Across the clear blue sky. It shook the earth
And the clogged underneath, the River Styx,
The winding streams, the Atlantic shore itself.
Anything can happen, the tallest tower
Be overturned...

Anything Can Happen, District and Circle.

Chapter IV

Neighbour is mankind: Vision, Values, Versatility
Introduction

Seamus Heaney’s poetry is for the promotion of causes he believes in. The present world of uncertainties evokes mixed responses in the poet’s psyche. On the one hand he feels that scientific progress and globalization have turned the world into a neighbourhood and on the other hand he feels unhappy about the circumstances that have remained unchanged since prehistoric times. Barbarity has just one evil face. Tragic archetypes occur in every age. Atrocities committed in the Iron Age can find parallels in contemporary wars. Memories of World War II, the pogrom of the Jews, the ethnic cleansing in Balkan, the 9/11 terror attacks on WTC, the London bombing of 2005, all seem extensions of the violence of ancient wars such as the war of Troy.

The poet is poignantly aware of his responsibility. Earlier Heaney focused on the violence and plight of Ireland but in later poetry he has gone global with a vision of peace, love and harmony. It seems that the conferment of the Nobel Prize in 1995 made him conscious of greater responsibilities and widened the horizon of his poetry. He steps out of his national consciousness and treats the entire world as his arena.

In this chapter the anthologies published between 1991 and 2006 will be analyzed viz. Seeing Things (1991), The Spirit Level (1996), Electric Light (2001) and District and Circle (2006). These anthologies bring into focus Heaney’s new perspectives. In a world torn apart by violence and wars, Heaney preaches the lessons of harmony, love and universal brotherhood. The chapter will also explore the new sensitivities of Heaney’s poetry which establish Heaney as a poet of the world.

Seeing Things (1991)

From an external physicality of things, Heaney’s vision shifts towards the inner spiritual world of ‘thingness’ in the anthology, Seeing Things, published in 1991. Heaney begins the anthology under the influence of two seminal works. The anthology opens with ‘The Golden Bough’, a translation of the celebrated passage of Virgil’s Aeneid, and
concludes the book by ‘Squarings’ sequences shadowed with Dante’s *Inferno*. Virgil’s version of hell in *Aeneid* serves as a thematic as well as structural plot for Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, and for this reason Virgil becomes Dante’s guide, in his description of hell. Heaney is also preoccupied with works of other poets such as Derek Mahon, Philip Larkin, Henry Vaughan, Thomas Hardy, Pasternak, Yeats, Sage Han Shan, archaeologist Tom Delaney.

The anthology is about visions, about seeing things, even ordinary, mundane things, through the clarity of renewed poetic vision. Henry Hart remark:

> The situation he obsessively delineates is one where mind comes up against a confining boundary, is checked by it, but then is simulated to transcend it. In the end all of his forms of resistance and containment are resisted. To his dialectical mind, limits provoke sublimation and sublimity!  

The opening poem, a loose translation of *Aeneid* (IV, 98-148)*, acts as a prologue, to the anthology. In Virgil’s translation, ‘the prophetess’ or Sibyl tells Aeneas**, how he, without dying, can meet the ghost of his father, in hell. Aeneas is ‘Blood relation of gods, / Trojan, son of Anchises’. The road to the underworld passes through the ‘Forest spread half-way down / And Cocytus winds through the dark, licking its banks’ but the desire for a union with father is so intense that Aeneas takes the ‘real task’ of the journey to the ‘underworld dark’.

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* Aeneas visits Cumaean Sibyl, who foretells his wars in Latium. After plucking by her direction the Golden Bough he descends with her, through the cave of Avernus, to the nether world. They reach the Styx and on the hither side see the ghosts of the unburied dead, among them Palinurus, who recounts his fate and begs for burial. The Golden Bough gains, for Aeneas permission from Charon to cross the Styx. Cerberus is pacified with the drugged honey cake. Various groups of dead are seen: infants, those unjustly condemned, those who have died from love (among whom Dido receives in silence the renewed excuses of Aeneas), and those who have fallen in wars. They approach the entrance to Tartarus, where the worst criminal suffers torments: but turn aside to Elysium, where the blest enjoy a care-free life. Here Aeneas finds and vainly seeks to embrace Anchises. He sees the ghosts drinking at the river Lethe and Anchises expounds to him the reincarnation of souls after along purgation. Among these souls he points out to his son those men who are in future to be illustrious in Roman history, from Romulus and early kings to the great generals of later days, Augustus himself, and his nephew Marcellus, to whose brief life the poet makes touching allusion. Aeneas and the Sibyl then leave the world through the Ivory Gate, through which false dreams are sent to mortals.

** Son of Anchises and Aphrodite and a member of the younger branch of royal family of Troy.
Still, if love torments you so much and you so much desire
To sail the Stygian lake twice and twice to inspect
The underworld dark…

(ll 11-13, The Golden Bough, ST)

He symbolizes the continuous lineage of hard labour on the farms and fields. The loss of the father is not simply a filial longing but in a wider sense, it is the loss of the signifier for the signified rural identity. Heaney, in his early poetry, associated his father with the tradition of the ‘spade’. In the mortal life of this planet, the union seems unattainable. However in the realm of the imagination, in the world of poesy, the unification can be achieved. The implication here is that, Heaney is willing to compensate for the loss through the power of poetry. In Virgil’s Aeneid, the Sibyl tells Aeneas to pluck the ‘golden-fledged tree-branch out of tree’. The action will render his journey problem free.

Hidden in the thick of a tree is a bough made of gold
And its leaves and pliable twigs are made of it too.

(ll 16-17, The Golden Bough, ST)

...And when it is plucked
A second one grows in its place, golden once more,
And the foliage growing upon it glimmers the same.

(ll 24-26, The Golden Bough, ST)

The plucking of ‘the Golden Bough’ can be regarded as the act of writing poetry. This suggests that Heaney will pluck the golden words from the vocabulary-tree and then perform the ‘real task and the real understanding’ of poetry to prepare the ground for meeting his father. The poem can also be regarded as Heaney’s tribute to the powers of poetry. A similar theme is maintained in the poem ‘Seeing Thing’ through an anecdote of Heaney’s childhood. The themes of return to childhood memories are recurrent in Heaney’s work. The recollection is not for the sake of nostalgic compensations but Heaney reinterprets and reanalyzes them through his adult vision. The recollections of childhood memories are reminiscent of Wordsworth’s poetry. It is a journey of retrievals.
In the introduction to his collection of essays, *The Essential Wordsworth*, Heaney remarked about Wordsworth's effort 'to retrieve for the chastened adult consciousness the spontaneous, trustful energies unconsciously available in the world of childhood'. In the title poem 'Seeing Things', he remembers the childhood fear that he experienced on a voyage to 'Inishbofin on a Sunday morning'. He recollects how he 'panicked at the shiftiness and heft / Of the craft itself'.

That quick response and buoyancy and swim-
Kept me in agony. All the time
As we went sailing evenly across

(ll 15-17, Seeing Things, S7)

In Section II, he alludes to Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, where Stephen Deadlus puts in plain words:

*claritas* is the artistic discovery and representation of the divine purpose in anything or a force of generalization which would make the esthetic image a universal one, make it outshine its proper conditions.

Heaney adopts the theological word 'Claritas', to universalize his experiences. In section III, the figure of the father, who had a narrow escape from death, is evoked.

... That afternoon
I saw him face to face, he came to me
With his damp footprints out of river,

(ll 59-61, Seeing Things, S7)

The poem focuses on the figure of the dead father, who revitalizes in Heaney's poetry. Heaney, like Aeneas of Virgil's *Aeneid*, longs for a rendezvous with his father. In the poem 'Man and Boy' the father is described as a 'low-set man / Who feared debt all his life'. This suggests the pathetic financial life of Irish peasants under colonialism.
Heaney’s visionary aspect in *Seeing Things* reveals an anticipation of a solution to the questions raised in earlier anthologies. The sequence of memory-retrieval-vision-return suggests that the poet flees from the agony of the real world to childhood memories and retrieves more than he actually remembers. In this excavation he is assisted by his highly developed poetic faculties. The transfigured memories identify significant adult consciousness in childhood memories and certain childish aspects in adult behaviour e.g. the desperate yearning to bring back his father. *Seeing Things* deals with the spiritual reinterpretation of memories otherwise lost under the weight of ambition, rivalry and greed. Childhood memories signify innocence, trust and positive energies that, on discovery, renew the world.

In the Nobel Prize acceptance speech, *Crediting Poetry*, Heaney has aptly described his poetic career as a ‘journey into the wideness of language, a journey where each point of arrival – whether in one’s poetry or one’s life – turned out to be a stepping stone rather than a destination’. In his poetry some poets occupy unique spaces. One such poet is Philip Larkin, whose spirit, is encountered in the poem ‘The Journey Back’. This poem marks Larkin’s death. In his collections of essays, Heaney remarked about Larkin:

Larkin also had it in him to write his own version of the Paradiso. It might well have amounted to no more than an acknowledgement of need to imagine “such attics cleared of me, such absence”; nevertheless, in the poems he has written there is enough reach and longing to show that he did not completely settle for the well known bargain offer, a poetry of lowered sights and patently diminished expectations.

In the poem Larkin is described as ‘A nine-to five man who had seen poetry’. Larkin returns from the underworld and quotes Dante.

*It felt more like the forewarned journey back*
*Into the heartland of ordinary.*
*Still my old self. Ready to knock one back.*

*A nine-to-five man who had seen poetry.*

(II 1-4, *The Journey Back, ST*)
Heaney and Larkin, have different poetical attitudes. Larkin is a ‘nine-to five man’ who belongs to the English literary tradition whereas Heaney’s roots are in the Irish tradition of ‘spade’. The phrase nine-to-five refers to the timings of official jobs, to which dawn to dusk tradition of farmers, is quite alien. Larkin hails from the land of the colonizers but Heaney is from a colonized land.

A focused vision and a firm will can make a human being cross every hurdle of life. Through the figure of a handicapped ‘woman who sat for years / In a wheelchair’ in the poem ‘Field of Vision’, Heaney’s seems to admire the firm determinations of the physically challenged people in the society. The ‘Field of Vision’ is an un-ploughed, less explored field of psychology of thousands of physically and mentally challenged people in society. The indifferent attitude of society colonizes the ‘others’ of the society. Heaney’s handicapped ‘woman’ stands out, from the faceless, numberless crowd, with her own individuality. She is not ready to compromise with the challenges which destiny and society have burdened her with.

She was steadfast as the big window itself.  
Her brow was clear as the chrome bits of chair.  
She never lamented once and she never  
Carried a spare ounce of emotional weight

Face to face with her was an education  
Of sort you got across a well-braced gate-  
One of those lean, clean, iron, roadside ones  
Between two whitewashed pillars, where you could see

(II 9-16, Field of Vision, 57)

Heaney’s poem pleads for a revised and renewed vision of society for the handicapped. There is a lot which a society can learn from them. They are not merely ‘others’ to be disposed off. Their strong will can educate society. They can serve as a ‘well-braced gate’, through which the society can renew its vision.

The scars of the divided cultural heritage have penetrated deep into the psyche of the Irish people. The poem ‘The Settle Bed’ describes a commonplace object namely a bed
which is ‘cart-heavy, painted an ignorant brown / And pew-strait, bin-deep, standing four square as an ark’ and than relates it to the conflict in Northern Ireland.

Protestant, catholic, the Bible, the beads,
Long talks at gables by moonlight, boots on the hearth

(II 10-11, The Settle Bed, ST)

The bed is ‘an inheritance’. The poet imagines that a ‘dower of settle beds tumbled from heaven’ to bridge political and social divides in Ulster.

Imagine a dower of settle beds tumbled from heaven
Like some nonsensical vengeance come on the people,

(II 20-21, The Settle Bed, ST)

The imaginative world of ‘dower of settle-beds’ suggests the settlement between the divided Irish people. The implication is that in the imaginary world, everybody will feel content with his own bed and not fight for other beds. In the contemporary political realities of Ireland such a reconciliation seems almost impossible. So Heaney compromises with the imaginative world where ‘whatever is given / Can always be reimagined’. Imagination becomes a compensation for the ‘nonsensical vengeance’ of Ireland.

Heaney once again make a visit to Glanmore in the sequence ‘Glanmore Revisited’ in the poem ‘Scrabble’ written ‘in the memoriam Tom Delaney, archaeologist’. The familiar world of ‘Bare flags’ and ‘Pump water’ and their game of Scrabble are evoked in the poem. The friendship with Delaney is old. This is suggested through the reference to game of scrabble which they played year after year. In the poem ‘The Cot’, he is present ‘Years later in the same locus amoenus’. An ordinary and commonplace item like a cot is nostalgically associated with the past.

And is the same cot I myself slept in
When the whole world was a farm that eked and crowed.

(II 13-14, The Cot, ST)
The ‘Glanmore Revisited’ sequence is a return to Glanmore, a place where he sought refuge from the turbulence of the world. It is a return to the world of memory. The implication here is that the poet is always able to recourse to the world of memory to renew his poetic vision. This can be called a compensatory revision. Thorough out the anthology, Heaney makes such returns. In the poem ‘Wheels within Wheels’, he returns to his childhood days. Childhood experiences, for an adult, make no sense but for a child these activities represent excitement and adventure. Heaney describes how he derived pleasure by pedaling an upside down cycle manually. Heaney identifies that children are not afraid to experience.

The first real grip I ever got on things
Was when I learned the art of pedalling
(By hand) a bike turned upside down, and drove
Its back wheel preternaturally fast.
I loved the disappearance of the spokes.

(II 1-5, Wheels within Wheels, S7)

In the concluding section, the childish activity of rotating the wheels is linked to the trained circus gymnastic skills of ‘Sheer pirouette’ and ‘Tumblers’. The juxtaposition of ‘Jongleurs’, a wandering minister of medieval times who traveled around singing the compositions of troubadours or reciting epic poem in noble households or royal court, and the young children’s game ‘Ring-a-rosies’, in which players sing while moving around in a circle, in the concluding line and the final word is ‘Stet!’, which is an act of restoration. This suggests that Heaney wishes to restore his bygone childhood days through the adult memory. He never wishes to confine himself by singing of courtly love as the Jongleurs sang; along side he wishes to sing of the innocent world of childhood.

Childhood represents a time of life which is high in faith. Children believe easily in goodness of the world. As one grows older and encounters other aspects of human nature and experience, the faith in the goodness of the world gets frayed. The bruised, adult poet returns to childhood through his poetry. This regressive journey has a healing touch.
In the literary world, where the poet is confined by the compromised representative political speaker position of his community and country, Heaney wishes to sing about childhood days. This is a psychological compensation. The poem ‘Fostering’ seems to emphasize that Heaney is a foster-child of his native place. The poem is dedicated to John Montague and the line ‘That heavy greenness fostered by water’ from his poem ‘The Water Carrier’ acts a prologue to Heaney’s poem. In the poem, middle aged Heaney returns to his native place. In a roundabout way, the poem refers the impact of colonizers on the native culture.

Of glar and glit and floods at dailigone
My silting hope. My lowlands of mind
(ll 7-8, Fostering, ST)

The words such as ‘glar’, ‘glit’ and ‘dailigone’ are not from Irish vocabulary. These are Scottish words brought to Ireland by the settlers in early seventeenth century. The poet as a native is unfamiliar with these words. The poem is also a comment on the pressures on poetry.

Heaviness of being. And poetry
Sluggish in the doldrums of what happens.
Me waiting until I was nearly fifty
To credit marvels.
(ll 9-12, Fostering, ST)

The political pressures on poetry have almost made it a stagnant reflection of the contemporary situations. However Heaney seems to reject this compromised notion and paves his own path. A sense of dissatisfaction is reflected in the confessions. As compensation, a new dispensation is called for:

... So long for air to brighten,
Time to be dazzled and heart to be lighten.
(ll 13-14, Fostering, ST)
'lighten' echoes with the sub-title of section II. The 'Squarings' sequence opens with a sub-section called 'Lightenings', the other sub-sections are 'Settings', 'Crossings' and 'Squarings' itself. In the whole sequence of 'Squarings', all the poems consist of twelve lines each and are divided into four stanzas of three lines each. The poems are thematically diverse but they are structurally united. In the 'Lightenings' sequence, poem xii, Heaney explains the meaning of the term

And lightening? One meaning of that
Beyond the usual sense of alleviation,
Illumination, and so on, is this:

A phenomenal instant when the spirit flares
With pure exhilaration before death-
The good thief in us harking to the promise!

(ll 1-6, Squarings xii, ST)

The imaginary perception of the moment of death and a vision of the world beyond human boundaries is delineated. Like the thief in the gospel account of Crucifixion, there is 'good thief' in human psychology who longs for eternal life. In the concluding line, the compensation for the difficulties of earthly life is provided in the heavenly reward.

This day thou shall be with me in Paradise.

(ll 12, Squarings xii, ST)

Heaney searches for the 'old truth' in the environment of 'Unroofed scope'. The poem questions the Christian concept of after life:

And after the commanded journey, what?
Nothing magnificent, nothing unknown.

(ll 7-8, Lightenings i, ST)
In one of his interviews, Heaney remarked:

... well, wait! Eternal life can mean utter reverence for life itself. And that's what there is. And our care in a green age, so to speak, in an age that's conscious of the ravages that have been done to the planet, the sacred value is actually eternal life. So that language is perfectly proper. It can be used again. It can be revived. It's not necessarily a mystifying language. It's a purifying language. 8

Heaney exhibits an uncompromising attitude towards the ‘old truth’. He investigates it under the scope of ‘Knowledge-freshening wind’ of rationality and prudence. In poem v he addresses after life as ‘flimsy’. The theme is continued in poem xxii, where Heaney questions the metaphysical inherited truths of religion:

Where does spirit live? Inside or outside
Things remembered, made things, things unmade?
What came first, the seabird’s cry or the soul

(ll 1-3, Setting xxii, ST)

Unable to search for answers to his metaphysical disillusionment, he turns to the ghost of Yeats:

What’s the use of a held note or held line
That cannot be assailed for reassurance?
(Set questions for the ghost of W.B)

(ll 10-12, Setting xii, ST)

Poem vi tells the story of the child Thomas Hardy who ‘experimented with infinity’ by pretending to be dead. Poem viii, is from Irish records. It is the story of the ‘monks of Clonmacnoise’, whose a ship is caught into the altar rails. The crewman tried to free it but it was all futile:

‘This man can’t bear our life here and will drown,’

The abbot said, ‘unless we help him.’ So
They did, the freed ship sailed, and man climbed back

(ll 9-11, Squarings viii, ST)
The annals suggest the Catholic doctrine of salvation through the Church. The story is from Irish annals. Ireland is a Roman Catholic nation. One of the causes of the religious conflict in Ireland was opposition to the Protestant Church. The members of Protestant church reject the papal authority and some other fundamental doctrines of Roman Catholic Church, and believe in justification by faith. With the advent of colonialism, the colonizers' faith was publicized as supreme and the natives were religiously colonized. Heaney, through the annals, compensates for the hurt religious sentiments of the native Irish people.

In the sub-section ‘Settings’, poem xiii, Heaney advocates his practise of re-entering of childhood through the experienced adult vision. This is a frequently used *modus operandi* in Heaney’s poetry.

Re-enter this as the adult of solitude,
The silence-folder and definite

(II 10-12, Setting xiii, ST)

The re-entry is for gaining a renewed vision which will be an amalgamation of innocence and experience. In poem xv, the memory of Heaney's father is evoked using the imagery of light:

And strike this scene in gold too, in relief,
So that a greedy eye cannot exhaust it:
Stable straw, Rembrandt-gleam and burnish

Where my father bends to a tea-chest packed with salt,
The hurricane lamp held up at eye-level
In his bunched left fist, his right hand foraging

(II 1-6, Setting xv, ST)

The poet exhorts the Dutch artist, Rembrandt van Rijn, a major religio-hitorical artist of the Golden Age who painted religious and historical paintings, to paint the picture of Heaney’s father in gold. His father was not a famous religious or historical
personality. However, if he had given an opportunity he might have been a famous personality. He seems to be among the unknown, numberless and faceless people who had the skill to reach the peaks of success. It seems that the colonial destiny and divisions confined and cabined him to his rural environs. Heaney wants him to be in the annals and to be preserve in gold. He glorifies the rural routine of his farmer-father. Rembrandt now has to compromise with the themes of his paintings. He has to paint and preserve the rural routine of a farmer. Heaney thus brings compensations to his father. The idea of linking the familiar and filial with the memory is further explained in the poem xix:

Memory as a building or a city
Well lighted, well laid out, appointed with
Tableaux vivants and costumed effigies-

(II 1-3, Setting xix, ST)

Memory is itself a combination of some ‘fixed associations’ which has ‘Its own contents in meaningful order’. It is the collection of some concrete images and anecdotes with which the ‘mind’s eye’ is preoccupied:

Familiar places be linked deliberately
With a code of images...

(II 10-11, Setting xix, ST)

This is how recollections and memories can be decoded in poetry. Associative thinking is a feature of Heaney’s poetry.

In the sub-section, ‘Crossings’, Heaney ‘sees’ the ‘things’ physically as well as intuitively. He seems to deliberately associate the familiar with certain unfamiliar images. Poem xxvii is a blend of the physical and the metaphysical. ‘Everything flows. Even the solid man’, the poet launches on the metaphysical journey of the spirit and the experience is linked to the physical journey of Heaney’s sister to London.

And you’ll be safe.’ Flow on, flow on
The journey of the soul with its soul guide

(ll 10-11, Crossings xxvii, ST)

The journey symbolizes the 'crossings' of the soul. Heaney uses fluid imagery to symbolize the crossings. In poem xxxii, he speaks about the 'stations of soul' which reverberates with the religious conception of stations of cross:

Running water never disappointed.
Crossing water always furthered something.
Stepping stones were stations of the soul.

(ll 1-3, Crossings xxxii, ST)

The familiar 'causey', the 'keshes or the ford' remind him of his 'father's shade'.

I cannot mention keshes or the ford
Without my father's shade appearing to me

(ll 8-9, Crossings xxxii, ST)

The unknown addressee of the poem xxxiii transfers Heaney manner. The physical absence of the addressee takes away the beauty from the surroundings:

That morning tiles were harder, windows colder,
The raindrops on the pane more scourged, the grass
Barer to the sky, more wind-harrowed
Or so it seemed.

(ll 4-6, Crossings xxxiii, ST)

The bond between the speaker-poet and the addressee is so intense that it changes the whole world for him. The addressee seems to be Heaney's father. The house which 'he had planned', stands as a testimony to the manifestation of his idea.

Stood firmer than ever for its own idea
Like a printed X-ray for the X-rayed body.

(ll 11-12, Crossings xxxiii, ST)
The house is the revelation of the thoughts and dreams. It is symbolized as a ‘printed X-ray’ sheet, which is the exposure of the internal organs of ‘X-rayed body’. The emptiness of the house underscores the absence of his father.

The ‘newly dead come back’ in the poem xxxiv. Heaney describes his encounter with the ghost of a ‘Vietnam-bound’ solider, a fellow passenger in the bus ‘From San Francisco Airport into Berkeley’.

Unsurprisable but still disappointed,
Having to bear his farm-boy self again,
His shaving cuts, his otherworldly brow.

(II 10-12, Crossings xxxiv, ST)

The ghost returns to his world of ‘military base’. Heaney sees his rural self in the ghost’s ‘farm-boy self’. The implication is that Heaney desires to return to his own rural world. America is not his native land. He goes there on short-term educational engagements. The ghost is a psychological materialization of his longing for Ireland. The encounter with the spirit seems to be a Dantesque influence which has dominated Heaney’s mind. In the concluding poem xxxvi, ‘Crossings’, the repercussion of a march is described along with a ‘Scene from Dante’.

... since the policemen’s torches

Clustered and flicked and tempted us to trust
Their unpredictable, attractive light.
We were like herded shades who had to cross

And did cross, in a panic, to the car
Parker as we’d left it, that gave when we got in
Like Charon’s boat under the farming poets.

(II 6-12, Crossings xxxvi, ST)

Charon is a mythological ferryman in Greek mythology. He ferried the souls of the dead across the River Styx to Hades. The escape from the policemen is given a mythical
The pretentious colonial attitudes could not deceive the natives. The burden of colonialism made them resistant.

The last of the 'Squarings' sequence is the sub-section 'Squarings' itself. In this section Heaney alludes to sage Han Shan and the poet Henry Vaughan. In the poem xxxviii, a visit to 'Capitol by moonlight' deals with a 'privileged and belated' position:

'Down with form triumphant, long live,' (said I)
'Form mendicant and convalescent. We attend
The come-back of pure water and prayer-wheel'

To which a voice replied, 'of course we do.
But others are in the Forum Café waiting,
Wondering where we are. What'll you have?'

(II 7-12, Squarings xxxviii, ST)

The colonizer's culture makes the Irish 'mendicant and convalescent'. 'Mendicant' suggests the financial condition, of Ireland under colonial rule. Ireland was reduced to a land of beggars who had to live on colonial mercy. Inner resistance developed as a compensatory faculty to combat colonialism as implied by the use of word 'convalescent'. The poem is also a bitter treatise on the cultural subordination of Irish people. Colonial domination has made them culturally vacant and insensitive. They are deaf to their own voice and compromise with an existence of the 'other'.

Rural inheritance and memory as compensatory psychological phenomena becomes the theme of poems xl and xli.

Out of that earth house I inherited
A stack of singular, cold memory-weights

(II 10-11, Squarings xl, ST)

The places I go back to have not failed
But will not last. Waist-deep in cow-parsley'
I re-enter the swim, riding or quelling

142
The very currents of memory is composed of,
Everything accumulated ever

(ll 4-8, Squarings xli, ST)

With such delineations, Heaney, thematically, comes very close to Wordsworth. Although Wordsworth belongs to the land of colonizers but for Heaney, he is not the epitome of British imperial ideologies like Spenser rather he is Heaney’s Romantic model. In his discussion of the association of moods and modes between Wordsworth and Heaney, Geoffrey Hartman has remarked about how Heaney has followed in his predecessor’s footsteps without becoming a mindless imitator:

Through his unifying development of natural images in his modes of thinking, in his drawing upon social energies deriving from a sense of place, and through his notion of art itself working through sounds and rhythms that are natural forces within poetic shapings, Heaney is the contemporary inheritor of Wordsworth’s legacy. The employment of memory is not just for the sake of restoration but for transformation and revision.

In the poem xlv, Henry Vaughan’s metaphysical declaration that the dead are ‘All gone into the world of light?’ is analyzed with agnosticism but in the poem xlv, Heaney imagines a pleasurable fate in afterlife for his rural loved ones.

... They will re-enter
Dryness that was heaven on earth to them
Happy to eat the scones baked out of clay.

(ll 4-6, Squarings xlv, ST)

The concluding lines mingle the earthly with the celestial. The final Judgment is portrayed in the image of domesticity. Heaney elevates the earthly ‘house-dust’ to the spiritual ‘pillar of radiant’ in which God will appear on the Day of Judgment. This seems, without a doubt, a suitable celestial compensation for the rural people.

In this materialistic world, people are so deeply entrenched in avariciousness that they fail to notice the evil. The responsibility of ‘seeing’ the immaterialities now belongs
to people who contemplating e.g poets. In the anthology Heaney seems to be 'seeing things' physically as well as metaphorically.

**The Spirit Level (1996)**

*The Spirit Level* is a poetic representation of Heaney’s recognition of human violence which is as ancient as Homer and as contemporary as the sectarian hostilities of Ireland. Heaney traces the darker side of human history from the Trojan War to the concentration camps of Nazis in World War II and links it to the colonial and sectarian cruelties in Northern Ireland. Much of the poetry, in the anthology, receives its impetus from Heaney’s own restlessness and the discontent of Northern Ireland.

The technique of influences and intertextualities persist in the present anthology which relies profoundly on the works of exemplary figures. He invokes Homer and Hugh MacDiarmuid, quotes from the works of Dante and resurrects Aeschylus, translates Martin Sorescu and cites the example of Hans Memling, pays reverence to Osip Mandelstam and alludes to James Joyce. Heaney, in this process of ‘adoption and adaptation’, cannot be charged with plagiarisms. In these attempts he transcends the frontiers of national literature and produces world literature in which, intertextualities, influences and translations are indispensable. David Damrosch rightly points out ‘World literature is writings that gains in translation’.11

The canon has always been influenced by translations, allusions and intertextualities. Works of major writers have been enriched by classical allusions, references and citations. Heaney, in the poem ‘Quoting’ from *Seeing Things*, acknowledged the power of quotation ‘Talking about it isn’t good enough / But quoting from it at least demonstrates / The virtue of an art that knows its mind’.

Heaney searches for inspiration as well as solutions in the works of classical writers. He desires to widen the dimensions of contemporary Irish literature, so that it can be appreciated and understood by the literary circles across the globe. Thus, the poet will
achieve a literal compensation for the Irish people who were misrepresented in the literature written by the hegemony.

The poem ‘The Rain Stick’ communicates the transforming power of the poetic imagination, which elevates the physical commonplace and mundane to the echelon of spiritual by bizarre. The poem is a celebration of water, the quintessence of all the existence on the earth, as it flows through the ‘cactus stalk’ and then to the dry portion of the land nourishing all types of flora and fauna. The movement of water generates an unexpected music from the plant.

Downpour, sluice-rush, spillage and backwash
Come flowing through. You stand there like a pipe
Being played by water, you shake it again lightly
And diminuendo runs through all its scales
Like a gutter stopping trickling.

(II 4-8, ‘The Rain Stick’ SL)

The sudden gush of water revitalizes and refreshes the arid and barren ground. The music created and the transmutation can be experienced through the sensitiveness of the textual representation. Heaney credits poetry for its insight into truth. In his Nobel lecture, he acknowledged the power of poetry:

I credit poetry ...for being itself and for being a help, for making possible a fluid and restorative relationship between the mind’s centre and its circumference... I credit it because the credit is due to it, in our time and in all time, for its truth to life, in every sense of that place.\textsuperscript{12}

The poem conceived and dispensed in the spiritual mode outlines the synchronization of the cosmos where every element individually contributes to the harmony of existence. Heaney asserts this law of correspondence in ‘The First Words’, where he translates a verse of Romanian poet Marin Sorescu, ‘Let everything flow / Up to the four elements, / Up to water and earth and fire and air’. Richard Tillinghast claims that many poems in this collection have much to say about the transcendental law
of compensation—‘about balance, equilibrium and karma’. The Buddhist and Hindu philosophies propagate the beliefs of rebirth and reincarnation. The subsequent principle of ‘karma’ states that the quality of a being’s current life and also of future lives is determined by that being’s action in this and the previous life. The ordinary and mundane, through the transfigurative vision, is elevated to the celestial level and the final drop of water, in ‘The Rain Stick’ is exalted to the ecstasy of ‘entering heaven’.

The magic of poetic imagination transforms a County Derry yardman from Heaney’s childhood into the persona of the seventh-century Yorkshire poet-herdsman Caedmon of ‘Whitby-sur-Moyola’. Heaney feels ‘lucky to have known’ Caedmon, ‘the perfect yardman’ who ‘with his full bucket / and armfuls of clean straw’ is ‘Unabsorbed in what he had to do’. The recollection of Heaney’s childhood yardman strikes a parallel with the poet-herdsman Caedmon who was dedicated to and completely involved in his work. The interrelationship between Caedmon and Derry yardman is related to their association with the rural and the ideal which they consolidated in their work and through their uncompromising attitudes, which Heaney recollects and acknowledges.

I never saw him once with his hands joined
Unless it was a case of eyes to heaven

(Il 12-13, ‘Whitby-sur-Moyola’ SL)

The image of ‘hands joined’ suggests servility and compromise. However, both the poet Caedmon and the yardman were self-respecting and dignified people. In the days of colonialism it was very common for the natives to bow down before hegemony. Heaney’s yardman stands apart from the mass displaying self-worth and unwavering confidence. Thus, Heaney elevates the ordinary, unlettered yardman, long forgotten by the people to the level of the learned seventh-century poet remembered for his erudite writings. Heaney’s efforts acknowledge and immortalize the yardman and furnish him with compensation for his praiseworthy yet unacknowledged determinations.

Heaney occupies a major position in the contemporary literary canon yet his agrarian sensibilities exhort his associations with those who are close to the earth. The
poem ‘At Banagher’ is a celebration of expertise of the peripatetic tailor in Banagher, a
town in County Offaly in the Republic of Ireland. Heaney celebrates the dexterity of ‘The
journeyman tailor’ who with his magical ‘touch has the power to turn to cloth again’. The
tailor contributes to the order and harmony of the world. He ‘holds the needle just off
centre, squinting / And licks the thread and licks and sweeps’ and fulfills one of the vital
needs of humanity and civility- the need to cover bodies. Such traveling tailors can be
easily found in the countryside but it is difficult to locate this blue collar category in
poetry.

Heaney’s admiration spirals in the concluding stanza where he bestows the image
of the Enlightened Saint Buddha (563?-483? B.C) on the tailor. Heaney honours him in
elevated terms:

My Buddha of Banagher, the way
Is opener for your being in it.

(ll 23-24, ‘At Banagher’5Z)

Buddha, was an Indian philosopher and the founder of Buddhism, was born in
Lumbini, Nepal. Buddha is regarded as one of the greatest human beings, a man of
character, penetrating vision, compassion, and profound thought. He is not merely a
founder of a great new religion, but a reformer who revolted against Hindu hedonism,
asceticism, extreme spiritualism, and the caste system. He stood for peace and harmony.
In one of the legends associated with Buddha, he exhibits extreme patience as he waited
under the Bodh tree for Enlightenment and on acquiring it, renounced a luxurious life and
a kingdom and led a life of an itinerant preacher serving humanity.

Heaney sings paeans to the tailor, who in the poet’s views, with his commitment
to order and harmony, with his wandering life, and with his indifference to comforts,
recalls Buddha. Heaney’s tribute can not be regarded as blasphemous as Buddha is a
universal saint. The tailor is a local ‘Buddha of Banagher’. Globalization and the ‘melting
pot’ multi-culturalism of the post modern world have produced many versions of
Buddha. He transcends the religious boundaries of Buddhism and metamorphoses into the lesser notion of 'local Buddha'. Writers, across the globe, have evolved different concepts of Buddha. One of such prolific dramatist, novelist and filmmaker, Hanif Kureishi, whose works focus around the lives of Asian immigrants in urban Britain, has constructed his version of local Buddha in the novel *Buddha of Suburbia* (1990). Heaney, also, culturally constructs his adaptation of local Buddha to lionize the tailor. Heaney has earlier celebrated the craftsmanship of the roofer in 'Thatcher', the skills of a blacksmith in 'The Forge' and has compensated for their dislocations and loss of identity through glorifying them and their dying skills in his poetry. Richard Tillinghast suggests 'The poem is reminiscent of 'Adam’s Curse’, by Yeats, where the writing of poetry is called 'Our stitching and unstitching'.

The sensitivity of the imagination and its power of transmute vision are dealt with in 'At the Wellhead'. Heaney talks to his blind neighbour Rosie Keenan 'Who played the piano all day in her bedroom' to 'sing yourself to where the singing comes from'. The 'blind-from-birth, sweet-voiced, with drawn musician' has been lonely throughout life. Her handicap has isolated her. The notes that issue from her piano are compared to the sound of water.

\[
\text{Her notes came out to like hoisted water} \\
\text{Ravelling off a bucket at the wellhead} \\
\text{Where next thing we'd be listening hushed and awkward.}
\]

(ll 12-14, 'At the Wellhead' SL)

In Heaney's childhood a bucket of water drawn from this well, stood in the scullery. It emerges as a symbol of poetic imagination in *Crediting Poetry*:

Ahistorical, presexual, in suspension between the archaic and the modern, we were as susceptible and impressionable as the drinking water that stood in a bucket in our scullery: every time a passing train made the earth shake, the surface of that water used to ripple delicately, concentrically, and in utter silence.
Destiny deprived Rosie of her eyes but her strong will and persistence helped her to overcome all odds. Her sensory organs were active. She stood apart from the crowd. The poet conceived her ‘...like a silver vein in heavy clay’. The poet and Rosie are bound by the ability to see with feelings:

Her hands were active and her eyes were full
Of open darkness and a watery shine.

She knew us by our voices. She’d say she ‘saw’
Whoever or whatever. Being with her
Was intimate and helpful, like a cure
You didn’t notice happening. When I read
A poem with Keenan’s well in it, she said,
‘I can see the sky at the bottom of it now.’

(Il 21-28, ‘At the Wellhead’ SL)

Heaney, in the poem, does not pity her for her blindness, rather he praises her determination. She ‘saw’ with her intuition and mind’s eye. Heaney’s emotional support to the ‘lonelier’ neighbour and appreciation of her willpower highlight the need of awareness and respect which physically challenged people require from society. Heaney throughout the poem, supports her with emotional strength. Rosie might have been living a pathetic life if she lacked willpower. She however worked as a singer and musician. Heaney acknowledges her firm strength of character which compensates for all her losses. Heaney’s poem is offered as a compensation for what life did not give her.

A mature vision can work miracles. Heaney claims that a positive reflection on things can bring out the best from them. In ‘Mint’, he advocates casting a constructive and optimistic vision. The ‘clump of small dusty nettles / Growing wild at the gable of the house...spelled promise / And newness’. The failures of vision condemned them as ‘disregarded’:

Like the disregarded ones we turned against
Because we’d failed them by our disregard.

(Il 15-16, ‘Mint’ SL)
Heaney appeals to the people to recast a vision of the ‘ignored’ of the society in prejudice against the ‘ignored’ is a result of apathy. The ‘ignored’ or marginalized by society can be rehabilitated if they are treated as equal. Heaney seems to be talking of the ‘other’ of society. The ‘other’ of the society may be physically challenged people, women, or people from the lower strata of society, unlettered rustics or colonized natives. Societies often fail them and misjudge their potentials and deny them rights because of some preconceived notions. A revised and renewed vision will serve as a compensation for their subversive position. Heaney’s poetry aims to restructure society with a balanced vision.

The innocent childhood imagination transforms ‘A Sofa in the Forties’ to a train and the historically awake, mature conscious adult-persona of the poet is reminded of the ‘Ghost-train...Death gondola’ which took their victims to the Nazi concentration camps of Germany and Poland during World War II. The perfect childhood delight is shadowed by the knowledge of atrocities. The children’s pretence that their sofa is a railway train is nostalgically recollected:

All of us on the sofa in a line, kneeling
Behind each other, eldest down to the youngest,
Elbow going like pistons, for this was a train

And between the jamb-wall and the bedroom door
Our speed and distance were inestimable.
First we shunned, then we whistled, then

Somebody collected the invisible
For tickets and very gravely punched it
As carriage after carriage under us

Moved faster, chooka-chook, that sofa legs
Went giddy and unreachable ones

(ll 1-12, ‘A Sofa in the Forties’ SL)

The poem is the entry into ‘history and ignorance’. Innocent pleasure is corrupted with adult vision in the concluding section where the children’s ‘only job’ is ‘to sit, eyes
Concentration camps of Jews during World War II

Jews being taken to death camps.

Mass grave of Jews at Nazi camps.

All the images are from Microsoft® Student 2007 (DVD). Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2006.
straight ahead, and be transported’. The poem ironically contrasts the initial innocence with consequent experience, and ignorance with historical consciousness.

The Hindu and Buddhist doctrine of ‘Karma’ is preeminently evident in the poem ‘St Kevin and the Blackbird’ where Heaney propagates the essence of ‘Karma’ which is ‘To labour and not to seek reward’. The theory emphasizes on maintaining the righteousness of actions and deeds with no desire for rewards. The righteous deeds will remunerate the doer with celestial compensation. In the Bhagvat Gita, an important Hindu text, Lord Krishna states that the best way to be free of debt is by selfless actions. ‘Karma’ is sometime translated as ‘destiny’ in English but it does not imply the absence of freedom of action or freewill that destiny does. The doctrine leaves the individual free to make his own choices. The poem disseminates the message of self-sacrifice and self-negation through the figure of St Kevin, who in the poem, becomes the embodiment of virtues. The saint metamorphoses into the spirit of Christ, the supreme emblem of self-sacrifice. The saint is presented performing the customary religious rituals ‘kneeling, arms stretched out’ in his monastic cell in Glendalough, County Wicklow, in imitation of Christ. It is a posture of patience as Heaney claims in the Noble lecture.

This is the story of another monk holding himself up valiantly in the posture of endurance. It is said that once upon a time St Kevin was kneeling with his arms stretched out in the form of a cross in Glendalough, a monastic site not too far from where we lived in the County Wicklow....as Kevin knelt and prayed, a blackbird mistook his out stretched hand for some kind of roost and swooped down upon it, laid a clutch of eggs in it and proceeded to nest in it as if it were a branch of tree. Then, overcome with pity and constrained by his faith to love the life of all creatures great and small, Kevin stayed immobile for hours and days and nights and weeks, holding out his hand until the eggs hatched and the fledglings grew wings... St Kevin’s story is, as I say, a story out of Ireland. But it strikes me that it could equally well come out of India or Africa or the Artic or the Americas. By which I do not mean merely to consign it to typology of folktales, or to dispute its values by questing its culture-bound status within a multi-cultural context.16

The legend of St Kevin becomes a paradigm for the people to judge their contribution of endurance and self-sacrifice sans any rewards. Heaney asks the readers to
imagine being Kevin'. St Kevin’s story stands as an example of supreme virtue of humanity in the society which is drowned in mercenaries, hatred, selfishness and blood-thirstiness. Heaney seems to propagating the view that the only way to rescue humanity out of the current circumstances is through self-sacrifices and endurance. Through the implied Hindu and Buddhist philosophy of ‘Karma’, and in the representation of St Kevin a lesser extension of Christ, the saviour of humanity, Heaney’s Irish folktale universalizes the solution for the whole humanity. These humanistic concerns elevate Heaney somewhere in the same hierarchy.

Heaney goes into raptures over his epileptic brother’s ability to compensate for the murkiness of his life with humour and imagination in ‘Keeping Going’. It traces the journey of sibling-togetherness from their childhood to adulthood. The mutual, lighthearted, juvenile, whimsy always provided them with a sense of relief and happiness. With the playful sense of whimsy, Heaney’s brother converted the monotonous and backbreaking task of white washing in a kind of play. He pretended to be a ‘piper’ with ‘a kitchen chair on / Upside down on...shoulder’ and presumed ‘a whitewash brush for a sporran’.

Heaney recollects childhood superstitions when to ‘Piss at the gable...will congregate’ dead, where ‘When a thorn tree was cut down / You broke your arm’ and ‘When a stranger bird perched for days on the byre roof meant dread. Superstitions are universal although they are ethically relative to a particular society. The archaic beliefs and superstitions, though most of the time contradictory to rationalism, attach society to its cultural roots. Heaney, as a rationally evolved being, contemplates whether belief systems ‘Happened or not’. The poet wields the power of transformation. The famous ‘Witches scene’ from Shakespeare’s Macbeth, instigates a rural response to a lost culture.

That scene, with Macbeth helpless and desperate
In his nightmare---when he meets the hags again
And sees the apparitions in the pot---
I felt at home with that one all right. Hearth,
Steam and ululation,...

(ll 39-43, ‘Keeping Going’ SL)
Heaney’s allusions to the ‘Witches scene’ do not elicit any parallels between Macbeth’s vaulting ambitions and the poet’s own. The witches’ cauldron transports him to the hearth of the old Irish kitchens. For Heaney, identity is deeply rooted in culture. When things fall apart, he returns to the lost centre to reaffirm his identity. He feels ‘at home’ with rural associations such as hearths. The poem reiterates the sense of comfort in bucolic belongings, as earlier dealt with in ‘Fodder’ in Wintering Out (1972). Heaney lamented the loss of the hearth in Irish homes in The Place of Writings:

...the transition from a condition where your space, the space of the world had a determined meaning and a sacred position, to a condition where space was a neuter geometrical disposition without any emotional or inherited meaning. I watched it happen in Irish homes when we first saw a house built where there was no chimney, and then you’d go into rooms without a grate – so no hearth, which in Latin means focus.

The pastoral soothe, the childhood fears, superstitions and playful pretences are contrasted with discomfort, the sinister adult awarenesses of factors promoting sectarian and political divisions. He writes about the murder of an acquaintance:

Grey matter like gruel flecked with blood
In spatters on the whitewash. A clean spot
Where his head has been, other strains subsumed.

(ll 51-53, ‘Keeping Going’ SL)

The victim dies ‘Feeding the gutter with his copious blood’. Heaney’s moving description captures the trauma of 1970s and 1980s in Northern Ireland. Heaney compromised with his status as a poet to show the harsh realities of contemporary Ireland in his poetry. In the Nobel lecture, he referred to the price that he paid for being a Northern Irish poet.

I found myself in the mid-nineteen-seventies in another small house, this time in County Wicklow south of Dublin, with a young family of my own and slightly less imposing radio set, listening to the rain in trees and to the news of bombings closer to home- not only those by the provisional I.R.A in Belfast but equally atrocious assaults in Dublin by loyalist paramilitaries from the north.....I heard, for example, that one particularly
sweet-natured school friend had been interned without trial because he was suspected of having been involved in a political killing.\textsuperscript{18}

The dialectics of childhood memories and adult realities are compensated for with moments of togetherness. A touching accolade is offered to the ‘good stamina’ of the poet’s brother. His cheerful demeanor compensates for the darkness of his life and makes him ‘keeping going’. His motivation is responsible for his survival. Heaney accentuated the necessitate of virtue in the commencement address that he delivered at the University of North Carolina on 12 May 1996, ‘Getting started, keeping going, getting started again-in art and in life, seems to me this the essential rhythm not only of achievement but of survival’.\textsuperscript{19}

Resurrection and reinvention through recollection elevates a bricklayer to the pedestal of the heroic, legendary Odysseus of Homer’s epic \textit{Odyssey}. Odysseus, according to the Greek legend, is an epic hero, ruler of the island of Ithaca and one of the leaders of the Greek army in the Trojan War. The Roman equivalent is Ulysses. Homer's \textit{Odyssey} narrates Odysseus's adventures describes his, ultimate return home ten years after the fall of Troy.

All through Homer’s \textit{Iliad}, he is depicted as a courageous, insightful, cunning warrior, and he is awarded the renowned shield of the Greek warrior Achilles on the latter’s death. Odysseus was responsible for bringing the Greek heroes Neoptolemus and Philoctetes to Troy for the final stage of the conflict. In the \textit{Odyssey} it is said that he proposed the stratagem of the Trojan Horse, the means by which Troy was conquered. In the works of later classical writers, particularly those of the Greek poet Pindar, the Greek playwright Euripides, and the Roman poet Virgil, Odysseus is characterized as a gutless and devious politician.

Heaney remembers the bloodied hand and the ‘Wound that I saw / In glutinous colour fifty years ago’. The bricklayer is clothed in epic dimensions. His trowel is portrayed mythlogically and it transforms into Odysseus’s sword:

\begin{quote}
I loved especially the trowel’s shine,
\end{quote}
Its edge and apex always coming clean
And brightening itself by mucking in.
It looked light but felt heavy as weapon

( ll 18-21, ‘Damson’ SL)

The brick layer becomes a Homeric parallel ‘Like Odysseus in Hades’, the Grecian underworld inhabited by dead souls, encountering the local ‘Ghost with their tongues out for lick of blood’. They are the soul of the brutally murdered Irish victims. The gravity of the epic is amalgamated with the interpretation of contemporary circumstances. The ghosts have a desperate desire for reparation as they are ‘all unhealed’:

And some of them still rigged in bloody gear.
Drive them back to the doorstep or the road
Where they lay in their own blood once, in the hot
Nausea and last gasp of dear life.

( ll 28-31, ‘Damson’ SL)

Heaney amalgamates the past and the present with mythology and reality to create a picture of the sufferings of his people. However, he seems to be uncomfortable with the blend as it brings the memory of the savagery and maliciousness. Hence in the concluding stanza the Homeric parallel is shunned:

... But not like him-
Builder, not sacker, your shield the mortar board-

( ll 36-37, ‘Damson’ SL)

The removal of the ghosts and repudiation of the Homeric parallel, suggests Heaney’s desire for a nonviolent compensation for the victims. He wishes the ghosts to be driven ‘back to the wine-dark taste of home’ where they could have ‘the smell of damson simmering in a pot’ and relish the ‘Jam ladled thick and steaming down the sunlight’. Heaney creates two contrasting panoramas- one where the world is violence-ridden, drowned in blood and gore and other, peaceful world, where the comforts of
home compensate for the callousness. Happy homes captured in poetry provide solace and serve as a compensation to the world weary poet.

In the poem ‘Weighing In’, ‘The 56 lb. weight. A solid iron / Unit of negation’ raises a debate. The poet engages himself in explaining the need for ‘principle of bearing up...And bearing out’. The root cause of much of the violence and indifferences, at personal, social, nation and international level, are the lack of endurances, tolerance and uncompromising attitudes. The only way to a peaceful society is through compromising with own self and through acting rationally when dealing with the offensive behaviour of others:

Balance the intolerable in others
Against our own, having to abide
Whatever we settled for and settled into

Against our better judgement. Passive
Suffering makes the world go round.
Peace on earth, men of good will, all that

Holds good only as long as the balance holds

(Ill 16-22, ‘Weighing In’ SL)

Peace is not just absence of war but creating conditions which will perpetuate it. This means eradicating conflicts through mutual compromises and peaceful co-existence. Peace is the responsibility of every individual but the initiatives are judged by the parameters which promote harmony and peace. The so-called harbingers of the peace of the world, the British colonizers of the past and the American invaders of contemporary world, claim that the main reason for their invasions are not to maintain their own interest but to safeguard civilization. In the process of restructuring society, as they claim to be doing, they forget about mutual adjustments and consciously or unconsciously deprive people of their basic human rights. Heaney propagates the theory of tolerance and harmonious living in which the act of balancing oneself is indispensable. Heaney’s negotiations are raised to a higher ethical plane through the parable of ‘Blindfolded Jesus’ and Herod’s army. The blasphemous army mocked Jesus but He ‘didn’t strike back’:
...To cast the stone.
Not to do some time, not to break with
The obedient one you hurt yourself into

Is to fail the hurt, the self, the ingrown rule.
Prophesy who stuck thee! When soldiers mocked
Blindfolded Jesus and he didn’t strike back

They were neither shamed nor edified, although
Something was made manifest- the power
Of power not exercised, of hope inferred

By the powerless forever…

(II 25-34, ‘Weighing In’ SL)

Heaney regards the exercise of exerting power over the weak as ‘a deep mistaken chivalry’. Since time immemorial, the intoxication of supremacy has forced the strong to exercise their power over the powerless. Human history stands as a testimony to implementation of power over the weak. This is a universal psychology of colonialism. The Aryan invasions and British colonization of ancient India, the Anglo Norman invasions, the British colonization, the Norwegian and the Viking invasions of Ireland and the colonization of Africans and Arabs are the results of the colonizing enterprise.

Postcolonialism has widened the dimensions of the term ‘colony’. Looking through the lens of postcolonialism, the weak become the colony of the strong. e.g women in patriarchy turn out to be colony of men, the have nots are to be colony of haves, the unprivileged become the colony of the privileged. Heaney, as a postcolonial poet has taken up the task of bestowing rights to all humanity. In the world of indifferences and inequality the parable of Jesus’ endurance against Herod’s army stands like a yardstick for all the ‘powerfuls’ of the world:

Two sides to every question, yes, yes, yes…
But every now and then, just weighing in
Is what it must come down to, and without

Any self-exculpation or self pity.

(II 37-40, ‘Weighing In’ SL)
Heaney realizes that compromises are vital. In the mad tussle of dialectics between strong and weak the approach of 'mea culpa' or the sense of apology is lost. The answer to all the problems of the world, as propagated by the poet-preacher, is in 'the power / Of power not exercised'. Heaney considers endurance and compromise high virtues. Tillinghast thinks the poem is about 'the subtle reciprocal economies that makes our lives workable and bearable'.

In the 'Mycenae Lookout', Heaney continues with the theme of war. He presents a mytholized version of violent Irish political and colonial history. Heaney adopts Aeschylus's Agamemnon, the first play in the trilogy of Oresteia and contemplates on the story of Atreus and the ten year Trojan War serves as a foil to the peace processes in Northern Ireland. The Peace and Reconciliation Group (PRG) was trying to establish peace and the provisional Irish Republican Army declared unconditional ceasefire. Heaney reinvents and modifies the Greek legend to fit his context. However, in the poem there are only implied references to the peace process. Heaney's 'watchman' has a more significant role than the watchman of Agamemnon. Heaney invests the watchman with his own persona as detached observer and hesitant commentator who does not articulate any strong political judgements:

That killing-fest, the life-wrap and world-wrong
It brought to pass, still augured and endured.
I'd dream of blood in bright webs in a ford,
Of bodies raining down like tattered meat
On top of me asleep- and me the lookout

(II 4-8, Watchman's War, 'Myceane Lookout', SL)

Corcoran criticizes the poet-persona for his silence:

The watchman becomes expositor, commentator, judge, confidant and visionary, in all of which roles he is both involved and detached, and accessory to the crimes and guilts he evokes who is their articulator and interpreter. The poem finds thereby Heaney's most unpredictable and original self-representation as a poet who has himself, through his career, been drawn to commentary on, has withdrawn from propagandist involvement, in a lengthy, ongoing local internecine war.
Heaney, in his visions of violence and peace, maintains a compromised outlook. He wishes to break his silence which is not an ordinary silence but 'cross-purposed silence' as demanded by the times. In the fourth part 'The Nights', he holds himself partially responsible for the king's assassination as he as a poet was aware of the conspiracy. The narrator-poet is simultaneously within the myth and outside it. The omniscience of his position loads him with greater guilt:

\[
\text{The king should have been told,}
\]
\[
\text{but who was there to tell him}
\]
\[
\text{if not myself? I willed them}
\]
\[
\text{to cease and break hold}
\]
\[
\text{of my cross-purposed silence}
\]
\[
\text{but still kept on, all smiles}
\]

(ll 10-15, The Night, 'Myceane Lookout' \textendash; SL)

The mute witnessing emphasizes the iniquitous nature of the bystanders in the second section 'Cassandra'. Unlike in the real legend she is not protected. She is in a horrific modern rendering 'camp-fucked' by the soldiers. The bystanders watch her and do not save her. They are like animals filled with desire to rape her all over again. Brute force surfaces in the following lines:

\[
\text{And the resultant shock desire}
\]
\[
\text{in bystanders}
\]
\[
\text{to do it to her}
\]

(ll 45-48, Cassandra, 'Myceane Lookout' \textendash; SL)

Many Irish girls in sexual relationships with British soldiers shared the fate of Cassandra. The poem shares the theme of 'Punishment' (\textit{North}, 1975). The insult upon injury inflicted on women has no compensation. Heaney casts the contemporary situation of Northern Ireland within the framework of the Trojan War. Cassandra was not the only one who met such a fate. Other women were also raped and murdered:

\[
\text{But in the end Troy's mothers}
\]
\[
\text{bore their burnt in alley,}
\]

159
bloodied cot and bed.
The war put all men mad

(ll 43-46, The Nights, ‘Myceane Lookout’ SL)

The violent imagery, the blood-spattered scenes and the faithless characters, all fit the Irish context. Heaney, in one of his essays commented on the role of poetry in wartime:

Faced with the brutality of the historical onslaught, they are practically useless. Yet they verify our singularity, they strike and stake out the ore of the self which lies at the base of every individuated life. In one sense the efficacy of poetry is nil... no lyric has stopped a tank. In another sense it is unlimited. It is like writing in the sand in the face of accusers and accused are left speechless and renewed. 22

In the Gospel of John, there is an episode where Jesus indirectly answers the scribes and Pharisees, by writing on the sand. This episode is discussed by the poet in relation to his poetry:

The drawing of those characters is like poetry, a break with the usual life but not absconding from it. Poetry, like the writing, is arbitrary and marks time in every possible sense of that phrase. It does not say to the accusing crowd or to the helpless accused, “Now a solution will take place,” it does not propose to be instrumental or effective. Instead in the rift between what is going to happen and whatever we would wish to happen, poetry holds attention for a space, functions not as a distraction but as pure concentration, a focus where our power to concentrate is concentrated back on ourselves. 23

Amidst the brutality and pandemonium of war Heaney sees a ray of hope. The turmoil of war is softened with the image of fresh water:

At Troy, at Athens, what I most clearly
See and nearly smell
Is the fresh water.

(ll 1-3, His Reverie of Water, ‘Myceane Lookout’ SL)
The image of water develops into the image of the well. Heaney uses the well as a symbol of poetic inspiration and poetic imagination:

And the well at Athens too.
Or rather the old lifeline leading up
And down from Acropolis

(ll 13-15, His Reverie of Water, 'Myceane Lookout' SL)

Corcoran claims that 'fiction of watchman and Agros becomes virtually transparent to this poet [Heaney] and his own writing, since the alternative is figured in an imagery of water, wells and pump which Heaney’s work has made its own, and frequently made into a symbol for the source of poetic inspiration'^24. The ladder of Troy is transformed into a ladder ‘that ran / deep into a well-shaft’ and finally ‘deeper in themselves’ symbolizing the cavernous crevasses of the human mind.

Heaney’s Dantean ‘The Flight Path’ is in response to the violence and the circumstances of the ‘dirty protest’ begun by ‘Ciaran Nugent’, one of the Provisional IRA men, in ‘Long Kesh’ internment camp in Northern Ireland in late nineteen-seventies which led to the hunger strikes of nineteen-eighties. In 1976, the British government removed the special status granted to the prisoners imprisoned for political acts. The prisoners launched the ‘blanket protest’ in which they refused to wear prison clothes and donned blankets instead. This was followed by the ‘dirty protest’ where they refused to clean their cells and smeared excrement on the walls. When these tricks failed, prisoners started hunger strikes in which ten prisoners died. These deaths could not move the British government but support for the political wing of Provisional IRA gained great momentum:

The jail walls in those months were smeared with shite.
Out of Long Kesh after his dirty protest
The red eyes were the eyes of Ciaran Nugent
Like something of Dante’s scurfy hell

(ll 33-36, ‘The Flight Path IV’ SL)
Heaney becomes a mental-traveler journeying through the physical and metaphysical realms. He passes through Dante’s hell and also makes a trip on ‘One bright may morning, nineteen seventy-nine’ in ‘the ‘red-eye special’ from New York’ and then in ‘the train to Belfast’. Heaney adopts the theme of incarceration and starvation of Ugolino’s sons and rehistoricizes the hellish imprisonment and self-starvation of IRA hunger strikers. The scene is closes with a quotation of three lines from ‘Ugolino’:

> When he had said all this, his eyes rolled  
> And his teeth, like a dog’s teeth clamping round a bone,  
> Bit into the skull and again took hold.

(ll 40-42, ‘The Flight Path IV’ SL)

In the cannibalistic scene of *Inferno* XXXIII, after concluding his vocalizations with Dante and Virgil, Ugolino turns away to chew on the neck of his enemy. Thus, invoking the monstrous tendencies of aggression, abhorrence, and antagonism. Nugent does not die in the prison but Heaney degrades him as an Irish Ugolino, the extension of Dante’s Ugolino. He is presented in a negative aspect which exposes his cannibalistic propensities after unfolding his maltreatment and incarceration. Heaney finds similarities of situations in his own predicament and Dante’s parallel in which he not only encounters Ciaran Nugent, but also sees the reflection of his own history, politics and poetic responsibilities.

> ‘When for fuck’s sake, are you going to write  
> Something for us?’ ‘If I do write something,  
> Whatever it is, I’ll be writing for myself.’

(ll 29-31, ‘The Flight Path IV’ SL)

For Heaney, poetry is a negotiation, a vehicle of expression of his thoughts. Throughout his poetry, he searches for images and symbols to suit his predicament. His ‘digs’ down into academic disciplines, adopts and adapts, rehistoricizes and intertextualizes as redresses of his situations. In this process, he believes ‘there is tendency to place a counter-reality in the scales- a reality which may be only imagined but which nevertheless has weight because it is imagined within the gravitational pull of
the actual and can therefore hold its own and balance out against the historical situation.  

In the poem ‘Tollund’, Heaney returns to Jutland. The title retrospects the poem ‘Tollund Man’ in *North* (1975). However, it does not use the landscape of bogs or the metaphor of the bog body in any germane sense. However, the poem serves as an important milestone in the poetic resurrection of the Tollund Man which remained from *North* to *District and Circle* (2006). The poem was written on a ‘Sunday morning’ after the announcement of cessation of hostilities accomplished by the united efforts of Irish and British governments. Jutland, which has been a place of ritualistic killings, has been transformed into a ‘Townland of Peace’, where serenity and calmness pervades making even the wilderness ‘user-friendly’:

> The by-roads had their names on them in black
> And white; it was user-friendly outback
> Where we stood footloose, at home beyond the tribe,

(ll 18-20, ‘Tollund’ SL)

The impact of ceasefire seems not only confined to Ireland but to Jutland. Heaney compensates for the ritualistic carnage of the earlier poem ‘Tollund Man’ in particular and the turmoil of the violence-ridden poem of the anthology in general. The sense of hope and reconciliation envelops the poem. Peace, as it appears, has been accomplished in Jutland. The genocide has been brought to an end. This brings the hope that peace would soon reign in Ireland and the sectarian killing would be terminated.

The theme of the journey continues in the concluding poem ‘Postscript’, of the anthology, where the poet embarks on a car journey, reminding the readers of a similar journey in ‘The Peninsula’ in *Door into Dark* (1969). The time and place is defined with the concrete details.

> And some time make the time to drive out west
> Into County Clare, along the Flaggy Shore,
> In September or October...

(ll 1-3, ‘Postscript’ SL)
The elemental forces of nature 'are working off each other'. The wild, foamy and glittering ocean, the stones, the ‘surface of slate-grey lake’ and ‘the flocks of swans’ with ‘their feathers roughed and ruffling, white on white’ and ‘Their fully grown headstrong-looking heads’ work towards the harmonious subsistence of the universe. Heaney’s journey is not an ordinary one rather it is a journey of apprehensions, articulations and acceptance of the unpredicted and spectacular. In the Nobel lecture Heaney described his journeys which ‘turned out to be a stepping stone rather than a destination’.26

Heaney, through out the anthology, embarks on many journeys to mental, moral and physical dominions. Each journey enriches his awareness and helps him in comprehending the situations. The anthology could be called ‘a book of movements’ which begins with the physical movement of water in ‘The Rain Stick’, and keeps its momentum in the journey of childhood to adulthood in ‘A Sofa in the Forties’ and ‘Keeping Going’, in the mental and physical journey in ‘The Flight Path’, the movements in ‘The Swing’ and ‘The Walk’ and culminates in the journey to ‘Tollund’. Heaney’s poetry underscores the suggestion that one has to compromise with the familiar and filial confinements in order to gain mature insight.

**Electric Light (2001)**

Seamus Heaney’s anthology *Electric Light* is a compendium of poetic genres. It treasures almost all known poetic styles. Heaney has embroidered the collectanea with nature poems, elegies, eclogues and epigrams, poems of meditation on origins and deaths and poems of dedication to literary friends. Poetic returns to and revivals of the poet’s own childhood spent at Anahorish as well as of classical Arcadia are merged into contemporary experience.

The collection unwraps with the iridescent nature poem, ‘At Toomebridge’, ‘Where the flat water / Come pouring the weir out of Lough Neagh’. The water falls ‘shining to the continuous / Present of the Bann’. The stream of water makes him conscious of the horrible colonial past of the place of ‘checkpoint’ and ‘Where the rebel
The poems in the earlier anthologies such as ‘Requiem for the Croppies’, ‘A Lough Neagh Sequence’ (Door into the Dark, 1966), ‘Toome’ (Wintering Out, 1972), ‘The Toome Road’ (Field Work, 1979), explore the themes of Irish landscapes which are imprinted upon Heaney’s consciousness. The memory of the violence becomes a psychological trigger. The colonial exploitation of the eel fishing rights at Lough Neagh, which sparked conflicts between the Irish fishermen and the colonizers and the massacre of Croppies boys at Vinegar Hills in Co. Wexford in 1798, arouses a desire for compensation for the erroneous wrongs done to the community.

Heaney uses the imagery of flow of ions from Electrochemistry to define the poetic process.

Where negative ions in the open air
Are poetry to me.

(ll 8-9, ‘At Toomebridge’, EL)

The flow of electrons, negatively charged particles found in an atom, produces electric current. Electrons, along with neutrons and protons, comprise the basic building blocks of all atoms. Each electron carries a small electric charge. When the stream of electron moves, the flow of charge is called electric current which illuminates electric lights and other current dependent machines. The reminiscence of the colonial cruelties charges the current in the poetic process of the learned poet. The electric current produced illuminates the world and darkness vanishes. Similarly, the poetic current enlightens the poet’s imagination and the world is recharged. The imagery of generation of electric current seems to be an apt beginning the poet as well as the anthology Electric Light.
Heaney seems to share the Heraclitus’s philosophy that every thing in the world flows and nothing is static. Heraclitus *(540?-480? B.C) was from Ephesus. He continued the search for the Ionian for a primary substance, which he claimed to be fire. He is believed to have anticipated the modern theory of energy.

He maintained that every thing is in state of flux, that stability is an illusion, and only change and law of change, or Logos, are real. In ‘Perch’, Heaney advocates the doctrine of Heraclitus:

That is water, on carpets of Bann stream, on hold
In the everything flows and steady go of the world.

(ll 7-8, ‘Perch’, EL)

The poet’s heart seems to be lightening up with hope for change. He desires to be harbinger of change at every front of society viz. political, social, religious. The weary world waits as the poet tries hard to frame a new vision to compensate for suffering through his poetry. The logos doctrine of Heraclitus, which identified the laws of nature with a divine mind, developed into the pantheistic theology of Stoicism*. A distinguish feature of Stoicism is cosmopolitanism which believes that all people are manifestations of one universal spirit. Thus, they should live in brotherly love and readily help one another. The ethnic differences, the social and political hierarchy hold no importance in

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* Heraclitus of Ephesus, a philosopher who flourished about 500 B.C. he belonged to a noble family. He set forth his system in a prose work (he was one of the earliest writers in Greek prose) which the ancients thought obscure. They called him ‘the obscure one’ in consequences. He rejected the views of Thales and his successors that there is a single permanent and imperishable substance behind the changes we see in the material world, and held that all things are in state of flux and the matter itself is constantly changing. He attributed to fire, an immaterial substance, the origin of all things. 28

* The Stoic school of philosophy was founded at Athens c. 315 B.C. by Zeno of Citium in Cyprus. The school took its name from the fact that Zeno taught philosophy in Stoa Poikile at Athens. Zeno, in strong contrast to his contemporary Epicurus regarded the world as an organic whole, animated and directed by intelligence, and consisting of an active principle (God), and of that which is acted upon (matter), two inseparable aspect of reality. The universe, according to Stoic doctrine, at the end of each of a never-ending series of cycles, is absorbed into the divine fire, and then starts on a fresh course exactly reproducing its predecessor. In ethics Zeno held that the true end of man is an active life in harmony with nature, that is to say a life of virtue, for virtue is the law of the universe, God’s will; and right conduct produces happiness. A notable Stoic doctrine was that of universal brotherhood of man, without distinction between Greek and barbarian, freeman and slave, and of the consequent duty of universal benevolence and justice. 59

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the social relations. Before the advent of Christianity, Stoics recognized and advocated
the universal brotherhood and equality of all human beings. Heaney is deeply touched by
this philanthropism. He, too, advocates the need of worldwide brotherhood, justice and
universal benevolence. As a poet, he always attempts to relieve the quandary and plight
of different marginalized sections—the colonized, the deprived children, and the physically
challenged.

He publicized sympathy and love for them through his poetry. In 'THE
CATECHISM' from 'Ten Glosses', he promotes harmonious existence of all human
beings.

Q. and A. come back. They “formed my mind.”

“Who is my neighbour?” “My neighbour is all mankind”

(ll 1-2, 'THE CATECHISM', EL)

The poem is based on one of the Ten Commandments from Holy Bible ‘Love thy
neighbour’. With the world compressing into a global village, Heaney’s nationalism
metamorphoses into the citizenship of the world. The walls of religious, ethnic and racial
differences are responsible for the division of the world. Heaney’s poetry is a plea against
all such dividing factors. He, like a true Christian, advocates the breaking of each and
every such boundary and invites all mankind to live like neighbours. The Nobel Laureate,
with such humanitarian concerns elevates himself to a pedestal where he undoubtedly,
can be admired as the ‘World’s Poet’.

Heaney’s endeavour for the harmony and universal camaraderie continues in the
poem ‘The Border Campaign’, which he dedicates to his literary associate, the Nobel
Heaney admires the efforts of Gordimer in South Africa. The works of Gordimer reflect
the sense of frustration with the socio-political predicament of racially divided South
Africa. Her novels such as A World of Strangers (1958), Occasion for Living (1963), The
Late Bourgeois World (1966) and The Conversationalist (1974) address the theme of
tensions between white and non-white people forced to live under racial segregation,
apartheid, formerly in effect in South Africa. Heaney takes up the theme of living in a divided country. In the poem, he recollects his college days at St. Columb’s College in London Derry.

...When I heard the word “attack
In St. Columb’s College in nineteen fifty-six
It left me winded, left nothing between me
And the sky that moved beyond my border’s dormer
The way it would have moved the morning after
Savagery in Heorot, its reflection placid
In those waterlogged huge pawmarks Grendel left
On the boreen to the marsh.

(II 4-11, ‘The Border Campaign’, EL)

The violence of 1956 series of bombing raids on military supply depots and barracks occurred, seemingly carried out by IRA, from across the border in Eire. In consequence, the right to arrest and intern suspects without trial was given to the military forces. Heaney draws an analogue between the violence of his contemporary days with the ‘Savagery in Heorot’ by the monster Grendel in the Anglo-Saxon epic Beowulf. Heaney translated Beowulf into English in 2000. Conor McCarthy regards Beowulf as a ‘text which has been used by various Old English Scholars to further claims of cultural and linguistic superiority, particularly in discussions concerned with issues of national origin and justification of colonialism’\(^{30}\). In the introduction to his translation, Heaney argues about his use of ‘Irish culture’ within the context of an ‘English’ poem as an opportunity to voice some of the historical injustices that can compensate for the marginalization of Ireland by England. He writes ‘putting a bawn into Beowulf seems one way for an Irish poet to come to terms with the complex history of conquest and colony, absorption and resistance, integrity and antagonism, a history that has to be clearly acknowledged by all concerned in order to render it ever more ‘willable forward / again and again and again’\(^{31}\). This is Heaney’s strategy of dismantling the hegemony. Heaney, comments on his anti-colonial agenda:

...every time I read the lovely interlude that tells of the minstrel singing in Heorot just before the first attack of Grendel, I can not help thinking of
Edmund Spenser in Kilcolman Castle, reading the early cantos of The Fairie Queen to Sir Walter Raleigh, just before the Irish would burn the castle and drive Spencer out of Munster back to Elizabethan court.32

The intertextuality not only provides an opportunity to raise the voice of Irish decolonization but it also constructs a platform where he can bring the agony of his people within the sanctified ground of a classic Anglo-Saxon epic. By dedicating the poem to Gordimer it seems that Heaney, too, wishes to control vices in his country. The intertextuality continues in ‘On His Work in the English Tongue’, a poem written in the remembrance of the British poet and author Ted Hughes who served as poet laureate from 1984 to 1998. In Britain, the poet laureate is named by the monarch as a member of the imperial household and is charged with the preparation of suitable verses for court and state occasions. In Seeing Things, Heaney dedicated ‘Casting and Gathering’ to Hughes. Heaney welcomed the poet laureateship of Ted Hughes:

[Britain] should turn to a poet with essentially religious vision….with a strong trust in the pre-industrial realities of natural world, is remarkable. In fact, it is a vivid demonstration of the truth of the implied message of Hughes’s poetry that the instinctual, intuitive side of man’s, and in particular the Englishman’s, nature has been starved and occluded and is in need of refreshment.33

The influence of Hughes on Heaney can be traced in the early anthologies like Death of a Naturalist and Door into the Dark. Heaney acknowledged ‘I’m different kind of animal from Ted, but I will always be grateful for the release that reading his work gave me’34. However the Hughesian influence is blurred in the later anthologies and replaced by a need to explore the roots of conflict in Ireland. For Heaney, Hughes was a like a torchbearer at the onset of his poetic career but he, being poet laureate, reminds Heaney of the subjugation of the Irish culture. Tom Pauline analyzes the relations between Ireland and England as ‘a story of possession and dispossession, territorial struggle and establishment or imposition of culture’35. Heaney combats this consciousness by giving a vernacular aspect to the Anglo Saxon epic. It can be categorized as a literary compensation:
Passive suffering: who said it was disallowed
As a theme for poetry? Already in Beowulf
The dumbfounding of woe, the stunt and stress
Of hurt-in-hiding is the best of it.

(II 1-4, ‘On His Work in the English Tongue, 3’, EL)

Heaney continues:

And the poet draws from his word-hoard a weird tale
Of a life and love balked, which I reword here

(II 10-11, ‘On His Work in the English Tongue, 3’, EL)

Heaney makes ‘Passive suffering’ the major theme of his poetry. He moulds the
‘weird tale’ into a new postcolonial frame work and becomes ‘reinventor of the poem,
[one] who turns Old English into Modern English to remake the literary and cultural
history of the British Isles’. The influence of European poets on Heaney can be seen in
the prose which he wrote in nineteen-eighties. Czeslaw Milosz, Osip Mandelstam, Joseph
Brodsky and Zbiginew Herbert appear in his prose and in this anthology. In the
concluding stanza he remembers Milosz’s saying:

Soul has its scruples. Things not to be said.
Things for keeping, that can keep the small hours gaze
Open and steady. Things for the aye of God
And for poetry. Which is, as Milosz says,
“A dividend from ourselves,” a tribute paid
By what we have been true to. A thing allowed.

(II 1-6, ‘On His Work in the English Tongue, 5’, EL)

The Nobel Laureate Czeslaw Milosz (1911-2004) was a Polish poet, essayist,
novelist and translator. His work concentrates on the impact of historical circumstances
on human morality. In nineteen thirty-nine when Germany invaded Poland, Milosz joined
the underground movement of resistance to Nazi occupation and edited an anthology of
anti-Nazi poetry Piesnniepodlegla (Invincible Songs, 1942). After the war was over he
worked as a cultural ambassador at the Polish embassies in Paris and Washington D.C.
During the ten year span in France, Milosz wrote Znewolony umysl (The Captive Mind,
1953), a much-admired political essay about the effects of the World War II on the values of imaginary writers who were forced to rationalize Stalinism. Milosz also translated the works of Shakespeare, Eliot and Milton into Polish.

The literary relationship which Heaney shares with Milosz is based on the idea of poetry as compensation for the socio-historical reality. Heaney shares the poetics of responsibility with the Polish poet who himself enquires about the significance of ‘poetry which does not save / Nation or people’. Milosz answers that ‘gentle verses written in the midst of horror declare themselves for life.’ Like the Polish poet, he desires to write poetry which ‘is strong enough to help society.’

In ‘Audenesque’, Heaney adapts four-beat quatrain of Auden’s elegy for Yeats:

Joseph, yes, you know the beat.
Wystan Auden’s metric feet
Marched to it, unstressed and stressed,
Laying William Yeats to rest.

Its measured ways I tread again
Quatrain by constrained quatrain,
Meting grief and reason out
As you said a poem ought.

(ll 1-4, 9-12, ‘Audenesque’, EL)

The elegy commemorates Joseph Brodsky (1940-1996), Russian born American poet, who served eighteen months in a Soviet labour camp for the charge of social parasitism, and was later exiled. He migrated to America and published numerous collections of his works. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 1987 and was named as U.S poet laureate in 1991. A major collection of his poetry, Selected Poems, was published in English translation in 1973, followed by A Part of Speech in nineteen eighty, History of Twentieth Century in 1986 and To Urania in 1988. Brodsky, in his essay ‘To Please a Shadow’ (1983), declared Auden as a poet whose ‘sentiments inevitable subordinate themselves to the linear and recoiling progression of art.’ Heaney
shares the dilemma of exile and political consciousness with that of Brodsky. In the concluding lines his advice to Brodsky is:

Do again what Auden said
Good poets do: bite, break their bread.

(II 67-68, ‘Audensque’, EL)

Heaney translated *Beowulf* and *Sweeney Astray* into English. The influence of translations is recurrent in Heaney’s œuvres. Zbigniew Herbert (1924-1998) is a Polish poet and essayist whose works have a profound impact on Heaney. His works are unconventional and ironic. In 1950 he published the collection *Struna swiatła* (Chord of Light), followed by *Hermes, pies i gwiazda* (Hermes, a Dog and a Star, 1957) and *Studium przedmiotu* (A Study of the Object, 1961). Heaney comments that Herbert’s poetry is ‘in the exactions of its logic, the temperance of its tone, and extremity and equanimity of its recognitions’.* He suggests that Herbert renounced ‘poetry as a self-indulging ornament’. In the poem ‘To the Shade of Zbigniew Herbert’, he addresses him as a poet whom ‘Apollo favoured’. Heaney says that for the Polish, Herbert was Apollo’s reincarnated. In Greek mythology, Apollo was the son of Zeus and Leto. He is the god of medicine, music, archery, and prophecy.

You were one of those from the back of the north wind
Whom Apollo favoured and would keep going back to
In the winter season. And among your people you
Remained his herald whenever he’d departed
And the land was silent and summer’s promise thwarted.
You learnt the lyre from him and kept it tuned.

(II 1-6, ‘To the Shade of Zbigniew Herbert’, EL)

Heaney presents his œuvres as memoirs and biographies. The poet he alludes to, analyzes or intertextualizes becomes a part of his poetic conscious. He sees his relationship with the literary family as a form of fascination. In an interview with Rand Brandes, he confessed ‘The only way I can write about any conviction is out of love. Not necessarily from my long immersion in the poet, but the poet’s immersion in me’.* In
the poem "Would They Had Stayed", the allusions are made to Scottish writers such as George Mackay Brown and Sorley Maclean. The other figures are Norman MacCaig and Iain MacGabhainn. The title of the poem echoes Heaney's desire for a reunion with his literary family. The poets invoked in the dedications and elegies are mostly the poets of the new world. Heaney can be associated with each one of them in their themes, their visions and their struggles against marginalization. The emerging literature of the postcolonial world encompasses literatures from across the globe. The English literary canon is being broadened not only by the native writers but also by those from Eastern Europe, South Africa, Indian subcontinent, Ireland and the Caribbean.

Heaney seems to be aware of the cultural diversity of globalization. Thus, in accordance to the demands of the new world, he acknowledges the contributions of non-native writers from the smaller and often unacknowledged, countries. Populating the English literary canon with writers from other countries excluding the British Isles, Heaney deploys a postcolonial tactic of softening the supremacy of the English literature written by the native. The glowing tribute to the writers of the new world, to some extent, compensates for the age-old marginalization of non-native literatures. The issue of literary reception is a significant debate of the postcolonial world. Steiner's remarked:

The new status of Eastern Europe has occasioned a veritable tide of translation both into English and into the relevant languages. Czech, Polish, Hungarian, and Romanian literature are beginning to reach the Anglo-American world-audience. In turn, Western texts, long forbidden, are being imported... Anglo-American masters, notably among the poets, are themselves turning more and more to translation. It is as if the planetary dominion of their privileged world-speech entails growing responsibilities.42

Along with Herculiean wisdom that every thing is in flux, Heaney holds memories to be stable. In the poems of remembrance Heaney recollects and elegizes friends and contemporaries who played Shakespearean roles at school in ‘The Real Names’. The poem is dedicated to the Irish playwright and short story writer Brian Friel (b. 1929). He is best known for addressing Irish themes. His work encapsulates rural magic, violence, republicanism and politics, the influence of colonizer’s culture of Ireland and the colonial
divisions between Ireland and Northern Ireland. Friel has translated, adopted and adapted a number of works by other authors such as Russian writers Anton Chekhov and Ivan Turgenev. He is also one of the founding members of Field Day group of Irish writers which includes Heaney.

The poem freezes the childhood moments which the poet ‘won’t forget’. He fondly remembers the enactment of Shakespeare’s play by the juvenile and local school-artists.

He dumped down at the opening of the scene
Raised a stour off the boards, his turnip fists
Swung low out of his ripped tarpaulin smock.
I won’t forget his Sperrins Caliban,
His bag-aproned, potato-gatherer’s Shakespeare:
And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-nuts.

(II 6-11, ‘The Real Names’, EL)

The Irish juvenile adaptation of the play creates a mature colonial consciousness in the poet. The universally celebrated Shakespeare is localized as the ‘potato-gatherer’s Shakespeare’. Heaney has always associated potatoes with the Irish identity. He has described his ancestors as potato-gatherers and as people who dig with the spade. Heaney, too, digs into history and literature, but with his pen. The evocation of Caliban and Prospero hint towards the relationship which the Irish and English shared. Shakespeare’s Tempest introduces Caliban as a savage and deformed slave who is neither man nor animal. He has to be taught language. In postcolonial criticism, Caliban has become central to the discourse of colonialism and as a cosmopolitan voice of anti-colonialism. This notion is shared by the colonies across the world. The colonizers under their pseudo-noble mission treated the natives as barbarians who had to be civilized. Derek Walcott voices similar sentiments:

Their admirable wish to honour the degraded ancestor limits their language to phonetic plain, the groan of suffering, the curse of revenge. The tone of the past becomes unbearable burden, for they must abuse the master or hero in his own language, and this implies self-deceit. Their view of Caliban is of the enraged pupil. They cannot separate the rage of
Caliban from the beauty of his speech when the speeches of Caliban are equal in their elemental power to those of his tutor. The language of the torturer mastered by the victim. This is viewed as servitude, not as victory.  

Heaney, as a postcolonial Caliban, writes to decolonize. This is a compensatory mission. In the poem, Heaney thinks of Shakespeare, the literary creator of Caliban:

Shakespeare’s father (or so John Aubrey claims)
Was a butcher, and when Shakespeare was a boy
“He exercised his father’s trade, but when
He kill’d a Calfe, he would doe it in high style
& make a speech.”

(ll 49-53, ‘The Real Names’, EL)

Heaney recalls his imitation of Shakespeare.

Managing to stand up unsupported
On the deck-tilt of hot zinc: I’m on a roof
That overlooks forever, with a pretend
Gully knife of my own in one raised hand,
Sawing air with the other
(Call it a stage
That everyone goes through ahead of time).

Cows snuffle at feed buckets in the byre
The stall-chain
Call it a home from home.

(ll 57-66, ‘The Real Names’, EL)

The portrayal of Shakespeare’s father as a ‘butcher’ and of the young Shakespeare pursuing the same trade is ironic. The cow, traditionally, has been associated with the peaceful rural world. The Irish native has been compared to the peaceful bucolic animal. The contrasting images of Heaney’s ancestors rearing animals and ploughing fields of Shakespeare’s father slaughtering cows indicate the differences between the two poets. Heaney’s representation of Shakespeare’s childhood can be described as colonial mimicry. Homi Bhabha refers to such situations as ‘ironic compromise’. Shakespeare as
the mouthpiece of the Empire misrepresented the Irish in his plays. Heaney writes back by representing him as a 'butcher'.

In a world where everything is in state of flux, Heaney believes memories are stable. In ‘Montana’ Heaney remembers ‘John Dologhan, the best milker ever’. Heaney, as a five years old child, developed a kind of ‘recognition’ with John Dologhan which at that time ‘made no sense’. However, a later visit to the stable triggers memories which he treasures in his poetry. Heaney has always related himself to the common people. Memories for Heaney are the healing faculty of fixities which compensate for the flux of the world. ‘The Loose Box’, too, starts with an abandoned stable. Heaney is again ‘Back at the dark end’ where ‘a deep-littered silence’ pervades. The poem recalls ‘an old recording’ of the Irish poet and novelist, Patrick Kavanagh:

That there’s health and worth in any talk about
The properties of land. Sandy, glarry,
Mossy, heavy, cold, the actual soil

(II 27-29, ‘The Loose Box’, EL)

Patrick Kavanagh (1904-1967) is best acknowledged for his volume The Great Hunger (1942) which recounts the depravation of the Irish land-tillers and the frustration of their families. Heaney’s poem captures a series of images. It opens with the birth of Jesus Christ a stable, and makes a reference to Thomas Hardy’s Tess of the D’Urbervilles while exploring the theme of cultural clash between industrialization of the cities and diminishing quality of rural life, then moves to the Trojan horse and finally to the death of Irish patriot Michael Collins (1890-1922) in the civil war. The fragmented images deal with religion, literature and nationalism. The poem commences with the birth of Christ, the savior of humanity and concludes with the death of Michael Collins who tried to save Ireland. The linking factor is the stable and the straw. Christ is born on a bed of straw; Trojan horse is filled with straw and the death of Collins occurs in the stable, on the straw. The abandoned stable reminds Heaney of the colonial history of Ireland where a visionary was killed on straw. Christ was born on straw and in his attempt to rescue
mankind was crucified. In the same way, Collins was killed on ‘hay-floor’ in his
decade to save his community:

Has nothing to hold on to and falls again
Willingly, lastly, foreknowledgeably deep
Into the hay-floor that gave once in his childhood
Down through the bedded mouth of the loft trapdoor,
The loosening fodder-chute, the aftermath...

(ll 58-62, ‘The Loose Box’, EL)

The childhood belief that the family doctor Kerlin brought babies in his big, black
take is described in the poem ‘Out of the bag’. The child entertains the illusion that the
doctor made the baby by magically putting together ‘infant parts’ with his surgical
instruments such as ‘steel hooks and chrome surgery tools’. After the birth of the baby,
his mother would ask him:

“And what do you think
Of the new wee baby the doctor brought for us all
When I was asleep?”

(ll 13-15, ‘Out of the Bag IV, EL)

As an adult, Heaney writes:

The room I came from and the rest of us all came from
Stays pure reality where I stand alone,…

(ll 1-2, ‘Out of the Bag IV, EL)

Pre-mature knowledge of reproduction was considered unsuitable for children.
Parents created symbolic stories to satisfy the curiosities of young children. The poet
links the narratives of his mother to the healing power of poetry:

Poeta doctus  Peter Levi says
Sanctuaries of Asclepius (called asclepions)
Were the equivalent of hospitals

In the ancient Greece. Or of shrines like Lourdes,
Says poeta doctus Graves. Or of the cure
By poetry that cannot be coerced,
Say I, who realized at Epidaurus
That the whole place was a sanatorium
With theatre and gymnasium and baths,
A site of incubation, where "incubation"
Was technical and ritual, meaning sleep
When epiphany occurred and you met the god...

(II 1-12, ‘Out of the Bag II, EL)

Heaney’s epiphany is based on the relationship between the creation of a baby and the writing of poetry. God creates the baby and poet creates poetry. The realization comes at Epidaurus*, the site of temple dedicated to Asclepius**. In ancient Greece, the patients were cured at the temple. For Heaney, ‘the whole place was a sanatorium’ where he could get rid of ignorance. The curing power of poetry is equated with the ancient mythical cure center and the pilgrimage to Lourdes in south western France where in 1858; St. Bernadette claimed to have a vision of the Virgin Mary. The waters of an underground spring in the grotto are believed to have miraculous healing power. Heaney believes that poetry can cure ills, revitalize the decaying, and resurrect the dead and reform society.

The theme of poetic resurrection is central to the poem ‘Sruth’, which Heaney wrote in memory of Mary O Muirithe. She was not cured from her illness but has been immortalized in Heaney’s verses. The poet visited her home after her death to honour her. The emotional bond prompted Heaney to do so. She died of ‘cancer’, the incurable

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* Epidaurus in Argolis, the chief seat of the worship of Asclepius. The sanctuary contained, besides the temple of Asclepius, a remarkable circular building supported by two circular colonnades, and a great outer colonnade where probably the patient slept. Here have been found inscriptions recording a number of cures effected in the sanctuary. About a quarter of mile from the sanctuary was the theatre, a very beautiful structure still to be seen in good preservation.

** In Greek mythology, son of Apollo and god of medicine. Apollo loved Coronis, daughter of Phlegyas, but she was unfaithful to him, and he slew her. Afterward he felt sorry, and turned the crow which had told him of of her infidelity from a white bird into a black. He saved the child of Coronis (Asclepius) and entrusted him to wise Centaur Chiron. From him Asclepius learnt the art of medicine.
disease according to medical science. The poetic imagination now cures her and also revitalizes her. Heaney makes him ‘Fit for what comes’:

Then asked me to visit:
If anything happened
Just to see and be sure
And not to forget
For your sake to do it.

(II 17-21, ‘Sruth’, EL)

Remembrance provides an emotional compensation for Heaney as well as for the friend who could not be saved by the doctors. The implication is that the power of poetry transcends all the cures in the world.

Heaney discusses the disintegration of Balkans in 1990s in the poem ‘Known World’. Balkans peninsula encompasses the countries that are commonly known as Balkan state: Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Republic of Macedonia, Siberia and Montenegro, Albania, Greece and Bulgaria. Balkan’s history is characterized by military and political strife as the peninsula is politically and economically important. In 1991 and 1992, four Yugoslav republics-Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia, declared their independence from Yugoslavia. This was followed by Serbia and Montenegro formation of new state- the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Heaney paints a gory picture of war in which concentration camps have mushroomed at every corner and people have been injured and made roofless:

... And now the refugees
Come loaded on tractor mudguards and farm carts,
On trailers, ruck-shifter, box-barrows, prams,
On sticks, on crutches, on each other’s shoulders,

(II 41-44, ‘Known World, EL)
The atrocities of wars bring a sense of loss and the disheartened poet believes that nothing has changed in the so-called civilized world. The prehistoric barbarity continues to envelop the world in which man has been reduced to a civilized beast:

The old sense of a tragedy going on
Uncomprehended, at the very edge
Of the usual, it never left me once…

(II 51-53, ‘Known World, EL)

Nationalism has changed. The barbaric world is defined by the need to establish a single ethnic identity. Ironically the harmonious existence of a single identity demands the ethnic decontamination of the other community. ‘Known world’ portrays the horror of the ethnic-cleansing of Bosnia and Herzegovina:

The open door, the jambs, the worn saddle
And actual granite of the doorstep slab.
Now enter another angel, fit as ever,
Past each house with a doorstep daubed “Serb house”.

(II 69-72, ‘Known World, EL)

Before the war, Bosnia had a concentrated ethnic population. The Muslim population was concentrated in the central and eastern Bosnia. Concentrations of Serbs were separate from those of Muslims. Croats were mainly concentrated on the northern and southwestern border with Croatia, with some Croats pockets in Central Bosnia. Serb military campaigns of 1992 and 1993 and Croats campaigns of 1993 and 1995 were aimed at ethnic cleansing of the ‘others’ from their areas. By the end of the war almost all non-Serbs had been expelled from Serb-claimed lands in eastern and northern Bosnia, and non-Croats from Croats-claimed lands in southwestern Bosnia. In turn, most non-Muslims had vacated the land under Muslim control in northwestern Bosnia. The war and its aftermath created homogenous zones. The return of the refugees was impossible.

Faced with the responsibility of addressing complex issues, the poet evaluates the healing role of poetry. The poet asks himself many questions:
Were we not made for summer, shade, and coolness
And gazing through an open door at sunlight?
For paradise lost? Is what I was taught?

(II 48-50, 'Known World, EL)

Heaney is unnerved by the savagery which motivates people to kill each other only because their views, language, colour of skin and religion are different from the 'other'. The suggestion of enjoying the natural beauty serves as a compensation for the violent mood of the poem.

Heaney bedecks Electric Light with three eclogues- ‘Bann Valley Eclogue’, ‘Virgil: Eclogue IX’, and ‘Glanmore Eclogue’. Eclogues are pastoral poems which are written in the form of dialogues or conversations. They are used as a means to contrast simple, unlettered shepherds with the corrupt urban populace. Eclogues are used as mouthpieces to utter moral and philosophical viewpoints. The form was explored by Italian Renaissance humanists such as Petrarch and Giovanni Boccaccio. In the history of English literary tradition, Edmund Spenser wrote The Shepheardes Calendar (1579) in 12 eclogues. The pastoral theme is taken up in works such as The Sad Shepherd (1641) by Ben Jonson, Arcadia by Sir Philip Sidney. William Shakespeare used the pastoral convention in As You Like It (1600). Pastoral elegy, one of the forms of eclogue, has inspired writers of elegies e.g. ‘Lycidas’ by Milton, Adonais (1821) by P.B Shelley and Thyrsis (1866) by Arnold.

The pastoral offers an alternative to the culture of wars. In Heaney’s metaphysics it seems to compensate for the atrocities of war by investing violence and stalemates with future possibilities of reconciliations and hopes of integration.

Heaney’s ‘Bann Valley Eclogue’ is loosely structured upon Virgil’s Eclogue IV. In 37 B.C, Virgil completed his first major work Eclogues, which contained pastoral poems modeled on the Idyll of Alexandrian poet Theocritus. Virgil’s Eclogue shows nationalistic consciousness with the introduction of real characters and events in the poem. The fourth Eclogue celebrates the birth of a child who is destined to usher a new
age of peace and prosperity. This tale might have reference to the expected child of Mark Antony and Octavia and symbolically may refer to the dawning of a new age. During the Roman Age and Middle Ages, the poem was regarded as a prophesy of birth of Jesus Christ.

Virgil’s fourth Eclogue offers a vision of peace. In ‘Bann Valley Eclogue’, Virgil appears before the poet. The poet aware of the influence of Virgil’s Eclogue on his people, asks him to provide inspiration. Adhering to the pastoral tradition of a pastoral poem, Heaney begins with an invocation to Muses:

Bann Valley Muses, give us a song worth singing,
Something that rises like the curtain in
Those words And it came to pass or In the beginning.
Help me to please my hedge-school master Virgil

(II 1-4, ‘Bann Valley Eclogue’, EL)

Heaney’s use of Eclogue evolved from the same state of mind as Virgil. Virgil wrote Eclogue in the midst of civil wars. The exhaustion and the demand of a peaceful compensation unite Virgil and Heaney. Virgil appears and assigns to Heaney the task of writing for the nation:

Carmen, ordo, nascitur, saeculum, gens.
Their gist in your tongue and provience should be clear
Even at this stage. Poetry, order, the times,
The nation, wrong and renewal, then an infant birth
And flooding away of all the old miasma.
...
...But when the waters break
Bann’s stream will overflow, the old markings
Will avail no more to keep east bank from west.
The valley will be washed like the new baby.

(II 8-12 & 15-18, ‘Bann Valley Eclogue’, EL)

Heaney quotes ‘Carmen, ordo, nascitur, saeculum, gens’ form Virgil’s Eclogue which heralds the unambiguous onset of a new era. The negotiations of poetry are helpful
in proposing compromises. Heaney's golden child will be the harbinger of a new reformed world where all the divisions will not exist as they would have already been washed away with the liberating water. Virgil prophesizes:

Eclipses won’t be for this child. The cool she’ll know
Will be the pram hood over her vestal head.
Big dog daisies will get fanked up in the spokes.
She’ll lie on summer evenings listening to
A chug and slug going on in the milking parlour.
Let her never hear close gunfire or explosion.

(II 25-30, 'Bann Valley Eclogue', EL)

The expected child in Virgil's Eclogue is a boy. Heaney however advocates birth of a girl. Heaney is aware of the gender bias against the girl child. In the modern world the preference for the male-child is still prevalent. As a result the world is still under the eclipse of female foeticide. With the coming of new era Heaney hopes 'Eclipses won’t be there for this child'. Heaney shows a concern for the marginalization of girls and desires a secure future of girls. His reassurance is a redress against the gender politics still persistent in many parts of world. The possibilities of reconciliation are balanced with the anxiety of eclipse of 1991. Heaney offers a natural world where 'Cows are let out....sluicing the milk-house floor'. The natural world offers compensations for the war-torn world. It washes away the past problems and grief with its liberating stream. It paves the way to reconciliation, and directs a shaft of light towards compensations and consolations of a secure and healthy future symbolized by the girl-child. Heaney's stream of water transcends the boundaries of his national consciousness and decontaminates and quenches the thirst of whole humanity. In the hope of a secure future of the world, the poet compromises with the reality of the condition in which the people actually live. He takes compensatory refuge in his imaginative vision of a possible safe and sound future of mankind.

The complexity of healing the injuries inflicted by wars is evident in Heaney's translation of Virgil's ninth Eclogue in 'Virgil: Eclogue IX'. In the eclogue of political protest and complain, Heaney raises the issues of sufferings of the civilian. The poem
seems to be a renewed endeavour of initiating negotiations which Heaney feels would bring reconciliation. The poem represents a longing for shelter. Colonization and the territory wars of the world have resulted in dislocating original inhabitants. The Balkan wars for ethnic singularity resulted in ethnic cleansing and capturing of land owned by the dominant’s ‘other’. After Octavian’s victory in the civil war Virgil was forcefully evicted from farm which was given to a demobilized soldier. The displacement from his own land inflicted a deep wound in Virgil’s heart. This sense of displacement can be extended to the psyche of all the civilians and natives whose lands were confiscated during colonization and during civil wars. Moeris complains in the poem:

An outsider lands and says he has the rights
To our bit of ground. “Our, old hands,” he says,
“This place is mine.” And all these kid-goats in the creel-
Bad cess to him- these kids are his. All’s changed.

(II 4-7, ‘Virgil: Eclogue IX’, EL)

The confiscation is not confined to the physical level of capturing land and imprisoning natives. It includesthe potential of articulation which, too, is suppressed during colonization and wars as Lycidas confesses in the poem ‘Shocking times. Our very music, our one consolation, / Confiscated, all but.’ The marginalization and subjugation was prevalent at every front and the most sensitive and responsible public-voice, the poet, the, feels inadequate in combating the situation. The poet becomes helpless as a dove before an eagle:

... But songs and tunes
Can no more hold out against the brute force than doves
When eagle swoops.


The simile of a dove before an eagle communicates the weakness of natives before the colonizers and of the civilians before the foreign soldiers. The pastoral poets write about pastures and the loss of their land renders them incapable of writing poetry. The act of writing compensates for the losses as exhibited in ‘Singing shortens the road’. The
In 1845 the potato crop in Ireland was struck by a disease and half the crop failed. The other agricultural products such as wheat and oats and the other resources such as beef, mutton, pork and poultry were taken and shipped out of the country by the British landowners for profit. The economic condition of the Irish peasant went from bad to worse in the years 1846 and 1847 leaving the people starving. The British Empire turned a deaf ear to the plight and refused to help the starving people and continued to ship the produce abroad. In the dreadful event many people migrated to other countries and more than one and a half million starved to death.

desire to write earnest poetry is compromised with the understanding of their engagements. The hope to write again partially heals their wounds:

That's enough of that, my boy. We've a job to do. 
When the real singer comes, we'll sing in earnest.

(II 82-83, 'Virgil: Eclogue IX', EL)

Heaney has always associated Glanmore, an estate in Co. Wicklow in the Republic of Ireland, with peaceful and revitalizing strength. Glanmore has been referred to in the 'Glanmore Sonnets' in *Field Work* (1979) and 'Glanmore revisited' in *Seeing Things* (1991). Heaney's move from Belfast to Glanmore in 1972 was to renew the poetic imagination. The peaceful and pastoral vision of Glanmore was compensation against the brutalities of Troubles. The eclogue is in form of dialogue between Myles and the poet. Myles may refer to Myles na gCopaleen- the Irish name of Brian O’ Nolan or the name may be a pun on Milesians, the mythological Spanish invaders of Ireland who invaded Ireland in 1300 B.C and became the ancestor of Gaelic Irish race. Peace has been established and captured in poetry. To renew inspiration which has somewhat decomposed because of wars, Myles says:

A house and ground. And your own bay tree as well 
And time to yourself. You’ve landed on your feet. 
If you can’t write now, when will you ever write?

(II 1-3, 'Glanmore Eclogue', EL)

The poem suggests that peace does not always bring universal prosperity. Peace sometimes brings its own problems. Those problems are relative for the poet and the farmer. Myles describes the difficulty in coming to terms with the changing world:

But now with all this money coming in 
And peace being talked up, the boot’s on the other foot.

Small farmers here are priced out of the market.

(II 20-21 &24, 'Glanmore Eclogue', EL)
The local farmer wishes for financial security, but the poet seems to be aware of his limitation. As a modest compromise, he offers a ‘summer song’ to the farmer. The song serves as temporary compensation and for a while reduces the insecurity of the farmer. The poet attempts to re-nurture his imagination. The eclogue is between the poet (Heaney’s profession) and the farmer (Heaney’s inheritance). In the eclogue, Heaney justifies his option to use the ‘pen’ rather than the ‘spade’ and his breaking up of the familial lineage as announced in his first anthology *Death of a Naturalist*.

The eclogues are different from the conventional pastoral poems as Frawley analyzes in the introduction to his work:

Virgil and Theocritus’ pastoral offered an idealization of a simple life in nature that implied a critique of their culture; Pastoral poems written under the ruler of a colonial government about nature and landscape are necessarily different, and contain as well become clear of culture lost under colonial rule, but also critiques of that rule itself. Colonial pastorals are quite literary about ‘homesickness’; the nostalgia contained in them is very real indeed.\(^{46}\)

Heaney’s pastoral vision compensates for the savage realities of wars. It underscores a harsh, pragmatic nostalgia that demands decolonization rather than maudlin retreat.

Heaney recreates the lavishness of the natural world in ‘Sonnets from Hellas’. The sonnets travel extensively in space and time, in the past and the present, journeying through the classical locations and revisiting the poet’s childhood. The classical and the modern are woven together in the descriptions of place and time. Hellas or the land of Hellenes is often applied to ancient Greece, including the Greek islands and colonies. The name became common after the mass migrations of Hellenic people, beginning about 1100 B.C.

In the first sonnet “INTO ARCADIA”, Heaney travel to Arcadia*, the rural utopia, where he finds ‘opulence and amen on the mountain road’. Time and location hold no value in the place of perfect rural bliss. The farmer who once worked in Melbourne,
capital of Victoria, in southeastern Australia, is ‘Known in Hellas, probably, since Hesiod’. Hesiod was a Greek poet who lived in 8th century B.C. Heaney’s Arcadia seems to be well connected by the modes of modern travel-communication.

Into Arcadia, a lorry load
Of apples had brust open the road
So that for yards our tyres raunched and scrunched them

(II 8-10, ‘INTO ARCADIA’, ‘Sonnets from Hellas, EL)

Only poetic imagination can grant access to this kind of amalgamated rural-modern utopia. The imaginary rural utopia is modernized through Heaney’s imagination. It hints towards Heaney’s dream vision of modernizing his rural society. ‘Pylos’ is written in memoriam of the American poet Robert Fitzgerald who translated Homer into English. Pylos is a region in Greece. In the ‘sandy Pylos’ Heaney ‘woke to the world like Telemachos’ and he feels he is ‘Young again in the whitewashed light of morning’. The poem is written as an acknowledgement of the literary achievement of Robert Fitzgerald who is ‘translator of all Homer’. He wishes to acknowledge the high achievements:

From myself to be more myself in the mast-bending
Marine breeze, to key the understanding
To that image of the bow strung as a lyre

(II 7-9, ‘PYLOS’, ‘Sonnets from Hellas, EL)

Heaney applauds the American poet for his translation of Homer which seems to have influenced Heaney in the translation of various classical works. Heaney has translated the classical works of Virgil and Dante into English; he has also translated Beowulf and Sophocles’s Antigone (The Burial at Thebes) and Philoctetes (The Cure at Troy), The Midnight Verdict (from B. Merriman and Ovid), and Buile Suibhne (Sweeney Astray) into English. The classics occupy a significant in the literary world. Italo Cavino emphasized the significance and need of classics in ‘Why Read the Classics’:

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The classics are books that exert a peculiar influence, both when they refuse to be eradicated from the mind when they conceal themselves in the folds of memory, camouflaging themselves as collective or individual.  

Further, he viewed classics as a reflection of historical culture:

The classic are books that comedown to us bearing the traces of reading previous to ours, and bringing in their wake the traces they themselves have left on the culture or cultures they passed through (or more simply, on language and custome).

For Heaney, as a part of identity, both language and customs are important. In his attempts to dismantle the hegemony he uses language as a tool for the subjugation of customs and traditions of natives. The translations provide an opportunity to look back into the histories of ancient civilizations and he uses the platform to rehistorize his own circumstances. Heaney extends gratitude to Robert Fitzgerald.

Heaney uses his poetry as a site to acknowledge all his mentors. In ‘Seeing the Sick’, he wishes to express gratitude to his father who reminds him of ‘Hopkins’s Felix Randal’. Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889) was an English poet whose works express an intense response to the natural world, and whose literary innovations have given a new lease of life to English lyrics. In 1884, Hopkins became a professor of Greek at University College, Dublin. However his stay at Ireland was miserable because of his ill health and excessive workload. During his stay he produced a series of ‘Terrible Sonnets’, which reflect the conflict between his religious vocation and the attractions of the world.

Hopkins’s ‘Felix Randal’ is an elegy to a dead blacksmith. After the death of Randal, the duty of the Hopkins also ends as the poet is left sans a subject. Hopkins writes in ‘Felix Randal (ll 1-2).

Felix Randal the farrier, O he is dead then? My duty all ended
Heaney remembers his father in a similar fashion but he claims that his loss and grief is much more as he shares an intimate filial blood relationship with his father. Heaney laments:

Anointed and all, my father did remind me
Of Hopkins’s Felix Randal.
    And then he grew
(As he would have said himself) “wee in his cloths”-
Spectral, a relict-
    OAnd seemed to have grown so

(ll 19-23, ‘Seeing the Sick’, EL)

Heaney is reminded of Hopkins’s ‘Felix Randal’ because of his association with the labour class. The title of the Heaney’s poem comes from a line from Hopkins’s ‘Felix Randal’ (ll 13).

This seeing the sick endears them to us, us too it endears.

Unlike Hopkins, Heaney’s duty is not over with the death of his father. He is overwhelmed by continuous surges of memory:

His smile a summer half-door opening out
And opening in. a reprieveing light.
For which the tendered morphine had our thanks.

(ll 19-21, ‘Seeing the Sick’, EL)

Father’s smile, connected to multi-hued memories, was like ‘a reprieveing light’. Heaney travels down memory lane and recollects mistakes and fears of rebuke. However, his father always smiled. The smile came across like ‘tendered morphine’. Heaney wishes to thank his father for being gentle and caring. Heaney has evoked the figure of his father in several poems such as ‘Follower’ and ‘Digging’ (Death of a Naturalist), and ‘The Stone Verdict’ (The Haw Lantern). In these poems the evocation was for establishing rural identity and exposing the impact of colonialism. The reminiscence in ‘Seeing the Sick’ seems to emerge from the desire to acknowledge the filial bond.
The concluding poem of the anthology is the title poem ‘Electric Light’. Following the division of Ireland with the declaration of Republic of Ireland on Easter Monday, 18th April, 1949, the mass migration to cities and to other countries started. People migrated to the United States of America and to the United Kingdom in search for better job opportunities. In an attempt to assist the farming population, and to curtail the mass migration of farm workers to the cities and other countries, electrification of rural Ireland was started. This exercise promoted the establishment of local small scale industries.

In the poem Heaney remembers his childhood visit to an old woman’s house. Heaney does not identify her. Heaney begins the poem with the description of ‘Candle-grease congealed, dark-streaked with wick-soot...’ which symbolizes the pre-electrification alternatives for light. The woman was ‘old’ and electrification was new. The implication is that earlier she had spent many dark nights and uncomfortable days without the electricity. Now, with the introduction of light ‘She sat with her fur-lined slippers unzipped’. The old woman introduced Heaney to the new inventions of electric light and radio.

In the first house where I saw electric light

(II 5, ‘Electric Light’, EL)

A turn of their wireless knob and light came on
In the dial. They let me and they watched me
As I roamed at will the stations of the world.

(II 31-33, ‘Electric Light’, EL)

The new scientific inventions were a source of comfort as well as a medium of contact with the outer world. In the Nobel lecture, at Stockholm, Heaney fondly remembered his childhood routine of listening to radio:

When a wind stirred in the beeches, it also stirred an aerial wire attached to the topmost branch of the chestnut tree. Down it swept, in through a hole bored in the corner of the kitchen window, right on into the innards of our wireless set where a little pandemonium of burbles and squeaks would suddenly give way to the voice of a BBC newsreader
speaking out of the unexpected like a *dues ex machina*. And that voice too we could hear in our bedroom...49

Another scientific invention that Heaney describes in the poem is ‘transport of a morning train’. With the invention and introduction of railways distance decreased. The poem explores the space between old and modern. Scientific inventions connected the world through the air waves and railway tracks but are unable to help the old woman in getting rid of ‘Her helplessness’. The old woman and the poet are ‘both desperate’. Heaney sympathizes with her. Heaney suggests that these inventions have made life easy and comfortable but they cannot comfort the old woman or the poet:

The night I was left to stay, when I wept and wept
Under the clothes...

(II 10-11, ‘Electric Light’, *EL*)

Heaney begins the anthology with ‘At Toomebridge’ where he writes about ‘negative ions’, the elemental force behind the production of electric current and concludes the anthology with ‘Electric Light’ suggesting a definite poetic strategy and the significance of poetic power.

**District and Circle (2006)**

From the outset of his poetic career, since the publication of *Death of a Naturalist* (1966), Heaney’s poetry has been deeply rooted in the familiar geographical and chronological ‘district’ of his imagination. In the most recent anthology *District and Circle* (2006), Heaney self-consciously returns and circles around his *au fait* ‘district’ of his childhood. In the previous collections, his vision was predominantly confined to Northern and Mediterranean Europe. In *District and Circle*, he goes global. His visionary terrain expands to scrutinize the contemporary world, shadowed by war, sans peace, harbouring the horror of violence. John Burnside claims:

...at first sight *District and Circle* is a compendium of many of Heaney’s singular preoccupations—Anahorish, the Tollund Man and Glanmore, are
all evoked, as the familiar ghosts of World War and Edward Thomas—this
collection aims, not so much at consolidation of a great artist’s vision, but
at a further enrichment, via further interrogation, of that artist’s sense of
his own source, and of his tradition.  

The anthology returns to time ‘In age of bare hands / and cast iron’ (The Turnip-
Snedder) to the contemporary menaced world where ‘Anything can happen, the tallest
towers / Be overturned’ (Anything Can Happen). In the oscillations, there are
remembrances—of poets such as Pablo Neruda, Auden, and Milosz, recollections of
American presence in Ireland during World War II and the memorial-register of friends,
family, authors and acquaintances.

In the first poem ‘THE TURNIP-SNEDDER’, the poet recollects the ‘age of bare
hands’ where the snedder, a pre-modern manual machine for mashing turnips for animal
feed, was used for in Ireland. Apart from cultivation, raising livestock is a major rural
activity in Ireland. Prior to the modernization of agriculture, the snedders were common.
Heaney, in a nostalgic vein, returns to the days of slow, laborious farm work:

as the handle turned
and turnip-heads were let fall and fed
to the juiced-up inner blades,
“This is the turnip-cycle,”
as it dropped its raw sliced mess,
bucketful and glistening bucketful.

(ll 15-20, ‘The Turnip-Snedder’, DC)

The ‘turnip-cycle’ produced ‘bucketful’ of the ‘raw sliced mess’ meant to be used
as fodder. ‘Bucketful’ represents the typical country measure. Seen from this angle, the
revisions and circlings resurrect a bygone world. The poem celebrates the contentment of
bucolic life. The childhood recollections belong to a poet who is now growing old. This
creates a conflict. The adult vision is laden with the awareness of the present predicament
of the world. The machine chops, ‘the clamp-on meat-mincer’ which is ‘standing guard /
on four braced greaves’ with its ‘inner blades’ drops ‘raw sliced mess’ suggesting
massacre and genocide. The poem is written amidst contemporary wars. Heaney is unable to save his poetry from the interference of war imagery. He has to compromise poetically with the raw material revitalized from the damaged world.

The intrusion of the adult scrutinical vision into the childhood recollections continues in the poem ‘A Shiver’. A poem about sledge-hammering, it captures the reactions of child watching a man beating iron with his sledgehammer in his workshop:

The way you had to stand to swing the sledge,
Your two knees locked, your lower back shock-fast
As shields in a testudo

(ll 1-3, ‘A Shiver’, DC)

The wielding man supports his ‘lower back’ like ‘shield in testudo’. ‘Testudo’ is a mobile siege shelter used by soldiers to save them from missiles. The rural activity is compared with military activity. In ‘Polish Sleeper’, the poet remembers ‘Listening for the goods from Castledawson’ and ‘languid, clanking waggon’. The poem indirectly touches upon the genocides and massacre of Jews by Nazis in World War II holocaust. The leadership of Germany’s Nazi Party ordered the genocide of 5.6 millions to 5.9 millions Jews in Europe. In the worst genocides of human history, along with the Jews and Russian soldiers, Nazis also massacred and imprisoned the Germans who were ideologically against them, the gays and physically and mentally unsound people. For centuries the Christians in Europe were against Jews. The political, ethical and religious hatred under the broad policy of anti-semitism was the immediate cause for the holocaust. After the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, the Nazis in their quest for the final solution to the European Jewish population problems, proposed the establishment of southeastern Poland confinements to which Jews would be deported. The second proposal was the deportation of Jews to the island of Madagascar. These proposals were, however, not adopted but the preliminary steps were already taken for the future deportations to concentration camps. As a consequence, Jews in Poland were forced to move into ghettos where they lived in appalling conditions. From Norway to North
Africa all Jews lost their rights and property. Heaney remembers the cleansing and deportation of Jews:

Once they’d been block-built criss-cross and four-squared
We lived with them and breathed pure creosote
Until they were laid and landscaped in kerb,

(Ill 1-3, ‘Polish Sleepers’, DC)

Ireland declared neutrality during the World War II but a silent anti-semitism existed in the religiously conscious Ireland which discouraged the immigration of thousands of Jews. Europe was ‘washed’ of its Jewish population leaving ‘no stain’. Phrases like ‘creosote’, ‘bleached’, ‘washed’, ‘parched’ refer to the process of cleaning and distillation referring to the forced amputation in Europe. Earlier, in previous anthologies, Heaney captured the tensions of wars but in District and Circle, his vision is for all humanity. ‘Anahorish 1944’ can be cited as an example. The poem is about the presence of American soldiers in Ireland during World War II:

“We were killing pigs when the Americans arrived.
A Tuesday morning, sunlight and gutter-blood
Outside the slaughterhouse. From the main road
They would have heard the squealing,
Then heard it stop and had a view of us
In our gloves and aprons coming down the hill.
Two lines of them, guns on their shoulders, marching.
Armoured cars and tanks and open jeeps.
Sunburnt hands and arms. Unknown, unnamed.
Hosting for Normandy.

Not that we knew then
Where they headed, standing there like youngsters
As they tossed us gums and tubes of coloured sweets.”

(Ill 1-13, ‘Anahorish 1944’, DC)

The poem is a recollection of a perfectly normal day in 1944. The rural people could not immediately perceive the turning point. The Allied assault on Nazi-occupied northern Europe gathered the largest force in the history of warfare. The oppositional
Allied forces consisted of 20 U.S divisions, 14 British divisions, 3 Canadian divisions, a French and a Polish division. On the first day of D-Day invasion, 6th June 1944, about 120,000 Allied troops landed at five beach locations along the coast of the French province of Normandy after crossing the English Channel from bases in south England. The poem captures the passing of ‘Unknown, unnamed’ soldiers to Normandy.

The neutrality policy of Ireland received both criticism and pressure from Britain. In order to safeguard the lives of American soldiers in Northern Ireland Britain suspended any kind of travel between Britain and in any part of Ireland. Bans were imposed on the telephone and telegraph services, and it was extended to the ban on print media to enhance security. The poem is a recollection of Ireland in 1944 when Heaney was a small child. The poet returns to the moments almost after 62 years, and finds the poignancy still there. The world has not changed. The recent example is of that of the American invasion of Afghanistan after 9/11. The poem draws parallels with recent wars. It hints at the American peace war in Afghanistan. Thus, an analogous can be drawn with the Irish people standing in their farms and watching silently the ‘unnamed, unknown American soldiers and Afghani farmers standing in their opium farms and silently watching the anonymous American soldiers.

The military forces have always been associated with war and violence but Heaney’s soldiers have ‘gums and tubes of coloured sweets’ along with ‘guns on their shoulders’. He presents a humanistic image of soldiers as they toss the gums and sweets to Irish children. Heaney’s presentation recollects the ‘chocolate cream soldier’ of the Irish playwright G.B Shaw’s play Arms and the Man (1898). Shaw’s play was unique in breaking the myth of chivalry and romanticism which was traditionally associated with wars and soldiers. Heaney is sensitive to the psyche of the soldiers. By painting the soldier’s in humanitarian hues, Heaney compensates for the brutal and horrific stereotyping. Heaney comprehends that soldiers are first human beings and later the dispensers of inhuman orders. Heaney talks about the life of a superannuated soldier, who was given the job of a ‘stretcher-bearer’ in the poem ‘To Mick Joyce in Heaven’.
Heaney’s demobbed soldier ‘was never a killer’ instead he helped the injured. After retirement, the life changed for him:

Kit-bag to tool bag,
Warshirt to workshirt-
Out of your element
Among farmer in-laws,

(ll 1-4, ‘To Mick Joyce in Heaven’, DC)

The retired soldier was a healer. During the war he bandaged wounds and carried bedpans for the sick. Life changed but with his humanitarian concerns, he opted for ‘the bricklaying trade’ and provided shelters for the needy. Professions changed but the philanthropic concerns remained the same for the demobbed soldier.

In ‘The Aerodrome’ Heaney remembers the ‘Toome Aerodrome’ of 1944:

Toome Aerodrome had turned to local history.
Hangers, runaways, bomb stores, Nissen huts,
The perimeter barbed wire, forgotten and gone.

(ll 7-9, ‘The Aerodrome’, DC)

Heaney claims that America and Britain have ‘usurped’ Ireland ‘by compulsory order’. Colonial usurpation filtered through the imposition of Allied ideologies on neutral Ireland. The only option for the Irish people was to wait and watch. The political domination of Britain reduced Ireland to inactivity.

Heaney talks about the unpredictable character of the contemporary world in ‘Anything Can Happen’. The poem is a version of Horace echoing the attack on WTC on 9/11. Horace (65-8 BC) was a Roman lyricist and satirist, whose works are considered masterpieces of the Golden Age. His chief poetic work Odes, Book I, II, III, celebrates peace, patriotism, love, friendship and pleasures in simple country life. In the poem Heaney refers to the coordinated terrorist strike on the World Trade Center, New York on September 11, 2001:
Anything can happen, the tallest towers

Be overturned, those in high places daunted,  
Those overlooked regarded. Stropped-beak Fortune  
Swoops, making the air gasp, tearing the crest off one,  
Setting it down bleeding on the next.

(ll 8-12, ‘Anything Can Happen’, DC)

On the sun-drenched morning of September 11, 2001, 19 terrorist working in teams of four or five hijacked four commercial jetliners and turned them towards WTC. Two of the planes, loaded with fuel and passengers, were flown at full speed into the twin towers. Neil Doyle, the award-winning journalist who specializes in investigating terrorism for national newspapers and broadcasters in UK and overseas, describes the horrible event:

There it was, right before our eyes, on the TV in the office. A crowd had gathered to watch the giant silver building spewing black smoke and witness Hollywood fiction transform into real life. An ominous black plume was billowing from the north tower of the World Trade Center in New York City.  

Thousands of innocent people were killed in the attacks. The whole world felt shaken and insecure. Heaney thinks ‘nothing resettles right’. In such global phantasmagoria, the terrorists represent fanatics who have no human compulsions. They turn the world into a waste land where ‘Telluric ash and fire-spores boil away’.

Bobby Breen’s helmet reminds Heaney of contemporary danger. Breen is presented as a fireman from Boston. In the hazardous job of firefighting, Breen saved many people from the fire. His helmet with ‘Tinctures of sweat and hair oil’ is an insignia of his hard work. One fine afternoon, Breen presented his ‘headgear / Of tribe’ to the poet. Heaney finds a parallel between his own ambition to save the world from burning in wars and Breen’s service as a fireman:

As if I were up to it, as I had  
Served time under it, his fire-thane’s shield,
His shoulder-awning, while shattering glass
And rubble-bolts out of a burning roof
Hailed down on every hatchet man and hose man there

(ll 16-20, 'Helmet', DC)

The imagery of war and terror has been dealt with in earlier anthologies but the global jurisdiction gives District and Circle uniqueness. In the title sequences 'District and Circle', Heaney travels the 'underground' as 'habitues' along 'the dreamy ramparts / Of escalators ascending and descending'. The poet, as a regular visitor is familiar with the subway:

Tunes from a tin whistle underground
Curled up a corridor I'd be walking down
To where I knew I was always going to find

(ll 1-3, Tunes from a tin... 'District and Circle', DC)

The poet-visitor passes through the strict surveillance of London underground railway subway. It is also known as the tube. It has about 42 percent underground area. The system serves 275 stations. The strict security system may have been the result of July 7th, 2005 London bombing, in which four bomb explosion struck London during the morning rush hour. Heaney describes the rush and security at the subway:

I re-entered the safety of numbers,
A crowd half straggle-ravelled and half strung
Like a human chain, the pushy newcomers
Jostling and purling underneath the vault

(ll 2-5, Another level down... 'District and Circle poem', DC)

Stepping on the train with the other fellow passengers on their way to other destinations represents an experience of sharing:

My back to the unclosed door, the platform empty;
And wished it could have lasted

(ll 9-10, Stepping on to it... 'District and Circle poem', DC)
The poet sees a momentary glimpse of his father in his own reflection in the window. His father, a rural Irish farmer, probably never traveled in a modern carriage. In the hustle-bustle of the city life of London, the poet finds the fleeting reflection of his father, soothing:

My father's glazed face in my own waning
And craning...

(ll 3-4, So deeper into it...’District and Circle poem’, DC)

In London he found nothing rural with which he could have feel at home. The split second reflection of his father in the poet's own reflection becomes a moment of epiphany which compensates for his nostalgia. Heaney celebrates it as 'the only relict / Of all that I [Heaney] belong to’. Heaney's concern accentuates the theme of identity which has been dealt with in earlier anthologies.

In the translation of Eoghan poet Rua Ó Súilleabháin instructions to Seamus MacGearailt, the blacksmith, Heaney presents his desire for possessing an instrument for digging. Seamus Heaney has always posed himself as a digger who digs down the layers of history and culture to expose. His digging activity has produced some of his immemorial poems. The instructions have been taken from a letter by an eighteenth century Irish speaking poet Rua Ó Súilleabháin (1748-84) addressed to a blacksmith asking for a perfect tool, shining with no 'trace of hammer to show on the sheen of the blade'.

Seamus, make me a side-arm to take on the earth,
A suitable tool for digging and grubbing the ground,

(ll 1-2, ‘Poet to Blacksmith’, DC)

‘... digging and grubbing’ refers to poet’s task of weeding out misrepresentations from literature, history and language. The digger-poet, on receiving the instrument, will write back to relieve the amnesia:
And I’ll work with the gang till I drop and never complain.

(ll 8, ‘Poet to Blacksmith’, DC)

The theme of the poem is similar to ‘Digging’ (Death of a Naturalist). The ‘spade’ and the ‘pen’ merge into the ‘tool’. The contrast between modern and traditional, old and new, music and cacophony is dealt with in ‘Midnight Anvil’. Easy connectivity of the new world is diffused through sounds. Barney Devlin in the Northern Ireland hammered ‘twelve blows’ on the anvil at midnight to herald the millennium. His nephew in Alberta heard them on his cellular phone. The poet caught the beauty of the act and produced a poem:

When Barney Devlin hammered  
The midnight anvil  
I can still hear it: twelve blows  
Struck for the millennium.

(ll 2-5, ‘Midnight Anvil’, DC)

Barney Devlin with his anvil symbolizes the old world, his nephew with ‘cellular phone’ symbolizes the modern world. The poet combines both in poetry:

And Eoghan Rua  
Asking Seamus MacGearailt  
To forge him a spade  
*Sharp, well shaped from the anvil,*  
And ringing *sweet as a bell.*

(ll 21-25, ‘Midnight Anvil’, DC)

The ‘anvil’ is forged into ‘spade’ which in turn rings ‘sweet as a bell’ to herald in the millennium. The dual consciousness of poet is visible in these lines.

Much of the poetry in this anthology is derived form Heaney’s childhood memories. Various childhood anecdotes are retold. ‘Sugan’ portrays the poet as a child fastening the bundles of hay, being punished by Miss Walls for ‘dirty talks’ with a friend.
Duffy, chewing tobacco in ‘A Chow’, the long queues on Saturday evenings at ‘Loudan’s butcher’s shop’ in The Nod’ and the hair-cutting salon of barber Harry Boyle in ‘A Clip’. Each poem preserves a memory like a photograph. The memories of innocence are preserved by the adult poet. Thus, they are shadowed with the awareness of lurking danger and the obscure realities:

Saturday evening too the local B-Men,
Unbuttoned but on duty, thronged the town,
Neighbours with guns, parading up and down’

(ll 9-11, ‘The Nod’, DC)

Loudan, the butcher exercised his might on the weak animals whereas the B-Men, the auxiliary B-Special Force of the former Royal Ulster Constabulary exercised it on the ‘natives’. The poem delves into the dark depths of human psychology which is responsible for man’s inhumanity to man. Following the same mood of anxiety and fear, Heaney remembers ‘Ku Klux cape’ in ‘A Clip’ and ‘Mennonites’, the members of Protestant denomination who emphasized adult baptism and rejected church organization, in the poem ‘In Iowa’. Heaney would go to Harry Boyle’s shop for ‘a clip’. Ku Klux Klan is a White supremacist group and a terror secret society that used violence and murder to promote white supremacist beliefs. The hate group was open to white native Protestant and Blacks, Jews and Roman Catholics who were excluded were targeted with violence and defamation:

Half sleeveless surplice, half hoodless Ku Klux cape.
Harry Boyle’s one-roomed, old bog-road house
Near enough to home but unfamiliar.
What was happened there?

(ll 7-10, ‘A Clip’, DC)

In ‘One Christmas Day in the Morning’, Heaney presents the fear psychosis of a hounded community:
I felt free as a bird, a Catholic at large in Tommy’s airspace.

Yet something small prevailed. My father balked at a word like “Catholic” being used in company.

(Il 4-6, ‘One Christmas Day in the Morning’, DC)

The image of ‘free as bird’ contradicts the image of confinement. The Catholic minority in Northern Ireland was cabined, constricted and confined. However, the rendezvous with an old friend whom the poet had not ‘met since Anahorish School’ transports him into a sense of forgotten freedom and the poet feels ‘Catholic at large’. The short flight into freedom counterbalances the painful reality of marginalization and confinement. Concealing the identity to save life is the worst compromise which minorities make.

In the prose poems ‘Found Prose’, Heaney remembers his ‘first sight of school’ in ‘The Lagans Road’ and the arrivals of “the gypsies” in his ‘district’ in ‘Tall Dames’. In 1975 Heaney had published a collection of prose poems Stations. ‘The Lagans Road’ exists geographically near the Lagan River in the eastern Northern Ireland. Heaney delineates the topographical details of the road:

The Lagans roads ran for about three quarters of a mile across an area of wetlands. It was one of those narrow country roads with weeds in the middle, grass verges, and high hedges on either side, and all around it marsh and rushes and little shrubs and birch trees.

(Il 1-5, ‘The Lagans Road’, DC)

Heaney remembers his first sight of the school and the youngsters playing on the playground. The presence of ‘Nissen huts’ creates a contemporary sense of violence in the heart of serenity. During the wars shelters known as Nissen huts were steel constructions in the shape of half cylinders. The adult recollections draw a parallel with the emotions of the travellers of Pacific North-west:

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... Years later, when I read an account of how the Indians of the Pacific Northwest foresaw their arrival in the land of the dead—coming along a forest path where other traveller’s cast-offs lay scattered on the bushes, hearing voices laughing and calling, knowing there was a life in the clearing up ahead that would be familiar, but feeling at the same time lost and homesick—it struck me I had already experienced that kind of arrival.

(ll 14-21, ‘The Lagans Road’, DC)

The ambivalent emotion of experiencing excitement in seeing other children enjoying themselves at play and at the same time being bothered by home sickness is universal childhood experience. Dislodged and colonized peoples experience it recurrently in the adult life. The human race has become so entrenched in atrocities that Heaney needs to relive and reenact his childhood to appreciate the significance of innocence and security. Memories are viewed like pictures in an old album. The poet transcends time zones and returns to the contemporary world with a treasure of forgotten values.

In ‘Tall Dames’, the arrival of “the gypsies” in Heaney’s ‘district’ adds refreshing colours to the routine life of the people. The gypsies peopled the ‘land of Eros’. In Greek mythology, Eros is regarded as the god of love. The gypsies came with the circus and Heaney feels that they are imaginary characters ‘out of storytime’:

...Every time they landed in the district, there was an extra-ness in the air, as if a gate had been left open in the usual life, as if something might get in or get out.

(ll 23-25, ‘Tall Dames’, DC)

Eros or libido is the driving energy of the life instinct in the Freudian frame of psychoanalysis. The implication is that these gypsies were full of energy. The gypsy women in ‘unerotic woolen shawls’ looked like Yeats’ “tall dames” walking in Avalon. In Celtic mythology, it is considered to be the land of the blessed. The gypsies were poor nomads who subsisted through begging. Heaney’s imagination raises these nomads to the supernatural level.
The anthology is haunted with memories of dead acquaintances. Heaney fondly remembers his aunt in 'The Lift'. Heaney esteemed her highly. She was a 'Favourite aunt, good sister, faithful daughter'. Her love was so strong that Heaney feels bound to her, years after her demise:

A lifetime, then the deathtime: reticence
Keeping us together when together,
All declaration deemed outspokenness.

(ll 16-18, 'The Lift', DC)

He sadly remembers her death:

Whole requiems at the sight of plants and gardens...
They bore her lightly on the bier. Four women,
Four friends- she would have called them girls- stepped in
And claimed the final lift beneath the hawthorn.

(ll 28-31, 'The Lift', DC)

He furnishes her with a befitting funeral midst flowers and poetry. After her death, her good deeds and strong relations are immortalized in Heaney's elegy. In District and Circle Heaney not only elegizes his filial relations, but also his 'literary relatives'. He remembers poets and writers who have influenced or inspired him. Ted Hughes is remembered in 'Stem'. After the death of Hughes, Heaney mourned 'standing on a pierhead watching him'. Hughes had considered meeting Eliot a very significant experience:

He said, "it was like standing on a quay
Watching the prow of the Queen Mary
Come towards you, very slowly."

(ll 4-6, 'Stem', DC)
However the bereavement of Hughes makes the reunion difficult for Heaney. He compromises with his imagination. The reality of death puts ‘wooden end-stopped stern’ in the recollections. Heaney experiences a sense of failure, unable to compensate with recollections in this case. Heaney elegized Milosz in *Electric Light*. He is submerged in the literary debts of the writers he writes about. The memorial poems are Heaney’s ‘act of thanksgiving’ addressed to the Polish writer.

Similar poetic concerns persuade Heaney to acknowledge the Chilean poet and Noble Laureate 1971, Neftali Ricardo Reyes Basoalto (1904-73), who wrote under the pseudonym, Palbo Neruda. Neruda’s works evolved through several phases. His poetry ranges from erotic to political. During his exile from 1948 to 1952, he wrote the *Canto General* (1950), an epic poem exploring the struggles of South American people in their fight for freedom. The work also describes the topography and native peoples, fauna and flora, and the ancient Inca and Aztec tribes.

Heaney’s poetic concerns are similar to Neruda’s. Heaney, like Neruda, is preoccupied with the predicament of his people in particular and the whole world in general. Like Neruda, the natural world is in abundance in Heaney’s oeuvres. He also sketches the geography and traces the origins of the ancient Celtic people and of the Iron Age victims through out his poetry. Heaney ‘sees with’ Neruda’s ‘eyes’:

O my Palbo of earthlife-
when I tasted the stuff
it was freshets and orbs.
My eyes were on stalks,
I was back in an old
rutted cart road, making
the rounds of the district, breasting
its foxgloves, smelling
cow-parsley and nettles, all

(ll 16-24, “To Palbo Neruda in Tamlaghtduff”, *DC*)

Heaney, like Neruda, does ‘the round of the district’ of familiar farms and rivers, encountering the ghosts and elegizing the dead. The poem is a glowing tribute to Neruda
for his efforts to bring the suffering of his people before the world. It is also an acknowledgement of the influence of Neruda on Heaney whose ‘tear-ducts melt down’ when he remembers Neruda. Heaney in his collection of essays, comments on his attachment to his land:

To this day, green, wet corners, flooded wastes, soft rushy bottoms, any place with the invitation of watery ground and tundra vegetation...possess an immediate and deeply peaceful attraction. It is as if I am betrothed to them, and I believe my betrothal happened one summer evening, thirty years ago, when another boy and myself stripped to the white country skin and bathed in a moss-hole, treading the liver-thick mud, unsettling a smoky muck off the bottom and coming out besmeared and weedy and darkened.^^

Heaney returns to the Tollund man in the sequence ‘The Tollund Man in Springtime’. The sequence of six sonnets revivifies the Iron Age victim of sacrificial death. The bog, as the storehouse of past has always been of immense interest to the poet. The bog land, bog oaks and bog bodies contribute to the impressive designs of Heaney’s poetry. In the poetic universe of bog bodies Tollund Man occupies his own unique place. Heaney has written about ‘Tollund Man’ in North (1975), about the city ‘Tollund’ in The Spirit Level (1996) and in District and Circle, he once again resurrects the Iron Age victim who is ‘neither god nor ghost’. He is a human being who was sacrificed by the Iron Age people ‘for their own good’. The reference is to the ritual sacrifice to the goddess, for the renewal of the season and for the fertility of crops. The Tollund Man was discovered by two Danish brothers on 8th of May 1950. The title of the poem reverses the fertility ritual. The decayed and unsightly body of the sacrificial victim surfaces in the spring time from an agriculturally productive bog.

Tollund Man returns to the twenty-first century. He experiences alienation and bewilderment as the world has metamorphosed from natural to virtual:

Into your virtual city. I’ll have passed
Unregistered by scans, screens, hidden eyes,
Lapping myself in time, an absorbed face
Coming and going, neither god nor ghost,
Not at odds or at one, but simply lost

(In 1-5, Into your virtual city... 'The Tollund Man in Springtime', DC)

In the contemporary world, the virtual city is under the strict surveillance of ‘scans, screens, hidden eyes’. The security measures in the virtual city have been necessitated by the unpredictable terror attacks. The Tollund Man is amazed to find that the progress has perpetuated greater barbarities. In the Iron Age, he understood the logic of his own death as an essential ritual created by the primeval man attempting to understand the natural phenomena. In contemporary circumstances the terror and violence has resulted in chaos. The world is a place where... ‘anything can happen’. He is an ‘absorbed face’ that is ‘simply lost’. The purpose of his resurrection is not for rehabilitation. His ‘sixth sense’, acquaints him with lurking terror, more irrational and menacing than anything encountered in the Iron Age:

Panicked snipe offshooting into twilight,
Then going awry, larks quietened in the sun,
Clear alteration in the bog-pooled rain.

(In 12-14, Into your virtual city... 'The Tollund Man in Springtime, DC)

Tollund Man is now a creature of the natural world. For a long time he was preserved in the bog by nature. The ‘Clear alteration’ in the natural world makes it difficult for him to feel at home in the civilized contexts of the modern world. The primeval man who died so that mankind may live finds that the world has moved in an entirely different direction.

Caeners in his article, identifies Biblical aspects in the resurrection of the Tollund Man. He refers to the resurrection of the dead as envisioned by prophet Ezekiel:

The description of his discovery calls to mind the biblical resurrection of the dead as envisioned by the prophet Ezekiel. In the King James Bible, Ezekiel 37:2 reads: “And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.” This rings with the poem’s comparison of the Tollund Man to sun-
dried turf. In Ezekiel 37:5 the first step of the actual resurrection is described as follows: “Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live.” The “breath of God” is the *conditio sine qua non* for life. Through His breath, God resuscitates the dead and they are made “to come up out of [their] graves.”

Caeners further suggests:

In the words of the Tollund Man himself, his creation went according to the Christian tradition and clearly alludes to Genesis and the creation of Man. The Tollund Man admits to having been “bog-bodied on the sixth day.” God made Man on the sixth day and, likewise, the Tollund Man was changed into what he became “on the sixth day.” The last line reads: “And on the last, all told, unatrophied.” Turned bog body “on the sixth day,” the Tollund Man speaks of a return to an “unatrophied” way of being here. The last day when all the history of Man is told refers to Judgement Day, which is, of course, the day when the dead rise from their graves, resurrected to face final judgement for their sins. That this will indeed happen in an “unatrophied” fashion, is prophesied in detail in Ezekiel 37:6: “And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live.” In addition to this, the last line of the sonnet, cryptic as it is, also suggests that the discovering and unearthing of the Tollund Man is already perceived as his Judgement Day and, being freed from the bog, he feels “unatrophied.”

Caeners is true in his analysis as the Tollund Man is aware of the divine dispensations ‘I was like turned in the breath of God’, he admits in the sonnet. In sonnet III, he talks about the in-between period when he ‘was buried and unburied’:

On show for years while all that lay in wait
Still waited. Disembodied. Far renowned.
Faith placed in me, me faithless as a stone

(Il 9-11, My heavy head... ‘The Tollund Man in Springtime, DC)

Tollund Man’s sense of alienation at the museum at Aarhus is articulated and so is his passivity in reciprocating when the poet ‘renowned / Faith placed in me’. This
recaptures the mood of the poem ‘Tollund Man’ from *Wintering Out*, when the poet feels ‘Unhappy at home’, on the silence of Tollund Man. Heaney says in the poem:

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Something of his sad freedom
As he rode the tumbral
Should come to me, driving,
Saying the names.
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Tollund Man is presented as a silent, ancient dead mummy that is unable to respond to the poet’s feelings. In the present poem, when the bog body is completely resurrected and can articulate his feelings, he confesses his being ‘faithless as a stone’. His silence underscores a sense of guilt. The confession and response from the Tollund Man can serve as a compensation to the ‘unhappy’ poet.

As the sequence progresses, the Tollund Man seems to do way with his passivity. He wishes to cross the boundaries both of his destiny as a bog body and as a historical object in a ‘display case’ in the museum. The first hurdle in his way is the history. Quoting Czeslaw that ‘The soul exceeds its circumstances’, Tollund Man apprehends the amnesias of history. He claims:

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History not to be granted the last word
Or the first claim...
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(II 2-3, “The soul exceeds its... ‘The Tollund Man in Springtime, *DC*

This articulation of the Tollund Man echoes the concerns of postcolonialism. Edward Said observed that ‘the colonized’ has since [World War II] expanded considerably to include women, subjugated and oppressed classes, national minorities”. The shared feature of all the marginalized groups is their placement in the relationship to a dominant culture that impinges upon them and seeks to define and silence them. Said further argues, ‘to be one of colonized is potentially to be great many different, but inferior things, in many different places, at many times’. Thus, Tollund Man, in the light of Edward Said’s observation, seems to be colonized by its fate and history. In the
postcolonial resurrection, he attempts to dehistoricize the history. History is always written from the point of view of the dominant leaving many voids as Fanon claims:

The settler makes a history; his life is an epoch, an Odyssey. He is the absolute beginning: “This land was created by us”; he is the unceasing cause: “If we leave, all is lost, and the country will go back to the Middle Ages”. Over against him torpid creatures wasted by fevers, obsessed by ancestral customs, form an almost inorganic background for the innovating dynamism of colonial mercantilism. 58

The silence of Tollund Man or the absence of the challenging voice is an idiosyncratic condition immanent in the indifferences against him. In order to return he ‘told’ his ‘webbed wrists to be like silver birches’ and ‘old uncalloused hands to be young’ and ‘spade cut skin to heal’. Thus, a complete physical resurrection in which ‘the soul exceeds its circumstances’; the Tollund Man gets ‘restored / By telling [himself] this’. Caeners thinks that the poet, at this juncture, describes ‘an instance of imagination pressing back against the pressure of reality’59. Heaney describes his theory of poetry in *The Redress of Poetry* as:

> a tendency to place a counter-reality in the scales – a reality which may be only imagined but which nevertheless has weight because it is imagined within the gravitational pull of the actual and can therefore hold its own and balance out against the historical situation. This redressing effect of poetry comes from its being a glimpsed alternative, a revelation of potential that is denied or constantly threatened by circumstances. 60

Caeners take the clues from Heaney’s theory. He explains:

The Tollund Man uses his imaginary powers to restore himself again “by telling [himself]” that it is so. In the light of Heaney’s theory of poetry, one could say that the Tollund Man turns himself into a counter-reality, thereby gaining new life and a door into the modern world. 61

With the realization of this ‘new revelation of potential’, Tollund Man sees that ‘sky was new’ suggesting new horizons. He smells ‘the air, exhaust fumes, silage reek’ and hears ‘Swarm at roundabout five fields away’. Along with the physical features, the
sensory organs have been restored which goes far away from his 'sixth sense threat' of the previous sonnet. The Tollund Man tries to compromise with his memories of ancient Jutland in order to come to terms with the modern world. In sonnet V, he seems to be 'unlearnable' of the knowledge of 'another world'.

Of another world, unlearnable, and so
To be lived by, whatever it was I knew
Came back to me. Newfound contrariness.
In check-out lines, at cash-points, in those queues
Of wired, far-faced smilers, I stood off,
Bulrush, head in air, far from its lough.

(II.9-14, Cattle out in rain... 'The Tollund Man in Springtime, DC)

Tollund Man has existed with uncomplicated rural wisdom. The 'Newfound contrariness' in his comprehension of the modern world with its 'queues' at 'check-points' and 'cash-points' keeps him suspended between the two worlds. He is unable to return to the old world and powerless to comprehend the modern world. He feels like the 'Bulrush', a waterside plant, which has its 'head in air' and is located 'far from its lough', which is the source of its nourishment. The Tollund Man stands with his mind engaged in the comprehension of modern world and his heart wishing to return to the Iron Age. In the final sonnet, the Tollund man arrives in the 'virtual city'. In the first sonnet he envisions his future arrival and the final sonnet deals with his arrival. He crosses 'every check and scan' with 'a bunch of Tollund rushes-roots and all'. Roots symbolize his original identity and cultural baggage, which is deeply entrenched in Jutland, which he carries in the form of 'Tollund rushes'. Being aware of the circumstances of the modern world, he brings a part of his culture to help him in remaining connected with his original 'roots'. He knows that he cannot a return to the old world. He 'spat on [his] hands' and 'spirited [himself] into the street' suggesting that he was ready to face the modern world. The resurrected Tollund man is not ready to compromise with the 'sad freedom' of his earlier poem 'The Tollund Man'. He compensates for the unhappiness of the poet by breaking his silence. He fulfils the poet's desire by coming out of his passivity in the 'display case' of the museum and actively participating in the twenty-first century.
In the first sonnet, the Tollund Man was unable to adjust to the new world because of its 'Clear alternation' to the old natural order. This refers to the increase in the average temperature of the Earth near surface air and oceans in recent decades and its projected continuation. An increase in global temperature is expected to cause other major changes, including the rise in the level of the sea, increased intensity of extreme weather events, and changes in the amount and pattern of precipitation. The agricultural yields, glacier retreats and extinction of species are some other natural threats of global warming. William D Nordhaus analyzes the impact of global warming:

Such factors include extreme events such as hurricanes, floods, droughts, and heat waves; the spread of agricultural pests and human diseases; large regional changes in temperature and precipitation; abrupt climate changes; and sea level increases that may be larger than expected because of surprises lurking in glacial dynamics.

Heaney, also an ecological poet, has concern for saving the world from natural threats. In the poem 'Hofn', he talks about one such threat:

The three-tongued glacier has begun to melt
What will we do, they ask, when boulder-milt
Comes wallowing across the deltas flats
And the miles-deep shag ice makes it move?

(II 1-4, 'In Hofn', DC)

The melting of glaciers not only causes landslides, flash floods and overflowing of glacial lakes but it also increases annual variation in the water flow in the rivers. The continued melting would deplete the glacial ice and reduce the runoff that would affect the irrigation of the crops in the areas which are heavily dependent on the water runoff. Among one of the most hazardous threats of the global warming is the impact on the ecosystem. An increase in global temperature would make some species extinct. The death of blackbird in the poem 'The Blackbird of Glanmore' seems to be the result of global warming:
On the grass when I arrive,
Filling the stillness with life,
But ready to scare off
At the very first wrong move.
In the ivy when I leave.

Its you, blackbird, I love.

(II 1-5, ‘The Blackbird of Glanmore’, DC)

In his efforts to compensate for global warming, Heaney proposes to plant trees. Deforestation is one of the major reasons behind the natural climate. Heaney is a conservationist who knows the importance of trees in the ecological balance of the planet. He makes an appeal to mankind in ‘Planting the Alder’:

Plant it, plant it
Streel-head in the rain.

(II 13-14, ‘Planting the Alder’, DC)

Poems such as ‘Helping Sarah’ and ‘Chairing Mary’ show his understanding of his responsibilities towards his growing daughter Sarah and ageing wife Mary. Heaney’s help at home presents a humane and beautiful aspect of a man who is sensitive to family needs:

Heavy helpless, carefully manhandled
Upstairs every night in the wooden chair

(II 1-2, ‘Chairing Mary’, DC)

Such attitudes are not sanctioned in the patriarchy. Heaney belongs to a new world which understands the equal position of both sexes. He is not ‘embarrassed’ by the weight of his wife and he is always standing by to help her. He believes in the united family system which is woven with the threads of mutual understanding, unconditional love and help. He is sensitive enough to understand the emotional needs and expectations of love from a father and a husband. In the disintegrating scenario, Heaney’s understanding serves as a permanent base.
Conclusion

The four anthologies analyzed in this chapter were published between 1991 and 2006. The influence of the classics can be seen throughout Heaney's oeuvre and particularly in his later works. The influence of Dante is visible in *Field Work, Station Island* and *Seeing Things*. Virgil's *Eclogues* have been used as a framework in *Electric Light*, Horace's *Odes* figures in *District and Circle*, and Homer's *Odyssey* is referred to in *The Spirit Level*.

The influences, intertextualities and translations widen the dimension of Heaney's poetry. He compromises with influences to widen the domain of Irish literature. Lorna Hardwick claims that 'Classical referents... help both to recreate and to communicate the pain of history. In so doing they can also cauterize the wound, thus enabling regeneration and the growth of a new creativity'\(^63\). The technique of return-memory-retrieval-vision is followed recurrently in the four anthologies and especially in *The Spirit Level, Electric Light* and *District and Circle*. The return suggests the desire to flee from the agony of present world to childhood memories and retrieves more than he consciously remembers.

The anthologies are visionary. Heaney embellishes his poems with saintly presence. In *The Spirit Level* St. Kevin and Jesus Christ appear. Both symbolize the virtue of self-sacrifice. The journeyman tailor becomes Buddha of Banagher. The references to Lourdes, and the pilgrimage site of St. Bernadette in France and the philosophy of love, harmony universal brotherhood preached by the Stoic Heraclitus in *Electric Light* suggest that Heaney propogates peace and harmony through his poetry. Although the poems are cluttered with references to wars ranging from the ancient war of Troy, World War II, Balkan Wars, the pogrom of Jews, the civil wars to the contemporary terror attacks on the twin towers. Through the portrayal of the war-ridden world, he wishes to bring home the horrors of wars and the apathy of man for man.

Heaney's poetry has moved from the domains of nationalism and has incorporated the concerns and vision of the whole world. He seems to be aware of the
cultural diversity of globalization. Irish problems have never been removed from his consciousness. However Heaney acknowledges the Irish historical experience.

Heaney, through his poetry, wishes to compensate for the political wrongs done to his people. In Heaney’s scheme of things, the eastern European writers such as Czeslaw Milosz, Zbigniew, from Poland and Joseph Brodsky from Russia hold a special place. It can also be said that he acknowledges the contribution of non-native writers to literature. He writes poetry in to commemorate these writers and frequently dedicates his poems to other writers such as Nadine Gordimer, Ted Hughes, and Patrick Kavanagh, and refers to Thomas Hardy, Auden, and Shakespeare.

Apart from acknowledging the literary masters, Heaney also, associates himself with people from the lower strata of society. He elevates these blue-collar types and glorifies their skills. The journeyman tailor of Banagher of ‘At Banagher’, the yardman of ‘Whit-sur-Moyala’, the bricklayer of ‘Damson’ (*The Spirit Level*) and the milker of ‘Monatana’(*Electric Light*), are considered with affection and appreciation.

In these anthologies, Heaney deals with a number of people with handicaps. He deals with this less explored field in literature. He shows how these physically challenged people become the ‘other’ of the society because of the indifference of people. He also appreciates the will power and uncompromising courage of the people who stand out against all the odds with their own identity in the faceless, numberless crowd. His endeavour is to compensate for the wrongs done to these people through his poetry.
References:

3. Ibid, p. 7
10. All the quotations of the poems are from Seamus Heaney’s Seeing Thing (London: Faber, 1991) cited here as ST.
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23. Ibid, p.108
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32. Ibid. p.xxx
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44. Harvey, p.162.
45. Ibid, p. 53.
49. Heaney Seamus, Crediting Poetry, p 415.
49. Heaney Seamus, Crediting Poetry, p 415.

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54. Caeners, Torsten, ‘“Neither god nor ghost”- The resurrection of the Tollund Man in Seamus Heaney’s District and Circle’ in *Literatur in Wissenschaft and Unterricht* (LWU), No. 39, Wurzburg: Koningshausen & Neumann Publisher, p.32-33

55. *Ibid* p. 33.


59. Caeners, p. 34


61. Caeners, p.34.


64. All the quotation are from Seamus Heaney’s *District and Circle*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006)