
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Metapoetry and Narcissism in the Poetry of Seamus Heaney: A critical Study of Selected Poems

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| ABSTRACT

This research examines metapoetry or self-reference poems which is concerned with writing about poetry itself. In other words, poetry is thematized and manipulated as the basic subject matter. The study aims to expose the narcissist traces and the creative aspects through the selected poems of Seamus Heaney in terms of meta poetry and self-reference. It highlights the authentic relation between manual work and place in one hand and the creative work of a poet on the other hand. In this respect, the research investigates the artistic ability of the poet in translating manual work through invoking traditional manual works such as "Digging", "Forge ", "The Salmon Fisher to the Salmon", "Poet's Chair" and "A Shiver" that have not been used any longer because of machinery and modern technology. These works are shown as equivalent to the process of writing poetry to explore mystery, curiosity, hard work yet productivity. Also, by referring to the physical world represented by certain places such as such "Anahorish" and "Broagh" Ending with "Personal Helicon" as the metaphorical construction for writing poetry or the actual home for inspiration yet for the creative work of a poet. Whether adapting laboring poems or languary poems, Heaney, as a narcissist poet shows artifice capacity to enhance his poetry in terms of self-conscious and reflexivity.

| KEYWORDS

artificer, laboring poems, languary poems, metapoetry, narcissism, Seamus Heaney.

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Introduction: Metapoetry and Narcissism

Metapoetry means "poetry whose subject is poetry itself". (Mayhew, 1994, p. 13). It deals with the topic of poetry "in which reflection on poetry is the organizing principle" of the poem (Torre, 1993, p. 85). In a word, all the tendencies of pre modernism, modernism and post modernism imply "a different critical attitude and a different interaction leading to another form of critical enunciation and that can bring about a coverage at some point with-and this is what is most relevant-poetic-critical practice itself"(Casas, 2011, p. 7). A particular gnoseological tension is created between poetic and theoretical language. This tension in turn motivates what the theorist has called meta-expectation in the reader;

which makes us expect from the metapoem a questioning of its poetic character, that is to say, of the rest of the expectations involved in reading [fictionality, revelation, ambiguity, unity, expressiveness, genre, and rhythm], and which, at the same time, serves to neutralize this questioning and read the metapoem as a poem (Torre, 1993, p. 118)

Language is naturally representational that has a full and coherent "heterocosm". While the reader reads, he experiences a fictional world. Anyway, the text needs the participation of the reader who in his turn would engage his intellect and imagination in this co-creation process. This shows the paradox of the reader in terms of two-way pull. Moreover, the

paradox of the text is shown as both self-reflexive and yet concentrates outward, directed toward the reader who shares and lives the read experience (Hutcheon, 2010, p. 7).

The term metapoetry suggested by Leopoldo Sánchez Torre who distinguishes the metatextual aspect of the literary text and decides to concentrate on the metaliterary aspect. This aspect would be shaped of the staff of statements for the thematization of reflection on literature used in a literary text, and would be of certain interest only when this serve to frame the work (Torre, 1993, p. 65).

In fact, this is the starting point for more recent theoretical and critical views as Casas mentions in his essay "About Metapoetry and Performativity";

which benefit from the time that has passed and which focus on different heuristics, less favorable to the localization of models which are more or less in the formalist and structuralist vein, and, by contrast, more prone to investigating the liminal, the zones of confusion and hibridization of traditions, (arch)genres, and poetic language, or to examining directly the crises of language, representation, and the sociocultural figure of the poet. (Casas, 2011, p. 6)

Actually, Modernism and the post modernism are characterized by self-consciousness. Modern poetry examines the nature of language itself but the modernist purification of the linguistic medium gets complicated because language is semiotic inherently.

Instead of getting rid of the mimetic and semiotic characteristics, modernist poets tend to examine the relations between signifier and signified as well as between language and reality. They tend to probe the linguistic medium to show "its capacity to talk about itself" (Mayhew, 1994, p. 13).

Speaking of Narcissism, the word is derived from Ovid's myth of Narcissus being in love with his own reflection and pining away as it is mentioned in Book 3 of his *Metamorphoses*. It is considered the first significant mirror stories ever recorded. The myth reveals; "this classical poet's deep understanding of the psychodynamics of mirroring, echoing, the limits of *self-knowledge*, and the probable -even-fatal consequences of *self-realization*." (Bahmani, 2015, p. 21):

As he is drinking , he sees an image,
the reflection of his face, and falls in love,
desiring a thing which has no substance.
He thinks the shadow must possess a body.
Astonished by himself, he remains there,
motionless, wearing the same expression,
like a statue made of Parian marble. (Ovid, 2012, lines 637-642)

The process of writing is an introspection of self-discovery, and confessional writing manifests a continual 'born again' process. Moreover, self –descriptive act of writing is a valid diagnostic instrument of narcissism. So, Narcissists are considered field- dependent which need to match to the world yet immediate environment is reflected.

Narcissism considers the self in the foreground of awareness not the vice versa. This examination of life explains how poets produce materials:

To experience the reach of the imagination, to delve into the arena of language, and to gain a sense of the shape and texture of human personal experience as it is articulated there-we need to spend some time in that house of mirrors. Even if it's just a temporary letting that we accommodate, in order to fixate and fuel inspiration, we need to focus on ourselves first. (Ayachi, 2014)

In the same way, the over-examining and discovering could come from instinctual need to be recognized. Like Narcissus who kills himself, the poet also needs to suffer and lives hard experiences in terms of re-born to translate the self- experience of wounds into words. This is why the outcome of such act shows true and authentic manifestations for poets:

Every true poet is a Narcissist, for the true poet is a contemplative and a creator. God is Narcissus. The men who have taken themselves to be Gods-Christ Buddha-are Narcissists. This makes sense because what a poet tries to do is create a world of his own and thus looks at himself in the world; not in the what, but in all of nature, earth, fire, air and everything else. (Juan Roman Jimenez (an early 20th century Spanish poet, and prolific narcissist).

Discussion

The Noble prize-winner Irish poet, Seamus Heaney has composed twelve collections arranged in a chronological order; *Death of a Naturalist*, *Door into the Dark*, *Wintering Out*, *North*, *Field Work*, *Station Island*, *The Haw Lantern*, *Seeing Things*, *The Spirit Level*, *Electric Light*, *District and Circle* and finally *Human Chain*. The best way to trace Heaney's reflexive works is to start with the first collection *Death of a Naturalist* (1966-1969) "Digging" (1966), as the touch stone to explore one's journey in search for self-cognition concerning oneself inwardly towards the environment surrounds him. Actually, writers and especially poets are obsessed with knowing identity. The first step to understand your world should be preceded by self-knowledge as the Greek philosopher Socrates says "Know thyself". Sigmund Freud also assures to "let ego be where id is" (Hart, 2006, p 462). In the middle, there is Shakespeare's image of mirror in his play *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* when Cassius answers Brutus:

And since you know you cannot see yourself
So well as by reflection, I, your glass,
Will modestly discover to yourself
That of yourself which you yet know not of. (Shakespeare, Act1, SC.2, 73-76, p .17).

If the one cannot understand his inner feelings, needs and ambitions, he will not have the capacity to deal yet to solve the other problems. To do so, is to come to a kind of compromise and reconciliation with the self to get a farther perception about the world.

In this respect, *The First Person in Literature* works as a kind of poetics, since it explains the paradoxical process by which "the subjective transforms itself into the universal and by which the artist must share his —private truths in order to convey —the universal truth of life" (Jensen, 2011, p. 70). As Brooks indicates, "privacy and obscurity, to some degree, are inevitable in all poetry" (Jensen, 2011, p. 70). Thus, the poet must be able to make a balance between the private and the mysterious in order to create a meaningful impact on the reader. More importantly, the title "Digging" suggests the idea of goes down in searching and investigating. The deeper you go, the better you get knowledge. One of the prominent characteristic of writing and reading poetry is to explore the deep meaning. To read a poem is to do your best to relate ideas and symbols for a better understanding.

Heaney frequently examines the topic of using tools in his early poems, especially in his collection *Death of a Naturalist* (1966). The concept of lyric figurations of tool use even gives a structural frame for the initial poem in the Heaney icon, "Digging," that begins and finishes with the following statement:

Between my finger and thumb
The squat pen rests; snug as a gun
Between my finger and thumb
The squat pen rests
I'll dig with it (Heaney, 1966, lines 1-5)

"Digging" indicates a sort of trial-and-error method in the space between this opening and closure. The lyric first introduces a hypothetical, almost metaphysical conceit of "pen-as-gun". Then, it closes by replacing the initial conceit to be read "pen-as-spade."

Although the act of digging parallels the act of writing in terms of hand work but the pen remains a pen and is not replaced by a spade at the end in a reference to the capacity of the poet to produce and create in artifice way. He is the "maker," the artificer with the godlike capacity to create in this world. The issue here is that of fitting hand to tool and tool in itself to verb. The suitable metaphorical equivalent to the pen in this poem is neither a gun nor a spade could "fit" between the finger and the thumb it is very difficult to make the pen act either of the verbs "shoot" or "dig" when it logically inclines toward the infinitive "to write." (Reddy, 2020, p. 9).

Similar to Sexton who indicates how it is trickery and magical to write poetry. Writing words combinations such as "pen", "gun" and "spade" come to show this magic and freedom from any authoritative commitment (Hamad, 2020, p. 46). Sexton states:

It's just like a runner getting into training or a fighter hitting a punching bag. You need to be in shape. You need the means, the equipment to be equal to the moment of inspiration when it comes. Otherwise you can do nothing. (Interview with Brigitte Weeks, p. 115)

In other words, the poet keeps trying, modifying and altering in an attempt to encode and reshape what is suitable for his capacity being a language maker. The process suggests the political sense of Ireland passing the agricultural roots until the poet chooses the right tool that fits and suits his career as a poet.

Another aspect is that the poet's skill can be manifested in paving the untrodden ways and bridging the distance the between spoken words and the actual scene. Poetry is a tool used to "measure " and more to fill the gap between these two entities:

At the core of Seamus Heaney's poetry, a profound experience is revealed- that a gap exists between the totality of what can be said and what can be witnessed, between the limits of languages and the margins of the actual world in which we live. For Heaney 'poetry' is a means of measuring this gap-if not bridging it. (Larsmo, 2007)

Another image that Heaney portrays to parallel the labor of digging and poetry is "Stooping in rhythm through potato drills/ Where he was digging"(Heaney, 1966, lines 8-9). One of the basic features of poetry is the musical language. "Rhythm" can be understood in terms of enjoying work in the field in a harmonious technique similar to writing rhythmic verse. Being a professional poet, Heaney assimilates writing a good piece of verse to digging as the plowman "neatly" nicks, slices and heaves sods. Again going down in search for "good turf" which means writing good poetry in terms of choosing words;

Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods
Over his shoulder, going down and down
For the good turf. Digging. (Heaney, 1966, lines 22-24)

Moving to the second collection of poems *Door into the Dark* (1969), Heaney's "Forge" addresses another craftsmanship that is by the passage of time vanished. First of all, the title of the collection has a self-conscious connotation as Heaney himself writes:

When I called my second collection *Door into the dark* I intended to gesture towards this idea of poetry as a point of entry into the buried life of the feelings or as a point exit for it. Words themselves are doors: Janus to a certain extent their deity, looking back to a ramification of sense and meaning". (Heaney, 1993, p. 18)

They give the chance to enter in to "the dark center, the blurred and irrational storehouse of insight and instinct, the hidden core of the soul" (Heaney, 1980, p. 52). Secondly, the act of looking into the anonymous and the mysterious shows the curious nature of a child to probe what it could be inside. Heaney's "Forge" again examines and glorifies country craftsmanship which used to be part of Irish country life through two experiences being a child and an adult, according to critic Michael Wood:

These poems use descriptions of rural labourers digging, turf-cutting, divining for water, purging unwanted farm animals, and their many and varied other tasks and contemplations of natural phenomena-and they are filtered through childhood and adulthood. (Wood, 1974)

Concerning the poem itself, the word forge means "a workshop where wrought iron is produced or where iron is made malleable". (Merriam-Webster. Dictionary, 2025, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/forge>). Heaney analogies the craft of the blacksmith to his own career in which the first employs his skills and tools in the process of malleability yet reshaping the iron in a certain mould to suit the peasant's needs. The second, the poet also manipulates and puts in shape yet adapts his words that address the reader's needs showing both ability and flexibility.

George Bornstein discusses the way "Poetry" insures the flexibility of poetry, he states:
The poem does not merely present a series of propositions about poetry, nor does it even add to those an enactment of its own semantic principles, but through its successive embodiments it re-enacts important paradigms of poetic transmission, paradigms that remind us that poems exist in multiple, changing forms that constitute more an ongoing process than a final product. (Bornstein, 2001, p. 36)

The poet describes how good blacksmith reshapes the raw material using his tool, "To beat real iron out, to work the bellows." (Heaney, 1969, line 14) In this respect, poetry is as malleable as "real iron" being flexible in its nature. The blacksmith parallels the creative role that the poet plays when he opens "a door into the dark" and "expends himself in shape and music". Again, a poet has the capacity to transform darkness into light as the blacksmith does within the process of malleability in the dark place "The unpredictable fantail of sparks" (Heaney, 1969, line 4). Heaney generates "sparks" through his words to create light out of "dark" reality.

The most basic and essential tool that must be existed in the "centre" of the blacksmith's shop is the "anvil" which is according to Webster's dictionary "a heavy usually steel-faced iron block on which metal is shaped (as by hand hammer)" (Merriam-Webster. Dictionary, 2025 from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/anvil>).

The state of being "in the centre" has been mentioned in Heaney's poems "The Forge", "The Salmon Fisher to the Salmon" and "Poet's Chair". The sense of betweenness and centrality in relation to the surrounding landscape has significant dimensions.

Starting with Heaney's "Forge", the blacksmith's forge is compared to a church in a reference to the pivotal role that the "altar" of the church does. It represents the point of transition from the stage of being guilty to repent and get salvation.

The anvil must be somewhere in the centre,
Horned as a unicorn, at one end and square,
Set there immovable: an altar
Where he expands himself in shape and music. (Heaney, 1969, lines 6-9)

The poet uses this conceit to emphasize that the forge is the centre of creativity and similarly the blacksmith's craft is equal to the creative work of a poet. A gain he describes the anvil in a beautiful metaphor "Horned as a unicorn" in a reference to the mythical ancient unicorn. The forge itself expresses centrality being the coming industry and technology heavily relying, in the first place, on this raw material "real iron". Though Heaney's elegy is obvious in mourning the perishing craftsman that were widespread in Ireland at that time, as P. R. King writes:

The precise and unadorned diction of the poem represents as honest a piece of craftsmanship as the subject he describes... (The Forge) is accurate, it comes alive as it records the last moments of a dying craft, and after it has been read it lingers in the mind. (King, 1979)

The next poem "The Salmon Fisher to the Salmon" from Heaney's collection *Door into the Dark* (1969), portrays the relationship between the fisher and his prey as his camera-eye dips under the river surface to pick it out. The overall scene shows Heaney as observing others rather than his own practice. He stands in mid-river in an attempt to control his prey's attention:

And I stand in the centre, casting.
The river cramming under me reflects
Slung gaff and net and a white wrist flicking
Flies well-dressed with tint and fleck. (Heaney, 1969, lines 5-8).

Stationing in the centre reveals the fisher's skillful strategy to keep balance as he is challenged by the weight of the flow. Besides, he uses certain technique concerning fishing of man –made lures that is designed to be similar to the textures and colors of "Flies well-dressed with tint and fleck" (Heaney, 1969, line 8). This poem preoccupied with nature and especially of animals in search of self-knowledge and awareness:

In short, the animal poems of Seamus Heaney are emblematic of his search for self-identification and self-discovery. Vivid images, splendidly animated with subtle uses of language, indicate that the animals of the Irish landscape preoccupy Heaney's mind and fire his poetic imagination, and clearly their "visitations are taken as signs", signs of self-awareness and self-definition. (Heaney, 1980, p. 19)

In fact, the new trend with centeredness is accompanied with constructive perspectives in which we establish borders and perimeters. For Heaney, "it seems every center is provisional and constructed, only coming into existence through the erasure or ignoring of other demarcations of space" (Reddy, 2020, p. 19).

Reaching to another laboring poem since Heaney originally has inspired by a sculpture made by his friend Carolyn Mulholland as well as the ordinary chair is simply made by a carpenter. Heaney's "Poet's Chair" from the collection *The Spirit Level* (1996) is another prototype of centrality and more the focus of all. Heaney being an Irish poet has inspired by Yeats' "Sailing to Byzantium" from his collection *October Blast* (1927). They travel through imaginary time machine seeking immortality. As they come to the fact that every natural being comes to an end, they search for artificial entity that is made in a creative way ".....; and gather me/Into the artifice of eternity" (Yeats, 1927, lines 23-24). They hypothesize if they get the chance to be transformed into unnatural object "once out of nature", They will choose to be any piece of art whether in the shape of mechanical bird or a chair but not human form.

The scenario this time will be a voyage to Athens not Byzantium and therefore, the whole setting revolves around Socrates's philosophy and the progressive achievements of Leonardo da Vinci concerning physics, mathematics and astronomy. All the events beginning with the subject of the solar system in terms of these binary oppositions light/shadow and deconstructing angels. Going back to the age of philosophy debating poetry until attending the dramatic show as the poet on the chair witnesses the last moments of Socrates's life. There is "a chair" placed in the heart of the city of Athens.

Considering the symbolic dimension of the voyage and the chair, the pivotal function proves the superiority of poetry as a genre has been the centre for the other fields of knowledge and art alike. It is analogized to the sun as the axis of our solar system and it is essential for the importance of its gravity which holds the entire solar system together, otherwise the whole universe collapses and consequently things turn upside down; "Leonardo said: the sun has never/Seen a shadow. Now watch the sculptor move" (Heaney, 1996, lines 1-2) Similarly, according to the English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley in his unfinished essay "A Defense of Poetry":

Poetry is indeed something divine. It is at once the centre and circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred. It is at the same time the root and blossom of all other systems of thought; it is that from which all spring, and that which adorns all; and that which, if blighted, Denies the fruit and the seed, and withholds from the barren world the nourishment and the succession of the scions of the tree of life. (Shelley, 1909-14, p. 16)

The chair itself is made in "artifice" technique "....., its four legs land/ On their feet-cats foot, goat foot, big soft splay-foot;" (Heaney, 1996, lines 8-9). Besides its importance being designed in a creative and elevated way that encourages "Every flibbertigibbet in the town, /Old birds and boozes, late-night pissers, kissers, /All have a go at sitting on it sometime." (Heaney, 1996, lines 11-13), It has significant role in which if the poet has the privilege to sit on it, it offers the reader a great and historical opportunity to sit and witnesses all the dramatic events around him being stationed "At the centre of the city" (Heaney, 1996, line 33). The act of witnessing itself makes the reader enjoy reflexive moments that summarize all the tragic scenes through history and to be identified with the poet and its chair:

And none now as the poison does its work
And the expert jailer talks the company through
At the centre of the city and the day,
Has proved the soul immortal.
The bronze leaves. (Heaney, 1996, lines 31-34)

This Greek era summons the description in Heaney's essay "The Government of the Tongue" about Christ's reaction as the adulterous woman is going to be judged. Christ stoops down to dictate something in the sand instead of answering her. Heaney analogizes the moment of dictating creates the pause that suggests fear and violence, into a space that poetry provides:" 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 distraction but as pure concentration, a focus where our power to concentrate is concentrated back on ourselves" (Cobb, 1996, p. 25).

One encodes all the previous craftsmanship poems along with Heaney's "A Shiver" from his collection *District and Circle* (2006) that shapes the trajectory of what has been discussed before. The state of shivering recurs in Yeats' "The Fascination of What's Difficult" from his collection *The Green Helmet and Other Poems* (1910) whose paradigm of literary activity as "continuous" along with physical work which is depicted in the divine colt that will "shiver under the lash, strain, sweat and jolt / As though it dragged road metal" (Yeats, 1910, lines 7-8), is just one way in which labor overlaps with the aesthetic field. " If writing can be compared to dragging road metal or breaking stones, then manual work can also acquire the traits of poetry; that is, labor can be claimed, reified, and brought within the space of the lyric". (Reddy, 2020, p. 7). In this case, the more difficult the labor is, the more fascinating the product will be both in physical labor and literary activity alike. Both Yeats and Heaney make use of mythology but Yeats shows more fascination in the mythical references as imaginary synonyms to the difficult labors as the colt shivers "under the lash, strain, sweat and jolt"(Yeats, 1910, line 7). Heaney's "Shiver" elaborates the physical activity through a common scene that one witnesses in the street which is something real not imaginary:

The way you had to stand to swing the sledge,
Your two knees locked, your lower back shock-fast
As shield in a *testudo*, spin and waist
A pivot for the tight-braced, titling rib-cage;
The way its iron head planted the sledge
Unyieldingly as a club-footed last; (Heaney, 2006, lines 1-6).

More serious, Heaney introduces a series of instructions that should be followed in such a hard labor as a way map or certain strategy that needs the proper technique as Heaney states:

Technique as I would define it, involves not only a poet's way with words, his management of metre, rhythm and verbal texture; it involves also a definition of his stance towards life, a definition of his own reality. It involves the discovery of way to go out of his normal cognitive bounds and raid the inarticulate" (Heaney, 1980, p. 47)

In a larger context, the poem examines the duality of power though the capacity to direct and "Withhold bale at will" (line 11). Heaney speculates the importance of the way you control the tools used. Tracing Blake, Heaney integrates the action and reaction rather than separates them in terms of progression and creativity. Both of them conveys the same sensation:" the

demolition of an old wall and the staking of a new one send identical shivers through the handle of the sledge" (Kosters, 2014, p. 149).

Heaney describes the process of swinging a hammer and release of its probable energy conveying the idea of the stored-up energy as well as the dynamic aspect of literary space in terms of power and creativity. In this respect, poetry is not fixed but dynamic as Heaney states; "a dynamic alertness that meditates between the origins of feelings in memory and experience and the formal ploys that express these in a work of art"(Heaney, 1980, p. 47). It seems a glorification of the creative power "withholdable at will" (line 12), that has the capacity to make "air of a wall"(line 13).

On the surface, it is a poem about the strategy of how you handle your tools concerning craftsmanship. In depth, it is about a work that has been there throughout forty years of continuous writing. "The Staked earth quailed and shiver in the handle?"(Heaney, 2006, line 14). It seems that, "Poetry is that shiver in the handle" (Larsmo, 2007)

In his other collection *In The Seven Woods* (1903), Yeats argues that the hard labor of human being is due to the original sin as in his poem "Adam's Curse" (p. 75). More significant, he hypothesizes that what seems to be just a moment of thinking for others, takes a great deal of work for a poet who invents a certain technique that requires years of intense labor (Jeffares, 1969, p. 53). The collective mindset towards poetry has always degrades the creative work showing that the lowest physical labor is superior in comparison to literary activity. In other words, writing or quit writing makes no difference for the world it manifests a mere trial which presents futility:

I said, 'A line will take us hours maybe;
Yet if it does not seem a moment's thought,
Our stitching and unstitching has been naught.
Better go down upon your marrow-bones
And scrub a kitchen pavement, or break stones
Like an old pauper, in all kinds of weather ;(Yeats, 1903, lines 4-9).

Another point is that the stitching process parallels the poet to the tailor in terms of accuracy to produce creative work:

His care for poetic technique, the endless process of alteration and revision which is evidenced by his manuscript books and the countless sheets of paper he covered in his ceaseless search for the right word in the right place, these are not likely to commend him to the young who suspect technique as something which gets *between* the experience and its immediate expression. (Jeffares, 1969, p. 54)

As Yeats again assimilates the literary work to the physical labor in his argument, he explains how the process of writing poetry in particular is not only as hard as any physical craft but more is the most difficult among all the labors. There should be a new hierarchy that set rather than the traditional one in terms of canon and superiority:

For to articulate sweet sounds together
Is to work harder than all these, and yet
Be thought an idler by the noisy set
Of bankers, schoolmasters, and clergymen
The martyrs call the world,' (Yeats, 1903, lines 10-14)

Yeats' "'The Fascination of what is difficult" and "Adam's Curse" introduce the process of composing poetry as an equivalent to the physical labors, if it is not the hardest among them. It seems that the concept of difficulty accompanies the literary genre. It represents the tool that the poet works hard to cultivate yet to prepare the ground for the aesthetic product to grow and appear on the surface. In the thirties, Yeats rebukes Margot Ruddock for not appreciating of technique. He tells her severely "Difficulty is our plough" which is a good belief for the poet (Jeffares letters by Mc Hugh). On the other hand, Heaney's "Glanmore Sonnets 1" from his collection *Field work* (1979) addresses Yeats tool which is the plough as Heaney uses vowels to cultivate the soil in the open ground that resembles the fertile possibility for new ideas; "Vowels ploughed into other: opened ground"(Heaney, 1979, line 1), he adds; "and art a paradigm of earth new from the lathe of ploughs"(line 6) (Hederrman, 1979, p. 68).

Finishing with Heaney's crafts man or laboring poems, the study includes Heaney's place- names poems or language poems. "Anahorish" and "Broagh" from the collection *Wintering out* (1972) are investigated largely according to the sense of place in particular the actual origin of the Irish poet, Seamus Heaney who is aware of the significance of the place of the origin whether personally or as a universal entity in the lens of literature; "the relationship between a literature and a locale with its common language" don't have a "particularly Irish phenomenon" (Heaney, 1980, p. 136). Carson McCullers mentions in Rafroidi's "The sense of place in Seamus Heaney's Poetry" To know who you are you have to have a place to come from"(Rafroidi, 1998).

More important, there are two types of countries; the physical one which is the place of the origin and the country existed in the mind as Heaney states:

It is this feeling, assenting, equable marriage between the geographical country and the country of the mind, weather that country of the mind takes its tone unconsciously savoured literary culture, or from both, it is this marriage that constitutes the sense of place in its richest possible manifestation. (Heaney, 1980, p. 132)

Seamus Heaney is considered a poet of the hand just like Shelley and Donne are called poets of the eye. Heaney always tries to "stir us to responses other than the merely visual" (Heaney, 1980, p. 133). This both tangible manual aspect of Heaney's work presents a second important method of stationing the place of poetry in the world. This strategy aims to assert its "here-ness," and yet assuring the poet's place within a tangible, solid, immediate reality. This method differs from the previously discussed approach to the laboring realm (Reddy, 2020, p. 12).

Speaking of poet's place leads to place poems that literally reveals Heaney's involvement with places and landscapes of Irish as he in a television interview with Patrick Garland "Poets on Poetry"(1973) states that:

I don't think of (the territory that I know) as the Irish scape. I think of it as a place that I know is ordinary, and I can lay my hand on it and know it, and the words come alive and get a kind of personality when they're involved with it. (Rafroidi ,1998)

Starting with Heaney's "Anahorish "from his collection *Wintering Out* (1972), as a celebration of topographical heritage that summons his Eden of childhood. It introduces an Irish version of an anglicized translation of the Gaelic etymology *Anach fhior uisce*. Heaney's act of naming the name itself conjures a magical reality as he "rediscovers a sense of harmony, and finds himself by means of myth. The whole poem moves with a joyous energy, embodied in its rhythms by means of *enjambment*, expressing a delight in the creativity of water and memory"(Fawbert, 2025):

My "place of clear water,"
the first hill in the world
where springs washed into
the shiny grass (Heaney, 1972, lines 1-4)

Assuming to be English, Seamus Heaney was actually Gaelic in origin and in particular to Country Derry as he comments:

The word had survived in our district as a common and as far as I had known until then, an English word, but now I realized that it lived upon our tongues like a capillary stretching back to a time when Irish was the lingua franca of the whole place. (Parker, 1993, p. 42)

Through writing the etymological poems such as "Anahorish", Hart cited in "Poetymologies in Seamus Heaney's *Wintering out* "that Heaney states:

That convinced me that one could be faithful to the nature of the English language-for in some senses these poems are erotic mouth-music by and out of anglo-saxontongue-and at the same time, be faithful to one's own non-English origin, for me that is Country Derry. (Hart, 1989 p. 217)

The very act of naming the name itself conjures a sort of magic reality that combines the consonants and the vowels of the title;"*Anahorish*, soft gradient/of consonant, vowel –meadow,"(Heaney, 1972, lines 7-8). Heaney invents a sense of harmony that moves the whole poem with a joyous energy representing by its rhythms using *en jambement*. It shows "a delight creativity of water and memory" .(Parker, 1993, p. 98).

More serious, the recurring image of water whether a lake, a river or a sea can be traced in Dudek's search for a prototype that will best allow him to achieve a sort of universality. In section 95 from *Europe*, Dudek blends meta-poetic in an implied comparison between mind and sea (Jensen, 2011, p 35):

The sea retains such images
in her ever-unchanging waves;
for all her infinite variety, and the forms,
inexhaustible, of her loves,
she is constant always in beauty,
which to us need be nothing more
than a harmony with the wave on which we move. (Dudek, 1971, lines 1-7).

Similar to the sea which is depicted as a store of images, the mind also has the function of storing and restoring images that capable of creating "infinite variety, and the forms" in harmonious movement with the wave. Another analogy is seen in Dudek's Prologue from *Atlantis* that assimilates the recurring waves of the sea with the process of writing poetry that is exposed to "the making and breaking" procedures within the repetitive frame.

So the waves of the sea (it all comes back to me
as when I first heard it),
the white snowcaps breaking,
the power of repetition, multitudes,
like the universe of atoms—
ephemeral, too, the making and breaking
of crested forms.
It comes back to me
(like a wave in these waters) (Dudek, 1971, lines 71-80)

In the repetition of these lines. Heaney's another place poem is "Broagh" from the same collection *Wintering out* (1972), which combines in the first lines the three traditions he knows beginning with the Gaelic's *Bruach*, the Scots' *rigs* and finally the Anglo-Saxon's *docken*; 'Riverbank, the long rigs/ ending in broad docken/ and a canopied pad' (Heaney, 1972, lines1-3). It also introduces water as "the healer, the assuager, the shape-changer".(Parker, 1993, p. 99).

In fact, the poem summons such interrelations among words in etymology and pronunciation. It is a poem in the *dinnseanchas* tradition;

about the sounds of a word, its pronunciation and uasage, and the people who use it. Not restricted by its graphic representation on the written page, the poem begins with the word "broagh" voiced in the title. In turn, the first word of the body of the poem functions as an appositive or translation of the title. (Michael R. Molino, 1993, p. 191)

In other word, the first word in the poem translates the title "Broagh" as well as to draw the structure of the whole poem in turn. It directs and constructs the whole poem accordingly. More important, the keyword for the poem is the "O" or "the black O" on which (Vona Groarke 2011, as cited in Johnston, 2016, p. 46) has opened more suggestive probabilities:

That "O" is a loophole. It's also a source or an origin. It puts me in mind of the pinhole to be found in certain paintings by Dutch masters such as Vermeer or de Hooch. And this pinhole is the only remaining visible evidence of a system used to calculate perspective ... I think of that rhyme as a kind of pinhole: I imagine the whole poem spinning out of it, being aware of it, keeping it in mind. (Johnston, 2016, p. 46).

This can be one of many possible interpretations that relates Heaney's "O" with the paintings of Vermeer and de Hooch. This relation is shown by using this technique to create a focal point concerning Heaney's "O" in his poem "Broagh", similar to the painters who make use of the camera obscura through their painting process.

Another possible interpretation can be traced in Dudek's "Theory of Art" that draws the complete image in terms of microcosm and macrocosm. "In a sense, the mind itself is the perfect image of balance as the site of order in which the disparate fragments of perceptible reality continually, and inevitably, intersect the imagination". (Jensen, 2011, p. 81).

"The poem is a vision"-but think of that diagram
of light coming to focus
from all quarters, to the miniature in a pupil-
the whole world, there in compendium, all
its huge fragments
a silent landscape, in the perfect O of the eye! (Dudek, 1956, lines 24 29)

In this way, the fragments of reality meets "in the perfect O of the eye!"(Dudek, 1956, line 29) to be reshaped by the subjectivity of the poet. Also, Dudek's "Continuation 1" emphasizes the process of "the mind making poems / hid in the texture of language" (Dudek, 1971, lines 11-12).

Both "Anahorish" and "Broagh," are poems whose titles represent place- names in the Irish countryside. This poetic subject locates the lyric on the most pivotal area, that is of the field of geography. In his argument of "Broagh," Neil Corcoran

comments on "the way topography and typography enters into an almost chiasmic relation within the space of the poem itself" (Reddy, 2020, p. 2) in terms of both microscopic level of typography as well as macroscopic one; as Corcoran comments;

both place and place-name are being very self-consciously translated out of actual topography into what we might call the topography of the poem, or the place of the text, by the way it foregrounds that "black O," the word "*Broagh*" itself, and the last "*gh*" by distinguishing them in italic font. The original place is, we might say, visibly displacing itself into the place of writing. (Corcoran, 1998, p. 48)

Closing with Heaney's "Personal Helicon" from his collection *Death of a Naturalist* (1966) which probes the two states of mentality as a curious child who seeks to discover the mysterious and dark places, and as an adult in terms of poetic exploration. The poem implies self-exploration as the title suggests in which the poet speculates a mere well where he lives as his source of both curiosity and inspiration. The word "Helicon" is the key word in the poem that illustrates the actual need of a poet to a source of inspiration to sustain improve his creative capacity. Being an excellent Latin scholar, Heaney knows that Helicon is a mount in Boeotia which is sacred to the Muses. Two fountains flow from it, the Hippocrene and Aganippe that their water inspires those who drink from it with the gift of poetry. (Parker, 1993, p. 74).

Echoing John Milton's "Paradise Lost. Book 1" (p. 680) who summons Helicon which is the classical home of the Muses as he declares;

.....or, if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th' Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme. (Milton, 1986, lines 10-16)

This poem indicates the poet's creative abilities due to his absorbed fascination with the marginal worlds around his farm. Heaney depicts the spring of the artistic motive in the dark underground aspects of things in terms of defying the taboos of his family in particular as a microcosmic portrayal for the macrocosmic reality of the world. This action establishes a procedure of distancing the self from parental dominating that paves the way to enter adulthood and then artistic hood. "(Allison, 1998, p. 195):

As a child, they could not keep me from wells
And old pumps with buckets and windlasses.
I loved the dark drop, the trapped sky, the smells
Of waterweed, fungus and dank moss. (Heaney, 1966, lines 1-4).

Relating "Personal Helicon" to "Forge" from *Door in the Dark* (1969) comes to be a conclusion to an extension of that resonant darkness as well as depth. Blake Morrison draws the following assumption concerning Heaney's aim in this collection: "Having been preoccupied with 'finding himself', with placing himself in relation to both family and literary tradition, Heaney recognizes that a deeper and darker plunge is necessary" (Kearney, 1984, p. 39).

Taking into consideration the recurring image of the well, it suggests the obvious effect that Irish mythology has tactile effect on Heaney's poetry who draws the way how 'first literary *frisson*' comes 'on home ground' through his Irish history lessons that are 'in reality a reading of myths and legends' in *Preoccupations* (Heaney, 1980, p. 23).

Actually, wells are basically identical with knowledge as it is mentioned in the story of 'Sinend and the well of Knowledge' that explains the Celtic glorification for both poetry and science, accompanied with the warnings that without danger they may not be approached. According to the story as it is mentioned in *Seamus Heaney: The Making of the Poet*, the goddess Sinend says;

went to a certain well named Connla's Well, which is under the sea- i.e. in the Land of Youth in Fairyland.
"That is a well," says the bardic narrative, "at which are the hazels of wisdom and inspiration, that is, the hazels of the science of poetry. (Parker, 1993, p. 74)

The fascinated gaze of childhood is followed by an evolutionary perspective as he enters adulthood and becomes more experimental in terms of self-exploration and stationing identity. It shows how this first meeting leads and opens horizons to an inner landscape:

Now, to pry into roots, to finger slime,
To stare, big-eyed Narcissus, into some spring
Is beneath all adult dignity.
I rhyme to see myself, to set the darkness echoing. (Heaney, 1966, lines 17-20).

Echoing Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Heaney borrows the character of Narcissus to express the importance of keep searching your identity and at the same time he assures that the time you know yourself well, you can set "the darkness echo" in terms of creativity and productivity. Unlike the story is mentioned by Ovid, Heaney invents a progressive tale showing a kind of compromise and reconciliation between Narcissus and Echo that leads to achieve self - knowledge yet to external knowledge. This time, the poet himself has the capacity to reflect his ideas inventing a technique to set the dark echo. Instead of repeating the final words of Narcissus as in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book 3; "'Alas, my beloved boy, invain!'/The place gave every word back in reply. /He cried: 'Farewell.' /And Echo called: 'Farewell'" (Ovid, 2012, lines 763-766). In the same context, Heaney actually makes use of the myth of Narcissus and Echo to prove his artistic capability in managing his tools through along journey of self - exploration and discovery. What makes Heaney's strategy to echo slightly more accurate is that he inclines to the activity of "sounding". The word is repeated with a subtle altering at the end of the first stanza of his poem "Gifts of Rain" from his collection *Wintering Out* (1927) in which unknown countryman is presented as a figure of the poet:

He fords
His life by sounding.
Soundings. (Heaney, 1972, lines 10-12).

This shift from singularity to plurality indicates that there are many kinds of soundings;

just like there are more than one kind of poetic echo. To "sound" is to give forth sound waves, to auscultate and to probe, and Heaney explains in "Station Island" that the sounding forth of his own poetic voice relies on a series of "echo soundings". His soundings are as much about sounding forth as about sounding down. (Quément, 2018, p. 1).

In the respect, Heaney assures the importance of being able to receive the sound then to examine it. The first step is to listen to a series of echoes that lead to create one's own poetic voice. Therefore, Heaney takes the decision declaring;".... I rhyme/To see myself, to set the darkness echoing." (Heaney, 1966, lines 19- 20).

The well is one form of the darkness, echoing with vibratory process. For Heaney:
Helikon, favorite seat of the muses, and sometimes referred to as a fountain, designates the meaning of this young child's favorite watery haunt, and how it leads him to apprehend the world beyond, the platonic reality beyond the appearance. (Mac Donogh, 1998)

The mirror –like theme is a recurring subject in the poetry of many of the contemporary poets. Sylvia Plath's "'Mirror '" from her collection *Crossing the Water* (1963) is the famous prototype that addresses themes of the self and identity in relation to the external world including the dilemma of time and ageing. The mirror is a typical and objective representative of self-referential discourse. It has its roots deep in the history of philosophy. In Plato's *The Republic*, Socrates uses the metaphor of the mirror to explain the artist's work contemptuously. Concerning Plato's theory of *mimesis*, similarly, the artist is someone who is;

turning a mirror round and round—you would soon enough make the sun and the heavens, and the earth and yourself, and other animals and plants, and all the other things of which we were just now speaking, in the mirror. (Plato, 2013, p. 340)

Plath realizes the contrasted constitutive entity of the mirror image being both constructive as well as destructive. It has this influential role it plays in the construction of one's identity, as Bahmany (2015) mentions in her book *Mirrors of Entrapment and Emancipation* in chapter three: Mirror Imagery in the Works of Sylvia Plath;

that recognition of our various mirror images and reconciliation with them will save us from disintegration. This reconciliation does not mean a simple monolithic resolution of conflict, but rather a creative acknowledgment of the fundamental duality of man; it involves a constant courageous acceptance of the eternal paradoxes within the universe and within ourselves. (Bahmani, 2015, p 160)

Thus, one wants to this kind of construction to reach a final shape of his own identity which makes him always in need "to spend some time in that house of mirrors" (Ayachi, 2014). Finally, the mirroring echo is encapsulated in this final poem as a scientific evidence to prove Heaney's artistic skill to set his own creative works in relation to other poets:

Echo sounding can here be conceived as the emission of a signal by Heaney. This signal hits a poetic ground and returns to the emitter (himself) with something identifiable, a sound mark that can be reproduced and that helps Heaney place his voice in relation to that of another poet. (Quément, 2018, p. 5)

In this way, Heaney represents the emitter which is the main source that sends and picks up a signal has already attaches a poetic area. Therefore, it is not a matter of a mere imitation or repetition of an echo, but more significant, it is a perfect cyclic process that summarizes the act of producing creative work in terms of reflexivity and self-consciousness.

Conclusion

To conclude is to say that The Irish poet, Seamus Heaney does examine the process of creating poetry as the main subject by relating it to laboring poems or handy works that have not been used due to industrialization and modern technology. As well as language poems showing the role poetry acts being the centre of all sciences yet all the other creative works. On the other hand, He adapts certain places he has already lived and experienced in the scope of place poems that motivates him using his environment as an effective tool for creativity and productivity. These poems draw the complete image of the artistic work and represents the first source of inspiration for a narcissist poet in terms of reflexivity and self-consciousness.

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