine with bulletin properties" (87). Furthermore the cynicism and the structures of exploitation inherent in such a society are paid for not only in social and political coin; they teach ways of feeling and in turn are taught by them, which tend to find their way into the most personal experience.

Neglecting and protesting against the oppression, the Donnellys try to wrap themselves around Canadian life. They live and work within the area allotted to them by the government. They never neglect economic go-aheadism, capitalism judicial process, commercial dealings, social authorization, political supremacy and
religious influence. They adopt themselves to all kinds of conditions and atmosphere in a new land. But, even then, their survival becomes a struggle.

Because the Donnellys make up their mind to adopt themselves with the conditions and atmosphere in a new land but at the same time they refuse to submit themselves to the enemies and kneel to them. Their denial of submitting and kneeling create problems for their survival. To face and overcome the problems, they start struggling against the oppressors of various groups. Their aspiration to safeguard their family name and self respect becomes the root cause for their struggle against their oppressors. They stand erect against surrendering, submitting and kneeling. But these three elements of surrender, submission and kneeling become the deciding factors for the survival of the Donnellys in Biddulph.

The Donnelly family is known for heroism. Such hereditary heroism provides enough courage to oppose the oppression. The Donnellys set up their own, small world in Biddulph after knowing the bitter truth that they are completely alienated and totally abandoned by the broader society which is more cautious and vigorous in enslaving them. The world set up by the Donnellys is solid, vital, furious, static, dynamic, hopeful, bright and everlasting. It is the extraordinary world which is built with extraordinary courage to face the family feud, social indifference and religious antagonism. Since they do not want to be oppressed, they yield themselves to heroic death.

Their heroism and unyielding attitude to slavery pave way for their death. Their high degree of heroism makes them become rebellious and revolutionary against the oppressors. An indomitable courage generates from their heroism and operates their rebellious self to find its identity as Donnellys. The Donnellys face the multifaceted oppressions that come from various angles in various levels. Hence the
struggle between the Donnellys and their oppressors is not ordinary but extraordinary and unique.

They not only try to assert their identity but also try to preserve their moral and spiritual values preserved by their ancestors. The critics view Biddulph as a battle field and consider the struggle of the Donnellys as a war between a family and the society. Gerald. D Parker declares that Reaney has concretely dramatized the struggle between the Donnellys and their oppressors. He remarks:

The Donnellys operate within this world (the separate world of the Donnellys), they pay taxes, acquire and work the land, engage in various commercial dealings, use its judicial process, vote in its election, attend its churches, adopt to its economic ‘go-aheadism’. They are also, however, associated with natural, spiritual values that struggle to remain vitally independent of the immediate obligations of such a world, part of the struggle between what Mrs. Donnelly called ‘the spiritual mark’ called character which last forever and the secular forces that threaten. Such a sense of character is concretely dramatized. (88)

There are certain characters with whose presence the dramatist highlights the theme of oppression and protest. There are some characters who also play vital roles in the play next to the Donnellys. Their role-play provides thrill, excitement, tension and fear to the audience. With the limited circumference of the historical document of the Donnellys the playwright expresses the social, political and religious follies in the contemporary Canadian Society.

Except the Donnellys, Farl, Keefe, Stub, Carroll, Halland, Jim Feeney, Mrs. Ryan, Donaldson, Morrison, Connelly, Macrimmon, Cassaleigh and some other
characters play significant roles to strengthen the plot and add merits to the play. Their performances in the events illuminate and explain the broader circumference of the modern, materialistic society. The characters like Farl and Casseleigh strive hard to subdue the Donnellys. But their attempts become failures.

Their villainy and enmity increase the heroism and courage of the Donnellys, when the documentary characters are changed into actors on the stage; the dramatists make them flexible according to his need. They are made to express and expose something desired by the dramatist. The villainous action of the oppressors and the anti-reactions of the Donnellys are counterbalanced by the playwright, whether it is farm or church or judicial court, the place becomes an operative element of oppression.

As far as the Donnellys are in Ireland, they live as ordinary citizens of Ireland, after their arrival in Biddulph in Canada; they express their heroism when they happen to face problems for their survival. The dramatist releases some characters from their encircled archival existence to make them brighter and more authentic on the stage, whether they are playing positive role or negative role.

The entire trilogy is dominated by family feuding and it is well focused and clearly presented by the playwright with a group of characters who are exercising enmity and hostility towards the Donnellys. They became the victims of family feud. Gerald D. Parker examines the roles of the other important characters and evaluates the significance of their rules to their individual degree of their actions and reactions which would contribute more to the plot development and climaxes of the trilogy. Parker says:

The density and the complexity of the archival material that verbally and scenically permeates the trilogy are, of course, understood as the
prime source of the central characters and events. The Donnellys, Farl, Keefe, Stub, Cassaleigh, Carroll and the others are in a sense released from their archival existence by means of their documentary definition. (88)

The Donnellys after their settlement in Biddulph try to come in term with the social contract which would provide them a smooth life in new land. The authorised society in Biddulph refuses to accept the Donnellys as they are. Mr. Donnelly refuses him saying:

Did you think, Cassleigh my boy, that after being away from my land for seven years I was going to run away from it because you faction of sneak said so? Look at this road. (scooping up gravel). This part of the road your grand new cart rolls on I was the first pathmaster of. I build this road before you were ever heard of or the Fat Woman and her husband who got half our farm away from us. Before Stub drove out the Africans and you killed the English man, I helped make this road with Andy keefe who you’ve finally chased out, to your shame. Well, Tom, there’s some horse dung; I didn’t put that in my road, but have it anyhow. You drove out Donegan, but you’ll never get Donnelly’s oak tree nor drive out his wife. You ask me to kneel, do you? And swear? ... Donnellys don’t kneel. (92)

The tragedy occurs because of their denial for submission to their enemies. The Donnellys are ready to adjust and co-operate with the organized and established society. But it is impossible for them to be submissive to the members of the society.
The Donnelly’s attempt of having social contract with the society in Biddulph becomes a failure. Surrender and submission become the deciding factors for the social contract between the Donnellys and the society in Biddulph. Social contract remains a problem throughout the trilogy. This problem of social contract comes to an end with the murder of the Donnellys. Since the contract becomes a failure they detach themselves from the society.

The Donnellys, right from their settlement, lead a detached life from the broader society. They never join the members of the society till their death. They are conditioned to alienate themselves from the society in Biddulph and hence the township of Biddulph appears to them as an Island. The Donnelly’s detachment from the society creates an atmosphere that they are leading an alienate life in an Island like town called Biddulph. They feel as if they are left alone in an Island. They don't change themselves though they undergo pressures and face prejudices.

They decide not to obey the pressures and prejudices. But they do not lack moral and spiritual values; Mr. Donnelly does not go to the Father for confession for his crime of murder since he is arrested. But Mrs. Donnelly goes to the Father for confession for the crime committed by her husband. Farl's murder by Mr. Donnelly is neither deliberate nor intentional, but it is incidental and accidental. But the pressures and prejudices caused by the enemies towards the Donnellys are totally deliberate and intentional. Gerald D. Parker observes:

Their (the Donnellys) passion for justice, for a legal clarity unequivocally detached from the corrosive pressures of prejudice, rumour and the particular social contract, in melodrama an almost obsessive attachment to documents of all sorts. Documents, then release an imprison, create and destroy, in a seemingly endless round
that finally engages us all playwright, actor and spectator not simply in mounts of archival, but in a totally captivating social milieu in which the implications of the events alerts us to the underlying tragic structuring of these events. (89)

The above comments of Gerald D. Parker depict the picture of the society in which the Donnellys lived. He finds the relevant connection between the captivating social milieu and the tragic events in the play. It is an obvious fact that the captivating society in Biddulph never allowed the Donnellys to establish their social identity and enjoy their individual freedom. The Donnellys, by protesting against the oppression of their enemies, tried to establish their personal identity in Biddulph. When they became successful in establishing their personal identity they were murdered. But, till their death, they could not establish their social identity in the society of Biddulph.

The members of the Biddulph society did not want the Donnellys to establish their personal identity without submitting themselves to them. Hence they put an end to their survival. The Donnellys give more importance to their personal identity as Donnellys rather than the social identity as the members of the Biddulph society. The internal ‘self” of the Donnellys refuses to surrender itself to the external force of oppression.

By revolting against the social oppression the Donnellys have not only established their self-identity in the Biddulph society, but also in the Canadian myth and history. When they come to know the fact that it is impossible for them to get membership in the Biddulph society and establish their social identity, they decide to live with their personal identity as the Donnellys. But the society is much cautious in shadowing their personal identity. Reaney, as a vigorous social reformer, does not
allow the personal identity of the Donnellys to be shadowed. He makes the Donnellys self identity emerges from the graveyard in Biddulph even after their death.

In the last play of the Donnellys trilogy, *Handcuffs* Mr. Donnelly after his release (after seven years) returns to Biddulph with the same vigour and interest to live in Biddulph with his family members but the enemies turn their oppressive attitude into a murderous weapon. They wrongly assas the assassination of the Donnellys as their victory over the Donnellys. But Reaney celebrates the death of the Donnellys as martyrdom and the Donnellys as martyrs.

According to Reaney, the Donnellys have scarified their lives for the sake of the oppressed people. Mr. Donnelly, the murderer, becomes a martyr in the eyes of God. God will justify the crime of Mr. Donnelly and He will provide a place for the Donnellys in paradise. Reaney makes the audience convinced by hinting the point that the Donnellys souls will be taken to Heaven. The Donnellys have shed their blood for some good cause. Their death preaches the lesson that no individual should allow himself to be ruled by any personal or collective force.

There is an inerasable stain in The St Nicholas Hotel. The stain refers of the blood stain the Donnellys who stand as symbol for their heroism. The last play of the trilogy, *Handcuffs* ends with the burial ceremony of the murdered Donnellys.

While the coffins of the Donnellys are carried by the pall bearers into the graveyard the chorus sings a song for the peace of the dead souls. The chorus sings, “May the angles take you into paradise. Into an advent suspicions and dead you into the holy city of Jerusalem” (*HC 271*).

The above song of the chorus affirms the fact that the Donnellys deserve to get the mercy of God and live in the holy city of Jerusalem, the place of Jesus Christ
on earth. They also deserve to be taken to Heaven by the angles since their death is considered as martyrdom. If the Donnellys are considered as martyrs, the society of Biddulph is considered as a malicious and sinful one. The Donnellys have not done any harm to the Biddulph society though they are neglected and degraded by it. But the Biddulph society destroys the Donnellys just to increase its authorized force. The murderers of the Donnellys are the representatives of the malignant society.

The conflict between the martyrs (the Donnelly) and the sinful society can be viewed as a conflict between good and evil. The Biddulph society totally becomes an embodiment of evil because of its lack of broader vision and flexibility. The town of Biddulph becomes an embodiment of evil, the abode of Satan. The members of the Biddulph society are governed by the evil force, Satan. The satanic force is highly operative in the minds of the people in Biddulph society. The collective antagonism is turned against the noble family (the Donnelly family). The entire society of Biddulph becomes dark since no member of the society is courteous or compassionate to the Donnellys.

The social, political and religious forces threaten the Donnellys to subdue them. The plot progresses with various characters; merchants, priests, bakers and politicians of Biddulph. These characters forget their personal and social identity and change themselves into the roles allotted to them. They present themselves on the stage according to the needs of the director. A group of characters mime the growth of the wheat field which symbolically shows the structure of the milieu in the Biddulph society and describes the Donnelly story.

The deep analysis of the mine expresses the growth of enmity and hatred of the society (mass) on the one hand and the heroism and protest of the Donnellys who stand straight as wheat crop without stooping and kneeling to their enemies on the
other. Parker analyses the symbolic, significant connection between the wheat crop and the mass of Biddulph and the wheat crop and the Donnellys in his following comment:

   The pall-bearers, the company of actors, who, in the course of the trilogy have played the various members of the Donnelly family, as well as the farmers, merchants, priests, bakers and politicians of Biddulph abandon all personal and social identity and return to the stage to mime the growth of wheat field evoking the seasonal design, that like structure of the mass finally informs and encloses the story of the Donnellys. (110)

   In the Donnelly trilogy, Reaney enforces the role of images to signify the theme and plot of the play. After the arrest of Mr. Donnelly, the Donnelly children, Pat, Robert, William and Jennie each place a stone at the four corners of the house. This placing of stone expresses the connotative implication that they have the heroic spirit to protect themselves from the cruel hands of the enemies during the absence of their father.

   In *Handcuff* a coffin contains four stones. The sight seers snatch four stones from the ruined Donnelly house in the arrangement of scenes, Reaney brings together several patterns, themes and images that have shaped the Donnelly story and its theatrical expression. The mass, the seasons and the home are consciously presented through multiple roles playing. The square space indicated by the four stones also has its significance by adding strength to the theme and plot of the play.

   The critics view the Donnelly house as an embodiment of the second world which stands for individual freedom and democracy. They extend the enmity between the Donnellys and the Biddulph society into a conflict between house and
universe. The selves of the Donnellys resist cooperating with the surrounding social milieu which functions with dominating and oppressive attitude. Hence the stage movement, scene setting and speeches always focus on the dynamic rivalry between the Donnellys and the Biddulph society. Gerald D. Parker studies:

The Donnelly house is signified by the squaring of the space embodies this second world. In performance the scenic conjunction of the two, the circle and the square in these final images of Handcuffs reinforces the tragic resolution of the Donnelly in which the opposing claims of spirit and matter, nature and society, are embodied in the single figure of Mrs. Donnelly. Mrs. Donnelly, we are reminded, could see straight ahead past this stupid life and death, but, as a tragic figure, she also saw and experienced the inward moments of dread and vital inescapable outward connection of the 'self with the surrounding milieu in the dynamic rivalry between 'house' and universe, we are far removed from any reference to simple geometrical forms. A house that has been experienced is not an inert box. Inhabited space transcends geometrical space. (114)

Parker's reference to the tragic resolution of the Donnellys indicates the fact that the dead Donnellys want to take revenge on their enemies with the support of God, since they are taken to Heaven by the angels. After their death, the spirits of the Donnellys take a resolution to destroy the enemies. Death provides permanent existence to the Donnellys. Reaney describes his play by space at the beginning of Sticks and Stones. Symbols, images and science scenic variations serve as interlocking forces at different levels to insist the importance of theme and plot.
Personal and social conditions are depicted through scenic variations. The Shamrock Concert Company is performing their melodrama “Black Donnelly” and “Farl and Donnelly Boxing”. This scene is enacted within the circle of watchers. Soon afterwards a circle is formed as the actual fight is staged between Mr. Donnelly and Farl. Later, after the murder of Farl, the chorus forms a circle around Mr. Donnellys to point out his arrest and the guilty verdict against him. Maggie in the St Nicholas Hotel follows the imagined inscription of the Donnellys stage coach around the hotel bar room in a circle. Tom is caught and carried out by the enemies.

Mrs. Donnelly, who goes in search of Tom, takes a circular journey around the hotel. There is a crushing environmental circle in Handcuffs. There is a mob circle formed around Mr. and Mrs. Donnelly and they are depicted as caged birds. The above mentioned circle formed in different contexts in various levels metaphorically, brings out the picture of a wheel. This wheel is nothing is but the wheel of the social structure and environment in Biddulph society.

The metaphorical social wheel expresses the social structure and environment that act as the antiforces to the Donnellys. The Donnellys are put inside the wheel of Canadian social structure for test. This structured social wheel degrades and disowns the Donnellys. They are crushed and thrown out by the wheel and sent to doom finally. The image of the trapped birds within the circular cage shows the loss of individual freedom of the Donnellys. They suffer like caged birds under machine like society which aspires for power supremacy.

Parker compares the Donnellys’ struggle for survival in Biddulph society to the caged birds which are longing for freedom. He compares the Canadian society to a wheel or a machine. Parker comments:
The larger, threatening circle formed by the chorus, metaphorically expresses the wheels of a social structure and environment that is increasing machine like inexorably enveloping all within the laws of its mechanical. Geometry, the spinning tops, the sewing machine the thrushing machine in Handcuffs, the danced out image of trapped birds within the circular cage, these images all specially inscribe the operation of this machine, intersecting with the various linear patterns that, as we have seen, tell their own story of people caught in rows, lines and ladders. (150)

The Donnellys are dehumanized by the machine like Biddulph society. They exist as scraps of papers. They do have an existence like newspaper items and as monstrously simplified figures in popular melodrama. In fact all of the figures of the play possess a historically rooted documentary definition as well as a more elusive, ambiguous real existence as human figures and faces. Furthermore as a poet and playwright Reaney recognizes that their lives individually and collectively are also imbued with metaphorical importance.

The complex patterns of scenic imagery are devised and manipulated in order to bring out a ‘vision’ expected by the dramatist. Metaphorical expressions and scenic imageries enrich the merit of the trilogy. Throughout the trilogy, there is transaction between the metaphorical expressions and the scenic images. The image of the church in Biddulph stands as a metaphorical force of oppression. Hence the scenic images and metaphorical expressions become the part of theme and plot.

The image of the church functions not only as a religious tool but also as a wheel for the social, political and economical machine in Biddulph. The dramatist
converts his ideas and thoughts through the metaphorical expressions implied by the
scenic images. The social, political and economical conditions in Biddulph society
are conditioned by the authorities of the church in Biddulph. People in Biddulph act
and react according to the mainstream pattern framed and set in motion by the
religious authorities.

The Donnellys would have been happy if the religious authorities provided
membership to them. The township of Biddulph would have been a place of
happiness to the Donnellys if the religious authorities had been kind and considerate
towards them. The church which is considered as the place of God turns into hell,
the place of Satan because of the inhuman attitude of the religious authorities. But
Reaney wants to see God in the religious authorities.

In his 'vision' the church should be the place of kindness and compassion. It
should reflect perfect divinity and act as a constructive force for the society with an
impartial account. But the church in Biddulph possesses none of these features. The
negative depiction of the church expresses Reaney's reformatory, restorative and
reconciliatory ideas for the upliftment of the Canadian society.

Since the church has control over the society it would have avoided the
murder of the Donnellys and saved their lives. But it is an irony that the antagonistic
approach and partial account of the church towards the Donnellys become the cause
for their murder. The critic Gerald D. Parker finds fault with the church which has
failed to save the lives of the Donnellys. According to Parker:

The image of the church is an important part of the social, political
and economic machine hearing down upon a family who refused to
kneel, deprives the liturgical speech of its mythic, restorative and
reconciliatory values. (249)
The above comment by Parker on the church in Biddulph proves the fact that it has no positive and constructive function in the society. Instead it stands as a vital force for problems and misdeeds in the society. A church should safeguard its mythic value. It should work hard for restoration if it is necessary. It should serve as a reconciliatory force for problems in society or politics. The church in Biddulph brings out a picture of the early nineteenth century religious atmosphere in Canada.

In *Sticks and Stones*, Mr. Donnelly is oppressed by George Stub, The Protestant Justice of Peace and Tom Cassleigh, the Catholic Justice of peace. These two men are the combined forces of religion and politics. Both men want to send the Donnelly family out of Biddulph. George Stub, the powerful political authority wants to occupy the land of Mr. Donnelly. He repeatedly compels Mr. Donnelly to sell his land of five acres to him. Mr. Donnelly who has decided not to kneel to anybody in Biddulph refuses to sell his land. But George Stub uses his political power and threatens Mr. Donnelly, "Darkie, if you don't sell the that corner five acres you have squatted on there I am going to heat it better than hell so seriously might happen ..."(26).

Tom Cassaleigh, the Roman Catholic fails to help the catholic family (Donnelly family). Instead, he joins hand with George Stub and threatens Mr. Donnelly to get out of Biddulph. He threatens and abuses Mr. Donnelly, "We want you out of the township you black foot face of a dog” (SS 90). The Roman Catholics are not only called as black feet in Canada but also in Ireland. When Mr. and Mrs. Donnelly are insulted by the adult population, the Donnelly children are insulted by the children of the White Foot society.

When William Donnelly comes and complaints to his mother that he was called as ‘black foot', Mrs. Donnelly says to him that they were called as black foot,
even in the old country (Ireland). She says, "In the old country, Will, your father, and your brother James, and your mother were born you were called as black foot if you could not join the white foot" (SS 26).

Will: They threw stones at me and they called me Cripple. I’m used to that, mother, but there was a new boy there and do you want to know what he called me, mother? (she nods) Blackfoot... Cripple, I Know. But what do they mean by Blackfoot?

Mrs. Donnelly: I suppose across the sea even it would come following us ... In the old country, Will, where your father and your brother James and your mother were born you were called a Blackfoot if you wouldn’t join the Whitefeet. They were a faction, they were a secret society, a secret people. (15-16)

These words of Mrs. Donnelly prove the fact that there is religious antagonism between the Roman Catholics and Protestants. ‘White foot’ symbolically refers to the Protestants and black foot refers to the Roman Catholics.

Seeking for a better life, the Donnelly family comes to Canada with a lot of hopes. But, contrary to their expectation their life becomes worse than in Ireland. The Biddulph society is divided into Roman line and Protestant line. There is a ‘Secret Security’ in Biddulph to watch the activities of the Donnellys under the leadership of Mathew Midnight. Life becomes miserable and the Biddulph society becomes a battlefield to the Donnelly’s. Their survival in Biddulph is “worse than a scab or leper”.

According to Mrs. Donnelly, "the name of black foot is worse than a scab, or leper or Nigger or Heretic..." (SS 17). Mrs. Ryan, who owns a neighbouring farm
to the Donnelly, often has quarrels with Mrs. Donnelly. She is a member of the ‘Secret Society’ which attempts to drive away the Donnellys from Biddulph. Some portion of Mr. Donnelly's farm has been encroached by the enemies and this is indicated by Jennie, the daughter of Mr. Donnelly, "It was my father’s farm; half of its fields were lost to his enemies" (SS 85). George Stub is referred as an Orange man (French man).

In *The St. Nicholas Hotel W.M. Donnelly Prop*, the Donnelly boys are oppressed by the enemies George Stub, Tom Cassaleigh, Finnegen, Jim Carroll and O'Halloran. Some members from Secret Society set fire on the barn of the Donnellys during their absence. Finnegan sets fire on the house of the Donnelly. They escape from the first murder attempt of Finnegan. But, they become irresistible victims to the fire set by O' Halloran in the second murder attempt.

Jim Carroll wants to take revenge on the Donnellys for his uncle’s (Farrell, the brother of Jim Carroll's mother) murder. There is a heavy competition between the Donnelly boys, stage coach and Finnegan stage coach. Out of professional jealousy Finnegan wants to drive away the Donnelly's from Biddulph. Jim Carroll is made a constable in Lucan. By using his police power he wants to take vengeance on the Donnelly boys and tries to victimize them.

After understanding the enmity and the oppressive attitude of Jim Carroll, John Donnelly challenges a fight with him and says, "I will fight you right now, I will make your big head soft there right on the road" (*TSNHWMMP* 162). When Jim Carroll challenges a fight with the Donnelly boys, Mrs. Donnelly bursts out with resistive force and calls Carroll. "You son of a bitch, you thief, you rogue, you bastard. You should be arrested" (*TSNH* 163).
In *Handcuffs*, Reaney makes the dead Donnelly's alive in the form of ghosts. The Donnellys rise from their graves with the supernatural power to take vengeance on their enemies. They frighten the members of the white foot society; causes damage to many things by setting fire and kill Mr. and Mrs. O' Halloran by making them meet with an accident. In *Sticks and Stones* in the first phase of protest Mr. and Mrs. Donnelly refuse to join the white foot society and kneel to them and refuse to sell their land to George Stub.

In the second phase, the force becomes vigorous and Mr. Donnelly threatens George Stub that he will charge him tresspass if he does not have his farm near the fence. As he states, "yes, the coloured settlers had come to these concession ten years before. Many of us came from Ireland and it was their bad luck to have farms to just fence or I shall charge you with tresspass" (*TSNH* 26).

In the third phase of protest Mr. Donnelly grows wild and kills Farl during the quarrel. In *The St. Nicholas Hostel W.M. Donnelly Prop*, the Donnelly boys set up the stage coach against their enemies (Finnegan) in the first phase of protest. In the second phase, they challenge for a stage coach race with Finnegan and win the race. In the third phase, the Donnelly boys become wild and break the stage coach and the stable of Finnegan when Finnegan sets fire on the Donnellys house through some men.

In *Handcuffs*, the ghosts of Mr. and Mrs. Donnelly threaten their enemies by appearing in front of them (Mrs. Finnegan sees the ghost of Mr. Donnelly) in the first phases of protest. In the second phase, the Donnellys ghosts cause damages to the things of their enemies. In the third phase, Mr. and Mrs. Donnellys appear like
old man and old woman and kill the O’Hallorans by making them meet with an accident.

Reaney fixes himself at the time of the Donnellys’ settlement in Canada. He analyses the social follies, acknowledges the injustice done to them and caution the contemporary society not to repeat or practice the same follies of the white foot in Biddulph society towards any section of the society. On the contemporary stage he reflects the social milieu of the eighteenth century Canada. If *The Donnellys Trilogy* is studied in terms of literary realism, the study reveals the bitter fact that there is antagonism among the English Canadians.

*The Donnellys Trilogy* investigates the minority discourse of the Donnellys, political and religious discriminations shown by the authorities and the antagonistic ambivalence between the Donnellys and the Biddulph society. The voice of the Donnellys is subdued and subverted by the enemies. Oppression is there as far as the Donnellys survive in Biddulph. But they overcome the oppression by rising from their graves. Power comes from the white foot society and from the political, religious and official authorities.

Mrs. Tom Ryan, Jim Carroll, George stub, Tom Cassaleigh and O’Hallorans form a power circle. They attempt to entrap the Donnellys and bring them into their circle. But the Donnellys, though occasionally entrapped, they slip away from the circle. They prove their resistance to power by taking revenge on them. The Donnelly story has got its place in the history and myth of Canada. The national existence of the Donnelly story is made universal by the dramatic art of Reaney.

Reaney’s artistic creation of the Donnellys story has a wider, universal appeal not only in the mind of the Canadian audience but also in the minds of the global audience. The people of Canada have become more familiar with the
Donnelly story by the dramatic creation of Reaney rather than history and myth, a psychological conflict arises in the minds of the Donnellys whether they have to submit and surrender themselves to the enemies or not. Since the Donnellys remind self-reliant they decide not to surrender themselves. Hence they allow themselves to be totally governed by their 'selves'.

The Donnelly Trilogy teaches a lesson not to the Biddulph society but to the global society. By depicting the Donnelly history, Reaney standardises his opinion of oppression and slavery. He aspires for individual freedom and self-respect. The members of the Donnelly family, the farmers, merchants, priests, Bakers religious authorities, and politicians of Biddulph have been living in three forms of drama: history, myth and the art. The world set up by the Donnellys is not there on the map of Canada but it is there in the Canadian myth and version of the Donnellys. As long as the earth survives the Donnelly history will speak the heroism of the Donnellys.