

Thematic Concerns in the select poetry of Seamus Heaney

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Abstract— *Seamus Heaney is a great poet rooted in Irish history and culture, his setting is pastoral, one which belongs to the world of nature and Irish heritage and. Heaney has raised the voice of the national identity of the catholic people and has also invoked the support of the protestant Irish community to help them recreate a prosperous Ireland of native traditions. The life of the Irish people at the farming level, rural habits and several other items happening in the day to day life of these people supply raw material for imaginary and symbolism in the poetry of Seamus Heaney. By picking up symbols from the experience of a childhood he reconstructs complete image of the Irish people living in Ulster region, a community of minority Catholics engaged in homely activities like farming, digging, churning etc., without much caring for attaining higher stations of life in political fields or in economic framework of the industrialized society. Heaney has raised the voice of the national identity of the catholic people and has also invoked the support of the protestant Irish community to help them recreate a prosperous Ireland of native traditions His symbols are homely but effective to the Irish life.*

Keywords— *History and culture, tradition, Irish identity, symbolism.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Introduction of Seamus Heaney

Seamus Heaney is a great living poet of the British poetry, with his Irish background he becomes a very close successor of W. B. Yeats of course, he is the next most important name after W. B. Yeats to provide real flavor to the concept of British poetry by including in it the Irish sensibility. When he was chosen for the Nobel Prize in 1995. His poetic fame swelled more and still more and finally earned for him the prestigious honor of poet laureateship of U.K in 1998. He was born in 1939, eldest of nine children, on the family farm mossbawn in country Derry, all his grand poetic resources at his back, he has given a very Faithfull account of the sufferings of the Irish Catholics.

His father was only a cattle farmer with ordinary means and meagre income, and the mother of the poet was however a lady with modern taste and progressive outlook, Heaney was one of the nine brothers and sisters in his family.

It is clear from the following word of Michael parker

Mrs. Heaney were nine children, Seamus, Sheena, Ann, Hugh, Patrick, Charles, Colum, Christopher and Dan. The family she created was very close, neat and according

to her daughter-in-law utterly together, like an egg contained within the shell. They had confidence in the way they lived, a lovely impeccable confidence in their own style. Margaret Heaney along with her sister-in-law. Mary who lived within the family formed a special bond with the eldest child.

At Anahorish School he was fortunate to be taught by a gifted teacher, Barnard Murphy and at St. Columbus College, another teacher Raymond Gallagher who preferred to describe him as renaissance type of boy. In 1965, Seamus Heaney entered a new dimension of life by accepting formally in the ritual of marriage.

II. SYMBOL OF IRISH IDENTITY IN SEAMUS HEANEY'S POEMS

Evert great poet uses a particular medium and objective correlative in order to project the innermost designs of his conceived idea at the imaginative plane. Similes, metaphors, personifications and allegorical expressions were used by the ancient classicists to project the image of their minds and imagination in verbal expressions. Images and symbols are, therefore, the most effective tools in the hands of a poet to communicate the complex designs knitted by his superior imagination.

Which gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name. In the modern times, a greater emphasis has been laid upon the concentrated use of imaginary and implied symbolism.

In the early years of the twentieth century a particular school was launched in the name of symbolism and T.S. Eliot and W.B. Yeats became pioneers in this regard. The trend continued in other fashions bringing to light the names like Imagism, Surrealism and Existentialism.

In the recent years a greater emphasis has been laid on the study of imaginary and symbolism of those poets who adopt oblique methods to project the conceived idea effectively. The fashion of using symbols has brought to light many more new symbols into focus. The traditional symbols have gone into the background and novelty of images has filled the poetic lines in the present century.

Heaney used complex images and methods of symbolism in order to bring to light the correct image of the catholic community in Northern Ireland. His symbols are homely but effective to the Irish life.

❖ Digging [Death of a Naturalist]

The question of Irish Identity has been discussed in the very first poem *Digging*. He uses digging as a symbol for raising the true Irish cult emotionally and intellectually. In the ordinary circumstances, the poem is a beautiful record of the activity of digging and ploughing as performed by his father with zest and energy. At the superficial level the poem connects us with the Irish background of the Ulster people, there is traditional family concern is this homely activity from the grandfather to the third generation.

My grandfather cut more third in a day

Then any other man on Tone's bog.

But, gradually, the digging becomes a symbol for other achievement of the poet with the help of his pen in the same background. The symbol of family inheritance is already enforced through the activity of digging which had continued from generation to generation. In the hands of the poet the activity of digging is bring continued with the help of pen which is as forceful a weapon in the hands of the poet as plough was in the hands of his father for mapping the furrows. The concluding lines of the poem forcefully project the intention of the poet:

Between my fingers and my thumb

The squat pen rests

I'll dig with it.

The determination of the poet to use his pen as a portion of digging is quite apparent in the lines quoted above. The poet's father was a skilled digger and the poet himself is a skilled artist in the use of pen. What we understand about the symbolic meaning between digging and pen is related to the question of Irish identity

Seamus Heaney wants to awaken the soul of these ordinary peasants and homely workmen of the Ulster region to rise above from mere ordinary digging and mapping of the slogans of Free State and independent identity.

It is only the poetic method of digging that may help the Ulster people rise to nationalistic cult of their own. The force of violence may be crushed with violence, and rebellious methods may be encountered with bullets as it was always done from the side of the British army. But the peaceful methods of Digging ideas and national spirit with the help of pen will survive all the time and will accumulate to prepare a real force of Irish identity with the establishment of their real homeland under Dublin government. Digging in Ireland is mostly related to potato digging, potato digging is also used as a symbol for projecting true Irish image.

❖ At a Potato Digging

Another poem of Seamus Heaney emitted as *At a potatodigging* again forces certain questions from the side of Irish people. There is contextual symbolism as the title itself carries us to the actual working conditions of the farmers in the activity of potato digging. Nothing else but potato and potatoes everywhere is seen in the rural background of Ireland.

We can mention here the geographical conditions prevailing in the Irish climate and consequential products. Potato is the major crop of Northern Ireland. All the agricultural fields are filled with potatoes, with every activity of digging potatoes are heaped on the surface of the earth. The major food of the farmers is also potato from their breakfast to the evening meals. Activity of potato digging immediately connects us to the rurality and poverty of the Irish people, particularly those of Ulster region. Here also the question of Irish identity is involved. At a time when the people of Great Britain could claim to be a developed community with almost all the resources of the world a their exchange, the people of Ireland suffered and still suffer from the problem of not getting even basic needs of their living standards due to the partialities served on the basis of ethnic conflict and related considerations.

The failure of potato crop in Ireland may cause social instability and mass problem related to the supply of the food. It happened in the mid-nineteenth century when

between (1845-51) millions of people died in want of food due to the failure of the potato crop. The picture of that great famine was perhaps present in the mind of Seamus Heaney while composing his poem at a potato digging. In the beginning of the poem we have a common picture of a farmer at the activity of digging.

Now the poem rises towards the historical past of Ireland. The potatoes develop into the symbols of Irish people. It is a common situation that the potatoes start rotting if they lie open on the ground in a large heap for a few days. The poet marks the rotting of the potatoes symbolically:

The new potatoes, sound as stones
Putrefied when it had lain
Three days in the long clay pit
Millions rotted along with it.

The images of live skulls, skeletons, wolfed and blighted root further carry the load of symbol to connect the whole affair to the scenes of killing in Ireland, let us mark the following lines:

Live skulls, blinded eyed, balanced on
Wild higgledy skeletons,
coured the land in forth-five,

In the days of the great famine the rotten skulls and foul smells were as common in the inhabited areas as the case of the potatoes in the Irish fields. The mention of skulls also associates ourselves with the people of Ireland in the Ulster region as the incidents of mass-killings under ethnic conflicts and political maneuverings have frequently taken place.

III. SEXUAL IMAGERY IN SEAMUS HEANEY'S POEMS

Love and sex are the cardinal points in man – woman relationships as far as the universal scheme of life and its creation on this planet is concerned. The theory of opposite sex forms the scientific bar is behind all the generative principles working in this universe. In living beings, it is theory of opposite sex and in some other cases it may be defined by the universal principle of opposite charges generally named as negative and positive. So that theory of opposite charge or opposite sex has always remained a major concern of all thinking minds of this planet. Mysteries related to the area of principle attractions between man-woman and the related theories of creation have always figured in almost all meditative visions. At the psychological level, man and woman are unable to

resist the temptation of viewing each other's bodily organs and deriving grand pleasures associated with sensors relations culminating into the sense of touch which finally loads into buoyant flames of sexual fulfillment.

The universal scheme of creation being with the primary sensation journeying through deep attraction, high sensationalism and finally leading to the act of sexual union. In this grand scheme of creation, the element of attraction drawing male and female towards each other is perhaps the basis of what we see in furtherance of life upon this planet.

In Hinduism also, we find sexual symbols of very high character to describe the basic character of existence in the universe. There are descriptions of the mythological sexual relationships of GOD's. Actually, every process of creation is defined by recognizing passive and female principle in the matter of the planet. The interaction of the matter and spirit is a necessary element behind creation. In sexual terms, male represents spirit and female matter. Fusion of the two forms the basic principle behind creation and life – like existence. In Hinduism, the symbols of love and sex are given religious touch of the highest kind in the Shiva cult. The worship of Shivaling is symbolically the worship of the generative part of the male figure. Simultaneously, Kauri is related to the worship of Parvathi of course, a thing exclusively related with the female organ.

The Shiva cult in Hindu religion is the direct presentation of the sublimation of the both languages (male and female) towards the greater dimensions of life resulting into the spiritual realization in the cosmic reality. In the worship of Shivaling and Kauri; we may find higher religion related to the two most vital human organs found exclusively in male one and in female other. The ancient saints, who conceived human life in all its higher realization has this thing in their minds. They wanted to communicate higher truth of life by placing the role of body language and nobility of sex at the center. The great saints of the ancient times understood the greatness of human life polarized in between male and female poles and they also understood great ethic principle in the union of both male and female for contributing to the universal scheme of creation.

Seamus Heaney is one of those modern poets who believe in the openness, frankness in the relationships of male and female together it has been understood as a position of nature's loveliness. It was only due to certain inhabitations imposed by the fanatic societies of the middle ages that male and female relationship was looked down upon and was even brought to the field of sinfulness. A man's sexual

contact with the lady partner was viewed in derogatory manner and it was generally regarded as the fall of the man.

During the middle ages it was believed that a man could achieve salvation and the real glory of spirit if he could get control over his desire of love and sex with a female partner. It was due to considerations that several kinds of inhabitations took place in viewing and defining the relationship of male and female together. Seamus Heaney has taken daring steps to leave off all such inhabitations and to define male and female relationship in all its naturalness and natural dignity.

In the modern times the people have started having a little freedom and independence of their own in individual relation. Freer outlook to love and sex is common places are not hesitant in mentioning even the hundreds of thrusts during such acts in order to reach the fertile points of ovary.

In this manner the images in relation to the life of love and the sex are not merely confined to the rosy cheeks, creamy breasts, silky neck, light feet and smooth legs. The poet have drawn their ideas if better nature by conceiving a few more details of sexual union, sexual intercourse and other adult designs.

Seamus Heaney's poetry develops on the strength of his image making faculty. He is unmistakably the poet of Irish climate, Irish history and Irish identity. But his senses are wide open and quite responsive to the modern attitude in relation to all things including man-woman relationship. It is true that his major concern is to portray the insufficiency of human treatment meted out to the images and the symbols picked up from the common habits and common attitude of the Irish men and women in their day to day living.

Seamus Heaney's images include sexual images and they supply an effective tool to project the actual poetic mission of the poet. At several occasions Heaney picks up his metaphors, similes and symbols from the sexual experiences of both male and female responses. Phallic images and feminine, images both run together to form the chapter of Sexual imagery in the poetry of Seamus Heaney.

- **Death of A Naturalist**

His first poetic volume, *death of a Naturalist* sexual overtones was quite apparent. The title poem of death of a Naturalist develops a particular image of frogs in a particular posture which has the submerged feeling of the poet regarding sexual touches.

Let us mark the following lines:

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Miss walls would tell us how

The daddy frog was called a bull frog

And how he croaked, and how the mummy frog

Laid hundred of little eggs and there was

Frogspawn. You could tell the mother by frogs too

For they were yellow in the sun and brown in rain.

The images of frogs are developed with sexual association the bull frog and mummy frog are mentioned with a view to tell something about their sexual intercourse resulting in hundreds of little eggs. Sexual images are further intensified by the use of words like bass chorus, grass-bellied; cocked loose weeks pulsed like sails.

The sexual imagery developed in the above quoted lines has in it the reminiscences of childhood vision of Seamus Heaney. In childhood a spectacle of sexual intercourse in between the two mating animals, insects, or other creatures awakens a lot of curiosity and develops a host of associations in the mind of a growing child who is still unaware of the things taking place in this regard. Just as William wordsworth recalls to his mind the child like fancies in the lap of nature where the scene of mating frogs attracted his attention, and made him more fanciful about what was happening amongst the frogs.

A more remarkable thing about Seamus Heaney is that he qualifies his image and its contextual meaning with the help of appropriate words and resulting sounds. The words used by him in describing the mating frogs with their croaks and other gestures are arranged in such a manner that their repetition by the reader projects the entire image by itself.

- **Blackberry Picking**

The *Blackberry picking* from the same poetic collection develops sexual imagery with the help of curtain well-chosen words, flesh, wine, summers blood and a few more details of this sort.

The following lines from the poem have submerged sexual imagery:

At first, just one a glossy people clot

Amonge others, red, green, hard as a k knot,

You ate that first one and its flesh was sweet

Like thickened wine; summers blood was in it

Leaving stains upon the tongue and lust for

Picking.

The description of blackberry picking is overloaded with Seamus details offering an open invitation to come nearer towards the glow of sexual designs. Glossy purple, flesh was sweet, thickened wine, summer's blood and lust for picking produce a curious pattern of the submerged designs of the poet. The implied sexual imagery and its related symbols have deep impression upon the minds of the readers.

The poet has tried to present a natural background of ripening fruits with help of certain symbolic words which help him produce the real glory of flesh, intoxication and sexual appeal even in the vegetable world which reticent the eyes of child Heaney. The poet's designs appear to bring into focus the glamour of flesh and sexual designs in the life of a man as a natural voice of human life.

From the child Heaney and the related images, we now turn to thoughtful day Heaney who conceives of the fate of Ireland past and present. In our previous chapters we have already noticed that Heaney was very much sore about the colonial expansion of the British in Ireland. He was all the more bitter about the use of Irish lands, seas and sea ports for the British colonial expansion in the far lands of the Americans.

- **Personal Helicon**

In his poem *Personal Helicon*, we find frequent exposure to the adult voice and sexual appetite. Here the sexual appetite has the Freudian image. According to the recent psychological researches which were initiated under the umbrella of Freud, it has been found out that sexual appetite is not nearly a case with adults but also with the children. Even since the child starts feeding upon the breast of his mother, his sexual appetite begins to play fondle with his small innocent acts. In *Personal Helicon* the poet marks the child's sensual delight in the company of his mother.

The following lines bear testimony to what we have spoken here.

As a child, they could not keep me from the wells
And old pumps with buckets and mind losses.
I loved the dark drop, the rapped sky, the smells
Of waterweed, fungus and dunk mass.
One in a brickyard, with a rotted board top.
I savored the rich crash when a bucket
Plummeted down at the end of a rope.
So deep you saw the repetition in it.

The poet picks up the symbol of water and well in which his past and present are reconciled. Sexual and sensual imagery is used to develop a serious idea of his ancient pagan and living catholic creed traversing through the history of Ireland. The images of childhood in the lap of his mother with all sensual fondling have the direct bearing on the through out of the poem.

The symbol of water is carried forward in his next poetic volume door into the dark. The implied symbolism re-creates the image of feminine kind in his surroundings. The poet mentions adult relationship and the act of love and marriage. But sexual attractions and sexual unions lead to the miserable conditions in human life. In the poem like *forge, undine, outlaw and laugh near to sequence* the poet dwells on the sad aspect related to the sexual touches.

- **The Forge**

The sexual desires are permitted by animal pleasure and in its beginning, it has the character of a brute. But it has its glory that it makes its progress towards procreative process and progeny. So, the sexual images in this second poetic volume bear the work of the poet's thoughtfulness about the exactness of life in the universe. His poem, the forge defines the act of creation in sexual terms:

Sometimes, leather-approved hirrs in his nose,
He leans out on the jamb, recalls a clatter
Of hoofs where traffic is flashing in rows;
Then grants and goes in, with a slam and flick.
To beat real iron out, to work the bellows.

Although the description is related to shaping of iron hoops on the anvil yet the submerged sexual imagery is quite apparent when one goes on reading the line after line evoking sensation with the image of sexual intercourse. Anvil, altar at the center are symbolic of female body organs and the words like expands himself in shape and music with the slam and flick have in them the male action during sexual intercourse. The sexual imagery is used for presenting, reshaping and refashioning of the progress in sexual acts.

- **The Wife's Tale and Outlaw**

In poems like *The Wife's Tale and Outlaw* the sexual imagery continues to draw our attention and affect our interest. In the Wife's tale monologue is a lady who is glad in making mention of a good male response from her partner.

But I ran my hand in the half-filled bags
Hooked to the slots. It was hard as a shot

Immune able and cool.

In *outlaw* Kelly's persecution mentioned in relation to the sexual acts of an unlicensed bull and his sexual services in impregnating of course is professional. Here the sexual imagery is developed in marked fashion and business-like attitude. However, the poet's idea of sexual union as the basis of procreation and furtherance of life upon this planet is kept at the center.

- **Ocean's Love to Ireland**

Ocean's love to Ireland. The implied sexual symbolism has its effect on our poetically awakened eyes. The myth of English civility is called illusion behind attractions in Anglo-Irish relations. Celebrated courtier of the court of Queen Elizabeth is presented here as a rapist who makes advances towards a maid of honor. Sexual imagery has been used for exposing the political ugliness behind England's encroachment upon Ireland.

Recurrences of sexual images under a few erotic illusions are mentioned in several poems of *North*. The sexual imagery employed in them has different shades. In some cases, male fascination for a female being is depicted in relation to the Bog people.

Seamus Heaney discovers his political motives of better culture for the fate of Irish people under his exclusive designs of sexual imaginary. He picks up the situations of mal treatment with the girls and terrible stories of their punishment in the male dominated societies. The images are developed in order to discuss and decide the fate of the Irish people who are still suffering not only due to the British atrocities but also due to the activities of I.R.A.

IV. NATURAL IMAGERY

Nature has always provided a large treasure of images for images for poetic imagination ever since the device of poetry was brought into focus for the expression of those superior thoughts and feelings which exceed the grasp of ordinary expressions for proper communications. Ever since the first poetic utterances came in to existence, we have seen the poets of all tastes dwelling upon the images picked up from natural phenomena as they confronted them. Even the earliest poet, Homer, who is regarded the greatest poet of his kind, used natural imagery in abundance for describing the big details of heroic cult. The poets of all ages and all tastes have banked upon the treasure of nature and natural aspects to supply images of different descriptions for achieving real poetic effect. So, the consideration of natural images in the field of poetry is not a new thing. It is based on the age-old poetic traditions.

As far as the relevance of preparing a chapter on natural imagery in relation to Seamus Heaney is concerned, it is made clear here that we are interested in seeking a definite direction in the use of natural images for the re-creation of the true identify of Irish people and for the presentation of the true Irish atmosphere.

The use of natural images in poetry is based on the theory of perception and perceptive reality. A man is gifted with five senses and all his senses develop their experiences when they are confronted with the natural phenomena outside. The images of the phenomenal reality begin assuming their shapes on the memory membranes of the growing child. These images of different descriptions become part and parcel of the personality of a child whose growth into manhood is directly affected by these images present in his memory. Wordsworth and Coleridge the great romantic poets developed their theories regarding perceptive reality and its transformation into poetic truth. In their opinion, the faculty of imagination works upon the material provided by the primary sensations through perception. According to Wordsworth, a poet develops images on what the poet's eyes and ears report to the mind's eye with what they half perceive and half create. The enormous fund of nature with its variegated scenes and sounds has always delighted, still delights and will always continue to delight the poet's imaginative insights. Whatever a great poet wants to express he has to adopt certain images for the effective presentation of his ideas and emotions. Certain things, which hit upon the imaginative plane after its deep contact with the abstract, cannot be explained without appropriate images. Longinus the great theorist of literary language has, therefore dwelt upon the great significance of poetic images and the use of figures of speech for attaining excellence in expression and to create true sublime effect. Naturally enough, the images from the spectacle of nature are easily available to the poetic faculty of the poet. Moreover, such images easily go to the heart of the readers as they are animated by the intensity of passion and volitions. They prepare an atmosphere of naturalness around both the poet and the reader and establish a close rapport between the two.

Seamus Heaney the great Irish poet of the closing decades of the 20th century is one among the galaxy of such poets who have done something new in the field of poetic images taken from whatever source. The basic function of this poet is to create lively images of Ireland and Irish people with all their difficulties, pains and agonies suffered by them in the different parts of Northern Ireland. Really, Seamus Heaney is a poet of Irish Land, Irish scenery of Ulster region and Bogland.

The pastoral images of nature related to the scenes of nature and agricultural activities like ploughing, churning, digging, spade handling, shovel working, potato heaps and alcoholic smells due to their stalemant are frequently interwoven in the poetic text of Seamus Heaney. His basic purpose is not to please the ear or eyes of the Irish readers with the projection of Irish landscape but to present the internal picture of the Irish people by finding coherence between the inner feelings and outer scenery. From the ordinary images of the pastoral world to the grand geographical scenes of land, ocean and mountains visit the poetry of Seamus Heaney at regular intervals. He makes his natural images pregnant with meaning in the background of the sufferings of the Irish people.

Seamus Heaney makes very effective use of natural images for symbolic presentation and co-relates the things of the conscious, subconscious, and unconscious. Actually, he wants to project the inner psychological feelings of the Irish people who have suffered incessantly and have taken their sufferings as their lot. In their speeches and expressions there is always a hidden agony which cannot be felt by ordinary viewers in ordinary circumstances. It has become a psychological sadistic reality with the Irish people. It is not perceptible or imaginable in ordinary circumstances. It has to be felt and recorded only by a searching eye of the poet. Seamus Heaney has done this thing by employing different kinds of images and implied symbolism. Natural images have also been used as an effective tool for desired poetic mission.

• In Blackberry Picking

In *blackberry picking* the poet recalls to his mind the images of his childhood experienced in the Mossbawn world. Among the children of Northern Ireland, it is a common feature that they go to the pastoral woods and delightfully engage themselves in the blackberry picking. The innocent activity of theft by encroaching upon the fields of others is common amongst the people of Northern Ireland. The poet picks up the images of the children in blackberry picking in a very realistic manner thus:

Round hayfields, cornfields and potato-drills
We trekked and picked until the cans were full.

The images of blackberries with thin glossy purple clot and shades of different colors according to their ripened or ripening character are beautifully picked up in the following lines.

At first, just one, a glossy purple clot

Among others, red, green, hard as a knot,
You ate that first one and its flesh was sweet
Like thickened wine: summer's blood was in it
Leaving stains upon the tongue and lust for
Picking.

Actually, the images of blackberries and Irish children's lust for picking them have symbolic significance in the greater poetic scheme and specific purpose of the poet. The image of fermented fruit with sweet flesh has in it the symbol of Irish identity and ancient Celtic tradition of the people of Ireland. When these sweet berries are transformed in to rotten character and sour smelling, they connect themselves to the crushed and rotten identify of the Irish people. The purity, freshness and sweetness of childhood are trampled down almost in the same manner in which blackberries are rotten after being weighted down in the barrelful cans.

• Death of a Naturalist

Death of Naturalist has great significance in the use of natural imagery. This poem is stirred by the childhood experiences of the poet. The poet used the symbols of water wells, pumps and buckets in order to project his essentially conceived poetic mission.

The following lines present before us a typical scene of a water body like a well with old pumps and buckets.

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 water weed, fungus and dank moss.

Its exactness and naturalness are highlighted by a natural image in the last line- the smells of water weed, fungus and dank moss. Water is a symbol of fine natural resource and prosperity related to Ireland. But it is being drawn and carried away by the other rulers. Whatever remains behind in Ireland is symbolically presented with the help of the symbols of waterweed, fungus and moss. Other images in this poem are also forceful. Let us see the following one:

A shallow one under a dry-stone ditch

The poet mentions that he is looking forward to his poetic maturity coming out from the childhood. The symbols of water and dry stones have their significance in the total scheme of the poet.

The image of water is a very positive sign in the poetry of Seamus Heaney. He associates good things of

Irish traditions with the image of water. The ancient Gaelic glory of Ireland is found by him in the image of water.

V. CONCLUSION

What has been discussed, analyzed, and pondered over in the foregoing chapters leads us to a definite conclusion that Seamus Heaney is a very effective poet of the modern Irish feelings. He achieves his greatness as a poet by producing unique images and related symbolism which cleave to the soul of every Irish soul. Among the most effective tools of poetry his imagery and symbolism have the distinction of their own. Although he is very much impressed by the symbolic mode of expression initiated by T.S. Eliot and developed in to complex poetic structures by W.B. Yeats, consequently having their influence in the inner poetic mind of Seamus Heaney during his formative years, but what is more important about him is his own poetic method in developing the respective pictures of that of that Ireland and those Irish people who have suffered incessantly and have still remained mute. There has always been double load on the fear psyche of the Irish people – first their sufferings and then suppression of their agony within their hearts. Needless to say, that the most severe agony is transformed in to an important feeling of relief if it is not ardently expressed. At the psychological level it becomes unburdening of the heavy load of mournful heart. So, the poetic task of Seamus Heaney involves the recreation of that picture which figured in his imagination while conceiving the agony of the Irish sufferers in the face of ethnic violence and ulterior designs of colonial expansion. Seamus Heaney has developed his own poetic methods for producing the exactness of the mental pictures and photographs appearing in his imagination.

When he was in college for better and higher education he came in touch with *Kavanagh's poetry*. In our conclusion we may mark that Seamus Heaney's poetic career found a definite direction under the influence of Kavanagh's poetic utterances. He got full support of the poetic voice of Kavanagh in order to birth to his own imaginative pictures about the sufferings of the Irish people.

In the conclusion of the poem Seamus Heaney shows the faithlessness of the British including the British poets by mentioning Ireland as a female passive recipient and England as a ruthless male surcharged with his sexual passion – a figure remaining apathetic about the consequences even after sexually assaulting the female figure of Ireland. This personified figure of Ireland has a

well thought out conclusion in the total image making processes of Seamus Heaney.

In order to re-create and re-organize the Irish pride and Irish identity Seamus Heaney tried to develop his own poetic and linguistic methods. He did not go much beyond the typical Irish situations and typical Irish feelings even in the use of images and symbols. In a sense we can say that he did not come to the basic Irish theme by applying certain images of universal character – on the other hand he uplifted the character of his images to the universal level by picking them from the typical Irish background.

The real greatness of Heaney's poetic art is in re-creating the mental pictures of those Irish people who suffered injustice and still did not open their lips or rather were not allowed to open their lips, perhaps the Nobel Prize committee considered this aspect of Seamus Heaney not as a part of his sympathy for his own people but as a unique thing related to the character of universal suffering in front of the unfortunate conditions of atrocities and oppression which frequently figure under political interests.

In the patterns of certain modern poets, Seamus Heaney has picked up a few open sexual symbols and sexual imagery. We have already discussed different items of sexual symbolism in a separate chapter designed for this purpose. What we want to conclude here in this regard is that the sex symbols have been given entirely a new poetic flavor in the art of Seamus Heaney. He develops his images on the basis of certain psychological reality about the sexual images. When the naked body of a beautiful girl with signs of torture is seen by him in the Punishment, he uncovers what he feels within himself as a human figure with male psychology will feel. He develops sympathy for the girl and after noticing brutal tortures on the frontal portion of her nipples, he re-creates the picture of the girl's recent past and sees her whole image in his imagination and then starts loving her – I almost love you. There are several poems in which he makes frequent exposures of the feminine body, but every time he develops his sympathy for them as a part of his male psychology. However, one thing is certain that in every case he keeps his eyes fixed on the things of Irish agony and native identity.

But these natural scenes of pastoral life have in them greater poetic designs of Seamus Heaney. He makes them as regular symbols throughout his poetry. The symbol of digging and potato digging immediately carries us to the Irish background and the agony of the Irish people amidst the failure of potato crops. The symbol of

water and pumping of the water from one field to another have in them implied symbols for a particular poetic vision of Seamus Heaney while viewing the life of Irish people.

Seamus Heaney has achieved that great milestone in the use of images and symbols which remained untouched even by W.B. Yeats, another Irish poet of very high eminence. W.B. Yeats produced the general character of the feelings of the people after World War I. In the eyes of Seamus Heaney this was only a very small portion of human tragedy in comparison to what the people of Northern Ireland have felt throughout the centuries. Seamus Heaney wanted to project the complete image of Ireland with severe truth at the center.

Seamus Heaney has achieved the truthfulness of his poetic art as he designed and desired for. He has brought the negative truth of Ireland and sweet harmony of his poetry in consonance with each other and has become a real voice of Irish people. His imagery and symbolism will always remain examples of high poetic breed and will continue to supply food for those inquisitive researchers who are most likely to find new meaning and new artistic truth in his treatment of linguistic aids with singularity.

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