Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences
Department of English Language and Literature

"WORDS AS BEARERS OF HISTORY": TESTIMONY AND TRAUMA IN SEAMUS HEANEY'S EARLY POETRY

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Ph.D. Thesis

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To my family,

who patiently and graciously tolerated my absence

during long years devoted to this study

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ABSTRACT

GÜLPINAR ÖZORAN, Gülay. *"Words as Bearers of History": Testimony and Trauma in Seamus Heaney's Early Poetry,* Ph.D. Thesis, Ankara, 2019.

This study argues that in Seamus Heaney's early poetry there is a paradoxical attitude towards the therapeutic function of the act of bearing witness to trauma. Heaney's early collections, *Wintering Out* (1972), *North* (1975) and *Field Work* (1979), are preoccupied with representations of Irish cultural traumas including the colonial conquest of Ireland and sectarian violence during the Troubles. Regarding these representations, this thesis argues that while some poems in these early collections represent, endorse and practice the act of bearing testimony as a way of coping with trauma, others question, refute and reject the idea that the act of bearing witness has therapeutic function. Heaney's early poems register the act of bearing witness as a necessary step for the process of healing because it enables the trauma-witnesses to comprehend and process the traumatic events and/or experiences that have been hitherto unfathomed and unprocessed. The poems also represent the act of bearing witness to cultural traumas as a way of regulating the uncontrollable traumatic memories and integrating them into the narrative of the past to end their impact on the present. Moreover, there are also poems in *Wintering Out, North* and *Field Work* that represent the act of bearing witness to cultural traumas of the distant and recent past as an impossible or dangerous task. Hence, Heaney's early poetry attracts attention to the fact that witnesses are rendered incapable of comprehending and thus representing the event, and also to the possibility of opening old wounds through representing the traumatic events in words. Accordingly, Heaney acknowledges that opening old wounds in a country that is already violently segregated as the Northern Ireland is especially dangerous since circulating the narratives of past traumas runs the risk of generating a desire for revenge. In conclusion, this thesis interprets these contradictory representations of testimony in Heaney's early poetry as an indicator of the traumatic complexity of the Troubles that Heaney represents.

Key Words: Seamus Heaney, *Wintering Out, North*, *Field Work*, Trauma, Testimony, Cultural Trauma

ÖZET

GÜLPINAR ÖZORAN, Gülay. "*Tarihe Tanıklık Eden Sözcükler": Seamus Heaney'nin Erken Dönem Şiirlerinde Tanıklık İfadesi ve Travma,* Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2019.

Bu çalışma Seamus Heaney'nin erken dönem şiirlerinde travmaya tanıklık etmenin iyileştirici işlevi ile ilgili çelişkili bir tutum olduğunu savunur. Heaney'nin erken dönem şiir koleksiyonları, *Wintering Out* (1972)*, North* (1975) ve *Field Work* (1979) İrlanda'nın sömürgeleştirilmesi ve Troubles dönemindeki mezhepsel şiddet gibi İrlanda'nın kültürel travmalarını temsil eder. Bu tez, Heaney'nin erken dönem şiirlerinde travmaya tanıklık etmeyi travmayla baş etme yöntemi olarak temsil ettiğini ve uyguladığını öte yandan ise travmaya tanıklık etmenin iyileştirici işlevi olduğu varsayımını sorguladığını, çürüttüğünü ve reddettiğini savunur. 1970'lerde yayınlanan bu şiirler travmaya tanıklık etmeyi iyileşme için gerekli bir adım olarak kaydeder çünkü tanıklık etme süreci travma tanığının daha önce anlayamadığı, çözümleyemediği travmatik olay ve/veya deneyimi anlamasını ve çözümlemesini sağlar. Aynı zamanda, bu şiirler kültürel travmalara tanıklık etmeyi kontrol edilemeyen travmatik hafızayı düzenlemenin ve bu hafızanın şimdiki zaman üzerindeki etkilerini sonlandırmak için onu geçmişin hikayesine eklemenin bir yolu olarak gösterirler. Ayrıca, *Wintering Out, North* ve *Field Work*'te yakın ve uzak geçmişteki kültürel travmalara tanıklık etme imkansız ya da tehlikeli bir eylem olarak da temsil edilir. Dolayısıyla, bu şiirlerde travmatik deneyim ya da olayın, tanığın olayı anlaması ve dolayısıyla anlatmasını imkansız kıldığına ve travmatik olayı sözlerle temsil etmenin eski yaraları açma ihtimali olduğuna dikkat çekilir. Sonuç olarak, Heaney erken dönem şiirlerinde Bazı şiirler ise Kuzey İrlanda gibi zaten şiddetle bölünmüş olan bir ülkede eski yaraları tekrar açmanın tehlikeli olduğunu çünkü geçmişte yaşanan travmalara dair anıların tekrar gündeme getirilmesinin intikam isteği yaratabileceğini dile getirir. Bu tez, Heaney'nin erken dönem şiirlerinde travmaya tanıklık etmenin çelişkili sonuçlarını göstererek Troubles döneminin İrlanda için yarattığı travmatik sorunlara işaret ettiği savını inceler.

Anahtar sözcükler: Seamus Heaney, Wintering Out, North, Field Work, Travma, Tanıklık İfadesi, Kültürel Travma

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ABBREVIATIONS

APA	American Psychiatric Association
CT	*The Cure at Troy*
DD	*Door into the Dark*
DN	*Death of a Naturalist*
DSM	*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*
FW	*Field Work*
IRA	Irish Republican Army
N	*North*
SL	*Spirit Level*
"Thorough-Other"	"Through-Other Places, Through-Other Times"
UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force
WO	*Wintering Out*
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army
PTSD	Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

INTRODUCTION

"We will not have come to terms with the past until the causes of what happened then are no longer active. Only because these causes live on does the spell of the past remain to this very day unbroken."
Theodor Adorno[1]

Indian politician and diplomat Dr. Shashi Tharoor delivered a speech in Edinburgh University on the British colonial history in India titled "Looking back at British Raj in India" which was recorded and broadcasted on *Youtube* in November 2017. Recounting a great number of cruelties inflicted on the Indian people and countless cases of abuse of Indian resources Tharoor demanded an apology from Britain but not in the form of any monetary reparation, as the "damage was so immense that it was essentially unquantifiable" so "any sum of reparations that is payable would not be credible, any sum that is credible would not be payable" (00:06:20-00:07:01). The apology that Tharoor called for might be given in the form of acknowledgement of "what the British did to India". He suggested that such an acknowledgement could be realised by transforming history lessons, which hitherto ignored the abuses of colonialism; or it could take the form of additional museums and monuments, which, till now, have successfully failed to display anything negative related to colonialism (00:41:22-00:45:30). According to Tharoor, if India's painful colonial history is addressed and recognised, even long after it ended, "the indelible stain of two hundred years of British colonialism in India" might be "cleansed" (00:53:20-00:53:40).

It is clear that cleansing the stain of the past does not mean, according to Tharoor, turning India back to its prelapsarian state or erasing the "indelible" memories of colonial experience, since the cleansing that Tharoor suggests can only be brought about by the acknowledgement of the past experiences that caused those "indelible stains" in the first place. In other words, Tharoor suggests that cleansing cannot be achieved through a complete forgetting, with which the word "cleansing" has closer affinity, but almost paradoxically through remembering/bearing witness. With a

similar belief in the healing power of remembrance, the former President of the Republic of Ireland, Mary Robinson also declared that "commemoration is a moral act" in reference to the immense suffering the Irish had gone through during the Great Famine of the 1840s (n.p). When the severity of the profound suffering of the people of India and Ireland, whose memories have weighed heavily on the minds of subsequent generations of people, are considered, the idea of reaching any kind of resolution merely through the acknowledgement of the painful and horrifying experiences of the past might sound somewhat inadequate as well as aporetic. One may doubt whether acknowledgement of what happened is sufficient to achieve the desired outcome.

Perhaps because the cases of India and Ireland are two cases out of many and world history is unfortunately full of horrendous experiences on both the collective and individual levels, however, a great deal of research has been carried out on the haunting effects of painful, horrifying, shocking experiences on individuals and societies and the ways of coming to terms with the constantly intruding memories of such unresolved past experiences. Trauma studies as a body of research dealing with the nature of extreme experiences that leave "indelible marks" (J.C. Alexander 6) on those who have been exposed to them and research in this field confirm that Tharoor's demand for acknowledgement of India's traumas as a foundation for social healing is to the point. Trauma studies also resonate with Mary Robinson's view of commemoration, a conscious form of remembrance, as "a moral act" and suggest that acknowledging and speaking out about, in other words, bearing testimony to, the traumatic past which is uncannily and paradoxically always present can actually be curative. Trauma, as a term which is taken here to refer roughly to exposition to overwhelming experiences whose memories can haunt individuals and societies even long after those experiences occurred, can be resolved, trauma studies suggest, if the experiences are processed, addressed and integrated into narrative memory.

This dissertation will explore the role of remembering, bearing witness or giving testimony to traumatic experiences in coping with the haunting effect of traumatic experiences in Seamus Heaney's early poetry. Regarding poetry as a form of testimony, the study will focus on the ways in which the Irish cultural traumas of the recent and distant past, including both colonial experiences and Northern Ireland's

Troubles, are represented in the early works of Seamus Heaney, one of the most prominent Northern Irish poets. Accordingly, this study argues that Heaney's early collections of poetry, especially *Wintering Out* (1972) and *North* (1975), and -to some extent- *Field Work* (1979) represent the acts of bearing witness and testimony to Irish cultural traumas as a trauma-coping strategy, and that there is an attempt in these early collections to work through and even heal the effects of these cultural traumas through testimony. Through remembering and bearing witness, Heaney's early poetry in a way endeavours to reconstruct Irish identity as cognisant of the traumas of the nation and concomitantly capable of moving beyond them. I deliberately use the words "attempt" and "endeavour" to refer to Heaney's engagement with cultural traumas of his nation in order to indicate a possibility of failure or of resignation. The reason for this is that, besides focusing on the attempt to bear witness to the past and present cultural traumas, the study shows that testimony deployed as a trauma-coping strategy in Heaney's early collections is repeatedly undone by the complexity of these traumatic experiences. Thus, the main argument of this dissertation is that there is a paradoxical attitude in Heaney's early collections towards the act of bearing testimony to trauma. To support this argument, I will analyse poems that represent, endorse and practice the act of bearing testimony as a trauma-coping strategy in the first chapter. The second chapter of the thesis will cover the poems that express a doubt about the healing potential of testimony, question the possibility of bearing testimony to a past event and also poems that portray the act of bearing testimony as an ordeal for the speakers.

Seamus Heaney (1938-2013) was a prolific poet whose career spanned the period from 1966 to 2013. He produced thirteen poetry collections over this time period, and wrote on a wide variety of subject matters. As Vendler argues, Heaney's:

> is a poetry in which readers can recognize profound family affections, eloquent landscapes, and vigorous social concern. It tells an expressive autobiographical story reaching from boyhood to Heaney's present age […], a story which includes childhood at home with parents, relatives, siblings; an adolescence with schoolfellows and friends; an adulthood with a marriage and children; a displacement from Northern Ireland to the Republic; travels; sorrows and deaths. (2)

The reason why the collections published in the 1970s are chosen for analysis in this dissertation is that these collections' engagement with Irish cultural traumas is more intense and concentrated than in his other collections. Heaney's intense preoccupation with the traumatic experiences of the Irish in the poems of the 1970s seems to have been occasioned by the acutely traumatic sectarian violence that broke out in 1969. The period that lasted until 1998 came to be known as the Troubles and was marked by an endless cycle of internecine violence between two sectarian communities broadly identified as Protestant/ unionist/ loyalist and Catholic/ nationalist/ republican. The two communities were estranged from each other in many ways but mainly in their totally different ways of remembering the past (Dawson, *Making Peace* 33-35)[2]. Throughout the Troubles, more than three thousand seven hundred people lost their lives and around fifty thousand were injured in bombing and gun attacks (Dawson, *Making Peace* 8). Heaney himself admits that the outbreak of the Troubles brought fundamental changes to his poetry. In his prose work, "Feeling into Words", Heaney notes that "[f]rom that moment [1969], the problems of poetry moved from being simply a matter of achieving the satisfactory verbal icon to being a search for images and symbols adequate to our predicament" (56).

The 1970s are regarded as the "worst decade" for violence not only of the Troubles but also of the twentieth century for Northern Ireland (Coohil 171). However, Heaney's first poetic response to this decade (Coohil 171), which first came with *Wintering Out* in 1972, does not involve representations of the recent traumas as much as representations of the traumatic experiences of cultural loss during the earlier colonial period. The increasing tension and sectarian violence in the early 1970s seem to have caused the poet to look into the historical background of the recent traumas to understand their complexity. Heaney's first two collections, *Death of a Naturalist* (1966) and *Door into the Dark* (1969), published before the outbreak of the Troubles are not as involved in representing the historical traumas as is *Wintering Out*. In the earlier, pre-Troubles volumes, there are only a few poems that point at or bear witness to the traumatic colonial experiences, such as "For the Commander of the 'Eliza'" (*DN* 21), "Requiem for the Croppies" (*DD* 14) and "Plantation" (*DD* 38). As for the collections published after the 1970s, one can say that although the violence of the Troubles and the experiences of cultural losses

during colonisation prove themselves to be a life-long engagement with trauma for Heaney, poems that respond to these traumas are sporadically situated in his later collections that turn to other preoccupations and interests. Even *Field Work,* which was published at the end of the 1970s, is not predominantly about Irish cultural traumas. One critic even claimed that *Field Work* represents "Heaney's withdrawal from Northern Ireland" both "biographically and poetically" (Cusack 53). That is why although poems in *Field Work* will also be analysed, the focus in the central chapters of this dissertation will be more on *Wintering Out* and *North,* which concentrate more on the questions of whether and how testimony can and should be given to the cultural traumas of the recent and distant past.

The long colonial history in Ireland is often seen as a direct cause of the profound segregation in Northern Irish society (Smithey 14). The way in which the island of Ireland was divided into two polities with the Government of Ireland Act in 1920 further complicated the historically problematic relationship between the Protestant and Catholic communities. Six north-eastern counties of Ulster were allocated to the government of Northern Ireland in Belfast, while the remaining twenty-six counties were governed from Dublin as imposed by the Government of Ireland Act. Edwards suggests that although this act "established two separate parliaments in Belfast and Dublin, […] London had a firm grip on reserved matters like foreign policy, currency, taxation and access to parts in both jurisdictions. It was envisaged that Ireland would eventually be reunited within the framework of Ireland" (*Essential Histories* 15). However, that has never happened. On the contrary, the distinct loyalties of the majorities on each side of the island resulted in the establishment of the Republic of Ireland in the south in 1949 and in Britain's passing of the Ireland Act in the same year, which ensured that Northern Ireland remains as an integral part of the UK (Edwards, *Essential Histories* 16). The feeling of insecurity that presided over both Protestant and Catholic communities in Northern Ireland stemmed mostly from the fact that Protestants were the minority in the island of Ireland and thus feared hostilities from the rest of the island while the Catholics felt themselves under pressure from and, threatened by, the Protestant majority within Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland was governed predominantly by Unionist parties from the very start, and their administration is often accused of being tainted with "unjust voting laws and

gerrymandering", which worked to their own advantage (Smithey 55). The Unionists' position in politics was "defensive and conservative" because of their anxiety that Britain might abandon them to the nationalist Catholic Irish (Smithey 60). However, their defensive stance occasionally led to offenses against the Catholic minority as the Unionists are claimed to have kept "Catholics in a position of permanent and hopeless inferiority" (Dawson, *Making Peace* 93). There was "systematic and pervasive" discrimination against the Catholics especially in employment and housing (Whyte 165). Moreover, the Catholics had no access to avenues of appeal because "civil service, judiciary and security forces have historically been dominated by Protestants" so they could not find the means to solve their problems (Smithey 65). This led the Catholic minority to demand equal citizenship through protests and civil disobedience within the framework of a Civil Rights movement which started in 1968. However, during a protest march from Belfast to Derry/Londonderry in 1969, the protesters are reported to have been ambushed by some loyalists who threw rocks at them. The fact that many of the loyalists who attacked the protesters turned out to be "local, off-duty members of the Special Constabulary", in other words, members of the police force, complicated the matters further (M. Smith 49). When in July of the same year the Protestants gathered for their annual Orange marches commemorating the victory of the Protestant king William of Orange over Catholic James II in 1690, some Catholic groups attacked the marchers in the same way, by throwing bottles and stones at them. This was the way the existing polarization between the two communities was about to turn into a 29-year-long violent conflict. The Royal Ulster Constabulary, which was already overrepresented by the Protestants, responded to the attack on the Orange marches with violence, they attempted to invade the Catholic section of Derry - Bogside (M. Smith 49). This event that took place in August 1969 came to be known as "the Battle of the Bogside", for when the armed police forces tried to invade the Catholic ghetto, the residents defended themselves with "petrol bombs in forty-eight hours of fierce fighting" (Dawson, *Making Peace* 93). With the Battle of the Bogside, violence escalated, and the British troops were immediately brought in to defend the Catholic minority and to restore order (Russell, *Seamus Heaney* 15). Smith suggests that both communities welcomed the troops initially (49). However, by 1972, the presence of the British troops started to be resented by the Catholics, because the British Army acted as another repressive state apparatus in the eyes of the Catholics. The British Army Observation Post on Derry Walls established to watch all

movements of the Catholics; the introduction of internment without trial[3]; and the employment of British Army to the purposes of policing the Catholic community resulted in an increase in popular resistance (Dawson, *Making Peace* 94). When British paratroopers fired on a group of unarmed Catholic civil rights marchers on January 30, 1972, the Catholics felt that their conviction that the British Army was there to repress them was confirmed. The event came to be known as Bloody Sunday as fourteen people among the crowd were killed (M. Smith 51), and it is one of the traumatic events that several of Heaney's poems represent and attempt to work through. The British paratroopers' shooting of unarmed civilians was immediately investigated by the Tribunal of Inquiry under Chief Justice Lord Widgery (Dawson, *Making Peace* 101). The Widgery Report, which was published in April 1972, concluded that "there was no general breakdown in discipline. For the most part the soldiers acted as they did because they thought their orders required it" (184). The report put the blame on "those who organized the illegal march" (183). The Catholic community regarded the inquiry and the report as a "judicial whitewash" of the British paratroopers' crime against civilians (Dawson, *Making Peace* 119). Although responses to the report were not uniform, there was a great majority of the Catholics who felt "they were under the heel of a fundamentally unjust and repressive state" and the destruction of the civil rights movement in this way led an increasing number of the Catholics to supporting an armed conflict (Dawson, *Making Peace* 151). The Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) had already emerged in 1969 as a response to the loyalist sabotages of the protest marches. Their actions were initially defensive, but they began offensive campaigns which took the form of "a war of attrition against security forces" in Northern Ireland and against "British authority figures" both in Northern Ireland and in England (M. Smith 51). The loyalists already had a paramilitary group[4], Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) which had emerged in the mid-1960s to defend the Protestant community from a predicted IRA threat (Edwards, "Abandoning Armed Resistance" 150)[5]. Both the PIRA and the UVF (alongside other minor paramilitary groups) were responsible for many terrorist attacks that took place between the Civil Rights marches of 1969 and the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. According to Aaron Edwards, between those years Northern Ireland was "the site of one of Europe's most bloody and protracted recent conflicts" (*Essential Histories* 7). A critic of Seamus Heaney's poetry, Helen Vendler says that

> [t]he Troubles, like all complex historical events, have produced rival explanations. They have been seen as the aftermath of colonization; as the clash of religions; as class warfare; as ethnic disputes; or, in their degenerate forms, as the thuggery of rival gangs. No one living in Northern Ireland went unscathed by them; eventually everyone on both sides knew a friend or family member whose life had been changed (or ended) by them. (40)

Historically situated in such a tumultuous period, Heaney's collections, *Wintering Out, North* and *Field Work,* respond to and bear witness to the trauma of the Troubles. What is meant by bearing witness or giving testimony to trauma here is basically a means to work-through trauma through cognitive engagement with the experience, an attempt to understand its complexity, to accept its reality and to leave it behind. The testimony of each collection has a distinct focus and looks at a different shard of the complex experience to serve these purposes. *Wintering Out* is principally preoccupied with understanding the historical background of the Troubles and many of the poems bear witness to the colonial history of Ireland as sources of the contemporary violence; as Morrison claims "what *Wintering Out* does is to explore the deeper structures of present hostilities" (*Seamus Heaney* 39). *North,* which is regarded as "Heaney's most intense engagement with the Northern conflict" (A. Murphy, *Seamus Heaney* 40) continues this attitude of looking into the past to resolve the present trauma but it goes further back in history, to the Iron age sacrificial rituals and also to the violence of the Vikings. Different from the speakers in many poems of *Wintering Out,* the speakers of *North* are preoccupied not so much with finding a source for the present cultural trauma as with understanding the current events by looking at them from the outside, from the larger perspective of a larger history that goes further than the era of English/British colonisation in Ireland. *North* testifies to the Troubles through "images and symbols" (Heaney, "Feeling into Words" 56) borrowed mostly from Norse but also from Greek mythology, it presents an effort to integrate the present violence into the larger history of a larger geography encompassing Ireland. Vendler's reading of *North* suggests that the collection, by looking at the "wide practices of prehistoric violence", regards contemporary violence in Northern Ireland as "neither colonial nor sectarian, neither economic nor class-caused but deeply cultural" (50). By recognizing similar patterns of traumatic violence in prehistoric times, *North* strives to understand the present trauma. As for *Field Work,* in this collection there is a more direct response to the Troubles. As Seamus Deane suggests, in *Field Work* "all trace of consoling or

explanatory myth has gone. The victims of violence are no longer distanced; their mythological beauty has gone; the contemplative distance has vanished. They are friends, relations, acquaintances" (71). *Field Work* still presents an attempt to understand the complexity of the traumatic sectarian violence, but perhaps more than understanding, the poems in this collection aim at mourning and commemorating the murdered victims through poetic articulation.

Vendler also indicates this strong social engagement of Heaney's poetry, as she suggests that his poetry, besides many other subject matters, explores "what it means to be a contemporary citizen of Northern Ireland" and looks at "the intolerable stresses put on the population by conflict, fear, betrayals and murders" (2). Heaney's poems' engagement with the contemporary situation has been duly noted by many critics over the years. Actually, debates over whether Heaney's poetry is adequately engaged with the contemporary situation has comprised the core question of Heaney criticism. Some have found its engagement with the violent crisis insufficient, accusing him of being evasive and indifferent to the subject (Fennell 33, Lloyd "Two Voices" 5), while paradoxically others have found him too dedicated to it, accusing him of betraying the art of poetry, of besmirching it with too much politics, and of propagandising (Longley, "Poetry and Politics" 27, Morrison, *Seamus Heaney* 67). This conflicting vein of criticism not only came from scholars but also from readers from both the Catholic and the Protestant sides. While the Catholic readers, with quite an aggressive tone, accused Heaney of not writing about their cause[6], the Protestant activists blamed him for writing papist propaganda in British territory[7]. There are also critics who admire Heaney's balanced poetic stance in such a polarised environment as Northern Ireland. Vendler emphasizes how Heaney's poetry both makes the repressed voices heard and also avoids propagandism, saying "Heaney has made one imaginative cast after another in an attempt to represent the almost unrepresentable collective suffering of the North, yet he has tried equally consistently, to bring intellectual reflection to the emotional attitudes that too often yield the binary position-taking of propaganda" (2). Heaney has also been regarded by some critics as the spokesperson of the whole society of Northern Ireland, who can show people a way out of the Northern crisis. Hederman, for instance, sees him as "the most potent Orpheus who would lead us through the psychic hinterland which we shall have to chart before we can emerge from the Northern crisis" (102). Heaney

himself believes that poetry should be functional in "getting through the thicket" (qtd. in Andrews 7), in other words, he wants his poetry to be responsible for and functional in coping with the traumatic violence.

This study is particularly inspired by this view of Heaney's poetry as a search for solution to the ills of the Troubles. Although Heaney's poetry has been regarded as a response to Northern Ireland's crisis by many critics, it has not been adequately assessed as testimonial poetry or poetry of trauma. There has been only one study on Heaney's poetry approaching it from the perspective of trauma theory, an MA thesis titled "Composed in Darkness: Testimony and Trauma in Seamus Heaney's *North"* written by Mark B. MacKichan. The main argument of MacKichan's thesis is that Heaney changes his method of confrontation with the traumatic experiences of the Troubles within the collection titled *North.* Observing different attitudes in the two sections of the collection, the writer claims that the first section consists of poems which do not directly engage with the trauma and instead offer what the writer calls a "mythical representational model" (48). In other words, the writer claims that the poems in the first section of *North* give testimony to the Troubles not through direct reference to the actual events but through related myths. As for the second section of the collection, MacKichan contends that poems in this section have a more straightforward approach to the Troubles.

While I agree with MacKichan's observation, my main focus in this dissertation is on Heaney's paradoxical position-taking on the subject of testimony as a trauma-coping strategy. I observed that while there are many instances in Heaney's early poetry where testimony/articulation of feelings and memories associated with traumatic events is treated as a way of coping with trauma, in some other instances, bearing witness to trauma is treated as an impossible or dangerous task. Different from MacKichan's argument, this thesis focuses on the speakers' oscillation between testimony and silence in Heaney's *Wintering Out, North* and *Field Work*.

This study will analyse Heaney's early poems through the perspectives of both psychoanalytic and cultural trauma theories. Most of the poems that will be analysed in the central chapters have individual speakers who struggle to bear testimony to a traumatic incident from Irish history that they witnessed, be it the colonial conquest

of Ireland or a sectarian murder/act of violence in the North. Because such poems represent an individual's traumatisation, the thesis heavily relies on psychoanalytic trauma theory. However, Heaney's speakers mostly voice a large group's traumatisation, they sometimes represent the whole Irish/Northern Irish society, at other times the Catholic population in the North. For this reason, cultural trauma theory is equally relevant to our study.

The term "trauma", which is now popular in everyday use , was originally derived from "the Greek word meaning wound" and used to refer to a physical injury caused by an outer agent (Luckhurst 3) however it evolved to refer also to psychological wounds later in the nineteenth century. Though the history of the study of traumatic disorders goes back to the nineteenth and early twentieth century with Paul Briquet, Jean-Martin Charcot, Pierre Janet, Sigmund Freud and his collaborator Joseph Breuer trying to identify the causes and symptoms of hysteria[8], the world had to wait until 1980 for a working definition of the term "trauma". That year, the American Psychiatric Association (hereafter APA) "finally officially acknowledged the long-recognized but frequently ignored phenomenon under the title 'Post Traumatic Stress Disorder', which included the symptoms of what had previously been called shell shock, combat stress, delayed stress syndrome, and traumatic neurosis, and referred to responses to both human and natural catastrophes" (Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* 3). In its 1980 edition of *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM*)[9] APA defined Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (hereafter PTSD) as an anxiety disorder that is caused by an outside stressor, which is usually the "direct exposure to an overwhelming event that would evoke significant symptoms of distress in most people" (*DSM III* 236). Events like "rape, military combat, earthquakes, plane crashes, or torture" are given as typical qualifying stressors behind the emergence of the disorder (*DSM III* 236-238).

This definition, however, was contested by psychotherapists for being misleading and narrow in its scope[10]. In a matter of 33 years, the APA has re-defined the boundaries and diagnostic criteria several times and the last revision came in 2013 with DSM-V. In that updated version, the definition[11], which originally held PTSD attributable only to those who are directly involved in the traumatic event, was expanded to include the experiences of those who witnessed a traumatic event that happened to other people,

so the definition came to be applied also to "witnesses, bystanders, rescue workers, relatives caught up in the immediate aftermath" (Luckhurst 1). The expansion of the definition of PTSD to include witness' experiences is significant for our study because as we see in the central chapters of the thesis, in Heaney's poetry we have speakers who are traumatised witnesses of various traumatic incidents in Irish history. Distortions of memory, hyperarousal and effortful avoidance of stimuli reminiscent of the traumatic moment, and the re-experience of the traumatic event through intrusions are generally regarded as the main symptoms of PTSD. All these symptoms[12] came to be attributed to PTSD as a result of a very long process of research upon reactions to overwhelming experiences, starting from the nineteenth century (Herman 9).

All these earlier investigations, which form the psychoanalytic pillars on which trauma studies rest, brought forth an idea of trauma as an extreme experience or series of such experiences which the victim "cannot simply leave behind" (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 2). In cases of exposition to traumatic experiences, the victims and witnesses fail to give proper reaction mostly because the experience is frightening or shocking and sometimes because certain social and psychological conditions prevent the psyche from giving a response to the incident. The event "which is seared directly into the psyche, almost like a piece of shrapnel" as Luckhurst puts it, gets stored in the unconscious in all its freshness (4). After an incubation period in which the ego represses what it deems as harmful and displeasing, the memory of the incident, absent in the conscious level, breaks into the present in the form of various symptoms including dissociation in personality and automatic repetition of similar experiences[13]. The symptoms can disappear if the individual remembers the initiating event and gives the emotional response necessitated by the extremity of the event through testimony, whereby the affect of the event is re-awakened, and the event is finally integrated into the life-story of the individual through words. That is to say, recovery in the case of trauma does not mean that the traumatised individual will lead a life as if the traumatic incident had never happened, but rather the individual will reconcile with the painful past, by abreacting[14] to it through testimony. As Kaplan says, "Trauma can never be 'healed' in the sense of a return to how things were before a catastrophe took place, or before one witnessed a catastrophe; but if the wound of trauma remains open, its pain may be worked through […]" (19).

"Cultural trauma"[15] is another term that needs clarification for the purposes of this dissertation. The term is basically defined as the experience of traumatic events which affect a whole social group, that is to say it indicates a collective experience rather than an individual one. The term emerged out of the need for a language to address collective experiences of trauma such as racism, slavery, the two World Wars, the Holocaust, Vietnam War, the totalitarian regime of the Soviet Union, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and on the London underground, the continual wars and civil wars in the Middle East, the extreme human cruelty at Abu Ghraib Prison and innumerable similarly and outrageously terrorizing events and experiences elsewhere. Cultural traumas are exceptional in terms of their capability for showing how vulnerable the members of a society are to such horrendous events and also for causing constant fear and anxiety in society (Neal ix). A disruption of the existing social order and of normality is observed in the case of cultural traumas. As Arthur Neal suggests:

> […] the borders and boundaries between order and chaos, between sacred and the profane, between good and evil, between life and death become fragile. People both individually and collectively see themselves as moving into uncharted territory. The central hopes and aspirations of personal lives are temporarily put on hold and replaced by the darkest of fears and anxieties. Symbolically, ordinary life has stopped. (5)

Natural catastrophes like volcanoes, earthquakes, floods, hurricanes or catastrophic experiences generated by people like wars, acts of violence and of terrorism are typical causes of such interruptions of the ordinary life of a community. In such cases, the normal course of events come to an abrupt halt and society is rendered clueless about their future lives.

Apart from above listed experiences which are traumatic because of their abruptness and unexpectedness, there is also a more insidious type of cultural trauma which is "chronic, enduring, and long lasting" (Neal 7). Painful histories based on discrimination like that of slavery and racism can be given as examples of insidious cultural trauma, where there is not just one single event that traumatises the members of a collectivity, but where oppression is exercised as a form of everyday reality. Insidious cultural trauma occurs when members of a society feel systematically devalued "because a characteristic intrinsic to their identity is different from what is

valued by those in power, for example gender, color, sexual orientation, physical ability" (Brown and Ballou 240). Such systematic oppression and devaluation inevitably annihilate the agency and identity of the community. In line with this, cultural trauma has also been defined as a "a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric affecting a group of people that has achieved some degree of cohesion" (Eyerman 2).

Like individuals suffering from psychological trauma, societies that have experienced insidious or abrupt traumatic incidents can be haunted by those experiences even long after they occurred. In the case of psychological trauma, Freud suggests that individuals react to traumatic experience belatedly, after a period of incubation (*Moses and Monotheism* 110). They tend to be amnesiac about what they had gone through, but after the incubation period memories of the traumatic incidents come back uncontrollably. Freud says "the patient does not *remember* anything of what he has forgotten and repressed but *acts* it *out.* He reproduces it not as a memory but as an action; he *repeats* it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it" (*"*Repeating and Remembering" 150, emphasis original). In other words, traumatised individuals may not remember the event for a period of time, but then they relive it in repetitive intrusions. The ways an individual performs forgetting and remembrance are surely quite different from the ways a society does, but there are also striking similarities between them. Amnesia may also occur in a society when the members of that society continue living as if the traumatic event or events had never happened. Such amnesia occurs perhaps not because the members of the society lose access to the memory of the traumatic event but because they feel a forced obligation to sweep the experience under the carpet. Kaplan says that collective amnesia may not necessarily be because of communities' literal inability to recall the event (as in the case of the traumatised individual's amnesia) but rather "because, for political or social reasons (or mixture of the two, including guilt or criminal activity), it is too dangerous for the culture (or powerful political figures) to acknowledge or recall, just as the 'forgotten' contents in individual consciousness are too dangerous to remember" (74).

Likewise, sectarian communities in Northern Ireland can be argued to have experienced collective amnesia, thereby forgetting or ignoring the traumatic experiences of the community with whom they were in conflict. The amnesiac

attitudes of sectarian communities towards each other brought about a need to bear testimony to these experiences, since testimony, an antidote for forgetfulness, would serve the purpose of setting the record straight and integrating the forgotten or unacknowledged experiences into the collective and narrative memory of Northern Irish society. Thus, the collective amnesia of each sectarian community caused the members of its adversarial community to bear witness to past and present traumas through a great "variety of modes and media of representation, from the murals painted in […] housing estates to the accounts produced by professional historians, and from the stories told in drama, film and fiction to the rituals of the commemorative parade" (Dawson, *Making Peace* 33). Seamus Heaney's poems, bearing witness to the collective traumas mostly of the native Catholic Irish, can be thus viewed as a response to the collective amnesia of the Protestant/Unionist community in Northern Ireland. Such poems by Heaney represent an attempt to make the cultural traumas of the native Catholic Irish processed, acknowledged and integrated into the narrative memory of Northern Irish society.

Trauma studies suggest that as long as the memories of traumatic incidents are kept unprocessed, unacknowledged and unrecognized, there is a risk that the traumatic incidents will be relived over and over again (Freud, *Beyond* 19; APA, *DSM-V* 271; Caruth, *Trauma* 10). In other words, unless the traumatic past is integrated in the collective memory of the traumatised community, it constantly breaks into the present, which results in a vicious cycle of similarly traumatising experiences (Herman 1). This is what Freud termed "repetition compulsion" ("Beyond the Pleasure Principle" 19) and, as Roger Luckhurst suggests, "Repetition compulsion has become a cultural shorthand for the consequences of traumatic events: individuals, collectives and nations risk trapping themselves in cycles of uncomprehending repetition unless the traumatic event is translated from repetition to the healthy analytic process of 'working through'" (9).

The idea that cultural trauma involves a dramatic loss of identity, a systematic oppression on a community, cycles of uncomprehending repetition, and the constant presence of the troublesome past in the present makes the whole concept very resonant with the experiences of the colonised people. It is important to establish this affinity between colonisation and cultural trauma as many of Heaney's poems, especially the

majority of them in *Wintering Out* act as testimony to the colonial experiences of the Irish with the particular intention of healing the contemporary wounds of the Northern Irish society.

As the long history of colonialism around the world indicates, because colonisation typically involves the exploitation of the land, people and goods of the new territory to the economic advantage of the coloniser, the colonised peoples' identities have been first "unformed" then "reformed" so that they would eventually turn into obedient subjects of the new and foreign power in their land (Loomba 2). This process of "unforming" and "reforming" indigenous peoples' identities has often involved "a wide range of practices including […] plunder, warfare, genocide, enslavement and rebellions" (Loomba 2). Apart from such oppressive and violent acts, this process of reforming the community has also involved more psychologically aggressive acts including the formation and circulation of discourses which would systematically devalue and dehumanise the native people. This systematic dehumanisation and devaluation is what immediately associates the colonial experiences with what Brown and Ballou call "insidious trauma" (240). All these oppressive and aggressive acts can be regarded as traumatising because they serve the purpose of exploiting the natives and their resources and also because, while doing so, such acts eradicate the identity of the people often through violent means. David Lloyd highlights the traumatic effect of colonialism in his "Colonial Trauma/ Postcolonial Recovery?" in a very concise and effective way. Lloyd first defines trauma as an experience entailing "violent intrusion and a sense of utter objectification that annihilates the person as subject or agent" and then he says this definition is applicable for

> the effects and mechanisms of colonization: the overwhelming technological, military and economic power of the colonizer, the violence and programmatically excessive atrocities committed in the course of putting down resistance to intrusion, the deliberate destruction of the symbolic and practical resources of whole populations. (217)

These mechanisms or colonial strategies are effective in depriving the society of agency, of the right to decide and act for themselves, and thus in objectifying them.

Although the colonised people's experiences have often been identified as traumatic, the experiences of the settler communities have not been fully acknowledged as such

despite the fact that settlers were not usually exempt from the traumatic effects of the colonial experience. Loomba claims that although colonialism was experienced in various ways by various people around the world throughout centuries, it has "locked the original inhabitants and the newcomers into the most complex and traumatic relationships" everywhere (2). As colonialism, in its very basic sense, suggests a successful attempt at exerting power over a people who are uncooperative, the history of colonialism is full of rebellions which often threatened the existence of the newcomers in violent ways. This power-struggle between natives and settlers often caused endless repetitions of violence, which can be taken as manifestations of unresolved traumas of the past (Loomba 2).

Colonisation in Ireland and the experience of the Irish were no exception. Lasting for eight hundred years from the twelfth to the twentieth century, colonialism in Ireland "unformed" the Irish identity in violent and psychologically aggressive ways to "re-form" it. Being the earliest colony of England, Ireland has undergone a notoriously complex history of military conflict, plantation, subjugation and cultural assimilation (Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English* 9). This complex history is marked by many failed rebellions against colonial oppression, violent retaliations against attempted rebellions, famines to which the colonial power is claimed to have responded unfairly, a war of independence, and violent sectarian divisions which continued to trouble the people even after Ireland's status as a colony ended. These experiences are here argued to be traumatic mainly because systematic oppression of the Irish people and devaluation of Irish identity throughout centuries have resulted in a highly repetitive history of suffering involving enmity and vendetta between native and settler communities.

Though the English were attracted to Ireland first and foremost by political and "increasingly religious and economic concerns", a great deal of attention was paid to Anglicisation of the Irish identity (Ohlmeyer, "A Laboratory for Empire" 27). Dealing specifically with British colonialism in Ireland in the seventeenth century, the twentieth century Irish poet and playwright Sean Ó Tuama claims that "subjugation of Ireland may well have been unique in the attention paid to cultural as well as territorial conquest" (28). Indeed, at the very start there was a great concern in transforming the Irish identity, though not immediately to an Anglo-Norman/English way of life, but

rather to a more continental one, because of the influence of the Roman Catholic Church. The Anglo-Norman king, Henry II had expressed his desire to conquer Ireland in the first half of the twelfth century and Pope Adrian IV gave his permission to Henry II to do so, with the hope that this conquest would "reform the unsatisfactory state of religion and ecclesiastical affairs in Ireland and […] bring the country into canonical conformity with the continent […] (Sheehy 68). Although Henry II did not act upon the papal permission and waited for fourteen years before sending Anglo-Norman forces to Ireland (for completely different reasons)[16], the *Laudabiliter*[17], a document authorising the Anglo-Normans to reform the Irish, was seen as a justification of the Anglo-Norman presence in Ireland up until the Reformation (Stewart 67).

The idea that the Irish must be reformed by its civilised neighbour continued its existence in greater force and insistence after the *Laudabiliter*. The Irish were not different from Anglo-Normans -and from the other European peoples- only in terms of religious practices. The organisation of society, the succession laws for the rulers, trade, wars, language, clothing in Ireland were all very different[18] and these cultural differences of the Irish were immediately taken to indicate that Irish identity was inferior to Anglo-Norman and European identities. Colonisers aimed at transforming the Irish character and culture to minimise these differences because they believed that the cultural differences of the Irish prevented them from making full profit of the Irish lands[19]. Drawing on the Roman discourse of civilisation against barbarism, medieval documents like Giraldus Cambrensis' *The History and Topography of Ireland*, portrayed the Irish as "barbarous" and "uncultivated" (102) people who were "cut off from well-behaved and law-abiding people" (103). Giraldus Cambrensis' *History* was written in 1188 and, although his portrayal of the Irish was contested by later Irish historians, it acted as a source book for later commentators who echoed his discourse[20]. According to Cambrensis' account, the Irish did not farm their lands but "[l]ive[d] on beasts only, and live[d] like beasts. They [had] not progressed at all from the primitive habits of pastoral living" (101). Cambrensis also says the Irish despise "work on the land" and adds that "the fields cultivated are so few because of the neglect of those who should cultivate them" (102). Seeing the character of the Irish people as the cause of their backwardness or of their improper use of the land, the English justified their attempts at transforming Irish customs and manners. Montaño asserts that

> The English experience in Ireland taught them that the Irish lacked each of the accepted cultural markers of civilized society: their legal system was ineffective, their system of inheritance was deeply flawed, their marriage customs encouraged promiscuity and illegitimacy, and their language, apparel and entertainments all contributed to the unsettled nature of Ireland. (283)

Because England was frequently at war with France, Scotland and Wales throughout much of the late Middle Ages, the conquest of Ireland did not yield a full-scale colonisation and the Anglo-Norman settlers of the twelfth century gradually assimilated into Gaelic culture despite all the discourses devaluing Irish life-style (Hendrix 22). However, when England under Henry VIII's rule renewed its interest in Ireland, the dehumanising discourses about the Irish identity were revived. Once again, in the sixteenth century, Irish identity came to be regarded as an obstacle to profit and progress that the English hoped to achieve in Ireland. This time such discourses resulted in the passing of effective state acts. In 1537, for instance, a legislation promoting English dress, language, culture and outlawing Irish language, hairstyle and garments became a law (Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English* 30). According to Ohlmeyer, a later legislation "prohibited Gaelic agricultural, social, political and cultural practices" (*Making Ireland English* 30). This latter legislation prioritised the removal of Gaelic speaking bards and minstrels "who served as symbols of the 'feasting and fighting' culture" (Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English* 30-31). Thus, this legislation also served the purpose of eradicating the native culture, which was deemed as an obstacle to progress by the English. The legislation suppressing bardic poetry and the mind-set behind it were political strategies to firmly establish English rule in Ireland. However, this can also be interpreted as silencing the native people, preventing them from giving response to their experience of cultural change and loss, which makes it possible to read the colonial history in Ireland as the history of trauma. As I have already established by citing both psychoanalytic and sociological theories of trauma above, overwhelming experiences become traumatic when it becomes impossible to give the proper emotional and verbal response to them. A society's inability to give proper response to cultural change and loss causes lingering political outcomes. As M. Smith contends "it is this inability to mourn that allows the memories […] to be carried into the next generation as emotional wounds" (35). The silencing of the Gaelic bards who are claimed to have acted as modern-day journalists,

chroniclers, political essayists, satirists, public spokesmen before their decline in the mid seventeenth century in a sense meant the silencing of the Irish people (Bergin 4).

Another colonial strategy which further prevented the Irish from giving the proper emotional and verbal response to cultural transformation was the disuse of the Gaelic language encouraged mostly through education in English, legislations asserting English as the sole language of the court and through discourses redefining Gaelic as the language of the outlaws and the uneducated and prohibiting education in Gaelic. In 1737, the British government passed the Administration of Justice act which mandated the English language as the only language in Irish courts (Cahill and Cathlain 119). Cahill and Cathlain suggest that British discourse on Gaelic has always carried the claim that "speaking in Gaelic is a sign of disloyalty" (116). They also quote a state act of 1537 suggesting that the exclusive use of English was the only choice for "His highness's true and faithful subjects" (116). In the nineteenth century, when Gaelic language declined especially among the educated Irish, the use of Gaelic language started to suggest that the language user was uneducated. The text used in geography lessons in the nineteenth century defining Britain epitomises the negative discourses regarding the insistence on using any languages other than English in Britain. It defines Britain as follows: "The island of Great Britain, which is composed of England, Scotland, and Wales, and the Island of Ireland, form […] the British Empire in Europe. The people of these islands have one and the same language (all at least who are educated), […]" (qtd. in Scally 151). Besides such "ideological state apparatuses" (Althusser 294), English/British colonial power also employed "repressive state apparatuses" (Althusser 296) including state-sanctioned military acts aiming at ethnic cleansing, in order to subjugate the Irish and colonise Ireland. The natives' responses to colonial strategies were not very obedient and docile[21]. Resistance was a common response and rebellions against English rule were frequent. The frequency of rebellions is noted by Stewart, who likens the government of Ireland to Hercules' task of killing the mythical creature Hydra, saying "as soon as one head of rebellion was cut off, two more shot up in its place" (60). The English response to rebellions was usually harsh. Cahill and Cathlain claim that "mass murder and other tactics of ethnic cleansing were tools used repeatedly by the English at least through the seventeenth century" (117). In one case, during the Desmond rebellion[22] in Munster (1579-1583), the Lord Deputy, Lord Grey's forces deliberately destroyed all

the "Corne" and "Cattells" in Munster, so that the rebels would be defeated by famine, not by military action (Spenser 135). 50.000 people, which equalled to one third of the whole population in Munster are estimated to have died due to famine and epidemics as a result of Grey's military strategy (Hadfield 167-168). Moreover, after the quelling of the rebellion, rebels' lands were distributed among the Protestant settlers. Such confiscations also served the purpose of removing the Catholic Irish from power.

Since the Reformation, rulers in England had been concerned about the possibility that Catholic Ireland could be a "staging ground" for a "Catholic invasion of England" (Smith 42). For this reason, they tried to "reduce the hold of Catholicism in Ireland" through confiscations of Irish lands among the Scottish and English Protestants (Smith 42). However, this strategy ended up in forging a very traumatic relationship between the natives and settlers, the effects of which continued to cause new traumas well into the twenty-first century. Outraged by confiscations of their lands among the settlers, Catholic natives rebelled in 1641 and it is claimed that they killed an unknown number of civilians including women and children -estimations range from 10.000 to 12.000 (Dawson, *Making Peace* 227). The response to the rebellion came eight years later in the form of retaliation with a matching violence. In 1649 Oliver Cromwell's forces reconquered Ireland and massacred the native Irish in Drogheda and Wexford in retaliation of 1641 rebellion, M. Smith suggests that in these retaliations "thousands were killed, thousands more executed and even greater numbers were sent into exile" (42). The experiences of both the natives and settlers during and in the aftermath of the rebellion were so traumatic that they are claimed to have left "a legacy of horror" (Dawson, *Making Peace* 227). The rebellion seems to have entrapped especially the Protestant community in the historical moment of its occurrence. The fear that they would be "annihilated at the hands of surrounding hostile Catholics" (Dawson, *Making Peace* 226) became so profound and prevailing that even the communal behaviour of the Protestants in the twentieth century seems to be directly driven from that traumatic moment in history. The rebellion also contributed to the strengthening of the image of Catholics as a "popish threat" to Britain (McCormack 172). After the Catholic king James II's defeat by Protestant William of Orange in the Battle of the Boyne in Ireland in 1690 Westminster passed a series of laws which restricted the rights of Catholics in order to maintain order and stability, as a precaution for this threat (M. Smith 42). These laws, known as Penal Laws, severely restricted the Catholics' right to own

property, to enrol in trade guilds and to have a control over their people's education. (M. Smith 43). Some of these laws could only be lifted gradually towards the end of the eighteenth century, however, Catholics still could not own land, vote, or be elected for a political office until the full Catholic emancipation in 1829.

Towards the very end of the eighteenth century, which proved to be a relatively stable century with the native Irish having lost their rights and lands, came another failed rebellion. In 1798, Ireland was again the staging ground for violent events. Inspired by the French and American Revolutions, a group called United Irishmen, a secular organisation led by a Protestant lawyer, Theobold Wolfe Tone, united the people of all sects to overthrow British authority mostly for economic reasons (Hancock 449). The assumption that the Irish all around the island would support their cause led the revolutionaries to failure because most of the loyalist Protestants came to regard "the United Irishmen as yet another front for Catholic schemes to drive Protestants from their lands" (Hancock 449). Also, because the uprising was not very well-planned, it ended in three months. The failed revolution gave Britain cause to bring Ireland under closer control. In 1801, with the passing of the Act of Union, the parliament in Dublin, which had been active since the thirteenth century, was dissolved, and Ireland started to be governed directly from London. The nineteenth century was marked by the struggle to replace rule from Westminster with Home Rule. Both Protestants and Catholics carried out several political campaigns to pass the Home Rule bill. However, towards the end of the century Protestant loyalists,' seeing the Catholic Church's involvement in political campaigns for Home Rule, led them to "turn away from" it (M. Smith 45). The renewed estrangement between the two communities resulted in yet another violent clash. When the Home Rule bill passed in 1912, despite the intense opposition from Protestant loyalists, they organized a paramilitary army, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and prepared for civil war (M. Smith 46). Catholic nationalists responded with their own paramilitaries, the Irish Volunteers. A possible clash between the two forces was postponed due to the postponement of Home Rule with the outbreak of the First World War. However, seeing Britain's engagement in the Great War as an opportunity, in Easter 1916 a group of nationalists protested against the postponement of the Home Rule bill and demanded independence. The uprising, now known as the Easter Rising, is regarded as another pivotal moment in Irish history because fifteen of the leaders of the uprising were executed within a week, which

caused the Catholic Irish to unite with the intention of establishing a "complete separation from Britain" (M. Smith 46).

Thus, the colonial history in Ireland is full of traumatic incidents for the inhabitants of the island. The attempted destruction of Irish culture, language and identity and the violence following it entrapped the Irish in a vicious cycle of similar experiences. Dori Laub defines trauma as "entrapment in a fate that cannot be known, that cannot be told but can only be repeated" ("Bearing Witness" 69). Colonisation in Ireland and the violent clashes between the natives and settlers caused by it seem to have entrapped both communities in their past. That is perhaps the reason why Richard Rose's statement about Irish history has been thought to capture truth and is often quoted by many scholars. Rose says, "Ireland is almost a land without history, because the troubles of the past are relived as contemporary events" (75).

Having said that the experience and effects of colonisation in Ireland fit the definition of cultural trauma, one must also acknowledge that collective experiences like colonisation or slavery can be regarded as cultural traumas only after a process of discourse-making in social life. Jeffrey C. Alexander, one of the major cultural trauma theorists, claims that "events do not, in and of themselves create collective trauma. […] Trauma is a socially mediated attribution" (8). In other words, overwhelming experiences with long-lasting effects on a community are not readily regarded as cultural traumas, but they are constructed through discourses. Events with horrendous effects on a collective identity become registered as cultural traumas through, what J. C. Alexander calls a "trauma process" (11).

In a trauma process, individuals or groups of individuals with "particular discursive talents for articulating their claims -for what might be called 'meaning-making' -in the public sphere", translate the event or events into forms of representation such as literature, fine arts, films, or mediate it through the mass media (J.C. Alexander 11). Ron Eyerman also suggests that in cases of cultural traumas

> Intellectuals, in the term's widest sense, play a significant role. […] intellectuals mediate between the cultural and political spheres that characterize modern societies, not so much representing and giving voice to their own ideas and interests, but rather articulating ideas to and for others. Intellectuals are mediators and translators between spheres of

> activity and differently situated groups. […] Intellectuals in this sense can be film directors and singers of songs, as well as college professors. (4).

Through such representations and mediations of the intellectuals or "carrier groups" as J.C. Alexander calls them, overwhelming experiences are forged as cultural trauma (12). The trauma process, that is to say, the representation of the traumatic experience by intellectuals or by anyone imbued with social and cultural authority, defines the experience as cultural trauma, but it also acts as a way of coping with the experience. J.C. Alexander suggests that once the traumatised collective identity has undergone the trauma process, "a period of calming down" ensues (22). He also asserts that "the spiral of signification flattens out, affect and emotion become less inflamed, […]. As the heightened and powerfully affecting discourse of trauma disappears, the 'lessons' of the trauma become objectified in monuments, museums, and collections of historical artifacts" (22-23). A routinisation of commemoration of the traumatic event follows the trauma process in which the event is abundantly represented in cultural artefacts (J.C. Alexander 23).

The concept of a "trauma process" introduced by cultural trauma theorists is very useful in exploring the role of literature as a form of cultural artefact with a capacity to represent the cultural trauma, and in coping with its effect on the collective identity. If the speech acts of individuals can be regarded as their testimonies to the individually experienced traumas and thus a way of working through, its counterpart for working through cultural traumas might be regarded as literary works through which the "carrier groups" testify to the experience, make meaning out of it and integrate it to the memory and thus the identity of the collectivity.

It is within this frame of thought that Heaney's early poetry is claimed in this study to be testimonial poetry. Heaney's collections of the 1970s represent the Irish experience of colonisation and the Northern Irish experience of sectarian violence, and by means of representation they also register these experiences as cultural traumas. Exploration of the cultural losses during colonisation and their effects on the Irish is a preoccupation especially in the collection *Wintering Out* but it is also present in *North*. To lay bare the effects of these traumatic losses, Heaney's poetry draws parallels between more familiar and perhaps more easily identifiable cases of trauma and these specific Irish cultural traumas. In his poetry, there are instances where Ireland's

colonisation is likened to rape ("Ocean's Love to Ireland", *N* 40) which results in the "ruined maid's pregnancy with a harmful child ("Act of Union", *N* 43), and also to an unexpected and powerful flood which causes farmers to lose their resources, their "Atlantis" beneath the water ("Gifts of Rain", *WO* 13-15). To explore what these traumatic losses meant for the Irish, the near-destruction of the Irish cultural identity is likened to the extinction of wolves in Ireland at the hands of English hounds ("Midnight", *WO* 35). All these metaphors draw attention to how the agency or subjecthood of the Irish people is undermined through the deliberate destruction of "symbolic and practical resources" of the Irish people during colonisation (Lloyd, "Colonial Trauma" 217). These metaphors and similar others in Heaney's poetry register the centuries-long series of attempts to destroy the Irish culture as traumatic and demonstrate them as a violent intervention in the ongoing growth of the Irish identity.

Heaney's poetry identifies the cycle of violence during the Troubles as another traumatising experience for the Irish. The representation and registration of the Troubles as a cultural trauma in Heaney's poetry are evident, particularly in the search for and suggestion of strategies to overcome the traumatic experience of repeated violence. Seeing the Troubles as the consequence of earlier traumas, many of Heaney's poems aim at pausing the ongoing destructive actions of the paramilitary groups and making people think at least for a moment what they have been and are going through by representing the past and present traumatic experiences. As trauma theory also suggests, the main reason behind destructive repetition is the traumatised person or community's desire to master the situation, to have a more positive outcome and this desire is either unconscious or automatic rather than conscious. Thus, one way to break the cycle is to make its sources known and understood, to raise them to the conscious level. In his essay "Government of the Tongue", Heaney draws an analogy between poetry and Jesus's act of writing in the sand in the Biblical story of the woman accused of adultery. When asked about it Jesus silently writes something in the sand and then says "he, who is without sin shall cast the first stone" (qtd. in "Government of the Tongue" 189). The writing on the sand together with the statement lead the people to question whether they have a right to stone that woman, and to understand the nature of what they are about to do. In other words, by writing in the sand, Jesus freezes the frame for a moment and gives people a chance to think before taking action

("Government of the Tongue" 189-190). It is what Heaney's poetry also does; it creates a pause and makes the reader question what might be the reason behind the repeated violence. Through engaging readers with such questioning, Heaney's poetry seems to attempt at raising the unprocessed traumatic experiences to the conscious level.

There are several instances in Heaney's poetry in which the possible underlying reasons for violence are hinted at so that the nature of the experience could be better understood. In "Kinship" for instance, the speaker asks whether the cause of repeated violence is Nerthus, the "insatiable" goddess (*N* 34) who always demands sacrifices. Likening those who fight to kill and to be killed for the sake of mother Ireland in the twentieth century to those who served as and offered sacrifices to a Norse Goddess in the Iron Age, Heaney's poem emphasises the uncanny resemblance between the two mind-sets, leading the audience to have a deeper understanding of the Troubles. In "Funeral Rites", the question is whether it is "the cud of memory" that is "incubating bloodshed" (*N* 8) in Northern Ireland. Suggesting that the memories of past traumatic experiences are like food that is repeatedly chewed and brought back for more chewing but never swallowed, never entirely digested, Heaney's poetry treats the unprocessed experiences of the past as the possible reason behind the traumatic experiences of the present.

Preoccupied with the discovery of underlying reasons for the contemporary violence, many of Heaney's poems attempt at healing the wounds of Northern Ireland by understanding them and integrating them into the narrative memory of the nation. Trauma theory suggests that traumatic events resist integration into the flow of experiences; they resist integration into "one's own and others' knowledge of the past" (Caruth, *Trauma* 152-153). They might be so overwhelming that they "get stored differently and may become dissociated from conscious awareness and voluntary control" (van der Kolk, van der Hart 160). In other words, traumatic experiences, unlike other experiences, are not automatically integrated into the traumatised individual/community's narrative memory but stand apart and, because they are not integrated, they threaten to come back without willed recall in the form of acting out. Very much in line with this understanding of trauma, the attempt to locate the historical sources of the present situation in Heaney's poetry can be interpreted as an attempt to

weave the traumatic memories of the nation into the narrative of the past. Such integration would erase the "precision and the force" of the traumatic memories (Caruth, *Trauma* 152) and would enable the traumatised society to treat them like any other experience in the constellation of experiences. The famous bog-poems in *Wintering Out* and *North* and poems dealing with the violent culture of the Vikings in *North* link the primitive nature of the contemporary violence with the atavistic violence of the Vikings and of the Iron Age people, rather than with colonial history. This association serves the purposes of erasing the uniqueness and separateness of the contemporary violence in nation's consciousness and attaching the particular experience of the Troubles to a larger history of violence. Poems such as "Tollund Man" (*WO* 36), "Punishment" (*N* 30-31), "Bog Queen" (*N* 25) dealing with violence which is "neither colonial nor sectarian" (Vendler 50) implicate that violence was a part of life in Northern Europe. These poems emphasising the existence of internecine violence even before the colonial history have been criticised by a fellow poet, Ciaran Carson, for naturalizing or normalizing violence (Carson 184-185). Most poems in *North* may indeed be regarded as an attempt at normalising violence though not because of Heaney's fear of making political statements as Carson implies but rather because of his intention to erase the uniqueness or extraordinariness of the sectarian violence in the national consciousness. Thus, Heaney's poetry registers the recognition of the traumatic experiences and the integration of them in narrative memory as ways of tending and possibly healing the wound.

Integration of the traumatic experiences into the narrative memory of the Irish people is attempted in Heaney's poetry through bearing testimony to them. Itself being a testimony to the cultural traumas of the Irish, Heaney's poetry also seems to endorse testimony as a way of healing the wound. There is an emphasis on the importance of giving testimony to the traumatic experiences of the nation for the therapeutic process, in many of Heaney's poems in all three collections, *Wintering Out*, *North* and *Field Work*. In "Whatever You Say Say Nothing" for instance, the speaker urges his addressees to speak out about the traumatic violence in an involved manner rather than hiding behind "sanctioned, old and elaborate" (*N* 52) phrases to come to terms with it. The "sanctioned, old and elaborate" phrases are not good enough according to the speaker, as they cannot engage anyone in a process of understanding or analysing what has happened or is happening. Heaney's poetry also emphasises the idea that bearing

witness or testimony to traumatic experiences can enable the traumatised subject or community to exert their agential power over the uncontrollable memories and emotions originating from the traumatic incident.

However, trauma theory suggests that representing the traumatic experiences with words is not always easy and does not usually give the sense of having achieved a satisfactory representation. Roth says:

> The traumatic event is too terrible for words, too horrifying to be integrated into our schemes for making sense of the world. Yet any representation of the trauma may have to rely on words and will be limited by the very schemes that were initially overwhelmed. […] a "successful" representation (a representation that others understand) of trauma will necessarily seem like trivialization, or worse like betrayal. The intensity of a trauma is what defies understanding, and so a representation that someone else understands seems to indicate that the event wasn't as intense as it seemed to be. (91)

In other words, trauma entails an aporia, it is both an "unspeakable" and an "unburiable" experience (Herman 1). There are various reasons why survivors of a traumatic experience might find the experience unspeakable, it might be because of the fear of "betraying" the extremity of the experience as Roth suggests (91). Herman argues it is unspeakable because "certain violations of the social compact are too terrible to utter aloud" (1); Caruth says it is so because the experience is not grasped at the moment of its occurrence and access to the memory of the event is literally impossible (*Trauma* 8). In other words, trauma is unspeakable because it is not understood as it is being experienced, because the experience is so overwhelming that it does not comply with the usual meaning-making mechanisms. It resists understanding, it resists turning into a narrative.

Heaney's early poetry reflects this aporia. In the collections of the 1970s testimony is registered both as a therapeutic and also a dangerous, difficult and even an impossible task. In other words, it is proposed and at the same time refuted as a trauma-coping strategy. In Heaney's early poetry, testimony is registered as therapeutic because it enables the victims and witnesses to work through the traumatic incident and to break its haunting grip. However, it is also treated as a challenge because it requires the bearer of testimony to open old wounds and to go through the trauma once again. The

difficulty of speaking out about the trauma is a frequent preoccupation in Heaney's poems. For instance, in "Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces" the speaker likens himself to Hamlet, describing himself as the "skull handler", "parablist", "smeller of the rot in the state" (*N* 14). Assuming the role of a spokesperson, the speaker is the one who is supposed to write about people who have been long dead and whose stories have never been voiced until now, he is the one who diagnoses the problems of the state. However, "pinioned by ghosts/and affections, / murders and pieties" (*N* 14) like Hamlet he cannot take action. Haunted by the traumatic memories of the nation and witnessing the traumatic violence on the streets, the speaker can only "dither or blather" (*N* 14) but cannot give a satisfactory testimony that would satisfy the traumatised society. One reason why Heaney's poetry treats bearing witness as a difficult task is that it runs the risk of re-traumatising the bearer of testimony and the society. Because bearing testimony requires the bearer and the listener of testimony to go through the traumatic incident once again, it forces people to confront what they have avoided confronting due to its intense pain.

Heaney's poetry does not only suggest that bearing testimony is an ordeal for the bearer of testimony, there are also instances where testimony is treated as a dangerous task. Trauma theory also suggests that especially in a society that is divided into two communities that are engaged in a violent conflict because of past traumas, bearing witness to man-made traumatic experiences bears the risk of generating further violence and further trauma (Volkan 308-309, J.Alexander 8-9). Heaney's *North* is particularly complicated by the fact that opening old wounds might deepen the rifts between the sectarian communities and re-traumatise the whole society once again. Whilst a majority of poems in the previous collection, *Wintering Out,* give testimony to the traumatic experiences during colonisation in an attempt to end their haunting effect in the present, *North* abandons this strategy and practices a tactful silence about the past traumas.

The first chapter of this thesis analyses the instances in Heaney's early poetry where the act of bearing testimony to trauma is represented as a trauma-coping strategy and also instances where there is an attempt to bear witness to traumatic experiences of the Irish. The chapter argues that bearing testimony to these traumas is a struggle for the speakers because testimony requires the bearer of testimony to repeat the trauma in

words. Claiming that there is a slight but meaningful difference between traumatic repetitions and testimonial repetition, the first chapter focuses on the instances where speakers, who are all witnesses of a particular Irish cultural trauma, struggle and manage to understand the trauma through testimonial repetition.

As for the second chapter, it focuses on how Heaney's poetry reflects the aporia of trauma. The chapter analyses the instances in Heaney's poetry where testimony's function as a trauma-coping strategy is doubted, questioned and even rejected. Observing that poems in the collections of the 1970s treat testimony both as a therapeutic exigency and also as an impossibility, the chapter argues that an oscillation between testimony and silence marks the poems of the early collections and that this oscillation demonstrates the traumatic complexity of the Troubles. Therefore, this thesis comes to the conclusion that Heaney's treatment of testimony is rather contradictory and that this contradiction is a testimony to the traumatic quality of life during the Troubles.

CHAPTER I

THE REPRESENTATION OF TESTIMONY AS A TRAUMA-COPING STRATEGY IN HEANEY'S EARLY POETRY

"*Telling people [about bereavement] is not always just born out of a desire to talk things out, or a desire for sympathy, or as a way of getting truth to sink, slowly, in. It is a way of clawing back the power into your life. You have no power over the death, but you do have power over the story."*

Virginia Ironside[23]

In this chapter, I argue that there are many instances in Heaney's early poetry where the act of bearing testimony to trauma is represented as a trauma-coping strategy. I will analyse poems such as "Digging", "Bogland" and "Roots" in the early collections where poetry's testimonial potential is explored and where the act of writing is metaphorically described as a therapeutic act of digging up the past and an act of uprooting what was buried. This chapter also argues that Heaney's early poems represent an attempt to work through Irish cultural traumas through testimony. I will analyse instances where speakers are witnesses of traumatic events in Irish history, such as the violent murder of a young Irish rebel in 1798 United Irishmen Rebellion or specific acts of sectarian violence committed in Ireland. The poems I will analyse here mostly represent the witness-speakers' attempt to work through their trauma through bearing witness to it. In their attempt, speakers struggle to take under their own control the re-presentation of the traumatic events and to exert their agential power over trauma through testimony. I observe this struggle to bear testimony to trauma can be observed in three sets of poems which I analyse in three sections. In the first section, my main focus will be on poems where the speakers struggle to be more than passive transmitters of traumatic experiences and try to assert their agential power by understanding and making a statement about these experiences. In the second section, I will analyse poems where speakers are more in control of their representation and the traumatic experiences are repeated for the purpose of processing or working through them. In this section of the chapter I suggest that some poems such as "Gifts of Rain" (*WO* 13-15), "Ocean's Love to Ireland" (*N* 40-41) and "Aisling" (*N* 42) act as textual simulations of the trauma of colonisation. In such poems, the experience of

the conquest of Ireland by England is repeated and also worked through in metaphors through a process of analysis and understanding. In the third section, I will look into instances in Heaney's poetry where the traumatic experiences of political killings in the island of Ireland are repeated, acknowledged, processed and lamented. I suggest that, in such instances, there is an attempt to gain control over the impact of the traumatic incidents on the Irish people and to lay the relentless traumatic memories of the past to rest by turning them into stories and thus into cultural possessions of the nation.

In its most basic sense, bearing witness or giving testimony is the act of telling what one has seen or witnessed. In the courtroom context, testimony is the eye-witness account, which is especially useful whenever it is hard to make a judgment on a case due to lack of evidence about the occurrence of an event of criminal nature (Felman, "Education and Crisis" 17). Although trauma testimony is discussed in relation to its therapeutic effect more often than to its evidentiary quality within trauma studies, it still is very much similar to eye-witness accounts given in the courtroom context. Trauma testimony, similar to evidentiary testimony, requires the bearer of testimony, who might be the victim, bystander, or the perpetrator of the trauma, to represent the traumatic event or experience. In that sense, it requires a repetition of the experience in words. Trauma theorists argue that this repetition or re-presentation of trauma can help the victims or witnesses overcome trauma because, while repeating the experience in words, they can actually bear witness to it for the first time (Felman, "Betrayal of the Witness" 165; Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 60). Trauma is often defined as a "missed encounter" ("The Betrayal of the Witness" 165), "a missed experience" (*Unclaimed Experience* 60) or an "unclaimed experience" (*Unclaimed Experience* 10) because the victims and/or witnesses fail experiencing or witnessing the event consciously at the moment of its occurrence due to its complexity or shock. Thus, the act of bearing testimony to the event, in other words, the representation of what happened provides the traumatised people with the chance of finally witnessing or experiencing the event consciously.

Studies on trauma since Janet and Freud have regarded testimony as a necessary speech act to process what has gone to the unconscious unprocessed, to integrate what stands disintegrated and separate in the traumatised mind (LaCapra, *Writing History*

21). As a more contemporary extension of Janet and Freud's works on trauma and traumatic memory, van der Kolk and Ducey's study emphasises the exigency of testimony, suggesting that "a sudden and passively endured trauma is re-lived repeatedly, until a person learns to remember simultaneously the affect and cognition associated with the trauma through access to language" (271). van der Kolk and van der Hart's study also points to how translating the experience into language, that is to say, giving testimony is necessary for the traumatised person to comprehend the experience and thus to break free of the haunting effect of the experience; hence they claim: "Traumatic memories are unassimilated scraps of overwhelming experiences, which need to be integrated with existing mental schemes, and be transformed into narrative language" (176).

Cultural/collective trauma theory suggests that a similar process of translating the traumatic experience into language is needed for a social healing, and this process is named as "trauma process" by Jeffrey C. Alexander (11). Trauma process requires intellectuals or people with "discursive talents", or high capacity of articulation, to represent the traumatic experience. Although J.C. Alexander who coined the term "trauma process" focuses more on how this process, first and foremost, makes it possible to call the experience as cultural trauma[24], this chapter benefits more from J.C. Alexander's suggestion that the trauma process has a healing effect on the society. J.C. Alexander says "a period of calming down" follows the trauma process (22). The lessons of the trauma are comprehended and "become objectified in monuments, museums, and collections of historical artifacts" (22-23) after the trauma process.

In line with J.C. Alexander's suggestions, a historian of Northern Ireland's twenty-nine-year-long crisis, Margaret Smith sees articulation of collective responses to trauma as a coping strategy. Smith argues:

> The lingering memory of trauma suffered by individuals or groups does not fade with time, even if it goes underground for significant spells. It can place burdens on individuals and become the chief source of meaning making in groups. Collective responses to harms and injustices of the past are a frequent underlying contributor to the next battle or war. A society that wishes to move beyond its past must seek ways to lay that past to rest (34).

M. Smith continues to say that mourning is a way of laying the traumatic past to rest, and the inability to do so would have "consequences" (35). M. Smith says: "It is this inability to mourn that allows memories, [...] to be carried into the next generation as emotional wounds. If mourning can occur, the next generation creates a new version of the event, strengthening the group's self-esteem and moving into the future without having to carry the burden of the past" (35). M. Smith seems to borrow the term "mourning" from Freud's famous essay "Mourning and Melancholia" where mourning is referred to as a healthy reaction to loss (244). Freud defines mourning as a process through which the individual comes to terms with the fact that s/he lost a loved object –either a person, or an ideal like country or identity ("Mourning and Melancholia" 243)–. In that sense, mourning has close affinity with testimony as both entail articulation of what happened and both may lead the individual/society to a closure, to a comprehension/acceptance of the tragic/traumatic reality. Thus, M. Smith's statement about the importance of mourning is also about the exigency of testimony as both require comprehension, acceptance of the traumatic reality through articulation.

1.1. THE REPRESENTATION OF TESTIMONIAL AND THERAPEUTIC POTENTIAL OF POETRY IN HEANEY'S EARLY POEMS

A great number of Heaney's poems and his various definitions of poetry indicate that his poetry shares trauma theory's propositions about testimony: that articulation brings a kind of liberation and that verbal response to and representation of unfathomed experiences and feelings is more than a necessity, that it is more like an "imperative" as Dori Laub calls it ("Truth and Testimony" 63). Heaney's attempt to make poetry a space where the ineffable or the unspoken can finally get articulated in order to bring a liberation from the effects of the traumatic experiences is evident in several of his definitions of poetry. In his essay titled "Government of the Tongue", Heaney defines poetry as a "threshold [...], one constantly approached and constantly departed from, at which reader and writer undergo in their different ways the experience of being at the same time summoned and released" (190). According to this definition, poetry, like testimony comes as a response to a summons, an "imperative to tell" (Laub, "Truth

and Testimony" 63), and the act/art of telling brings a release from the grip of the unspoken, unfathomed both for the listener and the speaker.

There are other statements by Heaney reflecting his commitment to write poems functioning like therapeutic or liberating testimony. In an interview with Dennis O'Driscoll, Heaney states: "From the beginning, I was conscious of a need to voice something that hadn't got voiced, to tune the medium in order to do that particular job" (O'Driscoll 90). In his article titled "Through-Other Places, Through-Other Times", after giving an account of an uncomfortable experience where he felt afraid to admit he was Irish to an Ulster woman who fervently displayed her pride in being British, Heaney quotes a French writer, Gaston Bachelard's question: "What is the source of our first suffering?" and answer: "It lies in the fact that we hesitated to speak. It began in the moment when we accumulated silent things within us" (qtd. in Heaney, "Through-Other" 367-368). With Bachelard's diagnosis in mind, Heaney endeavours to make his poetry a means to prevent the accumulation of silent things that would consequently cause suffering. These definitions do not exclusively point to an understanding of poetry as trauma testimony, but rather indicate that Heaney holds poetry as capable of and responsible for naming and representing, thus understanding any heretofore-unfathomed experiences and not necessarily only traumatic ones. However, the poems in the early collections addressing the Troubles and the colonial conquest of Ireland reflect an endeavour to understand the traumatic experiences of the Irish and articulate feelings associated with them as well as non-traumatic experiences and related feelings.

"Roots", the first poem of the sequence "A Northern Hoard" from *Wintering Out,* is one of the poems that expresses the exigency of bearing testimony to the Troubles. The poem and the collection in which it was published are among Heaney's earliest poetic responses to the sectarian violence. *Wintering Out* came out in 1972, three years after the outbreak of the Troubles. Between 1969 and 1972, Northern Ireland turned into a stage where various paramilitary groups relentlessly committed acts of violence on behalf of the communities they believed they were representing. The years in which Heaney wrote the poems to be published in *Wintering Out* witnessed the attack of the loyalist groups and of police forces on Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association's march, and another violent attack on the People's Democracy march from Belfast to

Derry/Londonderry (Edwards 11). The deployment of the British Army in Northern Ireland, the establishment of the Provisional IRA, and the introduction of internment as a state policy were among the most notable consequences of the attacks on the civil rights marches but they also became further reasons for the quick escalation of violence. 1972, the year in which *Wintering Out* came out, is regarded as "the worst year of violence" marked by the highest death toll of the Troubles (Grech 839). Bloody Sunday when a segment of the British Army, the Parachute Regiment, opened fire on civil rights marchers killing fourteen people, and Bloody Friday when the Provisional IRA, in retribution for Bloody Sunday, detonated twenty-two bombs in Belfast killing nine people, and wounding hundreds both took place in this year (Edwards 11). In his interview with O'Driscoll Heaney is asked about the meaning of the title of *Wintering Out,* and he explains with reference to the historical reality in which the book was written that "Times were bleak, the political climate was deteriorating. The year the book [*Wintering Out*] was published was the year of Bloody Sunday and Bloody Friday" (O'Driscoll 121). The title's implication is that the people in Ulster are wintering out, "seeing through" or "surviving a crisis" as Collins suggests (68), and the crisis that the book refers to is the violence troubling Ulster with an increasing tension.

Written in such a bleak atmosphere, many of the poems in *Wintering Out,* however, do not directly represent any of the above-mentioned violent events; instead the book is replete with poems engaged in an attempt to lay bare the historical roots of the present trauma. Most of the poems in this collection deal with the colonial history, the discontinuities in Irish cultural life as a result of colonisation and the prominent violent events of the colonial past. However, there are also a few poems that directly give a representation of the present occurrences. As Andrews suggests the poems constituting the sequence "A Northern Hoard" are "amongst the few in *Wintering Out* which [...] take us to the immediate horror of the Troubles" (*The Poetry of Seamus Heaney* 61). The prefatory poem of the sequence, "Roots" is about the possible responses that can be given to the shattering reality of "the gunshot, siren and clucking gas/ Out there beyond each curtained terrace/ where the fault is opening" (*WO* 29). The speaker addressing his lover likens Ulster to the biblical city of Gomorrah, which was destroyed by God as a punishment for the wickedness of its people. Like Gomorrah, Ulster is devastated, perhaps not by god-sent destruction but by violence committed

out of sectarian hatred, it has become a place where love is helpless in the face of murders and acts of violence:

> [...] The touch of love,
> Your warmth heaving the first move,
> Grows helpless in our old Gomorrah.
> We petrify or uproot now. (*WO* 29)

The speaker posits two reactions that can be given to violence by the inhabitants of modern Gomorrah: petrifying or uprooting. Molino's reading of the poem suggests that the mention of these two choices is an extension of the allusion to the biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah, the two cities where the only people who deserved salvation, Lot and his family are warned to leave their city without looking back at it. Lot's wife, unable to resist the temptation to look once more, disobeys the command and is turned into a pillar of salt –petrified– as a result, while Lot and his daughters are uprooted from their city and thus saved. This reading, Molino says, suggests escape from the site of trauma, from Ulster, as the only form of salvation and he reminds that this is exactly what Heaney family did by leaving Belfast for the Republic of Ireland in 1972 (66). However, because of the use of the active voice in the line in question: "We petrify or uproot now" rather than passive voice, it is highly unlikely that the poem suggests passive roles for the people of the Northern Irish Gomorrah such as being petrified or uprooted. The poem seems to suggest that people themselves have the choice of either petrifying or uprooting things outside themselves. Thus, the enigma of the poem can be solved through answering the question of what exactly it is to be petrified or uprooted by the people of Gomorrah.

The word "uprooting" has connotations of uncovering the buried roots of that which stands and appears above the ground and also of halting the growth of that which is being uprooted. In this sense, one of the two options available to the inhabitants of the Northern Irish Gomorrah can be interpreted as testimony, since therapeutic testimony ultimately does what uprooting is metaphorically supposed to do: it uncovers the buried and unspoken traumatic memories and feelings associated with the traumatic experiences and halts their growth into the present. Therefore, the poem can be taken to suggest getting rooted traumatic memories and feelings off of the chest, to speak out about them to end their growth, as a remedy. Andrews' reading of the poem

supports such an interpretation as he also claims that "The poem expresses an intense desire for exorcism" (*The Poetry of Seamus Heaney* 62).

The alternative to exorcism of memories and feelings stemming from trauma of sectarian violence is to petrify them. Petrifying connotes paralysis and also solidification. Petrifying or solidifying the trauma rather than uprooting it is definitely suggested as an option for trauma witnesses in the poem, but it is hardly suggested as a remedy since petrifying can only make the traumatic violence permanent and unchangeable. The end of the poem tacitly suggests exorcism/testimony rather than petrifying as a coping strategy by implying the pointlessness of petrifying through the image of the sniper introduced in the continuation of the poem:

> I'll dream it for us before dawn
> When the pale sniper steps down
> And I approach the shrub.
> I've soaked by moonlight in tidal blood
>
> A mandrake, lodged human fork,
> Earth sac, limb of the dark;
> And I wound its damp smelly loam
> And stop my ears against the scream. (*WO* 29)

The "pale sniper" (*WO* 29), whose violent acts can only perpetuate traumatic violence –can only petrify violence into permanence–, is probably introduced to the reader to implicate the counterproductive effects of paramilitaries' attempts at coming to terms with earlier traumas through violence.

The other possible response to trauma, uprooting, is ascribed to the speaker in the poem. The speaker is engaged in uprooting a mandrake, which he himself has germinated by soaking it in regular, "tidal" bloodshed on the land. Since there have been two factors in the germination of the mandrake: "tidal blood" and the speaker himself ("I've soaked"), and since the mandrake is buried, the image of the mandrake can be taken as a metaphor for the speaker's unfathomed and unspoken memories of traumatic experiences and feelings about them that need to be uprooted, spoken out. In other words, the unspecified horrors the speaker has witnessed but not comprehended or acknowledged are materialized and embodied in the form of a mandrake buried underground in the poem and the speaker is uprooting it by "wounding its damp smelly loam" (*WO* 29). The poem never elaborates on the benefits

of uprooting the traumatic memories and feelings associated with them. It does not say uprooting them is the right choice but the way the sniper and the speaker are held almost like foil characters to each other implies such a judgment. If the sniper's act of petrifying violence into permanence is useless in remedying the situation, the only other choice the residents of modern Gomorrah have, uprooting the traumatic memories and feelings associated with them must do some good. However, despite the fact that the poem holds testimony as a remedy it does not uproot the traumatic memories and feelings itself. As Andrews also claims, the poem "stands more as a melodramatic expression of need than an imaginative transcendence of it" (*The Poetry of Seamus Heaney* 62). The need to give testimony is acknowledged rather than being fulfilled in the poem, which makes it possible to claim that "Roots" is a poeticised theorisation of the exigency of testimony as a response to the Troubles, in the same vein as Heaney's definitions of poetry quoted above.

"Roots" is not the only instance in Heaney's poetry where the poet draws an analogy between the act of bearing testimony through poetry and the act of uprooting and hints at the healing potential of testimonial poetry. In his first collection, *Death of a Naturalist*[25], the opening poem "Digging" which is often taken to serve as "the manifesto" of Heaney's poetry (Jarniewicz, McDonagh 123), makes use of the same analogy and suggests that a testimony –a digging up of the unprocessed but buried memories– can heal and strengthen the people. The speaker of the poem indicates that he will go beyond the surface and dig the soil like his ancestors to produce perhaps not the much admired "cool" and "hard" potatoes or "the good turf" that his ancestors used to produce, but something that is again useful and nutritious, something that again would strengthen the people (*DN* 1-2). As the tool that he will use to dig is revealed to be a pen, it is likely that the product of such digging might be a poem, a narrative, a representation, and when the themes of many poems in Heaney's early collections are considered, the traumatic experiences of the Irish appear to be one of the objectives of "digging" –of writing– in Heaney's poetry.

However, "Digging" does not promote or promise a simple and passive act of re-presenting the Irish past with words. As Molino argues, the act of digging into the past –of uncovering it– does not mean that Heaney's poetry would act as a storage where the past is preserved intact as it was. Molino contends that "Heaney looks for the past in himself and in the people and places he knows best, but he does not [...] wish 'to

remember and conserve the past.' Heaney's relationship with the past is more complex" (3). Rather than conserving the past, "Digging" promises that testimony given in Heaney's poetry will act more as the begetter of truth of that past. As Shoshana Felman suggests, "the witness might be[...] the one who (in fact) *witnesses*—but also, the one who *begets*—the truth, through the speech process of the testimony" (24). Likewise, the poem, "Digging" implies that the digging of the poet's persona, in other words, his act of bearing testimony will not be a passive recording of what happened, but it will be a process where he will be consciously and actively involved in the act of bearing witness to the past traumatic moments. This promise is most evident in the speaker's admiration of the digging method especially of his grandfather and in his willingness to imitate the grandfather's meticulous digging. The speaker emphasises how neatly his grandfather "nicked" and "sliced" the dead but still undecayed plants of the bogs to create "the good turf" (*DN* 1-2). The essential substance of the neatly nicked and sliced turf produced by the grandfather was still the bog. However, the grandfather is the subject who actively gave those ghostly plants a shape; he is the one who transformed them into turf to be used to heat houses or to cook food. The speaker's admiration for the grandfather's act and method of digging indicates that he will do the same when he digs the past. His digging will be an active engagement with the past, it will be a diligent process of cutting of the complex experiences into smaller pieces.

The objective to uncover the past and the desire to give shape to the uncovered past thus expressed in "Digging" take Heaney's poetry to the boglands which Heaney defines as "the memory of the landscape, or as a landscape that remembered everything happened in and to it", Heaney also states that he associates the boglands with Irish "national consciousness" (*"*Feeling into Words" 22). Due to their particular chemical properties, the bogs of Jutland and Ireland have preserved bodies and artefacts for thousands of years almost untouched by the passing of time (McLean 301). Starting from "Bogland", the last poem in his second collection, *Door into the Dark* (1966), onwards, Heaney wrote several poems on bodies and artefacts that were discovered in the bogs. Heaney revealed the inspirational source behind his bog poems to be P.V. Glob's book, *The Bog People*. The poet says that *The Bog People* "was chiefly concerned with preserved bodies of men and women found in the bogs of Jutland, naked, strangled or with their throats cut, disposed under the peat since early

Iron Age times" (24). In his "Feeling into Words", the poet says that he came across the book in his search for "befitting emblems of adversity" to represent the violence of the Troubles (24).

The speaker of the first bog poem, "Bogland" introduces the bog as the landscape of Ireland: "Our unfenced country/ Is bog that keeps crusting/ Between the sights of the sun" (*DD* 43). This landscape, as Heaney pointed out in his "Feeling into Words" is soon revealed to be a storage where the whole history of Ireland is preserved fresh and intact to the minutest detail. The speaker emphasises how complete the things discovered in the bog are, firstly by giving the image of the Great Irish Elk which had gone extinct thousands of years ago:

> They've taken the skeleton
> Of the Great Irish Elk
> Out of the peat, set it up
> An astounding crate full of air. (*DD* 43)

Then, in the following stanza, the speaker draws attention to the unusual and perhaps also unnatural capacity of the bogs to preserve things intact, he says: "Butter sunk under/ More than a hundred years/ Was recovered salty and white" (*DD* 43). Perhaps because skeletons can also be dug up from other places on earth, the image of the elk's skeleton is not as striking as the image of the "salty and white butter" found in the bog at least a hundred years after it sunk. The fact that the passing of time, –more than a century– did not change the appearance nor the taste of the butter shows that boglands' capacity to preserve the past surpasses any ordinary type of soil. There is something that makes the bog –the Irish national consciousness– unique. Under normal circumstances, the butter would not have survived the passing of that much time; it would have been incorporated into nature, consumed perhaps by underground organisms. However, the bog with its peculiar chemical properties resists the butter's integration. The bog does not digest or incorporate things in itself. This indigestive nature of the bog is once more highlighted when the speaker says that the bog will never yield coal[26], but only the peat: "They'll never dig coal here,/ Only the waterlogged trunks/ Of great firs, soft as pulp" (*DD* 43-44). Fully decayed, fully digested substances turn into coal in other lands, but in Ireland, the bog prevents organic matters from turning into coal, it keeps them in a slightly distorted version of themselves. Through the images of dead but undecayed matters like the Great Irish

Elk, butter and peat taken out of the bog, the whole poem seems to suggest that Irish national consciousness is a storage that does not process nor incorporate past experiences into itself. In other words, the poem implies that the memories of the Irish are not ordinary memories, where every new experience is integrated into the past experiences, but rather traumatic memories, where experiences do not get processed and integrated into the constellation of past experiences.

Drawing on Pierre Janet's work on traumatic memory, van der Kolk and van der Hart distinguish traumatic memory from ordinary memory –which they also call narrative memory– in their essay titled "The Intrusive Past". van der Kolk and van der Hart argue that ordinary memories are not fixed, on the contrary, they are highly "malleable" (176). They work through an endless process of meaning-making through time, while traumatic memories remain fixed and resist integration into meaning-making mechanisms regardless of the passing of time (176). Caruth, too, defines the distinguishing quality of traumatic memories as "precision" (*Trauma* 154). In that sense, the bog which preserves everything in unusual freshness in Heaney's "Bogland" seems to be a storage where the traumatic memories of the nation are preserved with precision.

These unprocessed memories of past experiences make the national consciousness –bog– a very dangerous place for anyone stepping into it. The walker of the bog -the explorer of the national consciousness does not have a solid ground on which he can take firm and upright stand or move freely. The ground in the bogs has been different from other grounds on earth, for millions of years. The speaker says:

> The ground is itself a kind and black butter
>
> Melting and opening underfoot
> Missing its last definition
> By millions of years. (*DD* 43*)*

The national consciousness is dangerous because it does not let anyone walk freely on the surface of a solid ground, instead the ground is "melting and opening underfoot", the national consciousness is a "bottomless" swamp which "keeps crusting" (Heaney, *DD* 43-44). It may take the explorer into itself, making another layer of bog out of the explorer's body. This description of the bog –national consciousness– sounds like another metaphor for traumatic memory which incarcerates the victim and/or witness

in the past. Through the portrayal of the bogland as a dangerous and threatening landscape, the poem implies that an action is needed although it does not specify what it is. However, the preoccupation of Heaney's early poetry with the representation of traumatic experiences of the nation indicates that it is representation, thus testimony that is needed to turn the traumatic memories into ordinary memory.

"Roots", "Digging" and "Bogland" thus define the act of writing poetry as an act of digging, uncovering and uprooting which is necessary for a liberation from the haunting grip of the unprocessed and unacknowledged. In that sense, these poems seem to draw a parallel between poetry and testimony. Besides drawing this parallel, they also represent the act of writing, bearing testimony and digging as a strategy to cope with the traumatic memories.

1.2. TESTIMONY AS "A MODE OF ACCESS TO TRUTH" [27]

Drawing on Freud and Breuer's observations and recuperative methods, Felman defines testimony "not as a mode of s*tatement* of but rather as a mode of *access* to […] truth" ("Education and Crisis" 24, emphasis in the original). In other words, trauma testimony is a process and experience where the truth of the traumatic event is belatedly and eventually grasped. It is the process where the bearer of testimony does not passively repeat the event in words but actively confronts it and comes to terms with it.

It is necessary to note the distinct effects of passive repetition and active, conscious repetition of traumatic moments on the traumatised people in order to understand how the act of bearing testimony can be therapeutic. As has been established in the introductory chapter, trauma is an overpowering experience that erases the agential power of the victim –be it an individual or a society– not only because the experience is too shocking or too complex but also because of traumatic repetitions. The traumatic experience, being too incomprehensible either because of the element of shock or because of its complexity, renders those who are exposed to it powerless, reduces them to objects whose choices, desires and acts become irrelevant and meaningless. The victim's feeling of utter powerlessness is not limited to the moment of the initial traumatic incident. The feeling lingers on and the trauma victim find themselves living under an ever-present threat of a return to the site of trauma. The early trauma theorists

Pierre Janet and Sigmund Freud give descriptions of many clinical cases showing how trauma continues to overpower the victim long after the traumatic event occurred. Janet's account of the experiences of a young woman, Irene, is a particularly powerful exemplary case showing the victims' inability to gain control over their lives after trauma[28]. Janet, in his *Major Symptoms of Hysteria,* describes Irene as a 20-year-old woman who fell "ill" because of the "despair caused by her mother's death" (29). Witnessing the death of her beloved mother for whom Irene was the only care-giver was an overwhelming experience for Irene. After the funeral, Irene is reported to have started developing a peculiar mode of behaviour where she re-enacted the moments subsequent to her mother's death in unconscious and frequent repetitions. This repeated and precise acting out of the traumatic moment, the inability to free oneself from the grip of haunting memory of the traumatic experience puzzled the early trauma theorists. Freud, too, attracted attention to the "unwished-for-exactitude" of traumatic re-enactments (*Beyond* 18). In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* he observes that in traumatic neuroses patients' dreams are quite literal or non-symbolic, as they literally put the patient back into the very moment of trauma (13). Considering Janet and Freud's separate observations, one can say that trauma implicates a kind of imprisonment in a past moment. It seems as if the traumatic experience, a single moment in history, forces the victim to repeatedly perform a script that does not allow improvisation or any change. The traumatised subject cannot add anything to or take anything out of the script. Every performance is a precise re-living of the overpowering experience. As Judith Herman also argues:

> Long after the danger is past, traumatized people relive the event as though it were continually recurring in the present. They cannot resume the normal course of their lives, for the trauma repeatedly interrupts. It is as if the time stops at the moment of trauma. The traumatic moment becomes encoded in an abnormal form of memory, which breaks spontaneously into consciousness, both as flashbacks during waking states and as traumatic nightmares during sleep. (37)

The fact that the haunting memories in the form of re-enactments or dreams are not subject to willed recall further eradicates the agential power of the victim.

Such traumatic repetitions observed in clinical cases indicate psychopathology at the most obvious level. However, van der Kolk's article on traumatic re-enactments, "The

Compulsion to Repeat the Trauma", draws attention to the existence of more subtle forms of traumatic repetitions. van der Kolk argues that "compulsive behavioural repetitions" (389) can also be observed in traumatised individuals. Providing the readers with information on exemplary cases, van der Kolk shows that an individual who was exposed to a traumatising event in the past is more likely to get involved in a similar event than those who did not because they tend to repeat the behaviours that culminated in the initial trauma. Freud had coined the term "repetition compulsion" ("Beyond" 19) much earlier but he had not discussed it exclusively as a phenomenon occasioned by traumatic experiences. van der Kolk specifically focuses on the trauma victims' compulsion to relive traumatic instances over and over again. One common denominator between Freud's and van der Kolk's works is the emphasis on the observation that repetition of unpleasurable and traumatic experiences is a compulsion, behaviour that is out of the control of the individual. Both suggest that what is repressed is bound to return in the form of similar actions in different contexts and thus the act of remembering is replaced by this acting out (Freud, "Repeating and Remembering" 150, van der Kolk 389).

Since Freud, trauma studies have proposed the act of bearing witness/testimony to the traumatic experience as a way to end the repetition compulsion in post-traumatic situations. However, bearing testimony without emotional and cognitive involvement, in other words, the act of re-presenting the trauma in words without an attempt to recognise one's feelings and thoughts about the event or experience is argued to have no such therapeutic function. Freud and Breuer in their joint work on hysteria, a traumatic disorder, "On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysteria" stated their observation that symptoms of trauma such as repetition compulsion *"immediately disappeared without returning if we succeeded in thoroughly awakening the memories of the causal process with its accompanying affect"* (3, emphasis in the original) and they added that "Affectless memories are almost utterly useless" (3). This observation resulted in the introduction of what Freud and Breuer called the "cathartic method" and what one of Breuer's most well-known patients, Anna O. [29] famously called the "talking cure" or "chimney sweeping" (*"*Fraulein Anna O." 30). This method required the traumatised person to abreact to the event to which s/he failed to react in the moment of its occurrence, in other words to discharge repressed intense emotions caused by the initiating traumatic incident, to work through the affect or "talk away" the

symptoms (“Fraulein Anna O.” 37). The therapeutic function of abreaction -or the “talking cure”- suggested by Freud and Breuer at the end of the nineteenth century has been confirmed by many contemporary psychoanalysts; for instance, van der Kolk and Ducey also state that: “a sudden and passively endured trauma is relived repeatedly, until a person learns to remember simultaneously the affect and cognition associated with the trauma through access to language” (271). That is to say, if the traumatised person can understand the intensity or complexity of the traumatising event and give the proper emotional and cognitive reaction to it while re-presenting the event in words, the act of re-presenting becomes therapeutic.

In Heaney’s early poetry, there are instances where speakers struggle to turn their re-presentation of traumatic experiences into testimony. These speakers, in a way, struggle to grasp the truth of the traumatic event or experience they have witnessed through testimony. In such poems, speakers usually start out re-presenting what they have seen without emotional and cognitive involvement and attempt to turn this re-presentation into a therapeutic testimony. The untitled opening poem of *Wintering Out* is one such poem. It presents the speaker’s struggle to gain his cognitive power to make sense of what he sees, through testimony. The speaker in the poem in question struggles to bear testimony to the traumatic violence he has continually witnessed on the streets of Belfast.

The untitled poem that opens the collection is one of the few that represents contemporary traumatic events. The speaker of the poem describes the effects of sectarian violence and registers violence mainly as an undesired and uncanny repetition:

> *This morning from a dewy motorway*
> *I saw the new camp for the internees:*
> *a bomb had left a crater of fresh clay*
> *in the roadside, and over in the trees*
>
> *machine-gun posts defined a real stockade.*
> *There was that white mist you get on a low ground*
> *and it was deja-vu, some film made*
> *of Stalag 17, a bad dream with no sound.* (*WO* v, Heaney’s italics)

The “internee camp,” the “crater of clay” left by a bomb, “machine-gun posts” that the speaker respectively sees on the roadside, perhaps in his morning commute, reflect the traumatic quality of the daily life in Northern Ireland. In that sense, they can be taken as synecdoche for the traumatic violence and oppression. Neil Corcoran informs readers that the “internee camp” the poem refers to is the “Long Kesh prison, also known as the Maze, outside Belfast, built to house those picked up after the introduction of internment” (72). Internment –incarceration without charge or trial– as a state policy had been sporadically practiced in Northern Ireland since its inception in 1920, however, it was adopted by the Unionist government as a systematic practice in 1971 (Lowry 273). It is reported that within hours after it was launched on August 9, 1971, 342 men were arrested, and this number increased to 1981 by December 5, 1975 (McKearney 35). The experience of being detained without trial was regarded as traumatic on many levels. With reference to internees’ testimonies about their experiences, Lowry shows that the “arbitrariness and suddenness” of internment was one of the reasons why the experience was regarded as traumatic (275). Apart from this, the “ill-treatment” of the internees and “widespread use of violence during arrest and interrogation” are other factors that were traumatising for the internees and their families (Lowry 283). Because the internees are reported to have been almost exclusively Catholics[30] the experience is regarded as especially traumatising for that community (McKearney 35). The ill-treatment and widespread violence against the internees caused an uproar in the families of internees, and the practice of internment that gained momentum in 1971 is thought to have caused the Catholics to support the Provisional IRA in larger numbers, thus also the intensification of traumatic violence (McKearney 34). The speaker’s mention of the “new camp for the internees” (*WO* v) immediately evokes the traumatic atmosphere in the country.

The “craters of clay” left by a bomb is a reference to the violence that became more and more quotidian by the day in Northern Ireland. In an essay titled “Christmas, 1971” Heaney illustrated how bombs threatened life in Northern Ireland on a daily basis in 1971 through a representation of first-hand experiences that he himself or a member of his family had with bombs exploding in places they were routinely familiar with:

> In the Queen's University staff common-room recently, a bomb disposal squad has defused a bundle of books before the owner had quite finished his drink in the room next door. Yet when you think of the corpses in the rubble of McGurk's Bar such caution is far from risible.
>
> Then there are the perils of the department stores. Last Saturday a bomb scare just pipped me before I had my socks and pyjamas paid for in Marks and Spencer, although there were four people on the Shankill Road who got no warning. A security man cornered my wife in Robinson and Cleaver -not surprisingly when she thought of it afterwards. She had a timing device[…]. A few days previously someone else's timing device had given her a scare when an office block in University Road exploded just as she got out of range. (42)

The poem's reference to "a crater of fresh clay" in such an atmosphere where life-threatening danger feels imminent at all times indicates what Brown and Ballou call an "insidious trauma" (240), where traumatisation is occasioned not by an event but by a systematic exposition to traumatic experiences. The poem's reference to "machine-gun posts" (*WO* v) indicating the presence of the British Army as an oppressive force adds to the understanding of daily life in Northern Ireland as traumatic.

The perception of life in Northern Ireland as traumatic is strengthened by the mention of the repetitive nature of traumatic violence and oppression. The speaker states that oppression and violence in Northern Ireland -implied through the references to the internee camp, explosions and garrisons- feels like "déjà vu" (*WO* v). In other words, the scenery on a Belfast motorway gives the feeling that the speaker went through similar periods of violence and oppression in the past. As has been argued above, in post-traumatic situations, traumatised people tend to repeat the trauma in behaviour (Freud, *Beyond* 19; van der Kolk 389), in words (Hartman, "On Traumatic Knowledge 542) and in dreams and hallucinations (Janet 29; Freud, *Beyond* 13). By implying that life in Northern Ireland feels like *déjà vu*, the speaker is referring to the repetitive nature of sectarian violenceand also to the familiarity of such scenes in dreams, especially of traumatised subjects and in the culture of modern Europe.

Apart from describing the experience of living under oppression and constant threat of violence as "déjà vu", the speaker defines it as a "bad dream" or a copy of a war movie, *Stalag 17* (*WO* v). None of the words that the speaker uses to describe life in Northern

Ireland offers an active role to the speaker. The speaker, very much like any trauma victim, passively watches the repetition/the film/the bad dream. He cannot consciously intervene in the "bad dream"- a pure product of the unconscious- or change the dream's course; he cannot change the script of *Stalag 17*, nor can he stop having *déjà vu*. This inability to take action, to break the repetitive cycle is revealed to be not only the speaker's but the whole Northern Irish society's problem at the end of the poem. It is clear that it is the whole society that is overwhelmed and overpowered by the repeated violence, as the speaker leaves the pronoun "I" for the collective "we":

> *Is there a life before death? That's chalked up*
> *on a wall downtown. Competence with pain,*
> *coherent miseries, a bite and sup*
> *we hug our little destiny again.* (*Wintering Out* v, italics in the original)

The anonymity of the writing on the wall, "*Is there a life before death?*" further suggests the collective nature of the overwhelming experience. Life in Northern Ireland is like a vicious circle where people suffer, live in misery and on basics to survive, they take just "a bite and sup", and start the process all over "again" (*WO* v). The fact that people cannot do anything but "hug" their repetitive destiny calls the ontology of life in Northern Ireland itself into question. Can this endless and painful repetition, which denies people choice and the chance to take action be regarded as "life"? Heaney's speaker does not affirm or console the "we" of the poem, nor does he suggest a way out of the nightmare-like repetition. On the contrary, his speech -this poem- can very well be regarded as another form of repetition of the traumatic experience of being continually exposed to scenes of violence. The speaker, who seems to be a passive receiver and transmitter of the experience, is presenting a depiction of it in much of the poem. He is simply repeating what he sees, in words. It feels as if trauma found another platform on which to play itself out, regardless of what the witness-speaker desires to do with his words.

One might even think that the force that wields the language in much of the poem is more the force of the experience than that of the speaker's agency. In the opening lines, the speaker displays a lack of emotional and cognitive involvement with what he sees and introduces to the reader. When, for instance, he introduces the "crater" left by a bomb on the roadside, the probability that the bomb might have left some deeper

hollows on people's lives than the one left on the roadside strikes the reader quite powerfully. Yet the speaker does not take one moment to think about it, and he hastens to introduce another image that enters into his sight. It is not clear whether it is because the images enter into his view rapidly -he might be driving at the moment of witnessing, given that he is on a "dewy motorway"-, or because he cannot or does not want to give a response to what he sees but he ends up giving a short list of things he sees: internee camps, a crater of clay, machine-gun posts. Giving these impactful images of the first five lines in a hasty list might be taken as an indicator of the speaker's inability to grasp their significance and the affect they create on him. Although it is apparent that they are scenes from the Troubles, it is at first difficult to figure out how these images are related to each other. It takes perhaps more than one reading to see that the sequence the images are introduced in the first five lines suggests the historical cause and effect relationship between the British government's introduction of internment, the Provisional IRA's aggressive response to it and British Army's defence against such aggression with further aggression. The "white mist" that the speaker says "you get on a low ground" in the following line does not help him see things any better. Seen on low grounds, the mist symbolising the speaker's inability to understand the traumatic event, prevents him from seeing the roots of things that come into sight. For one reason or another, perhaps because of the metaphorica "mist" or because of the rapid materialization of things in front of the speaker's eyes or because he cannot/does not want to give response, the speaker fails to give an insight into what sense he himself makes out of the images he sees. In this sense, the speaker's representation seems to present a passive imitation of his experience of living in a place where violence and danger always make their presence felt. The speaker, who treats the ever-presence of violence and danger in Northern Ireland as the reason why citizens lead non-lives, passively makes violence and danger present once again.

At one point in the poem, however, the speaker becomes active, which slightly distinguishes his repetition from traumatic repetitions. There is one act that the speaker manages to do. The speaker does make a statement about the experience. This perhaps does not change the course of events, but it definitely gives him a more active role over his representation of the experience. Even though the experience of witnessing scenes of violence seems to have overridden the speaker's meaning-making faculties to some extent and made it hard to speak, he speaks. In the second stanza, after

passively recording what he has seen on the way almost like a camera, the speaker makes a statement "*it was deja-vu, some film made/of Stalag 17, a bad dream with no sound"* (*WO* v). Only at this point in the poem, does he take up the conventional responsibility of a speaker in a lyric poem; he expresses his thoughts if not his feelings. In other words, he claims his identity as the speaker, makes an attempt to take the representation under his control. He calls the experience by a name; he identifies it culturally-recognizable as a trauma, as he depicts it as a repeated violence and oppression which feels like a nightmare where all sounds are hushed. Apart from this one moment where the speaker can realise the actual act of speaking, there is another moment in the poem where the representation of the experience deviates away from an unconscious and passive repetition. Just as the speaker says the experience is a "bad dream with no sound", he introduces the anonymous writing on the wall "*Is there a life before death*?" (*WO* v). The anonymous question is mute, because it is posed as a graffiti in "*a bad dream with no sound*" (*WO* v). It does not get asked out loud in the "bad dream" that this poem is attempting to represent, but it is definitely asked out loud in the representation of that dream. The speaker not only passively represents what he sees on the wall, he also lends his voice to the anonymous question that is hovering over the minds of the Northern Irish people.

Through a seemingly passive statement and question, the poem leads the speaker and the reader to a belated cognitive processing of the experience. The statement and the voiced question raise a focal point for the camera eye of the speaker to zoom in on one aspect of the traumatic experience. Heaney, in his "Government of the Tongue", says "poetry [...] functions [...] as pure concentration, a focus where our power to concentrate is concentrated back on ourselves" (108). This poem, in a way, does exactly what Heaney says; it brings the power to concentrate back home to the speaker. The speaker manages to concentrate on a particular aspect of the experience through his active role as a speaker/as a bearer of testimony. He is able to highlight first and foremost its repetitive nature, though in great difficulty. Although the speaker is still not emotionally engaged with the traumatic occurrences in Northern Ireland at the end of the poem -which is required for abreaction-, the poem presents the speaker's struggle to comprehend the truth of the traumatic violence and oppression.

This act of representing and thus naming the experience as "déjà vu*"* in the opening poem of *Wintering Out* has an empowering effect on the speakers of the other poems in the collection. The speaker in "Linen Town" takes a step further than defining the trauma as a repetition and tells his audience what to do to prevent the trauma from playing itself out once again. This time the trauma that the poem responds to is not the insidious trauma of living under oppression and constant threat of violence in Northern Ireland, but a singular event in the distant history of colonial Ireland. The speaker of the poem, a contemporary member of Northern Irish society attempts to bear witness to a political and punitive killing that happened during the 1798 United Irishmen Rebellion. At the beginning of this chapter, I have roughly defined testimony as an eye-witness account. Thus, stating that the speaker situated in the present time attempts to bear witness to an event that happened centuries ago might be confusing. However, Marianne Hirsch's term "postmemory" (106) can offer an answer to the question of how one can bear witness to an event that took place even before s/he was born.

Drawing attention to the transmissibility of trauma, Hirsch defines postmemory as "the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up" (106). Hirsch suggests that memories of cultural traumas that precede one's birth can be "transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to *seem* to constitute memories in their own right" (106, emphasis in the original). In other words, narratives of a past trauma might feel like a person's own memory of the event and thus, this artificial memory -postmemory- can traumatise the person although s/he has not witnessed or lived through it herself/himself. Balaev also attracts attention to the transmissibility of trauma and says, "a person's contemporary identity can be 'vicariously traumatized' by reading about a historical narrative" (152). Thus, bearing testimony to a trauma that precedes one's birth would require her/him to abreact to the postmemory of that trauma. That is to say, when later generations need to work through a trauma that happened in the distant past, they bear testimony not to the event itself but to the trauma as represented in stories that transmit the affect of the trauma to the next generations. Similarly, in "Linen Town", the speaker, a citizen of Belfast in the twentieth century, attempts to come to terms with the postmemory of the trauma of 1798 United Irishmen Rebellion, a trauma he has not witnessed in real life.

This rebellion is a particularly significant moment in Irish history as it is the singular instance in Irish history when a great majority of the Irish people regardless of their sectarian identities united and rebelled against the British rule (Hancock 449). However, the rebellion resulted in 30.000 casualties and led to the Act of Union to be forced onto Ireland (Hobbs 38). "Linen Town" particularly responds to the killing of one of the leaders of the rebels, Henry Joy McCracken, who was a prosperous Protestant merchant and a friend to the leader of the rebellion Wolfe Tone (Pakenham 171-72). McCracken led 12.000 Ulstermen including both Catholics and Protestants in the rebellion but was defeated and "hanged in a Belfast square on July 16, 1798" (Pakenham 171-72). The poem seems to attract attention to the dramatic and violent loss of once-existing harmony between the sectarian communities through the figure of a Protestant rebel, McCracken, who was hanged for fighting against the British rule alongside the Catholic Irish. It also identifies this loss as a traumatic experience for the contemporary Northern Irish. However, the poem does not immediately start with the representation of the traumatic event. Instead, it starts representing a picture, a civic print from the eighteenth century titled "High Street, 1786" (see Appendix 1) by John Nixon (Hobb 40). The picture shows an afternoon on High Street in Belfast in 1786:

> It's twenty to four
> By the public clock. A cloaked rider
> Clops off into an entry
>
> Coming perhaps from the Linen Hall
> Or Cornmarket
> Where, the civic print unfrozen,
>
> In twelve years' time
> They hanged young McCracken-
> This lownecked belle and tricorned fop's
>
> Still flourish undisturbed
> By the swinging tongue of his body. (*WO* 28)

The picture the speaker sets out to describe does not feature any particularly memorable moment in history but a perfectly ordinary afternoon in Belfast in 1786. However, the speaker swerves from the objective of describing the scene for no apparent reason and suddenly jumps in time to introduce the memory of a traumatic event. The speaker starts describing a monumental day twelve years away from the one depicted in the picture. The image of the historical moment where McCracken

was hanged in 1798 comes "clopping off" (*WO* 28) into the speaker's representation of the picture. The image of the "swinging" body of McCracken invades the speaker's speech, like the "cloaked rider" (*WO* 28) in the picture. The speaker is unable to remain in the present moment where he is describing the actual picture but seems to have involuntarily jumped into another time frame. He is neither taken away to the time depicted in the picture, nor stays in the present time. The speaker is almost hallucinating, seeing and describing a scene which he does not actually see, but cannot stop seeing at the same time. The speaker set in 1972 did not witness the young man's execution in 1798; nevertheless, the scene still haunts him, still controls his perception of the present time and also of the past, for that matter. Every moment in history, and every moment to come are tainted by the horrendous sight.

Roger Luckhurst, in his book, *The Trauma Question,* claims that "[n]o narrative of trauma can be told in a linear way: it has a time signature that must fracture conventional causality" (8). Similarly, in "Linen Town", it is as if the speaker's agential ability to focus on a chosen time-frame were hijacked by the traumatic sight of McCracken's dead body. The traumatic loss that occurred centuries ago causes the speaker to fail in differentiating distinct time-frames in his mind. This inability to differentiate distinct time-frames, especially the inability to differentiate past from the present is suggested as an obstacle for working-through in trauma studies (LaCapra, *Writin History* 21). LaCapra suggests that working-through trauma requires one to be aware that s/he is here and now, and that the traumatic past has been left behind (*Writing History* 21). However, the sudden drifting of the speaker's mind to the event that occurred in 1798 in Linen Town indicates the speaker's inability to work through trauma. Rather than trying to distinguish between past, present and future, the speaker seems to treat the past trauma as if it were happening at the present, thus, he seems to fail in bearing therapeutic testimony to the haunting trauma.

Another chronological mix-up appears in the poem when the speaker criticises the "lownecked belle and tricorned fop" (*WO* 28) of the picture for "flourishing undisturbed by the swinging tongue" (*WO* 28*)* of McCracken's body, for not responding or paying attention to his terrorising death. This criticism hardly makes sense when viewed with linear chronology of events in mind. How could the figures of the 1786 picture respond to a not-yet-occurred execution of 1798, after all? However, this is the haunted speaker's perception, which fails to follow a

chronological order. Kai Erikson, in his essay "Notes on Trauma and Community" says "[trauma] invades you, takes you over, becomes a dominating feature of your interior landscape" (183); the speaker's interior landscape, his sense of what happened when, are likewise dominated by a violent event in the past. It is perhaps also possible to suggest that the speaker might be accusing those figures of 1786 perhaps not for their failure in paying attention or responding to the actual corpse of McCracken, but for their failure in preventing the traumatic experience to come. Having the larger frame of hindsight, the speaker might be holding the people of 1786 responsible for the events of 1798. However, this still shows the fracture of time in his mind, because the people of 1786 did not have the benefit/curse of hindsight as he does, and there was no way for them to know where they were heading to and how to prevent the upcoming political violence.

Towards the end of his half-actual, half-hallucinatory description of the picture, the speaker says,

> Pen and ink, water tint
>
> Fence and fetch us in
> Under bracketed tavern signs,
> The edged gloom of arcades. (*WO* 28)

The speaker in "Linen Town", like the one in "This Morning", asserts the traumatic experience as a collective one, a cultural trauma by referring to a community of which he is apparently a member. The community of "us" in the poem probably refers to the contemporary generation of people in Northern Ireland including the speaker and his audience. The speaker says they are present in the picture, "fenced and fetched" by the "pen and ink, water tint" (*WO* 28). It is not only one individual but the whole society who keeps witnessing an event which they did not actually witness. It is clear that they are there against their will, they are forced into the picture, and kept as prisoners there. The picture, which seems to stand for the history of Ireland incarcerates later generations in itself.

The poem does not elaborate on how and through which narratives the trauma of McCracken's death was transmitted to later generations. However, the traumatisation of the speaker and of the contemporary Northern Irish people, whom the poem represents, seem quite obvious. Traumatisation of later generations occasioned by

narratives about past traumas is called "secondary" (Figley, "Catastrophes" 12) or "vicarious" (McCann, Pearlman 133) traumatisation. Vicarious/secondary traumatisation of later generations is often thought to occur due to an intense feeling of empathy for the victims of trauma (LaCapra, *History in Transit* 81; Balaev 152). Balaev argues that such intense empathy for the victims of a past trauma stems from the vicariously traumatised person's perceived affinity with the real victims' group identity (152). Balaev says,

> an individual living centuries [after the trauma] who shares a similar attribute of the historical group, such as sharing the same race, religion, nationality, or gender due to the timeless, repetitious, and infectious characteristics of traumatic experience and memory. Conversely, individual trauma can be passed to others of the same ethnic, racial, or gender group who did not experience the actual event, but because they share social or biologic similarities, the traumatic experience of the individual and group become one. (152)

However, McCracken's death does not traumatise the speaker -and the contemporary Irish people- because they share the same communal identity. On the contrary, the figure of McCracken, a Protestant fighting with the Catholic Irish against the British rule defies such communal boundaries or categorisation. It is not because one's racial/national/sectarian ancestors were victimised that the contemporary Northern Irish are traumatised by the postmemory of trauma. It is rather the definite loss of almost a utopian harmony between sectarian identities in Northern Ireland that McCracken's violent death embodies that traumatised them. The intense feeling of empathy is thus caused not by a sense of communal affiliation with the victim, but by a sense that an ideal was lost. The poem seems to imply that this loss of harmony between the sectarian communities "fetched and fenced" (*WO* 28) the contemporary Northern Irish in the traumatic past. In a way, the traumatic loss entrapped the people in a vicious cycle of similar traumatic experiences. Each act of violence during the Troubles is a re-enactment of the traumatic loss of McCracken, of harmony.

There are quite a few poems in which Heaney refers to the violent events of the Troubles as re-enactments of the past traumas of the Irish nation. Perhaps, the idea is stated most clearly in a later poem titled "After a Killing" where the speaker describes two paramilitaries as the offsprings of the past:

> There they were, as if *our memory hatched them*

> As if the unquiet founders walked *again*:
> Two young men with rifles on the hill,
> Profane and bracing as their instruments. (*FW* 4, my emphasis)

The appearance of paramilitaries gives the sense of *déjà vu* again. Their violent actions seem to be copies of past violence. The attribution of generative power to "*our* memory" but not to us, who are supposed to be the actual keepers of that memory, emphasises once again how people in Northern Ireland are unable to control the memories, and how they are controlled by those memories instead.

"Linen Town" like "After a Killing" and also like "This morning" describes life in Northern Ireland déjà vu, a vicious cycle of similar traumatic experiences. The speaker in "Linen Town" ends up describing the picture -essentially an object in his hand- but figuratively representing Irish history, as a force almost with an agential power imprisoning and controlling the Irish people across generations. The picture fetches the present and forces it to watch the past continuously. The poem depicts the uncanny omnipresence of the past that the opening poem of *Wintering Out* has already identified as the main problem of life in Northern Ireland.

However, the speaker of "Linen Town" manages to claim his agential power over the traumatic cycle of violence by suggesting that it is possible to break that vicious cycle. When the speaker in "Linen Town" wakes up from his trauma-induced hallucination at the end of the poem, he takes his eyes from the picture/the past and looks around at the present time:

> It's twenty to four
> On one of the last afternoons
> Of reasonable light.
>
> Smell the tidal Lagan:
> Take a last turn
> In the tang of possibility. (*WO* 28)

The speaker asserts that the present and that afternoon in 1786 that the picture features are identical. 1972 is pregnant with possibilities just like 1786 was. The offspring of 1786 turned out to be the political violence of 1798, but for people of 1972, there is still hope, they can still prevent the upcoming violence. The contemporary Northern Irish must do what the "belle" and the "fop" failed to do back in 1786 and prevent the future violence. They only need to be aware of the ground they occupy and what

dangers it can bring on the people. They need to weigh the possibilities in their mind and "take a last turn" before the possibility becomes an inevitability (Heaney, *WO* 28).

The speaker, whose representation is haunted by the past at the beginning, manages to manipulate the past experience in order to shape the present and future at the very end of the poem. In a way, he manages to acknowledge the violence of 1798 as a past experience; he integrates it into the narrative of the past in an attempt to liberate the present from its grip. Besides gaining control over the representation himself, the speaker also restores the people's right and power to choose an action, at the end of the poem.

However, he can only do so after witnessing and re-presenting the experience one more time. In fact, "This Morning" and "Linen Town" give an uncanny role to repetition in confronting trauma. Repetition paradoxically functions both as the poison and the medicine in the poems. That is to say, while the poems treat repetition as the main problem in life in Northern Ireland, they can bring a solution to the problem only through another repetition. Repetition is almost treated as a necessary step for regaining power after the overpowering experience. It is as if the speakers have no other choice than to re-witness and re-present, but through this compulsion to repeat, they can assert their subjecthood; they can re-claim their authorial identities as the speaker.

This dual function of repetition that is observed in these poems implies that Heaney's poetry is a space where the speaker/witness/victim continually tries to prevent the overwhelming experience from playing itself out through his words, to prevent it from dominating his representation of it and to regain the right to own the experience as an event of his past. Here, it might be helpful to think about the word "representation" for a moment, because it is a word of significant meanings which can be functional in any discussion of representations/narratives of trauma. Representation is a presentation, a description on the one hand, while on the other, it has the political meaning of "being entitled or appointed to act or speak for someone, especially in an official capacity" ("Representation"). According to the latter definition, poems must be the speech acts that represent –that speak for– the speaker. They must say what the speakers want them to say. However, rather than a transparent relationship between the speaker and the representation, there is a battle where the speakers struggle to make their

description stand and speak for themselves in Heaney's poems. In a way, poetry/testimony becomes a battle-ground where the two forces, the witness/victim/speaker and the traumatic experience, aspire to take the control of the representation.

In his interview with O'Driscoll, Heaney says that he sees poetry as a "truth-telling arena" (123) –basically a testimony–, but the poems such as "This morning" and "Linen Town" attest that it should do more than telling "the truth"; poetry/testimony should engage with that "truth" actively and consciously: shaping it, giving a name or a structure, a "rhyme" to it, if intended to be functional and therapeutic. In other words, these poems suggest that the repetitions of trauma in testimony/poetry can only be healing when the giver of testimony regains his agency and authority and defines, interprets, deconstructs, reconstructs trauma through that active and authorial agency. The witness who could transform himself into a giver of testimony should use words that are equivalent to the horrendous experience; however, his words should create something more than another copy –another repetition of that traumatic past. The poet or the giver of testimony should be a translator rather than a copier. Like a translator, he should first understand the trauma and then find proper words to capture the truth of it; he should process the trauma consciously. The giver of testimony should exercise his agential power to comprehend and his authorial power to render the traumatic experience comprehensible in his target medium -his representation.

1.3. TESTIMONY AS TEXTUAL SIMULATION OF TRAUMA

In his 1914 essay, "Remembering, Repeating and Working Through", Freud suggests that unprocessed, or repressed memories of unpleasant, shocking experiences are not remembered but they are not forgotten, either. He says, "the patient does not *remember* anything of what he has forgotten and repressed but *acts* it *out.* He reproduces it not as a memory but as an action; he *repeats* it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it" (150, emphasis in the original). Freud, in the same essay, adds that the compulsion to repeat is "harmless" and actually, "useful" (154). Freud defines such repetitions as a "playground" where the patient will display "everything in the way of pathogenic instincts that is hidden in the patient's mind" (154). He adds, "provided only that the patient shows compliance enough to respect the necessary conditions of

analysis, we regularly succeed in giving all the symptoms of the illness a new transference meaning" (154). Perhaps the patient was not able to exert his agential power over the experience in the real situation; perhaps he was unable to register the experience with his conscious mind at the moment of its occurrence, but if and when the real situation becomes a simulation or a playground, that is to say a repetition, "he can be cured" through "analysis" and "therapeutic work"(154). Heaney's poetry turns the traumatised and traumatising national consciousness into a "harmless" and "useful" "playground" (Freud, "Remembering" 154) where the pathogenic aspects of the traumatic experiences of the nation would be analysed.

"Gifts of Rain" is one of the poems acting as a harmless and useful playground where Heaney mirrors and, by mirroring, analyses the Irish cultural traumas preserved precisely –but also unconsciously– in the national consciousness. Parker suggests that "Gifts of Rain" is "one of Heaney's most successful reflections in time of civil war" (99) and that the poem moves from representing a history of conflict and dislocation into a portrayal of a peaceful present where the past is processed and acknowledged (99-100). The poem repeats the trauma of colonisation, but this repetition is slightly different from traumatic repetitions. The poem presents a simulation of trauma where the actors –the victim and the perpetrator– are not the coloniser and the colonised but respectively a mammal, a man and a flood representing the actual actors of trauma. The simulation or the repetition presented in "Gifts of Rain" changes the actors and the setting but keeps the emotional atmosphere brought about by the actual cultural trauma. The repetition is not an exact copy of the traumatic experience of the Irish but more like a translation of it into poetry or testimony. Looking into the experience from a distance and through metaphors provides the speaker and his audience with a chance to understand what they failed to understand before. The poem has four sections describing different scenes –different phases of traumatic experience. The first section describes the victim's initial exposure to trauma:

> Cloudburst and steady downpour now
> for days.
> Still mammal,
> straw-footed on the mud,
> he begins to sense weather
> by his skin.
>
> A nimble snout of flood

licks over stepping stones
and goes uprooting.
He fords
his life by sounding.
Soundings. (*WO* 13)

The traumatic experience is the sudden and unexpected overflow of water due to heavy rain and the trauma victim is a mammal which is caught in the flood unprepared. The poem does not state how the "straw-footed" mammal feels when "a nimble snout of flood" comes and "licks over the stepping stones" on the piece of land he is used to live in. However, his despair and bafflement are evident in the mammal's pettiness and "still" ness. The mammal is so small and light-weight that he does not even sink in the mud, but remains "on" it. The force of the "snout of flood", however, is too strong, it uproots things, and conquers the stepping stones that perhaps the mammal normally has been using to go to his nest. The striking contrast between the "straw-footed" mammal and the "nimble snout of flood" gives the impression that the flood is life-threatening for the mammal, quite powerfully. The threat is so direct and so omnipresent that the mammal has to take precautions, not just once but repeatedly; he has to "sound" –calculate the depth of water– before taking his steps, all the time. The mammal can no longer freely move on the once familiar "stepping stones" because what was familiar has become unfamiliar for him. He is estranged from his home ground, which has received a new, foreign shape due to the flood. Unspecified things with roots in his home ground, perhaps plants and flowers, have been "uprooted". The landscape has been changed by an outside force which has not taken the mammal's desires, his habits, his way of life, his identity as a "straw-footed" mammal into account. Working through metaphors, the poem identifies how confrontation with a life-threatening, traumatic experience makes one feel, how dramatically such experiences change one's life and perceptions in general, but more specifically it implicates the Irish experiences during colonisation through the implied references to a powerful force invading the home ground of a vulnerable, unprepared being, who becomes estranged from himself and gets disconnected from his own land.

Andrew Murphy argues that Irish colonial history is "a history of oppression, displacement and dispossession" (*But the Irish Sea Betwixt Us* 166). Thus, the displacement that the poem's mammal feels after the flood seems to be intended to represent Irish people's feeling of displacement after the colonial conquest of Ireland.

Although Heaney's poem does not refer to a specific event from the colonial history as the cause of displacement and dispossession of the Irish, the passing of Penal Laws, which restricted the rights of the native Catholic Irish, at the end of the seventeenth century is often considered as the major way the colonial power rendered the native Catholic Irish displaced and dispossessed in their homeland (M.Smith 43). The Penal Laws ensured that native Catholic Irish could not "buy, inherit, or lease land, own a horse valued over five pounds, hold government franchises, or belong to trade guilds unless they took the Anglican communion. Catholics' control over education of their people was severely curtailed" (M. Smith 43). In a way, the native Catholic Irish became a dispossessed and displaced people especially after the passing of these laws. The displacement of the mammal in his home ground after the flood, in that sense seems to be a metaphorical repetition of the traumatic experience of displacement and dispossession of the Irish people.

The second section of the poem leaves the mammal and flood behind and describes the next phase of trauma where the victim, this time a man, struggling in vain to get over the lingering effects of the flood –trauma. It is possible to argue that this section represents the struggles of the subsequent generations of victims of the cultural/colonial trauma, who try to re-discover and restore their lost culture, identity and resources, which are still under the water/colonial power, by opposing it. The poem depicts a man walking with difficulty on "lost fields" to find his "sunken drills, an atlantis/ he depends on" (*WO* 13-14). His life is not directly threatened by the force of the invading flood unlike the mammal's, however, the unnamed man is still in danger and in despair because the fields on which he had been working to produce resources have been lost under the water. He walks, not because he wishes to walk, but because he has no other option than walking; his survival depends on his re-discovery of the sunk "atlantis" –his mythical glorious past and his utopian dreams– (*WO* 14*)*. The man "breaks the pane of flood" in search of his "lost fields" but as soon as he breaks the water with his steps, the water immediately closes in on his feet in response to his feet's motion: "water blooms up to his reflection// like a cut swaying/ its red spoors through a basin" (*WO* 13). The man's walk breaking the "pane" or pain of flood paradoxically brings further pain as after each step the water immediately blooms up like a "cut" yielding blood, painting its own surface with the man's appearance -reflecting him to himself- once again. There seems to be an implied

metaphor between the water which blooms up like a "cut" and the colonial power's violent responses to the man's/ Irish people's walk/acts to restore their lost field[31]. Every step that "breaks the pane of flood" gives the man a "cut". Besides inflicting pain repeatedly, the water, and the man's struggle against the water become the force that both defines and shapes the man's perception of himself. Every step causes the water to reflect him to himself once again. The image that the water reflects, however, is not the man's actual and complete self but only a distorted version of the man, as the water "cuts" the man as much as it reflects him. Trauma represented in the poem by the flooding water repeatedly reflects one piece cut from the victim's whole life/identity/appearance as if it was his gestalt –his whole life. His identity becomes arrested, it cannot expand but is repeatedly defined by one single force in his life, the invading water and his fight against it. Jean Amery, a Holocaust survivor, tells how Holocaust shook and shaped the self-perception of the Jewish people, in a way that resonates with the man's repeated encounter with his own reflection on the water in this poem. Amery says:

> being a Jew [...] means that I bear within me a catastrophe that occured yesterday and cannot be ruled out for tomorrow [...]. Every morning when I get up I can read the Auschwitz number on my forearm, something that touches the deepest and most closely intertwined roots of my existence; indeed, *I am not even sure if this is not my entire existence*. [...] Every day anew I lose my trust in the world." (294, my emphasis)

The man, representing the Irish people after the colonial conquest, in the poem, likewise, bears within him the trauma of colonisation. Whenever he looks around, he sees a re-shaped land, which repressed his atlantis: his glorious past and his high hopes. The water/colonial experience that reflects his appearance continually defines him as a man desperately in search of his lost fields as if that image was his entire existence.

The endless continuity of despair that the man suffers is once more emphasised when the man finally reaches the "sunken drills". The man bends to the ground to find the crops:

> he is hooped to where he planted
> and sky and ground
>
> are running naturally among his arms
> that grope the cropping land. (*WO* 14*)*

When he is hooped to the ground, the man's arms form the shape of a circle through which the "sky and the ground" slide. The water, on which the sky is reflected and under which the land slides, takes these two spaces filling everywhere around the man away from his hands. The "arms" (both figurative and literal senses of the word are perhaps implied) form a circle/endless repetition through which both the past (the ground which keeps roots) and the future (the sky towards which limbs of the living stretch out) "naturally" (through the natural force of the water) and continually slide, and thus elude him. The man is stuck in a circle with the water which keeps being omnipresent; he is imprisoned in the moment of traumatic experience like the speakers of "Linen Town" and "This morning from a dewy motorway" and like the Irish people they all represent.

The third section of the poem is surprisingly not directly about the flood or the invading water and it does not present another victim, but rather a survivor this time. The survivor is the speaker himself, and he seems to be a descendant of the mammal described in the first section and the man in the second. The emotional burdens of the earlier generations seem to have been left as a legacy to him. The speaker inherits the mammal's estrangement from his home ground and the man's endless and painful search for resources. However, the speaker reveals his wish to adopt the legacy of an earlier generation of ancestors through his stated admiration for their wisdom and ability to connect with their land. The "antediluvian" ancestors, with their "world-schooled ear" could understand the language of their land, they could "monitor" the sounds the rain-water used to make on various surfaces; for instance, they could "monitor" the effect of the night-time rain on the river Moyola, which is "harping on/its gravel beds" (*WO* 14). The "antediluvian" ancestors could see, calculate the sounds of the land: the source, the frequency, the effect of it, without even having to see them with their eyes. They would know the nature of the sounds of the land; they would know what happens outside in the dark by just listening. Their predictions and deductions would be proved right or almost right by the "daylight" which would reveal the "spouts" brimmed and "overflowing barrels in long tresses" of water the next day (Heaney, *WO* 14). That is to say, their life on the land was predictable because the language of the land and of the people were one and the same and the ancestors' perception of rain-water was not complicated. Living in a pre-flood period, the earlier generations did not associate rain-water with danger, as the mammal and the desperate

walker of previous sections of the poem would do, but rather with harmony and music. The speaker's yearning for the restoration of a past untainted by the traumatic experience is perhaps understandable but it is also counterproductive: the glorious past is gone as much as the traumatic past; it is impossible to bring it back; and attempts at bringing it back would never yield a cure[32]. That is probably why, the speaker, centuries apart from his antediluvian ancestors, cannot hear the Moyola harp: the speaker "cocks" his "ear at an absence"- at a silence. Ann Kaplan suggests that "Trauma can never be "healed" in the sense of a return to how things were before a catastrophe took place, or before one witnessed a catastrophe; but if the wound of trauma remains open, its pain may be worked through in the process of its being "translated" via art" (19). In agreement with Kaplan's statement, "Gifts of Rain" opens the wound of colonisation once again and "works through" it in a process of analysis.

When the speaker invokes the wisdom of his "antediluvian" ancestors so that he, too, can hear the Moyola; he, too, can connect with the land, the ghosts of his ancestors respond to his invocation:

> Soft voices of the dead
> are whispering by the shore
>
> That I would question
> (and for my children's sake)
> About crops rotted, river mud
> Glazing the baked clay floor. (*WO* 15)

The "antediluvian" ancestors give a lead to the speaker to follow. He now knows he needs to "question" the consequences of the flood for the future generations' sake. As the rotten crops and river water, which is "glazing the baked clay floor" rather than irrigating the land on which people could have produced food to be "baked*",* suggest, the consequence of the flood was waste and hunger. The speaker now knows it is his responsibility to explore and understand -work through- these consequences to protect his children from the same fate. Listening to ghosts haunting the shores of the Moyola, the speaker can focus on building the future.

The last section of the poem suggests that the antediluvian ancestors' advice work, because the speaker is now able to hear the Moyola's music:

> The tawny guttural water

spells itself: Moyola
is its own score and consort,

Bedding the locale
in the utterance,
reed music, an old chanter

Breathing its mists
Through vowels and history" (*WO* 15).

"Bedding the locale/ in the utterance" the Gaelic name of the river "Moyola" becomes once again both the music –score– and the instrument –consort– through which the music is made. The sound the river makes and the sound with which the river is named are no longer disconnected from the river's essence; the signifier and the signified are now in harmony; they are one and the same. The name "Moyola" carries its music like "an old chanter"; the "Moyola" creates its music by breathing in the sounds of the language and also the -painful- history of the land. The incorporation of traumatic history, which had made the familiar land unfamiliar, and the incorporation of what is "locale" and Irish in the river Moyola's bedding makes the river "swollen": "A swollen river,/ a mating call of sound/ rises to pleasure me, Dives/ hoarder of common ground" (Heaney, *WO* 15). The river has become stronger and richer by incorporating the history and language in itself. The speaker who has restored his connection to the land becomes the "hoarder" -the collector and protector of the riches/words/sounds of the "common ground" where history and language meet. What had become unfamiliar due to the trauma became familiar once again.

"Gifts of Rain" avoids direct references to the actual traumatic experiences of the Irish. The poem seems to be deliberately unspecific. It has the potential of making any incomprehensibly complex, life-altering, unforgettable but also unspeakable experience more comprehensible and speakable, and once again more familiar. The mention of the river Moyola is the only overt reference to Northern Ireland. The reference to the Moyola, along with the exploration of the disconnection with the land indicate that the trauma the flood represents is colonisation of Ireland. The poem through a heavy dependence on figurative language, narrates the history of colonisation succinctly but also very covertly. All four sections of "Gifts of Rain" come together to forge a narrative where Irish cultural traumas are played out through metaphors. The narrative represents how the Irish became disconnected from their land and from themselves, how their identity got fixated on and thus was continually

defined by the traumas of the past. However, the poem also gives a narrative of healing. The speaker is able to make the estranged land his home, the unfamiliar familiar. His is a story of success, it is a story where the agential power is "clawed back" into the giver of testimony (Ironside n.p.). The speaker, unlike the speakers of "Linen Town" and "This morning from a motorway" are fully in control of his narrative, where even the ghosts speak to him when they are invoked. The speaker's representation is linear, unlike the arms of the crop-searching man of the second section. He even gives section numbers to each stage of trauma that he represents. The sectioned structure of the poem, and the linear narrative imply a survivor, who is able to present the truth of traumatic experience of colonialism step by step. The poem seems to be an encapsulation of Heaney's conviction that "There is such a thing as truth, and it can be told - slant" (O'Driscoll 467). The poem gradually explores and, by way of exploration, belatedly reveals the trauma, whose truth, being shocking and incomprehensible, had "dazzled" and "blinded" the Irish people at first, but now is being worked through in the poem. The healed speaker/ the poet invites the reader into a process of analysis through authorially concealed meanings in metaphors and puns. The speaker seems to have "nicked" and "sliced" a poem out of the whole incomprehensible traumatic history -a piece of turf out of the bog. The poem, with its rich figurative language invites the reader to go through the same process of digging. The reader needs to "dig", "slice" and "nick" a meaning out of the speaker's representation, which is a mirror held to the real trauma.

"Gifts of Rain" unlocks the emotions which had been locked by the experience of colonisation -which had been kept out of the reach of the traumatized nation-, by embodying those emotions with the mammal and the crop-searching man's almost visible and tangible despair and powerlessness. The heavy dependence of the poem's overall meaning on a plethora of figures of speech is a reflection of the complexity of trauma, whose truth keeps eluding the victim. The poem invites the reader to consciously engage with the emotions hidden behind metaphors by gradually dismantling them in each section. Complex metaphors and syntactic structures of the poem eventually form a well-organized, and linear narrative rendering an understandable but "slantly" told truth (O'Driscoll 467). The poem attempts to create a mirror effect in the reader's mind through its invitation to dismantle the metaphors, which lock the emotions caused by the trauma inside them. The reader, like the

speaker/the giver of testimony is almost forced to take an active, agential role and to interpret, deconstruct and reconstruct each line to understand the poem and also what it represents. In a way, "Gifts of Rain", a narrative constructed out of the national consciousness is a playground where traumatic memory is repeated for the purposes of healing. The poem creates "necessary conditions of analysis" (Freud, "Remembering" 154) for the traumatised nation. In other words, the poem puts the traumatic memories of the nation through a process of analysis in "Gifts of Rain" as in many other poems in the early collections.

The poem "Oracle" from *Wintering Out* also suggests that reading poetry engages people in a search for meaning, which brings peace and unity. Especially when the fact that Heaney published this collection just after the Bloody Sunday –a violent result of sectarian segregation in society– is taken into account, poetry's potential to bring people together in peace can be regarded as the desired cure for the cultural trauma of the Troubles. The speaker of the poem is an oracle speaking in riddle-like phrases as oracles do to a querist, who is a young boy who likes hiding in tree trunks, causing everyone to look for him. The oracle says:

> Hide in the hollow trunk
> of the willow tree,
> its listening familiar,
> until, as usual, they
> cuckoo your name
> across the fields.
> You can hear them
> draw the poles of stiles
> as they approach
> calling you out:
> small mouth and ear
> in a woody cleft,
> lobe and larynx
> of the mossy places. (*WO* 18)

The oracle foresees that people will "draw poles of stiles" between each other's gardens in search of him; they will become united in their search for him, if the querist can become "the lobe and larynx of the mossy places" by hiding in tree trunks; if he can become the ears and voice of the "mossy" land. The poem seems to suggest that if the hearer/ witness of the mossy places/bog becomes the skilful giver of testimony, who can "hide" and by way of hiding, paradoxically reveal the truth of the traumatized and traumatizing national consciousness/bog, people from each sectarian community

will look for what the bog says through the speaker's words, in unison. Both "Gifts of Rain", and "Oracle" suggest that poetry, through its usual method of making meaning by hiding it in figures of speech, mirrors trauma which locks all pieces of meaning and truth in itself and requires interpretation and understanding.

A set of two poems in *North,* about colonisation and its effects on the Irish and the British: "Ocean's Love to Ireland" and "Aisling" engages the readers in a similar analytical process by uncovering half-buried-but-still-strong emotions and assumptions stemming from the traumatic experience. "Ocean's Love to Ireland" explores the conquest of Ireland through the prevailing metaphor of "rape". This metaphor has actually been used more than one occasion in Heaney's poetry to explore the effects of colonial experience in Ireland. "Traditions" treats the effect of English language and literary traditions on Gaelic language and literary traditions, after the conquest of Ireland by the English, as rape: "Our guttural muse/ was bulled long ago,/ by the alliterative tradition" (Heaney, *WO* 21). "Act of Union" (Heaney, *North* 43-44) and "An Open Letter" (Heaney, *OL* 19-30) also hinge on this metaphor. Maloney says Heaney's reliance on this trope "should not be surprising", stating that rape has been employed as a "recurrent metaphor for colonial relations" in post-colonial literature in general, she explains "[r]ape reduces another person to sexual object; colonisation discounts another nation as a conquest" (73). The objectification of individuals and nations in these experiences inscribes both of them as trauma and makes them possible tropes for one another. In "Ocean's Love to Ireland", the conquest of Ireland is represented by the rape of an Irish maid by Sir Walter Ralegh, the Elizabethan poet and explorer who arrived in Ireland with fellow English men to establish plantations on the estates of the Irish and Old English rebels (Maloney 74). Heaney's "Ocean's Love to Ireland" takes its ironic title from Ralegh's poem titled "Ocean's Love to Cynthia" in which Ralegh expressed his admiration and love for Queen Elizabeth I, who called him "the Shepherd of Oceans" (Maloney 74). The title of Heaney's poem is ironic because Ralegh does not love Ireland at all; he victimizes and dishonours the maid representing Ireland. The experience of rape renders the maid powerless, so much so that she is unable even to talk -to pronounce Sir Walter Ralegh's name- to stop him, she calls him "'Sweesir, Swatter!". The phonetics of the wrong name by which she calls him associates the conqueror with invincible and destructive water: "He is water/ he is ocean, lifting/ Her farthingale like a scarf of weed lifting/ in the

front of a wave" (*North* 40). The irony of the poem's title becomes clearer when the second section of the poem reveals Ralegh's real love for Cynthia who represents Elizabeth I/England. The poem makes it very clear that both the conquest of Ireland and the rape of the maid involve only an assertion of cruel, unempathic power. Ralegh, who is revealed to be capable of human emotions in the second section of the poem, loves Cynthia. The insensitive rapist of the Irish maid is quite caring when he is around Cynthia; he lays his "cape" before Cynthia in "plashy grounds" in order to protect her even from the mud (*N* 41). The discrepancy between his respectful way of treating Cynthia and the way he treats the Irish maid shows how he does not even see the maid as a human being like Cynthia. The poem seems to repeat the colonial discourse, which continually saw the Irish as inferior to the English. The colonial discourse from the twelfth century onwards stereotyped the Irish as uncivilized, primitive people who are a direct contrast to the civilized English; and the juxtaposition of Ralegh's treatment of the respectable lady and of the maid, whose honour is so recklessly ruined, seems to work as a reminder of the destructive effects of the colonial discourse on the Irish people.

The poem is quite clear in its definition or representation of the traumatic experience. Unlike "Gifts of Rain" which both locks and reveals meaning in implied metaphors, "Ocean's Love to Ireland" works through transparent similes and explicit metaphors. The speaker directly and coarsely states "Ralegh has backed the maid to a tree/ As Ireland is backed to England" (*North* 40). The directness and coarseness of the statement give a sense that the experience has not been refined for/processed into poetry. The statement does not lock its meaning inside it like the metaphors of "Gifts of Rain"; it does not invite the reader to find the keys, to actively engage with the process of "digging" -of meaning-making; the meaning is forcefully imposed instead. The experience is, like the bodies and artefacts found in the bogs, kept in its unprocessed state in the poem. The blatant statement mirrors the blatant experience of the rape or the conquest, creating a similar unsettling atmosphere in the poem. The poem depicting the monstrosity of Ralegh's/England's treatment of the Irish (maid) is analysed belatedly; it is put into a larger frame that also includes the perception of the matter by the English only when the poem following "Ocean's Love to Ireland" - "Aisling" is also read.

Unlike "Ocean's Love to Ireland, the following poem "Aisling" requires a very meticulous digging. The poem's referents and meaning are hidden under layers of allusions and unanswered questions -silences. It is an incredibly short and dense poem which seems to squeeze the Irish rebellions starting from the sixteenth century plantations onwards into one riddle-like representation:

> He courted her
> With decadent sweet art
> Like the wind's vowel
> Blowing through the hazels:
>
> 'Are you Diana…?'
> And was he Actaeon,
> His high lament
> The stag's exhausted belling? (*North* 42)

The poem refers to a story of punishment- to the Greek/Roman myth where the hunter, Actaeon, who dishonoured the goddess Diana by seeing her bathing naked, is transformed by the goddess into a stag as a punishment. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* –the unnamed source of Heaney's poem– narrates how Actaeon, the stag who is now unable to use language, fails to reveal who he is and gets hunted by his own friends and dogs. The title of the poem, "Aisling" refers to a particular literary tradition, a form of poetry developed in the eighteenth century. In a typical aisling "a woman representing Ireland appears to the dreaming narrator and offers some insight or prophecy usually about the fate of Ireland" (B. O'Donoghue 420). Aragay claims that when the woman is asked to reveal her identity in aislings, her answer is usually "Mise Éire" which means "1 am Ireland"; she also states that "the function of this idealized figure, frequently a vulnerable virgin ravished by the masculine English invader, was to remind her menfolk that they must fight so as to regain possession of their land" (54). The woman representing Ireland is variously known as Kathleen/Cathleen Ni Houlihan and Roisin Dubh (Dark Rosaleen) (Aragay 54). Drawing on the Aisling tradition, the title of Heaney's poem implies that it is not Diana but Kathleen Ni Houlihan, the mythical embodiment of Ireland who has been dishonoured. However, like Diana, Kathleen Ni Houlihan is vengeful and she punishes those who trespass against her; she, too, is capable of transforming the hunter into the prey. The shared motif of a man dishonouring a female figure connects this poem with "Ocean's Love to Ireland". Reading the two poems in their original sequence gives the sense that "Aisling" represents the aftermath of the rape of the Irish maid/the conquest of Ireland. The poem

might be referring to the violent response of the Irish to the dishonouring offense of the English. The fact that Actaeon is hunted by his own friends and dogs because he does not share the same language with them any more might be a reference to the sixteenth and seventeenth century rebellions, where the Old English, who settled down in Ireland in the twelfth century, took active role to overthrow the English supremacy in Ireland[33]. The Old English who were often regarded as "more Irish than the Irish themselves"[34] (Stewart 62) by the Tudor English, did not recognize the later English/British planters as their relatives and friends but saw them as an enemy to fight against, in the same way Actaeon's friends and dogs did not recognize him and hunted him down. Heaney's poem might be suggesting that Mother Ireland's response is more violent than the trespasser deserved, as Heaney's source, *The Metamorphoses*, questions whether Actaeon's offense deserved such a severe punishment. Ovid's narrator says:

> Ambiguous rumours were the goddess was
> More violent than just, others spoke praise
> Of how she stood for chastity and both
> Extremes found worthy logic for their cause. (71)

To suggest that Kathleen Ni Houlihan is Diana and the English trespasser is Actaeon is to imply that Ireland herself turned into a victimizer giving harsh punishments to those who were not even aware that they were trespassing. However, even the speaker himself is not sure whether these analogies work for the Anglo-Irish context. He asks questions rather than giving statements: "Are you Diana...?", "was he Actaeon". The questions make it unclear whether the poem really identifies the colonial power with Actaeon or Ireland with Diana. Nevertheless, the questions hint at the possibility of interpreting the Anglo-Irish affairs from the viewpoint of Actaeon/the English who trespassed against Mother Ireland and got harshly punished. From their viewpoint, Diana's response to Actaeon's unwittingly committed offense was out of proportion. The two poems "Ocean's Love to Ireland" and "Aisling" in a way seem to put the Irish and the English/British into conversation, attempting to uncover how they saw the actions of one another and what they have gone through as a result of those actions. Each of the two poems functions as a piece of a jigsaw puzzle; only when they come together, can they contribute to the begetting and uncovering of the truth of trauma. Poems such as "Digging", "Linen Town" and "Gifts of Rain" have already suggested how uncovering the buried past can bring a healing to the lingering effects of that past.

Similarly, “Ocean’s Love to Ireland” and “Aisling” seem to re-present the past experiences in order to work through their impacts on the present.

1.4. LAYING THE PAST TO REST THROUGH POETRY

Heaney’s early poetry suggests that uncovering the painful past through testimony or testimonial poetry serves also the purposes of laying the relentless past to rest. This healing potential is attributed to testimony especially in “The Tollund Man” where the speaker introduces a body discovered in the bogs of Denmark and consequently put on display in a museum in Aarhus. The bog personified in the poem as a goddess “tightened her torc on him/And opened her fen” and with her “dark juices” kept Tollund Man’s body miraculously intact and yielded him thousands of years later to “turfcutters’/honeycombed workings” (*WO* 36). The statement that the Tollund Man was found by turf-cutters’ digging the bog is quite suggestive and seems to connect the poem with Heaney’s earlier poems. The act of digging has always had connotations of exploration, of analysis which yields a poem/ a story in Heaney’s poetry, from “Digging” onwards. The turf-cutters’ shapely, perhaps artistically aesthetical “honeycombed workings” reminiscent of the digging of poets uncovered the story of a violently killed man. The story of an Iron Age man who was killed perhaps in a sacrificial ritual or as a victim of a murder or as a convict of some crime -as the “noose” around his neck may suggest- is made a part of human history through turf-cutters’ digging. The speaker implies that the Tollund Man’s recovery even after thousands of years finally lets him have his rest. Just after saying the Tollund Man was found by the turf-cutters, the speaker says, “Now his stained face/ Reposes at Aarhus” (*WO* 36). The bog is now one ghost shorter to haunt the inhabitants and diggers of the bogs. The haunting figure of the Tollund Man -dead but not completely so[35]- is taken under control by the inhabitants of the mossy lands, because his death is consciously remembered, turned into a story, his body put into a museum as a result of digging. The speaker, at the very beginning of the poem, says “Some day I will go to Aarhus/ To see his peat-brown head,/ The mild pods of his eye-lids,/ His pointed skin cap” (*WO* 36). The discovery of the body ensures that no turf-cutter/ no giver of testimony runs the risk of encountering the ghost of the Tollund Man in the bog/national consciousness again. Anyone who wishes to remember/commemorate him can go to

the museum in Aarhus and going there to see his body/ to remember his story will definitely be an act of choice -an exercise of agential power.

However, the fact that the Tollund Man now rests in peace after his excavation does not make the bog devoid of any more ghosts. The poem "Bogland" describes the bog as a landscape that occupies both horizontal and vertical space in Ireland. It is "everywhere the eye concedes to/ Encroaching horizon" and its center is "bottomless" (*DD* 43-44). As the juxtaposition of the grandiose discovery of the Great Irish Elk and the discovery of such an ordinary matter as butter in "Bogland" suggests, the bog holds a great variety of things to deal with for the turf-cutters/ diggers of national consciousness. The bog seems to be an infinite space filled with infinite number of ghosts.

The speaker in "The Tollund Man" introduces the figures of four Catholic brothers, who were violently killed in the1920s, as possible ghosts that can haunt the turf-cutters of Irish boglands. Michael Parker quotes Heaney's explanation about the victims of political violence to whom the poem refers, Heaney says the story of the victims represented in the poem "is part of the folklore of where I grew up that there were four brothers, four Catholic brothers, who had been massacred by Protestant paramilitaries, or whatever you want to call them, in the 1920s and had been trailed along the railway lines as a kind of mutilation." (107). In "The Tollund Man", no one as yet has dug up the bodies of horribly tortured and murdered Catholic brothers from the bog, the speaker does not even know whether they can be dug up from the bog. However, he wishes and actually prays that the bog will yield their figures. He says:

> I could risk blasphemy,
> Consecrate the cauldron bog
> Our holy ground and pray
> Him to make germinate
>
> The scattered, ambushed
> Flesh of labourers,
> Stockinged corpses
> Laid out in the farmyards,
>
> Tell tale skin and teeth
> Flecking the sleepers
> Of four young brothers, trailed
> For miles along the lines. (*WO* 37)

The figure of the Tollund Man having his peaceful repose in the museum after being taken out of the Danish boglands and the following description of violence in which the four brothers were killed are in complete contrast to each other. The Tollund Man, discovered and remembered, is finally in peace, but the figures tortured in horrible ways seem to be still suffering. It seems as if the brothers' bodies have not only been "trailed/ for miles along the lines", but also for years. Decades later, the speaker cannot see the bodies of the four brothers whenever he wants; there is no place: no museum, no monument that he can visit to consciously remember/commemorate them. However, he cannot stop seeing them in his mind, either; it is not up to his choice to see them or not. Like the speaker in "Linen Town", he cannot stop being a witness to an event that he did not actually witness. The contrasting images of the Tollund Man, who has been put to rest, and of the four brothers, who continue to suffer and to haunt the speaker, suggest what needs to be done. The murdered brothers need to be uncovered, given a space where they will rest in peace, because no matter how different the Tollund Man and the four brothers are –in terms of one's peace and the others' restlessness–, or how distant their birthplaces are, they are actually very similar. Both the Tollund man and the Catholic brothers were the inhabitants of "the old man-killing parishes", like the speaker (*WO* 37). The poem seems to suggest that the solution that worked for Tollund man would also work for the Catholic brothers. Besides suggesting this solution, the poem can actually also be regarded as the suggested solution in practice. The speaker by uncovering, remembering, narrating the violent deaths of the Catholic brothers attempts to turn his representation/poem into a monument or a museum where the victims can be mourned for and commemorated. The speaker, in a way, integrates their story into the history of Ireland and in so doing, he claims the experience as a possession of the Irish people. Traumatic memory which has overpowered and objectified the speaker/the nation by haunting them for decades is now itself being claimed by this poem as a possession, an object, a poem, a story that belongs to the Irish people.

The attempt and desire to lay the relentless traumatic memories of the past to rest by turning them into a story, that is to say, a possession of the nation are also evident in some of Heaney's elegies in *Field Work*: "The Strand at Lough Beg", "A Postcard from North Antrim" and "Casualty" where the individual victims of sectarian violence from both Catholic and Protestant communities are lamented. Through lamentation,

the poems attempt to lay the dead to rest, they try to prevent them to turn into ghosts haunting the nation like Henry Joy McCracken, the member of United Irishmen in "Linen Town", or the four Catholic brothers, who were tortured and killed in horrible ways, in "The Tollund Man". The elegies acknowledge the fact that these individuals, have been killed in the name of sectarian groups, although they did not take side with one or the other violent sectarian group; the poems incorporate the victims' stories into the larger history of Ireland/Troubles. Even if the story of the victim's traumatic death is not exactly known by their mourners, as in "The Strand at Lough Beg" where the particulars of the murder that the poem attempts to represent were not known, there is still an attempt at telling their stories. The speaker/mourner struggles to construct a story by which he can mourn for his loss. "The Strand at Lough Beg" written in memory of Heaney's second cousin Colum McCartney, tries to forge a narrative through a set of questions which can never be answered:

> What blazed ahead of you? A faked road block?
> The red lamp swung, the sudden brakes and stalling
> Engine, voices, heads hooded and the cold-nosed gun
> Or in your driving mirror, tailing headlights
> That pulled out suddenly and flagged you down
> Where you weren't known and far from what you knew (*FW* 9)

Because he is murdered without a witness, the victim's story cannot be told; the truth of the experience cannot be begotten. No one knows how the paramilitaries approached and killed him. This is probably why the speaker yields to the unrepresentability of how McCartney died, and directs his attention to creating an imaginary death scene where McCartney is transferred to somewhere familiar and peaceful from the actual and unfamiliar site of murder. The speaker imagines himself to be walking in front of McCartney in the familiar side of Lough Beg, his walking forward is interrupted by a silence: "I turn because the sweeping of your feet/ Has stopped behind me, to find you on your knees/ With blood and roadside muck on your hair and eyes (*FW* 10). Not knowing or wondering how his cousin has been shot, the speaker stops in his tracks and goes back –both in time to the moment of death, and also in setting to his cousin's dead body. He then washes the blood and mud stained body of his cousin with "handfuls of the dew", he says:

> I dab you clean with moss
> Fine as the drizzle out of a low cloud.
> I lift you under the arms and lay you flat.

> With rushes that shoot green again, I plait
> Green scapulars to wear over your shroud. (*FW* 10)

With this private ritual of cleaning the corpse, the speaker attempts to prevent his cousin from wondering restlessly on earth; he "lays" him "flat". Through a ritual which is only carried out in the lines of this poem, the giver of testimony seems to be attempting at sending off the dead cousin to a peaceful place.

In conclusion, Heaney represent the act of bearing testimony as a trauma-coping strategy and there is an attempt in the early collection to heal the wounds of the Irish people caused by the traumatic experiences of the recent and distant past by repeating the traumatic history in words. Unlike traumatic repetitions where the trauma victim, unable to assert agency, repeats the trauma as if s/he was haunted or controlled by it, the repetition –representation– in Heaney's poetry allows the speakers to exercise their agential power over the experience in many cases, such as "This Morning", "Linen Town", "Bogland", "Kinship", "Gifts of Rain", "The Tollund Man", "Ocean's Love to Ireland", "Aisling", "Strand at Lough Beg". The exercise of agential power, the ability to concentrate on and to understand and define aspects of incomprehensibly complex trauma in poetry, enables the speakers of poems and givers of testimony to integrate the traumatic past into the constellation of past experiences. Because integration requires processing of the unprocessed memories, the poems engage both the speakers and the readers in a process of analysis of what the Irish have been through. Thus, this chapter shows the attempt at turning the uncontrollable and unprocessed memories of the traumatic past into understandable, truthful and useful narratives that would almost act like a monument by which the past would be consciously remembered. Heaney's early collections seem to hinge on the conviction that conscious remembrance of traumatic experiences would bring an end to automatic or unconscious repetitions.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEMATISATION OF TESTIMONY IN HEANEY'S EARLY POETRY

"What art can do is bear witness not to the sublime, but to the aporia of art and to its pain. It does not say the unsayable, but says that it cannot say it."
Jean-François Lyotard[36]

The first chapter of this dissertation has shown that in Heaney's early collections *Wintering Out, North* and *Field Work,* there is an attempt to work through the cultural trauma of the Troubles through representation. The chapter has focused on the instances in Heaney's early poetry where speakers, witnesses of sectarian and communal violence both before and during the Troubles, struggle to represent and thus repeat in words the traumatic scenes they have witnessed. Drawing on both psychoanalytic and cultural trauma theories, I have tried to attract attention to how the speakers' repetition/re-presentation slightly but meaningfully differ from the traumatic repetition. Rather than being further objectified and victimised by the traumatic repetition, the previous chapter claims, the speakers in repeating the trauma in words become actively and cognitively engaged in the traumatic experience, and thus take a step to become the controller of the traumatic memories rather than being controlled by them. Another point of focus has been the instances where speakers acknowledge, process, and mourn the nation's past and present traumatic experiences. Looking at these instances, I have suggested that Heaney's early poetry offers a therapeutic testimony whereby individual speakers reclaim their agential power over trauma, and also integrate the traumatic violence of the Troubles and earlier times into the story of the nation's past.

In this chapter, I argue that in Heaney's early collections *Wintering Out* (1972), *North* (1975) and *Field Work* (1979) the attempt to work through the cultural traumas of the Troubles and of the colonial conquest of Ireland through bearing witness to them is contrapuntal to the acknowledgement of the impossibility of doing so. I have observed that while some poems in these early collections represent, endorse and practice the act of bearing testimony or witness to the Irish cultural traumas as a trauma-coping strategy, some others represent it as an impossible task.

Ambivalence and contradictory attitudes in Heaney's poetry have been duly noted by various critics. Molino says, "Heaney's poems serve as a textual space in which competing discourses, conflicting experiences, discontinuous thoughts, interrupted action, questions without answers, and contradictory cultural messages cohabit" (71). Molino ultimately associates the coexistence of contradictory views in Heaney's poetry with the equally strong influence of two conflicting literary traditions, Irish and English, on the poet. Other critics regard the contradictions in Heaney's poetry as a voluntary change in views, or as an indicator of his modernity. Kearney, for instance, claims that in Heaney's poetry, there is an "ultimate fidelity to the ambiguity of opposing demands" and "refusal of any single place or position which would permit the illusion of a final solution" ("Poetry, Language and Identity" 563), while Vendler warns Heaney's readers to watch out the poet's "vigilant willingness to change" (11). Vendler says, because of this willingness to change, "quoting a sentence or a stanza from Heaney and adducing that it gives 'his opinion' on this or that political question betrays the fluidity and responsiveness of his mind" (11). While the contradictions and change of views in Heaney's poetry have been thus addressed by critics, there is a lack of studies focusing on these changes and contradictions as a testimony to the incomprehensibility and also unrepresentability of the traumatic experiences of the Irish. Therefore, this study focuses on the contradictions in Heaney's early poetry as indicators of the traumatic quality of the three-decade long experience of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland and the underlying colonial experiences.

As argued above, poems in *Wintering Out, North* and *Field Work* are engaged in understanding and representing the cultural trauma of the Troubles. Thus, the present chapter analyses instances in Heaney's poetry testimony as a trauma-coping strategy is problematised, where healing capacity of testimony is doubted, questioned and even rejected. In *Wintering Out,* beside a great number of poems written with the conviction that poetic testimony upon the "summons" of the cultural trauma of the Troubles would lead to a "release", there are also poems that do not respond to the trauma itself but rather to the challenges the Troubles and the colonial conquest pose to representation, to poetry, to testimony. Some of these poems such as "Roots", "Stump" and "No Man's Land", "Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces", "Backward Look""Wool Trade" and "Midnight" are marked by the presence of a speaker who sets out to give an account of the Troubles and fails or by a speaker who is confounded by his own

sense of "response-ability" in Felman's words ("The Betrayal" 200) or rather his sense of response-inability in the face of a situation too complex and horrible to come to terms with.

Trauma theory registering trauma as both an "unburiable" and at the same time "unspeakable" experience (Herman 1) indicates an aporia about bearing witness to trauma. The theory sees the act of bearing witness -of giving testimony- as both an indispensable part of the healing process and also a very challenging, even an impossible task. Dori Laub, whose work on trauma is largely drawn from testimonies of Holocaust survivors, epitomizes this aporia of trauma in his statement "the imperative to tell the story of the Holocaust is inhabited by an impossibility of telling" ("An Event without a Witness" 79). Various reasons for this aporia have been put forth by trauma theorists. Drawing largely on Janet and Freud's works, Caruth ("Introduction" 6) and Felman ("Education and Crisis" 16) claim it is because of the idiosyncratic way memory of the traumatic experience gets stored in the unconscious before being inscribed into the consciousness of the witness/victim that they fail in giving testimony to it. Both Caruth and Felman focus on the crisis of representation brought about by the horrors and complexity of trauma in their works. Caruth treats testimony as a literal impossibility since it requires the witness and/or victim to remember and narrate a history to which s/he does not have access because the witness/victim missed the experience at the time of its occurrence ("Introduction" 6); Felman suggests that testimony cannot offer "a completed statement, a totalizable account", but rather it gives "bits and pieces" of the memory of traumatic experiences because the experiences "have not settled into understanding or remembrance" ("Education and Crisis" 16). Whitehead stresses the way traumatic experiences cause a "rupture in symbolic order" as the reason for the impossibility of giving testimony to trauma (84). In agreement with Whitehead, Tal (6) and Hartman ("On Traumatic Knowledge" 541) also claim that it is because traumatic experiences dislocate meanings of words that language in its ordinary usage fails to refer to or describe the experience. Roth suggests the traumatic experience is "too terrible for words" and any attempt at representation betrays its radical uniqueness (91). Kaplan says trauma cannot be described in words because political and social complexities make it very dangerous to acknowledge what happened (74).

2.1. THE REPRESENTATION OF TESTIMONY AS AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK IN *WINTERING OUT*

Speakers in Heaney's poems attempting to bear witness to the Irish cultural traumas get stuck in an impasse in their attempt because of similar reasons. In this section of the chapter, I will look into instances in Heaney's *Wintering Out* where the attempt to work through the cultural traumas of the Troubles and of the colonial conquest of Ireland through bearing witness to them is problematised. This section argues that poems such as "Roots", "Stump", "No Man's Land", "Backward Look", "The Wool Trade", and "Midnight" represent the unrepresentability of the traumatic experiences of the Irish nation rather than bearing witness to them.

"Roots", which is analysed in the first chapter as a poem expressing a need to exorcise the harmful feelings associated with the traumatic violence and traumatic memories, is also one of the poems that aporetically highlights the life-threatening danger any attempt at exorcism/testimony puts the speaker/giver of testimony into. In the poem, the speaker risks his life by uprooting the mandrake "soaked in bloodshed" (*WO* 29), the embodiment of the unspoken and unfathomed horrors of traumatic violence in Northern Ireland. The last two lines of the poem delicately implies the dangers involved in the attempts at uprooting the heretofore unspoken and unfathomed feelings and experiences: "And I wound its damp smelly loam/ And stop my ears against the scream" (*WO* 29). The meaning of these lines relies heavily on a myth related to the plant, mandrake that Heaney chose to use as a metaphor for the buried traumatic memories and feelings associated with trauma. For a very long time since the ancient times, the plant "whose root is thought to resemble a human form" (Kearney, *Navigations* 220) was believed to have magical healing powers and to scream so terribly when it was uprooted that the scream could kill the person venturing on the task of uprooting it (Carter n.p). The life-threatening danger that the poem hints at is not elaborated upon by the speaker but the omen that the buried and the unspoken will shriek so terribly or speak so loudly that it would kill the speaker once they are articulated, points at the aporia of trauma. In a way, the poem tacitly suggests that the attempt at speaking out about the Troubles is inhabited by the impossibility of doing so.

That the speaker stops his ears against the mandrake's scream, against the scream of what has been silently accumulated underneath the surface indicates his anxiety over the consequences of the task of uprooting the mandrake on his own well-being. The speaker is convinced that the remedy for the inhabitants of violent Gomorrah lies in the task of uprooting the mandrake, but also that the process of uprooting it is painful and dangerous, that the remedy comes at a grave cost. The pain and the danger that the poem foresees in uprooting the mandrake probably lies in the nature of any trauma testimony. Rachel Rosenblum, in her article "Postponing Trauma: the dangers of telling", gives accounts of a great number of Holocaust survivors who had managed to go on with their lives as if untainted by the traumatic events until they gave testimony to the horrors of those experiences. Rosenblum acknowledges the costs of speaking out as well as the costs of silence, she says: "When survivors remain silent, they are often condemned to a desiccated existence, a dried-out life, a death in life. But when they speak out [...] they are running a greater risk" (1319). The risk that Rosenblum observes in telling the trauma is the danger that the speaker of "Roots" tries to protect himself from by stopping his ears against the mandrake's shriek. Rosenblum explicates that telling the trauma does not necessarily mean a safe passage from a state of traumatisation into that of healing: "Telling the traumatic event [...] leads to the risk of repeating the original trauma, or worse to that of actually experiencing it for the first time" (1333). The speaker of "Roots" takes the risk of re-witnessing or witnessing the traumatic events of the past and present for the first time for the sake of a cure.

The idea that it is a great challenge to speak out about trauma is perhaps most effectively carried out by the curious image of the mandrake introduced as the embodiment of unarticulated trauma. Heaney gives the affect of Ulster's traumatic experiences agential power by making the readers envisage it as an anthropomorphic figure, a plant famous for its resemblance to the human body. Moreover, this plant loaded with human agency and the speaker are presented as if they were in a deadly confrontation with each other: the speaker "wounds" the mandrake's "smelly loam" (*WO* 29), while the mandrake threatens the speaker/the uprooter's life with its shriek. A psychoanalytic reading of the poem would suggest that they are not even in equal terms, the mandrake -the affect of trauma- has the upper hand in this combat since the "smelly loam" in which the mandrake lives is the speaker's own unconscious, where

unassimilated scraps of experiences are buried. So, wounding the "smelly loam" (*WO* 29) is actually wounding oneself; any attempt at uprooting the trauma from the unconscious is destined to be painful as the shovel directly goes into a part of the topography of the speaker's own mind. In other words, the smelly loam can be interpreted as the unconscious in Freudian terms.

Abraham and Torok's concept of the crypt is also quite resonant with the images of the mandrake and its smelly loam. Abraham and Torok define the crypt as "a sealed-off psychic place in the ego" where the memory of "an ever so painfully lived Reality -untellable and therefore inaccessible to the gradual assimilative work of mourning" (142) is buried. Abraham and Torok suggest that the crypt is established in the ego when a traumatic loss is "denied and disguised" (142) due to its unassimilable nature, that is to say, the crypt's raison d'etre is the preservation of the lost object within oneself and also the preservation of the self from the traumatic experience of loss. Revealing the contents of the crypt means finally acknowledging what has been too painful to acknowledge, it means acknowledging the fact that what has been lost is lost. In the case of the speaker in "Roots" uprooting the mandrake means acknowledging the painful reality he has unconsciously denied, accepting what he witnessed as witnessed, what he experienced as experienced. The crypt would have never been built, the mandrake never germinated (at least not in blood), if it had not been difficult and dangerous to accept and assimilate the traumatic experience in the first place. Thus, the poem suggests that revealing the contents of the crypt -uprooting the mandrake from its smelly loam- is as dangerous and painful as it is necessary.

"Stump", another short poem from the sequence "A Northern Hoard" in *Wintering Out*, similarly registers testimony as both a necessity and an impossibility:

> I am riding to plague again.
> Sometimes under a sooty wash
> From the grate in the burnt-out gable
> I see the needy in a small pow-wow.
> What do I say if they wheel out their dead?
> I am cauterized, a black stump of home. (*WO* 31)

The poem hinges on an analogy between the problematic constitution of the sectarian identities in Northern Ireland and the "plague". Frequent acts of discrimination against the Catholic minority by the predominantly Protestant Unionist governments since the

inception of Northern Ireland caused the deepening of the long-standing sectarian division and the eventual eruption of sectarian violence (Kinealy 35). The resurgence of violence in 1968-69 resulted in further intensification of intolerance between the sectarian groups and both Protestant/ Unionist/ Loyalist and Catholic/ Republican/ Nationalist communities became increasingly invested in creating homogenous enclaves where they would feel themselves safer (Hanna 4). From 1969 onwards "the practice of forced dislocation" became a common strategy enacted by each of the communities against their adversary (McGinley 129). Hanna reports that "by 1974 […] 8180 families were forced to evacuate their houses" (4). The motivation behind the practice seems to be a willingness to cleanse one's community from harmful others. The poem, which seems to have been occasioned by the sectarian communities' preoccupation with building safe enclaves for themselves, implies that the communities regard the members of their adversaries as germs that can contaminate their communal life and identity, they see each other as a source of the plague. And apparently, in the poem, one of the communities has taken brutal measures to prevent the disease from spreading by burning the dwellings of their adversaries[37] as the speaker's seeing "the needy" "from the grate in the burnt-out gable" *(WO* 31) implicates. Hanna associates the appearance of "burnt gables" in news coverage and also in the poetry of Northern Ireland with the frequency of the practice of burning dwellings (60). It was indeed very common for paramilitaries to burn the dwellings to make people evacuate their neighbourhoods during the Troubles, as McGinley suggests the practice "had profound significance for territorial reclamation and for reaffirming national identity" (129). Hanna claims: "In August 1969, the burning of hundreds of houses in the Falls Road area of Belfast was the precursor to a spate of large-scale arson attacks in residential areas over the next four years" (60). Though the poem does not specify or elaborate on the traumatisation of the people whose houses have been burnt down, it indicates the traumatic potential of their experience -the sudden and violent loss of their living spaces and a direct and violent assault on their communal identity.

Rather than the traumatisation of "the needy" (*WO* 31), the poem focuses on the traumatisation of the speaker, a bystander. The speaker is not an attendant of the "small pow-wow" (*WO* 31), not among the "needy" who have been directly exposed to the traumatic event but he is traumatised by others' experiences and is confounded by his

sense of responsibility to "say" something and by his inability to know what to say: "What do I say if they wheel out their dead?" (*WO* 31). The agony over not knowing what to say implies a conviction that having something to say, being articulate about what happened would help the needy. The last line of the poem "I am cauterized, a black stump of home" (*WO* 31) gives an insight into the possible reason why this poem treats speaking out about trauma as a challenge. Corcoran explains the state of being "cauterized" as being "seared into insensibility, incapable of feeling or responding, having nothing to 'say'" (*Seamus Heaney* 73*)*. The speaker cannot speak because he feels the affect of what happened to others inside himself, perhaps it is the home of the needy that was burnt down in actuality, but the speaker finds his own self turn into a "stump" (*WO* 31). He identifies himself with the victims so much so that he can no longer see his position as an outsider who can offer help through articulation.

Trauma theorists have coined several terms to explicate the kind of trauma occasioned by bystanders' complete identification with the victims. Figley initially terms traumatisation through identification as "secondary traumatic stress" ("Catastrophes" 12), in a later study he calls it "compassion fatigue" ("Introduction" 2). For Hoffman, traumatisation of people who have not been directly exposed to the traumatic event but who have heard or saw it to happen to other people is "empathic over-arousal" (198), for McCann and Pearlman, it is "vicarious traumatization" (133). All these terms emphasize the transmissibility/ contagiousness of trauma. Luckhurst underlines this "worrying" transmissibility of trauma by suggesting that trauma "leaks between [...] patients and doctors via the mysterious processes of transference or suggestion and between victims and their listeners or viewers who are commonly moved to forms of overwhelming sympathy, even to the extent of claiming secondary victimhood" (3). In cases where bystander is moved to overwhelming sympathy or to complete identification with the victim, as in "Stump", his/her recognition of victims as others is dissolved and the bystander is incorporated into victimhood (LaCapra, *History in Transit* 76). This identification that goes beyond empathy, where one recognises the difference of his/her position from that of the victim, prevents one from taking advantage of his more fortunate position as a bystander to help the trauma victims. As LaCapra says "such identification [...] may exclude forms of social responsibility and political activity that are incumbent on someone who is fortunate enough not to have lived through certain extreme, traumatizing events" (*History in Transit* 82). Hoffman

comes to a similar conclusion about secondary traumatisation and suggests that "empathic over-arousal can move observers out of the empathic mode, cause them to be preoccupied with their own personal distress, and turn their attention away from the victim" (13). Likewise, "Stump" has been criticised for its "undue emphasis on the poet's personal burden of guilt and inadequacy" and for the "too little space given to the victims of atrocities" (Parker, *Seamus Heaney* 104). The emphasis is indeed on the speaker's agony about feeling useless in remedying the situation of the needy through articulation. The speaker's inability to speak stems from his inability to recognise his position as different from that of those whose homes have been burnt down out of sectarian hatred. LaCapra suggests that what is desirable in cases of witnessing others' trauma is not "projective or incorporative identification" but rather "heteropathic identification [which] involves virtual not vicarious experience- that is to say, experience in which one puts oneself in the other's position without taking the place of -or speaking for- the other or becoming a surrogate victim who appropriates victim's voice or suffering" (*History in Transit* 135). Portraying the speaker as a trauma witness who cannot maintain heteropathic empathy and moves beyond it to slip into surrogate victimage, "Stump" seems to suggest secondary traumatisation as yet another reason for the impossibility of articulation/testimony.

2.1.1 Testimony as a Moral Obligation to the Victims ad Complicity of Silence

Alongside suggesting bystanders' complete identification with the victims as a reason for the inability to speak about trauma, "Stump" also puts forth the act of bearing witness to what the victims have gone through as a moral obligation. The speaker's heightened anguish over witnessing trauma stems from his failure in fulfilling that moral obligation as much as from his inability to differentiate himself from the victims. Guilty-conscience over failure in speaking to/about/for the victim is also present - and perhaps more emphasised- in "No Man's Land", another short poem from the same sequence, "A Northern Hoard" in *Wintering Out.* As Brearton also suggests this poem is also "torn between the need to speak and the inadequacy of words" (25).

> I deserted, shut out
> their wounds' fierce awning,
> those palms like streaming webs.

> Must I crawl back now,
> spirochete, abroad between
> shred-hung wire and thorn
> to confront my smeared doorstep
> and what lumpy dead?
> Why do I unceasingly
> arrive late to condone
> infected sutures
> and ill-knit bone? (*WO* 30)

The mention of "smeared doorstep" (*WO* 30) pins the poem down as a poem about the horrors of the Troubles because doorstep killings was one of the most common strategies practiced by both Catholic and Protestant paramilitaries to reclaim a territory for their own communities. Social geographers, Boal and Murray attest that especially in mixed areas, which they call "interfaces" ("A City in Conflict" 371), paramilitaries frequently committed murder on the doorsteps of their victims' houses ("The Social Ecology" 152). Boal and Murray attracted special attention to the fact that such "intergroup murders" did not take place in religiously homogeneous neighbourhoods but mostly "along the boundaries between Catholic and Protestant areas" with mixed populations ("A City in Conflict" 370). Feldman explains the reason why interfaces were seen as more suitable for doorstep murders and suggests that the murders were committed to send a signal to the adversarial community that the location of the murder belongs to them, Feldman says "Each victim is both a defilement of one community and a purifying intervention for another. Each corpse or stiff is a sign of sacrificial extraction that rehearses the eventual subtraction of the community in which the stiffing took place" (73). In other words, every doorstep murder in an interface was regarded as a rehearsal of the eventual cleansing of one community from the defilement of the other, of one community's reclamation of Northern Ireland as their own territory. The title of the poem "No Man's Land" can perhaps be read as a comment on how each paramilitary group's violent attempts at reclaiming the territory as theirs contrarily lead to Northern Ireland's eventual descent into a no man's land where anyone would be an easy-target and thus in danger.

While the traumatogenic event that is represented in the poem seems to be the phenomenon of doorstep killings, "No Man's Land," like "Stump" and "Roots" does not focus on the victims or survivors of trauma but again on the speaker, a guilt-stricken bystander. The speaker feels guilty for having shut out the wounds of the

wounded, for having deserted the victims and he reprimands himself for his belated response. The readers are not given any insight into the reason why he deserted the victims in the first place but the speaker's sense of guilt over failure in fulfilling a moral obligation is rendered quite tangible. Brearton suggests that the speaker's guilt is rooted in his conviction that silence and inertia implicate complicity. Brearton says, the poem is "haunted by the fear that to say and do nothing is to be complicit in covering up what a properly questioning and responsible poetry should seek to expose" (25).

The idea that silence of the witness is a crime is a much-discussed subject in trauma theory, especially but not exclusively, with reference to the undue silence of the Holocaust bystanders. Shoshana Felman, in her reading of Camus' *The Fall*, into which, she argues, Camus inscribed the silence surrounding the Holocaust, suggests that the narrator's failure in giving response to the traumatic scene he witnessed turns him into an "accomplice in the execution of the Other" ("Betrayal" 192). Felman compares the unresponsive narrator of *The Fall* to "the Marxist intellectuals accepting Stalin's labour camps and the Western Allies witnessing the genocide with a *conspiracy of silence*" ("Betrayal" 192, emphasis in the original). Judith Herman propounds the same equation between bystanders' silence and crime against trauma victims in her *Trauma and Recovery:*

> When the traumatic events are of human design, those who bear witness are caught in conflict between victim and perpetrator. It is morally impossible to remain neutral in this conflict. The bystander is forced to take sides. It is very tempting to take the side of the perpetrator. All the perpetrator asks is that the bystander do nothing. He appeals to the universal desire to see, hear and speak no evil. The victim, on the contrary, asks the bystander to share the burden of the pain. The victim demands action, engagement and remembering (7-8)

Likewise, "No Man's Land" can be suggested to imply, through the speaker's guilt for not responding to the trauma, that the victims of the Troubles need the testimony of the bystanders perhaps not in the court of law but in "the court of history" (Felman, *Juridical Unconscious* 96) so that they can get justice and so that the trauma they endured would not happen again. Instead of meeting the need however, the speaker in "No Man's Land" has deserted the victims to their own fate and feels himself diminished -to a "spirochete" (*WO* 30) for doing so. As Andrews also suggests the speaker knows that "he forfeits his humanity" by keeping his mouth shut about the

victims (62). The speaker did not take sides with the victims, when they were wounded, and he is uncomfortable in having to give a late response: "Must I crawl back now" (*WO* 30). As Molino says, "violence has continued in his absence" (67), the wounded the speaker could have possibly saved is dead now on his own doorstep. He feels his late response is useless and his earlier silence "condone[d] the infected sutures and ill-knit bones" (*WO* 30) while a timely response could have healed them.

While this intense sense of guilt and regret for not responding earlier emphasises the exigency of bearing witness, the speaker's earlier silence may be taken as a sign of the difficulty or perhaps impossibility of doing so, at least at the moment of its occurrence. This impossibility of giving an immediate response to the traumatic event has often been considered as a result of the failure in consciously experiencing the trauma at the time of its happening. Trauma theory has dwelled upon the belatedness of trauma since the foundational works of Freud who suggested that trauma is first experienced after a period of "latency", which he also called "incubation period" (*Moses and Monotheism* 84). Due to the event's radical uniqueness and overwhelming immediacy, the victim/witness fails in grasping the experience with the conscious mind, which makes it impossible to bear witness to the event from inside the event. After stating that the majority of actual and potential witnesses failed "to occupy their position as a witness" during the Holocaust, Dori Laub says:

> it was [...] the very circumstance of *being inside the event* that made unthinkable the very notion that a witness could exist, that is, someone who could step outside of the coercively totalitarian and dehumanizing frame of reference through which the event was taking place, and provide an independent frame of reference through which the event could be observed. ("Truth and Testimony" 66 emphasis in the original)

The fact that the speaker in "No Man's Land" was silent when the traumatic scene was taking place may be explained through Laub's suggestion that "*being inside the event*" ("Truth and Testimony" 66, Laub's emphasis) prevents one from bearing witness. The late response of the speaker and his intense guilt for arriving "late to condone infected sutures and ill-knit bones" (*WO* 30) indicate his physical presence and cognitive absence during the traumatic occurrence.

2.1.2. Testimony as the Communication Bridge between the Traumatised and the Non-Traumatised and Its Collapse

To explicate what makes people fail to understand the traumatic event and to react accordingly and immediately, Felman in her "Betrayal of the Witness" refers to a statement by Irving Howe about the Holocaust witnesses, which is also relevant to the discussion of Heaney's speakers who are "cauterized" (*WO* 31). Howe says: "People don't react to great cataclysms with clear thought and eloquent emotions: they blink and stumble [...] To be human means to be unequipped to grapple with the Holocaust" (248). It is perhaps this human unpreparedness for the traumatic violence that fails the speakers in "Roots", "Stump" and "No Man's Land" in their attempt to say something. Trauma theory suggests that while traumatic shock and the event's overwhelming power thus numb the victims and bystanders, the act of bearing witness through testimony/articulation can make people own the experience, "repossess one's life story" (Laub, "Truth and Testimony 70). It can enable them to establish the truth of what happened for the first time. As Felman argues, it is "through the speech process of testimony" that the witnesses not only witness but also "beget the truth" ("Education and Crisis" 24).

For this process of "begetting the truth" through testimony, the witness needs a listener. Besides having evidentiary and therapeutic value, testimony, perhaps first and foremost, is an act of communication where the listener also plays an essential role. Laub argues: "For the testimonial process to take place, there needs to be a bonding, the intimate and total presence of the other—in the position of one who hears. Testimonies are not monologues; they cannot take place in solitude" ("Bearing Witness" 70–71). In *Wintering Out* there are poems which deny the possibility of such a bonding or communication between the traumatised and the non-traumatised. "The Wool Trade" is one such poem where trauma renders language, the means to communicate, dysfunctional. The poem implies that the significations of words - especially those reminiscing the traumatic event- eventually alter for the traumatised while they remain the same for the non-traumatised, which blocks their communication. Unlike "Roots," "Stump" and "No Man's Land" that respond to the immediate traumatic experiences of Northern Ireland's citizens, "The Wool Trade" takes the colonial experiences as traumas to be dealt with. The poem opens with a suggestive epigraph from Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* which sets the theme of rupture in language after trauma. The epigraph is Stephen Dedalus' famous expression about the Dean of Studies, an English Jesuit's use of English

language: *"How different are the words 'home'/ 'Christ', 'ale', 'master', on his/ lips and mine"* (*WO* 27, italics in the original). In the continuation of this utterance, Dedalus expresses his displacement in the English language: "I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language" (Joyce 205). Dedalus' feeling of displacement stems from the fact that he feels the English language does not belong to him but to the English Jesuit first and foremost, while Heaney's speaker feels displaced in the language in which he expresses himself because the traumatic loss of cultural and economic resources in Ireland due to English/British colonialism has fundamentally altered the meanings of words. When someone utters the phrase "wool trade" or related terms like "to shear, to bale and bleach and card", the speaker does not immediately think of the common associations of these words like "warmth" and "fleece" but thinks of the way wool industry was destroyed in the eighteenth-century by Britain.

> 'The wool trade' -the phrase
> Rambled warm as a fleece
>
> Out of his hoard.
> To shear, to bale and bleach and card
>
> Unwound from the spools of his
> Of his vowels
>
> And square-set men in tunics
> Who plied soft names like Bruges
>
> In their talk, merchants
> Back from the Netherlands:
>
> O all the hamlets where
> Hills and flocks and streams conspired
>
> To a language of waterwheels,
> A lost syntax of looms and spindles,
>
> How they hang
> Fading, in the gallery of the tongue! (*WO* 27)

Stan Smith rightly claims that the poem reveals "a whole history of economic transformations, social conflicts they generated, and the process by which language

inscribes the double dispossession Dedalus laments" (62). The historical and traumatic event that the poem evokes is the destruction of the wool industry in Ireland which came as a "stroke" (Cronin 87) with the "Woollen Act" that London parliament passed in 1699 (Hakizimana 7). The export of woollen goods constituted a substantial part of the Irish economy before 1699. However, because Irish wool industry competed with the English industry in the international arena, Westminster made sure that Ireland would not export woollen goods to countries other than England and Wales through the said legislation (Kelly 25). The passing of the legislation caused protests of the Irish producers and to answer their protests, the English parliament supported the establishment of linen industry in Ireland and invited merchants from France to teach the new industry to the Irish (Cronin 86-88). The Woollen Act and the replacement of wool industry with linen industry have had far reaching consequences and caused the strengthening of sectarianism in Ireland. Irish historian Cronin claims that the wool industry had been a "genuinely national business" which had been run by Protestants and Catholics alike, while "the wealth and power that emerged from [linen] industry was concentrated in the hands of the large, non-Catholic population of Ulster" (87). Thus, it seems possible to suggest that the poem hints at the colonial policies of England/Britain as a possible reason for the modern-day sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland.

When the unidentified "he" of the poem utters the words "wool trade" or any related words such as "to shear, to bale and bleach and card" (*WO* 27), the speaker thinks of the "square-set man in tunics" (*WO* 27), merchants from the Netherlands. The reference to Dutch merchants further links the poem with the historical context. Kelly reports that the clothworkers in Cork who used to produce goods for profitable Dutch market directly competed with the clothworkers in Exeter, Colchester and London and it was their section of the industry which caused popular "agitation against competition from Irish woollen industry" in England and hence the passing of the Woollen Act (25). The speaker's association between the words related to the wool industry and peaceful Dutch merchants indicates that he is quite nostalgic about the past, in a way the speaker nostalgically commemorates the peaceful trade relations before the hostile intervention of England. This nostalgia involves a sense of melancholic attachment to and idealisation of pre-trauma conditions. Apart from the lost peaceful trade relations with the Dutch, the disappearance of words such as "spindles" and "looms" from

conversations drives the speaker to nostalgia. In other words, the speaker does not only yearn for his nation's economic prosperity but also for its cultural and linguistic prosperity.

The speaker's nostalgia, his fond remembrance of an ideal past eventually makes it a greater challenge for him to accept the present reality where the woollen industry with all its cultural, linguistic and economic presence has been extinct for a long time. He resents having to talk of the present reality, he says: "And I must talk of tweed, / A stiff cloth with flecks like blood" (*WO* 27). Molino suggests that "the speaker [...] seems to choke when he 'must talk of tweed'" (78). The present reality, where "the British tweed has replaced Irish wool" (Ingelbien 637), and any conversation on the topic of the wool trade can only remind him of the fact that Irish economy and culture were destroyed so that the British tweed could be produced, that is probably why the flecks on tweed remind the speaker of blood. Kali Tal's explanation on how traumatic experiences dislocate the meanings of words can provide an insight into the reason why the speaker of "The Wool Trade" resents having to talk of tweed. Tal says,

> Traumatic experience catalyzes a transformation of meaning in the signs individuals use to represent their experiences. Words such as *blood, terror, agony,* and *madness* gain new meaning, within the context of the trauma, and survivors emerge from the traumatic environment with a new set of definitions. On the surface, language appears unchanged – survivors still use the word *terror*, non-traumatized audiences read and understand the word terror, and the dislocation of meaning is invisible until one pays attention to the cry of survivors, 'What can we do to share our visions? Our words can only evoke the incomprehensible. Hunger, thirst, fear, humiliation, waiting, death; for us these words hold different realities' This is the ultimate tragedy of victims. (16)

For the speaker of "The Wool Trade", the meanings of words are dislocated, the tweed that may naturally come to mind when the subject of conversation is the wool trade becomes an emblem of what happened to the Irish economy and culture for the speaker. Neither the signifier "tweed", nor "the wool trade" have neutral significations for the speaker, the words are immersed with connotations of cultural and economic dispossession, destruction and hostility. A story of Irish victimhood has been thus weaved into these words, that is not necessarily known to people living outside of the Irish cultural trauma that the poem responds to.

Wintering Out does not point to the traumatic events' power to transform the meanings of words as the sole indication of the impossibility of bearing witness to Irish cultural traumas, of communicating the knowledge of what happened. The collection also suggests that the decline of Gaelic language, the medium in which the whole Irish population used to express themselves before colonisation as another barrier to testimony. Especially from the seventeenth century onwards, England/Britain's colonial strategy was to replace the use of the Gaelic language with English initially in institutions such as schools and courts of law and later in civil life. With the passing of the Act to Restrain Foreign Education in 1695, Gaelic was prohibited in education (Crowley 69), and in the eighteenth century, Administration of Justice Act (1737) mandated the English language as the only language in Irish courts (Cahill and Cathlain 119). The use of Gaelic particularly declined in the island when the famines of 1840s hit especially the Gaelic-speaking population (Ó Ceallaigh and Ní Dhonnabháin 181). There are a few poems in *Wintering Out* including "The Backward Look" (*WO* 19-20), "Traditions" (*WO* 21-22), "A New Song" (*WO* 23) that respond to the decline of Gaelic language -and Gaelic literary tradition along with it- during the colonial era. While "Traditions" and "New Song" manage to bear witness to, mourn and accept the fact that the Irish "guttural muse/ was bulled long ago/ by the alliterative tradition" of the Anglo-Saxons (*WO* 21), and that Gaelic is now a "vanished music" (*WO* 23), "The Backward Look" rather than mourning and accepting, resists adapting to the new reality where Gaelic language, which is allegorically represented as a snipe, is "disappearing among/ gleanings and leavings/ in the combs/ of a fieldworker's archive" (*WO* 20). "The Backward Look" recognizes that the void of Gaelic language is unfillable but also that the language is not dead.

> A stagger in air
> as if a language
> failed, a sleight
> of wing.
>
> A snipe's bleat is fleeing
> its nesting ground
> into dialect,
> into variants (*WO* 19)

The choice of "snipe" as a metaphor for the Gaelic language is probably due to the bird's high-level survival skills that it displays in the case of an encounter with hunters. Having a camouflaged appearance and unpredictable flight patterns, the snipe is a

challenging prey for shooters, hence the word "sniper" denoting a skillful shooter is derived from the said bird in English. The poem implies that Gaelic language, like the snipe, is a survivor, it did not die but it fled its "nesting ground" (*WO* 19), its native culture due to the threat of a "sniper" (*WO* 19). However, more than rejoicing at the idea that the language is not dead, the poem focuses on the saddening reality that it has virtually disappeared in Ireland, that it is only spoken among the rural people as its disappearance "in the combs/ of a fieldworker's archive" (*WO* 20) suggests. The poem hints at the idea that the absence of the snipe means that the snipe's bleats and the drumming of its tail-feathers will also vanish:

> It is his tail-feathers
> Drumming elegies
> In the slipstream
>
> Of wild goose
> And yellow bittern (*WO* 19)

These lines are especially significant for the discussion of the way the disappearance of Gaelic language becomes a barrier to bearing witness to past traumas of the Irish, but they are clouded with a covertness characteristic to Heaney's poetry. The lines basically suggest that the sound of the snipe's tail-feathers is an elegy of "wild goose" and "yellow bittern". What the snipe elegizes on the surface appears to be two other bird-species which had fled their nesting ground probably due to the threat of the same sniper. The reference to other bird species, wild goose and yellow bittern, however, have larger connotations in Irish culture, which indicates a deeper meaning. James Murphy says, "the phrase 'the wild geese', has long been so entrenched in the Irish consciousness that it seems to require neither explanation nor quotation marks" (23) though the statement may not hold true for Heaney's international readers. In the "Notes" of Joyce's *Portrait*, Seamus Deane says the wild geese are "the Irish Catholic soldiers who fled to the Continent after the Treaty of Limerick in 1691. There they served in the French, Spanish and Austrian armies" (Joyce 310). The Treaty of Limerick was signed after the Battle of the Boyne, where the Protestant forces of William of Orange had won a decisive victory over the Catholic forces of James II. James Murphy suggests the phrase "wild goose" refers not only to "those who left in the aftermath of Limerick" but also to "Irish people on the continent who engaged in professions other than soldiering" (23). As for the yellow bittern, Parker suggests that it is an allusion to a Gaelic elegy titled "An Bonnán Buí" ("The Yellow Bittern") by

Cathal Buí Mac Giolla Ghunna (c. 1680-1756), which is said to be a "touchstone of the Gaelic tradition" for Heaney ("From Winter Seeds" 138). Thus, the image of the snipe elegizing the wild goose and yellow bittern means that the snipe laments the displacement of the Catholic Irish and of the Irish literary tradition that is disappearing along with the language. The poem suggests that Gaelic is the medium where displacement of the Irish people and Irish cultural life can be worked-through and thus the disappearance of the language seals the end for any work of mourning/bearing witness/ working-through for the Irish. The possibility of bearing witness to the Irish traumas flies away on the bleats and tail-feathers of the snipe, leaving the tale of what happened to the Catholic Irish after the Battle of the Boyne untold. In a way, the poem laments the fact that with the disappearance of Gaelic comes the end of knowing and owning who the Irish are and the traumas that they have lived through.

2.1.3. "The tongue's leashed in the throat": The Failure of Testimony in Working Through Trauma

Another poem in *Wintering Out* that responds to the unfillable void left behind traumatic losses of Irish culture during the colonial era is "Midnight". "Midnight" is also one of the poems which makes the readers doubt the possibility of working-through trauma, at least once and for all, through testimony. Therefore, it offers another instance in Heaney's poetry where testimony as a therapeutic and communicative speech act is problematised. Like most of the speakers in the previously analysed poems, the speaker in "Midnight" confesses his inability to speak. His last lines involve an admission that his "tongue's leashed" in his "throat" (*WO* 35). Despite this admission that comes at the end and prior to this conclusion, the poem actually seems to have given an elegiac account of the cultural and physical destruction in Ireland brought about by the colonial power during and after the Elizabethan conquest of the island. The poem specifically laments the extinction of Irish wolves and the destruction of forests in Ireland, which are usually regarded as emblems of the lost elements of Irish culture and identity by Heaney's critics. Molino, for instance, says the poem "contemplates the country's native spirit and its language" (68), Tobin argues that there is a link between "the extinction of the Irish wolfhound and the near extinction of the Irish language" (71), Andrews says the wolf and its destroyed habitat represent "a native energy that has disappeared from Irish life" (58).

Since the professional wars-
Corpse and carrion
Paling in rain-
The wolf has died out

In Ireland. The packs
Scoured parkland and moor
Till a Quaker buck and his dogs
Killed the last one

In some scraggy waste of Kildare.
The wolfhound was crossed
With inferior strains,
Forests coopered to wine casks. (*WO* 35)

The poem, indeed, seems to be an expression of lamentation that seemingly manages working-through both loss of cultural identity and the physical losses of the Irish wolfhounds and the Irish woodlands, by owning the story of how they came to pass, through testimony. The testimony presented in the poem fulfils all expectations from a testimony: it presents an effort to consciously grasp how the traumatic event of loss took place. The poem dates the traumatic event to a particular time period, it attributes responsibility to those who are responsible, it even hints at the reason why and also the way how it happened. The poem locates the extinction of the wolves after the "professional Irish wars" waged during the reign of Elizabeth I (Hogan 206). The word "carrion", an allusion to Spenser's *A View on the Present State of Ireland,* where Spenser's character, Ireneus describes the way the famished Irish during the Desmond Rebellion (1579-1583) had to feed on carrions, also dates the start of the gradual cultural losses to the Elizabethan era. The speaker attributes the responsibility of the losses to the Protestant planters, who settled in Ireland after the conquest, by suggesting that the last of the wolves was killed by a "Quaker buck", a member of a branch of the Protestant sect[38]. He also suggests the destruction of the wolves' habitat, the forests for England's commercial profit[39] as another reason why the Irish wolfhounds have gone extinct. Through all these informative statements, the speaker in the poem can be argued to weave a story of trauma where native spirit or culture of Ireland was targeted and destroyed by planters.

However, despite giving a seemingly full testimony of the traumatic loss of the wolfhounds/cultural identity, the poem ends abruptly on a bleak note of failure. When the speaker focuses on the present time-frame and recognises the absence of the wolves

in the present time: “Nothing is panting, lolling/ Vapouring”, he says “The tongue’s/ Leashed in my throat” (*WO* 35). The closure that would supposedly come after bearing witness to traumatic loss is frustratingly cut off from the poem. The testimony that is supposed to work-through the traumatic loss contrarily ends in the speaker’s abrupt descent into passivity and silence, which indicates traumatisation rather than working-through or closure. The speaker’s inability to respond to the absence of wolves/Irish cultural identity implies that he has not been able to work through the trauma of loss, that testimony has not worked. The absence embodied by the word “Nothing” has been endowed with active agency by the speaker, the poem suggests that the absence is “panting, lolling/ Vapouring” instead of the wolves. The speaker’s inability to respond to the tangible and also living and breathing absence indicates that trauma of loss continues to haunt the Irish people even centuries after the Elizabethan conquest. The overwhelming force of the traumatic past that disabled the speaker’s power of expression suggests that the testimony that the speaker has given has not enabled him to distinguish the past from the present. However, the ability to realise the distinction is seen as the key to work through trauma by trauma theorists. LaCapra’s definition of “working-through” asserts that the ability to distinguish past from present as an essential requirement, LaCapra says: “Working-through is an articulatory practice: to the extent one works through trauma [...], one is able to distinguish between past and present, and to recall in memory that something happened to one (or one’s people) back then while realizing that one is living here and now with openings to the future” (*Writing History* 21). Although the speaker in “Midnight” is somewhat aware that he is centuries apart from the traumatic events, he and his power of expression are still overwhelmed by the image of the still “panting, lolling and vapouring” legacy of traumatic events. The poem by no means suggests that the speaker is aware that he is “living here and now with openings to the future”. His relatively lengthy testimony about the past and his abrupt silence about the present and future show that the speaker’s consciousness is more invested in re-creating or re-enacting the past rather than working-through it.

As this section of the chapter has demonstrated, poems in *Wintering Out* such as “Roots”, “Stump”, “No Man’s Land”, “Backward Look”, “The Wool Trade” and “Midnight” represent the act of bearing witness to the traumatic experiences of the Irish nation either as a challenge or an impossibility for the speakers. The speakers of

these poems are unable to give the proper verbal response to the traumatic events that they witnessed for a variety of reasons including secondary/vicarious traumatisation, the dislocation of meanings of words after trauma, the speakers' inability to differentiate the past from present and future.

2.2. OSCILLATION BETWEEN TESTIMONY AND SILENCE IN *NORTH* AND *FIELD* WORK

Despite the emphasis on the dubious functionality, or outright impossibility of giving testimony/bearing witness to Irish cultural traumas of the recent and distant past in the poems in *Wintering Out*, the collection as a whole still seems to act as an elegiac testimony where there is an attempt to work through the losses of cultural and economic resources in Ireland due to colonialism. To give a few examples from the collection, "Bog Oak" and "Linen Town", invoke the brutal ways Irish rebellions against colonial exploitation in different centuries were crushed by colonial power; "Servant Boy" recognises the anger pent up in Irish people for being reduced to second class citizens in their own land; "Gifts of Rain" summarizes the traumatic history of colonisation and points to the costs of that history to the Irish nation in metaphors; "Backward Look", "Traditions" and "A New Song" treat the decline of Gaelic language as a traumatogenic event, while "The Last Mummer", "The Wool Trade" and "Midnight" treat the loss of cultural and economic resources in Ireland as traumatic losses. Lastly, "The Tollund Man" evokes the figures of four Catholic brothers, who were tortured to death by Protestant paramilitaries in 1920s in an attempt to work through the historical cases of sectarian violence in Ireland. These poems either treat the present violence as the acting-out or "deja vu" ("This morning" *WO* vi) of the past or more often than that as a legacy of it. There is, thus an attempt in *Wintering Out* to present the particularly painful events in Irish history in a cause and effect relationship with each other, and thus in a comprehensible and coherent frame, so that they could be acknowledged and integrated into the story of the nation's past.

However, comprehensible and coherent representations of trauma are often claimed to run the risk of trivialisation. As Roth argues "a 'successful' representation (a representation that others understand) of trauma will necessarily seem like trivialization, or worse like betrayal" (91). Perhaps more than trivialisation, Heaney's comprehensible representation of the Irish traumatic experiences in *Wintering Out* can

be claimed to simplify them, since his representation narrates the experiences from only one perspective: the perspective of the Nationalist Catholic Irish. Though much later in 1990, Heaney argues that poetry adds "complication where the general desire is for a simplification" ("The Redress of Poetry" 258)[40], *Wintering Out* by constructing, to a large extent, a narrative which emphasises only the victimhood of native and Catholic Irish throughout and in the aftermath of colonial history seems to simplify rather than complicate the experiences. In constructing such a narrative of Irish victimhood, Heaney in *Wintering Out* reiterates only one of the competing grand narratives about Irish history: the nationalist discourse. Like *Wintering Out*, the nationalist narrative "tells a story of the suffering and oppression inflicted on the native, Catholic, Irish people by English (later British) colonialism over 800 years" (Dawson *Making Peace* 33). However, one element that gives the Troubles its traumatic complexity is the co-existence of and the intransigence between the two competing grand narratives about the past in Ireland: the nationalist and loyalist narratives. In contradiction with the nationalist discourse, the loyalist discourse tends to tell a story of "how the legitimate settlement of Ireland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries under the legal auspices of English Crown, was met with hostility and extreme violence from a native Irish population inflamed by their superstitious Roman Catholic creed" (Dawson, *Making Peace* 34). Each of these competing narratives seems to reflect the sectarian communities' tendency to appropriate victim status for themselves and to attribute responsibility of past and present violence to the Other.

Edna Longley places *Wintering Out* within a tradition of Ulster Catholic writing because of the nationalist discourse inherent in the collection and she appropriates Foster's interpretation of John Montague's work *The Rough Field* to give an insight into Heaney's representations of the Irish past in *Wintering Out* ("Poetry and Politics in Northern Ireland" 29). In his reading of *The Rough Field*, Foster says:

> The Ulster Catholic writer has lived so long with the imagery of land decay and land loss that he has become addicted to it. [...] What he wants is not progress, a forward looking reversal of decay through [...] improvement, but rather a return, the recovery of a politico-spiritual impossibility -a mythic landscape of beauty and plenitude that is pre-Partition, pre-Civil War, pre-Famine, pre-Plantation, pre-Tudor. ("The Landscape of Three Irelands" 149-150)

Although there are rare instances in *Wintering Out* where the poet focuses on the possibilities of harmony among the warring sectarian communities as in "The Other Side", "Oracle" and "Cairn Maker" that complicate categorisation of Heaney's *Wintering Out* as a product of what Foster describes as an average Ulster Catholic writer's tendencies, the collection's heavy dependence on the nationalist discourse in bearing witness to the past largely confirms Edna Longley's argument. The nationalist narrative of pre-colonisation bliss and post-colonisation wretchedness observed in *Wintering Out* indicates an inability and perhaps a resistance to mourn and acknowledge traumas of the past as events of the past, and thus also an insistence on preserving their memories alive in the present. Whatever is felt as an absence in Northern Ireland in the present reality -for instance the absence of economic, cultural, linguistic prosperity in poems such as "Backward Look", "Traditions, "New Song", "Wool Trade" and "Midnight" - is explained in *Wintering Out* through a series of historical events such as England's passing of certain legislations that culminated in the losses in question. This representation of history where past events are posited as the reason behind today's desolation runs the risk of turning into a propaganda whereby a return to pre-trauma conditions and perhaps even punishment of those who have played a role in the traumatic losses can be demanded. LaCapra's article "Trauma, Absence, Loss" points at this risk involved in representations conflating absence that is felt in the present time with the event of traumatic loss that happened in the past, he differentiates trauma of loss from trauma of absence. LaCapra suggests that trauma of loss is a historical trauma, in other words, it is an event which can be dated back to a past moment and it can be resolved through memory-work. Unlike trauma of loss, however, trauma of absence is a structural trauma which is "not an event but an anxiety-producing condition of possibility related to the potential for historical traumatization" (725). Trauma of absence cannot be worked-through in the same way as the trauma of loss can, LaCapra suggests that absence can only be worked-through when one learns better to live with it (712). If and when trauma of absence is conflated with or converted into trauma of loss, LaCapra suggests, "fundamentalisms or foundational philosophies" emerge (702) because in perceiving absence as the experience of loss "one assumes that there was (or at least could be) some original unity, wholeness, security, or identity which others have ruined, polluted, or contaminated and thus made 'us' lose. Therefore, to regain it one must somehow get rid of or eliminate those others" (707). The emphasis on the native,

Catholic Irish losses, which took place throughout the colonial history, during the rekindled violent conflict between the Catholics and Protestants of Northern Ireland might also imply a kind of fundamentalism to be at work in *Wintering Out.*

The circulation of such selective narratives of the past where each community emphasises their own trauma or traumatic losses at the hands of their ruthless adversary is claimed by trauma theorists to cause re-traumatization rather than bringing a closure. Instead of providing people with a chance of moving beyond their traumatic past, such narratives are claimed to create an "us" and "them" polarization in society. Vamık D. Volkan, a psychoanalyst who has worked as a member of teams facilitating reconciliation between communities-in-conflict such as Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus, Israeli and Palestinian communities in Gazza, as well as Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland, claims that the circulation or "reactivation" of memories of past traumas where a certain group was victimized by others unites people identifying themselves with the victims against those whom they see as their oppressors (307-308). Volkan suggests that representations of such traumatic events become an important "large-group identity marker" and that they can be used by political entities "to promote new massive societal movements, some of them deadly and malignant" (307). Hutchison and Bleiker's joint work on the subject of reconciliation after trauma confirms Volkan's and also LaCapra's claims. Huthcison and Bleiker's work points out how narratives of trauma which represent the experiences selectively have the power to shape collective identities and cause rifts between groups in violent conflict to deepen, they give the example of the US government's deployment of a rhetoric of evil outsiders "to gain nation-wide support for its wars of response in Afghanistan and Iraq" after the traumatic terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in September 11, 2001 (386). To prove the same point, Jeffrey Alexander says:

> The twentieth century was replete with examples of angry nationalist groups and their intellectual and media representatives, asserting that they were injured or traumatized by agents of some putatively antagonistic ethnic and political group, which must then be battled against in turn. The Serbians inside Serbia, for example, contended that ethnic Albanians in Kosovar did them traumatic injury, thus providing justification for their own "defensive" invasion and ethnic cleansing. The type case of such militarist construction of primordial national trauma was Adolph Hitler's grotesque assertion that the international Jewish conspiracy had been

> responsible for Germany's traumatic loss in World War I. ("Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma" 8-9)

Trauma narratives' capacity to shape collective identities in a separatist way and the plurality of and the intransigence between the grand narratives about the traumatic past in Northern Ireland thus problematise and perhaps invalidate the idea that testimony/articulation would bring closure and that the memory-work involved in bearing witness would work-through traumatic experiences. *Wintering Out* does not address this complication, although it does problematise testimony as a trauma-coping strategy on several levels as has already been argued within this chapter. In this section of the chapter, I argue that *North* which was published in 1975, three years after the publication of *Wintering Out,* to a large extent recognizes the destructive tendencies of selective victimhood narratives and crosses out the possibility of claiming them as testimonial representations. I argue that there are three main ways that *North* problematises testimony and refutes the idea that one can bear witness to a nation's past experiences. First of all, the collection treats the circulation of trauma narratives as a way of strengthening sectarian hatred and thus of further traumatizing the Northern Irish society, -confirming the claims of LaCapra, Volkan, Hutchison and Bleiker, and Alexander-, rather than as a way of working through traumatic past, through poems such as "Antaeus" (*N* 3) and "Hercules and Antaeus" (*N* 46). The replacement of the nationalist narrative with a non-accusatory one which avoids focusing on the colonial era as the source of contemporary violence in poems such as "Belderg" (*N* 4), "Funeral Rites" (*N* 6), "Kinship" (*N* 33), "Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces" (*N* 12) may also be taken as an indication that Heaney in *North* recognizes the partiality of *Wintering Out*'s nationalist representation of cultural traumas of Ireland. Secondly, *North* crosses out the evidentiary quality of testimony -especially of testimony of the distant past- by underlining the fictionality of representations of the past through "Bog Queen" (*N* 25) and "The Digging Skeleton" (*N* 17). Lastly, *North* indicates an impossibility of bearing witness to the Troubles because the truth of the experience is too complicated to be known, because making judgment about the parties involved in traumatic violence is not at all possible, through "Grauballe Man" (*N* 28) and "Punishment" (*N* 30).

It is possible to think that rather than problematizing testimony as a coping strategy, the collection fervently rejects the idea that representations of the past have therapeutic

function and endorse a tactful silence about the past as a coping-strategy. However, *North* also has a few poems where the nationalist narrative is repeated such as "Ocean's Love to Ireland" (*N* 40) "Act of Union" (*N* 43) and other poems where speakers feel imprisoned in silence such as "The Unacknowledged Legislator's Dream" (*N* 51) and "Whatever You Say Say Nothing" (*N* 52-55). The juxtaposition of these poems where nationalist narrative is reiterated and the poems which doubt the therapeutic function of such narratives is interpreted in this study as a contradiction, reflecting and also bearing witness to the traumatic complexity of the Irish experiences before and during the Troubles.

North has been attracting a great deal of critical attention ever since it was published. The critical responses to *North* have mostly focused on the question of whether Heaney is partial in his representation of the Troubles, since Connor Cruise O'Brien's review which was published soon after the publication of *North*. In that early review, Cruise O'Brien had criticised Heaney for his one-sided representation, he said: "I had the uncanny feeling, reading these poems, of listening to the thing itself, the actual substance of historical agony and dissolution, the tragedy of a people in a place: the Catholics of Northern Ireland. Yes, the Catholics, there is no equivalent Protestant voice. Poetry is as unfair as history, though in a different way" (25). However, Heaney's own view about his stance in *North* does not agree with O'Brien's statement. Heaney states that the poems in *North* came as a response to the Provisional IRA's increasing involvement in violence, which changed the Catholic Irish minority's position in Northern Ireland from being an oppressed group of people to being oppressors. In an interview where he is asked about his stance in *North*, Heaney explains with reference to the book's historical milieu:

> It was a time when victim status had become complicated. The Northern minority for about a year and a half, I suppose two years, had enjoyed a certain heady victim status. And there was a moral high ground in having been fifty years at the mercy of a gerrymandered system and so on, and all this was coming to the fore and being noticed by the liberal press in Britain; so, this was all hunkydory. Well then of course, once the killing starts and once the Provisional IRA starts to establish their rights by arms, as it were, the moral high ground was taken away from the nationalist community. And instead of protesting their victim status, they also had to endure and internalize and take on their oppressor status or their violence-dealing status. So of course, the poems are complicated by that. (qtd. in Russell, *Poetry and Peace* 214)

This statement indicates a deliberate deviation in *North* from nationalist trauma narratives of *Wintering Out* where victimhood of native Catholic Irish are concentrated upon while the role they played in the internecine violence is not mentioned. Reminiscing the colonial victimhood of native Catholic Irish, during the early years of the Troubles, when Catholic community was looking for ways to protest the oppressive Unionist government in civil rights marches might be interpreted as Heaney's support of the cause of the contemporary Catholic Irish. Edna Longley did interpret Heaney's representations of colonial history in the early collections as protest; she described Heaney's poetry "up to and including *Wintering Out"* as "poetry-as-protest or protest-as-poetry" and not as a nationalist propaganda ("'Inner Emigre'" 37). The fact that Heaney stopped reading in public a particular poem "Requiem for the Croppies" –a poem with a nationalist discourse[41]– after Provisional IRA started carrying out acts of violence with full force in the early 1970s and also that Heaney refused publishing several of his poems with nationalist themes in his collections[42] also indicate an awareness on the poet's part about the destructive effect of narratives of victimhood.

This awareness dominates especially the first part of *North*[43] which opens with "Antaeus" and ends with "Hercules and Antaeus", two poems that focus on different stages of the story of Antaeus, the giant son of Gaia, the goddess of earth, from Greek mythology. Mary Brown rightly claims that these poems are "placed strategically" in the collection (295), since they give a unifying frame to the poems in Part I. This part consists of poems that reflect a deviation from the nationalist narratives of *Wintering Out* and a turn to an earlier history and myths in their attempt to find "images and symbols adequate to [Northern Ireland's] predicament" (Heaney, "Feeling into Words" 56) and the two poems involving the mythical character of Antaeus render the concerns of other poems in Part I more easily detectable.

"Antaeus" which was written in 1966 but published in *North* introduces the mythical and titular character, who spells out his secret in maintaining his physical strength in wrestling matches. Being the son of the goddess of earth, Antaeus renews his strength each time he touches the ground:

> In fights I arrange a fall on the ring
> To rub myself with sand
>
> That is operative

As an elixir. I cannot be weaned
Off the earth's long contour, her river-veins. (*N* 3)

Relying on his renewable strength, he challenges any fame-aspiring hero to wrestle with him, he knows that the only way anyone can defeat him is through a cut to his connection with earth:

Let each new hero come
Seeking the golden apples and Atlas.
He must wrestle with me before he pass
Into the realm of fame

Among sky-born and royal:
He may well throw me and renew my birth
But let him not plan, lifting me off the earth,
My elevation, my fall. (*N* 3)

The closing poem of Part I, "Hercules and Antaeus" describes the way Hercules taking takes the challenge and defeats Antaeus by lifting him up:

Antaeus, the mould-hugger,

is weaned at last:
a fall was a renewal
but now he is raised up-
the challenger's intelligence

is a spur of light
a blue prong graiping him
out of his element
into a dream of loss

and origins – the cradling dark,
the river-veins, the secret gullies
of his strength,
the hatching grounds

of cave and souterrain,
he has bequeathed it all
to elegists. (*N* 46)

Critics have often interpreted these poems to be about colonial history[44], seeing the myth of Antaeus and Hercules as an "allegory of colonization" (Corcoran, *Seamus Heaney* 100). In such a reading, Ireland is argued to be represented by Antaeus, who has proved himself to be an invincibly powerful hero until Hercules - representing Britain- defeats him by disconnecting him from the sources of his power. The cultural,

economic, linguistic prosperity, whose loss has been brought into agenda in *Wintering Out,* can very well be interpreted as the sources of power from which Ireland is argued to be disconnected in this poem. However, the sympathy for the character of Hercules, who is quite openly admired for his "spur-of-light"-like intelligence (*N* 46) in "Hercules and Antaeus" and the treatment of Antaeus' defeat as a long-awaited and anticipated event that happened "at last" (*N* 46) confound the reader who takes the poem as an allegory of colonisation. The poem praises Hercules with a quick summary of the heroic deeds he has achieved and the ones he will achieve, he is described as "Sky-born and royal,/ snake-choker, dung-heaver,/ his mind big with golden apples,/ his future hung with trophies" (*N* 46), while Antaeus is given a single and not a very elevating epithet "the mould-hugger" (*N* 46). Taking the poem to be an allegory of colonisation would imply that it is celebrating the defeat of the native culture by the higher intelligence of the colonial power, which manages to decipher the secret of its power and heroically defeats it. Such a celebration in Heaney's poetry would be especially confounding and perhaps also quite unlikely when one thinks of *Wintering Out*'s elegiac treatment of the cultural, linguistic and economic losses in Ireland after the Elizabethan conquest.

Antaeus, in the original sources, is described as the tyrannical ruler of the "dark abode" of Libya (Pindar IV, 90). He kills strangers by forcing them into a wrestling match (Apollodorus 217) and collects his victims' skulls as "trophies of athletic toils" (Pindar IV, 95). Considering such negative attributes, one can suggest that Antaeus, rather than representing Ireland, is more likely to represent a tyrannical power whose defeat is a cause for celebration. Heaney's statement about the poem's allusion to this particular mythical figure in an interview explains what Antaeus stands for, Heaney says that the poem "began […] as a little fable for two kinds of poetry, or for two kinds of poetic intelligence. […] I thought of Hercules being the intellect and the clarity of light and the wilful intelligence, and Antaeus being the remembering, backward looking, mother connected, Freud would say 'regressive' part of the self" (Baker 462). In this perspective, "Hercules and Antaeus" is a poem which expresses a wish to swerve from a poetic intelligence, which is melancholically attached to the past, as Vendler also argues: "To adopt the defeated Antaeus as an alter ego -as Heaney had done in 1966- is to condemn oneself to a lifetime of nostalgia for a vanished heroic past, living in 'a dream of loss and origins.' In 1975, conceding the victory to Hercules, Heaney

resolutely says goodbye to Antaeus" (89-90). Saying goodbye to Antaeus is a gesture to abandon nostalgic/melancholic narratives about the pre-trauma/pre-colonisation past. In other words, the poem suggests disconnection from the stories of "loss and origins" (*N* 46) as a step to break the cycle of violence, because such stories give the modern-day fight between the sectarian paramilitaries a certain vitality each time they are articulated just as earth gives strength to Antaeus each time he touches the ground[45].

2.2.1. Eradication of the Radical Uniqueness of the Cultural Traumas of the Past in *North*

The engagement with the Troubles in *North* still involves representations of past experiences but this time the poems- with the exception of "Ocean's Love to Ireland" and "Act of Union"- are devoid of melancholic attachment to the vanished Irish cultural elements. Unlike *Wintering Out, North* does not nostalgically yearn for a fetishized/ idealised Irish past which was destroyed by colonial power. *North* mostly bypasses colonial history; it forsakes the search for the seeds of the contemporary trauma there. Instead the collection focuses on an earlier time period, when violence was the sustaining power in the Northern cultures. Many of the poems in Part I imply an association, and at times, an unbroken continuation between the violence of ancient and early medieval Northern European cultures and the modern violence in Northern Ireland. While "Belderg", "Funeral Rites", "Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces", "North" link the violence of the Vikings with the violence of the Troubles due to their cyclical nature, the famous bog poems of the collection "Bog Queen", "The Grauballe Man", "Punishment", "Strange Fruit", "Kinship" see a resemblance between the ancient Germanic people's violent human sacrifices for the fertility goddess, Nerthus, and the acts of violence of Northern Ireland's paramilitaries committed in the name of Mother Ireland. Establishing these links, Heaney seems to be prioritising peacebuilding in the present rather than working through the past traumas for the purposes of the present. By hinting at the idea that violence is not the legacy of colonisation but that it is a very deep-rooted cultural phenomenon in Ireland, the poems in *North* seem to tone down the accusatory voice of *Wintering Out* and still present an attempt to comprehend the contemporary traumatic violence through the perspective of a larger history.

"Belderg" is one of the poems with a non-accusatory but still an inquiring approach towards the trauma of the Troubles. It presents another instance in Heaney's poetry where the past is again dug up from beneath the ground so that the exhumed materials, the actual witnesses of history, can speak about the components of Irish identity. When the poems in *Wintering Out* looked into the past, they focused on colonial history and saw a wounded and conquered nation and defined Irishness as such. "Belderg" in *North* also looks into the past, but it reveals a world that was devoid of any pre-trauma glory or prosperity, a world where violence had a constant and significant presence even before the colonial period. Heaney in an interview revealed that the poem is about his visit to the archaeological site in Belderg, County Mayo in the Republic of Ireland in 1972 (O'Driscoll 163). In that visit, the poet had received guidance from the archaeologist, Seamus Caulfield who lived in Belderg (O'Driscoll 163) and the poem is basically construed on the conversation between the archaeologist and the poet upon the materials that the Irish boglands yielded from the island's history. The archaeologist sees "A congruence of lives" when he looks around his home and sees "growth rings/of iron, flint and bronze" (*N* 4). The remains of iron, stone and bronze ages appearing on different layers of the land around the archaeologist's home suggest a development through history, a growth similar to that of a tree.

The poet's persona sustains this metaphor of homeland as a tree but, being a poet, he sees a "forked root" rather than "growth rings" when he thinks about the etymology of the name of his own homeland, Mossbawn. Mossbawn is a compound word, "moss" means bog while bawn has different meanings in English, Scottish dialect of English[46] and Irish:

> […] I could derive
> A forked root from that ground,
> Make bawn an English fort
> A planter's walled-in mound
>
> Or else find sanctuary
> And think of it as Irish,
> Persistent if outworn. (*N* 5)

In an article he had written in 1972, Heaney had explained the poem's image of the "forked root" with reference to the denotations of the words "moss" and "bawn" in the languages and cultures in question:

> *Moss*, a Scots word probably carried to Ulster by the Planters, and *bawn,* the name the English colonists gave to their fortified farmhouses. Mossbawn, the planter's house on the bog. Yet in spite of this Ordnance Survey spelling, we pronounced it Moss bann, and *ban* is the Gaelic word for white. So might not the thing mean the white moss, the moss of bog-cotton? In the syllables of my home, I see a metaphor of the split culture of Ulster ("1972" 35, emphasis in the original).

Likewise, the poet's persona in the poem also focuses on the split roots of his homeland. The distinct meanings of the word "bawn" in the native and planter cultures and languages do not give the speaker a sense of "congruence" -as the remains of prehistoric ages do to the archaeologist- but rather a sense of intransigence, a broken unity, a ramification. The speaker's dismay is heightened when his companion reminds him of another ramification in the root of his homeland: the Norse roots of Mossbawn. The archaeologist asks the speaker about the Viking connection of Ireland twice in the poem: "So I talked of Mossbawn/ A bogland name. '*But moss?'/* He crossed my old home's music/with older strains of Norse" [47] (*N* 5, emphasis in the original), and later when the speaker recognises only the Irish, English and Scottish roots of Mossbawn's identity, the archaeologist asks again: "'But the Norse ring on your tree?'"(*N* 5). The Vikings had first systematically raided and then settled down in Ireland in the late eighth and early ninth centuries and became completely integrated in Irish society by the Anglo-Norman invasion of 1169 (Larsen 129-131) and the archaeologist is insistently trying to create an awareness in the speaker that long before the colonial history from which the speaker assumes all the ramifications have burgeoned, there were the Vikings, whose culture is associated with violence and destruction perhaps more than anything else. Until the second time the archaeologist gently reminds the speaker of the Viking ancestors of the Irish, the speaker has been preoccupied with/haunted by the intersection of history where Ireland and the English and Scottish colonisers clashed. The speaker's preoccupation with the colonial history and the resulting ramified cultural life in Ireland can be regarded as a symptom of cultural trauma since this preoccupation or obsession suggests that the nation's experience of colonisation has left "indelible marks on [their] identity" as cultural traumas do according to J. Alexander (1). The speaker makes it clear that he attributes a unique identity-shaping (or identity-splitting) power to the English/British colonisation in Ireland and is unable to see what other destructive -and at the same time constructive- experiences came before that point in history. However, the archaeologist provides

him with a longer timeline of Irish history that includes the Viking invasion of Ireland and this inclusion, in a way, eradicates the radical uniqueness of the trauma of English/British colonisation in Ireland.

Looking past the English conquest of Ireland to define Irishness had been a principal strategy of the writers of Irish Literary Revival, the most notable of whom are the Anglo-Irish writers, William Butler Yeats, Lady Augusta Gregory, John Millington Synge. As Schirmer suggests, works of the revivalists involved a "reconstruction of Ireland's cultural past and an attempt to establish a cultural identity around that reconstruction" (163). The cultural past that they reconstrued was that of the Celtic Ireland, the revivalists bypassed the history of colonisation and sectarian conflicts on the island in their works and unlocked the history of Celtic Ireland. They revived the Celtic legends and myths in an "attempt to right the historical balance" (Foster, *Fictions of the Irish Revival* 10). Kearney argues that the invocation to the Celtic myths and legends and to the ancient figures of Celtic mythology such as Fionn, Cuchulain and Cathleen Ni Houlihan in revivalists' works is an indication of their attempt to "resolve the endless quarrels between coloniser and colonised, Planter and Gael, Protestant and Catholic" ("Myth and Modernity" 41). Kearney adds that these figures of Celtic mythology were thought to be able to help resolving the endless conflicts because they are "timeless creatures from an antique world, sacred memories older than the scars of conflict, a common heritage for all the tribes of Erin" ("Myth and Modernity" 41). Therefore, it is possible to argue that revivalists aimed at re-activating/ remembering the pre-trauma past as a trauma-coping strategy and the myths they invoked emphasise the heroism, glory and greatness of the Celtic -and thus Irish- culture before colonisation. Although the main aim was to create a "cultural unity and identity" (Schirmer 165) in a severely divided Ireland through invoking Celtic myths and legends, the attempts to revive a pristine Ireland and Irishness led the way to the rise of Irish nationalism and thus nationalist narratives of the traumatic past. Schirmer claims that "the revival planted the seeds of its own destruction by pointing the way to a rise in Gaelic consciousness that would inevitably, despite all the movement's doctrines of aesthetic purity, be wedded to various forces working at the time for a political independence guaranteed to disempower the Anglo-Irish" (165). Gaelic awakening in the nineteenth century following the flourishing of Irish Literary Revival, a movement originally Anglo-Irish in its ideological outlook, reversed the

Anglo-Irish writers' attempts to maintain the "gap between 'Catholic' and 'national' feeling" (Kiberd 23) and brought a focus on the image of the Irish as a conquered nation[48]. Thus, it is possible to argue that although the movement aimed at overcoming the aggressive identity conflicts through unifying myths and deliberately overlooked the sources of these conflicts, it seems to have eventually added vigour to the nationalist narrative of traumatic loss by magnifying the greatness of pre-colonisation/ pre-trauma Ireland.

In poems that establish the Vikings as one of the ancestors/ precursors of the Irish such as "Belderg", "North", "Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces", Heaney uses the revivalists' trauma-coping strategy of looking past the colonial period in Ireland, however, the past that he exhumes from beneath the bogs in *North* does not give sufficient grounds to idealise pre-colonisation Irish culture, therefore, the poems do not accuse Planters for a lost paradise. This non-accusatory stance indicates a deviation from the purpose of working through the past through testimony to the purpose of establishing reconciliation between Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland through a more objective look at history. In "Belderg" for instance, the poet's persona finally recognises that the violent culture of Vikings is as much a part of Ireland's history, and hence identity, as the colonial period, and as H. O'Donoghue also suggests, this recognition "causes a vertiginous, shocked shift in perspective" (193). At the end of the poem, the speaker sees a vision which shows that violence is and has always been the way of the world: "[…] in my mind's eye saw/ A world-tree of balanced stones,/ Querns piled like vertebrae,/ the marrow crushed to grounds" (*N* 5). Many critics[49] share the view that the "world-tree" that the speaker sees is Yggdrasil, the ash tree that was believed to have "sustained the Viking world in being" (Corcoran, *Seamus Heaney* 108). The element that enables Yggdrasil to stand is pure violence: its "vertebrae" is made up of "quernstones" -the domestic tool to grind wheat. The poem had already introduced the image of the quern stone, a material that the excavations repeatedly recovered from the bog. In the first quintet of the poem, the archaeologist informed the speaker that it is one of the materials that "just kept turning up/ and were thought of as foreign" in Ireland (*N* 4). The last stanza, however, reveals that quern stones –a metaphor for violence due to the tool's literal function of grinding whatever is put into its eye– are at home in Ireland as they are anywhere else around the world. The enigmatic image of the quern stones as the vertebrae of the world-tree seems to

embody a squeezed version of world history, where the grist – "the marrow" of the tree– has always been the people and their collective and individual identities. The poem implies that the marrow, the life force within the world-tree has been repeatedly and violently crushed and grinded into mixable particles, so that the tree could keep standing.

Thus, the poem does not deny the destructive effect of the grinding process / violence involved in any invasion –be it the invasion of Ireland by the English/British or by the Vikings or the invasion of any other place on earth– but it also seems to suggest and accept that it is how the world has always worked, that the sustaining power of the "world-tree" has always been violence. This idea that many poems in *North* including "Belderg" dwell upon caused certain critics to assess *North* as a collection that posits violence as inevitable. For instance, Ciaran Carson in his early review of *North* says: "It is as if [Heaney] is saying that suffering like this is natural; these things have always happened; they happened then, they happen now, and that is sufficient ground for understanding and absolution. It is as if there never were and never will be any political consequences of such acts (184-85). In agreement with Carson, Blake Morrison also asserts that "[Heaney's] allusions to former cultures amount to a sort of historical determinism" ("Speech and Reticence" 29). However, "Belderg" along with other poems alluding to Vikings and Iron Age people can also be argued to attempt at lessening the traumatic quality of colonisation and of the sectarian violence by erasing their radical uniqueness so that they would not be narrativized in a way to motivate feelings of revenge that would create an endless cycle of violence.

Shoshana Felman argues that traumatic events such as the Holocaust "cannot be assimilated or integrated into any existing cultural frame of reference" due to the lack of such a frame that can accommodate the magnitude and uniqueness of the event ("*Camus' The Plague*" 104). In other words, according to Felman, there is not an existing frame of reference by which the experience of the Holocaust can be compared and understood. Felman says: "we can literally witness only that which is within reach of the conceptual frame of reference we inhabit" ("Camus' *The Plague*"104). In line with Felman's argument, Heaney in "Belderg", by presenting Viking invasion as a frame of reference for the English conquest of Ireland, and Viking violence as a frame of reference for the violence of the Troubles, renders the traumatic experiences of

colonisation and sectarian violence during the Troubles as comprehensible, thus also assimilable and integrable.

Heaney employs the same strategy in other poems evoking the violence of earlier cultures such as “North”, “Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces” and “Kinship”. In the titular poem “North” for instance, the separateness of the violence of the Troubles in Irish psyche is attempted to be levelled through an allusion to Viking culture. Observing the remains of Vikings that are excavated in Orkney and Dublin, the speaker infers that Vikings were living in a cycle of violence, that they had a culture, very much similar to that of Northern Ireland during the Troubles, where “exhaustions nominated peace, /memory incubating violence” (*N* 10-11). As for “Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces”, the poem describes the Vikings as “neighbourly, scoretaking/ killers, haggers/ and hagglers, gombeen-men/ hoarders of grudges and gain” (*N* 15). That all these epithets can be used to refer also to the modern Northern Irish paramilitaries creates an immediate and certain affinity between the medieval and modern cultures in question. In “Kinship”, the speaker addresses Tacitus, the Roman historian, and invites him to come back and report

> how we slaughter
> for the common good
>
> and shave the heads
> of the notorious,
> how the goddess swallows
> our love and terror (*N* 38-39).

Drawing an uncanny parallel between the ancient Germanic tribes’ code of conduct and that of the contemporary Northern Irish, this poem, like others, uses the earlier cultures as frames of reference for the current traumatic experience and thereby erases their perceived uniqueness. In doing so, the poems tacitly remind the readers of the atavistic nature of the modern violence. They avoid finger-pointing to a particular time-frame or historical event as the source of traumatic violence. They do not attribute responsibility to and appropriate victimhood for any one particular community in Northern Ireland conflict. They simply suggest and attract attention to the idea that society’s approval of violence as a means to bring justice or “common-good” (*N* 38) is a primitive cultural phenomenon.

Observing the absence of narratives that point fingers at those responsible for the present trauma and the endeavour to treat sectarian violence not as a result of unprocessed past traumas but as a cultural phenomenon, one can argue that these poems attempt at letting go of memories of distant and recent past through silence/reticence. Unlike *Field Work*, where elegies such as "Strand at Lough Beg", "A Postcard from North Antrim" and "Casualty" honour and mourn the victims of Troubles and unlike *Wintering Out,* where collective memories of the colonial past are brought back into agenda for working-through, the poems alluding to earlier cultures in *North* are not engaged in memory-work for any particular traumatic events[50].

Silence about the past traumas is not only exercised but also tacitly promoted as a trauma-coping strategy in *North.* One way Heaney promotes silence about the past is through indicating that telling narratives of past traumas or giving testimonies to traumatic events of the past renews the old wounds and makes it possible for those narratives to haunt the present. "Bog Queen" is one of the poems where bringing the past into daylight awakens and empowers traumatic events' power and control over the present. The speaker of the poem, a dead Viking woman whose body has been dug up from the bogs in Ireland, is often seen as a metaphor for Ireland and the poem is regarded as an aisling by critics. Stallworthy, for instance, claims that the bog queen is "the Mother Goddess, [Heaney's] version of Kathleen Ni Houlihan" (168). Likewise, Parker also argues that the bog queen represents "the dispossessed people" of Ireland, like them, "she survived centuries of 'waiting' by becoming at one with the land and its sufferings" (*Seamus Heaney* 135). However, reading "Bog Queen" as an aisling disregards the poem's network with Heaney's earlier poems. As Molino suggests, "One has to read Heaney's poems, not in isolation, but as a series of dialogues on related subjects" (93). "Bog Queen" seems to be in dialogue with three other poems that have been analysed in the first chapter of this thesis: "Digging" (*DN* 1-2), "Bogland" (*DD* 43-44) and "The Tollund Man" (*WO* 36-37). Analysing these poems, the first chapter established the idea that bogs represent Irish national consciousness in Heaney's poetry and that like a turf-cutter, the poet is supposed to dig the bogs to bring about something as useful for the people as turf, a narrative out of the national consciousness that would heal the society torn and traumatised by centuries-long sectarian hatred. The previous chapter's analysis of "The Tollund Man" has also shown that uncovering the undigested bodies from the depths of the bog -in

other words uncovering the unprocessed traumatic memories from the depths of national consciousness- is necessary to gain control over the traumatic memories. The Tollund Man, himself a bog body, rests in peace in a museum in Aarhus, only after being uncovered, for instance. Heaney expresses a need to uncover the memories of traumatising events such as the four Catholic brothers' violent murder in 1920s in order to lay their memories to rest as peacefully as the Tollund Man.

"Bog Queen" like "The Tollund Man" on the surface tells a story of an age-old body's coming out to daylight, and on a deeper level, it gives us a story of remembering/reconstructing the buried traumatic past. The poem, like the other bog poems, is inspired by P.V. Glob's book, *The Bog People* which shares the results and interpretations of archaeological research on the bodies retrieved from the bogs of Northern Europe. In the book, Glob tells that in 1781, a turf-cutter had discovered a body of a Viking woman, seemingly "a lady of high rank" (104) in "a small peat bog on Drumkeragh Mountain" in Moira estate in County Down in Ireland (104). Glob also mentions that the turf-cutter had cut the hair of the bog woman and given the lock to the lady of Moira Estate. This detail about the body finds its way into the poem as the bog queen, the speaker of the poem, says: "I was barbered and stripped, / by a turfcutter's spade" (*N* 26). Although this is how the body was actually found and treated in 1781 by the turf-cutter, the image of the turf-cutter digging the bogs also reminds us of the analogy between the turf-cutter "going down and down/ for the good turf" (*DN* 2) and the poet digging with his pen in "Digging", the opening poem of Heaney's first collection, "Death of a Naturalist". The turf-cutter's spade -the poet's pen- cuts the "plait of [the bog queen's] hair,/ a slimy birth-cord/ of bog" (*N* 27) and thus, brings about the birth of a centuries old body into the present reality. As a bog body buried down but still alive with the agency to speak, the bog queen seems to be a metaphor for the buried memories of past traumas, which are ironically still active to shape the present. Although the poem establishes the idea that it is the turf-cutter -the poet- who brings her into the present, it also makes it clear that the bog queen is, by no means, under the control of the poet after her re-birth. Once the body/ the past is brought into light, the body/the past has their own agency as bog queen's announcement of her rebirth as a rising of her own doing might suggest. The bog queen rises from the bog in a zombie-like form and declares: "I rose from the dark/ hacked bone, skull-ware, / frayed stitches" (*N* 27). It is as if the bog queen/the traumatic past

had used the turf-cutter/ the poet for her own goal of coming back to haunt the present. Thus, the poem's implication is that a poetic work that attempts at bearing witness to the past, as Heaney's *Wintering Out* does might re-awaken the haunting power of traumatic experiences rather than bringing a closure.

The poem's implication that bearing testimony to trauma is itself traumatising actually reflects one of the common views about the truth-recovery processes after traumatic experiences. Hamber, a historian of the sectarian conflict of Northern Ireland, expresses this view, suggesting that "breaking the silence of the past […] is a dangerous, difficult and often fraught task" (2). McEvoy and Hamber in their short article "outlining options for truth recovery" in Northern Ireland also suggest that "truth-recovery would open old wounds for victims and others" (9). They argue that bearing witness to the past might obstruct or "destabilise" the peace-process that traumatised societies need to go through (9). Heaney's tacit promotion of silence on the grounds that remembering can open old wounds might similarly indicate his prioritising peacebuilding in the present rather than working-through the past.

"Bog Queen" does not promote silence solely on the grounds of a concern about the risk of re-traumatising the society through re-awakening the past traumas. The poem also implies that bearing witness to the past events and experiences as they were in actuality is not possible and any attempt at uncovering the buried memories is definitely going to be fictional and the resulting narratives cannot have testimonial claims. Unlike the other bog poems where descriptions emphasise how well-preserved the bodies or materials buried in the bog are, "Bog Queen" dwells on how the passing of time and the turf-cutter's spade transformed and disfigured the regally accessorised body of the Viking woman to become a hideous and fragmented skeleton. The bog queen says that her "body was braille/for the creeping influences" (*N* 25) and also "the seeps of winter/ digested her" (*N* 25), her "diadem grew carious/gemstones dropped in the peat floe" (*N* 26) and at the end of the poem, she describes herself as "hacked-bone" and "skull-ware" (*N* 27). By the time she rises from the dark with the help of the poet's pen, the bog queen/the past is totally transformed, the memory of how the events of the past came to pass is totally distorted.

Due to its emphasis on how the passing of time and a poet's intervention can transform a memory, "Bog Queen" seems to be an allegory of "trauma process" that Jeffrey

Alexander introduced to trauma theory. Alexander argues that "events do not, in and of themselves, create collective trauma" (8) but rather they are constructed as such after a process where individuals with particular "discursive talents" for "meaning-making" in society (11) represent those events as traumatic. Neal also argues that events have to be interpreted by people to have a meaning and a significant place in the collective memory, he defines collective memory as a "a storehouse of knowledge" that holds a vast inventory of past experiences (198). However, events in that inventory are not inherently meaningful, they can only be so after being "interpreted, given credibility and constructed along lines that give [them] applicability to present concerns" (Neal 198) by the members of the collectivity in question. According to Neal, people "take an active part in determining what their collective memories will be. Events are fashioned through a filtering of experiences. Some experiences are dismissed while others are elaborated and given high level of significance" (197). Neal also attracts attention to how the passing of time weakens events' relation to truth, as he says: "In the telling and retelling of the stories of our past, the events in question become stereotyped and selectively distorted as they become embedded in collective memories" (197). A collective memory of trauma, like any other collective memory thus gains its essence through distortion due to the passing of time and the people's active involvement in constructing meaning out of past events. According to Neal, meaning-making processes are motivated by our individual and collective need to repeat the experiences that were once rewarding for us and to avoid what was painful, that is why memories of how a traumatic event shook the foundations of a social system are constructed, they serve as a "reminder of what to avoid in the future" (198-199). Thus, collective memories of the past are essentially fictions with some ties to truth, like the bog queen who is essentially the same Viking woman buried centuries ago, but also uncannily not quite similar to who she was. The poem suggests that the passing of time and the poet's pen turned her into a dark, nightmarish version of herself, who seems ready to haunt the present. This poem thus seems to enter into a discussion with the poetic voice of *Wintering Out* and of Heaney's earlier works, refuting the idea that digging and uncovering the past is an exigency to break the traumatic memories' control over the present. "Bog Queen" thus marks a shift in the perception of the role of poetic articulation in coming to terms with trauma. The poem also doubts whether one can really discover the past no matter how much he digs the national consciousness, implying that perhaps the poet's pen can only alter the truth of

the experiences of the past and make the traumatic situation even more unresolvable and haunting.

"The Digging Skeleton" in *North* also tacitly promotes silence about the past at least in poetry by treating the reconstruction of memories of the past in poetry as an act preventing the dead/the past from resting in peace. Silence is promoted in the poem for two reasons: firstly, the reconstruction of the past in poetry is bound to be fictional and thus unreliable and secondly, once the past is reconstructed in a form of art, the story of the past repeats itself ad infinitum as art makes the story permanent, never letting it slip into oblivion. Donnelly informs us that the poem is "a version of [Baudlaire's] "Le Squelette Laboureur" from *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857)" (246). Although Heaney's version closely imitates Baudelaire's poem, there is a significant difference in meaning at the end of the poem. While Baudelaire's text is basically preoccupied with mocking and denying the religious consolation that death is a resting place, Heaney's version emphasises how reconstructing the images of the dead in poetry puts an end to their afterlife rest. The speaker examining forgotten "anatomical plates" (*N* 17) of old times addresses the figures of "flayed men and skeletons" (*N* 17) which seemed to be "digging the earth like navvies" (*N* 17). Very much like Keats' speaker in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (Keats 134), the speaker in "The Digging Skeleton" is engaged in constructing a story out of the silent figures that he is examining:

> Sad gang of apparitions,
> Your skinned muscles like plaited sedge
> And your spines hooped towards the sunk edge
> Of the spade, my patient ones,
>
> Tell me, as you labour hard
> To break this unrelenting soil,
> What barns are there for you to fill?
> What farmer dragged you from the boneyard?
>
> Or are you emblems of the truth […] (*N* 17-18)

The speaker expects the skeletal figures to have a story and he asks questions to the "sad gang of apparitions" perhaps to be able to tell their story in poetry. The answerless questions he asks to the dead figures inevitably give the idea that any story that the poet can tell about them/about the past would be just a subjective construction perhaps too far away from the truth.

Receiving no answer, the speaker imagines the dead figures say:

> ‘This is the reward of faith
>
> In rest eternal. Even death
> Lies. The void deceives.
> We do not fall like autumn leaves
> To sleep in peace. Some traitor breath
>
> Revives our clay, sends us abroad
> And by the sweat of our stripped brows
> We earn our deaths; our one repose
> When the bleeding instep finds its spade’. (*N* 18)

Caldwell claims that the “traitor breath” is a metonymy for the poet writing about the dead, that the poem gives a “nightmare vision in which the dead witness the poet’s treason in bringing about their resurrection” (28-29). The poem is, indeed, about the life-giving power of poetry, which is usually treated as a cause for celebration in other poets’ works as in Shakespeare’s famous “Sonnet 118” (1350). Like Athena’s breath which gives life to Prometheus’ humans of clay in Greek mythology, the poet’s breath is implied to give life to the inanimate skeletons. However, the traditional cause for celebration is inverted in “The Digging Skeleton” since for the skeletal figures that the speaker examines, life meant suffering and struggle and death a destination where they would have eternal rest. Thus, when they are brought back into life in poetry, they are retrieved into and imprisoned in the same miserable life where they work to earn their death. This reply is of course again constructed by the speaker, “he ventriloquizes for them” as Hart puts it (86); thus, it is possible to argue that the poet is committing a treason both against the truth of the experience of the dead and against their right to rest in peace. Interpreted within the context of the Troubles and trauma, the poem can be argued to express a certain doubt about the therapeutic functionality of remembering and telling the traumatic events of the past. The poem, in a way seems to be saying that rather than letting go of the dead/traumatic past, revival of the past in poetry keeps it alive and causes the pain of the experience to remain fresh forever.

2.2.2. “Can the poet run with the hare […] and hunt with the hounds?”[51]: The Dissolution of Victim-Perpetrator Dichotomy in Reciprocal Violence

So far, this chapter has established that some of the poems in *North* exercise and tacitly promote silence as a trauma-coping strategy. In those poems, speaking out about or remembering a troubled event -be it in the recent or distant past- in poetry is regarded as a way of opening the old wounds and of keeping the affect of traumatic event fresh. The idea that poetry can only present a distorted version of the past events also strengthens the reason why silence might be a better idea than articulation for peacebuilding in societies trying to emerge out of traumatic conflict. There are also poems in *North* where silence is treated as a natural outcome of not knowing how to judge the traumatic situation or the participants/creators of trauma.

Man-made traumas such as genocides, terrorist attacks, rape cases, slavery or any other hate crime invariably involve a foundational dichotomy, that of the victim(s) and the perpetrator(s). LaCapra argues that the distinction between the two is very significant and adds: "'Victim' is not a psychological category. It is, in variable ways, a social, political, and ethical category. Victims of certain events will in all likelihood be traumatized by them, and not being traumatized would itself call for explanation. But not everyone traumatized by events is a victim" ("Trauma, Absence, Loss" 723). While in some traumatic cases, it might not be very difficult to situate people involved in trauma as victims or perpetrators, in other complex cases such as the sectarian violence during the Troubles, the contrast between this binary may not be as clear, as Jankowitz also argues "the definition of victim in Northern Ireland is the subject of disagreement and controversy" (16). Ryan explains why coming to a judgment about the people/groups involved in sectarian violence of Northern Ireland is difficult and problematic: it is because "those doing the killing probably think of themselves as victims as well. Republican perpetrators may regard themselves as oppressed and humiliated by four hundred years of British colonialism. Protestant perpetrators may believe that Irish irredentism threatens to destroy their way of life" (100). Moreover, it is not only due to the memories of the distant past that each sectarian community saw themselves as the victim of the other community. As violence escalated in 1970s, new traumas were added to the collective memory of the people in Northern Ireland almost on a daily basis. In his short article, "Christmas 1971", Heaney himself represents the daily life in Northern Ireland as full of terrors: "Fear has begun to tingle through the place. Who's to know the next target on the Provisional list? Who's to know the reprisals won't strike where you are? The bars are quieter. If you are carrying

a parcel you make sure it's close to you in case it's suspected of being about to detonate" (42). The frequent explosions and reprisal attacks, Heaney thus writes about, had constantly caused victimisation on both sides of the conflict for three decades[52].

"Punishment" in *North* addresses this impossibility of deciding who qualifies as victim in traumatic violence in Northern Ireland through implying that each act of traumatic violence has invisible layers of earlier traumatic experiences behind. The poem does not attempt to resolve the question of which one of the sectarian communities is the victim, which one is the perpetrator, but rather it indicates that judging one community as perpetrators by looking at the immediate act of violence does not reflect the truth of the experience and of those who were involved.

"Punishment" is one of the poems which was inspired by Glob's *The Bog People.* Heaney makes use of the information Glob provides about a particular body -a body of a young girl- found in the bogs of Windeby, a northern province of modern-day Germany to comment on the impossibility of knowing how to assess the traumatic situation in Northern Ireland. Glob reports that the girl "lay naked in her grave in the peat, her hair shaved off, with nothing but a collar of ox-hide round her neck and with bandaged eyes" (153). Referring to the Roman historian Tacitus' work *Germania,* where Tacitus explicates how Germanic tribes used to punish adulterous women, Glob infers that the Windeby girl was most probably punished by her society for adultery (153). Taking the cue from this inference, Heaney's "Punishment" builds a connection between past and present cultures in terms of their approval of violence as a means to correct behaviour in society.

Elaborating on the description given by Glob, the speaker of the poem introduces the punished girl as a poor victim of violence, deserving nothing but empathy and pity. The speaker empathises with the girl so much so that he almost feels the pain the girl suffered just before she died, he says: "I can feel the tug/ of the halter at the nape/ of her neck" (*N* 30). He can vividly visualise how her violent death came to pass: "I can see her drowned/ body in the bog,/ the weighing stone,/ the floating rods and boughs" (*N* 30). The speaker's empathy and sympathy for the girl go so far as to make him say that he "almost" loves her:

> Little adulteress,
> before they punished you,

you were flaxen-haired,
undernourished, and your
tar-black face was beautiful.
My poor scapegoat,

I almost love you
[…] (*N* 30-31).

However, the speaker also admits that his empathy and love for the girl would not have led him to step up and speak for the poor scapegoat's right to live, he says:

[I] would have cast, I know,
the stones of silence.
I am the artful voyeur

of your brain's exposed
and darkened combs,
your muscles' webbing
and all your numbered bones (*N* 31)

The speaker's mention of "the stones of silence" brings us back to the issue of witness' moral obligation to speak up for the victims of trauma that we discussed in relation to "No Man's Land". The speaker knows that failure in responding to and intervening in the traumatic scene would make him an "accomplice in the execution of Other" (Felman, "Betrayal" 192), yet he also knows he would still "cast the stones of silence" (*N* 31) because this is what he has done for the victims of Troubles:

I who have stood dumb
when your betraying sisters,
cauled in tar,
wept by the railings,

who would connive
in civilized outrage
yet understand the exact
and tribal, intimate revenge. (*N* 31)

In these lines, the speaker refers to the Provisional IRA's punishment of women dating with British soldiers. As Stallworthy suggests women "keeping company with British soldiers" were punished by being "shaved, stripped, tarred and handcuffed to the railings of Belfast" by the IRA men during the Troubles (168). The way the tribes of the "little adulteress" and of her contemporary "betraying sisters" punish them creates an affinity between these women and poses them paradoxically both as victims and

betrayers/criminals. The speaker's dilemma that leads him to silence and inertia is that he is both outraged by the violent way these women have been treated and also somewhat complacent about the fact that they have been punished for transgressing their communities' codes of conduct. As Stephanie Alexander also contends, the speaker "acknowledges that the proper response to such violence is 'civilized outrage' but cannot bring himself to condemn it fully. It is an understandable punishment for the 'little adulteress' the 'betraying sister'" (231). The speaker's understanding of the violent treatment of Catholic women flirting with the British soldiers is not because he thinks those women deserve punishment but because their perpetrators are motivated by a desire to take revenge of an earlier trauma, where they were the victims. Hogan attracts attention to the poem's implication of "the hatred, felt by the Northern Catholics against the British troops whom they view as a foreign, invading enemy army" (251). Hogan argues that Catholics projected their anger against the British army onto their own women (252). In other words, the women, like Windeby girl, are only "scapegoats" punished only because the real offenders cannot be punished. Although Heaney never indicated which particular traumatic act of the British army in Northern Ireland was the cause of the punishment of Catholic women, one can assume it might be Bloody Sunday as it was one of the most shattering experiences of 1970s and of Troubles.

As explained in the introductory chapter, the earliest violent clashes of the Troubles between the Protestant and Catholic communities caused the Stormont government to send for the British Army for help. British troops were originally brought in to "defend the Catholic minority" (Russell 15) after the armed conflict known as the "Battle of the Bogside"[53]. By 1972, however, the British armed forces proved themselves to be another police force monitoring all movements of Catholics (Dawson, *Making Peace* 94). This caused resentment among the Catholic community and their resentment became justified by the violence of Bloody Sunday, when a section of British army opened fire on Catholic civil rights marchers, resulting in the death of fourteen and the wounding of fifteen people in January 30, 1972 (M. Smith 51). Bloody Sunday was a turning point and an absolute trauma for the Catholic community. As Dawson suggests the event "is the most devastating instance of the British state's use of armed force against a section of its own citizens since Peterloo in 1819. It is also the most important single case of the abuse of state power perpetrated by the British Army in the course

of its long counter-insurgency campaign in Northern Ireland. As such, it occupies a pivotal position in the unfolding history of the Troubles" ("Trauma, Place, and the Politics of Memory" 151). The fact that Catholic citizens felt their existence threatened by the state forces that were supposed to protect them provides sufficient ground to regard Bloody Sunday as a particularly traumatic event in the history of the Troubles. As Edkins also suggests, to be called and recognised as trauma, an event has to be "more than just a situation of utter powerlessness. […] It has to involve a betrayal of trust as well. […] What we call trauma takes place when the very powers that we are convinced will protect us and give us security become our tormentors" (4). However, Bloody Sunday is also traumatic for the Catholic community because those who suffered the traumatic loss of their loved ones believed that their trauma was not recognized by their perpetrators. The Catholic community became convinced that those responsible for the traumatic losses would not be brought into justice after the British government's investigation on Bloody Sunday. The investigation concluded that among the British soldiers "there was no general breakdown in discipline. For the most part the soldiers acted as they did because they thought their orders required it" ("Widgery Report" 184). The report issued after the investigation put the blame on "those who organized the illegal march" ("Widgery Report"183). And Catholic community regarded the inquiry and the report as a "judicial whitewash" of British paratroopers' crime against the civilians (Dawson 119). Nancy Rosenblum argues that "Where systems of justice are absent or when the application of laws and remedies is biased or undependable, personal revenge and organized vengeance will out" (78). The increasing rate of Catholic citizens' recruitment in IRA after the Bloody Sunday[54] indicates the collapse of the Catholic community's trust in the British government's capacity to maintain justice in Northern Ireland.

The violence of Bloody Sunday and the failure of justice in healing the socio-psychological wounds of the Catholic community seem to be in the background of Heaney's "Punishment". The speaker understands "exact/ and tribal, intimate revenge" (*N* 31) projected onto the Catholic women flirting with the British soldiers most probably because he recognises the Catholic community's desperate need for justice for their victims. The speaker's understanding of a violent act of revenge which he would have normally protested "in civilized outrage" (*N* 31) thus indicates invisible layers of trauma beneath the one on the surface, it indicates an impossibility of

understanding and resolving the traumatic violence that one witnesses during the Troubles. As Walker argues "trauma defies understanding and breaches our comprehension of normalcy" (264). Likewise, violent events of the Troubles such as the Bloody Sunday and acts of revenge are implied to be too complicated to be understood in "Punishment". Thus, the poem is more a testimony to the impossibility of understanding and thus telling the trauma than to the traumatic violence itself.

2.2.3. Reconciliation after Trauma: Does It Require Articulation or Silence?

Graham Dawson in his comprehensive work *Making Peace with the Past: Memory, Trauma and the Irish Troubles,* makes mention of two distinct ways of building peace in societies-in-conflict: backwards-looking and forward-looking approaches to peace-making. While backwards-looking approaches "see justice as centrally concerned with righting the wrongs of the past", forward-looking approaches "seek to leave these aside in the interests of future-oriented goals" (17). Heaney's early poetry seems to oscillate between these two contradictory approaches. While poems in *Wintering Out* to a large extent employ the backwards-looking approach, poems in *North* such as "Hercules and Antaeus", "Belderg", "North", "Kinship" and "Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces" focus on the mission of peacebuilding among the sectarian communities in the present time through silence about past traumas. However, there are also poems that refute silence as a trauma-coping strategy in *North.* Even in "Punishment" there is a certain doubt expressed about the function of focusing only on the present situation as the poem emphasises the intricate ways the present is entangled with the past. Because, as Barber says, "the past is always present in Northern Ireland" (252), "Punishment" implicates that evaluating the present in isolation from the past would obstruct one from understanding the truth of the experience.

"Funeral Rites" goes one step further than expressing doubt and treats silence about the traumatic past as a counterproductive strategy. The poem implies that peace can be established only when the communities-in-conflict come together to bury the dead/the past. A public funeral is proposed as an occasion that could unite the divided people of Northern Ireland. Yearning for the old days when family funerals used to enable people to gain a certain imperturbability about death[55], the poem's speaker

expresses a public need for a massive and non-denominational funeral for victims of sectarian violence:

> Now as news comes in
> of each neighbourly murder
> we pine for ceremony,
> customary rhythms:
>
> the temperate footsteps
> of a cortege, winding past
> each blinded home. (*N* 7)

Corcoran points out that "this poem is the major instance in Heaney's work where 'we' and 'our' define community larger than that of the Catholics of the North" (*Seamus Heaney* 110). Indeed, the poem puts special emphasis on the idea that the pined-for funeral cortege should pass by "each blinded home" (*N* 7), and that the ceremony should be for "the whole country" (*N* 8). The speaker's imaginary vision of such a non-factional funeral ceremony is in stark contrast with the funeral practices in Northern Ireland during the Troubles. Ramazani attracts attention to this contrast and attests that the poem came as a response to the fact that "sectarian 'murder' in Northern Ireland has […] perverted mourning ritual into the occasion for ever more violence" (335). Indeed, especially the high rate of enlistment in the Provisional IRA after the funerals of the fourteen victims of Bloody Sunday indicates how funerals were politicised and how they were no longer ceremonies where the dead were peacefully sent off. Instead, funerals became political spaces where the seeds of future violence and trauma were sown. A statement by Paul Coyle, a friend of whom was killed on Bloody Sunday, about the atmosphere after the funerals confirms this idea: "there was a very bad atmosphere about afterwards. People were looking for blood, revenge. I felt it myself: bitterness, anger, resentment, a lot of fear" (McCann 141). Another witness of the traumatic shooting of the civilians, Liam Wray says that "The day after the funerals was an open table at the end of Rossville Street where people were joining Provisional IRA –that's how they became so strong. As open as that, hundreds were coming and putting their names down" (Joanne O'Brien 36). When acted upon, the destructive feelings of anger and revenge, "common responses to man-made trauma" (Hayes 155) tend to cause a cycle of violence, a constant traumatisation as they did after Bloody Sunday[56]. The non-factional funeral imagined in the poem seems to be suggested as preventive of the emergence of the desire for vengeance and feeling of

anger. The suggestion serves to the purpose of preventing the people from automatically repeating the traumatic violence, and of uniting the antagonistic communities on a common ground: the pain of losing their loved ones traumatically in violence. In other words, the poem seems to imply that a funeral of this nature and magnitude would make people across denominations come to bury the dead alongside their enmity against each other in solidarity, as Hart also contends, the hope is that in such "a massive, non-sectarian funeral cortege" both of the warring communities would "bury their hatchets with their dead" (83).

Thus, by suggesting a non-denominational funeral as a remedial rite, the poem implicitly identifies the bigger problem in Northern Ireland as the way the society is split into murderous factions and the way violence has taken a cyclical nature in the present than the instances where traumatic violence or losses of the past actually took place, unlike the majority of poems in *Wintering Out* where the speakers are mostly preoccupied with how traumatic events came to pass in Irish history. In other words, "Funeral Rites" is invested in finding a solution to the present where traumatic acts of violence are repeated endlessly and not in working through the historical trauma of loss. In its attempt to mend the present, however, the poem still engages with the past and establishes a connection between responses of medieval Norse cultures and of contemporary Northern Irish to violence. Towards the end of the poem, the speaker alludes to Gunnar Hamundarson, a hero from the Old Norse saga, *Njal's Saga* and says that "the cud of memory" is "allayed" and "arbitration/ of the feud placated" (*N* 8) only when the recently buried dead is

> disposed like Gunnar
> who lay beautiful
> inside his burial tomb,
> though dead by violence
>
> and unavenged. (*N* 9)

Thus, the poem seems to suggest what LaCapra argues in his book *Writing History:* the idea that traumatic repetition, -the cycle of violence- can be broken when the dead -the past- is laid to rest and when the past is distinguished from the "present with openings to future" (21). Seeking for revenge after a traumatic loss means sliding into and getting stuck in the whirlpool of a past experience. The poem suggests that the bereaved can/should avoid getting entangled in that whirlpool by burying their dead in acceptance and not seeking revenge.

However, the choice of allusion to Gunnar as the prototype of a violently killed hero who rests in peace despite being unavenged adds ambiguity to the poem because Gunnar is actually avenged in the original saga. In *Njal's Saga*, Gunnar's son Hogni and his friend Skarphedinn kill four of Gunnar's killers, because they think they saw that Gunnar's burial mound opened and heard Gunnar singing a heroic song about how heroically he fought and how he would "sooner die than yield an inch" (*Njal's Saga* 150), which they interpret as an encouragement to avenge his death. The speaker in "Funeral Rites" does not acknowledge that Gunnar is eventually avenged but only covertly hints at it[57]:

> Men said that he was chanting
> verses about honour
> and that four lights burned
>
> in corners of the chamber:
> which opened then, as he turned
> with a joyful face
> to look at the moon. (*N* 9)

Corcoran, possibly without taking *Njal's Saga* into account, argues that the poem "urgently desires an end to the terrible cycle, but it can imagine such a thing only in a mythologized visionary realm" (*Seamus Heaney* 111). However, as Regan also suggests "For all its attempted peacefulness […] what the poem recovers from the realm of mythology is a highly fragile and tentative image of hopefulness" (15). The hope is fragile and tentative in what Corcoran calls "mythologized visionary realm" (*Seamus Heaney* 111), since at the end of the poem, the unavenged dead, Gunnar, is seen looking at the moon, "that ancient symbol of cycles itself" (Hart 84), which indicates a perpetuation of trauma, of violence. Thus, although the poem posits a funeral that builds solidarity among the antagonistic communities as a way to overcome trauma of loss, it also implies, through the reference to "men" who are haunted by Gunnar's chanting ghost, that it may not be possible to build solidarity between groups so deeply antagonistic to each other. In a way, the poem points at the possibility that there would be people who would be haunted by the experience of traumatic loss and would seek revenge as a result. Thus, solidarity is given as the only way traumatic repetition of violence can be stopped however the end of the poem reveals that it is not realistic to expect solidarity after groups experience traumatic loss at each other's hands, because, as the most basic law of psychoanalysis dictates, the

repressed is bound to return -the unprocessed, unmourned dead is bound to haunt the living.

Although the poem unites Northern Ireland's warring factions in a funeral ceremony -an occasion traditionally functioned as a ritual to work through loss-, the ceremony that the speaker imagines does not prove itself to be functional in that sense. Though the poem seems to pose funeral ceremony as a trauma-coping strategy whereby people could bury and leave the past behind in unison, it does not focus on funerals' function and capacity to provide the public with a platform for articulation of feelings and thoughts after a traumatic loss. As McIvor attests, rituals like the funeral ceremonies "offer a collective means of mourning by incorporating traumatic events into narratives of civic life" (6), however, the funeral that the poem sees fitting for the Troubles victims is not an occasion where the victims are mourned but an occasion where they are only buried. While, as Dawson suggests, "the public acknowledgement of a violent death, and the naming and calling-to-account of those responsible, establishes an objective foundation without which it may be impossible to lay the dead to rest" (*Making Peace* 78-79), the attendees of the imagined funeral procession in the poem are quiet, they do not share their feelings and thoughts, name and call-to-account those who are responsible. The poem actually emphasises the silence of the attendees several times. During the imagined funeral, only the "purring" of "family cars" and the "muffled drumming/ of ten thousand engines" (*N* 8) are heard, while the procession

> Quiet as a serpent
> in its boulevard
>
> […] drags its tail
> out of the Gap of the North
> as its head already enters
> the megalithic doorway. (*N* 8*)*

The emphasis on the reticence of the attendees gives the idea that reticence is actually an element that creates and supports the desired solidarity between communities-in-conflict. Reticence -the absence of testimonies or narratives- may be what unifies people of antagonistic communities, no one accuses anyone in silence after all, but the poem also implies that there are dangers involved in silence. The depiction of the quiet gathering as a serpent, through its biblical connotations, attributes a deceptive/ diabolical/ dangerous characteristic to the silence of the attendees. Moving like a

serpent the quiet procession does not head towards the future for new possibilities, on the contrary it goes through a "megalithic doorway" back to a past time-frame[58], promising nothing but a repetition of the past (*N* 8). Heaney's quiet procession is not a serpent moving forward following a linear structure but an Ouroboros, continually eating its own tail, constantly relapsing back to its past. So, the poem proposes solidarity that can only be based on and supported by the silence of the grudging parties as a solution to the traumatically repetitive violence and then sees a deadlock in that solution since without the work of mourning, of articulation, the past is not actually left behind no matter how deep it is buried. The aporia of trauma thus once again becomes the ultimate message Heaney gives. Although the objective motivating the imagination of a non-factional funeral in the poem is to end the cycle of violence, the poem eventually gets entangled in the irresolvable problem of how to articulate feelings and thoughts and thus mourn the traumatic losses without generating a desire for vengeance, and creating an "us" and "them" mentality.

2.2.4. The Use/Uselessness of "fault-on-both-sides-tact"[59] in Coming to Terms with the Trauma of Internecine Violence

The irresolvable problem of how to represent trauma without promoting vengeance thus dominates the first section of *North* and a tactful silence or evasiveness -especially about the sectarian identity of victim/perpetrator- is proposed and at times exercised as a trauma-coping strategy. However, the poems in Part II definitely abandon this strategy and even seem to criticise the tactful silence or evasiveness of Part I. This contradictory position-taking within the collection is most effectively observed in the criticism of "Northern reticence" (*N* 55) in "Whatever You Say Say Nothing". In contrast to many of the poems in Part I, whose speakers treat speaking about the cultural traumas as dangerous and impossible[60], the speaker of "Whatever You Say Say Nothing" in Part II declares himself "incapable" of "the famous/ Northern reticence" (*N* 54), and he seems to be convinced that in such a country as Northern Ireland, - a "land of password, handgrip, wink and nod,/ of open minds as open as a trap" (*N* 55)-, silence or evasive speech that does not say anything is very dangerous. The danger that silence poses to society is that it tends to accumulate until a moment when all unspoken experiences and feelings come out with a destructive force as the following lines implicate: "it's near time that some small leak was sprung// In the

dykes the Dutchman made/ To dam the dangerous tide that followed Seamus" (*N* 54). Heaney's idea that the "accumulation of silent things" ("Through-Other" 368) is a source of suffering is here expressed through a metaphor of unspoken realities as a dam whose dykes need only a small leak, to collapse. In other words, Heaney seems to go back to the trauma theory's proposition that articulation of individual/collective response to trauma is essential in coming to terms with it.

The poem "Whatever You Say" is also antithetical to the non-accusatory discourse of Part I as it criticises staying silent and indifferent to the victims' sufferings because doing so is the same as taking sides with the perpetrator. Although the speaker of the poem does not name any one side as the perpetrator, he still seems to be quite convinced of the uselessness of "fault-on-both-sides tact" (*FW* 40), because it means saying/doing nothing for the victims. The speaker in the poem mocks the futility and meaninglessness of common clichés about the Troubles to express the criticism against silence, he says: " 'Religion's never mentioned here,' of course./ 'You know them by their eyes,' and hold your tongue./ 'One side's as bad as the other,' never worse" (*N* 54).

It has already been established in this chapter that this tact or objective stance that is maintained in the first section of *North* indicates that the poems in this part prioritise peacebuilding in the present rather than working through the past. However, as Brewer and Hayes also argue, there is an essential quandary that a victim or bystander usually finds himself/ herself in after traumatic experiences: "the peace versus justice dilemma" (513). The search for justice results in repeating the traumatic event and pointing fingers at those responsible so that they could be brought to justice, and the search for peace results in letting go of the past whose narrativization may "rekindle anger and resentment among the victims" (Brewer, Hayes 513). The oscillation between proposal and refutation of articulation/testimony as a trauma-coping strategy in Heaney's poetry might itself be taken as a testimony to the prevailing "peace versus justice dilemma" (Brewer, Hayes 513) in Northern Ireland in the 1970s.

Heaney responds to this dilemma once again in *Field Work*, where forgiveness is proposed as a solution to the problem of articulation without promoting vengeance. Although *Field Work* is claimed to "represent Seamus Heaney's withdrawal from Northern Ireland" both "biographically and poetically" (Cusack 53)[61], there are still a

few poems that engage with the cultural trauma of the Troubles, such as the elegies: "Casualty", "Strand at Lough Beg", "A Postcard from North Antrim" and "Triptych" a sequence of three poems. In "Sibyl" the second poem of "Triptych", the speaker asks, "What will become of us?" (*FW* 5) to an oracle and the oracle replies that there is no other way of overcoming the present trauma without forgiveness:

> I think our very form is bound to change.
> Dogs in a siege. Saurian relapses. Pismires.
>
> Unless forgiveness finds its nerve and voice,
> Unless the helmeted and bleeding tree
> Can green and open buds like infants' fists
> And the fouled magma incubate
>
> Bright nymphs…. (*FW* 5)

In *Wintering Out*, in "No Man's Land", failure to speak up for the victim, that is to say staying silent after witnessing an act of victimisation was given as a reason why a human being can lose humanity and downgrade to a "spirochete" (*WO* 30), to a bacteria. In *Field Work*, it is the resistance to forgive the perpetrators that would cost people their humanity and turn them into "pismires" (*FW* 5). Heaney's endorsement of forgiveness as another trauma-coping strategy in this poem again resonates with the propositions of trauma theory. The theory suggests that forgiveness after violent trauma is a "necessary condition for social and political reconciliation through the overcoming of emotions like resentment and vindictiveness" (Brudholm, Rosoux 34). Forgiveness as a coping strategy offers a middle ground between the intransigent peace and justice dilemma because it requires acceptance that one or one's people have been subjected to trauma through testimony and also letting go of the negative feelings against the perpetrators. Forgiveness of the victim, along with the remorse of the perpetrator, is often thought as an act of empathy that would bring a societal healing by "drawing victim and villain toward a shared vision of a world in which the Other matters" (Gobodo-Madikizela 45).

However, a trauma-coping strategy that is proposed in one poem gets refuted in another due to the complexity of the traumatic experiences in Northern Ireland. Although Heaney did not write another poem that inserts forgiveness as the sole solution of the traumatic violence in Northern Ireland, he wrote poems where an undeniably Catholic Irish voice expresses anger against the enemy. One such poem is

the “The Toome Road” where the discourse of what is “mine” and “ours” has been broken and harmed by “them” has been employed without a hint of empathy or forgiveness for the perpetrators. What enrages the speaker is the presence of the British Army in Northern Ireland. The speaker’s sentiment is that the “headphoned soldiers” with their “armoured cars” on their “powerful tyres” invaded his own pastoral land (*FW* 7). He asks “How long were they approaching down my roads/ as if they owned them?” (*FW* 7). He feels himself and his people to be the real owners of the land, living in harmony with it. In contrast to the soldiers’ and their military equipments’ extreme incompatibility with the life in Northern Ireland, the speaker says “I had rights-of-way, fields, cattle in my keeping, /Tractors hitched to buckrakes in open sheds, / Silos, chill gate, wet slates, the greens and reds/ Of outhouse roofs” (*FW* 7). Although the poem seems to be about the British Army’s presence in Northern Ireland in the 1970s on one level, it also seems to be haunted by the whole history of Ireland’s colonisation as, towards the end of the poem, the speaker addresses the contemporary British soldiers as “charioteers” (*FW* 7). As McGuirk also suggests, calling the British soldiers as charioteers, the speaker associates them “with the forces of imperial Rome and by extension with any imperialist force” (71) particularly that of the historical British Empire. Thus, it is possible to argue that “The Toome Road” constructs a story of trauma where the perpetrators are pinpointed and blamed and not forgiven. Although Heaney had previously written many poems avoiding generating “us” and “them” mentality in a society that is already violently divided, “The Toome Road” articulates the accumulated feelings of anger and resentment against the historical and contemporary British invaders.

In conclusion, Heaney’s poetry over the 1970s, the most eventful and violent decade of the Troubles, attempts at coming up with and maintaining an applicable and valid trauma-coping strategy. One strategy that Heaney’s poems constantly propose and at the same time refute is bearing witness to the traumatic events of the Troubles and to their historical reasons. This strategy is seen in some of the poems as the only way a traumatised person or society can come to terms with a history of trauma, while other poems indicate that it can only open old wounds and deepen the rifts between the communities-in-conflict by emphasising the pain of the victims and wrong-doing of perpetrators and thus perpetuate trauma. In response to the risks and dangers involved in speaking about traumatic experiences, Heaney’s poems especially in the first part

of *North* achieve an objective stance where neither of the communities are categorised as perpetrators. Through a non-accusatory discourse, the speakers of the poems in Part I of *North* give testimony to the complexity and unrepresentability of the traumatic events. However, this non-accusatory approach is accompanied by a certain evasiveness and silence that is tacitly promoted as a trauma-coping strategy; thus, the adoption of this approach constitutes a contradiction within Heaney's poetry. A further contradiction comes to the fore in Part II of *North* and *Field Work* when testimony is once again adopted as a valid trauma-coping strategy. This chapter has argued that the oscillation between testimony and silence in Heaney's poetry is caused by a dilemma between a search for justice and a search for peace, often experienced after witnessing violent traumas.

CONCLUSION

Although Seamus Heaney's poetry is versatile in terms of the variety of subject matters it covers, his collections published in the 1970s, *Wintering Out, North* and *Field Work*, are preoccupied with representations of Irish cultural traumas including the nation's colonial experiences and sectarian violence in Northern Ireland during the Troubles. With regard to these representations, this thesis has argued that Heaney's collections of the 1970s are marked by a paradoxical attitude towards trauma testimony. The thesis has shown that while some of the poems in these collections represent, practice and endorse the act of bearing testimony as a trauma-coping strategy, others express frustration caused by the impossibility of bearing witness to the Irish cultural traumas. There are also poems in the early collections that express doubt about the therapeutic function of testimony and represent it as useless in coming to terms with trauma or even dangerous in the context of Northern Ireland's sectarian violence. This juxtaposition of contradictory views about testimony and the resulting oscillation between testimony and silence are regarded, in this study, as themselves being markers of the traumatic quality of the Irish experiences that are represented in Heaney's early poetry.

The study has demonstrated that the poems in *Wintering Out, North* and *Field Work* which represent, practice and endorse testimony as a trauma-coping strategy do so mainly because testimony offers a space in which the victims or witnesses of trauma can work through the heretofore unfathomed and unprocessed traumatic experiences of recent and distant past. Trauma studies, too, propose testimony as a trauma-coping strategy for the same reason. Because traumatic experiences overwhelm the victim's or witness' meaning-making mechanisms due to the experiences' complexity or shocking quality, the victim/witness fails in witnessing the event at the moment of its occurrence, in other words, s/he cannot give the proper emotional and cognitive response to trauma (Laub, "Truth and Testimony" 66). This failure to witness the event at the moment of its occurrence causes emotions and memories stemming from trauma to be repressed into the unconscious. In order to work through trauma, the victim/witness needs to abreact to the trauma to which s/he failed to react at the moment of its occurrence and articulate the repressed emotions and thoughts (Freud, Breuer "On the Psychical Mechanism" 3). In other words, s/he needs to re-live or re-

witness the trauma, this time fully conscious and emotionally and cognitively involved in the process of witnessing. Poems such as "Gifts of Rain", "Ocean's Love to Ireland" and "Aisling" represent the conquest of Ireland by England as a traumatic experience that the Irish people have not come to terms with and thus, need to work through by bearing witness to it. These poems re-present the conquest of Ireland in metaphors and engage the readers in a process of analysis and comprehension. Because the representations express the emotions caused by the trauma, they are claimed in this study as testimonies to the traumatic experience of colonisation. Other poems such as "Linen Town" (*WO* 28) and "This morning" (*WO* v), imply that through bearing testimony to the Irish cultural traumas of the recent and distant past one can distinguish the traumatic past from the "present with openings to future" (LaCapra, *Writing History* 21). In Heaney's early collections, the ability to make this distinction is treated as key to working through the traumas of the past and to prevent the past from repeating itself in the present.

Another reason why Heaney's poetry represents testimony as a trauma-coping strategy is that the act of bearing testimony keeps a record of the traumatic event and thus regulates the normally uncontrollable memories of trauma. Trauma theorists often state that because traumatic events overwhelm the victim and/or witness, memories of traumatic events are differently stored in their minds and that such memories resist being integrated into the narrative of the past (van der Kolk, van der Hart 176). Thus, unlike the memories of ordinary events, traumatic memories are not subject to their willed recall (Caruth, *Trauma* 152), instead the memories can haunt the subject in the form of repeated hallucinations, dreams, or in the more subtle form of unconscious behavioural repetitions (Freud, "Beyond" 19; van der Kolk 389). In other words, memories of trauma are not remembered in words, but keep getting acted out. Bearing testimony to the trauma, –consciously and affectively remembering the traumatic event/experience– is prescribed as the solution to this compulsion to repeat the trauma (Freud, Breuer, "On the Psychical Mechanism" 3). Heaney's poems "The Tollund Man" and "The Strand at Lough Beg" among others bear witness to and keep the record of traumatic sectarian killings of the recent and distant past in order to prevent their repetition in the present and future.

However, although these poems represent the act of bearing testimony as a therapeutic process and although the speakers of these poems manage to bear witness to Irish cultural traumas, there are many other poems in Heaney's early collections, especially in *Wintering Out*, marked by the presence of speakers who fail to do so. The speakers of "Roots," "Stump," "No Man's Land," for instance, manage to represent not the traumatic sectarian violence they have witnessed but its incomprehensibility and unrepresentibility. These speakers express feelings of guilt for not having been able to give a proper verbal response to the traumatic violence they have witnessed as bystanders. The speakers' guilty conscience results from the fact that they cannot speak out about the trauma despite their awareness that doing so would help the victims, as it would be an act of solidarity with them.

Each of these poems implies a distinct reason why bearing witness to trauma is an impossibility for the witness-speakers. In "Roots," it is because bearing testimony to traumatic events runs the risk of re-traumatising the bearer of testimony. The poem implies that there is this risk because testimony requires the bearer to acknowledge the trauma through re-living it in words. In "Stump," it is because the witness-speaker is vicariously traumatised due to an intense feeling of empathy towards the actual victims of trauma. The empathy that the speaker feels towards the actual victims amounts to total identification with them. Therefore, the speaker cannot use his more fortunate position as a bystander to help the victims through testimony as he himself is also traumatised. In "No Man's Land," the speaker is unable to give testimony to trauma because, although he was physically there to witness the trauma, the traumatic sectarian violence that he witnessed overwhelmed him so much that he cannot give a response. The intense sense of guilt of these speakers implies that although testimony is an exigency in post-traumatic situations, it can also be an impossibility for a variety of reasons.

It is not only through speakers with confessed inability to bear witness to traumatic experiences that Heaney's *Wintering Out* represents the impossibility of bearing testimony. Poems such as "The Wool Trade" and "Backward Look" suggest specifically Irish reasons why testimony is not possible after traumatic experience. "The Wool Trade" represents loss of cultural, economic and linguistic prosperity in Ireland due to British colonisation as a traumatic loss. The poem suggests that

testimony, which is usually a communicative speech act, is impossible because traumatic loss has changed the meanings of words for the traumatised people, while it remains the same for the non-traumatised. “The Backward Look” represents both the decline of Gaelic language due to Britain’s colonial strategies to Anglicise the Irish and the forced dislocations of native Catholic Irish during the colonial period as traumatic. The poem suggests that the decline of the language of the mostly Catholic Irish eradicated the possibility of bearing testimony to the Irish cultural traumas during the colonial period. Besides these poems that suggest testimony as an impossibility, there is also one poem in *Wintering Out* that expresses doubt about the therapeutic potential of testimony. Although the other poems convey a definite conviction that testimony is therapeutic, “Midnight” implies that even bearing testimony may be useless in working through trauma, as the speaker is still haunted by the traumatic loss of Irish cultural identity after representing how the trauma came to pass.

This thesis has also argued that testimony as a trauma-coping strategy is even more problematised in *North* than it is in *Wintering Out.* In *North,* there is a recognition of dangers involved in the re-activation and circulation of trauma testimonies especially in violently segregated societies such as in Northern Ireland. According to cultural trauma theorists, testimonies to cultural traumas which represent and emphasise the victimisation of one social group by another run the risk of creating or reinforcing a dangerous “us” and “them” polarisation in society (Volkan 307-8; Hutchison & Bleiker 386; LaCapra, “Trauma, Absence” 707; J. Alexander, “Toward a Theory” 8-9). Moreover, the theorists argue that the perception that one’s own community has suffered at the hands of another can generate a desire for revenge. For Northern Ireland, sectarian communities’ selective narratives of the past are already regarded as among the reasons why sectarian violence erupted in 1969 (Dawson, *Making Peace* 33-35). The increasing involvement of Catholic citizens in violence, especially after Bloody Sunday (1972), and the recognition of the destructive effects of narratives of trauma and victimisation have been argued, in this thesis, to have altered Heaney’s priority from working through past traumas to peacebuilding in the present in Northern Ireland. Thus, the poems in the first section of *North* abandon the strategy of bearing witness to the past traumas deployed in *Wintering Out* and adopt an objective stance towards the sectarian communities and practice a tactful silence about the past traumas in order to build peace. However, the poems in the second section of *North* represent

the dangers involved in silence. The poem "Whatever You Say Say Nothing" criticises "the famous Northern reticence" (*N* 54). The poem adopts trauma theory's proposition that articulation is therapeutic and suggests that the unspoken and repressed emotions and thoughts accumulate until they come out with a destructive force.

Analysing various instances in Heaney's early collections, where speakers, the witnesses of particular Irish cultural traumas, attempt to bear testimony to them, this study has demonstrated that Heaney's early poetry is marked by a paradoxical attitude towards the act of bearing witness to the traumatic experiences of the Irish. While bearing testimony is represented as an exigency in Heaney's early poetry on the accounts that it regulates the traumatic memories and integrates them into the narrative of the past, it is paradoxically also represented as a difficult, dangerous and even as an impossible task. This paradoxical attitude towards bearing testimony seems to be caused by the traumatic complexity of the represented experiences. The Troubles as a period of acute social crisis and traumatic violence necessitated a response. This is evident in Heaney's search for "images and symbols adequate to [Northern Ireland's] predicament" ("Feeling into Words" 56) with expressed reluctance, in the early 1970s. However, the ambivalence and paradoxes in the early collections imply that formulating a response to such a complex traumatic period was not easy. Heaney's earliest poetic response to the Troubles attempted to explain the discrimination against the Catholics and the emerging sectarian violence with reference to the traumatic experiences of cultural and economic dispossession in Ireland caused by colonialism as argued in the second chapter. Poems in the 1972 collection, *Wintering Out,* imply that colonial history in Ireland is full of traumas awaiting to be processed, acknowledged and integrated into the narrative of the past. The decline of Gaelic language, the traumatic loss of cultural and economic prosperity in Ireland, the displacement of the native Catholic Irish during the colonial period are all represented in relation to the modern-day sectarian violence in *Wintering Out*. This representation, however, became questionable when the Catholics' victim status in Northern Ireland was shattered due to their increasing involvement in acts of sectarian violence. Heaney recognised that the social structure changed, and the Catholics took on "their oppressor status or their violence-dealing status" (qtd. in Russell, *Poetry and Peace* 214). This recognition complicated the later poems. *Wintering Out*'s trauma-coping strategy of digging up the past to come to terms with it is not only abandoned but also questioned

and refuted to a large extent in *North.* The narratives of the past that *Wintering Out* circulates, for instance, are represented not as testimonial. The change of attitude towards trauma testimony reflects a shift in Heaney's priorities. While *Wintering Out* prioritises working through traumas of the past through testimony for the purposes of establishing justice, the larger section of *North* prioritises peace building in society through a tactful silence. When *Wintering Out* and the first section of *North* are thus compared, the representation of testimony in Heaney's poetry does not seem to be paradoxical but rather evolutional. It looks as if there were no conflicting representations of testimony but only a moving forward to a new understanding of testimony. However, this proves itself to be deceptive because the second section of *North* and *Field Work* adopt testimony as a valid trauma-coping strategy. Hence attitude towards Due to this pendulum-like movement towards testimony in Heaney's poetry towards trauma testimony, this study shows that that there is a paradoxical perception of testimony in Heaney's early poetry.

Although Heaney criticism is a vast body of scholarly research, where Heaney's poetry has been addressed mostly as an example of postcolonial writing and political poetry, it has not been adequately addressed as a testimonial poetry. This study has attempted to fill this gap in Heaney criticism. Another gap in Heaney criticism that needs to be addressed in a later study is in the subject of Heaney's later representations of the Troubles as a cultural trauma. The fact that this study has focused on the collections of the 1970s does not mean that later collections do not contain representations of the trauma of the Troubles. I chose to analyse the early collections due to the fact that they are marked by a uniquely concentrated preoccupation with the representations of the Troubles and its historical causes; however, Heaney continued writing about the Troubles in the collections published after the cessation of the conflict in 1994. A comparative study between the representations of the Troubles as trauma in the early collections and in the collections published after the cessation might contribute to Heaney criticism. Trauma theorists emphasise the difficulty and even the impossibility of witnessing a traumatic event from inside the event (Laub, "Truth and Testimony" 66). The early collections analysed in this study represent the speakers' attempt to bear witness from inside the event and this is probably one of the reasons why the act of bearing testimony is represented as an impossibility in many of the poems. Looking

into later collections to see whether the attitude towards the act of bearing testimony change might introduce a new argument to Heaney criticism.

ENDNOTES

[1] Adorno, Theodor. "What does coming to terms with the past mean?" 1959. Trans. Timothy Bahti and Geoffrey Hartman. *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective. Ed. Geoffrey Hartman*. Bloomington: Indiana UP. 1986. 114-129. Print.

[2] Dawson, in his book, *Making Peace with the Past: Memory, Trauma and the Irish Troubles,* shows how the narratives of the conflicting communities in Ireland emphasize different aspects of their shared history. According to Dawson the nationalist narrative stresses the "suffering and oppression inflicted on the native, Catholic, Irish people by English (later British) colonialism over 800 years, and of Irish resistance throughout that time" (33) while the loyalist narratives put great emphasis on "how the legitimate settlement of Ireland in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, under the legal auspices of the English Crown, was met with hostility and extreme violence from a native Irish population inflamed by their superstitious Roman Catholic Church" (34).

[3] The policy of internment let the largely Protestant Royal Ulster Constabulary take many young Catholic men into detention to interrogate them about their relation to Irish Republican Army (Russell, *Seamus Heaney* 16).

[4] Ulster Defence Association, Ulster Freedom Fighters, Red Hand Commando are some of the paramilitary groups established by loyalists.

[5] Edwards states that the reformist policies of Unionist prime minister Terence O'Neill and his attempts at "harmonizing relationships between South and North" were interpreted as dangerous by O'Neill's opponents "who fuelled rumours of an armed rebellion by the IRA" ("Abandoning Armed Resistance?" 151). These rumours resulted in the establishment of the UVF.

[6] In the collection, *The Spirit Level* (1996), there is a poem titled "The Flight Path" which indicates Heaney's discomfort upon confrontation with a nationalist acquaintance: "'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.' *(SL 29)*

[7] Michael Parker notes that when Heaney and his family moved from Northern Ireland to the Irish Republic, the Protestant activist and preacher Rev. Ian Paisley called Heaney as a "well-known papist propagandist" and stated his contentment with the fact that Heaney left North for his "spiritual home in the Republic" (120).

[8] Van der Hart and Horst suggest that "In the late 19th century, hysteria was considered to be a broad class of mental disorders, which embraced conditions we now include under the dissociative disorders: somatization disorder, conversion disorder, borderline personality disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder" (1).

[9] The idea that the traumatic event is "outside the range of usual human experience" also became an issue of controversy. Feminist psychotherapists like Judith Herman and Laura S. Brown suggested that APA's early definition of PTSD erroneously excludes the experiences of hundreds of women, who are exposed to physical and psychological violence on a daily basis at the domestic space. Herman says "Sadly, this definition has proved to be inaccurate. Rape, battery, and other forms of sexual and domestic violence are so common a part of women's lives that they can hardly be described as outside the range of ordinary experience" (33). Brown referring to the traumatising events that many women in North America are exposed to, says "These experiences are not unusual, statistically; they are well within the 'range of human experience'. They are the experiences of most of the women who come into my office every day. They are the experiences of that could happen in the life of any girl or woman in North America today" (101). She suggests that this erroneous definition of PTSD misleads people into thinking that the range of usual human experience is "the range of what is normal and usual in the lives of men of the dominant class; white, young, able-bodied, educated, middle-class, Christian men" (101). This was not the only criticism directed towards this definition, however, many psychotherapists refused it for being misleading and narrow in its scope.

[10] Dell'Osso and Carmassi claim that "PTSD has generated as much controversy as almost no other disorder in the field, on what concerns its boundaries, diagnostic criteria, central assumptions, clinical utility, prevalence in various population" (1).

[11] DSM-V defined the qualifying stressor as "exposure to actual and threatened death, serious injury, sexual violence" and/or "repeated or extreme indirect exposure to

aversive details of the event(s), usually in the course of professional duties (e.g., first responders, collecting body parts; professionals repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse)" (280). According to this updated definition those who directly experience the traumatic event(s), those who witnessed, in person, the event(s) when it occurred to other people, or those who learn that the traumatic event(s) occurred to a valued and loved person can be diagnosed with PTSD if they also show a set of typical somatic and psycho-somatic symptoms "for more than one month" (DSM V, 281).

[12] APA's 2013 edition of *DSM* gathered these sets of symptoms of PTSD under four main categories, namely "intrusion", "avoidance", "negative alterations of cognitions and mood", "alterations in arousal and reactivity". According to this categorization, the traumatized person may re-experience the traumatic moment through intrusive and vivid memories, flashbacks, and traumatic nightmares that take her/him to the exact moment of traumatic experience; try to avoid trauma-related stimuli; have inability to recall certain features of the traumatic event (amnesia); have distorted blame-of-self and others; have persistent feelings related to trauma like anger, fear, guilt, shame and horror; be hyper vigilant and have exaggerated startle reactions, difficulty in falling and staying in sleep and in concentrating (DSM V, 271).

[13] The idea that traumatised-people do not remember the traumatic event/s and articulate emotions stemming from the traumatic moment- but re-enact them over and over again after a period of incubation was developed by Freud and Breuer in their joint work "On the Psychical Mechanism" (2-3) and it was re-stated several times in Freud's individual works such as "Repeating and Remembering" (150), *Moses and Monotheism* (110). The idea was later adopted and confirmed by many contemporary theorists including van der Kolk and Ducey (271), Caruth (*Trauma* 4).

[14] Laplanche and Pontalis define abreaction as "emotional discharge whereby the subject liberates himself from the affect attached to the memory of a traumatic event in such a way that this affect is not able to become (or to remain) pathogenic" (1).

[15] Eyerman suggests that the term is used synonymously with "national trauma" as "the difference [between them] is minimal at the theoretical level" (3). "Communal trauma", "collective trauma" and "societal trauma" are other terms which have been used synonymously with cultural trauma in related literature. All these terms are used

to refer to a "horrendous" event or series of such events that leave "indelible marks" (J. Alexander 6) on the integrity of a society.

[16] The conquest of Ireland started in 1169, when one of the five kings in Ireland, Diarmait MacMurchada wanted help from Henry II as a resolution to a political problem within Ireland. Ireland was not governed under one high king in the twelfth century and one of the Irish kings, Diarmait MacMurchada, the king of Leinster, had political conflicts with other Irish kings who acted in union against him. MacMurchada saw it to his advantage to get help from the English king Henry II. In return for his acknowledgement of Henry II as his feudal lord, MacMurchada was given permission to recruit fighters from England. Under the leadership of a Norman noble Richard FitzGilbert, who came to be better known as Strongbow, these fighters travelled to Ireland, recovered and reassured MacMurchada's position as the king in Leinster. MacMurchada married his daughter Aoife off to Strongbow and when he died without a male heir, Leinster became a possession of Strongbow through marriage. Paying homage to Henry II as his overlord, Strongbow started Norman settlements in Leinster (Duffy et al. 32-37). From Strongbow's reign onwards, a new governmental mechanism was introduced in Ireland and a Lord Deputy acted as a representative of King of England in Ireland.

[17] *Laudabiliter* was issued in 1155, Pope Adrian IV and it addressed Henry II:

> […] thou dost desire to enter into the island of Ireland, in order to subject the people to the laws and to extirpate the vices that have there taken root, […]. We, therefore, seconding with the favour it deserves thy pious and laudable desire, and granting a benignant assent to thy petition, are well pleased that, for the enlargement of the bounds of the church, for the restraint of vice, for the correction of morals and the introduction of virtues, for the advancement of the Christian religion, thou shouldst enter that island, and carry out there the things that look to the honour of God and to its own salvation (qtd. in Sheehy 67).

Sheehy cites *Laudabiliter* among many other European correspondence about the state of Christianity in Ireland and comes to the conclusion that the discourses regarding the Irish and Ireland emphasised the need to transform their culture by drawing attention to "serious abuses in the practice of the Christian faith, in ecclesiastical discipline and in the administration of sacraments; […] grave moral turpitude among the masses of the people" (67).

[18] The differences are mainly thought to be the result of two factors, firstly Ireland was never colonised by the Romans unlike England, which remained a Roman province for four hundred years. Secondly, Ireland remained intact from continental influences because it is "an island hidden from Europe behind a larger one (*L'ile derriere I'lie*)" (Stewart 71).

[19] Montaño explains how pastoral and mobile lives of the Irish were interpreted by the English to be the very reason why the Irish land was not productively and profitably farmed. According to the English, it was because the Irish did not like working on the land, which associated them with other "barbarous" cultures, the English could not make much profit of their new land. So, they saw it important to transform the pastoral and mobile Irish life into a settled and agricultural one (282-334).

[20] Seventeenth century Irish historian, Geoffrey Keating's assessment of Cambrensis as "the bull of the herd of those who write the false history of Ireland, wherefor they have no choice of guide" is often quoted by commentators of Irish history (67).

[21] Montaña quotes a seventeenth century letter that displays an everyday form of resistance of the Irish against the English efforts to anglicise the Irish and to make Ireland a replica of England, the letter reads as follows:

> For an instance of theire malice to the Englishe, an English man did strongly inclose a peece of ground for meadowe, and he pitched out from thence an exceeding number of stones, and when he came to mowe his grounds he found more stones then he tooke out (for the Irish never went that way, day or night) but threwe in stones from under their mantles. (1)

[22] Desmond dynasty rebelled against Anglicisation of Irish society and against the rule by Elizabeth I, who was declared a heretic by the papal bull *Regnas Excelsis* in 1570 (Canny 124).

[23] Ironside, Virgina. *"You'll Get Over It": The Rage of Bereavement,* London: Penguin Books, 1997. Print. No page.

[24] According to J.C. Alexander, events, no matter how shocking and painful they might be, are not inherently traumatic, but they come to be regarded as such after the trauma process. J.C. Alexander gives examples of painful events affecting collectivities around the world in the twentieth century, which did not turn into recognized cultural

traumas because of the lack of the "trauma process", to somehow prove that cultural traumas are constructed through representation. One such case is the mass slaughter of the residents of Nanking, China by the Japanese in 1938. J.C. Alexander says, "Under orders from the highest levels of the Imperial government, they carried out this massacre in six of the bloodiest weeks of the modern history, without the technological aids later developed by the Nazis" (26). Although this terrible event was carried out under the observation of the "critical and highly articulate" Western people, the event did not undergo a trauma process and it became "the forgotten Holocaust of World War II" (26). However, J.C. Alexander also adds that this event continues to be remembered as an "obscure incident" now, and "the very existence of [it] is routinely and successfully denied by some of Japan's most powerful and esteemed public officials" (26).

[25] *Death of a Naturalist* was published in 1966 and the sectarian violence did not start until 1969, but even before the eruption of the actual violence, the tense atmosphere that caused the later violence was present before that year. In his interview with O'Driscoll, Heaney describes the 1960s as follows: "The B-Special Constabulary were on the roads at night. The anti-Catholic speeches were still being delivered by Unionist leaders on the Twelfth of July. The whole gerrymandered life of the place seemed set to continue" (O'Driscoll 65)

[26] Coal is a fossil fuel created from the remains of plants that lived and died millions of years ago while peat is also an organic fuel, which consists of "spongy material formed by the partial decomposition of organic matter" (Kopp n.p). Peat is "the first step in the formation of coal" (Kopp n.p) That is to say, coal is the fuel formed from the fully decayed organic matters, fossils, while peat is formed from only partially decayed organisms.

[27] Felman defines testimony "not as a mode of s*tatement* of but rather as a mode of *access* to […] truth" ("Education and Crisis" 24, emphasis in the original).

[28] Irene's case is also regarded as a powerful exemplary case in exploring the differences of traumatic memories from the narrative and ordinary memories by Van der Kolk and Ducey (271), Caruth. Their article "Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of

Memories and Engraving of Trauma", explores traumatic memories with detailed reference to Irene's case.

[29] Anna O. was suffering from symptoms of hysteria and was claimed to have been totally cured through sessions in which her symptoms were "talked away" (*"*Fraulein Anna O.*"* 37).

[30] McKearney reports that of all 1981 internees, "1874 were Catholic/republican" while only 107 were "Protestant/loyalist" (35).

[31] Any rebellion from Irish history like the Desmond Rebellion, Rebellion of 1798 or Easter 1916 might be the referents of the Irish people's acts to restore lost fields.

[32] The speaker's nostalgia for the wisdom of "antediluvian ancestors" might be taken as a reference to the Celtic Literary Revival at the turn of the twentieth century. The movement led by William Butler Yeats aimed at reviving the glorious past of the nation (Rowley 50).

[33] The Old English who remained Catholic fought against the Protestant English and British along with the native Irish in Silken Thomas Rebellion (1534), First Desmond Rebellion (1569-1573), Second Desmond Rebellion (1579-1583), 1641 Rebellion.

[34] "Hiberniores Hibernis ipsis"

[35] All of the bog bodies in Heaney's poetry occupy an in-between state, they are dead but not quite so at the same time. They hang between life and death. In his analysis of "Bog Queen", Ramazani suggests that Bog Queen's in-betweenness is implicitly "between the human and the non-human, between poet's projection and her own existence, between opacity and intelligibility" (339). Ramazani's statement works for all bog-bodies in Heaney's poetry.

[36] Lyotard, Jean François. Heidegger and 'the Jews'. Trans. A Michel and M. Roberts. Minneapolis: Minneapolis UP, 1990, p.47. Print.

[37] In the historical and actual cases of plague, people tried to prevent the disease from spreading by setting the infected areas on fire as Engelman explains: "Fire [...] provided the only appropriate measure to destroy wherever "plague germs" might find

accommodation, destroying the agent in its habitat regardless of its character" (144). Neil Murphy also gives an account of certain plagues in history where "brutal measures" such as expelling "the sick and all their relatives" from their town for a certain period of time and burning the houses of the sick to the ground (54). The poem seems to refer this historical association between plague and fire.

[38] Historical records about how the wolves died out support the testimony given in the poem. Neeson claims that wolves, alongside woodkernes, in the Irish woodlands were regarded as the "most serious dangers to the colonists", who were mostly English and Scottish Protestants, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries therefore several destructive measures were taken against them to ensure the planters' safety (140).Wolves and woodkernes are reported to have been "bracketed together" and hunted and it is also claimed that their hunters were rewarded (Neeson 140)

[39] Neeson also wrote extensively about the way the Irish woodlands were systematically destroyed by colonisation in his "Woodland in History and Culture". According to Neeson, mainly for two reasons the colonial power destroyed the woodlands in Ireland: to prevent the Irish from opposing to the colonial power (because the woodlands functioned as their gathering place), and for profit out of timber. Because timber constituted a significant part of England's national economy, the exploitation and thus the reduction of the Irish woodlands was also among the policies of colonial settlement in Ireland. Cooperage and ship-building are among the main ways the Irish timber was put to use (Neeson 139-143).

[40] Heaney's statement in full gives an insight into what he means by complication and simplification, he says:

> If you are an English poet at the front during the First World War, the pressure will be on you to contribute to the war effort, preferably by dehumanizing the face of the enemy. If you are an Irish poet in the wake of the 1916 executions, the pressure will be to revile the tyranny of the executive power. If you are an American poet at the height of the Vietnam War, the official expectation will be for you to wave the flag rhetorically. In these cases, to see the German soldier as a friend and secret sharer, to see the British government as a body who might keep faith, to see the South-East Asian expedition as an imperial betrayal, to do any of these things is to add complication where the general desire is for a simplification. [...] In the activity of poetry too, there is 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. ("The Redress of Poetry" 258-59)

[41] "Requiem for Croppies" is a poem published in *Door into the Dark* (1969). It was written in 1966 to commemorate Easter Rising on its 50th anniversary (Tobin 54). The poem describes how rebels of 1798 United Irishmen Rebellion were killed with barleys in the pockets of their coats and how, because they were not properly buried – "without shroud or coffin" (*DD* 14)-, the barley in their pockets grew up out of their graves in August. Heaney explains the link between Easter Rising and the United Irishmen Rebellion of 1798 in "Feeling into Words", he says "[Easter] Rising was the harvest of seeds sown in 1798" (23). Even though the poem seems to find consolation in the fact that the spirit of 1798 rebellion was not dead and that it was eventually revived in Easter Rising, it also points to the cyclical nature of violence in Ireland. However, once the violence escalated in the early 1970s, the poem could also be read as a nationalist propaganda due to the inherent theme of Irish rebels' resilience and determination to fight on. This caused Heaney to stop reading the poem in public. In an article that he wrote after the 1994 ceasefire, Heaney explains how the changing political situation in the early 1970s loaded the poem with an unintended ideological meaning. With reference to the year 1968 when the Catholic/Nationalist/Republican community started their protests and felt that they could change the unionist government's oppressive policies, Heaney says:

> The fact that I felt free to read a poem about the 1798 rebels to a rather staid audience of middle-class unionists was one such small symptom of a new tolerance. In a few years' time, of course, to have read 'Requiem for the Croppies' in such a venue would have been taken as a direct expression of support for the IRA's campaign of violence. ("Cessation 1994" 46)

In a later interview -carried out by O'Driscoll-, when Heaney is asked to comment on why he stopped reading the poem in public, he again explains the reason with reference to the changing political situation:

> The poem may have been appropriated but it hadn't been written as a recruiting song for the IRA. No way. In the Northern Ireland context, its purpose was to exercise the rights of nationalists to have freedom of cultural speech, as it were. To make space in the official Ulster lexicon for Vinegar Hill as well as the Boyne and the Somme. In 1970 and 1971 there was a promise in the air as well as fury and danger, but soon enough it all went rancid. Internment was bad enough, but then you had Bloody Sunday in 1972, and Bloody Friday, dismaying hardness and ruthlessness in the violence all round, and at that stage a reading aloud of the poem would

> have been taken as overt support for the Provisionals' campaign. So, that's when I stopped. (O'Driscoll 118)

[42] Molino analyses a few poems by Heaney which were written in the early stages of the poet's career and published in journals but eventually omitted from his collections by the poet himself due to the poems' propagandist approach. "Craig's Dragoons" and "Intimidation" are among the poems that got left out due to their one-sidedness. "Craig's Dragoon" establishes a link between past and present violence in Ireland. William Craig, the minister of home affairs in the first decade of the Troubles, and Royal Ulster Constabulary who took orders from Craig to attack on the civil rights marches (McKitrick n.p) are likened respectively to king and his military forces "who massacred thousands of the poorly armed and trained United Irish Army during the rebellion of 1798" (Molino 59). As for "Intimidation", it is about the resentment of Catholics for the traditional Loyalist show of joy on every July 12 in commemoration of the victory of Protestant William III over Catholic James II in the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. The exclusion of these poems and Heaney's conscious decision to stop reading "Requiem for Croppies" in public can be interpreted as the poet's reluctance in providing the Provisional IRA with ideological support and thus his conviction that such poems can be used to promote "deadly and malignant" societal movements or acts as Volkan suggests (307).

[43] The collection is divided into two parts: the first part consists of poems which establish a link between the contemporary violence with the atavistic violence of the Vikings and Iron Age people, while the second part consists of poems that represent the Troubles more directly.

[44] Corcoran says: "Hercules is the stronger aggressor breaking the native Antaeus, son of Earth, by removing him from his source of strength in the ground and leaving him in the land in the shape of that persistent Celtic theme, the sleeping giant who will one day awake to lead his people into their true inheritance -a desperate cultural escapism […]" (100). Hakkıoğlu and Parlak read the poems as metaphor for colonisation as well, they suggest: "As ["Antaeus"] refers to the origins of Irish solidity and source of native resistance, ["Hercules and Antaeus"] implies the great loss and the extinction of indigenousness under the mental faculties and growing capacity of the British colonizer" (107). Another critic who contributes to this argument is Robin

Glendinning who calls "Hercules and Antaeus" as "another poem in which Hercules is England and Antaeus is Ireland. Hercules is a civilising power who can defeat Antaeus when he raises him off the ground. But everytime he is thrown down, Antaeus redoubles his strength. Heaney describes Antaeus as 'the mould-hugger'. His power lies in 'river veins', 'secret gullies' and 'the cradling dark' in his language, his myth and his heritage" (12).

[45] In O'Driscoll's interview with Heaney, the poet says the changing times dictated him to abandon the nationalist narratives of history:

> The *aisling* understanding of history, let's face it, was based on the facts of invasion, expropriation and defeat of the Gaelic order, so it became a part of cultural nationalist mindset and continued to have a more than subliminal appeal for Northern nationalists –we could still romanticise ourselves as the ones in thrall to the foreigner, looking forward to a moment of deliverance into some true, 'unoccupied' condition. But the age of Blair and Brown is very different from the age of Brookeborough. Catholics, men and women, were more than metaphorically put upon when you had the likes of Brookeborough telling his supporters not to employ Catholics. There has been change, in other words, in the world that produced me, and change has also been affected in me by what I've lived through in the Republic and in America; and poetry is bound to manifest the reality of change. For better or worse, it's a case of *quod scripsi, scripsi.* (170)

[46] The plantation of Ireland was undertaken by English and Scottish Protestants. Dobson claims that it was especially after the Union of the Crowns of English and Scottish Kingdoms in 1603 with the coronation of James I that Scottish Protestants became a partner in colonising the island (v) thus three culturally and linguistically distinct populations started to live together since then.

[47] H. O'Donoghue asserts that the word "*mose* or *mos* means 'bog' in both Danish and Icelandic, and came into Ulster English via Scots" (193).

[48] Schirmer argues that the revival movement produced a great number of writers who subverted "the movement's most fundamental assumptions" (166). According to Shirmer, political writers such as Joseph Campbell, Padraic Collum, Thomas MacDonagh and Patrick Pearse made efforts to restore the Catholic dimension of Irish identity and also to "replace the early revival's idea of the Celt with a more culturally authentic representation of the Gael" (166).

[49] Molino says: "The reference to a 'world-tree' recalls the tremendous Yggdrasil tree of Norse mythology that supported the cosmos -its roots extending to Niflheim, the netherworld; to Midgard, the home of man; to Jotunheim, the place of the giants; to Asgard, the home of the gods" (98). Henry Hart and Heather O'Donoghue also suggest that the "world-tree" that the speaker sees in his mind's eye is the mythical Yggdrasil in their analysis of the poem (Hart 82; H. O'Donoghue 193).

[50] "Punishment" might be regarded as an exception for this as it responds to the way the Provisional IRA violently punished Catholic women fraternising with the British soldiers. The violent punishment of women was probably motivated by the British Troops' opening fire on the protesters in Bloody Sunday, though the poem does not directly refer to it. The response to the recent memory of Catholic women's punishment and of Bloody Sunday involves an evocation of how Germanic tribes used to punish adultery. In that sense, this poem is engaged with memory-work in the same way as the poems in Wintering Out and Field Work are. "Punishment" will be analysed in detail in the continuation of the chapter.

[51] Edna Longley asks this question in discussing the paradoxical position-taking of the speaker of the poem "Punishment" towards the victims and supposed perpetrators of traumatic violence in her article " 'Inner Emigre' or 'Artful Voyeur'? *North*" (45).

[52] Jankowitz reports that throughout the Troubles approximately 3700-4000 people were killed due to the paramilitaries' attacks (9). 43 percent of these casualties are reported to be Catholics while 29.6 percent are Protestants (Jankowitz 9). Jankowitz argues that "whilst all major protagonists were responsible for violence to varying degrees, exact figures are contested; most accounts hold republican paramilitaries responsible for the majority of deaths at 57.8 per cent, followed by loyalist paramilitaries at 29.9 per cent and finally security forces at 9.9 per cent" (9).

[53] The Royal Ulster Constabulary which was overrepresented by Protestants had attacked the areas populated by Catholics in Derry -Bogside in August 1969. The attack quickly escalated into reciprocal violence (M. Smith 49, Dawson, *Making Peace* 93) and as a result British troops were brought in.

[54] Barry Doherty suggests that "support for the IRA amongst Catholic communities grew rapidly following Bloody Sunday" (14).

[55] The poem consists of three sections each of which has a different focus. In the first section, the speaker describes his memories of funerals where he witnessed the peaceful and ritualistic send-off of his dead relatives to their last voyage. The speaker seems to think that such family funerals enables one to gain a certain imperturbability about death as he says: "I shouldered a kind of manhood, / stepping in to lift the coffins/ of dead relations" (*N* 6). The line implies that the acceptance of death, the overt acknowledgement of it in a funeral makes people grow up. Thus, this section focuses on how such funerals "had once tamed death" (Ramazani 335) and how they used to enable people to accept death.

[56] Provisional IRA exploded a series of bombs around Belfast to avenge the victims of the Bloody Sunday (Edwards 11).

[57] H. O'Donoghue rightly suggests that Heaney "with masterful ambiguity" allows "the reader to suppose that the vision of Gunnarr offers hope and affirmation following violence, while Njal's saga demonstrates exactly the opposite" (200).

[58] The destination of the funeral cortege that the speaker imagines is "the great chambers of Boyne" (*N* 7). Known as the "Bend of the Boyne" (Brugh na Bóinne), the burial place chosen for the victims of Troubles in the poem, is an archaeological site where megalithic structures were excavated since the nineteenth century onwards. The site was actively populated from the prehistoric times until the fourteenth century (Eogan and Grogan 124). Thus, the procession moving through "the megalithic doorway" (N 8) might be symbolising a move from the present to the past.

[59] The phrase is taken from Heaney's poem "An Afterwards" in *Field Work* (40). In the poem, the speaker imagines himself dead and placed in the ninth circle of Dante's inferno like all the other poets. There he is visited by his widow who is accompanied by Virgil's wife and asks who, among the poets, has led the "most dedicated and exemplary life on earth" (*FW* 40). The wide's imagined answer is far from praise for him: "You weren't the worst. You aspired to a kind,/ indifferent, fault-on-both-sides tact" (*FW* 40). In a way, the poem indicates that Heaney sees his own poetry at least

up to *Field Work* as an objective/ non-partisan writing, which makes him neither the most dedicated and exemplary nor the worst poet.

[60] "Hercules and Antaeus", "Bog Queen", "The Digging Skeleton" have been argued to treat speaking about cultural traumas as dangerous as they run the risk of deepening the rifts between communities-in-conflict and of opening the old wounds. "Bog Queen" and "Punishment" imply it is impossible to bear witness truthfully to cultural traumas because they are distorted in the collective memory and because the experiences are too complicated to be grasped and told.

[61] Corcoran finds *Field Work* as "more relaxed in structure than *North,* less concentratedly intent on its own coherence" (*Seamus Heaney* 127). According to Corcoran poems that respond to the cultural trauma of the Troubles are scattered about the collection among pastorals and love or marriage poems (*Seamus Heaney* 128).

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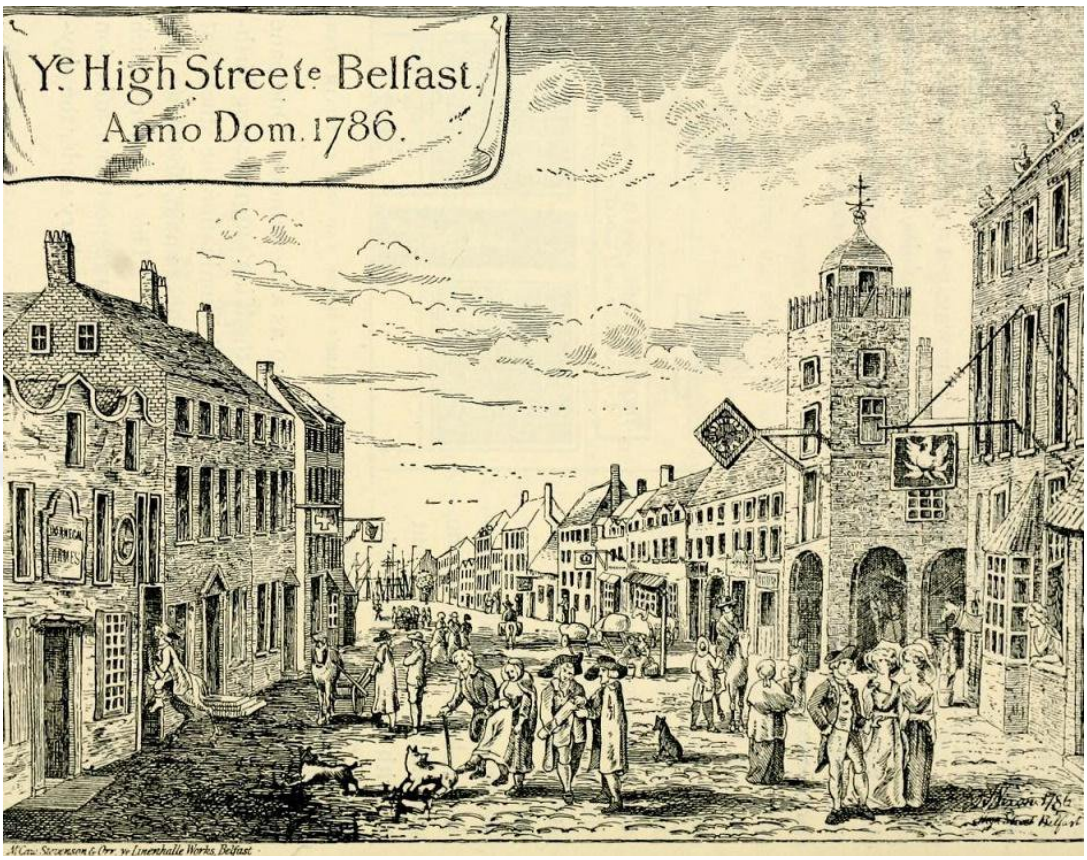
APPENDIX 1



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APPENDIX 2: ORIGINALITY REPORTS

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
DOKTORA TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ORİJİNALLİK RAPORU

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA

Tarih: 18/11/2019

Tez Başlığı : "Tarihe Tanıklık Eden Sözcükler" : Seamus Heaney'nin Erken Dönem Şiirlerinde Tanıklık İfadesi ve Travma

Yukarıda başlığı gösterilen ve Danışmanlığımda hazırlanan tez çalışmasının a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam ...156... sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 15/11/2019 tarihinde Turnitin adlı intihal tespit programından aşağıda işaretlenmiş filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezin benzerlik oranı % 4 'tür.

Uygulanan filtrelemeler:

1- ☒ Kabul/Onay ve Bildirim sayfaları hariç
2- ☒ Kaynakça hariç
3- ☒ Alıntılar hariç
4- ☐ Alıntılar dâhil
5- ☒ 5 kelimeden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orijinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları'nı inceledim ve bu Uygulama Esasları'nda belirtilen azami benzerlik oranlarına göre tez çalışmasının herhangi bir intihal içermediğini; aksinin tespit edileceği muhtemel durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

TEZ DANIŞMANI:

AD/SOYAD: Huriye Reis
ÜNVAN: Prof. Dr.
İMZA:

TEZİ HAZIRLAYAN ÖĞRENCİ BİLGİLERİ:

Adı Soyadı:	Gülay Gülpınar Özoran
Öğrenci No:	N11243322
Anabilim Dalı:	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı
Programı:	Doktora
Statüsü:	☒ Doktora ☐ Bütünleşik Dr.

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DISSERTATION ORIGINALITY REPORT

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUGE AND LITERATURE

Date: 18/11/2019

Thesis Title / Topic: "Words as Bearers of History" : Testimony and Trauma in Seamus Heaney's Early Poetry

According to the originality report obtained by ~~myself~~/my thesis advisor by using the Turnitin plagiarism detection software and by applying the filtering options stated below on 15./11../2019 for the total of ....156..... pages including the a) Title Page, b) Introduction, c) Main Chapters, and d) Conclusion sections of my thesis entitled as above, the similarity index of my thesis is ...4.... %.

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1. Approval and Declaration sections excluded
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I declare that I have carefully read Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences Guidelines for Obtaining and Using Thesis Originality Reports; that according to the maximum similarity index values specified in the Guidelines, my thesis does not include any form of plagiarism; that in any future detection of possible infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility; and that all the information I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

18/11/2019 gülpınarÖ

Date and Signature

Name Surname:	Gülay Gülpınar Özoran
Student No:	N11243322
Department:	English Language and Literature
Program:	Ph.D.
Status:	☐ Masters ☒ Ph.D. ☐ Integrated Ph.D.

ADVISOR APPROVAL

APPROVED.

Prof.Dr. Huriye Reis

APPENDIX 3: ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORMS

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ETİK KOMİSYON MUAFİYETİ FORMU

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA

Tarih: 18/11/2019

Tez Başlığı: "Tarihe Tanıklık Eden Sözcükler" : Seamus Heaney'nin Erken Dönem Şiirlerinde Tanıklık İfadesi ve Travma

Yukarıda başlığı gösterilen tez çalışmam:

1. İnsan ve hayvan üzerinde deney niteliği taşımamaktadır,
2. Biyolojik materyal (kan, idrar vb. biyolojik sıvılar ve numuneler) kullanılmasını gerektirmemektedir.
3. Beden bütünlüğüne müdahale içermemektedir.
4. Gözlemsel ve betimsel araştırma (anket, mülakat, ölçek/skala çalışmaları, dosya taramaları, veri kaynakları taraması, sistem-model geliştirme çalışmaları) niteliğinde değildir.

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Etik Kurullar ve Komisyonlarının Yönergelerini inceledim ve bunlara göre tez çalışmamın yürütülebilmesi için herhangi bir Etik Kurul/Komisyon'dan izin alınmasına gerek olmadığını; aksi durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

18/11/2019
Tarih ve İmza

Adı Soyadı: Gülay Gülpınar Özoran
Öğrenci No: N11243322
Anabilim Dalı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı
Programı: Doktora
Statüsü: ☐ Yüksek Lisans ☒ Doktora ☐ Bütünleşik Doktora

DANIŞMAN GÖRÜŞÜ VE ONAYI

Uygundur
Prof. Dr. Hüniye Reis
(Unvan, Ad Soyad, İmza)

Detaylı Bilgi: http://www.sosyalbilimler.hacettepe.edu.tr
Telefon: 0-312-2976860 **Faks:** 0-3122992147 **E-posta:** sosyalbilimler@hacettepe.edu.tr

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ETHICS COMMISSION FORM FOR THESIS

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DEPARTMENT

Date: 18/11/2019

Thesis Title: "Words as Bearers of History" : Testimony and Trauma in Seamus Heaney's Early Poetry

My thesis work related to the title above:

1. Does not perform experimentation on animals or people.
2. Does not necessitate the use of biological material (blood, urine, biological fluids and samples, etc.).
3. Does not involve any interference of the body's integrity.
4. Is not based on observational and descriptive research (survey, interview, measures/scales, data scanning, system-model development).

I declare, I have carefully read Hacettepe University's Ethics Regulations and the Commission's Guidelines, and in order to proceed with my thesis according to these regulations I do not have to get permission from the Ethics Board/Commission for anything; in any infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility and I declare that all the information I have provided is true.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

18/11/2019
Gülpınar

Date and Signature

Name Surname:	Gülay Gülpınar Özoran
Student No:	N11243322
Department:	English Language and Literature
Program:	Ph.D.
Status:	☐ MA ☒ Ph.D. ☐ Combined MA/ Ph.D.

ADVISER COMMENTS AND APPROVAL

Approved

Prof. Dr. Hüriye Reis

(Title, Name Surname, Signature)