

THE SPATIAL TURN IN CONTEMPORARY IRISH POETRY:  
THE POETRY OF SEAMUS HEANEY  
AND  
CIARAN CARSON

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## **ABSTRACT**

**THE SPATIAL TURN IN CONTEMPORARY IRISH POETRY:  
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Dođan, Buket

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This study discusses the process of places becoming spatialized and of frozen identities turning into mobile subjectivities in Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson's later poetry against the background of the changing conceptions of space, subjectivity, land, history and identity. To analyse their response to the spatial turn and their treatment of place and space in the wake of seminal developments in domestic and international affairs starting with the early 1990s, the theoretical framework in this study employs Edward Soja's understanding of "thirdspace," and Deleuze and Guattari's "rhizome" and "smooth/striated spaces" as its conceptual tools. This study argues that the vacillation between the rural heritage and contemporary cosmopolitan urban space in Heaney's poetry points at a site which juxtaposes the rural with the urban, the past with the contemporary, and the public with the private at a new

fluid crossroads. In a similar vein, Ciaran Carson reveals the transparency between the borders of the places and spaces, thus, in his poetry, places dissolve into rhizomatic spaces which welcome any movement in any direction defying the dictations of hierarchical thinking. This study also discusses how both poets make use of the potentials of the textual space to embody the process of spatialization in the linguistic form. It comes to the conclusion that both Heaney and Carson respond to the spatial turn in their own ways but in their response both of them moved towards the thirdspace or smooth space, respectively, to subvert the previous secondspace perspective.

**Keywords:** Seamus Heaney, Ciaran Carson, spatialization, thirdspace, rhizome

## ÖZ

ÇAĞDAŞ İRLANDA ŞİİRİNDE UZAMSAL EVRİLME: SEAMUS HEANEY  
VE  
CIARAN CARSON'IN ŞİİRİ

Doğan, Buket

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Bu çalışma Seamus Heaney ve Ciaran Carson'ın son dönem şiirlerinde, mekanların uzamlaştırılma ve sabit kimliklerin akışkan öznelere dönüşme sürecini değişen uzam, özne, vatan, tarih ve kimlik gibi kavramlar bağlamında incelemektedir. Bu çalışma, 1990'larda hem yurtiçi hem de uluslararası alanlarda gerçekleşen köklü değişikliklerden sonra, şairlerin uzamsal evrilmeye nasıl tepki verdiklerini ve mekan/uzamı nasıl ele aldıklarını incelerken, Edward Soja'nın "üçüncüuzam" anlayışı ile Deleuze ve Guattari'nin "köksap," "pürüzsüz/çizgili uzamlar" kavramlarını kuramsal çerçeve olarak kullanacaktır. Bu çalışma, Seamus Heaney'nin kırsal kökler ve kozmopolit şehirsiz uzam arasındaki gel-gitlerinin, kırsal/kentsel, geçmiş/çağdaş ve kamusal/hususî gibi uzamsal kavramların yan yana gelebildiği yeni bir alana işaret ettiğini öne sürmektedir. Benzer bir bağlamda ele alındığında, Ciaran Carson'ın şiirleri, mekanların arasında olduğu varsayılan sınırların nasıl şeffaf hale geldiğini açığa vurmaktadır. Bu nedenle onun şiirlerinde, mekanlar, hiyerarşik düşünme

tarzının kurgularını reddedip herhangi bir yndeki hareketi mmkn kılan rizomatik uzamlara dnşmektedir. Bu alıřma, ayrıca, her iki řairin uzamlařtırma srecini yazınsal uzamın el verdiđi aralarla nasıl desteklediđini de tartıřmaktadır. Bu alıřma, bu řairlerin uzamsal evrilmeye kendilerine zg yntemlerle yanıt verdikleri ve her ikisinin de nceki ikincuzam anlayıřını yıkmak iin sırasıyla ncuzam ya da przsz uzamlara dođru yneldikleri sonucuna varmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Seamus Heaney, Ciaran Carson, uzamsallařtırma, ncuzam, kksap.

to  
my dearest sons Adel & Can  
for letting me experience such kind of love



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

As space appears to shrink to a 'global village' of telecommunications and a 'spaceship earth' of economic and ecological interdependencies ... and as time horizons shorten to the point where the present is all there is (the world of the schizophrenic), so we have to learn to cope with an overwhelming sense of *compression* of our spatial and temporal worlds. (Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* 240)

#### 1.1. Aim of the Study

Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson's poetries question and problematize the traditionally acknowledged organic link between place, identity and nationality in the aftermath of the spatial turn in the late twentieth century. Both poets in their unique ways poeticize their response to this turn by putting the emphasis on space and subjectivity rather than on a stable place and identity. Both poets turn frozen identities into fluid subjectivities. Thus, this study will look at how these two poets revisit familiar places of the past and how, in their poetry, the links between identity, place, nation and history are dissolved in the new space their poetries embody. To be able to shed light on what kind of paradigm shifts these poets experience, this study will borrow conceptual tools from spatial and subjectivity theorists, specifically from Soja, Deleuze, Guattari and Massey. To start with, Seamus Heaney, vacillating

between the rural heritage and urban cosmopolitan area positions his poetry in the interface which generates a site that juxtaposes the rural/urban, the past/contemporary and the public/private. To analyse this new space, which extends beyond the places of the past and the contemporary atmosphere with a new spatial awareness that would problematize the previous dualistic view, I am going to borrow Edward Soja's concept of "thirdspace"<sup>1</sup>. This conceptual tool will help to understand the following points: Heaney looked at the places of the past, yet they could not contain all the reference points for the subjectivity he was poeticizing. He was not at ease with the contemporary global and cosmopolitan culture. Thus, in his poetry the materialistic firstspace<sup>2</sup> of the past and its reflections were converted to a new spatial awareness of the thirdspace, which also gave him a new critical outlook to gauge the working mechanisms of the dualistic thinking. The thirdspace he was representing is fecund, open to multiple relations and affairs, and defying the hegemonic discourse. Trying to challenge and critique the hierarchies set between place and space, rural and urban, and global and local, this study will also borrow Doreen Massey's understanding of space, global and local. In her understanding of space, Massey puts the emphasis on multiplicity that refers to multiple roots, connections to multiple histories and places. Moreover, she underlines the

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Soja, in *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (1996), offers "thirdspace" as an alternative spatial tool, which combines the traditional geographical concept of place and space as the representation of place. Detailed explanation will be provided in the "Theoretical Framework" chapter on pages 73-74.

<sup>2</sup> Firstspace is regarded as a perspective that is focused on the 'real' material world according to Soja (*Thirdspace* 6).

importance of constitutive interrelatedness in space, which refers to living together with different and heterogeneous groups of dwellers. In such kind of a spatial atmosphere, subjectivity is configured differently; that is, the organic link between land, nationality, history and subject is challenged as these totalizing narratives cease to have an encompassing effect on the subject and fail to create a homogenous type of community. In this space, the subjects Heaney has given voice to are open to multiple relations and connections, and mobile, and they are aware of the loss of the unified "I" of previous poetic traditions. Along with Soja and Massey, there will be some references to Jahan Ramazani's concept of transnationalism to be able to explore the multiple and dialogic relationships with various cultures and spaces in his poetry.

In the same line of thinking, Ciaran Carson takes the places of the past which were assumed to belong to a certain sect or a group and spatializes these sites with a new awareness. This novel understanding of space lays bare the working mechanisms of and rationale behind gridding places. Carson challenges the Cartesian space and subjectivity by revealing the transparency and porosity of the borders between places and their dwellers. In doing so, he exploits the potentials of the textual space literally as well as figuratively; that is, Carson's poetry from the early 1990s onwards responds to a paradigm shift in configuration of space and subjectivity. In depicting rural and urban spaces, he adopts a conciliatory attitude to relieve the tension between the binaries. In other words, he defies mapping the place with fixed coordinates; rather he embraces city space which is fluid, open to change and any kind of experience. Against such a backdrop, subjectivity, too, appears in multiplicity and multi-



dimensionality. That is, the subject is no more a flaneur wandering around the city passively as an observer, instead, the flaneur as the poetic persona depicts subjects in dialogic relationship with the city space. In order to poeticize these spaces of movement, plurality and performativity, some conceptual tools from subjectivity and space theories; like Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome, smooth and striated spaces<sup>3</sup> will be borrowed. Ciaran Carson delineates spaces which are in a constant process of construction and deconstruction without any hierarchical structure, and which can be explained with the term rhizome that refers to any kind of network stripped off hierarchical categories. Witnessing a period characterized by clashes, troubles and strict control of the state apparatuses, Carson's depiction of space and how subjects dwell in it can be best explained by how these subjects are exposed to continuous variations of movement and form in between smooth and striated spaces. With the spatial model offered by Deleuze and Guattari, this study aims to explore, in Carson's poetry, how smooth spaces encompass more movement in any direction accommodating third subjectivities.

One of the important reasons why these two poets are brought together in this study is the fact that they responded in their own ways to the spatial turn in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. They both witnessed the bloody events and conflicts known as the Troubles, which shaped the spirit and the agenda of the Irish culture to a great extent. Due to historical reasons for the Irish, place is one of

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<sup>3</sup> Deleuze and Guattari use these terms to point at two different sites, which are not separate or each other's opposites. Smooth spaces of nomad thought offer some routes for escape from the state apparatuses; striated or gridded spaces are confined by anchored and recognizable points by State philosophy. A subject may wander among these two spaces.

the most important identity markers. Identity is also defined by what sect or political view one adopts. As identity and place are two important elements in the Irish context, I would like to dwell on how these two categories are poeticised by these poets from the same background. Focusing on the period after the early 1990s, this study deals with how these two poets responded to the paradigm shift by challenging the totalizing narratives; that is, how essential identities and/or shared culture made an impact on their poetry. As well as their similarities, this study underlines their differences in spatializing the places of the past. Belonging to the previous generation, Heaney is exposed to the zeitgeist of a preceding framework which felt the anxiety of losing the symbiotic tie between the land and the identity. On the other hand, born in 1948, Carson already met the clean break with the unified "I" and organic links. Carson is more experimental in exploiting the textual space with several techniques. Their differences would also testify to the inability of totalizing narratives to hold the two poets from the same background within the same lines of response. In that sense, this study will also try to address the desire of the contemporary Irish poetry to hear a multiplicity of voices and the broken relationship between the centre and the margin.

This dissertation aims to offer a novel perspective to explore how place, space and subjectivity appear in Heaney's and Carson's poetry. Taking the point that, in their poetry most of the time place and space are taken as separate entities without the notion of porosity (as in Eugene O'Brien or Neal Alexander), as my starting point, I will try to design a new perspective which is built on this porosity. Review of scholarship also indicates that the symbiosis between space

and subjectivity in their poetry has not been paid enough attention. This dissertation will also respond to this gap in literary studies and explore this symbiosis by consulting Soja's thirdspace and Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome and smooth spaces as the conceptual tools. This dissertation looks into closely how Heaney and Carson as members of different poetic generations, treated place, space, and subjectivity in a comparative mode of analysis, and this is another attempt to contribute to literary scholarship with a new insight.

That even poets with mononational labels have dialogic relationships with other countries and nationalities is indicative in testifying to the transhistorical and transnational<sup>4</sup> links between different cultures and places. While seeking traces of these links, this study will not overlook the unique historical context of contemporary Ireland, especially that of the 1990s and its aftermath. Michael Thurston and Nigel Alderman, too, underline the significance of studying poetry in its unique context: "Poems are situated. That is, they are produced, circulated, and read in specific historical circumstances" (19). Yet, as Ramazani states, we should constantly remind ourselves that "the cultures, locations, and identities connected or juxtaposed are themselves agglomerations of complex origin – though those earlier fusions have often been naturalized in ways that occlude the surprise or irony of their convergence" (47). In order to see how epistemological categories, like place, identity or

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<sup>4</sup> "Transnationalism" is widely referred to as the interconnectivity between people of different origins and nations. Yet, it is used here in the sense Jahan Ramazani uses in his *A Transnational Poetics* (2009). The term should not always be associated with "dialogic energies and interstitial identities", yet it is often a synonym for "neoliberal globalism or corporate jet-setting" (31). Like nationalism, the cultural politics of transnationalism is "situational and cannot be predicted – both ethnic separatism and cross-cultural interchange, both global dialogue and imperial imposition are in some sense 'transnational'" (31).

history in the wake of the seminal developments in the early 1990s and its aftermath underwent substantial changes, there will be an overview of the historical, social and political atmosphere of the previous decades. Ireland and Northern Ireland under the British rule experienced several conflicts, tensions and even bloody events, which had a great impact on social, economic and political life in the archipelago. Thus, this study will give a quick look at all these events in order to understand in what kind of a context this poetry arises. With one eye on the particular historical moments of Ireland, and the other on the global erosion of the totalizing grand narratives, this dissertation will look at how these two poets revisit the familiar places of the past and dissolve the links between identity, place, nation and history in the space they poeticise.

Though contextual references enrich the polysemic nature of poetry, the meaning is still dependent on each and every word resonating in the mind of the reader. Thus, the use of language, poetic devices and style will be given close attention in this study. Language itself turns out to be a focus for the poets in this study. Especially starting with modernist poetry, which was non-representational and aesthetically self-conscious, language is seen as the only entity to experiment with as anything out of the text lost its transcendental and metaphysical significance. In other words, meaning in traditional sense as a stable concept is subordinated to the materiality of language. Similarly, contemporary poetry envisaging anything null and void outside language and poetry reinforces further experimentalism with language in its free textual space. Ciaran Carson, particularly, uses poetic language and even the format of the page to evince that language cannot refer to anything other than itself.

Because language has transformed itself into the main focus in contemporary poetry, this study will trace briefly how poetic language has been treated until recent decades.

The transformation of the conception of language due to the erosion of totalizing narratives or the centre-periphery structure makes itself evident in poetry. Thus, without having any reference point other than language itself, poetry welcomes theoretical perspectives that explore the ontological nature of language or how it embodies, employs and represents some categories like space, identity, and temporality within its universe. Despite many poets' and critics' disinclination towards literary theory, theory and poetry have been interwoven in the second half of the twentieth century. From the New Criticism onwards, focusing mainly on the formal aspects or the material conditions of being in a literary work, literary theory has found parallel resonances in experimentation of the language poets, who assert that language dictates meaning, not vice versa and that the reader's participation is a must to find a way to approach the broken poetic language. It is because of this reason that poetry welcomes theoretical propositions.

One of the major things that literary theory has injected to poetic tradition is the critique of unitary poetic persona. The notion of all-knowing omnipresent (lyric, or not) subject and consciousness is problematized in contemporary poetics. The poetic voice in the works of the poets under scrutiny in this study, does not promise any space of truth validity beyond language; that is, it does not address any transcendental or metaphysical presence embodied by a stable signified. For many contemporary poets, the stable subject gives way

to the freeplay of multiple subjectivities with the help of the linguistic system, which has become the poetic material itself. Heaney displaces the unitary poetic persona and replaces it with multiple subjectivities vacillating between different sites of existence. Ciaran Carson, similarly, rejects positing a pervasive unified subject as he poeticizes split subjectivities dwelling in different spaces in the living present. In a nutshell, the presupposed referential nature of language or the potential to signify through the embodiment of the unified subject is problematized and challenged by the poets in this study as both poets in their unique ways replace the unified subject who promises a transcendental wholeness beyond language with some alternative third voices. In the works of both poets, how they replace the stable “I” of poetry becomes an important issue, therefore; in order to trace and contextualize the paradigm shift in unitary poetic persona in Heaney’s and Carson’s work, this study will include a very brief survey about the lyric “I”, starting from the Romantics to contemporary poetry.

Another poetic element to be traced is how the poetic voice is reconfigured and poeticized in relation to space and time in the poetry of these poets. The self that the Enlightenment epistemology configured was a unified and stable whole within the frame of totalizing narratives. However, contemporary poetics liberates the lyric subject from such restrictions and/or set identities. In such a context, this study will postulate that the self is split into multiple positions and voices in the aftermath of the reconsideration of unified subjectivity in a post Nietzschean and a post-Freudian world as proposed by Barthes and Derrida. In the light of recent conceptions of space and subjectivity,

the poetic voice is treated in a new light. Departing from Cartesian conceptions of the ego and space<sup>5</sup>, the split or multiple subjectivities reshape a new kind of relationship with the space which is constructed in a rhizomatic<sup>6</sup> and nomadic<sup>7</sup> site. In this site of existence, the previously acknowledged self, who is tightly connected to history and to the land s/he dwells on, is largely problematized. In this dissertation, the working mechanisms of the binaries to promote transcendental wholeness will be laid bare with the help of the conceptual tools of space like rhizome, nomadism and thirdspace in Heaney's and Carson's poeties.

With the help of these conceptual tools, this dissertation aims to explore how the bond between the subject and place together with history and nationality fails to envisage a presupposed whole being in Heaney and Carson. Departing from the Cartesian understanding of space and subjectivity, which proposes space as an ultimate and empty entity that needs to be filled with place and organic links, Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson create a new spatial awareness, which generates a mobile and anisotropic space that is open to

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<sup>5</sup> Cartesian conception of space takes space as absolute and isotropic, which is dead and immobile. Thus, once the subject is positioned in Cartesian space, there is no fear for dislocation. Cartesian space will be further explained in the "Theoretical Framework" of this study on pages 68-70.

<sup>6</sup> In *A Thousand of Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari, along with rhizomatics introduce several other plateaus to explore our lines of thought. Rhizomatics is set against the continental philosophy which is resembled to arborescent tree model. The concept of "rhizome" will be explored in the theory section of this study. Please see pages 83-86.

<sup>7</sup>Nomad and nomadism are tropes that are used to understand space in line with rhizome. In this study, the term "nomadic poetics" is used in the sense it is treated by Pierre Joris in *A Nomad Poetics*. The nomad in the multiplicity of selves, languages, and locations is in a constant drift without having the possibility of being reterritorialized. Further explanation about nomad and nomadic poetics will be given in the "Theoretical Framework" between 88-93.

deterritorialization<sup>8</sup>. For the former, by borrowing thirdspace as a conceptual tool, this study will aim to show how Heaney creates a new spatial insight by configuring a new site of space vacillating between the spaces of the past and those of the global, urban or cosmopolitan. After thirding<sup>9</sup> these two sites of existence, Heaney's thirdspace is open to multiple selves and more mobile. In a similar fashion, Ciaran Carson discovers a new site of spatial existence in the midst of Belfast, which is rhizomatic, which welcomes nomadic subjectivities, and which embodies itself in the junction between smooth and striated spaces.

While dealing with Seamus Heaney's and Ciaran Carson's poetry from the early 1990s onwards, this study, firstly, aims to look at the traditional assumptions in the Western tradition about the organic tie between the subject and the place as a fixed and homogenous entity. The next challenge concerns itself with the conventional suppositions of understanding space and place as mere geographical entities and tries to display them as multidimensional bodies, which can form a dialogic relationship with several epistemological categories such as race, nation and subjectivity. In this study, with one eye on these two poets' peculiarity and the other on global and worldwide conceptual metamorphosis, I aim to discuss how place and space cease to be separate

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<sup>8</sup> Deleuze and Guattari use the terms "deterritorialization" and "reterritorialization" for the first time in *Anti-Oedipus* (1972). These terms are used to depict the constant process of transformation in relating ourselves to the places. Once the control and/or order is taken away from a land or place, the self is deterritorialized, yet it is -not necessarily- followed by the restructuring of the place or territory that has been deterritorialized.

<sup>9</sup> Edward Soja, in *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (1996), offers an alternative way for spatial awareness, and with the help of "thirding" of the spatial imagination, Soja shows a way to go beyond the traditional dualism between the material and mental spaces.



entities as places stop being the sites of monolithic locations in their poetry. I will also focus on how Seamus Heaney's and Ciaran Carson's poetry from the early 1990s onwards welcomes a transnational, rhizomatic and nomadic aesthetics along with a new spatial awareness.

This dissertation focuses mainly on the 1990s and its aftermath; thus, it will include a brief history of Ireland and the archipelago of the few previous decades before the 1990s to make more sense of the paradigm shift in poetry. This period is consequential in the sense that Ireland witnessed several vital changes, which re-shaped writing and reading of subjectivities, space and transnational entities. During the first half of the 1980s, Ireland's bleak political and economic state had a pervasive influence on the conception of space in the country. A general macrocosmic downturn in Western economies made Ireland vulnerable and Ireland had to confront problems such as unemployment, high crime rates, people with depressed psychologies and community divisions. The unresolved Northern crisis between Britain and Ireland during Thatcher's government affected foreign politics adversely. This ongoing Northern crisis quickened the cultural debate in the Republic as reflected by a diverse range of writers, artists and intellectuals. Against the backdrop of these historical and social phenomena, Michael Parker draws attention to how Heaney's and Carson's poetry enabled re-readings and re-imaginings as their work "paved the way for the new perspectives associated with the 1990s" (5). Analysing the poems in the collections in the 1990s and later, I will occasionally be relating poems to both national and transnational contexts.

Since the early 1990s, things have changed radically on the island of Ireland. Increasingly, diverse voices started to address not only issues preoccupying the local audience but also wider geopolitical concerns. As Scott Brewster and many others have stated, “Irishness constitutes an elastic reference point that is at once everywhere and nowhere” and the “conventional oppositions of east-west and north-south that have shaped modern Irish culture must also now be re-thought in global terms” (17). Putting contemporary Irish poetry in a transnational perspective makes it evident that the “new routes of exchange are not just between Ireland and Britain, Northern Ireland and the Republic, Ireland and America, but also between Ireland and an eastward-leaning Europe, and between Ireland and the developing world” (17). Both the history of Ireland and of the world in general refute simplistic centre/margin and tradition/modernity polarities and borders become porous. In order to be able to address transnational relations between countries, nations or inhabitants in the context of Heaney’s and Carson’s poetry, this study will devote some space to transnationalism as a conceptual tool which is devised by Jahan Ramazani in *A Transnational Poetics*.

In the contemporary Irish world, place and home have become everlasting shifting signifiers. In case of Northern Ireland, both the Unionists and Nationalists favour places with secure borders as they yearn for an exclusivist sense of place in the face of spatial fluidity or porousness. Since the latest outbreak of the Troubles, poets from Northern Ireland have dealt with the notion of home and interrogated the context of fractured belonging and uncertainty, in an era of rapidly accelerating globalization. There are several

generational, geographical and/or gender factors affecting these poets in their endeavour while dealing with the notion of home. Home can no more simply be “equitable with birthplace, or family place, or even the place where one was reared and spent most of one’s life” (Kennedy-Andrews, *Writing Home* 3). Accordingly, the poets under focus in this study move away from the sense of rootedness and tend to go towards a poetics and politics of displacement, mobility, openness and pluralism. Having witnessed the economic, social and political changes Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson problematize the stable “I” by seeing their home place through the eyes of a local outsider or a resident alien, attaching it the feeling of estrangement that questions any too easy unity between self and place. By critiquing the taken for granted notions about their homeland, the processes through which place is constructed and deconstructed are laid bare; as a result, both poets achieved to open a space of signification, which involves a novel attempt more than simply undermining the stable narratives of place. In such a context, Kennedy-Andrews drives the nail home when he asserts that in contemporary Irish poetry the “crossing of boundaries and the experience of diaspora open up new understandings of the relations between places, a new sense of the permeability and contingency of cultures, new concepts of identity and home” (*Writing Home* 3). This study, therefore, will focus on how former understanding of place is dissolved and spatialized in the ever-shifting city space in Heaney and Carson’s poetry.

## 1.2 Methodology and Concerns about Labelling and Division

In seeking to gauge their poetry, rather than drawing boundaries or offering limits, I aim to analyse and acknowledge how poetry by Heaney and Carson produced in a specific timeline addresses the particular challenges of their historical period and how it paves the way for new insights for reading poems. The strategy I follow will not simply be positioning their poetry in its unique context, but will rather be offering arguments on how their poetry responds to the shifts in conceptions of space and subjectivity.

Trying to periodize the poetry written in the 1990s and in its aftermath in the Irish archipelago, using any literary marker which would allude to any single poetic movement is not preferable as it is impossible to group any two poets under one single heading in the wake of postmodernism. While, for instance, Michael Thurston and Nigel Alderman can bravely name *The Waste Land* the great poetic monument of modernism, they find it difficult “to determine a single great poetic monument of postmodernism” as postmodernist poetry “resists the notions of singularity, greatness, monumentality, and, sometimes, poetry itself” (8). One encompassing term would be “postwar”, which is seemingly a temporal marker and which might be seen as a timely way for periodizing twentieth-century literature, yet it would still not be a convenient term to refer to a period of literary production as time periods may not similarly correspond to the grouping of literary works. Thus, the two world wars may not similarly be compatible temporal markers for a period of literary production. Bearing all these reservations in mind, I would like to refer to

poetries of Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson from the early 1990s onwards as “contemporary”, which is at the same time associated with a temporal marker, as a rather neutral term, yet without risking any reference to a literary movement or a term.

The following chapter will be allocated to the contextual and literary background for the study. The first part of the chapter focuses on Irish poetry till 1990 and gives detailed background information about Irish context, Irish poetry and some prominent figures that made impact on Heaney and Carson. The following subheading, “Contemporary Poetry” will deal with the macro changes in contemporary Europe on poetry, the recent trends, the genealogy of the approaches to the lyric “I” and the poetic voice. The next subsection will be titled “Contemporary Irish Poetry” as it will give a detailed frame recounting how Irish poetry welcomes and reacts to the recent changes along with their peculiar contextual events. As this dissertation plans to make use of conceptual tools about space, the following subheading will reflect how space and place are pivotal in Irish context and poetry. Finally, the chapter will end with introductory information about both poets’ earlier work in order to compare and contrast, and to grasp how they responded to the paradigm shift in their recent careers.

The third chapter will provide a theoretical framework in order to familiarize the reader with the theoretical tools that will be used in this study. The chapter starts with a short overview of the discussions about the distinction between place and space. This study prefers to use space as a functional tool to analyse the relationship between subjectivity and the space it inhabits rather

than place. Yet, in order to provide insights about how place is transformed into space in Heaney's and Carson's poetry, and how they departed from Cartesian conceptions of self and space, this part also aims to explain how they responded to the spatial turn. Another intersection between formerly consolidated binaries this study concentrates on concerns rural and urban spaces. Irish poetry is generally regarded to have flourished in rural space, yet with the existence of time-space compression<sup>10</sup>, the distinction between rural and urban ceases to exist. Thereby, having experienced both rural Ireland and urban space Heaney and Carson generated a kind of space that welcomes both of them in a thirdspace, a rhizomatic and a nomadic one respectively.

The fourth chapter will be focusing on Heaney's work in the 1990s and its aftermath. Different from the early and middle period of his canon, when he was more preoccupied with either personal awareness of his land or with public concerns and anguish respectively, in his later phase starting with *Seeing Things* (1991), Heaney revealed a distinct shift. This study will not seek traces of parallelism between Irish politics and Heaney's poetry, but will pay attention to the mediation between the ancient spaces of the distant past and the remote past of his family in this thirdspace he has created. With his next collection *The Spirit Level* (1996), Heaney blurred the so-called fixed boundaries between spaces and identities of the past like Catholic/Protestant or

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<sup>10</sup> David Harvey coined the term "time-space compression" in his book *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989) to refer to the recognizable change in the spatial and temporal dimensions of social life. He would like to signal "processes that so revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter, sometimes in quite radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves" (240). He believes that "the history of capitalism has been characterized by speed-up in the pace of life, while so overcoming spatial barriers that the world sometimes seems to collapse inwards upon us" (240).

Nationalist/Unionist. Finally, the last collection that will be analysed in this study is *District and Circle* (2006), in which Heaney was more open to transnational spaces and sensibilities along with global trends and configuration of spaces. Heaney's canon in the aftermath of the 1990s consists of some other collections than the ones this study focuses on like *Electric Light* (2001) or *Human Chain* (2010), yet these collections are deliberately set aside as conceptual tools about space apply less than they do in *The Spirit Level* and *District and Circle*.

The chapter on Ciaran Carson's poetry will be focusing on Carson's attempts to poeticize the city of Belfast as a rhizomatic space. In three of his collections namely *First Language* (1994), *Opera Et Cetera* (1996) and *Breaking News* (2003), Carson depicts Belfast as a no more geographical place with uniform dwellers or sites. Unlike his collections in the aftermath of the 1990s, in his previous collections, Carson tended to reflect Belfast as a homogenous city which was involved in the Troubles and was dissected between binaries. Yet, in the collections that are looked into in this study, Carson portrays a city space which rules out Cartesian coordinates and yet which is on the verge of explosion thus, absence. With *Opera Et Cetera* (1996), like Heaney, Carson also moves the city space from Belfast to a transnational context, and problematizes its specificity and fixity by laying Belfast and other cities together. In *Breaking News* (2003), Carson's poetic persona reveals that his previous attempts to say anything about Belfast are futile. Thus he stretches further the city space that he has associated with Belfast, which is unpredictable, on the brink of disappearance and insecure in global and transnational context. In a nutshell,

this chapter will be concerned with how Carson has addressed a new urban spatiality by seeking traces of the rhizomatic links and transnational flows.



**CHAPTER 2**  
**SPATIALIZATION AND TRANSNATIONAL FLOWS IN**  
**CONTEMPORARY IRISH POETRY**

**2.1. Irish Poetry until the 1990s**

We Irish, born into that ancient sect  
But thrown upon the filthy modern tide  
And by its formless spawning fury wrecked,  
Climb to our proper dark, that we may trace  
The lineament of a plummet-measured face.  
(Yeats "The Statues" 28-32)

Although this dissertation does not offer a historical reading of their poetry, exploring the social and historical context within which Heaney and Carson wrote sheds more light on their changing conception of space and subjectivity in their poetry. Therefore, a brief overview of the period between 1801, the year when the Act of Union passed integrating Ireland's administrative bodies to the British Parliament, and the 1990s when the Troubles, which was a historical outcome of the Act of Union, ended. Long before the 1800s, Ireland being situated in the archipelago had been the object of invasions, occupations

and conflicts in different periods<sup>11</sup>. Thus, the category of place has been foregrounded and prioritized over many other epistemological categories in Irish literature due to historical reasons. Michael Thurston and Nigel Alderman emphasize the role of place in producing art or configuring subjectivities, saying: “[t]he idea of place has been central to the poetry of postwar Britain and Ireland, and it tends to function as a means by which the poet can measure both personal and social transformations” (131). One can generalize their statement in such a way to cover the whole Irish history. The importance of place in organizing identities and communities was accepted in the period until the 1990s. However, epistemological categories like place, land, identity and history lost their potential in configuring stable and totalizing narratives for nationalities and cultures after the 1990s as they themselves were conceived on a more slippery ground. Place, specifically, one of the main concerns of this study, ceased to be a fixed entity which functioned to relate people and history to itself in the traditional symbiosis. Acknowledging the disappearance of the set totalitarian principles for laying fixed borders between places and its people,

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<sup>11</sup> The Irish archipelago has been very much accustomed to getting invaded by as various groups as the Germanic tribes and the Normans since the very early ages. The first invasion started with the emergence of Christianity in the 5<sup>th</sup> century in Ireland, when Gaelic Ireland was under the dominance of Celtic paganism and polytheism. The Normans mounted the subsequent invasion in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, which marked the beginning of more than 800 years of direct English rule; yet the attempts of the Crown to assert full control over the archipelago were not always successful. Henry VIII declaring himself King of Ireland and introducing the English Reformation was protested by military campaigns against the British rule. In the wake of military campaigns against the British rule, the Crown introduced the policy of plantation, transferring English and Scottish Protestant settlers into Ireland, which followed displacement of Catholic landholders. This is how the sectarian conflict started to become a recurrent theme in Irish history. Until 1801, when the Act of Union came into force making Ireland as integral part of the United Kingdom under the direct control of Westminster, Catholic majority in the Irish parliament was slowly replaced by the Protestant minority suffering severely from political, economic and social privations.

Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson, reconsider and challenge the impulse to set symbiotic ties between the “home” place and its inhabitants. Thus, both poets, in their unique ways, spatialize the places that were to be linked with Irish topography and history. That is why, they are very much interested in addressing the historical and the topographical data of Ireland from a novel viewpoint. They question this so-called link between place, collective history and identity of the people and this chapter will concern itself with Irish poetry written until the 1990s in order to shed light on contemporary Irish poetry by following a historical and a thematic trajectory.

While referring to a seemingly homogenous group of literary productions of a community, it may be difficult to put it under one single blanket like “Irish.” Once started, many questions may arise like; “is it written in Irish or English?”, the answer to which should inevitably involve Britishness. While most of the poets writing in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have produced in English, they are at the same time deeply influenced by and educated within English poetic tradition, thus, they used British forms of poetry like the sonnet or tended to allude to Anglo Saxon canon. Yet, they relied on the storehouse of the Irish tradition in their choice of the content, myths and stories, place names, words or figures of speech. To label this hybridity as Irish may not explain the question thoroughly. One other question might be “does it have to include only the poets from the Republic of Ireland while excluding the ones from Northern Ireland, a territory that belongs to the British crown?” or “should we include them only if their subject matter is the history, mythology or the contemporary life of Ireland?” The list of questions is inexhaustible, but in

order to provide insight to these questions or even to foster more of others, this study is going to proceed by analysing the common themes in Irish literature and also by trying to come up with alternative ways of thinking. This endeavour is absolutely necessary as issues like place and genealogy occupied a significant place in Irish communal memory due to historical reasons. Their history has been a process of re-membling their collective notion of place and the past. In such a context, this endeavour will also serve to contextualize Heaney and Carson's poetries within Irish frame.

The historical, social and cultural context of Ireland was shaped around national, religious and political conflicts such as; Irish/British, Catholic/Protestant, Nationalist/Unionist, etc. Against the Catholic Nationalists who wanted Home Rule, the Protestant Unionists found being a part of England a much better option. Some of the common comprehensive themes in Irish literature that both Heaney and Carson treated are these conflicts, occupations and exiles. In the wake of World War I, in 1922, Ireland gained a partial freedom. Partitioned Ireland, Northern Ireland as a part of Britain and the Republic of Ireland as a separate free state continued to suffer the above mentioned conflicts on different levels. The Catholic minority in Northern Ireland was devoid of the rights given to the Protestant majority. The Protestant minority in the Republic of Ireland was uneasy and felt unsafe. The whole thing exploded into violence in the 1960s which was called the Troubles in Northern Ireland and which lasted for three decades. This period was violent and bloody. In the midst of all these bloody events, one of the most central motives for the Irish poets was, unsurprisingly, nationalism. They were expected to act as the

spokesperson of one of the parties. An unnamed Sinn Féin hierarch (Danny Morrison, in fact), who sat down opposite to Seamus Heaney on a train to Belfast voiced this demand loudly: “When, for fuck’s sake, are you going to write something for us?” (Morrison, “Seamus Heaney: an appreciation”). Heaney himself made this accusation on himself with exact wording in his poem “The Flight Path” in *The Spirit Level* (25). As part of their troubled history national identity markers were threatened by external forces repeatedly. Nationalism was another colossal issue in Ireland that Irish poets tried to respond to. As the principal concern for the last two hundred years, nationalism has, thus, shaped much of Ireland’s art and literature from 1801 onwards. In Justin Quinn’s words, the dominant nationalist ideology “both imagines an origin back in the vague ancient past and fantasises a glorious utopian future for the nation” (2). Nationalism, being triggered by the Act of Union, helped most Irish writers voice their yearning for a deeply rooted Irish existence in the past and also gave way to neonationalists such as Eavan Boland or Declan Kiberd to overhaul the idea of free Ireland.

Along with sectarian divisions and conflicts arising in the archipelago, another frequent theme in Irish culture, history and literature has been language. Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson, in their canon, were attentive to the spaces between languages, not only that of Irish and English (or old English) but also in their references to and translations between languages; such as Italian, Latin or French. Thus, they struggled between pressing pulls of different languages. This struggle dates back to the period starting with the controversial Act of Union in 1801, which introduced several ground breaking changes in

Irish culture, history and literature. English was confirmed to be the language of the government and administration, and Ireland was directly subjected to the British parliament in London. Amidst these ostensible conflicts, rather than submitting oneself linguistically to the instruments of the Empire, to write in Irish might be seen as the only way of identifying oneself with the fantasised Gaelic culture and literature. One might say that the poet should turn to his origins and write in this language in order to rehome himself in his native language. One can even claim that the Gaelic world and culture being accessible through English is a type of linguistic imperialism. Yet, each option is not without its drawbacks. Writing in Irish may not bring international recognition the writers long for. Because of this practical reason, Norman Vance starts his *Irish Literature Since 1800* from the 1800s as he thinks that “there is no genuinely Irish [Irish literature in English language] English-language writing before the nineteenth century, when the rapid decline of the Irish language made English the only practical language for the Irish writer” (23). Justin Quinn, too, takes the year 1800 as the beginning of Irish literature (1). What is more, some of the Irish poets, who are generally known as Irish more than anything else, like Seamus Heaney and Thomas Moore express their “indebtedness to and complicity with the Empire” having been educated in English language (Quinn 5). Besides, most of the Irish readers being monoglot, appreciate the works of Yeats, Kavanagh, Clarke, MacNeice, Heaney and Carson in English. Among them, Yeats is an interesting example, who “established modern Irish literature and yet had no knowledge of the Irish language” (Quinn 4). Due to spatial restraints, this study has to limit itself to only representative examples but one feels

obliged to repeat for historical reasons, that linguistic and national rehomeing or dehomeing have been a critical issue in Ireland. Being an intricate matter, language is another space to Heaney and Carson for a free interplay between different draws like Irish vs. English or local vs. global. Thanks to the textual space they have generated within language, Heaney and Carson used the opportunity to reveal the transparency and porosity of places, as well.

Identity has been another complicated epistemological category to settle for the Irish as it is very much reflected in Heaney's and Carson's poetry. This search has a historical and social dimension and again one feels compelled to look at the historical background: in the aftermath of the Act of Union, Irishness under the control of the Empire was an uneasy assumption and the nationalist part sought ways to separate themselves from the British and to acquire their autonomy. Ironically, in the 1880s, the Irish reunited due to the attempts of Charles Stewart Parnell to bring home rule to Ireland. When their efforts ended in failure, Irish nationalism renewed its hopes in the Celtic Renaissance, in other words, Revival<sup>12</sup>. This cultural movement aimed to promote, in different ways, ancient Irish literature, folklore, and Gaelic language. Most of the Irish poets believed that they should embrace their culture before the invasions and occupations. Yeats, too, believed, similarly, in the noble and glorious Gaelic past

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<sup>12</sup> The movement called *Revival* is also known as *Celtic Revival*, which basically refers to the renewal of Irish nationalism and culture that began in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and bloomed until the 1920s. The idea to foster Irishness was executed by translations and re-tellings of Irish myths, folklore, poetry and so on. Revival put emphasis on past movements in literature, the arts and social practices. One of the most important novelties that the movement brought is *The Irish Literary Theatre*, which was founded by W.B. Yeats and others in 1899, and which was developed into the important Abbey Theatre Company.

and thus, was one of the pioneer figures in the movement who introduced the Irish Literary Revival to be able to go back to their rooted identity.

This movement required that the Irish should embrace their own culture, speak their own language, play their own games and appreciate their own literature. The movement found echo in politics, which gave way to questioning the identities of Irishness and Britishness. As Sean O'Brien stated, in the wake of

a loosening formal ties between the peoples who constitute the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the identity and work of a number of poets have invited questions about what the term 'British' might mean. (571)

When one considers the long imperial history that involved trying to exert dominance on almost half of the world, Britishness was associated with a capitalist mindset and hegemony. As Neil Roberts asserts in his Introduction to *A Companion to Twentieth-Century Poetry*, "this subject exists because of the successive historical phenomena of British imperialism and American cultural, economic and political dominance" (1). That is why, though he acknowledges his indebtedness to English language and literature, Heaney reproaches Blake Morrison and Andrew Motion with a funny and angry poem "Open Letter":

But don't be surprised  
If I demur, for be advised  
My passport's green.  
No glass of ours was ever raised  
To toast *The Queen*....  
I hate to bite  
Hands that led me to the limelight  
In the Penguin book, I regret



The awkwardness,  
But British, no, the name's not right. (*Open Letter 9*)

Not being able to relate himself to the markers of Britishness like the passport's colour, Heaney asserts explicitly that he did not belong to the British tradition. That he was included in *Penguin's Contemporary British Anthology* made him furious as he found it hard to be associated with Britishness. In this case the term British cannot be seen as "a convenience" as Sean O'Brien proposes (571), but it would rather be a sign of allegiance.

In exploring issues related to subjectivity, Heaney and Carson question their link to the land they were dwelling in, along with the relation to the nationality and history their country adopts. In such a context, geography as well as history complicates the issue of Irishness and Irish writing. In the same line of thinking, Thurston and Alderman also repeat one of the common visions about the function of geography, "[t]he idea of place has been central to the poetry of postwar Britain and Ireland, and it tends to function as a means by which the poet can measure both personal and social transformations" (131). In the Irish archipelago, one can talk about the long-established tendency of the Irish to emigrate to as well as to receive incomers from Britain, not necessarily very willingly in either case, thus it may make it impossible even now to come to an agreement on who, or what, is still authentically or essentially Irish. As emigration has long been a fact of Irish life, much Irish writing still takes place outside Ireland. Some of the successful Irish-American writers like Frank McCourt and Paul Muldoon write in exile endorsing the view that exile was the only way to save themselves from poverty and repression. Similarly, still for

some other reasons, Heaney produced most of his recent canon outside Irish archipelago. In a shrinking world however, poetry can still talk about the sense of place, community and self even in displaced locations. Thus, though Irish poetry is produced by a relatively small coterie of poets, it is still vast, heterogeneous, paradoxical and it is already a site of interaction of multiple roots.

Irish poetry has undergone many constitutional and pivotal changes since the 1880s – the 1880s were marked by the spirit to embrace the traditional Irish culture and to argue that Ireland’s future could only be improved by separation from Britain- and has explored the aforementioned themes like nationalism, identity and language in new micro and macro spaces. The poets that are the focus of this study have undergone similar shifts and adapted their poetry accordingly. Yet, these poets were also aware of the developments in the arts in the global world, as well as in the Irish context. In order to acknowledge and explore the changes and challenges in the macro space of the global, the next part of the chapter will focus on the contemporary issues and notions in recent times.

## **2.2. Contemporary Poetry**

This part of the chapter aims to reflect on the international shifts in contemporary poetry and how they are gauged and observed in the Irish archipelago. The recent historical, social and economic changes have triggered a process of questioning of the epistemological categories like identity, nationality

and place. These changes are reflected in the contemporary poetry written in the post-war era, as a result of which there is the persistent use of the term *contemporary* along with many others like *new*, *avant-garde*, and *postmodern*. This need for a new label implies that there are new shifts in poetry written in the second half of the twentieth century along with the need to categorize these shifts. Giving a working definition of these terms would be beyond the focus of this thesis; however, for the sake of clarity, I should note that with the word *contemporary* I refer to the poems written from the late 1960s onwards when many of the grand or totalizing narratives have been challenged. In the rising modes of poetry, earlier conventions and schools of thought were, as usual, challenged as they could not live up to the expectations of the poets in their attempts to achieve new representational modes. New content was given expression in new forms and sometimes in renovated old forms. In such a context, contemporary poetry is written with the awareness of the futility of pursuing a symbiotic unity between language, land and identity, and it questions all totalizing principles and brings forth decentered and multiple viewpoints. In a similar line of thinking, Blake Morrison and Andrew Motion, too, preferred to refer to the poetry written in the second half of the twentieth century as “contemporary poetry” in their book titled *The Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry* (1984) because of the resonances the term is associated with.

The years from 1945 onwards have witnessed a radical transformation in the cultures of the British archipelago and the global system at large. The Western epistemology in the post-war period witnessed a radical

metamorphosis in the understanding of several key categories such as history, time, space, subjectivity, class, gender and art; and became polyphonic and multcentred, not only in terms of these categories but also in terms of the foregrounded geospaces and the wide scope of identity markers. Throughout the postwar period, as Alderman and Blanton put it clearly “poetry in English – even British and Irish poetry in English – arises from multiple tributaries and geographies, often originating well beyond the traditional centres of English literature” (5). British and Irish poetry written since World War II has been designating a novel sense of place and set of political, social, economic and historical relations appropriate to the second half of the twentieth century. Until the 1960s, the poetry scene in the post-war period was overwhelmingly white, male and middle-class, yet since then, as Sarah Broom states there has been

a gradual but radical diversification of the poetry being published and reviewed, so that women poets, poets from working class, rural and non-metropolitan backgrounds, and poets from ethnic minorities have become prominent and recognised figures within the poetry world. (1)

The collapse of the previous grand narratives led to decentralization and pluralization of the previous frames of reference in poetry. Thus, in contemporary poetry, there is a general reorientation “from the one to the many, from the fixed to the ephemeral, from the patriarchal to the feminine” (Jarniewicz and McDonagh 124). Rather than configuring each and every subject around and according to a single type, contemporary poetry seeks ways to give voice to multiple, various and unique experiences, interpretations and

emotional states. To satisfy the desire to hear the multiplicity of voices and the relationship between the centre and the margin, fixed or set categories lend themselves to porous, tentative and experimental involvements. Once the contact between the centre and the margin becomes customary, one can talk about the presence of the peripheral subjectivities, like those of the feminine, or the underprivileged.

The transformations reflected in contemporary poetry could be comprehended better by referring to the trajectory of “the speaker” in the poem. This trajectory testifies to how poetry adapts itself to the new discursive elements of each time period. To be able to demonstrate where the speaker in contemporary poetry stands I will offer a very brief background, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, of this trajectory. To start with the 18<sup>th</sup> century theories, one can recognize the anonymity of the poetic voice, whose only function is to deliver the external world artfully and to put it into a form designed to instruct and grant artistic pleasure to the reader. Yet, this anonymous poetic voice is challenged by the exaltation of the lyric subject with the rise of Romanticism. From the Romantic to the Modernist poetry the external world can be portrayed only after it had been transformed by the poet’s feeling. This triggered the presence of the lyric voice. Margaret Drabble acknowledges how the lyric voice starting with Romanticism was foregrounded, saying it “expressed an extreme assertion of the self and the value of individual experience ... together with the sense of the infinite and the transcendental” (842-43). Poetry became more expressive of the poet’s consciousness. Thus, in the Romantic convention, the

lyric "I" most of the time overlapped with the poet in his own person and circumstances.

Although the lyric "I" sounds too subjective, it is aware of the predicament of the contemporary man and offers its lyric potentials as a remedy to his fellow beings. The difference of the Romantics was that they were looking for such a remedy not in the external and the empirical, but in the internal and the visionary. For the Romantics, the cure for the malaise of the modern culture and/or psychic disintegration of people lied in a process of reintegration; that is, "the world of subject and object, self and world, were viewed as mutually constructive processes, human perception playing an active role rather than merely receiving impressions passively from the outside world" (Habib 409). This subject/object relation reflected in the lyric "I" has been one of the main concerns of the poetry that has been written in the aftermath of Romanticism.

After the Romantic poetry, the conversion of the lyric "I" in Modernist poetry deserves attention as it puts a similar emphasis on the lyric "I" but this time on a different level. As a reaction to the Romantic mode of thinking and writing, Modernist poetry problematizes the existence of a possible lyric "I". Since they were writing in a post-Nietzschean and post-Darwinian world familiar with Freudian theories, it sounded anachronistic for them to assume such a unified "I". Yet, paradoxically, they were after such a unity to be achieved through different ways. As Emig states, modernists "exhibit the structures associated with the 'fragmented reality' apparently so poignant in the years between the two world wars" (61). In Emig's words, metonymy and metaphor

are devised in order to mirror “the modern mind’s perception of reality as an arrangement of non-compatible sensations and impressions” (65). In Modernist poetry, on the one hand, there was the acknowledgement of fragmentation of the lyric “I”, on the other hand, there was an attempt to unify the fragments of the self of the speaker in such a way that they would cohere. This was the modernist response to the issue of the speaker in the poem. After Modernist poetry, there were individual poets, like Larkin or poetic movements like the Movement which tried to go back to a pre-Modernist mode of representation of the speaker. However, as stated above, in a post-Nietzschean and a post-Freudian world their attempts ended up being anachronistic as the Cartesian self of the lyric “I” dissolved in the 20<sup>th</sup> century irreparably and the aftermath of World War II consolidated this awareness. Contemporary poetry came into being in the shade of this awareness and both the unified and the lyric “I” was a thing of the past and there could be no going back to it.

Contemporary poetry has posed myriad challenges to the notion of a unified and autonomous self that might possibly be embodied in a poetic universe. Instead, it is characterized by the tendency “to emphasize the multiplicity of subject positions which an individual simultaneously inhabits; the contradictory and plural identities which individuals acknowledge as their own” (Broom 3). What is more, the identity markers themselves are undergoing “constant revision and evolution, and those pertaining to race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality are still contentious, explosive, and unpredictably fluid” (Broom 3). In such a context, it is understandable that both of the poets in this study find it difficult to associate themselves with one single sect, nationality or a place.

Further, as these poets were writing in a post-Wittgensteinian and post-Saussurean world, they were aware of the potentials of language in constructing one's truth and "I". Yet, they were also aware that language is "both of restricted competence and even within its limited competence ultimately unreliable" (Emig 222). Accordingly, contemporary poets writing in English are being driven "to explore the nature of the self and the scope and limits of human agency, particularly in terms of the relationship between the individual and language" (Broom 4). In a nutshell, in contemporary poetry, the reconfiguration of the autonomous lyric "I" has become impossible also because of new linguistic conceptions.

Due to the complexity of transitional elements embodied by the time period they produced their poetry in, to situate the two poets in a specific context and a setting might be much more difficult than it seems. Until the 1980s, there was a stark oppositional polarity between conservative mainstream and beleaguered margins. However, there is a loosening up of this fundamental division in the early 1980s, and it is widely accepted that there has been a

'cross-fertilisation' (as Gregson calls it); or 'New relations' (as Kennedy says); or 'Deregulation' (in [Sean] O'Brien's words); or 'Instabilities' (in Robinson's view), between formerly disparate types of verse, and this process has upset and superseded the old embattled positions of the 1970s. (Barry 12)

The dissolution of the binaries between mainstream and experimental poetry is more complex than the blurring of the binaries. Because the new situation is far



more multifaceted, as Barry says “the new situation is that there are now *more*, not fewer, zones and divisions than before; yet they are also *more fluid*” (12).

The challenges posed to the autonomous lyric “I”, tying the self and the land symbiotically, and identity which comes into being as a result of the historical and geographical nuances are reflected repeatedly in contemporary poetry. The next part of the chapter will attempt to focus closely on how Irish poetry responded to blurring of the boundaries between the mainstream and the margin by exploring the issues of nationalism and a sense of place.

### **2.3. Contemporary Irish Poetry**

Having an insular nature due to its location in the archipelago, Irish poetry was thought to be a closed entity thus in the periphery. However, in the second half of the twentieth century, these political associations and concepts of mononationality should be avoided as even such a so-called closed entity as Irish poetry cannot be thought within a mononational framework. It has been a part of transnational flows not only in relation with the British archipelago but also with the rest of the world. Thus, in the later decades of the twentieth century, it would be anachronistic to dwell on the traditional binaries like British versus Irish.

The poets in this study, Heaney and Carson acknowledge and appreciate enormous if not cherished influence of English language and culture on their poetry. They both studied English literature at Queen’s University and the long-lasting hegemony of the United Kingdom made them associate themselves in

one way or another with many identity markers of Britishness. The works they produce can be better understood against this background. Justin Quinn, too, emphasizes that they are transnational poets along with many others: “Yeats, Kavanagh, Clarke, MacNeice, Heaney, Carson, to name a few, are above all poets of the English language, and that they are Irish is only of secondary importance. They have more in common with the poets of England than they do with the Gaelic bards” (2). That does not mean that their Gaelic roots have not influenced them at all, but the British influence on these renowned poets cannot be underestimated.

In the later decades of the twentieth century, due to the reasons above, Irish poetry cannot be considered as a monolithic canon. It flourished in its unique context which was shaped by the course of things in social and economic life. From the 1920s to the 1990s, Ireland experienced a very big clash between the urban and the rural; their morality was more local and family based with the Church being the sole authority. Starting with the period between 1959-66, under the Séan Lemass government, industry developed in Ireland to a great extent and in the 1970s this led to a dismissal of many things connected with traditional Ireland. To illustrate from Justin Quinn’s observations, small farmers, small shops and the Irish language were perceived “as signs of unmodern atavism that the country wished to abandon, especially after it joined the European Economic Community in 1973” (194). In other words, they turned their face to more global trends and flows. Finally, in the mid 1990s, as Quinn states; “these developments were galvanized by large in-flows of foreign investment; multinational companies were attracted by the country’s well-

educated young population and by fiscal policies which maximized their tax-breaks and minimized their long-term responsibilities” and the investment bankers Morgan Stanley called the phenomenon the “Celtic Tiger” (194). Thus, the isle was opened to the effects of globalisation in its peculiar terms. The economic improvement in the Republic “increased urbanization and large scale immigration, factors which place pressure on accepted models of a collective national perspective” (Jarniewicz and McDonagh 121). The island started to lose its distinctive Irishness due to outside influences.

Since the dawn of the Celtic Tiger, Irish poetry has been influenced by the decentralization and pluralization of values in its own terms. In *Irish Literature since 1990 Diverse Voices*, Jarniewicz and McDonagh reflect the change in Irish poetry as follows: “Irish poetry since 1990 has been clearly marked by the notable absence of a dominant voice and an eclectic, surprising and challenging *mélange* of subject matter” (121). In Louis De Paor’s words, in contemporary Irish poetry, there appear several poets with “agitated intelligence” and these voices are generally the ones who are aware of “the complex nature of major shifts in the traditional markers of Irish identity” (qtd. in Jarniewicz and McDonagh 121). These poets reflect the transaction and interaction between several nations together with the dissolution of the totalizing discourses of country, nation and race.

Starting with the early 1990s, in line with the other social parameters, epistemological categories have changed dimension in Irish poetry, as the scope of contemporary poetics has responded to contemporary experience. Seamus

Heaney talks about the change in contemporary Irish poetry in one of the interviews he gave:

I guess my own situation now is more scattered or diverse. I said to you the other night that if I were to choose a pseudonym now I would choose the name Sartor, and I do think more of the great grandfather tailor. The poems begin with digging with the spade, digging into the centre, but I think now I would use the image of the needle, perhaps, unpicking the stitches, and restricting it into a different shape and moving around like a tailor, the tailor moving around with the needle, rather than the guy with the spade. That's just the symptom of some kind of change, loosening of the roots. (qtd. in Jarniewicz and McDonagh 122)

This shift of the metaphor from digging to stitching is quite significant, as the poet no longer looks for what is hidden deep inside but engages with the surfaces and flat materials with heterogeneous elements. Elmer Andrews, in the same line of thinking, finds the notion of the "Irish" as a fixed and coherent nation problematic and for him "Irishness" can be "a spiritual entity" which "has been increasingly thrown into contradiction and confusion" (1).

Ciaran Carson, like Heaney questions the national identity and the land as a homogenous and all-encompassing entity and leaves his inherited territory and arborescent thinking to explore new images of place, identity and history. Both poets disregard searching for the roots in the past or in the collective consciousness, rather they appreciate the spontaneity, plurality and diversity of the experience in every day life. Michael Kenneally similarly detects the response to the paradigm shift in these two poets and explains the reason for it as follows:

Because that world is the status quo for them, these writers have paradoxically been liberated to discover new perspectives on – or more accurately and revealingly perhaps, to transcend – the grid of myth, history and religion that underpins Irish society. (x)

The search for authoritative and essentialist depth gives way to the attraction of the ever-lasting processes of conversions and differences. The shift of the digging metaphor to that of the stitching in a way shows how the world of poetry embraces “the realm of the flux, the many, and the heterogeneous” (Jarniewicz and McDonagh 123). What is more, the shift in the political scene, that is election of someone from the margins as the president also contributes to the atmosphere of the change in contemporary Ireland. Mary Robinson’s presidency was “an unambiguous symbol of the collective desire for change, a tangible instance of a country prepared to accept voices from the margins and heralding a more pluralistic outlook on a variety of social, cultural and political fronts” (Jarniewicz and McDonagh, 125-26). This variety in the political scene is revealed in poetry with polyphony of voices. All these shifts also signify a move from modernist legacy towards postmodern sensibility.

The shifts in both domestic and global scale have had a shaping influence on the social, political and aesthetic parameters in contemporary Irish poetry. As a result, the atavistic notions associated with Irish life, culture, politics and literature are now under close critique by most of the poets including Heaney and Carson. In their poetry, they have welcomed a more pluralistic and experimental look into the set and symbiotic categories which have been taken for granted for such a long period of time. Thus, the next part of the chapter will

look closely at the changes in these parameters and epistemological categories, like place and space, or nation, local and global.

### **2. 3.1. Space and Place in Contemporary Irish Poetry**

With the disintegration of the grand narratives like race and nation, not only the notion of Ireland or Irishness, but also the symbiosis between land and nation has been problematized. Declan Kiberd problematizes the hierarchy between them as follows: “[n]o one element should subordinate or assimilate the others: Irish or English, rural or urban, Gaelic or Anglo, each has its part in the pattern” (653). So, there is a movement towards a more transnational and heterogeneous understanding of culture and literature. Referring to contemporary Irish poetry, Kennedy-Andrews too acknowledges the general shift “from Yeatsian notions of rooted identity and the orthodoxy of a closed, unified culture towards a concept of culture as a worldwide web or provisional network of routes” in his *Writing Home: Poetry and Place in Northern Ireland 1968-2000* (19). The correlation between place and a specific culture is always complicated and multi-dimensional. Kennedy-Andrews’s reflection on the relations between space, place and nation for Ireland is worth quoting at length:

Places are always linked together by flows of cultural influence that circulate through wider social space, though there is of course unevenness, from place to place, and from time to time, in the scale and intensity of these interconnections. Places are inevitably more or less hybrid, their character always influenced by relations with other places. Boundaries are always temporary,

always porous, always socially constructed. The idea of a closed national culture has always been challenged and undermined. Not only is the concept of nation and the nation-state a comparatively recent development in the history of human evolution, but national boundaries are constantly changing to accommodate new political scenarios. (*Writing Home* 19)

One can say that there has been a movement and settlement of the above given categories and the centre or the origin has been diasporic for Ireland.

As places are no more seen as organically divided or organized, the claims of home and homeland have been shattered in contemporary Irish poetry. It can be said that contemporary Irish poets have come a long way by challenging such so-called organic ties as place, nation and belonging. Through their poetry, they offer resistance to the longing for a return to a lost Gaelic past and to places that have been fantasised, which was prevalent in Irish nationalism. Although this so-called unified culture had never existed, these conventional notions of place, identity and nation were so powerful that it was difficult to resist this yearning for cultural and national belonging and wholeness with the place that was inhabited in previous decades as in the case of Heaney's early poetry. Yet, contemporary Irish poetry has taken up the challenge of going beyond these concepts. In the aftermath of the bloody and violent civil disturbance of the Troubles, and in an era of interconnectivity via migration and globalization, these poets welcome a more diverse, spacious and rhizomatic understanding of place, home and subjectivity.

After the 1980s, through dialogic relationships within several categories that have been reorganized such as space and place, unconventional

subjectivities have appeared. The previous understanding of the connection between place and space, and the inhabitants or the community was as follows: “[p]laces provide spaces with content, and the populations of those places with identity and security; as well as being geographical locations they are also ‘structures of feeling’” (Davidson 28). On the contrary, in contemporary experience, place is no more an indicator of a rooted identity and space is not an absolutely fixed entity simply to be located in. In the absence of the previous grand narratives and with the disappearance of the previous spatial discipline, place and space cease to be two different entities, in fact, places being devoid of any reference points merge into space. Space has turned out to be a rhizomatic entity, which refers to multiple roots and relationships rather than to a single place with a monolithic frame.

Most of the Irish poets used to hold onto the place they lived in and look for an organic unity between the land they lived in, the language they spoke and the identity they embodied. Yet, since the 1990s due to above given shifts and changes they have felt displaced from their land and language. The result is an illusory centre that does not hold and a land that does not make them feel at home both nationally and spiritually. The understanding of a unified and an autonomous self is replaced by the multiplicity of subject positions. Urbanization of the Irish rural space contributed to this fluid existence. The contemporary Irish poets oscillate between trying to reinforce the utopian organic tie between their identity and their land, and surrendering themselves to this new type of spatial experience. In such a context, Davidson’s analysis that “[i]f identity, through language and a shared culture, tradition and history is



linked to a particular place, then leaving that place is a traumatic event” rings true for the Irish contemporary experience (28). The new urban space does not support this so-called rooted tie between subjectivity and place; rather it presents them with cacophony of voices and illusions, which is the new transnational spatial experience. In a nutshell, trying to form a symbiotic tie among space, land, language and subjectivity proves problematic in contemporary Irish poetry.

With the change in concepts regarding place and space, the contemporary Irish experience of home has been subverted, as well. For Ireland, Fintan O’Toole exemplifies the situation as follows: “The exile’s dream of return has no meaning when the homeland is an ex-isle, a place forever gone” (176). And for Kennedy-Andrews, Ireland for at least 150 years has been “scattered, splintered, atomized” and is a “diaspora, and as such is both a real place and a remembered place, both the far west of Europe and the home back east of the Irish-American” (*Writing Home* 18). What happens to Ireland indeed is the microcosmic reflection of the globalized world. With the rise of technology, transportation and scientific developments, places are much more easily and fast connected, which makes the places metamorphose into other forms. In the aftermath of this kind of changes, places cease to be uniform sites linking their inhabitants to them and to other people. Doreen Massey compares the notion of place before and after globalization as follows: “the notion of place (usually evoked as local place) has come to have totemic resonance” and for some “it is the sphere of the everyday, of real and valued practices, the geographical source of meaning, vital to hold on to as the ‘global’ spins its ever more powerful and

alienating webs" (*For Space* 5). Likewise in Ireland, emigration makes the borders of the island permeable. Home cannot be thought as any one place, language or tradition; "it cannot be reduced to unitary notions of Ireland", but it is produced "out of the encounter with other places, languages and histories, in the process of which the opposition between home and away, self and other, rootedness and itineracy, is inevitably revised" (Kennedy-Andrews, *Writing Home* 18). Similarly, significant number of Irish poets, having suffered from the tensions resulting from occupations, violence and conflicts, have at least one time an exile experience. Expatriate, exilic and migratory forms of being can best be understood within the framework of cultural and racial hybridity and boundary-crossing experiences.

Heaney and Carson have witnessed the radical transformation of place into space by dissolving the organic tie between the land and its people. Both Heaney and Carson are long-time Ireland residents; that is, Carson barely left Ireland and though Heaney was driven exile, he kept coming back to Ireland several times. Both poets also saw the emergence of the outbreak of the Troubles. Yet, with the radical transformation in epistemological categories, they also question place as a direct reference to a rooted identity and in their poetries place and space cease to be separate entities. Place starts to act as space and space becomes rhizomatic; thus, they cannot re-territorialize themselves into a fixed location and the result is the nomadic poetics. Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson belong to two different generations of poets; while Heaney, together with Montague, Mahon and Longley can be classified as the first generation poets, being born in the late 1920s and '30s, Carson along with

Muldoon and McGuckian is among the second generation poets, born in the 1940s and '50s, who have lost their interest in the old colonial theme in their poetry. Thus, in their careers after the early 1990s how they experience and project the spatial relationship between their subjectivities and the land they live in varies. One different thing between them about handling the spatialization process might be that while Heaney made use of traditional forms like sonnet, Carson was more experimental in exploiting the textual space of poetry like haiku from the Far East.

Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson tried to give voice to new forms of subjectivities by reinvigorating and reconsidering the national identity formation process. Both poets in this dissertation problematized the idea of associating home with a stable place and they stretched the idea of place to space. By combining this awareness with material conditions of language they outreached place also to the textual space. Lastly, the next part of the chapter will focus on how contemporary Irish poetry has been influenced by recent global and macrocosmic trends regarding nationalism and land.

## **2.4. Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson's Poetry from the Early 1990s on**

### **2.4.1. Seamus Heaney:**

As has been pointed out so far, the "contemporary" can never be static by definition and thus the disposition of contemporary Irish poetry is constantly changing and requiring redefinition. Seamus Heaney's poetry in the 1990s and

in its aftermath is congruous with the attributes of the contemporary since he internalized the awareness of the loss of the symbiosis between land, place and people, the indications of which can be spotted in his poetry on different levels. Heaney started writing in the 1960s and went on writing until his death in 2013. Heaney's poetry has reached a large public which extends to all classes in Ireland and abroad. Having written in such a long period of time, his writing career encompasses quite different aesthetics and styles. Having produced poetry as late as 2010, Seamus Heaney is included in contemporary Irish poetry not because of the chronology but because he was concerned with contemporary experience and interested in the subversion of old dichotomies.

Heaney gave voice to his conception of poetry both by objectifying it in his poetry practice and by theorising on it in his prose writing, which is the case in many of the twentieth century poets' career. As Neil Roberts maintains "this is a century in which poetry has not only been written and discussed, but the writing and discussion have been exceptionally closely related" (2). This tendency might have also arisen because of the distrust in the potential of language as an aesthetic vehicle to signify anything out of itself. That is why, most poets might have felt the urge to explain themselves more clearly in prose language. Heaney, too, wrote several prose works to reflect his understanding of poetry and art like *Preoccupations* (1980) or *The Government of the Tongue* (1988), which give several insights about his poetry. In his recent prose collection *Finders Keepers* (2002), the most complete one-volume edition of his prose, he voices several important questions of his career like; how should a poet properly live and write? What is his relationship to his own voice, his own

place, his literary heritage and the contemporary world? In one of the essays in the collection titled "Something to Write Home About", Heaney argues how he witnessed dissolution of the polarities and declares in his own words that places do belong to hybrid roots:

Castledawson was a far more official place altogether, more modern, more a part of the main drag. The very name of the place is from the orderly English world of the eighteenth century, whereas Bellaghy is from an older, more obscure origin in Irish. So, as I once said in a poem – a poem called 'Terminus' – *I grew up in between*. (53)

The quote above is an analysis of how the places he lived in are indeed spaces of in-between sites. The poem he talked about in the essay "Terminus" reveals his in-betweenness with his genuine poetic voice, as well:

Two buckets were easier carried than one  
I grew up in between.

My left hand placed the standard iron weight.  
My right hand tilted a last grain in the balance.

Baronies, parishes met where I was born. (15-19)

By making use of concepts which are generally gauged in the light of dualistic thinking, Heaney tries to reflect his double breeding. Heaney grew up between the predominantly Protestant and loyalist village of Castledawson and the generally Catholic and nationalist district of Bellaghy. He gave a detailed description of the space that he inhabited:

In a house situated between a railway and a road. Between the old sounds of a trotting horse and the newer sounds of a shunting engine. On a border between townlands and languages, between accents at one end of the parish that reminded you of Antrim and Ayrshire and the Scottish speech I used to hear on the Fair Hill in Ballymena. (*Finders* 53)

These in-between spaces will be the guiding spirit for him in his poetry in the 1990s and in its aftermath, during when Heaney answered these essential questions with a contemporary sensibility and the dichotomies he was associated with only gave way to a more fluid and porous space.

Much has been said over the years about Seamus Heaney's dual heritage and his role as a Northern Irish poet negotiating the political convulsions of his place and time. He was soon engulfed in the centuries old difficulties of the North; such as difference of religious affiliation – Catholic versus Protestant-, of political affiliation – Nationalist versus Unionist-, of class - the deprived versus the economically dominant -, of region – the agricultural against the industrial -, and of tribe – Celts versus Anglo-Saxons. Although the Heaneys left Belfast due to repeated riots and murders for the Republic of Ireland, the North and the turmoil has never ceased to shadow his work. Having been born in a rural Catholic area in the Protestant North, Heaney was also involved in the dissection of two different spaces. What is more, having been raised in a rural space of Derry (London), he always experienced the clash between urban space and his rural roots. All these contextual facts resulted in an intensified quest for origins and identity as a constant theme in Heaney's early work, which Heaney himself talked about in his prose collection *Preoccupations* (1980): "We are

dwellers, we are namers, we are lovers, we make homes and search for our histories” (131). Thus, his early poetry, namely *Death of a Naturalist* (1966), *Door into the Dark* (1969) and *Wintering Out* (1973), was concerned with identity, searching for his roots and his name. These early poems are generally elegiac reflecting the urge to search for the supposed glorious past and roots. In other words, he was searching for those whose names are lost in history; that is, he was speaking for them with the help of his symbolic figures, like “The Seed Cutters”: “Under the broom ... / Yellowing over them, compose the frieze / With all of us there, our anonymities” (12-14). Similar to these figures, his poetic voice is anonymous, too. Thus, with these figures he was after his lyric voice as a poet.

After the riots of 1969 in Derry and the political upheavals, Heaney’s fundamental aim as a poet changed, as he himself declared: “From that moment 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” (*Preoccupations*, 56). From anonymous poetic voice, who was searching for his roots, Heaney delved into the matter of politics. This time, Heaney’s poetic persona was not anonymous or archaic, but he named his poetic voice after his first name. In the midst of bloody sectarian violence, the succeeding collection *North* (1976) was published to be able to reflect more deeply on these events and the Heaneys left the Northern Ireland for the Irish Republic. In *North*, which is the first collection of poems which explicitly addresses the Troubles in Northern Ireland, Heaney engages in collective identities and how they are treated by state apparatuses. In “Singing School”,

this time, the poet gives his first name although the police officer asked his family name in order to find out his identity. As a young student, while he was going home with his girl-friend, he was stopped and inquired by the police:

policemen  
Swung their crimson flashlamps, crowding round  
The car like black cattle, snuffing and pointing  
The muzzle of a sten-gun in my eye:  
'What's your name, driver?'  
    'Seamus ...'  
        *Seamus?*  
        ("Singing School" 52-58)

In his early poetry, Heaney left archaeology aside and tried to find explanation for violence. Thus, Heaney's poetry, inspired by P.V. Glob's *The Bog People*, inquired into bog, which he saw as a memory bank, to be able to make sense of violence, murder and conflicts. One of the most famous figures he wrote poems about was Tollund Man, who was a famous bog body dating back to the Iron Age and found out that bog bodies could be found in Northern European Lands, like Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Ireland. In the end, he came to the conclusion that bog bodies were archetypal patterns and thus, they could be seen in every culture. They were transnational images. In his poem, "The Tollund Man", Heaney counted the names of the famous bog bodies:

Tollund, Grauballe, Nebelgard,

Watching the pointing hands  
Of country people,  
Not knowing their tongue.

Out there in Jutland



In the old man-killing parishes  
I will feel lost,  
Unhappy and at home. (37-44)

Heaney extended these emblems of violence to almost any culture including his own and he did not feel like a stranger in Jutland. Yet, like all influential historical events, Heaney knew that any comment on the Troubles would turn out to be clichés, even his poetry:

I'm writing just after an encounter  
With an English journalist in search of 'views  
On the Irish thing'. I'm back in winter  
Quarters where bad news is no longer news,

...

Expertly civil-tongued with civil neighbours  
On the high wires of first wireless reports,  
Sucking the fake taste, the stony flavours  
On those sanctioned, old, elaborate retorts:

'Oh, it's disgraceful, surely, I agree.'  
'Where's it going to end?' 'It's getting worse.'  
'They're murderers.' 'Internment, understandably ...'  
The 'voice of sanity' is getting hoarse.

("Whatever You Say Say Nothing, 1-4, 17-24)

Heaney's next collection *Field Work* (1979) signalled a new turn and a new perspective to poetry as he broke with his search for the roots. The phrase fieldwork implied that Heaney would go through a process of collecting data about people, cultures and the surrounding space, Belfast and the Republic having become too different sites. His poetry engaged in ordinary domestic and social relations, yet he was still an elegist. In *Field Work*, there are six elegies written for his close circle of friends, relatives and acquaintances. One is for

Heaney's cousin Colum McCartney (ambushed and shot in a sectarian killing), for his friend and the social worker Sean Armstrong, shot by a 'pointblank teatime bullet' (*Field Work* 19); for the composer Sean O'Riada and the poet Robert Lowell; for an acquaintance, Louis O'Neill, victim of a bomb explosion ("Casualty"); and for the young Irish Catholic poet Francis Ledwidge, killed in action fighting for England in the First World War. While the elegies take up one half of the book, the other half is on domestic life with his wife and social occasions with his friends, still observing his surrounding space and people as a part of fieldwork.

Being preoccupied with the questions like; "who is the poet?", "what is his relation to the poetic persona?" Heaney tended to define himself with alter egos. Starting from very early collections, Heaney adopts several alter egos; a digger, a seed cutter or a thatcher. In *Station Island* (1984), he uses an animal as an alter ego when Heaney reconfigures himself as a bird, the King of Sweeney of Middle Irish Legend<sup>13</sup>. With *Haw Lantern* (1987), Heaney started to answer his consequential questions by exploring the virtual realm. Experiencing many deaths in life; his parents, relatives and several friends, Heaney engaged in absence rather than presence. Thus, he aimed to substitute space of absences with the help of his art. Heaney drew an analogy he had long been seeking: when he was born, a chestnut tree was planted in the hedge before the house;

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<sup>13</sup> Sweeney was transformed into a bird, when he went mad at the battle of Moira (AD 637) and, cursed by St Roman. This set of twenty original poems called 'Sweeney Redivivus' are slightly connected to the actual events in the Middle Irish narrative, yet still gave Heaney a framework and a voice.

but his twin, the flower-decked tree, had long since been cut down. Yet, the poet could still see it:

I thought of walking round a space  
Utterly empty, utterly a source  
Where the decked chestnut tree had lost its place  
...  
Its heft and hush become a bright nowhere,  
A soul ramifying and forever  
Silent, beyond silence listened for.  
("Clearances" 1-3, 12-14; bk.8)

So, by creating space, Heaney started to equalize the presence and the absence, material and the immaterial.

In the 1990s and in its aftermath, which is subject to this dissertation, Seamus Heaney took a new turn and sought ways to reconcile the dualities. He questioned the symbiosis between place and identity. What is more, he also deeply engaged in one of the current themes in contemporary Irish writing; that "questions of personal identity and self-understanding could still be approached through engagements with the often difficult past, the different world which had shaped the lives and attitudes of parents and ancestors" (Vance 207). For Heaney, though culture and identity were immanent in place and he was preoccupied with a lost home, a lost language and past in his earlier poetry, his work after 1990 did not show dislocation as a source of anxiety, rather he problematized the validity and reliability of the rootedness to a single place. Then, the place-name poems stopped being poetic excavations for him and poetry became a site of repossession. Similarly, for Richard Kearney, Heaney's poetic quest for a home "presupposes the absence of a literally existing one" and his project of homecoming is "invariably accompanied by the literal awareness

of 'homelessness'" (120, 6). Heaney's concern for the lost home was no more a sentimental or a nostalgic look backwards for a so-called glorious ancient patria, but an expectation of new possibilities of home hitherto not envisaged. Thus, Heaney welcomed a realm for transnational subjectivities within his poetic territory by being open to global influxes and effluxes.

With his first collection in the new decade *Seeing Things* (1991), Heaney turned his face to the phenomenal world along with the distant past revived with stories taken from the Irish annals. Thus, the two seeming polarities of the real and the transcendent were taken to belong to the same perception. The poetic persona bid freedom in the experience of the material world, that is, the everyday and the extraordinary could stand up together without ignoring the political realities of the age. The succeeding collection *The Spirit Level* (1996) grounds itself more on the activities of everyday; the poet as a child and his siblings playing train on a sofa in the farmhouse or a brother tending his cows are all reminiscences of the past. Yet, Heaney did not tie these experiences and places to a single place or a root. Finally, in *District and Circle* (2006), Heaney put his poetry onto a global, heterogeneous and multi-layered space. Although the setting of his poems was provincial, native or local places of Irish history, he stretched them to global events like 9/11 or London bombings. Heaney stripped his poetry out of a narrow national framework and moved it to a transnational setting, within "the overarching context of the twentieth century's 'traveling cultures' (in Clifford's phrase) and 'dramatically delocalized world' (in Appadurai's), poetries that seem native or provincial or local often turn out to be vitally exogamous" (Ramazani, 43). Ramazani's assessment of Heaney's

poetry that “the imaginative topography of Heaney’s poetry is an intercultural space, a layered geography” and that Heaney “renews dinnseanchas, the Irish place-name topos, by revealing the transnational sedimentation of the Irish ground” rings true when Heaney amalgamates international political events with a return to his boyhood experiences (39).

#### **2.4.2. Ciaran Carson**

After Heaney, among the second-generation Irish poets, Ciaran Carson, too, questions the so-called organic unity between the land, place and space, and pays attention to the fluid and non-stable nature of these entities and subjectivity. The former divisions between the poetry from the North and the Republic become increasingly problematic with the extension of globalization to several monolithic nations and acceleration of the processes of political and economic unification in Europe. The nationalistic labels on poets, like Ulster or Republican lost their meaning, when poets, like Heaney or Mahon, change places. Carson is a long-time resident of Belfast, yet he is aware of the impossibility of having organic ties with a single place. The impossibility of territorializing oneself to a stable place is mentioned by the Tunisian writer Albert Memmi, who refers to the high probability of experiencing the nomadic site of existence in the contemporary world in his book of memoirs *The Immobile Nomad*. The technological change and changes in the world in general can easily make many nomads:

where cheap air flight has made at least the White World into summer travelers, sun-seekers, tourist-nomads, or really not nomads at all, while a large part of poor Third World people are constrained to turn themselves into forced labor exiles or at best transhumance-ing workers, transients that have been 'transported' as the term was used in the slave trade. And in the 'trans' of such transience here is no trance, no ex-statis. (qtd. in Joris 127)

Pierre Joris too expands the definition of nomadic poetics: "A nomadic poetics: mindfulness in & of the drift (la derive) there is no at homeness here but only an ever more displaced drifting" (74). Carson's poetry voices this feeling of uncanniness and defamiliarisation for a so-called home place. Looking at these places from a voyeuristic perspective, Carson observes himself from outside, as well.

In post-Troubles Ireland, categories of separation and division, like North and South or the Republic fail to refer to any intrinsic formal or thematic features of poetics dominated by any leg of the binaries. That is why, as opposed to exilic subjectivity, the second-generation Irish poets, including Carson deal more with migrant or diasporic sensibilities. At this point, giving an ear to what Iain Chambers says might be interesting as he defines migrancy as a state, which

involves a movement in which neither the points of departure nor those of arrival are immutable or certain. It calls for a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are constantly subject to mutation. Always in transit, the promise of a homecoming – completing the story, domesticating the detour – becomes an impossibility. (5)

Perhaps the timeliest metaphor for contemporary condition is, life is a one-way trip, without a home to go back to. The migrant has to deal with the “sense of being rootless, of living between worlds, between a lost past and a non-integrated present” in Ian Chambers’ view (27). In such a world, Carson’s poetry, too, does not take home as a place, but it becomes a poetic space which acts as a site of combination and variety. Carson rewrites history, reconfigures identities and deconstructs dualistic thinking. Amidst all, according to Kennedy-Andrews, what the poet should do is “map his one place in a world where there is no secure ground of being, no reliable coordinates that he can use” (*Writing Home* 19). In the same line of thinking, writing in the post-Troubles Ireland, Carson, like Heaney deploys several methods to spatialize the places of the past, which evinces how the materiality of place is dissolved into a textual space.

In addition to the move from rooted to diasporic notions of culture and identity, another important theme Carson explores in the changing conceptualization of Irish place is the shift in the centre of gravity; that is, from the rural to the urban and/or from the country to the city. The nationalist representation of Ireland generally depends upon the rural spirit and Carson in his peculiar way challenges this fetishisation. The urbanized Irish space has come to the fore in his poetry; and “the city of flux and diversity” as Kennedy-Andrews asserts “is not the natural home of traditional religious, political or cultural pieties” (*Writing Home* 11). The contact zones of these two places might have been the vantage point for liminal, hybrid and bricolage subjectivities, like Belfast interfaces, for Carson. What is more, the city as “a site of discontinuity and difference, of infinite ‘plurabilities,’ became the locus of an alternative

vision to . . . totalizing, rural-based cultural nationalism” (Kennedy-Andrews, *Writing Home* 11). Carson deploys a different method to unsettle the fixed visions of Irish place. In the light of this new urban poetics, Carson, putting the recent Troubles in the background of his work, questions the essentialist view of Belfast “as standing, unchanging and monolithic, in stark opposition to the pre- or anti-modern land” (12). Thus, in his poetry since the early 1990s, Carson experimented with disjointed, decentred and ungrounded forms of space by portraying Belfast as a city space, which is volatile and unreliable, but open to reconstruction and constant overhauling.

In exploring this new urban space, Carson configures new concepts of place and subjectivities. In the second half of the twentieth century, with the dissolution of the national borders and mononational identities, mapping gained much more importance. There appeared several different viewpoints on mapping. In recent context, it can no more be seen as an objective way of picturing the land, rather it highly depends on the position of the agent who maps the city. Also, the city that is mapped is not a stable and a fixed place being a living site which is under constant construction and reconstruction. It is hard to link a city to a mononational population due to transnational identities. In Carson’s poetry, it is clearly seen that Belfast is no longer solely a place to escape but it is a city space with labyrinths and ever-shifting frameworks. Hence, Carson depicts spaces which are on the constant move, momentary and which depend on personal experience.

Starting with the 1970s, Ciaran Carson has produced a diverse body of work including poetry, translations, a novel, critical writings on literature and



Irish music. His poetry is inseparably linked to his home city of Belfast, Irish history, topography, language and music. In his first collection of poetry *The New Estate* (1976), Carson pictures fragmented autobiographical memories, the Troubles, and names places in Belfast. His mother tongue being Irish, Carson is interested in exploring how objects and places are named in Irish and English language. The succeeding collections *The Irish for No* (1987) and *Belfast Confetti* (1989) mark a new departure in terms of both form and subject matter. These collections represent Carson's distinctive use of the long line. He reveals excavations of the hidden stories of his home city and contemporary life. The preface poem of *Belfast Confetti* (1989) "Turn Again" shows how city is a fluid space which refuses to be decoded and stabilized by any devices even by maps:

There is a map of the city which shows the bridge that was  
never built,  
A map which shows the bridge that collapses; the streets that  
never existed.  
Ireland's Entry, Elbow Lane, Weigh-House Lane, Back Lane,  
Stone Cutter's Entry-  
Today's plan is already yesterday's – the streets that were there  
are gone.  
And the shape of the jails cannot be shown for security reasons.  
("Turn Again" 1-9)

Maps cannot represent the heterogeneity of the past or the vitality of the present places being always on the move. Although Belfast has continued to be the framework for Carson's poetry, in his succeeding collections *First Language* (1993) and *Opera Et Cetera* (1996), he turns his attention to the potential of language and the link between writing and space. In *Opera Et Cetera* (1996), he draws four sequences together; the alphabetical series "Letters of the Alphabet";

“Opera”, a series similarly built around the radio operator’s code; “Et Cetera”, poems inspired by Latin tags; and “Alibi”, translations of short poems by the Romanian poet Stefan Augustin Doinas. Carson’s most recent poems in *Breaking News* (2003) drop the long line; some of the poems in the collection are pared back to one word per line. In these three collections after the 1990s, namely *First Language*, *Opera Et Cetera* and *Breaking News*, which are the focus of this study, Carson sets culturally specific Troubles onto a transnational framework by problematizing Belfast as a unique place with organic ties or links.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Every story is a travel story – a spatial practice.

Michel de Certeau (115)

All that we can do is re-collect and creatively juxtapose, experimenting with assertions and insertions of the spatial against the prevailing grain of time.

Edward Soja (*Postmodern 2*)

Space is becoming the principal stake of goal-directed actions and struggles.

Henri Lefebvre (409)

This chapter aims to provide a theoretical framework for conceptual tools in space and subjectivity studies to be able to analyse how space appears in Heaney and Carson's poetry. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, an unprecedented era when migration, exilic events and globalization took place at a phenomenal speed, subjectivities underwent radical transformation being able no longer to attach themselves to the land and nation for so long. Both Heaney and Carson witnessed the microcosmic and macrocosmic events in domestic and international affairs leading to the spatial turn. Their major concerns like their attachment to the land they dwelled in or their sense of who they were were all very much related to this new understanding of spatiality and subjectivity. As

poetry and literary theory both engage in subjectivity and thus the subject's position, I believe these two fields will be in tune with one another in analysing the shift in epistemological categories. Thus, this study will employ some key terms about space and subjectivity like thirdspace, rhizome, smooth and striated spaces, nomadism and transnationalism and how these concepts flourished departing from the Cartesian understanding of space and subjectivity. Thirdspace will be used to refer to the new space Heaney creates in order to poeticize the junction points between dualities, like the places of the past/classical and the present or the local and the global. For Carson's mobile and living city space and interfaces, I will be borrowing Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of rhizome, smooth and striated spaces. In the aftermath of bloody events and riots in Ireland, the concept of striated space will shed light on how the working mechanisms of the State philosophy grid city space and try to put the residents under surveillance. On the other hand, by making use of the concept of smooth spaces, this study aims to explore how these spaces will host the experience of moving in city space with freedom or escaping from the state apparatuses. Finally, to refer to the impotency of any grand discourse to make one feel at home in any place, this study will be referring to Pierre Joris and Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of nomadic existence, which enables one to transgress the binaries of here and there or far away making the borders in between places porous.

In recent years, space has attracted considerable attention from many scholars in various disciplines. While nineteenth and early twentieth century discourse was dominated by time and history, in the twentieth century, in the

wake of World War II, space and geography proclaimed the attention time and history had previously attracted. The revival of interest in space and geography in the second half of the twentieth century is named 'the spatial turn' and this new aesthetic sensibility is reinforced by the claims of postmodernism and postcolonialism. Globalization together with the recent developments in technology connecting spaces and places to one another regardless of national borders and/or limits also made space attract more attention. That globalization aims for connectivity for all countries, places and nations in order to promote homogeneity causes traveling, technology and transportation to advance incredibly fast. The motivations behind the urge to compress time and space on behalf of a homogenous culture are quite various; some of which might be to claim monopoly on economy and values. Amidst all these changes, to foster one connected culture for the world, lands, borders and spaces becomes more important.

### **3.1. Space and Place**

Though space has been reevaluated within different frames such as globalization, technology, postcolonialism and postmodernism, it has always been the focus of attention during the entire span of humanity. To trace the genealogy of the different conceptions of space, one should go back to Euclid's geometry to acknowledge how space was taken to be an infinite, flat and empty container. It was until the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the Western view of space was shaped with an Euclidian frame. In his *Elements* circa B. C. 300, he introduced

some axioms<sup>14</sup> to discuss space. From these axioms, it can be inferred that Euclidian space is interminable, there is no preferred origin and direction in it, there is no specific way to define a point in infinity and that Euclidian space is flat, linear and continuous. Till the 19<sup>th</sup> century, space had been seen as the empty container of Euclidian geometry. As Henri Lefebvre elaborated in his influential book *The Production of Space* (1994), Euclidian space had “a strictly geometrical meaning” and it was mainly “an empty area” (1). In spatial studies, it was referred to as “‘Euclidian’, ‘isotropic’, or ‘infinite’, and the general feeling was that the concept of space was ultimately a mathematical one” (Lefebvre 1). To think of space as a living and a corporeal entity was out of question for the time being.

To understand the Medieval conception of space, one can say that the keyword is “historicize”: space in the Medieval context can be best analysed by seeing it in the light of historical setting. As European landscape is shaped and transformed with historical, economic and social changes, space is transformed, as well. Lefebvre exemplifies how space is very much affected by these changes: the urban space of the Medieval Era was “fated to become the theatre of a compromise between the declining feudal system, the commercial bourgeois, oligarchies, and communities of craftsmen” (269). Thus, historicizing space will

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<sup>14</sup> 1. A straight line segment can be drawn joining any two points,  
2. Any straight line segment can be extended indefinitely in a straight line,  
3. Given any straight line segment, a circle can be drawn having the segment as radius and one endpoint as center,  
4. All right angles are congruent,  
5. If two lines are drawn which intersect a third in such a way that the sum of inner angle on one side is less than two right angles, then the two lines inevitably must intersect each other on that side if extended far enough. (Berlinski 2013)

give us new means of finding out how people are located both in their community and the cosmos. Cassidy-Welch, too, dates spatializing processes to the Medieval ages, asserting that through the Middle Ages, space started to be related to its historical context and “historical change can be tracked through spatial understandings and forms has [*sic*] continued to stimulate what has come to be known as ‘spatial turn’ in histories of the premodern world” (1). To illustrate, space is very much linked to the historical developments, as European landscape underwent a remarkable transformation through Christianisation, and increasing urbanization has transformed the topology of the continent. Lefebvre gives a more concrete example for how space can be interpreted in relation to the dictations of history and its historical circumstances as follows; the commercial development of the high Middle Ages is a precursor to an invading form of capitalism, which depicted the urban space as a “tool of terrifying power” (269).

Space has a symbolic importance and representative mission for the context and time in which it flourishes. Giuseppe Tardiola takes space as a symbolic entity defining medieval space as “eminently ontological, psychological, conclusive” and resembles it to time as both become “the sphere of activity of the symbol and the liturgy” (qtd. in Westphal 1). Similarly, Bertrand Westphal argues that space has always been “subject to symbolic readings” and the concrete details of geography often relate to “a spiritual hermeneutic rather than to immediate observation” (1). To put it in different words, apart from having symbolic significance, space was associated with the “supernatural” and was seen as a “reflection of creation” (2). Foucault explains

this dual reflection of space by emphasizing the fact that it should be interpreted by historicizing in its peculiar context:

in the Middle Ages there was a hierarchic ensemble of places and open, exposed places; urban places and rural places (all these concern real men)...there were the supercelestial places, as opposed to the celestial, and the celestial place was in its turn opposed to the terrestrial place. There were places where things had been put because they had been violently displaced, and then on the contrary places where things found their natural ground and stability. It was this complete hierarchy, this opposition, this intersection of places that constituted what could be ...called medieval space: the space of emplacement. ("Of Other Spaces" 22)

Following the genealogy of the category of space, one can see that space is constructed in accordance with the claims of specific episteme. Moving from the Medieval Era to the Renaissance, one can see that further shifts of perspective are remarkably reflected onto the spatial conception of the era. For Kemp, the way we think about space, consciously and unconsciously, is profoundly "associated with the way that space has come to be represented in Western art from the time of the invention of linear perspective in the Renaissance" (13). Lefebvre stretches the time period from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century when there exists

a code at once architectural, urbanistic and political, constituting a language common to country people and townspeople, to the authorities and to artists – a code which allowed space not only to be 'read' but also to be constructed. (7)



Lefebvre also gives an example of how spatiality of the city is influenced by the zeitgeist of the time stating that a “Renaissance town” would be exhibiting “the dissolution of the feudal system and the rise of merchant capitalism” (47). Foucault explains the change in the perception of space in reference to Galileo’s discovery “that the earth revolved around the sun,” and that “a thing’s place was no longer anything but a point in its movement, just as the stability of a thing was only its movement indefinitely slowed down” (“Of Other Spaces” 23). Westphal, similarly, traces the change in the perception of space against the backdrop of the Renaissance idea that “the perception of space becomes vertical with the introduction of perspective in painting and mapping, and with the alignment of the planet’s sidereal depth in the solar system” (2). This shift has been strengthened over the centuries.

In Western history, Descartes’ perception of space marks a turning point. Lefebvre points out the change in the understanding of space as follows: “[w]ith the advent of Cartesian<sup>15</sup> logic ... space has entered the realm of the absolute” (1). Gaining a metaphysical dimension, space came to be in command of everything including all senses and bodies. With the introduction of Cartesian space, the binaries were consolidated; space being absolute “infinite *res extensa*, a divine property which may be grasped in a single act of intuition because of its homogenous (isotropic) character” and place is the concrete and meaningful

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<sup>15</sup> Cartesianism is the philosophical and scientific conventions introduced by the writings of the French philosopher René Descartes. Epistemologically, it puts the emphasis on rationalism and has a belief that certain knowledges can be attained with reason. Ontologically, Cartesian logic builds on dualism of two finite substances, mind and body, which can be extended to any field or understanding.

sites to be located on the space like towns, villages or cities (Lefebvre 14). In other words, space and discourse aim for fixity by trying to make space secured and guarded to bring it under control so that the greatest fear of dislocation can be dispelled. Thinkers as diverse as Descartes, Newton and Kant promoted Cartesian understanding of space, as they contrasted place and space, in that, while place is a meaningful component of human activity which can be analysed, space acts as a void for human activity to take place. Space, for Cartesian logic, is absolute, empty and unproblematic. Edward Soja further elaborates on how space was treated by Cartesian way of thinking; space was seen “as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile. Time, on the contrary was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic” (“Heterotopologies” 13). The intellectual perceptions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries privileged temporality as an active agent against space, which was delegated the role of being a static frame, in which time took place.

Before the postmodern spatial turn in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some theorists challenged the dominance of the Cartesian ‘absolute space’. One of them is Heidegger albeit not dwelling on space overtly in his works. Yet, his understanding of space is far from being a priori absolute Cartesian space. Schatzki enlists the main principles of Heideggerean understating of space:

- (1) space as the aroundness of the world in which people proceed, composed of the regional places of entities differentially near and far vis-à-vis people’s activity;
- (2) space as the place (Ort) where the clearing happens, embracing a here of human

dwelling that is centered around things and contains places and paths for dwelling; and (3) space as a component of the empty, or open, of the clearing in which entities are. (66)

Heidegger, in a way, equalizes space and place as a free and mobile site, which hosts any kind of human activity.

Gaston Bachelard is highly indebted to Heidegger. He is more interested in intimate spaces especially the house, which embodies the most primal resonances of the human experience – sanctuary, love, reason – while also providing spatial form for that which resists empirical analysis (Bachelard 29-30). He is, in other words, trying to “[demolish] the lazy certainties of the geometrical intuitions by means of which psychologist sought to govern the space of intimacy” (Bachelard 220). Any new perception of space stripping it of the geometrical dimension and acknowledging it as an active agent for any kind of human activity will point to a departure from Cartesian space and subjectivity.

At this point, another scholar to mention is Michel de Certeau, who has not seen space from the viewpoint of abstract positivist models. De Certeau is concerned with the practicalities of intimate space. For him, cities are planned, virtual spaces, apprehensible in terms of the “geometrical” or “geographical” space of visual, panoptic, or theoretical constructions (De Certeau 93). Yet, every step taken by city walkers as they weave their own personal urban poem represents a potential subversion of those constructions (De Certeau 110). Finally, Foucault openly argues against the idea of space as “the dead, the fixed,

the undialectical, the immobile” (“Questions of Geography” 70). On the contrary, he takes space as a living entity and relates it to power and knowledge.

Starting with the second third of the twentieth century, a great deal of attention has been paid to matters of spatiality and location. As Eric Falci states, “space and place began to re-emerge as conceptual problems, most prominently in the fields of phenomenology, epistemology, social theory, and political economy” (201). The presumed immobility of place was encompassed by and replaced with indefiniteness and activity of space. Eric Falci summarizes what de Certeau (1984) and Lefebvre (1991) point out departing from the Cartesian understanding of spatiality as follows: “space was conceived of as having a poetics, and of being a kind of production itself rather than simply occupying the ground where production happened” and as a result “[p]laces - actual, virtual, conceptual - became the site of spatial practices and experiences” (201). In other words, with the spatial turn space is taken no more as a container to be filled in but as a living entity, which is produced by human activity. Derek Gregory sheds light on the change in the perception of space: “space and time are not neutral, canonical grids that exist ‘on the outside’, separate from and so enframing and containing everyday life, but are instead folded into the ongoing flows and forms of the world in which we find ourselves” (771). Gregory strips space of its mathematical dimensions and highlights its social dimension by relating it to everyday life. Within the framework of the “spatial turn”, several different theorists have introduced a wide range of ideas on space. Falci conveys what Post-Cartesian thinkers, postmodern geographers, like Edward Soja and Doreen Massey assert that space itself is a construct and he draws attention to

“[r]eading of spaces, spatial forms, spatial systems, spatial practices, and the materiality of space” (201). While space becomes rather a multi-dimensional critical tool to interpret the configurations of the post-Cartesian thinking, place lost its popularity as a frame for thinking. Finally, in the recent decades, space has become rather a product of an interdisciplinary collection of ideas, between the fields; such as geography, urban studies, philosophy and social theory. In the latter half of the twentieth century, space is no more taken as an empty container but a dynamic product of cultural exchanges and conflicts along with configurations associated with urbanization, technology and imperialism.

In defining space, there had been the tendency to explain it by referring to place; either by putting them in binary oppositions or by relating them to one another. Yi-Fu Tuan, in his *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977), differentiates space and place, and posits this distinction as follows: “if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place” (6). He thinks that the ideas of “‘space’ and ‘place’ require each other for definition” and he resembles them to a kind of journey “[f]rom the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa” (6). Ian Davidson elucidates on the reason for the tendency to compare and contrast them as follows:

Traditional, physical geography is the study of places within space, where a ‘place’ is a bounded area set within ‘space’ that is best described through a set of coordinates. Space is therefore ‘a priori’, it was already there and places, such as towns, villages, homesteads, farms, cities,

regions and so on, are located within it. Without places, space becomes empty and meaningless, a mathematically calculable desert. (28)

Space containing places in it is crucial in configuring one's identity, bearing in itself the content and working mechanisms to constitute one's subjectivity in relation to itself. Davidson states the importance of space in constructing one's subjectivity as follows: "Places provide spaces with content, and the populations of those places with identity and security; as well as being geographical locations they are also 'structures of feeling'" (28). Space, place and subjectivity are equally important interrelated constructs. Seeing place and space as separate entities would mean that places are corporeal entities with fixed definitions and space is an empty holder, which is shaped by the atmosphere of the place, and that place is occupied by subjectivities with homogenous features. In this study, rather than this traditional view, space is taken as a comprehensive entity which is animate, mobile and responsive to human activities and experiences.

The tendency to set place and space as each other's prerequisite is dematerialized by the postmodern spatial turn, and space and place start to be taken as one entity. Edward Soja, in his *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (1996), offers the concept, "thirdspace" which is:

a creative recombination and extension, one that builds on a Firstspace perspective that is focused on the 'real' material world and a Secondspace perspective that interprets this reality through 'imagined' representations of reality. (6)

Soja interprets this “an-Other form of spatial awareness” starting with the late 1960s with thirdspace describing it “as a product of a ‘thirthing’ of the spatial imagination, the creation of another mode of thinking about space that draws upon the material and mental spaces of the traditional dualism but extends well beyond them in scope, substance, and meaning” (*Thirdspace* 11). Soja brings forth thirdspace as a concept which combines the traditional geographical concept of place and space as the representation of place. This study will make use of thirdspace as a spatial tool to analyse how the former dualities in gauging spaces dissolve themselves in the heterogeneous and mobile thirdspace.

With globalization and the condition of having to be connected, place ceased to have a traditional emblematic significance. Defining place, especially the local place, Doreen Massey attracts attention to the shift in understanding of place:

[i]n the context of a world which is, indeed, increasingly interconnected the notion of place (usually evoked as a local place) has come to have totemic resonance ... For some it is the sphere of the everyday, of real and valued practices, the geographical source of meaning, vital to hold on to as ‘the global’ spins its ever more powerful and alienating webs. (*For Space* 5)

To attribute a definite set of values and/or identity to places has become impossible in this web of interconnectedness. At the same time, it is not applicable to describe a place as a site of inclusion for some population, while the same place implies a site of exclusion for some others. As Davidson puts forth, “[i]n a globalized world, where place is homogenized through processes of

commodification, populations became dispossessed and dislocated” (29). In other words, to ascribe certain characteristics to a place and to identify a set of common values for it would mean to create “politically conservative haven ... one that fails to address the real forces at work” (Massey, *For Space* 6). Massey rejects this mindset and questions the validity of such a juxtaposition: place as “closed, coherent, integrated as authentic, as ‘home’, a secure retreat; of space as somehow originarily regionalized, as always-already divided up” as opposed to space as “the outside ... the abstract ... the meaningless” (*For Space* 6). In such a context, new formulations for place and space are needed. The “imagination of space as a surface on which we are placed, the turning of space into time, the sharp separation of local place from the space out there” for Massey is rather “the ways of taming the challenge the inherent spatiality of the world presents” (*For Space* 7). Such a view of place “challenges any possibility of claims to internal histories or to timeless identities” (Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* 5). In the new spatial turn,

the identities of place are always unfixed, contested and multiple [and] the particularity of any place is ... constructed not by placing boundaries around it and defining its identity through counterposition to the other which lies beyond, but precisely (in part) through the specificity of the mix of links and interconnections *to* that ‘beyond’. (Massey, *Space* 5)

Thus, places, which are thought this way, are “open and porous” (5).

To be able to decode the underlying principles of spatialization in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the understanding of space should be reformulated



accordingly. For Lefebvre, “[t]he form of social space is encounter, assembly, simultaneity”, and to the question “what assembles, or what is assembled?”, his answer is: “everything that there is in space, everything that is produced either by nature or by society, either through their co-operation or through their conflicts” and he further describes everything as “living beings, things, objects, works, signs and symbols” (101). Doreen Massey, similarly, sees space as “dynamic simultaneity...constructed out of the multiplicity of social relations across all spatial scales, from the global reach of finance and telecommunications, through the geography of the tentacles of national power, to the social relations within the town, the settlement, the household and the workplace” (*Space* 4). In other words, space as a tool is a “product of interrelations” and “space does not exist prior to identities/entities and their relations...identities/entities, the relations ‘between’ them, and the spatiality which is part of them, are all constitutive” (Massey, *For Space* 10). Space does not have a priori status for place as a fixed entity to dwell on but is rather a social construct; likewise, place is no more a tool with impermeable borders to serve as a site of existence for a rooted identity. Space and place are interrelated and coexistent.

The duality between place and space is dematerialized and the dissolution of the difference between them finds its echo in other binaries in configuring spatiality. For the next part of the chapter, working mechanisms of another dual logic between rural and urban space will be laid bare. Both poets in this study somehow vacillated between different pulls of various spaces having long lived in a culture which is defined with in-betweenness or with

conflicts. As the borders become porous in any configuration of space, rural and urban spaces, also, cease to exist as two discrete spatial sites.

### **3.2. Rural and Urban Space**

In this study, the dissolution of binaries between the urban and the rural will be taken as the starting point to explore the dispersal of Cartesian self into a non-Cartesian dimension. In traditional conception, another binary opposition in spatial categories is the one between rural and urban spaces. While rural life is seen to have the capacity to establish “a geographical community that ascribe to a common set of values” as Davidson states (30), urban space has a threatening and uncanny set of atmosphere. The harmony of the self-closed and self-sufficient world of the rural has been threatened by the urban life with its new roads and industry. In the postmodern spatial turn, when the borderlines become porous, it is indeed hard to draw clear lines between the rural and the urban with clear-cut binaries. Ian Davidson along with Doreen Massey and David Harvey offers a new understating of rural and urban spaces which welcomes both: “[y]et a place that is always in process, a kind of open field or three- dimensional network with unlimited potential combination and connectivity, can effectively operate within an increasingly spatialized society” (30). Afterwards, this place can “become more than a place of retreat, of sentiment, nostalgia and opposition to technological development, but a place that also links to the broader environment” (30). This kind of reconstruction clears away the former boundaries between the urban and the rural. In such

kind of a heterogeneous space, it is no longer possible to locate any space into its reclusion or retreat from global economic, social, cultural and environmental changes. Otherwise, this retreat would create another set of binaries between insiders and outsiders of technology and change along with the partition of urban and rural space.

In the wake of World War I, the status quo witnessed a big clash between the rural and the urban, and what is more, the focus changed its direction towards urban space. Still I believe that a clear-cut distinction between the city and the countryside is impossible to draw in a post-industrialist context. Steve Pile similarly asserts that “cities are characterized by their openness: to new possibilities, and to new interactions between people” and “the difficulties and paradoxes that the unavoidable openness of cities presents, as different histories and geographies intersect and overlap” (viii). In each of these so-called different categories, like city or countryside or rural and urban, one can see the features of one another.

Starting with the second third of the century, for the first time in history more than half of the humanity lived in the cities, which created a new kind of geography and concentration of world population. At this point, Doreen Massey, along with John Allen and Steve Pile, asks “What possibilities and problems does this new geography bring?” (1) Yet, they draw attention to the coexistence of “possibilities” and “problems” in the same sentence talking about the city. They explain this double-sidedness as follows:

On the 'possibility' side, there is the city as the apex of civilization, the birthplace of citizenship, the City on the Hill. On the 'problem' side, there is the city of poverty, mayhem and threat; the bursting of the bounds of social control. On the one hand, cities are the crucibles of the new, places of mixing and the creation of new identities; they are the cradles of new ideas. On the other hand, that very process of the coming together of different peoples can create conflict, intolerance and violence. These contrasting images of the city overlap and play off one another, perhaps because the city comprises so many worlds. Taking these contrasts together, it would appear that the city is nothing if not ambiguous. (Massey, Allen and Pile 1)

The possibilities and the problems that may occur in the "ambiguity" of the city will all take place in spatial terms. In other words, social relations or any type of relations are all spatially constructed. Massey, Allen and Pile draw a very comprehensive picture of the issues: "from life on the streets to the economics of neo-liberalism, from issues of 'community' to questions of environmentalism" (1). Cities become spaces where different stories intersect. In all types of the cities, like metropolitan or divided cities, or the urban space, we are face to face with a complicated intertwining of social networks and relations as each city or urban space lives in interconnection with both other cities and the rural spaces.

In literature, the linguistic pastoralism loses its strength and influence as the attention of contemporary poetry deviates from the dual way of thinking between the rural and the urban to that of amalgamating one with the other. The evacuation of the binaries between the rural and the urban seems to disclose itself in "a row of evacuated linguistic signifiers" for Peter Barry (7). The villages and the rural homesteads all lose their idealized status as Barry states: "[t]he villages in which the farm workers of the idealized rural past used

to live now have rows of gentrified houses and cottages, usually with names containing the word 'Old' (The Old Rectory, Smithy, School, Dairy, Post Office and so on)" (7). From these evacuated signifiers, one can infer a representation of a vanished community. Yet, there used to be the tendency to see the city as scheming and dark and to associate oneself with transcendental tranquillity of the countryside. Peter Barry comments on this inherent inclination as follows:

In terms of an age-old rhetorical trope, we were implicitly rejecting the inherent corruption and deviousness of the city, and associating ourselves with the innate goodness and honesty of the countryside. Hence, our preference for metaphors with a rural flavor seemed to highlight a more general and widespread desire to occlude the city. (7)

The emotive pull of the countryside is shifted to the cities and urban experience by drifting some rural sensibilities with itself. Together with the shift in focus towards the city and the urban, linguistic pastoralism gives way to a more urban and civic vocabulary to be able to refer to urban experience. The contemporary urban scene has become a cacophonous music of interrelations. Poetry, especially, paying attention to cities indeed is "a significant part of the cultural energies which helped to reinvigorate the sense of local worth and identity as traditional industries collapsed" and perhaps "poetry even helped to pave the way for subsequent economic revival in the post-industrial cityscapes of the 1990s" (Barry 10). Cities are in a constant process of shaping the contemporary experience.

The ancient dichotomy between the country and the city cannot disappear at once. Yet, it has changed dimension. A house in a rural

environment somehow is connected to the urban via phone, fax and e-mail. In other words, as we somehow live in an urbanized environment, which is digitalized and always online, the mere physical location has become less and less determinant about our ways of life. The origin of the absolute distinction between the country and the city can be dated back to the nineteenth century. However, “the town/country dichotomy has progressively been eroded for many generations, and is now virtually meaningless” and “the countryside can never be wholly ‘nature’ nor the city wholly ‘culture’” (Barry 31). Analysing the process of dissolution of the gap between the urban and the rural, one can acknowledge the gradual processes over many hundred years which produce multi-layered spaces that include the traces of both the countryside and the industrialized city at the same time. The urban and the rural seem to be dissolved in one another.

Where the categories of the urban and the rural intersect is unveiled in the wake of the urbanization process, during which fields or anything related to rural are brought back to existence. Thus, it is difficult to define any place in pre-existing terms, that is, to label a space as city and to attribute urban features to it would merely categorize that into a generic local abstraction. If one took city as a corrupted space and source of anxiety in the eighteenth century, then the difference in the twentieth century is that one does not have to go to the cities to be corrupted – s/he can be affected anywhere they are. Thus, one can experience the corruption of the city in the country, as city has become a space or rather in Barry’s words “a state of mind which may exist anywhere” (40). In other words, city has changed as a concept and as an actuality, and there are

several new locations problematizing the ancient dichotomy between the city and the country.

The urban space is multi-layered in the sense that it bears the traces of the countryside. Barry diagnoses that there is “double visioning” in the cities, which simultaneously “perceives both the built-up present and the inscriptions upon it of pre-urban past” (46). Fields and/or the places that belonged to the rural in the past are now buried beneath the streets, and places of the urban are referred to as “old.” That is, in the label of the urban, one can see the traces of the past. Similarly, Gillian Tindall, in *Countries of Mind: The Meaning of Place to Writers* (1991) quotes Karl Marx in relation to the idea that one can sense “the soft veil of nostalgia that hangs over urbanized landscape” (144). Barry further adds that “all cities are haunted by the ghosts of their former selves, and the haunting partly consists of the prevalence of such verbal and topographical echoes of the past” (46). The idea of double visioning, then, is rather the characteristic of a multi-layered and multi-temporal perspective of spaces, which lays one history or one geography over one another. Through the city, one can perceive several layers of time and several epochs simultaneously. At the end, these spaces will prove to be both transhistorical and transnational.

This study questions the shifts in the understanding of space and subjectivity in poetry and while doing so the ideas discussed here like the dissolution of binaries between the urban and the rural and double-visioning will serve to demonstrate how the two poets depart from the Cartesian logic in poeticizing space and subjectivity. Another conceptual tool to analyse this departure is rhizome and rhizomatic thinking of space, which refers to the

constant construction and deconstruction process of a space without any hierarchical structure. Rhizomatic spaces become significant in Carson's poetry.

### **3.3. Rhizome and Rhizomatic Thinking of Space**

Departing from the Cartesian conception of space as absolute and fixed with its geometrical dimension and stripped of its social and experimental aspects, conception of space in the recent decades of the twentieth century can only be possible with the help of subjects' involvement and movement in it. This spatial conception is non-hierarchical, heterogeneous, multiplicitous and acentered. This view also characterizes Heaney and Carson's poetry as they position their subjects and their acts in a space which gives way to free crossings and overleaps transhistorically and transnationally. With its heterogeneity, multiplicity and asignifying rupturedness, rhizome as a term contains in itself all the resonances of this new conception. In other words, rhizome is the right term to analyse their conception of space as it gives way to structures that are non-hierarchical and open-ended which, in turn, challenge traditional power structures in spaces.

Rhizome is an evolving term that was first used by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980). The Oxford English Dictionary defines rhizome as "a prostrate or subterranean root-like stem emitting roots and usually producing leaves at its apex; a rootstock". In *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*, rhizome is explained firstly by how "[b]otanists use the term to differentiate between the diffused



underground growth systems of certain kinds of plant (such as couch-grass) and those with a dominant or radicle/radical root system (such as the carrot)” (206). As Childs and Fowler assert, in the adaptation of Deleuze and Guattari, rhizome refers to “a non-hierarchical network in which established practices of logic, causation, filiation, etc. (including the practice which would look to oppose rhizome and root) cannot function” (206). Deleuze and Guattari develop metaphors to theorize the term rhizome by contrasting it with the arborescent system whose renowned metaphor is tree. This metaphor is widely used in Western thought in order to relate to any organization or positions based on a hierarchy. Tree originating from a single root spreads into a unified body and the branches, leaves, flowers and fruits can only grow out of this centred unity. Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizome tries “to discard the image of a tree with a main ‘taproot’ and then a network of roots getting smaller and smaller as they are distanced from the taproot, yet implicitly leading back to and supporting the centre. Such a tree exists at a single point; it can be plotted” (Davidson 40).

Rhizome, on the other hand, defies the notions of centeredness and origin created by the tree model. Instead, it does not seek for telos and “has no such centre, but exists as a network that produces its own space. It may well have points or nodes in the system, but these are simply stopping-off points rather than a set of points that can provide coordinates” (Davidson 40). Deleuze and Guattari identify some approximate characteristics of rhizome, two of which are “connection and heterogeneity” as they follow with a short explanation; “any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be” (7). The first two principles explained here relate to the idea that

rhizomes defy organized structures and principles; rather connect themselves to a wide range of disciplines. Unlike Chomsky's linguistic model based on a tree model, Deleuze and Guattari argue that "there is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages" as "not every trait in a rhizome is necessarily linked to a linguistic feature" in that "semiotic chains of every nature are connected to very diverse modes of coding (biological, political, economic, etc.) that bring into play not only different regimes of signs but also states of things of differing status" (7). Rhizome, thus, "ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences and social struggles" (7). Rhizome, in other words, does not simply construct or produce space, but it plays a part in deconstruction, in revealing "the semantic and pragmatic contents of statements, to collective assemblages of enunciation, to a whole micropolitics of the social field" (7). It offers a less grounded and established spatial model.

Another feature of rhizome is "multiplicity": "[t]here are no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root. There are only lines" (Deleuze and Guattari 8). Rhizome cannot be reduced to either the one or the multiple but is composed of "directions in motion" and it has "neither beginnings nor end, but always a middle (*milieu*) from which it grows and overflows" (21). As opposed to arborescent culture, rhizome is like a plateau, and between places. It is always in the process of production, that is always "detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight" (21). As Davidson asserts,

rhizome is then, always “in the process of construction, and never settled, and contains within itself the possibilities of its own liberation” (41). Rhizome – with the principles of connection, heterogeneity, multiplicity- moves outward not upward, cuts across borders, bridges gaps and makes new connections having no apparent source root as Kennedy-Andrews infers (*Northern Irish* 14). Thus, it is “mobile, deterritorialized, and undermines the logic of binaries” (*Northern Irish* 14). Rhizomatic space then is not a closed entity with clear-cut borders and references, but rather it gives way to incessant connections, relations and interactions.

### **3.3.1. Smooth and Striated Spaces**

To analyse the spatial model that Ciaran Carson employs in his poetry, I will be using the conceptual tools that Deleuze and Guattari developed in *A Thousand Plateaus*, which is already an effort to construct a smooth space of thought as Brian Massumi declares in “Translator’s Foreword” (xiii). Deleuze and Guattari use the terms “smooth space” and “striated space” to refer to two different sites, namely the space of nomad thought and State space, which is “striated” or “gridded”. Brian Massumi summarizes State space as follows: “[m]ovement in it is confined as by gravity to a horizontal plane, and limited by the order of that plane to preset paths between fixed and identifiable points” (xiii). State philosophy is another term for “the representational thinking that has characterized Western metaphysics since Plato” and as described by Deleuze, it “reposes on a double identity: of the thinking subject, and of the

concepts it creates and to which it lends its own presumed attributes of sameness and constancy” (xi.). Unlike “striated space” of State philosophy, “smooth space” of nomad thought is open-ended. What is more, “[o]ne can rise up at any point and move to any other. Its mode of distribution is the *nomos*: arraying oneself in an open space (hold the street), as opposed to the *logos* of entrenching oneself in a closed space (hold the fort)” (Massumi xiii).

Smooth spaces of nomad thought provide some lines of flight for possible escape routes from the “striated” or “sedentary spaces of capitalism”. Smooth spaces do not lie horizontally and they have the potential to move in every possible direction. In other words, as opposed to the gridded space of striated topography, smooth spaces provide a space of constant deterritorialization as they provide “continuous variation, continuous development of form” (Deleuze and Guattari 478). In smooth space, thus, “the line is a vector, a direction and not a dimension or metric determination” (478). At this point, the contrast between smooth and striated spaces is worth quoting at length in the words of Deleuze and Guattari:

In striated space, lines or trajectories tend to be subordinated to points: one goes from one point to another. In the smooth, it is the opposite: the points are subordinated to the trajectory. This was already the case among the nomads for the clothes-tent-space vector of the outside. The dwelling is subordinated to the journey; inside space conforms to outside space: tent, igloo, boat. There are stops and trajectories in both the smooth and the striated. But in smooth space, the stop follows from the trajectory; once again, the interval takes all, the interval is substance. (478)

The spatial atmosphere engulfing bodies somehow employs hierarchies, and Deleuze and Guattari are interested in “exposing inequalities and concealed or naturalized power structures” (Davidson 41). The spatial model they offer with smooth spaces encompasses more movement in any direction, which in turn achieves to overwhelm the mechanisms trying to turn spaces into a place. This study will use smooth space as a spatial tool to understand how Carson makes use of the opportunities of escape in search of lines of flight from the gridded and striated space of the State philosophy in the wake of the bloody Troubles. The next part of the chapter will delve into nomad thought, which allows smooth space to flourish.

### **3.4. Nomad and Nomadism**

Nomadic and rhizomatic understanding of space defies the plotting and gridding of space in order to decode or to familiarize it as in modernist collage or cubist viewpoint of space in the first decades of the twentieth century designs. In other words, rhizomatic and nomadic conceptions are one step further than modern collage and cubist mode. Pierre Joris, in *A Nomad Poetics* claims that space studies need to flourish with the help of nomad poetics. He puts under scrutiny the key rhizomatic and nomadic understanding of space in Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus*. Joris defines rhizomatics by relating it to language; it is “ a material flux of language matter” (5). For Davidson, by “moving from the modernist notion of collage to a more

postmodern idea of the rhizome” Joris is “moving from the location of objects within a frame to the idea of a system that produces its own space” (39).

As stated above, nomad and nomadism are suggestive metaphors associated with Deleuze and Guattari’s term rhizome. The contemporary nomad operates within rhizomatic space and this mobile – though not necessarily physically – nomad self “traverses and transgresses the familiar binaries of here and there, home and away, self and other” (Kennedy-Andrews, *Writing Home* 14). Steven Best and Douglas Kellner transvalue the term within a wider reference:

Nomads provide new models for existence and struggle. The nomad-self breaks from all molar segments and cautiously disorganizes itself. Nomad life is an experiment in creativity and becoming, and is anti-traditional and anti-conformist in character. (103)

The nomad, in contemporary space, is always ready to fluctuate between binary oppositions and lines of flight. The rooted identity associated with a certain place is a fallacy in the second third of the twentieth century as the contemporary subject is left to oscillate between spaces.

The nomad and the ideas regarding the nomadic refer to movement and human body. For Deleuze and Guattari, they “indicate the possibilities of subverting bureaucratic functionalism, and celebrate the synchronic and the situational as against the intrinsic” (Davidson 41). Unlike the striated space of the State philosophy, nomad inhabits smooth space, as Davidson calls “a space

of flows”; he elucidates on the spatial practice of nomad in smooth space as follows:

In order to avoid surveillance and capture by the state apparatus, those who are nomadic engage in rapid processes of change, both changing the space they inhabit and their location within it through processes of ‘territorializing, deterritorializing’. The nomad has to avoid the coordinates of Euclidean space and the functional grid that would allow the state to get them in their sights. (41)

Another characteristic of the nomadic is, it does not need language. Rather than language, as a form of self-expression and a way of expressing concepts, Deleuze and Guattari stress “[t]he necessity of not having control over language, of being a foreigner in one’s own tongue, in order to draw speech to oneself and bring something incomprehensible into the world” (378). Davidson, too, highlights another important aspect of the nomad thought: the nomad “rejects the thinking subject as the producer of truth about the world, locating thought ‘with a singular race’ or tribe, a way of thinking that is neither individual nor emanating from a nation-state, and is deployed in a ‘horizonless milieu that is a smooth space, steppe, desert or sea’” (42). The nomad inhabits a territory in which “the points are subordinated to the paths” and the “in-between ... enjoys both an autonomy and a direction of its own” (Deleuze and Guattari 380). As a consequence of the privileging of movement through space over residence within a “place”, the “life of the nomad is the intermezzo. Even the elements of his dwelling are conceived in terms of the trajectory that is forever mobilizing

them” (380). Deleuze and Guattari define one of the fundamental tasks of the states as “to striate the space over which it reigns” and “to relegate smooth space to a conduit or a means of communication, then the nomad will seek to distribute himself in a smooth space; he occupies, inhabits, holds that space; that is his territorial principle” (381). In the same line of thinking, Davidson reaches the following conclusion about the migrant: “[i]f the migrant, forced to move from one country to another, is deterritorialized, in the sense that they lose their territory, then they will seek to reterritorialize themselves in the country they move to” (42). Yet, it is a never-ending process as the notion of rooted identity to a specific place is no more plausible.

The ironic symbiosis between identity, language and space characterizes the nomadic poetics. Pierre Joris, in his essay “Notes Toward a Nomadic Poetics” discusses the idea of nomadism by drawing an analogy between traveling and poetry; that is, like traveling, a state of being on the move and resisting location, poetry, a linguistic form, defies being located and linked to a set identity. Hence, identity and language are in a constant “state of assembling, disassembling and reassembling” as Davidson relates (93). In such kind of a link between language and place, as Deleuze and Guattari acknowledged long ago in order writers to liberate themselves from the restrictive codes of their mother tongue, they should embrace multilingualism or they should deterritorialize the major language by finding the minor language, the dialect or rather idiolect (105). In such kind of a textual space, the writer would benefit from this nomadic site in stripping themselves of set principles for this language, land and identity. Similarly, Joris believes that a nomadic poetics can “cross languages, not just



translate. But write in all or any of them ... it is essential now to push this matter further, again, not as 'collage' but as material flux of language matter, moving in and out of semantic and non-semantic spaces ... a lingo-cubism" (38). In such a nomadic textual space, the author can no more be perceived as a single unified being as s/he has been replaced with multiple subjectivities, or rather as Barthes concludes the author ceases to be a single identity and thus, he is declared as dead. Joris reflects on the death of the author in nomadic poetics as: "We now have to say 'I' is many others" and for him "[a] nomadic poetics will thus explore ways in which to make – and think about – a poetry that takes into account not only the manifold of languages and locations but also of selves each one of us is constantly becoming" (43). Such kind of poetics can thus take place in a rhizomatic space which gives way to many other possible ways but not a conclusion.

Within the framework of nomadic poetics, it is impossible for a subject to feel at home with any of the fixed and rooted entities. As Joris asserts, "the fallacy would be to think of language as at-home-ness while 'all else' drifts, because for language to be accurate to the condition of nomadism, it too has to be drifting" (74). Thus, for Joris, "the nomad goes in circles, sits in circles" (75) as the nomad is "never reterritorialized" (115). However, being a nomad does not necessarily require constant changing of places. As Joris has already referred to in his nomadic manifesto: "The days of anything static, form, content, state are over. The past century has shown that anything not involved in continuous transformation hardens and dies. All revolutions have done just that: those that tried to deal with the state as much as those that tried to deal

with the state of poetry” (25).

While Cartesian convention is in pursuit of the essence of being, nomadic thought seeks to transfer the signified to the body and it offers the opportunity to go beyond the boundaries of logocentric thinking and power relations in capitalist society. Focusing on the movement between smooth and striated spaces will give us the chance to be critical about the concept of space as a static entity. This transferring between these spaces will pave the way for becoming in multiple environments with multiple subjectivities. For this study, especially Ciaran Carson’s poetry will offer a unique opportunity for analysis in the light of contesting spaces with smooth and striated division.

## CHAPTER 4

### SPATIALIZATION OF THE PLACES OF THE PAST IN SEAMUS

#### HEANEY'S POETRY: *SEEING THINGS* (1991), *THE SPIRIT*

#### *LEVEL* (1996), AND *DISTRICT AND CIRCLE* (2006)

The Ireland I now inhabit is one that these Irish contemporaries have helped to imagine.  
Seamus Heaney (Nobel Lecture *Crediting Poetry* 97)

Without needing to be theoretically instructed, consciousness quickly realizes that it is the site of variously contending discourses.  
Seamus Heaney (Nobel Lecture *Crediting Poetry* 13)

From the early 1990s onwards, in his poetry, Seamus Heaney responded to the spatial turn that took place in the late twentieth century in his view of the places of the past. The Irish places, for Heaney, were no more reference points for certain identities of race, community or religion as these places could not be defined anymore with fixed dimensions and borders in the wake of global and transnational movements and influences. These places implied a reference point beyond the empty and infinite Cartesian space, as the contemporary conception of space pointed out something different from a passive entity to position places in itself. Heaney's work from the early 1990s on became a site of combination of place, which is porous and with permeable borders, and space, which is itself a social construct. It is because of this reason that we can say that in these poems, Heaney revisited the places he had identified himself with in the past from a

novel viewpoint, and blurred the distinction between place and space by embodying a new kind of subjectivity, which is free from the boundaries of the so-called homogenous places. In such a context, Deleuzian dictum that “the becoming is geographical” (Deleuze and Parnet 48) rings true for Heaney’s search for being in a new thirdspace. By spatializing places, Heaney created a new site of dwelling, in which he merged spaces of the past moments and the transnational contemporary spaces of the present in a thirdspace. This chapter aims to discuss how Heaney managed to challenge the traditional understanding of place with fixed dimensions and borders, and spatialized these places in a thirdspace “where issues of race, class and gender can be addressed simultaneously without privileging one over the other” (Soja, *Thirdspace* 5). This new thirdspace now embodies interplay of signifiers of spaces of the past and memories and of contemporary urban spaces. At the heart of this intersecting point of spaces, not only the spaces of the Irish past and that of the contemporary urban experiences are incorporated but time is also included. Since space is a hybrid entity involving subjectivity, movement and time in itself, Heaney’s thirdspace is thus, “spatiotemporal” in Bertrand Westphal’s words (26). Heaney created such a fluid thirdspace that time and space are diluted into one another; that is, in this thirdspace, Heaney referred not only to the places of his childhood in County Derry but also he journeyed back and forth in time in the midst of his memories. In other words, Heaney translated the experiences of the thirdspace into a spatiotemporal context.

Apart from spatiotemporal site of existence, Heaney was also concerned with the aesthetic form he was going to express himself. When he was awarded

the Nobel Prize in 1995, he was praised for his combination of “lyrical beauty and ethical depth which exalt everyday miracles and the living past” (O’Donoghue “Introduction” 1). He repeated the same concerns in writing poetry in the Preface to *Finders and Keepers: Selected Prose 1971-2001* (2002) quoting from his Foreword to another prose collection *Preoccupations* (1980): “How should a poet properly live and write? What is his relationship to be to his own voice, his own place, his literary heritage and his contemporary world?” (“Foreword” x). As a poet being preoccupied with the questions not only about the subject matter but also about the form, Heaney made use of poetry as a textual space. He mediated over both poetry and writing itself, the textual space of which was another site of existence to dwell on.

His biographical elements contribute to the deep sense of dividedness and rootlessness experienced by the poetic persona in his poems. His poetry is the textual space where he could aestheticize and also seek some sort of remedy for this dividedness and rootlessness. This might account for the title of the first poem of his first collection, “Digging”, in which he announces that he will dig through his art into the future, which, in fact, is a metaphorical account of what he does in his later poetry. He digs into different forms of being and coming to terms with his truth. In these collections, we can say that this act of digging involves creating a thirdspace, which is also a space for reconciliation of different polarities. References to his living practice would prepare a better ground for a better treatment of this space as Seamus Heaney needed to create a thirdspace in order to reconcile his dividedness between dualities and binaries with the help of poetry. He was born into a Catholic family as the eldest of nine

children in County (London) Derry in Protestant Northern Ireland. Being marginalized in the Protestant community in Northern Ireland, Heaney had to change places and to move his family for so many times. With the outburst of the Troubles, he had to resign from his teaching position at Queen's University Belfast, where he did a degree in English. Even after starting to live in the Republic of Ireland, Heaney felt torn apart and wavering between places until the end of his life. Therefore, visiting the places of his childhood and memories implied for Heaney a search for a thirdspace to syncretize the tension he was having between two spaces.

Heaney engaged in writing about home and home place in his early poetry. For Heaney, developing an organic link between home place and self was always critically significant, accordingly, moving his home so many times had several repercussions on his art. In his poems, in the context of these translocations, he seems to waver between ideas, as he does between places and identities. Very suitably Helen Vendler defined Heaney as "a poet of the in-between" (Poetry Foundation n.d.). Interestingly enough, this in-between status was also reflected in his dividedness between his aesthetic and public concerns. In this line of thinking, Bernard O'Donoghue asserts that Heaney's work reflects "the exemplary Yeatsian conflict between artistic freedom and public responsibility" (7). Elmer Kennedy-Andrews agrees with this as he says that there is a 'double vision' in Heaney's work due to this dividedness (*The Poetry of Seamus Heaney* 41). Having left his home place due to political and societal unrest, Heaney himself referred to his double consciousness in his essay "The Sense of Place":

I think there are two ways in which a place is known and cherished, two ways which may be complementary but which are just as likely to be antipathetic. One is lived, illiterate and unconscious, the other learned, literate and conscious. In the literary sensibility, both are likely to co-exist in a conscious and unconscious tension. (*Preoccupations* 131)

Heaney was torn between two ideologies and communities as both the Protestant and the Catholic circles expected him to be their mouthpiece. Even in citizenship, he went through the process of duality; he was involved “in the process, a kind of dual-citizenship which was personally advantageous but also an aspect of a problematic which has troubles and bedeviled many an Irish poet in recent years” (Dorgan 12). Yet, prioritizing poetry over anything else, Heaney recoiled in the state of coercion. He mostly engaged in “[t]he dialectic emplacement and displacement” in his way of dealing with places (Kennedy-Andrews, *The Poetry of Seamus Heaney* 42).

In his early poetry, Heaney treated space as an immobile and stable land. Being exposed to conflicts, invasions and tensions about the land and territories, Heaney was taking space as a site to quest for origins and identity. His engagement of space was vertical as he was digging with his pen for his roots trying to adopt the image of his father and grandfather digging for potatoes engraved in his mind. The phenomenal world was still not the main focus of his work. The supposed glorious past was acting like a reference point and he aimed to do his best with his writing to have an access to it. In other words, he used the textual space of poetry to search for frozen images and identities. His early work was shadowed with the search for origins and in this

journey he assumed some personalities that were mostly associated with the Irish. Going back to Irish mythology or narratives, Heaney exploited space to find out the “omphalos” for the Irish identity and the land.

Apart from the anonymous or archaic images to identify himself with to embrace Irish land, culture and identity like Sweeney, Heaney also directed his attention to Belfast and the Republic to collect particulars about the recent images of the cities to investigate what had changed about these spaces in the course of time. He rather had a nostalgic look back on those spaces remembering those old days and wrote elegies for his close circle of friends and relatives. Either distant or near past was the reference point for Heaney to investigate the link between the land and the people. Addressing directly the Troubles and specific events, Heaney was trying to explain and find justification for the loss of the symbiotic tie. In the wake of influential changes both in the Irish archipelago and in the rest of the world, Heaney’s treatment of these categories was radically revised.

Apart from the changes Heaney underwent in his personal life, the social and political changes in the archipelago since the early 1990s also had a great impact on Heaney’s later poetry. One of the most comprehensive factors opening Ireland to global influxes and effluxes was the Celtic Tiger (from the mid-1990s to the late 2000s), which initiated an international context in the Republic of Ireland with the help of transnational investors pouring in, drawn by the country’s favourable tax rates. The second boom of the Celtic Tiger ensured a more global and open economy and relations, as a result Ireland opened its doors to workers from new European Union member nations along



with the continued investments by multinational firms, growth in jobs and tourism. Another significant event that contributed to the international context of the country was the Good Friday Agreement (1998). The deal proved to be the end of the period known as “the Troubles” and the agreement established a power-sharing assembly to govern Northern Ireland with the consent of each community in 1998. The agreement promised to set up a nationalist and unionist power-sharing government in Northern Ireland and relieving the tension, the agreement made Northern Ireland a space more open to transnational effects. These changes extending across national boundaries reshaped Heaney’s outlook on the role of the poet or his relation to place, country and people, dating back to his early collections. Thus, he felt the urge to reconfigure a vantage point that could accommodate the contemporary epistemological categories.

Heaney like most of the contemporary poets is affected by recent phenomena like globalization and geospatial stretch. Therefore, the close relationship between transnational poetics and place is also a concern of this study as the macro level investigations of poetry and transnationalism can be discerned on micro-level in the form and language of several contemporary poets. Thus, it is not limited to the borders of nations and places. For Ramazani, within the framework of transnationalism, we can pay attention to how “specific poetic devices enable extraterritorial imaginative travel, and what their implications are for a poetics of transnational identity” (*A Transnational* xi).

Poetry, different from other literary and cultural genres, is more widely associated with its nation and thus, it is not very common to relate it to

transnational contexts. For T.S. Eliot, poetry is “stubbornly national” (8) and to Auden it is “the most provincial of the arts” (“Writing” 23). Or, poetry is identified as an attachment to home or native place. Poetry’s geographic peculiarity and its specific language becomes significant when one looks into both Eliot’s and Auden’s transatlantic and transnational careers. Bakhtin, too, is another theorist linking poetry to singularity by labelling it as “centripetal,” “singular,” “unitary, monologically sealed-off” as opposed to the novel with a heteroglot nature (272-3). Contrary to Bakhtin’s views of poetry as monologic and singular, transnational poems are quite hybrid, heteroglot and dialogic in Bakhtin’s terminology as they cannot isolate themselves from the global and cosmopolitan experience anymore. As David Jacobson puts forth, there is the fact that “local and transnational communal identities are asserted (or reasserted)”, in order to be able to study poetry in a global setting and from a transnational viewpoint (17). As the appearance of territoriality becomes translocal, dialogic models should be preferred to problematize a monolithic epistemology.

Poetry, bearing transnational aspects, acts as an artefact to show the dialogic nature of nations and the local. Matthew Hart, in *Nations of Nothing but Poetry*, shows “how enduring poetry (and innovative political practices) emerge from the contradictions among beloved local identities, the redoubtable nation-state form of government, and the increasingly globalized nature of twentieth-century culture” (5). Especially, starting from the second half of the twentieth century, even localist poems convey the contraction of time and space of transnational flows and images. Thus, twentieth and twenty-first century

poetries cannot anymore be analysed within the confines of a single nation. In transnational criticism, as James Clifford proposes, practices of displacement might emerge due to several strategies like central modernist ones: “transnational collage, polyglossia, syncretic allusiveness” or “[i]nterstitial concepts of culture - hybridization and creolization, contact zones and diaspora identities – are well suited to modern and contemporary poetry’s translocal conjectures and intercultural circuits” (qtd. in Ramazani, *A Transnational* 28). Still, each poetry may be transnational in different ways in terms of their re/configuration of cross-cultural ingredients.

In the wake of these transnational improvements in the archipelago, Heaney’s treatment of place in his poetry welcomes a new concept of place, which is more outward looking, more open to outside influences, without succumbing to bland cosmopolitanism or globalization. Acknowledging all these transformations that problematize the opaqueness of national boundaries, Heaney sees that place is no more a national and internal frontier. He puts the emphasis on occupying in-between places or inner spaces, zones between dream and reality, and this world and the other world in his poetry. His exploration of this new space is embodied in the defiant textual space, which subverts the hierarchy set by the poetic persona, who is believed to be the holder of the place with its fixed coordinates. What is more, language no more acts as a medium or an organizing principle for the hierarchy between the signifier and the signified. Ciaran Ross, in the same line of thinking, observes in *Subversions Trans-National Readings of Modern Irish Literature* (2010), that twentieth century Irish writers are “arguably most politically subversive when

they deal with the matter of literature itself, that is, form, genre and language” (6).

In three of his collections that he wrote since the early 1990s, namely *Seeing Things* (1991), *The Spirit Level* (1996), and *District and Circle* (2006), Heaney engaged in creating a spatiotemporal site of existence in the textual space of his poetry translocating his poetic persona from the ancient times to Irish past and later to the global contemporary spaces with shifting of different perspectives. In these poems, he problematizes empiricist reductionism as, at times, the poetic persona and its impressions travel back and forth between different configurations of temporality and spatiality, celestial and terrestrial, non-linear and linear. In *Seeing Things* (1991), he intertwined celestial and terrestrial places of the ancient past by compressing time and space in the thirdspace he generated. He created an in-between site of existence by paying a visit to the ancient spaces of Virgil and coming back to the present world from the classical in a short period of time. In the following collection *The Spirit Level* (1996), Heaney revisited the Irish spaces of the past with his contemporary consciousness; that is, he could see the intersection and blurring of binaries like Catholic and Protestant or Unionist or Nationalist. Finally, in *District and Circle* (2006), Heaney explored global contemporary spaces out of Ireland. For example, in London Underground station, he could create fluid spatiotemporally which was based on motion. In that thirdspace, he poeticized the uncanny as in the case of seeing the image of his father in the mirror of the train. The new spatiotemporal site of existence Heaney configured after the early 1990s was discernible in these three collections. He created a thirdspace, which was free

from the hierarchies between rural Irish spaces and urban contemporary international ones by juxtaposing this world and the afterworld, the rural and the urban, the public and the private, and the local and the global.

#### **4.1 *Seeing Things* (1991)**

Heaney's work up to 1990 has been widely explored in a considerable number of texts. Yet, his work from the early 1990s on deserves more attention as from then on, Heaney rediscovered the places with which once he identified himself from a totally new viewpoint and explored spatiality and temporality from radically different vantage points. Eric Falci refers to the change in so-called place poetry including Heaney's as follows: "[p]ostwar 'poetry of place' – a term needing both evacuation and reinvigoration – is most powerful when it pushes hard against the places it represents and the spaces it constructs" (219). In other words, "place" ceases to be a conceptual and a theoretical tool to refer to a single site with homogenous features. Instead, Falci frames the change in the tendency to encompass social relations, experiences and events in space:

As globalization continues to refigure the meaning of location and the texture of place, the space of poetry will absorb and refract such reconfigurations. Place will not dissolve into the virtualities of space. (219)

To what Falci draws our attention is that with the materialization of globalization, places of countries do not anymore have retentive borders and, thus, space is no more an absolute ultimate site expected to be filled with the homogenous activities of place. Similarly, Heaney in *Seeing Things* (1991), his

first collection in the new decade, is concerned with “ideas of boundaries and borders” (Broom 152). He kept moving in and out of the terrestrial and celestial places and diluted the boundaries and borders between the places. He openly challenged the idea of place with social, political and geographical borders. Heaney problematized the so-called homogenously Protestant and Unionist places by seeing them in the thirdspace, where any place could no more exist with its evenly Protestant or Catholic and Unionist or Nationalist population and values but is open to transnational fluxes and hybrid subjectivities. In this new spatial site of existence, Heaney questioned the previous organic link between his memories and past places.

Heaney dedicated *Seeing Things* to his contemporary Irish poet Derek Mahon, who was very much aware of the metamorphosis of place into the space with its potential to construct social relations, experiences and becomings of the subjects. Both poets belonging to the same generation of Irish poets, through their mid-careers, felt uncomfortable with a sense of belonging in a certain history or with positioning themselves in a gridded geography of State philosophy. Thus, they had the compulsion to explore the potential of undefined space; or to situate themselves in a space which is outside the recognized templates of belonging. Seamus Heaney defines this space as “bright nowhere” (“Clearances” 12; bk. 8), which defies being gridded by State philosophy. Mahon, likewise, explores the potential of ungridded space with these lines: “We might be anywhere, but are in one place only” (“A Garage in Co. Cork” *Collected Poems* 131). Mahon poeticizes one of the moments when the so-called unity of self and place is broken apart. As Eric Falci further asserts, in the paradigm shift from

place to space “place will become both thicker and more placeless” (219). In other words, the sense of being situated is multidimensional and heterogeneous. Both Heaney and Mahon acknowledge the “bifurcations implicit in our sense of location, and the contradiction that structure the space where we are” (Falci 219).

The title *Seeing Things* refers to the solid corporeal world of objects and the poetic persona’s awareness of the things going on around. It might also refer to a tormented, hallucinatory site of imagination, which comes to the fore when the poetic persona visits an afterworld as a new spatial site. On both levels, the poetic persona somehow responds to a paradigm shift and encounters a new spatial site of existence; in Soja’s wording, Heaney envisions a spatial awareness in the thirdspace, which would combine the material world he is dwelling in with his perspective that interprets this reality through imagined representations of reality. The collection starts and ends with two of Heaney’s translations; both of which deal with the memory of the past. The first poem is “The Golden Bough” (from Virgil’s *Aeneid*) and the last one is “The Crossing” (from Dante’s *Inferno*). Both of these poems are concerned with traversing boundaries between locations and constructing spaces; that is Aeneas in “The Golden Bough” is engaged in shifting places between this world and the other, and generates an in-between state where he could have a more mobile and dynamic existence. What is more, by putting these two poems in the same collection, Heaney creates another in-between zone; that is utopia in “The Golden Bough” and dystopia in “The Crossing.” In “The Golden Bough,” the utopic (not + place) underworld site cannot be regarded as a place as the origin

of the word utopia suggests.

In the Roman mythology, the Golden Bough is a tree branch with golden leaves that enables the Trojan hero Aeneas to travel through the underworld safely. When Aeneas enters the forest to look for the sacred branch, two doves lead him to an oak tree that shelters the shimmering bough. With the help of the golden bough, Aeneas is able to pass safely through various dangers and obstacles there and finds the spirit of his father. As opposed to this utopic sense of space, Dante's "The Crossing" could be counted as dystopia, where Dante with Charon could take a journey to the Inferno, the Purgatorio and the Paradiso. The spectacle of the underworld now is dystopian; when a boat driven by an old man approaches Virgil and Dante to take them further to the Inferno, an earthquake shakes the land in the wake of a wind and fire rising up from the ground. The collection *Seeing Things* starts with an opening poem depicting a utopic space and ends with a closing one portraying a dystopian site. The rest of the poems, then, would be positioned in another liminal space or in-between utopic and dystopic spaces. Heaney, thus, could negate the possibility of creating a unified subjectivity with a notion of fixed place. Heaney's thirdspace, on the contrary, embodies a spatiotemporal ontological site of existence. Both Dante and Aeneas in these poems try to challenge the rigid boundaries of time and place with their urge to move beyond the thresholds and chronology; that is, they problematize the linearity of time, going back and forth in time and forcing borders between this world and the other. Consequently, they protest against the idea of tying the self within a so-called organic link to a single place.



Heaney creates a mobile thirdspace, in Soja's sense, which is a site of "extraordinary openness" (*Thirdspace* 5). From the outset, with the first poem in the collection "The Golden Bough" from *Aeneid* VI, Heaney creates a thirding where he could intersect the underworld of Pluto and his own memories with his dead father in the imaginary space. The poem describes Aeneas, the Trojan hero of the Trojan War. He just had a vision of his departed father, who had urged him to visit the Sybil of Cumae and to seek her assistance in going to the underworld to unite with his father. In her presence, Aeneas prayed for "one look, one face-to-face meeting" with his dear father ("The Golden Bough", 19). The underlying implication might be that, like Aeneas, the poetic persona would like to see and to rejoin his father in the underworld. Yet, his search did not end up with a reunion; on the contrary, the speaker was displaced from Pluto's place and thus, from his father's patriarchal space. Virgil's words were like echoes for the poetic persona's grief for his father and the speaker was "Backwards and forwards so often to the land of the / dead," without any result ("The Golden Bough" 40-41). Yet, the Sibyl's answer proved his efforts to be in vain; the descent was the least difficult part of the journey, as he had to change place one more time: "But to retrace your steps and get back to upper air, / This is the real task and the real undertaking" ("The Golden Bough" 51-52). Then, the poetic persona had to confront the adult life without a father figure, which was both liberating and terrifying. By acknowledging his father's loss and disappearance for good, the poetic persona is, indeed, set free from the dictations of phallogocentrism. Yet, at the same time, it would also imply that he had to assume the role of the patriarchal authority as the prospective descent.

The place envisioned in “The Golden Bough” was not a homogenous one; on the contrary, it turned out to be a space of contradictions and bifurcations. The underworld that Aeneas would like to discover is labyrinthian. He pleads to Pluto while praying “for one look, one face-to-face meeting” with his dear father to “[t]each [him] the way and open the holy doors wide” (“The Golden Bough” 17-19). Furthermore, he is warned to face the consequences of his actions as the space is full of mysteries and the unknown: “if you will go beyond the limit, / Understand what you must do beforehand” (“The Golden Bough” 61-62). As Doreen Massey describes, spaces are constructed “through the specificity of the mix of links and interconnections *to* that ‘beyond’” (*Space* 5). The underworld spatialized in the poem was already thick with false dichotomies: the cave where the Sybil of Cumae resided was a place “where clear truths and mysteries / Were inextricably twined” (“The Golden Bough” 4-5). Pluto’s place was rather a place of threshold than a final destination for the poetic persona to embrace his father, who might act as a token of “home” or a source of “rooted identity.”

That Heaney would frame his work with classical texts might highlight the importance of memory, of the journey down into the past, intellectual and spiritual fathers. Having this kind of urge for going deep to search for the ancestors, collective consciousness or shared culture might indicate a yearning for a grand narrative which is shaped around a patriarchal space. Yet, in the lines translated from Book VI, between 98-148, the poetic persona did not refer to a scene where a genuine father and son reunion took place. This reveals the unattainability of the rooted identity in relation to a place. As Kennedy-Andrews maintains, for Heaney, poetry “comes to express the sense of ‘home’less [*sic*] as

a literal (i.e. geographical, political or personal) property than as a metaphorical preoccupation” and to him home was something “that cannot be taken for granted as present” but it must be “sought after precisely because it is *absent*” (*The Poetry of Seamus Heaney* 58). Thus, Heaney appreciates the process and/or the performance of seeking for an organizing principle for his actions and search. Yet, being aware of the absence or truancy, Heaney filled his poetry after the early 1990s with “luminous emptiness” of places, and “the solidity of the earlier images of earth are replaced by images of air, lightness, and ‘truancy’” (E. O’Brien *Seamus Heaney* 153). To acknowledge the absence or unattainability of a rooted existence, Heaney’s imagery defies the gravity of centre. In the same line of thinking, the orientation of the poem “The Golden Bough” traces the same process: “Day and night black Pluto’s door stands open. / But to retrace your steps and get back to upper air, / This is the real task and the real undertaking” (“The Golden Bough 50-52). The poetic persona, then, was exposed to a kind of thirdspace through which he could provide himself with mobility; that is, he could move between the spheres of this and the other world. Regan’s words for this poem ring true as she says that in Heaney’s poetry, the “in-betweenness of life and death is beautifully and memorably sustained” (23). Rather than setting rigid and inflexible borders between so-called places, Heaney welcomes spaces which give the chance of mobility and versatility by encompassing different experiences and becomings.

As the opening poem of his collection implies, Heaney is no more interested in defining his poetic persona by rooting him in a single place associated with ancestors or patriarchy. Kennedy-Andrews claims that for

Heaney “identity is best found in ‘displacement’” and it “present[s] a more modern, even post-modern Heaney” (*The Poetry of Seamus Heaney* 55). Here, Heaney is preoccupied with spatial existence, which is created by the threshold and crossings of the places. Heaney, in one of his speeches acknowledged that he was aware of the dialectical aspect of Ulster as the centre of two components: “to be a writer in Ulster is to be very much in two minds, to be ‘in two places at once’, to be aware that he or she belongs to a place ‘that is patently riven between notions of belonging to other places’” (E. O’Brien *Seamus Heaney: Searches for Answers* 38). With this collection, Heaney fabricated a non-referential space that does not consolidate the subjectivity tied to a place. In “The Golden Bough” he adopted an anonymous identity, who was in disguise of a classical figure, Aeneas, who had the ability to move between spaces of this world and the afterworld. As Bernard O’Donoghue also commented on the poem, it “provides an obviously apt introduction to the negotiations with the afterlife and the underworld in *Seeing Things*” (“Heaney’s Classics and the Bucolic” 112). While the mythical space of the underworld, on the one hand, implies the unconscious source of the poetic persona’s creative imagination, on the other hand, it constitutes an a-temporal site, the inhabitants of which are dead and have departed from the structured linear time of the living world and entered a realm that transcends time and space. The visitors in the poem would also like to have a superior vantage point by transgressing the boundaries between the living and the dead.

The succeeding poem is the journey back from the underworld as the title suggests “The Journey Back” (*ST* 7). In the previous poem, Aeneas was

warned about the difficulty of the journey back; and on the journey back, there was an interesting and absurd encounter with Larkin's ghost in the underworld quoting Dante whose underworld worked like a workaday rush hour (Foster 209). Larkin's quotation from Dante was in italics as Dante described the Inferno:

*'Daylight was going and the umber air  
Soothing every creature on the earth,  
Freeing them from their labours everywhere.*

*I alone was girding myself to face  
The ordeal of my journey and my duty  
("The Journey Back" 2-6)*

Larkin quoting Dante, and Heaney quoting Larkin point out a space which would relieve them of daily chores in any place. That each poet referring to one another's lines from as different times and places as Dante, Larkin and Heaney, creates another multidimensional textual space, which gives the poetic persona the opportunity to transgress the boundaries of various times and spaces in the freedom of the textual space. The merging of subjectivities, in other words, leads this space to configure itself in an a-temporal and placeless context, which gives the opportunity to move and construct any kind of time and space they wish to live.

Heaney created a new space at the heart of the classical time and space of Dante, by integrating an ordinary everyday time and space. This looks like a phantasmagoria where the ordinary parameters of time and space go bankrupt. In other words, by distorting the linear understanding of time and space and by

relating it to a specific context and time period, Heaney tries to configure a spatial context free from the connotations and signifiers of the time. This new spatiotemporal existence was not that much different from the classical time as the poetic persona states: "And not a thing had changed, as rush hour-buses / Bore the drained and laden through the city" ("The Journey Back" 7-8). The poetic persona tries to go back to the contemporary age from the classical time of Virgil as it is stated in the poem: "It felt more like the forewarned journey back / Into the heartland of the ordinary" ("The Journey Back" 11-12). He, at the same time, tries to go back to the ordinary and the mundane from the grand and epic concerns of Virgil. By transgressing the borders between the grand and the ordinary, he at the same time problematizes the so-called strict borders between these binaries. This new thirdspace he is configuring then is like a threshold which has contact with both the grand and the ordinary. What is more, he problematized the totalizing movements of the Irish past like Unionism or Nationalism and Protestantism or Catholicism and declared that he would like to strip himself of these by declaring that he would like to move to the heart of the ordinary or the mundane, as he announces in the following lines: "Still my old self. Ready to knock one back" ("The Journey Back" 13). The two poems interrelate closely. In contrast to the first poem, in "The Journey Back," Larkin seemed to have returned to the contemporary time much more easily and this apparent ease of return becomes quite evident with the punctuation highlighted. In the text, the transition from Larkin's quote from the medieval source to his own experiences in the secular city occurred without a break in style; that is, he just passed from italics to regular style. Thus, the

contemporary journey conflicted with the ancient prophecy as Heaney created a thirdspace by amalgamating the classical with the contemporary in the new context.

“The Journey Back” was a journey back from the classical world to the present. He visits the past; especially the underworld spaces to give expression to modern chaos, in other words the modern inferno, by relating it to Dante’s *Inferno* or Pluto’s underworld. When he cannot find solace or explanation to his mood in the modern world being “drained,” “laden,” he sought for an account in the past places (“The Journey Back” 8). And it would not have been different for him if he were “a wise king setting out / Under the Christmas lights,” it would be “Still [his] old self” (“The Journey Back” 9, 10, 13). It was a quick return to the contemporary secular city, which was not very different from Dante’s *Inferno* as everywhere was full of burden. Heaney, in a way, created a spatial experience out of these two seemingly different locations. That Heaney transferred this spatial occurrence into the thirdspace is explained by Richard Kearney as follows: “Heaney’s poems are not in fact primarily about place at all; they are about transit, that is, about transitions from one place to another” (102).

In this journey, language was almost the only company, according to Heaney. He was aware of the strong sense of lack of various things; like a centre, home or a homely place and the only thing he could compensate for or substitute for his lack was language; that is, poetry. Thus, he had a strong belief in the power of poetry and language, which was the only thing that could save him from “the drained and laden through the city” and being a “nine-to-five man” (“The Journey Back” 8,14). Heaney’s thirdspace is, hence, a textual one, as

well. His textual thirdspace was the one that extended beyond the material and mental spaces of the traditional dualism and that was a spatiotemporal site that he could take refuge in. Kennedy-Andrews says that Heaney surpassed the dual directions of space with the help of language: "Heaney's poetry espouses the view that it is language which perpetually constructs and deconstructs our notion of identity. As such, poetic language is always on the move, vacillating between opposing viewpoints, looking in at least two directions at once" (*The Poetry of Seamus Heaney* 57).

Heaney displaced the idea of home from a fixed place and reterritorialized it into a spatiotemporal site, which would imply that home can no more be a solid or a fixed entity, but it may only be related to a space of experiences, interactions and occurrences that might take place anywhere and everywhere. Heaney diverted the attention from the fixed home place to the mobile and portable objects that created the illusion of a home place. Attributing the idea of the place of home to objects, which could take place everywhere and anywhere, Heaney liberated the idea of home from a fixed place and seated it into a freeplay of metonymic spatiotemporality. In such a context, Heaney generated an arbitrary space for the so-called fixed home place by interplaying with the objects. Home cannot be defined with a single place with fixed coordinates but it is a pile of affairs and interactions. In the title of the poem "A Basket of Chestnuts", Heaney used the name of a very homely object; that is, a basket of chestnuts. He gave very intimate and fine details of feeling a basket of chestnuts:



There's a shadow-boost, a giddy strange assistance  
That happens when you swing a loaded basket.  
The lightness of the thing seems to diminish  
The actual weight of what'd being hoisted in it.

For a split second your hands feel unburdened,  
Outstripped, dismayed, passes through.  
Then just as unexpectedly comes rebound –  
Downthrust and comeback ratifying you.

(“A Basket of Chestnuts” 1-8)

He remembered how well he felt with all these homely objects and in order to revive this feeling he recollects chestnuts: “I recollect this basket full of chestnuts, / A really solid gather-up” (9-10). He would like to rejuvenate the notion of feeling at home by wishing the chestnuts to be painted:

And I wish they could be painted, known for what  
Pigment might see beyond them, what the reach  
Of sense despairs of as it fails to reach it,  
Especially the thwarted sense of touch. (13-16)

In the poem, Heaney referred to a portrait that was considered to be his own image painted by Edward Maguire in 1973. This was also the portrait on the cover of *North*. The reason why Heaney was still interested in the portrait in this poem was that that basket of chestnuts was invisible in the representation:

A basketful of chestnuts shines between us,  
One that he did not paint when he painted me-

Although it was what he thought he'd maybe use  
As a decoy or a coffer for the light  
He captured in the toecaps of my shoes.  
But it wasn't in the picture and is not. (19-24)

Although John Wilson Foster thinks that Heaney “is still at home in the company of relishable objects ... with a basket of chestnuts” (210), he seemed to overlook the fact that the idea of a basket of chestnuts was revisited in *Seeing Things*, and in this revisit the basket of chestnuts was absent in the portrait. Thus, Heaney authenticated that the idea of home could only be a reflection on his shoes but not in the portrait; thereby, it is still an absent presence. In other words, Heaney relates the experience being home to an object, which is in the basket and which can be carried to wherever one goes. Home is reduced to a moveable object; that is, the experience of home can be lived anywhere and everywhere. Even if the “homely” object is not present in the portrait, its reflection is there. As Neil Corcoran in his article “Modern Irish Poetry and the Visual Arts: Yeats to Heaney”, puts: it is “a poem evoking a painting which does not exist” and is a “tribute [to] displacement” (265). Heaney, in other words, disclosed his yearning for going beyond the limits and enjoying the new freedom of thirdspace, which is both imaginative and linguistic. The poem recreates itself in the movement of its verse: “a shadow-boost”, “a giddy strange assistance” that happens when you swing a loaded basket (“A Basket of Chestnuts” 1). The heaviness and/or grandness to be tied to a home place is relieved as it is indicated in his word choice. What is more, when the roots or the belief in the stable home place was shattered, Heaney believed that the importance attached to it decreased, too: “The lightness of the thing seems to diminish / The actual weight of what’s being hoisted in it” (3-4). By challenging the idea of being home with fixed and stable roots, Heaney also relieved the tension that might have aroused due to being isolated from the home place. With this poem,

Heaney appreciated the spatial freedom “defying the appetites of gravity”, “Sweeny-like, walking on air” conditions, as quotes from Heaney (*Northern Irish* 91). Like the rhythm that a basket gets into when it is swung, the burden of the reality that home place is no more achievable is lightened with the rhythm of the word, in the textual space of poetry.

In the aftermath of the Celtic Tiger and the Good Friday Agreement, Ireland became more open to influxes and effluxes, which made Heaney revisit and question the homogeneity of the link between the land and memories. He problematized the notion of oneness or uniqueness attributed to Irish nation. Eugene O’Brien carried out a similar vein of analysis of Heaney’s poetry after the early 1990s: “his work is driven by the desire to create a space where notions of Irishness are pluralized and opened to different influences, and it is predicated on the future, as opposed to past” (*Seamus Heaney and the Place of Writing* 2). In this critical thirding that Heaney went through, there is “a creative process of *restructuring* that draws selectively and strategically from the two opposing categories to open new alternatives” in Soja’s words (*Thirdspace* 5). In such a process, Heaney asserted that any place or anything could be reinvigorated from the past. In “The Settle Bed”, Heaney openly stated that there is always a site for reimagining or reconstruction of a tradition or an inheritance. He, thus, used some part of this poem as an epigraph to his translation of *Beowulf*:

*And now this is ‘an inheritance’ –  
Upright, rudimentary, unshiftable planked  
In the long ago, yet willable forward*

*Again and again and again. (Beowulf ix)*

In "The Settle Bed" in *Seeing Things*, this inheritance "Can always be reimagined" (28). In this poem, the settle bed stands for inheritance and Heaney attributes the feeling of home to it, in other words, he identifies home place with this kind of objects. The settle bed to which the image of home is ascribed is mad of "seasoned deal / Dry as the unkindled boards of a funeral ship" (5-6). This bed on which obviously a lot has been experienced as the bed gets older and is exposed to great change, Heaney and his routines on this bed changed, as well. Likewise, the circumstances and the places where the settle bed is located changed, too. The settle bed is described in a very vivid and strong language: "Trunk-hasped, cart-heavy, an ignorant brown. / And pew-strait, bin-deep, standing four-square as an ark" ("The Settle Bed" 2-3). It is obviously not beautiful at all as it is "Dry as the unkindled boards of a funeral ship" (5). Once the poetic persona lies on it, he is exposed to the sounds of the people from history. At first glance, it might be assumed that it is a treasure from the past and it would open up surprising disclosures from the past, yet the poetic persona takes the bed as a burden as an "un-get-roundable weight" which has to be removed from one's memory and life as he reveals: "But to conquer that weight" (18). In order to get rid of this emotional burden that the settle bed imposes on the poetic persona, he suggests an act of imagination, which would reconfigure both the object to be related to home and his way of looking at the past. Once one finds out how to reinvigorate his vantage point, s/he would have the chance to have a free lookout, as the poetic persona openly claims: "You are free as the lookout" (30).

Heaney spatialized the place where this settle bed resides. He changed the focus for home from the settle bed to the panoramic view of “the lookout”, and thus, disrupted the possibility of identifying his home place with the settle bed. Similarly, Eugene O’Brien concluded, “this project of reimagining the historical, cultural, linguistic, and societal givens ... is central to his developing conception of place of writing” (*Seamus Heaney and the Place of Writing* 162). Discharging himself from bindings of the totalizing historical, social and cultural links, Heaney, indeed, opens a new space where he challenges the power of old assumptions and shared occurrences.

Heaney was against the idea of “gravity” in metaphorical terms; that is, to be settled onto a specific ground and to feel rooted within the mapped familiar territory. That is why, in his poetry after the early 1990s, he poeticized the idea of being free from the ground and exposed the poetic persona to air or fog. He declared himself against the “appetites of gravity” in *North* (“Kinship” 24; sec.4). He introduced the idea of fog in the poem “The Settle Bed” and exemplified the freedom one could enjoy while one is spatializing the places they feel rooted in:

...You are free as the lookout,

That far-seeing joker posted high over the fog,  
Who declared by the time that he had got himself  
down  
The actual ship had been stolen away from beneath  
him. (30-35)

One is free as much as s/he can imagine, as the borders between places are porous. That is, trying to achieve omnipresence or to adopt an essentialist view of “reality” is in vain, thus, one’s understanding and perception is subjective and performative. Places are without fixed boundaries and they are no more fixed entities, as Heaney in the last line of the poem openly announces: “The actual ship had been stolen away from beneath him” (34-35). In other words, the idea of totalizing grand narratives in favour of one single homogenous medium is already out-dated. For Heaney, the secure and safe home place was taken away under one’s feet, and now he is free to identify himself with any landscape he wishes. For Eugene O’Brien, one of the reasons which makes Heaney’s work so valuable is “this reimagining of the interaction and definition of self and other, making them ‘all through other,’ and of the connections between selfhood and place, connections constructed and maintained through language” (*Seamus Heaney and the Place of Writing* 147). Yet, these constructions are not for good, as Cookson and Dale assert; “Heaney’s work does not stay still” (3). Likewise, neither his earlier tribal nor group identifications stay the same. The bed, for example, here, is referred to as a “thing” from the past and the bed is full of echoes of “the long bedtime / Anthems of Ulster” (9-10). At first glance, it might seem that Heaney went back to the past when “physical and material items conjured up ideologies of belonging and territorial piety” (E. O’Brien *Seamus Heaney Creating Irelands of the Mind* 106). Yet, adopting a new perspective, Heaney made this bed combine the aspects of both communities: “Protestant, Catholic, the Bible, the beads”, as he aims to create a more comprehensive space which would surround him with a broader and more transnational and

transcultural context (“The Settle Bed” 11). As Neil Corcoran puts forth, “political anachronism and the atavisms of both sides are lightened or loosened” (*Seamus Heaney* 172). The thirdspace created here is free of any hierarchical setting between the Protestant and the Catholic, but encompasses the practices of both by going beyond their borders without privileging one over the other. Towards the end of the poem, the poetic persona clearly revealed that a thirdspace can be reimagined:

...from that harmless barrage that whatever is  
given

Can always be reimagined, however four-square,  
Plank thick, hull-stupid and out of its time  
It happens to be. (“The Settle Bed” 26-30)

Both political past and personal memory can be reimagined in a new context and space in tune with its own time. Thus, it can be asserted that Heaney’s language negotiates both things and ideas; converts both into an artificial medium that is simultaneously abstract and concrete in the thirdspace. He is very much aware of the fact that the visionary and the real are symbiotic. In the same line of thinking, Henry Hart underlines the blend of these binaries as Heaney called for a “synthesis of the imaginary and real, and repeatedly explores the dynamic relations between them” (“What is Heaney Seeing in *Seeing Things?*” 33). Heaney sought to create a thirdspace to retreat by developing the notion of space as a source, recognizing absence as well as presence both in terms of language and the self. For Heaney, by trying to meet

the polarities, the subject is striving for wholeness, as Lacan would say (E. O'Brien *Seamus Heaney Creating Irelands of the Mind* 83).

Starting with *Seeing Things* (1991), Heaney made a transition from transcendental site of existence to everyday life with quotidian concerns. Not only did he clear the space for the expression of personal and familial loss but also from then on, he puts “a sense of flow and lightness” in his poems which contrasts strongly with his “earlier obsession with earth and depth” (Broom 152). In “Fosterling”, Heaney, getting himself free from the constraints of the previous mindset, acknowledged his preoccupation with the place and the rural landscape with some hope. He referred to any form of home place with italicized Gaelic words; like *glar / glit / dailigone* as if to emphasize that the idea of place belongs to a distant past, which could only be quoted with the help of italics. Thinking of his double breeding and dual heritage, in terms of language and education, one notices that Heaney had claims for both languages and used them dialogically. Kennedy-Andrews, similarly, puts the emphasis on Heaney’s double influence and the interplay between Irish and English:

Part of Heaney’s ambivalent predicament is due, consequently, to his maintenance of a notion of himself ‘as Irish in a province that insists that it is British’. And this double consciousness is operative at the level of his poetic language where two tongues engage in conflictual dialogue. (*The Poetry of Seamus Heaney* 61)

In other words, the textual space Heaney configures welcomes both his intuitive inheritance from his mother tongue, and his mastery over the cultural, the second language. Heaney himself, too, talks about this double consciousness in



language as follows: “I think of the personal and Irish pieties as vowels, and the literary awareness nourished on English as consonants” (*Preoccupations* 37). He expressed privacy, beliefs and feelings with vowels that he associated with Irishness, and Englishness was related to culture, awareness and education and it was associated with consonants. Vowels have a more distinctive role in word formation, yet consonants are directed and read with the help of vowels. Vowels, being a metaphor for his Irishness are accompanied by consonants that stand for his English education; that is, Heaney set them onto the same ground.

Being fifty then, Heaney looked back on the days when he had good command over places with definite and fixed borders. He quoted from John Montague’s “Water Carrier”<sup>16</sup> in the first line of the poem in italics: “That heavy greenness fostered by water” (“Fosterling” 1). The poem starts with a definite reference word “*that*” which displayed that Heaney and Montague share some common knowledge about Irish rural places. Then, Heaney shifted to his memories as a schoolboy: “At school I loved one picture’s heavy greenness” (“Fosterling” 2). The Dutch landscape with windmills reflected onto water in a certain order made him remember his childhood terrain when he used to see everything in-place:

Horizons rigged with windmills’ arms and sails.  
The millhouses’ still outlines. Their in-placeness  
Still more in place when mirrored in canals.  
I can’t remember never having known  
The immanent hydraulics of a land  
Of *glar* and *glit* and floods at *dailigone*,  
My silting hope. My lowlands of the mind. (3-9)

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<sup>16</sup> The poem is first published in the collection *Poisoned Lands*, by The Dolmen Press, Dublin in 1971.

By exploring the remnants of his memory, he recalled how once he had a good command over his land and place. That he acknowledged his being fully literate about the places of the past and his mantle as a poet to write about the weighty matter of Northern Ireland proved to be heavy for him in the following sestet, which starts with the line: "Heaviness of being" (10). Along with "picture's heavy greenness", "heaviness of being" made him feel heavy and almost hopeless. In this journey, poetry barely helped him, and he referred to his early poetry when seeking wholeness and organic link to his land: "And poetry / Sluggish in the doldrums of what happens" (10-11). In such a condition, "the heaviness of being" sooner or later would force his mind to seek refuge in experience that would transcend that heaviness. Heaney openly regarded the notion of "being" as heavy since it indicates a rooted, motionless and static state, which did not spare any space for "becoming". Thus, he expressed his desire to enjoy the freedom of being in the air, in metaphorical terms, unburdening himself from the already fixed links and relations. Yet, he had to wait until he was fifty to appreciate the freedom of space:

Me waiting until I was nearly fifty  
To credit marvels. Like the tree-clock of tin cans  
The tinkers made. So long for air to brighten,  
Time to be dazzled and the heart to lighten.  
(*"The Fosterling"* 12-15)

At the age of fifty Heaney reflected on his old life and became aware of the imprisonment he was exposed to. He acknowledged having made a mistake

about timing; he was slow and dealt with trouble in his writing for years in vain trying to connect himself to his land and to construct his subjectivity by identifying himself with the land he was born in. Yet, now he is ready to create a thirdspace in which he can put some “air to brighten” and he is ready to welcome “Time to be dazzled and the heart to lighten” (14-15). The thirdspace he is creating is between the imagined space of the past and the present place of the world. Up to that point, in his journey to achieve the thirthing Heaney suffered a lot to adjust the tension between the present and past, public and private spaces. At that point, it is worth quoting Henry Hart, who explains Heaney’s agitation:

Although he gazes more fixedly on a paradise full of marvels, he never loses sight of his troubled homeland. His contrary desires and principles keep him vacillating and also keep his redemptive journey moving forward. (“Seamus Heaney” 124)

In the firstspace in Soja’s sense, Heaney puts the places of the past at the background, and the secondspace which contains the imagined representations of the firstspace will be reinterpreted in the extension of thirdspace. In his Nobel award acceptance speech, Heaney recalled the difficulty of being the spokesperson for the recent violent events in Northern Ireland: “I began a few years ago to try to make space in my reckoning and imagining for the marvellous as well as for the murderous” (*Crediting Poetry* 20). What Heaney configured is a thirdspace that would embrace the binaries “marvellous” and “murderous”. He discovered the potential of creating a space, which is free from

the previous so-called organic tie with the place he was born in. In Bernard O'Donoghue's words, in the poem, Heaney came to appreciate that the "bid for freedom does not go outside experience; it suddenly sees it as having been implicit in experience from the first" (11). Rather than depending on the accumulated tradition or past knowledge, Heaney chose to give credit to his insights that he gained in time. He did not believe in the conclusive nature of events or categories, instead he noticed the performative power of experience. With this poem, Heaney launched his manifesto to announce the change in his dealing with the past, identity and place.

*Seeing Things* differs from its predecessors in terms of both style and theme; that is, it is not tied to earth or roots, and it does not have a philosophical style like *Field Work* (1979) or *Station Island* (1984). This collection might be taken as a radical departure from his earlier collections due to its long poetic sequence. "Squarings" has 48 sections of 4 tercets of equal length. This collection proved to be a radical departure from Heaney's earlier collections, and each sequence proposes a "dominant metaphorical meditative terrain" (Hirsch "Home is Where the Heart Breaks"). The four sequences make up a series without any ostensible plot or logical argument, but rather it is a flow of associations composed in a thirdspace, which combines the traditional geographical place with space as the representation of place. In these sequences, the events and/or objects are designed with apparent randomness.

All the titles of the four sequences; "Lightenings", "Settings", "Crossings", "Squarings" are somehow references to motion; that is, there is a movement between boundaries. All the titles are somehow connected to a threshold

sensibility. The sequences are with promises to cross the margins or the fixed boundaries. All the titles ending in “ing” indicates that the poetic persona will realize himself on the move or in the process of becoming. Rather than finalizing the experience in a place, Heaney preferred to put the emphasis on the very process of becoming, which could take place in a space that welcomes experience and motion. McCarthy also suggests that the sequences in the second part of the collection are full of references to “the possibilities of traversing boundaries” (60). Accordingly, one of the sequences is titled as “Crossings” and the collection ends up with a translation from Dante’s *Inferno*, “The Crossing”. In the sequence “Crossings,” the twenty-seventh sestet, from the first line onwards highlights that nothing is permanent and is fixed onto a stable ground, but anything or anyone can change places or transform their subjectivity, accordingly:

Everything flows. Even a solid man,  
A pillar to himself and to his trade,  
All yellow boots and stick and soft felt hat,  
  
Can sprout wings at the ankle and grow fleet  
As the god of fair days, stone posts, roads and cross-  
roads,  
Guardian of travellers and psychopomp.  
(“Crossings” 1-7; sec. xxvii)

A fluid kind of subjectivity always on the move is depicted here. The mission of the “guardian of travellers” or “psychopomp” is to guide the souls to the place of the dead in mythology or to guide a living person’s soul spiritually, which indicated the state of moving beyond the borders and limits. What is more, even “a solid man” will one day feel the urge to liberate himself from the tension of

the link to a single place as the poetic persona says: “Can sprout wings at the ankle and grow fleet”. Here, Heaney referred to his father as a cattle-dealer who wore a broad soft hat, carried a stick and attended markets and he turned his father into a psychopomp. Heaney’s father, who was most organically linked to the land and place, was in this poem set free from the tension of gravity and stability, and thus the father was uprooted from the land. The title of the last poem of the collection, an *Inferno* translation is another promise of a crossing of the borders and freeing the self from the boundaries and restrictions of the place. The lines Heaney translated from the *Inferno* indicate Heaney’s yearning to defy the boundaries and traverse them. Virgil leads Dante to a great river called Acheron, which constitutes the border of hell. There, they come across a crowd of newly dead souls who are waiting to be taken across. A boat approaches with Charon, at its helm. Charon recognizes Dante as a living soul and tells him to keep away from the dead, but after Virgil informs him that their journey has been ordained from on high, Charon troubles them no longer. At that moment, an earthquake occurs; fire starts and Dante being scared feints. In such a radical traversing between spaces, the damned souls are “in a boat” (“The Crossing” 1) and heading towards “the other shore” (5), yet Dante being a living soul needs a “lighter boat” (12). Trying to depict threshold subjectivities, the poetic persona, indeed, assigns the meaning on the experience of becoming in this entrance or brink. Heaney again chose to defy the force of gravity in metaphorical terms; that is, he refused to stick to the stable ground and roots, instead, he opted for another site of existence, which involved motion and flow on a boat. What is more, the poetic persona, who is Dante in this case, would like

to be on the same boat as all these dead souls, who cursed most of the totalizing discourses like God:

They blasphemed God and their parents on the earth,  
The human race, the place and date and seedbed  
Of their own begetting and of their birth  
(“The Crossing” 22-24; sec. xxvii)

Dante would like to be on the same boat as those dead souls who anathematized grand narratives like fatherhood, which refers to rootedness; human race, which has refers to progression and place, pointing out the so-called organic link between the land and people. By defying or scolding patriarchal values, the poetic persona, indeed, problematizes the conceptions fostered by the Enlightenment, like progression, which could only be possible by reproducing or proliferating. Rather than submitting to the authority of the patriarchal discourse of the gods or the fathers and instead of the urge to belong to a patriarchal root, the poetic persona envisages a space which puts the emphasis on the process of becoming in the experience itself. Thus, they went for flow, floating and motion. Different from the first poem in the collection “The Golden Bough”, where there was still an urge in the poetic persona to look for his father, this last poem of the collection went one step further and negated all attempts to look for the past roots and advised: “Quiet your anger” (13), as all tensions are supposed to be relieved here and all totalizing narratives are blasphemed.

In “Squarings”, the second part of the collection, Heaney set the scene again with familiar elements but still with a desire to exceed and challenge their recognized boundaries from a more critical viewpoint. Henry Hart, similarly,

underlines what Heaney did in the sequences of tercets: Heaney “takes up old concerns – his family, literary precursors, sectarian divisions in Northern Ireland – to confront his limits and find strategies to go beyond them” (“Seamus Heaney” 132). In the first sequence titled “Lightenings”, in the first tercets, Heaney set a very familiar scene; the house as a space in which one can surrender oneself to the impulse of getting free from the borders. The first stanza starts with the following description:

Shifting brilliancies. The winter light  
In a doorway, and on the stone doorstep  
A beggar shivering in silhouette.  
 (“Lightening” 1-3; sec. i)

The poetic persona again, by thirding in Soja’s sense, merges the binaries in the new spatial focus; that is, home can be taken both as a space to embrace or to elude. As Henry Hart observes, Heaney set the house as a metaphor for the “locus of self-containment and self-abandonment” (“What is Heaney Seeing in *Seeing Things?*” 39). All thresholds, like doorstep, doorway, roof, and wall are open and penetrated, and they are accentuated with elusive images like “shifting brilliancies” or “silhouette”. This kind of elusiveness is compatible with the thirdspace Heaney is configuring, which welcomes ambiguity, multi-referentiality and being in the air in metaphorical terms. Now, new and “shifting brilliancies” are allowed to let the beggar in the dark. What is experienced in the light of these brilliancies involves again quotidian concerns, rather than grand matters. After the journey the poetic persona took, he came across with nothing unusual or extraordinary: “And after the commanded journey, what? / Nothing



magnificent, nothing unknown” (7-8). Yet, there is a difference in this new perspective. Here, at this point, he witnesses the common facts of existence “gazing out from far away, alone” (9) and with an “Unroofed scope” (12). He sees “Just old truth dawning” (11). He sees the old truths without any particular difference in the light of this “an-Other form of spatial awareness”, which lightens or heightens these common facts of existence (Soja, *Thirdspace* 11). Obviously, the “Unroofed scope” at the end of the poem gives way to “Knowledge-freshening wind” (12).

In the next section “ii”, Heaney is more than assertive to reveal his desire to transcend the limits. With imperative force, Heaney openly gives instructions, which are full of quotidian implications:

Roof it again. Batten down. Dig in.  
Drink out of tin. Know the scullery cold,  
A latch, a door-bar, forged tongs and a grate (1-3).

As Hart asserts, here “[s]ublilities need to be contained, just as limits are needed to impel them in the first place” (“What is Heaney Seeing in *Seeing Things?* 39). Heaney asks the readers to repress and expose themselves to the dictations of asceticism, yet he is very much aware of the fact that these are stages rather than ends. For Hart, they “represent stations along his meditative way, his poetic process of making and unmaking, confinement and transcendence” (39). In the following tercets of the same section, he commands severely: “Relocate the bedrock in the threshold. /Take squarings from the recessed gable pane” (7-8). The wording he employs here - “relocate,” “bedrock,” and “threshold” - composes a manifesto to resist the tradition of

locating the subjectivities to the bedrock of the places of the past. Rather, he suggests that realization of the self take place on the move or in a flow. He openly demands that we reside ourselves in the thresholds. Having described all details about the “real” material world of the Firstspace, he is now suggesting going beyond the Secondspace, which is the perspective that interprets this reality through “imagined” representations of reality by evacuating language: “Do not waver / Into language. Do not waver in it” (11-12). He dismisses the stable ground of language and moves from the safety of textual space to that of corporeal one. Rather than taking refuge in language, which can only refer to itself, Heaney defies the referentiality of language and gets involved in the space through experimentation; that is, he seeks to create a thirdspace to retreat, by using space as a source, validating absence as well as presence, in terms of language.

In the following section “iii”, the poetic persona shifts his tone from imperative to interrogative, again with the desire to transcend the limits of the First and Secondspace. He returns to his metaphor of the game squarings:

Squarings? In the game of marbles, squarings  
Were all those anglings, aimings, feints and squints  
You were allowed before you'd shoot, all those

Hunkerings, tensings, pressures of the thumb,  
Test-outs and pull-backs, re-envisagings,  
(1-5; sec. iii)

His visionary "envisagings" are conducted in "that space / Marked with three round holes and a drawn line" (11). They are confined within limits but those limits encourage and evolve rather than deter the final performance. Heaney ends with a description of a visionary transgression: "You squinted out from a skylight of the world" (12). As Sarah Broom suggests, the "Squarings" sequences are "dominated by an acute sense of the possibility of sudden movement into another state of being, and are intrigued by moments of stillness or balance between two states or spheres" (152). The sense of motion and lightness dominates these poems, which are quite different from Heaney's earlier preoccupation with roots, earth and depth. The poetic persona who used to dig for the roots is now ready to embrace spatial existence in the journey between borders, spaces and states.

"Squarings" follows a pattern which includes such motifs as the house, the marble game, the boat journey, the dead father and the visionary landscape. With all these recurring concepts, Heaney was tracing a process to challenge the old literary, religious, political and psychological understandings to open up a thirdspace for him to transcend. In other words, as Crowder and Hall state, Heaney tries to "cross over to undermine the very image that has figured so large in his work" (5); that is, his past image, a poet who was digging with his pen to search for his roots, is replaced with his ambition to create a thirdspace that would enable the subject to move freely across porous and luminous places and within time. That might be one of the reasons why Heaney refers to transcultural and transnational notions in a wide range of timeline. Barbara Hardy, too, tries to figure out the reasons for Heaney's literary allusions:

Seamus Heaney loves literary allusion, in part no doubt because of the times, in which assertive intertextuality and collage are fashionable or obligatory, in part no doubt because critics have urged him to break away from traditional self-contained lyric-narrative, in part no doubt because of his honourable personal and political preoccupation with his own art, and in part no doubt because he grew up as a student of literature, to become a teacher and a bespoke critic as well as a poet. (189)

The reason may be either one or all of the above, but another reason for Heaney to make such transcultural and transhistorical allusions can be the wish to create a thirdspace for him to challenge the duality between the traditional conceptions of place and space.

In section “viii” Heaney recounts another story of a vision with transcultural and transhistorical allusions. Medieval monks in Clonmacnoise where they see a ship sailing above them in the air tell the story. The anchor gets caught in the altar rails; one of the crewmen climbs down but fails to release it, and the monks free it. The ship moves on and the crewman climbs back “Out of the marvellous as he had known it” (12; sec. viii). Once more, putting this story from the “annals” (1; sec. viii), Heaney tries to create a thirdspace where the quotidian and the sublimities appear together. Johnston analyses the reason why Heaney has written from the “annals” as follows: “Rather than conveying authority, the attribution ‘The annals say’ heavily qualifies the story by placing it within the seventeen-century quasi-folk compendium *The Annals of the Four Masters*” (161). This visionary event experienced by the monks of Clonmacnoise in ancient times fits into Heaney’s own supernatural boat journeys as well as his new poetics. As it can clearly be

seen especially in this collection, Heaney merges the visionary and the quotidian in the same textual space, which is another attempt to spatialize binaries in his thirdspace. For Heaney, “the appeal of metaphysical visions and voyages is countered by similar devotion to the quotidian” (Hart “What is Heaney Seeing in Seeing Things?” 34). After the boat sighted by the monks above their oratory catches its anchor in the altar rail, one of the visionary crew climbs down to unfasten it:

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

The abbot said, ‘unless we help him.’ So  
They did, the freed ship sailed, and the man climbed back  
Out of the marvellous as he had known it.

(9-12; sec. viii)

The analogy drawn here again serves the purpose of liberating the self from the ties or the bonds one would have to a place or a context; that is, the poetic persona lets the crew free their anchor from the altar rail so that they can enjoy being on the move floating on the water. The same analogy would also be of use to foster the theme of relativity of perception, which Henry Hart states:

From our secular perspective, the praying monks are “marvellous,” otherworldly creatures; from the monk’s perspective the crew sailing over their oratory is “marvellous”; from the crew’s perspective the monks are the ones who are “marvellous”. (“What is Heaney Seeing in *Seeing Things?*” 40)

Embedding visionary elements into the story helps the poetic persona to break free from the linear time and the causality in the events in configuring contextual background. Allowing the visionary to come to the fore in the free

space of the mind and the vision, the poetic persona could resist the idea of referring to exact time and place. Removing the boundaries by making use of various techniques, the poetic persona lets us perceive the sublime beyond the known boundaries. The “Lightening”, the title of the first part of “Squarings”, emphasizes the sublime crossing from one realm into another; that is, Heaney devises another space that juxtaposes the zones of this world and the other one without exalting one or the other. As Bernard O’Donoghue emphasizes, the story “represents with wonderful aptness the capacity of two cultures and worlds, however unlike, to collaborate” (12). In short, with this collection Heaney showed that harmonized contraries of limits are crossed over, the natural and the supernatural are combined and the limits are fit in the sublime. As Hart asserts “[w]hen he writes about places now, they are luminous spaces within his mind” (“What is Heaney Seeing in *Seeing Things*?” 33).

With *Seeing Things*, Heaney moves towards the experimentalism of transnational culture. His poetry after the early 1990s exhibited the tension between a sense of responsibility to a place and the wish to go beyond the historical and cultural ties by spatializing places. Heaney builds a thirdspace, through which he can juxtapose different points of dissections. In this thirdspace, everyday life with quotidian concerns is collocated with the stories of the past and nation; the idea of home being assigned to a single place is amalgamated with a transnational context, where home can be described with its absence as well as presence. He looks back on the places of the past with the contemporary mind and vision, and amalgamates them in the spatial context which defies the principles of the Cartesian space, like linearity or causality. In

the end, what Heaney achieved is a space characterised by flow and lightness, where any epistemological category like place, home and identity are problematized and challenged, and where the subjective and the social spaces merge into each other.

#### **4.2. *The Spirit Level* (1996)**

... we stood footloose, at home beyond the tribe  
More scouts than strangers, ghosts who'd walked  
abroad ...

Seamus Heaney, "Tollund" (20-21)

Different from the previous collection *Seeing Things*, where Heaney amalgamates the ancient terrestrial and celestial spaces of the past and present world, in *The Spirit Level*, he revisits Irish places of the past which are configured by the dualistic thinking – like the Catholic/Protestant or the Unionist/Nationalist. Even after Yeats, for Irish poets, the mythos of place continues to shape their notions of national community. In the absence of a national community, Irish poets still struggle to mark the space of home by responding to several pressures. In the same line of thinking, Heaney constantly questions the poet's relation to community, often examining the mythological status of home. The space he configures serves to free him from the narratives of the presence of national place of Ireland, which embody romantic, mythic, and atavistic notions of identity. Starting from the early 1990s, it can be said that Heaney's poetry exhibits a tension between a sense of responsibility to a place and a desire for freedom, from being a poet held accountable to

community and the poet seeking a space free to explore historical and social ties. Thus, with the help of the spatialization of places, Heaney recenters the subject in relation to the past from a novel viewpoint and rewrites the cultural narratives. What is more, he preserves both public and private spaces and transforms them into a new creative thirdspace, beyond these two spaces. The conceptual tool, thirdspace, will be used to refer to Heaney's representations of place or constructions of Irish history and identity from a new vantage point which allows him to acknowledge how spaces indeed invigorate themselves in the intersection and blurring of binaries. Thus, by borrowing Soja's term this study will explore how the presupposed organic links between homogenous places and the self are illusory and how places become third with a potential to configure new experiences and connections.

In *The Spirit Level*, Heaney questions the past and tries to distance himself from past cultural and national narratives. Though he seems to locate himself in the local, he problematizes the place of the local and creates a thirdspace, in which the practices of the local are defamiliarized. In the poem "Mint", the space of home can be read as a microcosmic reflection of the macrocosmic North. Yet, the poem invites a double reading. In the microcosmic space of home, the poet focuses on his childhood memory of it. Now, he remembers even such unimportant details about his home space:

It looked like a clump of small dusty nettles  
Growing wild at the gable of the house  
Beyond where we dumped our refuse and old bottles:  
Unverdant ever, almost beneath notice. ("Mint" 1-4)



In these poems, his imagination works through metonymic logic as he chooses mint as the symbol of home. In the past, mint growing up in the backyard went unnoticed but now he remembers Sunday mornings with the memory of mint, which was “cut and loved” (“Mint” 10). He sounds somehow nostalgic about their weekend ritual as he says, “My last things will be first things slipping from me” (“Mint” 11). He is aware of the fact that his recent memories about his home will fly from his memory as opposed to the ones from distant past which are believed to remain much longer. However, the poetic persona is not sad about losing the record of his memories in the near past; he is even ready to relieve himself from anything from the past: “Yet let all things go free that have survived” (“Mint” 12).

In the final two stanzas, the poet displaces the idea of home as a nostalgic place to go back. Instead, he lists what has been excluded from the idea of home: “Let the smells of mint go heady and defenceless / Like inmates liberated in that yard” (“Mint” 13-14). In this tableau, obviously, mint cannot be seen since it stopped growing in that yard without attention and care. The poet cannot envision an ideal home place with the ties of memorable objects or things as they can easily disappear and in their absence it is difficult to imagine a stable home place. He envisions what is excluded or displaced as well as what is included. Also, a lot more has been neglected in the space of home, too: “Like the disregarded ones we turned against / Because we’d failed them by our disregard” (15-16). The place of home has obviously been overlooked and let slide.

From a different viewpoint, the subject “we” in the last two lines of the poem reflects an inclusive and pluralistic view of the occupants of the macrocosmic space of Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland, the interests of Catholic minority have been excluded by the Protestant majority. The mint here acts like a metaphor for the Catholic minority, who were “[g]rowing wild at the gable of the house / Beyond where we dumped our refuse and old bottles: / Unverdant ever, almost beneath notice” (“Mint” 2-4). Within all these images of and references to the past, there is the sense of commonality, as well. Following the Good Friday Agreement, when the tension between the two groups was tempered, the Catholic minority was “Like the inmates liberated in that yard” (“Mint” 14). He makes a kind of confession in the last two lines of the poem: “Like the disregarded ones we turned against / Because we’d failed them by our disregard” (15-16). That the Catholic interests are ignored in favour of the Protestant majority can be the macrocosmic implication of the poem. With one’s disregard and with the power to defy the authority and the presence of the other, one could negate the other’s essence as an opposing party. Yet, this negation would at the same time nullify the presence of itself, as well. In other words, the negation of Catholicism will problematize Protestantism as an opposing ideology as binaries are present or define themselves with the other’s presence. Thus, the poem acts as a meeting space between presence and absence of memory of home and at the same time between political and religious sects.

Heaney problematizes the local place of home by exhibiting what is excluded and ignored. In other words, in its absence, he is creating a new spatial

awareness, which critiques the attempt of the local to be homogenous by excluding the different (minority) counterparts. In the same line of thinking, Ian Davidson states that: “[i]n a globalized world, where place is homogenized through processes of commodification, populations became dispossessed and dislocated” (29). To ascribe certain characteristics to a place and to identify a set of common values with it would mean to create a “politically conservative haven ... one that fails to address the real forces at work” (Massey, *For Space* 6). Massey rejects this mindset and questions the validity of such a juxtaposition: place as “closed, coherent, integrated as authentic, as ‘home’, a secure retreat; of space as somehow originarily regionalized, as always-already divided up” as opposed to space as “the outside ... the abstract ... the meaningless” (*For Space* 6). Heaney is presenting a more pluralistic and heterogeneous space, which has gone through the process of an-Othering. The space Heaney creates, then, welcomes both local and global elements and it resists being categorized within one type of place. Christopher Malone is also aware of the fact that this conception of “the local differs from other configurations of place in Heaney’s verse” (1097). In his early poetry, as most of the critics have already mentioned, Heaney was after achieving solidarity with a local place by claiming it as a home place to put in the centre. As he spoke out in his prose collection *Preoccupations* (1980) “omphalos, omphalos” sound of the water pump, a childhood memory, what he means by omphalos is “the navel, and hence the stone that marked the centre of the world,” which would mean origin (17). Yet, in *The Spirit Level*, Heaney calls attention to a thirdspace, where he juxtaposes the corporeal space of the local with the imaginary pluralistic space of the global in another realm.

He makes it crystal clear that home place is a construct which is taken for granted with several suppositions.

In "The Flight Path", as the title indicates the poet is constantly on the move, going to and coming from nowhere, which openly transvalues the importance of place as a fixed entity. The poem is a six-part poem and each part of the poem depicts the poetic persona as being dislocated from a fixed place. Rather, he is on the move and in a constant flux. The very first part of the poem starts again by taking a stroll down memory lane and the poetic persona recalls the days of childhood with his father. In the poem, as Eugene O'Brien asserts, "the self describes the ongoing process of recontextualization that has been his life" (*Seamus Heaney: Searches for Answers* 107). The poetic persona remembers how his father folded him a perfect paper boat to swim it in the water. Yet, despite its promise, the poetic persona is aware of the result that the paper boat will not stay long in the water as he predicts "[t]he whole thing would go soggy once you launched it" ("The Flight Path" 14). Though the poetic persona is not on the boat, still what he remembers from old days is one incident about a boat, which Heaney used as a trope to challenge fixity or being settled onto a land. Being on a boat can be associated with being on the move and not belonging to a fixed place, on the contrary, being on the land refers to a sense of belonging to a place. In the poem, being at home at a place is associated with objects, or the possessions, which is an indication of a wish to root the self. Yet, it is not likely for the self to tie to a boat, which is always on the move.

In the second part of the poem, the poetic persona is now at an airport creating the image of looking up at a "late jet out of Dublin" "in Wicklow under

the flight path" ("The Flight Path" 17-18) and he lives a moment where self and other fuse. In other words, the poetic persona would like to dislocate himself from his present place. In the same line of thinking, Malone draws an analogy between the "flight path" and the poetic persona's wish to dislodge himself from the tense atmosphere of the city as he suggests: "Heaney calls attention to the discursive limits imposed on this context through his desire to be displaced through the 'flight path' of the imagination," a metaphor for displacement (1101). In this part of the poem, the poetic persona mentions the names of the cities, Glanmore, County Wicklow, Sandymount, Dublin and County Derry, which were somehow related to the bloody events. Eugene O'Brien set the context for the poem as follows: Physically Heaney moved to a cottage in Glanmore, County Wicklow, in the Republic of Ireland, in the wake of 30 January 1972; the Bloody Sunday, when British Paratroopers killed thirteen unarmed civil rights marchers and wounded twelve more, which was followed by serious rioting nationalist areas of Northern Ireland (*Seamus Heaney: Creating Irelands of the Mind* ix). The poetic persona moves from his past memories in county Derry to several other cities, where he has come across with several people and events that can be accumulated as memories. Now, he is standing "in the doorway early in the night" ("The Flight Path" 24):

I'm in the doorway early in the night,  
Standing-in in myself for all of those  
The stance perpetuates: the stay-at-homes  
Who leant against the jamb and watched and waited,  
...  
Who never once forgot  
A name or a face, nor looked down suddenly

As the plane was reaching cruising altitude  
To realize that the house they'd just past over –  
Too far back to see – was the same house  
They'd left an hour before.  
("The Flight Path" 24-27, 31-36)

In the image the poetic persona created, the "I" of the poem combines himself with the other in that he "stands in" on behalf of those who stayed at home and imaginatively puts himself in their position watching the "I" leave on one of his many journeys. He puts himself in a scopic position, from where he can look down at a house made tiny and unfamiliar by distance and perspective, while at the same time remembering that it was the familiar house that had just been left behind.

In the third part of the poem, the poetic persona emphasizes the change in understanding of places and how they are spatialized thanks to the changes in the global world. The speaker in this part of the poem is in an in-between place, an airport terminal. The very first line "Up and away" shows the desire to strip himself of the national context and to break ties with the home place ("The Flight Path" 38). Very much like a tourist's viewpoint, who is far away from his so-called home place, the poetic persona is listing the products one can find in an airport terminal:

Up and away. The buzz from duty free.  
Black velvet. Bourbon. Love letters on high.  
The spacewalk of Manhattan. The re-entry.

Then California. Laid-back Tiburon.  
Burgers at Sam's, deck-tables and champagne,  
Plus a wall-eyed, hard-baked seagull looking on.  
("The Flight Path" 38-43)

He is referring to the activities that can be done in different metropolitan cities, and one can feel attachment even to this kind of transnational experience. By attaching importance to multinational items, he tries to re-home himself. He even ornaments his verse with some French words, to stress the transnational context more: "*Reculer pour sauter*"<sup>17</sup> ("The Flight Path" 45). Finally, he names Glanmore, together with the names of these big cities like California or Manhattan, showing that from then on he will be exposed to nomadic site of existence and that the local and the global will appear together: "So to Glanmore. Glanmore. Glanmore. Glanmore" ("The Flight Path" 47). Glanmore, indeed, turns out to be a space of imagination, where the poetic persona combines the traditional geographical concept of place and space, as the representation of place, and extends them into a mode of thinking which would dissolve the former dualities between the local and the global in the heterogeneous and mobile thirdspace. At the end of the third part, the poetic persona mentions Sweeney Astray, the displaced, wandering king, to refer to the transition between spaces or reconceptualization of home place. The transformation of places into a space is also interpreted by Kearney as follows: "Heaney's poems are not in fact primarily about place at all; they are about transit, that is, about transitions from one place to another" (102). He further adds that we only have "look to the titles of some of his major works to see just how fundamental this notion of poetry as transitional act is: *Wintering Out, Door into the Dark, Field Work, Sweeney Astray, Station Island*" (102). As the titles of his major collections indicate, Heaney engages in the process of becoming or

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<sup>17</sup> To drawback in order to make a better jump.

moving in any direction. Similarly, Heaney, openly announces by quoting from Horace that change in places is inevitable: "Sweeney astray in home truths out of Horace: / *Skies change, not cares, for those who cross the seas*" ("The Flight Path" 54). Although Bernard O'Donoghue foresees that, Heaney will replace "Sweeney with the Tollund Man as his alter ego" ("Introduction" 8) indeed, from the early 1990s on, Sweeney as a wandering King would be a much more congruent alter ego for Heaney, who turned his attention to the flowing and nomadic site of existence. On the other hand, the Tollund Man was unearthed from the bogland of Denmark by excavation, which recalled the notion of searching for roots in the deep. Yet, with Sweeney, Heaney chose to dig up in imaginative history.

The poetic persona is always on the move and denies any kind of attachment to a place, tribe or nationality. In the fourth part of the poem, he is "on the train for Belfast" ("The Flight Path" 60). The poet here describes how he was approached by a friend, presumably a member of the IRA, and in a dream he had asked him to take part in setting an explosion at a "customs post / At Pettigo" ("The Flight Path" 73-74). From what Eugene O'Brien asserts, one can infer that here again Heaney is trying to create a thirdspace by combining the lived experience and the wish to outdo it: "by inhabiting a constellation whose components include both the desire to transcend the actual as well as the gravitational pull of the actual" (*Seamus Heaney: Searches for Answers* 108). The poetic persona feels ambivalent which can be about his being pulled in between the totalizing discourse of religious sects and his desire for and awareness about the existence of a spatial existence that does not impose any culture or



place specific identities or responsibilities. The “gravitational pull of the actual” proved to belong to the past once more when he was asked to involve himself with the Catholic side. On the same train,

Another schoolfriend’s name, a wink and smile

...

So he enters and sits down

Opposite and goes for me head on.

‘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.’

(“The Flight Path” 78, 82-86)

Physically, Heaney moved from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland in 1976 and spent time at Berkeley, Oxford, and Harvard. He has often been viewed as not sufficiently committed to the Catholic, nationalist position. Here the identity, which was defined in terms of an all encompassing “us”, has been juxtaposed with the use of “myself”. So, Heaney’s complex notions of identity and subjectivity after the early 1990s seem not to be related to “our people” or “we”. With the new space he has created, the poetic persona turns his focus on multiple selves which replace the so-called organic identity configured in the light of the grand narratives. Therefore, “his identity is a changing process wherein space is left for a dialogue between self and other and where there is a welcome for the voices and influences of alterity” (E. O’Brien *Seamus Heaney and the Place of Writing* 106). Here, Heaney is expressing a desire to recreate himself in a spatial site of existence rather than attaching himself to his own mythos.

Heaney is preoccupied with keeping a space of self for himself to be able to question and challenge the cultural memory and the socio-historical narratives that have become the markers of identity. In the fifth part of the poem when his disorientation on the plane and in the train transgressing boundaries ultimately ends, he returns to a stable ground. Yet, stability is illusory; “it is the space of interrogation he returns to” (Malone 1102). When the poetic persona is stopped and interrogated “at a roadblock” by the police, he speaks of notions of home and belonging in very defamiliarising terms:

When I answered that I came from ‘far away’,  
The policeman at the roadblock snapped, ‘Where’s that?’  
He’d only half-heard what I said and thought  
It was the name of some place up the country.  
(“The Flight Path” 98-101)

As opposed to police’s wish to define the place with definite coordinates, the poetic persona already strips the space he has been of its gridded structure. Here the police might be a metaphor for the State philosophy which aims to map and grid places, yet the poetic persona insists that his place is ‘far away’ and openly tells that it is impossible for one to reach a final ultimate home place, which does not exist at all:

And now it is – both where I have been living  
And where I left - a distance still to go  
Like starlight that is light years on the go  
From far away and takes light years arriving.  
(“The Flight Path” 102-105)

By obviously telling that he is coming from and going nowhere, he is devaluing the importance of place and prioritizing space. In other words, the poetic

persona refuses to give exact coordinates which are used to fix space into a striated one. In Eugene O'Brien's words, "place becomes more of a space wherein there is potential for development as opposed to a predictive, historically driven imperative from the past" (*Seamus Heaney: Searches for Answers* 113). To use Eugene O'Brien's wording, the poetic persona defies seeing space as a bridge or "imperative from the past" and he tries to liberate place from its taken for granted roots and connections.

The title of the collection *The Spirit Level* evinces Heaney's intention to inscribe a sense of balance between and alteration for the attraction of different forces in an attempt to sustain some kind of equilibrium. The poet is definitely torn apart between the pulls of the tribe or a group and a yearning for bidding freedom from all cultural and national ties and responsibilities. The search for equilibrium is evident in the poem "Tollund". First of all, the poet refers to the same place; that is, Tollund Moss of "The Tollund Man", in one of his early collections *Wintering Out* (1972). Tollund Moss is a narrow bog set amongst the hills near Aarhus in Jutland. Here, Professor P. V. Globe excavated the body of a man whose body parts like his skin, hair and stomach contents along with his clothing are all amazingly well preserved. It dates back to 210 B.C. and there was almost nothing on him except for a leather cap and a belt around his waist. Once analysed, it is understood that he had either been hanged or strangled around his neck. Relating the Tollund Man to the dead people in the bogland of Ireland, Heaney emphasizes the common features of cultures and places. In other words, he universalizes the idea of death as an indirect reference to the Troubles. Ramazani, similarly, asserts that we can see "[p]oetry's translocal

stretch” between Heaney’s Ireland and Jutland (*A Transnational Poetics* 15). Yet, he also warns “it is also discernible in poetry that may seem unambiguously local” (15). In “The Tollund Man”, Heaney obviously sees the connections between his home country and this bogland in Jutland, where he sees this naturally mummified corpse. He observes the parallelism between Northern Ireland, where many civilians are killed in the bog of the land and this bogland, where people are preserved within the very same bog. Thus, Eugene O’Brien’s analysis rings true when he says, Heaney’s “initial connection with this bog figure was his similarity with aspects of Heaney’s personal and Irish past” (*Seamus Heaney: Searches for Answers* 57). The identification between these two places is to such an extent that in *Wintering Out* (1972), the poet announces that he feels at home there though being unhappy and lost: “I will feel lost, / Unhappy and at home” (“The Tollund Man” 43-44). This sense of displacement is common to everyone in Ulster, irrespective of political or cultural alignment. In these lines, Conor McCarthy infers that “there is the suggestion that the feeling of being at home and the feeling of being lost are unhappily similar” (34). Being at home is associated with being lost; that is, binaries start to emerge in one another. With the spatiotemporal compression, as spaces shrank to global villages and time came to where the present is all there is, the self started to feel challenged and stressful, yet at the same time at home in such kind of a chaos without having a unique and homogenous concept of place as home. In such a context, the poetic persona experiences the feeling of the uncanny in a space different than his so-called home place, yet he is at the same time trying to cope with the irrepressible sense of compression of his/her spatial and temporal

worlds.

In *The Spirit Level*, in “Tollund”, which has been the subject of many of his poems in Heaney’s previous collections, now a completely reformed context appears. The place is not exalted due to its mythic connections and/or the memories of the past. On the contrary, the place seems to be set in a new space. The place evokes some kind of an uncanny feeling, as the poet describes it as “[h]allucinatory and familiar,” which might refer to the haunting quality of space, as well (“Tollund” 4). These two adjectives might refer to being at home in this global and transnational space. What is more, with global and translocal changes, the rural and the urban are juxtaposed, which creates a new kind of space, where: “[t]he scarecrow’s arms / Stood open opposite the satellite / Dish in the paddock” (“Tollund” 11-13). One of the past symbols of rural life, the scarecrow now is seen together with an urban symbol, that is, satellite dish. That Heaney chose satellite dish to relate to urban space has also another signification; satellite dish is a device to open to new global influences via television. What is more, juxtaposing a scarecrow and a satellite dish together leads to other defamiliarising effects. Scarecrow is thought to belong to the rural, whereas a satellite dish is to be for the urban, and yet seeing them together will not only problematize the homogeneity of the rural but also it blurs the definition of the urban. This multi-layered space would encompass people with more fecund and heterogeneous experiences.

In “Tollund,” Heaney collocates past and present together, and generates a new creative spatial model that extends beyond the past and present spaces and introduces a new spatial awareness. In this thirdspace, he poeticizes the

present against the background of past memories and traditions. Therefore, the past has been objectified with the help of the present vehicles of global time, like tourism:

Dish in the paddock, where a standing stone  
Had been resituated and landscaped,  
With tourist signs in *futhark* runic script  
In Danish and English. Things had moved on.  
(“Tollund” 13-16)

The “standing stone” there is resituated or recontextualized with the help of “*futhark*”, the oldest form of runic alphabets, used by Germanic tribes. The “standing stone”, the symbol of the past, which captures and freezes time, is not enough on its own to drive present forces, as “Things had moved on”. That Heaney draws upon the material and mental spaces of the traditional dualism with the process of thirding enables him to look at the categories taken for granted in shaping these dualities with a critical eye. To exemplify, he sees that the binaries in constructing space indeed merge into one another; that is, a space that was regarded as Catholic or Nationalist would bear the traces of the Protestant or the Unionist and vice versa. In the same line of thinking, Christopher Malone analyses how Heaney resituates the past within the present time and space as follows: “Heaney’s irony works to engage and rewrite the past through the frame of the present, taking a view of the past which is both newly contextualized and sensitive to the different interests shaping community” (1100). Heaney is quite transnational and translocal in his depiction of his previous places with a distance enough to be scopic, rather than excavatory as in his early poetry.

Heaney decentres the place names and turns them into more of spatial entities. To put it differently, he reduces the existence of places gridded with such exact names into spatial existence that can defy the presence of borders in between these kinds of places by their ability to permeate any place. In Tollund of *Wintering Out*, there was a homogenous place with “Stockinged corpses / Laid out in the farmyards” (“The Tollund Man” 27-28). The poet was unhappy there seeing corpses everywhere and being exposed to purgation thinking of his own country. The poetic persona seeing the loss is acting more with a modernist sensibility feeling sorry and confused with that loss. Yet, in *The Spirit Level*, the poetic persona creates a fluid site of existence, where rather than identities or subjects, the undefined “ghosts” are walking there and they are ready “to make a new beginning” (“Tollund” 22). The resonances that the “ghosts” walking here and there and abroad evoke are related to the idea that ghosts have the potential to challenge the fixed boundaries set in between borders of places. They can easily permeate through spaces being free spirits that can be anywhere and everywhere without being exposed to any kind of laws or sanctions of state apparatuses. What is more, the poet openly announces that the place may or may not be Tollund. The same feeling will be in “Mulhollandstown or Scribe”, which reveals great anguish, too. The poet, here, openly devalues the importance of place and creates a wider space, where no more citizens with homogenous features live:

It could have been Mulhollandstown or Scribe.  
The byroads had their names on them in black  
And white; it was user-friendly outback

Where we stood footloose, at home beyond the tribe,

More scouts than strangers, ghosts who's walked abroad  
Unfazed by light, to make a new beginning  
And make a go of it, alive and shining,  
Ourselves again, free-willed again, not bad.  
(“Tollund” 17-24)

As the epigraph to this chapter indicates, feeling “footloose, at home beyond the tribe”, he challenges the less likely solidarity between identity and home place. Even the dictionary definition of “footloose” tells a lot about how personal identity needs not be forced by that of the tribe or the group: “1. able to travel freely and do as one pleases due to a lack of responsibilities or commitments. 2. unrestricted in its location or field of operations and able to respond to fluctuations in the market” (*OED*). That they are being footloose indicates their being dislocated and their being at home at the same time. Beyond the tribe is another indication for the tribal origin being re-located in a “nowhere.” What is more, the ghosts of the past, too, are freed from their sense of belonging to a place. In this poem, the poet has interwoven different aspects of his heritage, language and history into a totally new space. This very process of creating a new space should be seen as “Not bad,” as he believes they will be “free-willed again” (“Tollund” 24); that is, they will have a chance to appreciate the spatial existence which would make them disclaim their responsibilities for any sect or community. In other words, as the poetic persona closes the poem, he cherishes rootlessness and lack of origin.



In *The Spirit Level*, Heaney vacillates between different pulls of forces. He revisits the past places specified with cultural and historical narratives, not with an excavatory approach to search for the roots, but with a new method: he is not specific to one culture but is aware of all the others at the same time. He questions the authority of the past over the present time and spaces. In order to conduct this exploration, Heaney makes use of several tropes, like his father, past places or memories and in this collection, he refutes the capability of all of them to order the present. From this collection onwards, Heaney's thirdspace encompasses the local and the global, and this geospatial stretch gives the poetic persona the opportunity to show that the so-called opposing binaries like the local and the global share several common features. Seeing the juxtaposition of categories inevitably makes the poetic persona at home anywhere, yet uncannily.

#### **4.3. *District and Circle* (2006)**

In *District and Circle* (2006), Heaney is concerned with the new turbulence of the twenty-first century, like terrorism, globalization and erosion of the natural world. Being open to global influences, Heaney puts the contemporary issues in the background, and pays attention to threshold crossings, journeys and revisitings. In the title poem "District and Circle", Heaney reconciles the classical allusions with the contemporary experience. The poetic persona descends from street-level into a terrifying but familiar image of the London Underground. The poem is based on his memories from a vacation

in London following the terrorist attacks on the transportation in 2005. His journey to the underworld, to a tube station is juxtaposed with that of the Dantesque/Virgilian notion of the underworld tunnels along the levels between life and death. He moves into the heart of an urban a-chronic space and juxtaposes his spatial experience in the London Underground, with a lack of daylight and the new totality of mechanical devices, vehicles and voices with the classical journeys to the Underworld with Virgil, Aeneas or Dante, whom he used as tropes to emphasize crossing borders or journeying in-between spaces in his previous poems.

As a result of the 1994 ceasefires and the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, in the aftermath of the Celtic Tiger, which granted the Irish government economic fortunes, domestic issues lost their acute status. However, even when these issues were the focus of his poetry, Heaney was aware of what was happening in the world at large. Michael Parker observes Heaney's involvement in international and global affairs as well as in the matters in his own country as follows:

Heaney's antennae has been consistently turned to foreign stations, to voices, times and cultures far removed from his own, not simply as a means of extending his poetic range but in order to enrich his understanding of others' history. The deep affinity he felt for writers in Eastern and Central Europe before and following the Second World War is again and again reflected in references to their work in his poetry and prose. (370)

Responding to all these global influxes and effluxes, Heaney took the opportunity to reflect on them in his millennial collection *District and Circle*

(2006). The influence of global events like the al-Qaeda attacks in New York on 11 September 2001 or the terrorist attacks in London of 7 July 2005 were referred to in this collection. Having one eye on national question and the other one on foreign influence and relationship, Heaney in this collection is concerned with global places by creating spaces out of these so-called places with clear borders and divisions. In various contemporary settings, he problematizes the validity and reliability of the rootedness to a single place and pays visits to contemporary global spaces.

As in most of Heaney's canon, violence and conflict overshadow the world he poeticizes. Any intimation of danger or violence may appear in any place in the twenty-first century, just as the violence and death appeared in the bogland of the Iron Age. Thus, any modern space in contemporary world may also suffer from violence, death and conflict. In the title poem "District and Circle", Heaney refers to the self who has to handle the conflict between his rural heritage and the tension he lives in the urban space. The poem is composed of five sonnets each with varying near-rhyme schemes. In the first sonnet, the poetic persona is in the London Underground, which is a terminal, neither an arrival nor a departure place; indeed, it is a place of transition located in the in-between. It is nobody's home and the poetic persona being in this thirdspace does not want to leave. He wishes neither to take the train, which would mean that he would make a choice for a place, nor to leave the terminal. He describes his status as:

I was on my way, well girded, yet on edge,  
Spot-rooted, buoyed, aloof,  
Listening to the dwindling noises off,  
May back to the unclosed door, the platform empty;  
And wished it could have lasted,  
That long between-times pause before the budge  
(“District and Circle” 47-52)

The poetic persona occupies a threshold space as he announces he is “on edge.” He also experiences time as a threshold, as well, when he says “That long between-times pause.” Heaney’s setting the poem in London tube station for Kennedy-Andrews is “the antithesis of rooted existence and stable identity” (*Writing Home* 88). The poetic persona is accustomed to wandering in the underworld spaces of Hades or the mythical underworld spaces of the past. Starting with the first sonnet, the poetic persona is in the noisy and unreal world of the Underground, which is very different from the mythical underworld spaces of the past. Yet, he does not feel like a total stranger in the tube station and he knows what to find there. In other words, the underground tube station is like an uncanny site of existence because this location and its depiction imply nowhere that is special for him. He can feel at home and familiar in any place:

I’d be walking down  
To where I knew I was always going to find  
My watcher on the tiles, cap by his side,  
His fingers perked, his two eyes eyeing me  
In an unaccusing look I’d not avoid,  
(“District and Circle” 6)

The poetic persona knows that he is going to come across with the busker in the Underground and it is clear that the busker, too, knows the poetic persona as they have a kind of interaction between them. Their eyes meet as two people who have a lot in common as they “both were out to see / For [them]selves” (“District and Circle” 7-8). The poetic persona identifies himself with the homeless busker who rehomed himself in this unhomely space in the Underground urban space rather than with his Irish ancestors. The only figure that he can have personal contact is a busker in the tube station, which is a quite contemporary urban experience. In this urban context, people feel lonely and deprived of genuine personal contact. Yet, they have such an authentic mutual recognition that the poetic persona does not want to give money to the busker in order not to damage their companionship. The poetic persona is not there as the representative of a certain group of community. He is there as a non-representative individual, just like the busker in the tube station, he does not feel any attachment to any space or a group, which reveals his urge to strip himself of his identity markers. The busker is very much like Orpheus who is the poetic gatekeeper leading the poetic persona to the underground step by step (Osterwalder 704). Both the poetic persona and the busker are at the lowest level of human existence; they are in the underground without any genuine and rooted relationship.

The poetic persona manages to view himself by looking at himself from without; that is, he trivializes the so-called uniqueness and importance of the self and a sense of belonging. Starting with the second sonnet onwards, the poetic persona announces himself as one of the mass in the Underground who

can be anywhere at any time. In other words, the poetic persona is stripped of all epistemological categories, which would define him like identity or place. Together with the crowd in the tube station, he was just anyone:

along the ramparts  
Of escalators ascending and descending  
To a monotonous slight rocking in the works,  
We were moved along, upstanding.  
(“District and Circle 15-18)

The Underground station does not act as a place for the poetic persona; rather, it turns out to be space, which does not offer any reference point for any community or anyone’s home place. The poetic persona is just anyone in the station and drifts with the travellers in the station. He can move anywhere “Elsewhere, underneath, an engine powered, / Rumbled, quickened, evened, quieted” (“District and Circle” 19-20). He releases himself from the boundaries of a place; that is, being in the Underground, he might have the potential to be anywhere, he wants. In other words, he enjoys being on the move; neither in the departure nor in the arrival place.

Heaney seems to have saved himself from the “appetites of gravity,” in his poetry after the 1990s. Having been preoccupied with the collective and rigid movements on the escalators in his excavation of the Underground, he turns his attention towards an open, light and hot upper world. As Kennedy-Andrews observes, Heaney chooses to locate the poetic persona to the Underground which is “the symbol of both the subterranean passage of colonial history and a rapidly accelerating (post)modernity, struggles for space and

balance" (*Writing Home* 87). Later on, he turns his attention to a park as a setting where sunbathers lay. They are "regardless" in contrast to the anxious, repeatedly self-questioning poetic persona who has spent missing "the light / Of all-overing, long since mysterious day" ("District and Circle" 22-23). Once again the poetic persona changes his focus from the garden to the spectacles, sensations and sounds encountered on the platform and on the train, which is another proof that he is enchanted by the spatial organization of the Underground. In between the upper world and the Underground, he is struggling to create balance and space among the "human chain" by taking shelter in "the safety of numbers" ("District and Circle" 32, 30). That he is in the Underground not for origins but for the safety of numbers is poignantly ironic when set in the light of the London bomb attacks in the Underground in which commuters were specifically targeted at. In between this "Street-loud, then succumbing to herd-quiet", the poetic persona feels self-reproach about whether he is betraying his past or origins: "Had I betrayed or not, myself or him?" ("District and Circle" 35, 36). He is questioning himself about whether he is betraying his rural roots, which has come to light with the classical journeys to the underworld searching for his Irish rural heritage. His journey in the Underground, which is very much related to the contemporary quotidian urban experience makes the poetic persona feel as if he is substituting the journey to the underworld with that of the contemporary tube one. Finally, the "first tremor" of the train makes him "glad" and relieves him ("District and Circle" 39).

The poetic persona tries to poise the spaces; namely the Underground tube station and the underworld of Hades. As Heaney himself explains, the first

and final stanzas were originally composed as part of a sonnet sequence on the Tollund Man, but he decided to transplant it here into a contemporary urban context:

this Iron Age revenant was, as they used to say in stage directions, 'discovered' in a new setting, keeping step with me in the world of surveillance cameras and closed-circuit TV, of greenhouse gases and acid rain. He functioned as a kind of guardian other, risen out of the Jutland bog. ("One Poet in Search of a Title")

In the poem, although he is not physically there, he remains still an invisible wanderer surveying London with the eyes of a stranger. Thus, when the poetic persona questions himself "Had I betrayed or not, myself or him?", "him" may refer to the busker, whom he encounters in the underground entrance, or to the poetic persona's father as he appears in the very last sonnet of the poem ("District and Circle" 36). However, "him" may also refer to the displaced figure of the Tollund Man, who is a stranger to the contemporary urban space and experience. The Tollund Man ushered Heaney to the mysteries of the bogland and was like his guide into the spaces of the underworld. One other interpretation might be that the busker might be taken as the modern day Virgil who could exist in the Underworld as a living soul, just like the busker who has the potential to experience the Underground and the upper world. Yet, the existence of both figures could be taken as a challenge to the Cartesian understanding of space; they can be on the move between places without being exposed to the gridded space of the State philosophy. The poetic persona transplanting himself into the Underground station, into the heart of contemporary urban space feels that he was very much alienated from his roots



or homely place. Yet, indeed, he has created a thirdspace for him in which he has combined his memories in the old Gaelic land and the new global urban space. For the poetic persona, this thirdspace is revealed as “Always new to [him], always familiar”, being in-between these two spaces, he is in constant questioning: “Had I betrayed or not, myself or him?” (“District and Circle” 37, 36) Losing one’s guide in the underworld is to risk getting lost; betraying the purpose of the journey and the repercussions can be fatal. Thus, he is very much afraid of betraying or losing his guide.

The poetic persona feels rooted on the train, which is on the move but this is also the location in his living present where he feels liberated from the pulls and pushes of the two spaces; the attachment he feels to his father’s land and the attraction of the contemporary urban space. On the train, the poetic persona, indeed, situates himself in a thirdspace, where he feels enrooted with the movement and openness of the thirding:

As sweet traction and heavy down-slump stayed me.  
I was on my way, well girded, yet on edge,  
Spot-rooted, buoyed, aloof,  
Listening to the dwindling noises off,  
My back to the unclosed door, the platform empty;  
And wished it could have lasted,  
That long between-times pause before the budge  
And glaze-over, when any forwardness  
Was unwelcome (“District and Circle” 46-54)

In this sonnet, his actions assume such a symbolic weight that, in thirdspace he is positioned, he is silently gripped by his own vacillations and thoughts among the silent and anonymous crowd. He is not only vacillating between the two

spaces of the rural Irish father land and the urban Underground station of London but also between the self that splits and that doubles to become “myself or him” (“District and Circle” 36). The poetic persona questions his other half whom he feels betraying, yet at the same time he doubles himself with “him” whom he embodies with either the busker or the Tollund Man. In the thirdspace, indeed, the poetic persona amalgamates the two chronotopes of the urban and the rural, the present and the past.

In the last sonnet of the title poem, the poetic persona in the thirdspace he created balances the two selves that occupy the different chronotopes. He is not in the past anymore. Yet, he is not in the present, either, since he subverts his presence calling himself “relict” (“District and Circle” 65). The most important element that shows his being torn apart between the two chronotopes and selves is the mirror. His recognition of his father’s “glazed face” in his own is a haunting experience, yet his father’s face is not only “waning” but also “craning” (“District and Circle” 58-59). It is both there stretched out but at the same time losing its power. Seeing himself in the father – past- implies that the material firstspace where the father was positioned will only be seen or exist in the reflection on the present time as a weakening image; that is, the past embodied in the image of the father here is a part of the thirdspace which is another creative mode of thinking. As in all the other sonnets, the poetic persona is tormented between oppositions and trying to situate himself in the thirdspace he is creating. The textual space that he generates with the help of his poetry helps Heaney to poeticize “all-encompassing (cultural, historical, linguistic) network” as Kennedy-Andrews

points out (*Writing Home* 87). To illustrate, especially the last sonnet is a replica for the complex pattern of rhyme and half rhyme prevalent in the whole poem. The words of the title poem find their echo in several words of the last sonnet; while “growl”, “treble”, “centrifugal” reverberate the idea of “circle”, “socket”, “relict,” and “flicker-lit” resonates “district”. They are all inscribed and symbolised in the labyrinthine Underground (Kennedy-Andrews, *Writing Home* 87). With his word choice from the rural and urban spheres too the poetic persona creates a new spatial awareness, in which he can amalgamate his rural Irish roots with that of his global contemporary experience:

the jolt and one-off treble  
Of iron on iron, then a long centrifugal  
Haulage of speed through every dragging socket.  
(“District and Circle” 61-63 )

The language hauls and drags the speaker into two directions, both away from and deeper into the “earth’s clutch” (McDonald). Yet, Heaney does not surrender; on the contrary, he challenges the gravitational power of the centre or origin by letting the “centrifugal” power to drag him anywhere. Now, he is highly different from the poet who was seeking for “omphalos”. He embedded a creative mode into the textual space he was writing, which made it possible for him to amalgamate English “the language of the colonial power” as Osterwalder would name, with Gaelic words in bits and pieces (699). Space is another product of thirding in the sense that it is a kind of spatial mode which allows different discourses to have a dialogic relation in a new context.

“District” is a word which Heaney uses in order to refer to home parish and “circle” is associated before with the omphalos, the natal origin. In the last sonnet, associating “circle” with the words like “growl”, “treble” or “centrifugal”, the poetic persona indeed tries to negate the so-called capability of circle or centre’s holding parts together. Similarly, relating “district”, which stands for home for Heaney, to “relict” or “flicker-lit” evinces the idea that home is vanishing and losing its effect. For Kennedy-Andrews, the words “district” and “circle” are “reconstructed through the recodifying of traditionalist discourse in the semiotic system of (post)modern capitalist consumerism” (*Writing Home* 87). This title poem shows how Heaney has changed since *Seeing Things*; now his journey to the underworld is to the heart of quotidian urban space and his rural origins are scored by the urban experience in the new creative spatial mode. Although modernity and contemporary global setting are intimidating and hostile, his memories of his rural origins and sacred past are quite fast to leave him:

the only relict  
Of all that I belonged to, hurtled forward,  
Reflecting in a window mirror-backed,  
By blasted weeping rock-walls.  
Flicker lit.  
 (“District and Circle” 65-69)

The past images either hurry up to vanish before his eyes or are dimly lighted. His new spatial awareness coexists with a regenerated emphasis on space liberated by the awareness of loss. He has moved from the rural world of his first language to the culture of the metropolis. In this new thirdspace he created, he does not “cut of his ‘living roots’ altogether, his poetic identity spans the

whole range of linguistic expression from local peasant dialect to erudite, polyglot, globalized idiom" (Osterwalder 706). He defined himself to be on his way girded by the State philosophy, but still on edge: "I was on my way, well girded, yet on edge" ("District and Circle" 47). That would again position him in the threshold and in the thirdspace he has generated which is in between the Firstspace of the real material world of his rural Irish origins and roots, where he feels estranged and unhappy and the Secondspace through which he can interpret this reality through imagined representations of the new global contemporary experience. In this process of thirding, as Kennedy-Andrews insinuates "[t]he bid for freedom is always attended by guilt and doubt" (*Writing Home* 87). He is, at the same time, familiar with the new contemporary experience of global spaces. Yet, he is not at home there, either. He comes up with a thirdspace, in which he is creating an alternative spatial imagination, where he can combine the contemporary London Underground and his restless and unhappy ties to his rural Irish heritage.

Early Heaney's essentialist tendencies were mostly associated with his preoccupation with myth and the so-called "sacred-past". He was preoccupied with the mythological figures reminding him of the past Gaelic life in order to identify himself and his community with the so-called "glorious" past of his ancestors. Heaney reintroduces his Iron-Age hero, The Tollund Man, who first appeared in *Wintering Out* (1972), in *The Spirit Level* (1996) and then in *District and Circle* (2006). This excavated victim of Iron Age fertility rites reminded the poet of all victims he knows from Gaelic history. This time in "The Tollund Man in Springtime", the journey to the underworld has been reversed when the

Tollund Man goes up to visit the contemporary urban world. Being a spirit he can pass “[u]nregistered by scans, screens, hidden eyes” undetected. He, too, explains his presence as follows: “Lapping myself in time, an absorbed face / Coming and going, neither god nor ghost” (“The Tollund Man in Springtime” 2-4). Being a spirit from another time and space, he can be intact in the technology-driven and security-threatened urban world. Being transplanted into a contemporary urban context, the Tollund Man is “Not at odds or at one, but simply lost” (“The Tollund Man in Springtime” 5). He is neither in conflict nor at peace with the contemporary people and places, but he was simply resurrected from nature’s peat bog of “seeding grass / And trickles of kesh water, sphagnum moss, / Dead bracken on the spreadfield, red as rust” (“The Tollund Man in Springtime” 6-8). The Tollund Man commands both the urban experience and the bogs, which Heaney knows very well from his childhood. He shares this landscape with the Tollund Man.

The Tollund Man has been put into a subject position in the thirdspace he situates himself. He is the poetic persona throughout the six sonnets as Heaney grants the right and the authority of the poetic persona to the Tollund Man, who was tortured, killed and buried in the bog. In existential terms, the Tollund Man was in the lowest level of existence, that is, he had stayed in the bog for years. Yet, Heaney gave voice to a figure that was raised from the bog and then put into a museum to satisfy others’ voyeuristic desires. What Heaney does is that he gives voice to the ones dwelling on the margins. The Tollund Man gives details about how he has been taken out of the bog and carried into the museum:

And me, so long unrisen,  
I knew that same dead weight in joint and sinew  
Until a spade-plate slid and souged and plied  
At my buried ear, and the levered sod  
Got lifted up; then once I felt the air  
I was like turned turf in the breath of God,  
Bog-bodied on the sixth day, brown and bare,  
And on the last, all told, unatrophied.  
(“The Tollund Man in Springtime” 22-28)

He was taken out of the bog in a perfectly preserved condition. The Tollund Man lies in his display-case in the museum of Silkeborg in Denmark in a similar position to that of his discovery in the bog. He has been waiting in limbo at a museum display for over 60 years:

My phantom hand  
And arm and leg and shoulder that felt pillowed  
As fleshily as when the bog pith weighed  
To mould me to itself and it to me  
Between when I was buried and unburied.  
Between what happened and was meant to be.  
On show for years while all that lay in wait  
Still waited. Disembodied. Far renowned.  
(“The Tollund Man in Springtime” 31-38)

He is neither alive nor buried in the bog, but he is on a display at a museum, which stands as a thirdspace, which is neither a place to bury the figure, nor a site that allows the figure to be in the living world. Being in such kind of a space, the poetic persona has the ability to command such a long period of time as he refers to Czeslaw Milosz, the Polish poet: “The soul exceeds its circumstances” (“The Tollund Man in Springtime” 43). Just like time, space is verticalized. He can move in-between times and spaces, in spirit, and Heaney puts him into the heart of geographical decentring. Different from the other buried figures rising

up from the earth, all of whom being preserved by being laid hidden and dormant in the earth, the Tollund Man can wander freely between different spaces. So, it can be said that Heaney liberates his alter ego – The Tollund Man – now.

Seamus Heaney, one eye on the Gaelic past and mythology and the other on contemporary era and urban experience generates a new spatial existence in the aftermath of a shift from the rural to the urban space and from the rooted identity towards a diasporic one. From the late 1990s onwards, the tension he feels between the collective identity formation and configuring a self in a quotidian context is becoming more discernible. He finds sticking to the notion of primal and autochthonous understanding of place much more difficult as the strict, fixed and homogenous borders of places vanish.



## CHAPTER 5

**THE CITY AS A RHIZOMATIC SPACE IN CIARAN  
CARSON'S POETRY AFTER THE EARLY 1990S:  
*FIRST LANGUAGE (1994), OPERA ET CETERA (1996)*  
AND  
*BREAKING NEWS (2003)***

Writing has nothing to do with signifying. It has to do with surveying, mapping, even realms that are yet to come. (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 4-5)

That Ciaran Carson is grouped as a second-generation poet by most of the critics is not only a chronological identification but also a classification in terms of themes, motifs and style. Against the background of the zeitgeist of the time period, Carson's early poetry responds to diasporic and hybrid formations. In this response, sense of rootlessness or feeling of dehomed in the familiar places is an important poetic feature which is reflected in both his content and form. Along with the Troubles, that is riots and bloody events, autobiographical elements constitute another point of reference. What is more, his mother tongue being Irish, he is interested in exploring how objects and places are named either in Irish or English. Another significant point of reference is the potentials of language and the textual space, both of which function to get rooted in

temporary elusive sites of becomings. In one of his most famous poems “Belfast Confetti” he seems to stretch the promise of the corporeality of language to depict the city space in the middle of explosions and disappearance.

Different from his early poetry, in his later poetry, he not only reveals excavations of the hidden stories of his home city but also spatial sites of contemporary life. Thus, it can be inferred that being influenced by global and translocal stretch with the spatial turn, Carson opens his poetry to transnational flows. What is more, knowing that the assumption of the symbiotic tie between the signifier and the signified has already become obsolete, he diverts his attention more to form and language being both the signifier and the signified. In his collections starting from the early 1990s onwards, it is rather discernible that he starts to experiment with language and transnational styles and forms. Employing the textual space of poetry, he aestheticizes the link between writing and space, and stretches the local space of Belfast to international spaces of several other cities.

It can be said that Carson’s poetry from the early 1990s onwards responds to the shift in configuration of space and subjectivity. In depicting rural and urban spaces, he adopts a conciliatory attitude to relieve the tension in the dualistic perspective. In other words, he defies mapping of a place with fixed coordinates, rather he embraces city space which is fluid, open to change and any kind of experience. Against the backdrop of such a spatialization, subjectivity, too, is conceived in multiplicity, and multi-dimensionality. In order to explore and discuss these spaces of movement, plurality and performativity, this study borrows some conceptual tools in subjectivity and space studies;

Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome, smooth and striated spaces. Ciaran Carson delineates spaces which are under a constant construction and deconstruction process without any hierarchical structure, which can be explained with the term rhizome. Witnessing a period with clashes and strict control of the state apparatuses, Carson's depiction of space and how subjects dwell in this spatial atmosphere can be best explained by how these subjects are exposed to continuous variation, movement and form in between smooth and striated spaces. With the spatial model offered by Deleuze and Guattari, this study aims to discuss how smooth spaces will encompass more movement in any direction which, in turn, challenges the traditional mechanisms trying to turn spaces into a place.

Starting with his first collection, *First Language* (1994), Carson poeticizes Belfast as a city space, which is disintegrated and which lacks any fixed coordinates. Different from his previous collections, where Belfast was taken as a "dominant frame of reference," amidst radical changes experienced in Ireland's politics and social life, in this collection Carson has inaugurated a new kind of poetics, in which he depicts Belfast as a city space, which is open to change, in constant movement and rhizomatic (Alexander 193). In his odyssey in this city space, Carson is skeptical of mapping and disbelieves the potential of maps in being able to represent fluid city space, which can host or encompass several different occasions, like demonstrations and/or barricades that may alter the frame of the city. This study will explore Carson's poetry collections after the early 1990s in order to display how Belfast stops being a place but rather acts as a city space, which is open to challenges, explosions and

disintegration. Within this city space, Carson creates an urban cartography that welcomes change with the help of textual space.

Within this constantly changing, hence unmappable city space, Carson's poetic persona wanders under constant but invisible surveillance of the violent forces. His poetic persona tries to escape from the gridded striated spaces of the State philosophy and thus is on the move to look for smooth spaces. Carson supplants the taken for granted notions regarding the city with not only ever moving and flexible city space but also with the textual space, which grants him the free, fluid and centreless space to exploit. Thus, the city also becomes a "text"ure. Since "the bond between the narration and location that characterizes traditional rooted discourses has been broken" as Barrios detects, poetry for Carson acts as a refuge to create a spatial site of existence, with the help of which he could poeticize a Belfast which can be everywhere and nowhere (16). With the help of writing, which can be interpreted "as a spatial and historical code" for Barrios, Carson, indeed, is making use of the potential of textual space, "to reinvent home and identity as open spaces" (16). By stripping his text of its regional environment, he devalues the place with fixed rotations, and supplants it with a textual space and city space, where psychological fugitives wander in the ever-changing streets of the city space.

Ciaran Carson, a permanent resident of Belfast, grounds his poetry in Belfast against the background of the Troubles. He poeticizes on all details about the city. Yet, he is also in command of transnational flows and influences along with local details and attributes. His poetry is multi-layered and encompasses several links to the global world and things ethereal. Carson

spatializes the city by traveling through different sites of Belfast and what is more, he traverses the city by paying attention to the “real histories and concrete details, but in the chinks of these descriptions are memories, dreams, and imaginings of other places, embedded thickly” as Danielle Barrios argues (19). Carson manages to picture an all-moving and fluid site of city space without setting any kind of hierarchy between inhabitants, streets or sites. Places that were taken as a site or a commodity for a certain group of people in the face of clashes, conflicts and violence cease to be paths with fixed and identifiable coordinates of State philosophy. Thus, Carson’s portrayal of Belfast as a city space is rhizomatic rather than arborescent. From arborescent beings, rooted in time and place, who were surrounded by totalizing principles and dualism, the subjects are turned into rhizomatic nomads, who, thanks to globalized communications networks, roam across the spaces without necessarily moving their bodies at all. Thus, Carson creates a deterritorialized consciousness in the amorphous geopolitical city space that lacks any definite or solid form. Belfast, in other words, does not refer anymore to a geographical place with uniform dwellers or sites, but it appears in the poems as an indeterminate site for any kind of experience.

Carson is aware of the fact that place can no more be a reliable reference point for the coordinated self and thus, he does not give credence to static reading of topological data; that is, cartography and maps cannot be taken as reliable sources to give accurate information about the cities. Cities as living entities hosting a heterogeneous group of people are hard to stabilize on maps. A case in point is, in his first poetry collection *The New Estate* (1976), with the

first poem “The Bomb Disposal”, Carson announces that the city cannot be taken as a static place to be pictured in maps:

The city is a map of the city,  
its forbidden areas changing daily.  
I find myself in a crowded taxi  
making deviations from the known route.  
(9-12)

The city Carson experienced is like a labyrinth, and it can no more stabilize his “self”. “Its forbidden areas changing daily” will make it more difficult for the State philosophy to grid or to striate spaces of the city. Maps, fixed and immobile tools to steer visitors or inhabitants are far from being a guide to city space, which moves and changes so frequently. Thus, cities are no more fixed places with homogenous group of inhabitants, static streets and city plans. The city that Carson is trying to poeticize is the one which is on constant move hence, being at the moment is foregrounded over the fixed notions of the city of the past. Rather than the pre-conceived notions, momentariness of experience is encouraged over past and memory; thus, city space both imprisons and provides the maze-walkers with so many possibilities.

### **5.1. *First Language* (1994):**

With his first collection in the 1990s, *First Language* (1994), Carson changed his focus and put a disintegrated city, which is open to demolition at any moment, at the heart of his poetry. The poem “Apparat” which was also put

in a compendium of Belfast poems *The Ballad of HMS Belfast* (1999), as one of the Belfast poems, portrays how Belfast ceases to be a nostalgic framework for home but becomes a tentative site open for decomposition. The poem portrays a city space that is on the verge of explosion, yet the poetic persona avoids giving an overt reference to Belfast so as not to create a mimetic replica of Belfast. It is because the poetic persona would like to create a vague sense of space that can happen anywhere and everywhere. By not giving an overt reference to a place, the poetic persona indeed tries his best to avoid the apparatuses of the State philosophy. With the title of the poem "Apparat," Carson creates a multi-layered spatial notion which might be a reference to any space in any part of the world. Carson might be alluding to the administrative system of a communist party, typically in a communist country or simply an organization or existing power structure especially a political one. The word "apparat" has wider resonances than any ordinary word. One reason among others is the phonetic similarity between the word "apparat" and "apparatus," which implies an internalized surveillance of the individuals and also a mechanical, clinically distanced administration of their minds, bodies, intersubjective spaces, etc. Another implication is that the subjects become autocrats due to these apparatuses. Due to the context or the conditions within which it appears, the poem obviously explores the political situation in Belfast by repositioning it into an amorphous space and time. However, this spatiotemporal site may tell Belfast's apparat as well as of any time and space.

That the city space is open to any kind of disintegration was not new for those who lived in Ireland during the Troubles. Almost everyone was

accustomed to being at the heart of the bomb explosions or total demolition. In the poem, the robot bomb disposal expert seems to be very much accustomed to such assignments living in the middle of the Troubles. The very first word of the poem on the bomb disposal expert is “[u]nparalysed” and he acts “[a]s casually as someone to be barbered” and “sits relaxing with a magazine” (3-4). The robot bomb-disposal makes use of contemporary things and style as “[i]t was using “deep creep”” and “infinite hair,’ conversing in its base-of-two conundrum” (“Apparat” 5-6). The bomb disposal expert was clearing the space of the bombs most probably planted by the opposite group. In this life and/or death situation, the robot bomb disposal expert was positioned in a contemporary everyday life setting using “deep creep,” a kind of lubricant and cleaner which is used daily by many. That the robot bomb disposal expert in contemporary context added some mythological terms like “the realms of Nod” (“Apparat” 15) or “Nemesis” (“Apparat” 20) creates juxtaposition between the classical world and a contemporary event. This creates an uncanny effect.

Like any other poet living in the 1990s, it is impossible for Carson to resist the geospatial stretch. It becomes possible to reach other places without actually moving, via several technological devices and the other effects of globalization. In this poem, analogies can be drawn between the incompletely graspable geospatial stretch and the stretch of the poetic language. Accordingly, the poem “Apparat” includes some transnational and multi-layered resonances. The robot bomb disposal expert looks like the members of a communist party: “Its chips were bugged like all toasters in the apparatchniks’ / condominium” (“Apparat” 7-8). The way its wires and cables are connected is likened to the



toasters in the house of a member of a communist party. The conceptual resonance of referring to the communist party or its members might evoke the notion that we can draw an analogy between the faith in the State philosophy of the communist ideology and the motif of gridding places in order to dispose bombs as State philosophy is associated with striated spaces as Deleuze and Guattari would relate. Thus, the bomb disposal expert is like the representative of the State philosophy to grid the place and to disarm the bomb. Starting with the third stanza, the robot is called “Turnbull” (9), which refers to a family name: “Northern English (chiefly Northumbrian) and Scottish: variant, altered by folk etymology, of Trumble, on theory that it denoted a nickname for a man thought to be strong and brave enough to turn back a charging bull, from Middle English turn(en) ‘to turn’ + bul(l)e ‘bull’” (“Turnbull Family History”). What is more, he is related to the American Explosive Ordnance Unit:

Turnbull twiddled with the radio controls. He twitched his  
robot’s claws.  
He felt the Mobile Ordnance Disposal Unit index through  
its dictionary of clues. (“Apparat” 9-12)

The user guide of the robot bomb disposal expert is designed like the “Mobile Ordnance Disposal Unit,” which is referred to as a well-known American bomb disposal unit. It indicates that the bomb disposal expert may belong to any nation.

The translocal stretch of Belfast can further be observed when the poetic persona refers to transnational as well as different spatiotemporal sites. Though being a robot, he is clothed in a Byzantine robe and enters the scene in incense

manifesting that he has been needed since very early ages. The poetic persona puts double entendre on “the realms of Nod”, from where the robot bomb disposal expert “was beckoned”; that is, “the realms of Nod” refers to the imaginary realm for sleep and dreams punning on the biblical name and also it is the country which Cain journeyed after slaying Abel (“Apparat” 15-16). This double entendre shows again that planting bombs and trying to dispose them are imbued with transnational roots. At the same time, the same bomb disposal expert makes use of “deep creep” and “infinite hair,” both of which belong to contemporary experience and lifestyle (“Apparat” 5-6). That is, the poetic persona is juxtaposing the contemporary daily experience with the past and the previous contextual events. What is more, he is located in between dream and real life. In this liminal space, the poetic persona becomes ironical and satirical by personifying the bomb as well as the robot bomb disposal expert:

The smart bomb got the message and intoned the right  
liturgical analysis.  
Latinate, they swapped explosive bits and pieces; they re-  
emerged in Nemesis. (“Apparat” 17-20)

By blurring the boundaries between dream and reality, the bomb and the bomb expert, the poem forces us to move onto a different space of understanding where traditional binaries dissolve. The bomb and the robot bomb disposal expert are pictured like each other’s counterpart when they exchange, their parts act like one single being. In other words, the opposing parties come to be one homogenous entity. Being one another’s punishment and salvation, they see each other in Nemesis. Moreover, the satirical and ironical tone of the poetic

persona arouses the feeling that coming across with a bomb and a bomb disposal expert becomes a routine event in this city space. Still, amidst dissolution of the binaries, he also embodies the transnational roots and memories of this kind of explosions. By amalgamating these two different temporal experiences, the poetic persona implies that the city space has always been vulnerable to such threats since the early ages; that is, this bomb disposal expert could be in Byzantine gowns or he could be located in Abel and Cain's country. In such a temporal site, Belfast serves as a rhizomatic space for such kind of a meeting for different temporalities and epistemologies. In such a context, Doreen Massey drives the nail home when she rejects the "exclusivist claims to places –nationalist, regionalist and localist" all of which attempt "to fix the meaning of particular spaces, to enclose them, endow them with fixed identities and to claim them for one's own" (*Space, Place, and Gender* 4). Rather, the city of Belfast is not characterised by the roots as arborescent thinking would explain, but it is portrayed as a rhizomatic space which might relate to various cultures and times by linking them with non-hierarchical structures.

As stated above Ciaran Carson turns Belfast into a rhizomatic city space also by debunking the capacity and ability of maps in representing the borders of the city or fixing a city place. What is more, within this city space, one cannot feature an identity which is organically rooted to the space. In another poem, "Two to Tango", the futility of the effort to try to connect one to a single type of identity deeply rooted to a single place is explored. The poem wavers between the binaries in creating subjectivities and invalidates them by fabricating a rhizomatic space. "Two to Tango" is a poem about informers, in other words,

surveillance. The narrator in the poem may either be “a participant in a witness protection programme or a creative writing tutor” as Neil Alexander states (193). In any case, the poetic persona is in mutual interaction with the reader in managing the shift in identities:

Whether you want to change your face or not's up to yourself.  
but the bunk of history  
They'll make up for you. Someone else's shoes. They can put  
you anywhere. Where's a mystery.  
(“Two to Tango” 1-4)

Although Carson's interest and investment in Belfast's history and geography finishes especially after the 1990s, the context of Troubles remains strongly present. The poetic persona hints at the impossibility of configuring a stable identity due to his awareness about the fact that the dwellers are social constructs under the dictations of the state apparatuses. The poetic persona trivializes the likelihood of having individualistic identities tied to a place; as it is evidently referred to in the poem “the bunk of history” will “make up for” the subjects a face, which is used as a trope for identity. In other words, it is under the command and authority of history or the status quo to create or construct subjects in any context they need. Apart from others' questioning, their constant incessant introspections bring new subjects, who are subjected to forces beyond them, into being. This stanza sounds like a manifesto against identities as essential and frozen entities.

The poetic persona problematizes the significance and possibility of fixed and stable epistemological categories in building subjectivities. After

discrediting the integrity of history and politics, he invalidates the potential of place in generating identities. Places do not have the potential to evoke unique feelings or insights peculiar to that single place; in the same line of thinking, the emotion or sense can be evoked anywhere any time. In the second stanza, the poetic persona portrays the long esteemed capacity of place in creating place-related identities:

Aromas, sounds, the texture of the roads, the heaviness  
or lightness of the air –  
All these contribute to the sense of place. These things are  
what we are, (“Two to Tango” 5-8)

By using corporeal and sensual language, the poetic persona, here, pictures an organic place with some specific features like “the textures of the roads” or “the heaviness / or lightness of the air” yet there is always the possibility to alleviate the effects of these places on us. In the following stanza, the poetic persona immediately renders the possibility of a unique effect of a single place null and void:

...These things are  
what we are,  
  
Though mitigated by ourselves. The details might be  
anywhere, so long as a romantic atmosphere  
Is evoked. (“Two to Tango” 7-11)

The peculiar effects of a place can well be aroused “anywhere” as the notion of place has already been spatialized. This kind of an atmosphere can only be possible in a smooth space which is open-ended. The poetic persona also emphasizes that cities or places cannot have inherent organic features to define

their dwellers, on the contrary, they are all spaces to which certain characteristics are attributed, like: “But to mention Africa, the Middle East or Russia / is anathema” (“Two to Tango” 11-12). These places remind us mostly of unpleasant sensations and these make us loathe or detest. Again for the poetic persona, these feelings are not peculiar or special to these places, but these sensations can be kindled in any spatial site. Within these rhizomatic spaces the poetic persona detects that hierarchical network or established filiation between places cannot function thus the poetic persona negates any referential or central point. As opposed to the “logos of entrenching” these people in a closed space, the poetic persona does not negate the possibility of journeying in the open space. He is making fun of the idea of assigning a centre to a place or to a subject. A case in point is, being questioned by the state apparatuses, the poetic persona names himself “the jammy centre in the / doughnut” (“Two to Tango” 15-16). The jammy centre of the doughnut is the moving centre of the food. He positions himself in the centre of a dish, which would conclude the syllogism that centre is present. Yet, the same statement would invalidate such reasoning as the centre is revealed to be “jammy,” which is not the correct substance for a centre which is to be designed to hold the things intact. Here, in the poem it is used as a trope to refer to the centre in epistemological terms with its moving and floating nature. A fixed and a stable centre envisaged to embrace and hierarchize categories or classifications is inconceivable in contemporary world, when labels and/or identities are all evacuated and stripped of their homogeneity. Even Belfast cannot be taken as a specific place:

And Belfast isn't like Beirut, although I've never been there.  
It's what it is:  
Agendas, bricks and mortar, interfaces. Others in the structure  
like me. *Veritas*.  
("Two to Tango" 21-24)

The poetic persona compares and contrasts Belfast and Beirut maybe due to their similarity in spelling, but the supposed similarity is misleading. The poetic persona further claims that Belfast and Beirut are not the same, yet he adds that he has not been in Beirut before, which shakes the stability or the reliability of his language and authority. On the other hand, he avoids giving specific details about this as he follows: "It's what it is / Agendas, bricks and mortar, interfaces" ("Two to Tango" 22-23). He problematizes the idea that the cities can be taken as places by specifying nothing about either Belfast or Beirut. On the contrary, he generalizes Belfast when he says it is all about "bricks and mortar" and "interfaces", which can already take place anywhere or everywhere. On the other hand, what is common for all the cities is that they have all meeting and interacting points. As the title of the poem suggests, it is impossible to avoid vacillating between the binaries and perceiving city space as elusive and smooth with the potential to move in every possible direction. The poetic persona cannot help writing on it endlessly.

Though Peter Barry regards Ciaran Carson as "relentlessly loco-specific" in his *Contemporary British Poetry and the City*, Carson, indeed, tries to create a centreless fluid city space in reference to Belfast rather than taking Belfast as a solid mapped space. In the rhizomatic city space he depicts, the city is there with all its collapsed, ruined and shabby elements. Yet, at the heart of this

ruined and demolished city space, he sets a dream world. He can spatialize place and manages to situate himself in-between these two spaces in-transit; that is between the city space of Belfast and dreamspace of Belfast. In the poem “The Ballad of HMS *Belfast*” Carson creates an in-transit site of existence by referring to Belfast the city, and *Belfast* the ship. Belfast is the name of the ship which hosts people defined with various nationalities and backgrounds on board. The ship sets out from “old Belfast” – he means the city of Belfast- but their future destination is not certain or is not revealed:

On the first of April, Belfast disengaged her moorings, and  
sailed away  
From old Belfast. Sealed orders held our destination,  
somewhere in the Briny Say.  
 (“The Ballad of HMS *Belfast*” 1-4)

The poetic persona gives details about both time and place, yet none of them discloses clear and definite information about the prospects of the ship. There is no information about the year, yet the exact date revealed in the poem implies an irony; that is, the ship sets out “[o]n the first of April”, the April Fools’ Day. Setting the time as the April Fools’ Day contributes to the feeling of futility of trying to elude from a city space; that is, only the fools can think of such a thing. The only direction that can be learned about the route of the ship is that, she is going “somewhere” and further details are “[s]ealed”. The poetic persona is obviously disinclined to set definite coordinates for the route of the ship. Thus, rather than trying to fix a place with clearly set coordinates, the poetic persona creates a spatial in-transit site of existence, which is in-between Belfast, the city



and *Belfast*, the ship. The ship is a replica of a smooth space which defies lines or trajectories to be subordinated to points. Deleuze and Guattari give the “boat” as an example for a smooth space along with the “tent” and the “igloo”, where the dwelling is subordinated to journey.

On the ship the poetic persona envisions, the crew is comprised of people from as many nationalities and backgrounds as possible. The ship named *Belfast* is a microgeographic replica of the cosmopolitan, global and transnational *Belfast* and even the contemporary global world. The crew is reported to be “of Jacks<sup>18</sup>”, who are “aromatic with tobacco-twist and / alcoholic” (“The Ballad of HMS *Belfast*” 5-6). Carson, Kennedy-Andrews says, “radically undermines the idea of a centre capable of providing discursive unity and fixity, and the claims of any culture to possess a pure and homogenous body of values” (*Writing Home* 215). Kennedy-Andrews’ analysis rings true as the poetic persona gives further details about the heterogeneous people on board: there were “[b]oth Catestants and / Protholics” (“The Ballad of HMS *Belfast*” 7-8). These are the combination of the words, Protestant and Catholics, and he dissolves the opposition between them; that is, one is defined in terms of the other. In such kind of a rhizomatic space, he distorts the hierarchies between these groups and he even disfigures the correct spelling of the words. Again, this might imply the impotence of language to signify a fixed and unified concept. Yet, both groups “sailed beneath / the White Ensign” (“The Ballad of HMS *Belfast*” 9-10). The bond between them is not about their nationality or sect, but they love one another because they share a common space on board. The ones

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<sup>18</sup> It is an informal usage as a form of address to a man whose name is not known.

on the ship are there to achieve intersubjectivity with the help of a shared spirit which is fostered due to the spatial atmosphere that embraces them. In other words, the poetic persona acknowledges the authority of experience again:

We were tarry-breeked and pig-tailed, sailed beneath  
the White Ensign;  
We loved each other nautically, though most landlubbers  
thought we were insane.  
(“The Ballad of HMS *Belfast*” 9-12)

The crew feels bound to one another due to their experience and performance on board. They are on a non-stable floating object, and there they feel connected to each other but not through their so-called essential identities. What is more, the poetic persona puts emphasis on the transnational roots of the ship as he resembles it to “*Beagle*,” Darwin’s ship in his voyage of 1831-1836 and to “*Enterprise*,” which is used very widely as the name of a ship. It is also referred to as either British Royal Navy or the US (“The Ballad of HMS *Belfast*” 13, 14). Then, he likened it to “the Nautilus”, which is the first nuclear powered submarine launched (“The Ballad of HMS *Belfast*” 57). In such kind of a rhizomatic and transnational space, the textual space is, too, configured with the combination of prose and verse: “each system was a back-up for the other, auxiliarizing / verse with prose” (“The Ballad of HMS *Belfast*” 15-16). He is creating a rhizomatic language between prose and verse without prioritizing one over the other, and each and everything is the back-up for one another rather than being their opposites.

The poem discredits maps in depicting places with homogenous groups of people and in portraying places with fixed boundaries. The poetic persona tries to give further information about the nationality and the roots of the crew, yet he cannot provide the readers with sufficient and accurate information due to the fact that maps are politically constructed. While they reflect the dominant and rich part of the world in detail, they simply underrepresent the marginal and peripheral countries or regions:

Some sang of Zanzibar and Montalban, and others of the lands  
unascertained  
On maps; we entertained the Phoenix and the Unicorn, till we  
were grogged and concertina'ed.  
("The Ballad of HMS *Belfast*" 33-36)

Carson has depicted the city space on a ship as a smooth space which defies any static and essentialist delineation. The only place or direction the poetic persona can give the reader is that:

Above the aqua. We gazed at imperceptible horizons, where  
amethyst  
Dims into blue. ("The Ballad of HMS *Belfast*" 29-31)

Zanzibar is an island off the coast of East Africa, Montalba is a place in Philippines and there are some other people whose countries are not even mentioned on maps. The poetic persona prefers to picture space rather than sticking to indefinite mapping. With the emergence of transnational flows and global influences, mapping or cartography fails to freeze places in their stable position or condition, thus, the poetic persona chooses to turn his focus on the

shared values and intersubjectivity that subjects might achieve in this smooth space. The people on the board prefer to refer to mythical universal figures and stars like Phoenix and the Unicorn rather than their roots. Mythology, in other words, will provide them with a shared space beyond nationality or a specific culture. What is more, through mythological references, the poetic persona tries to go beyond the linearity and creates non-linear temporality. Belfast the ship is full of people from different origins, countries or no origins. However, they can still entertain themselves in the transnational space of the ship. That space has a command over our relationships or experiences more than any other thing is analysed truly by Fredric Jameson, who assesses the situation of human's relation to space as follows: "our daily life, our psychic experience, our cultural languages, are today dominated by space rather than categories of time" (16).

Through the metonymic details provided in the poem, the poetic persona sets the rhizomatic space, which generates a kind of smooth space which defies the discriminative potential of the dualistic thinking. Accordingly, on the ship, which is free from the forces of gravity of the land, there is no hierarchical relationship between any member of the crew, any nationality or place. The crew is thus reported to be moving in-between two opposing spaces:

We've been immersed, since then, in cruises to the Podes and  
Antipodes;  
The dolphin and the flying fish would chaperone us like  
aquatic aunties. ("The Ballad of HMS *Belfast*" 37-40)

Setting off a journey to the Podes and Antipodes is another challenge to the binaries and it gives us a sense of endlessness of their experience. The crew was

floating between two opposite directions and their captain was “like a grand Mikado” (“The Ballad of HMS *Belfast*” 48). He is promising them

the Future: new Empires, Realms of Gold,  
and precious ore  
Unheard-of since the days of Homer: we’d boldly go where  
none had gone before.  
 (“The Ballad of HMS *Belfast*” 49-52)

With the help of their heterogeneous togetherness, they subvert the traditional binarisms. They are promised “[u]nheard- of” sites of existence. Here, the expressions, “new Empires,” “Realms of Gold” refer to these promised spaces and are devoid of their traditional and imperialistic connotations. With the idea of ship as a smooth space and a lack of destination, he also provides a space of constant deterritorialization and challenges the teleological thinking. The motif of the sea-voyage puts adventure and travel to the foreground, which also enables the poetic persona to create a floating and non-stable space. This new kind of space can host non-rooted transnational subjectivities much more easily; in other words, they constantly reterritorialize themselves in this intersubjective space which is not affiliated with a solid ground. Also claiming to be a ballad, the poem includes stories and adventures of other distant times and spaces. The only refrain the poem includes is “we” like a chant all throughout the poem, rather than a line or a phrase. Repetition of “we” indicates the effort of the poetic persona to fix a new communal belonging for itself but each time he is trying to set a certain set of communal identity, it is like a drop of quicksilver and he has to reconfigure from scratch. Carson engages with

“fragmented, temporally and spatially mobile, digressive poetics”, for Kennedy-Andrews, this is because of “his intuition of centrelessness” (*Northern Irish* 215). Experimenting with a nomadic site of existence after the 1990s, Carson sees his home place through the eyes of an outsider or resident alien, instilling estrangement that challenges any easy relation between self and place. Thus, as a Northern Irish writer, Carson is indeed doing more than simply undermining the working mechanisms of stable narratives of place.

Carson engages in dream narrative in “The Ballad of HMS *Belfast*”. Nonetheless, he never detracts himself from the materiality of the city. In other words, the imprint of the city’s urban materiality is impossible to suppress in his poetry. City space is a living animate entity which encompasses any kind of experience and translation of subjects, rather than acting like an absolute Cartesian space. Having been awakened from an “*aisling*” (“The Ballad of HMS *Belfast* 97), which means dream or vision in Irish language, the poetic persona becomes aware of the fact that he is still on *Belfast* in the city of Belfast:

I lay bound in iron chains, alone, my *aisling* gone, my sentence  
passed.  
Grey Belfast dawn illuminated me, on board the prison ship  
*Belfast*. (“The Ballad of HMS *Belfast*” 97-100)

The conscious self of the poetic persona “in iron chains” has resonances of cultural and social restrictions. Yet *aisling* liberates him from his mental restrictions. Calling the ship “prison,” the poetic persona is aware that, on the one hand, this ship is a kind of prison as they cannot move easily out of it, on the other hand, the space on it liberates him. In the last stanza of the poem, the

poetic persona draws an analogy between arrival and waking up from a dream; in that he declares that he is now in Belfast, not away from the city. The idea that the ship he was on is named Belfast is quite ironical. It can be said that double entendre is used on the ship's name as the ship Belfast is like a replica of the city space of Belfast, which is volatile and heterogeneous in terms of race, sect, and culture. Therefore, the poetic persona is trying to leave Belfast the city with the ship *Belfast*, which is almost the micro replica of it. Yet, when he wakes up from his dream, he is happy to be in Belfast the city again. This time he names the ship Belfast as prison. He can neither escape nor appreciate staying in Belfast. He feels free through inspiration but also imprisoned due to his locatedness. What is more, he creates a kind of double consciousness, from one site of being he looks at and judges his existence in the other site. In such kind of a psychology and existence, Belfast implies ontological resonances for him.

Carson, then, engages in Belfast the city space, yet he is aware of the fact that Belfast like all city spaces after the postwar period is volatile and far from providing its inhabitants with an organic and homogenous place. Its volatility undermines its cartography. He problematizes the idea that the city becomes a stable and an anchored place through mapping, that is why; Carson strives to show the futility of trying to map Belfast's city space, which defies any grid or chart. As Alex Houen asserts, "while the image of the map arises throughout Carson's work, mapping itself is invariably made provisional" (261). The word "provisional" here refers to the present moment, which is more about the potential of space to host the present time as a living entity. This is also the reason why space or mapping the city space will not lead to smooth places

avoiding the grid of State philosophy. In the same line of thinking, when it comes to the city, as Carson puts in his prose work "Question Time" in *Belfast Confetti*: "Everything will be revised. ... No don't trust maps, for they avoid the moment: ramps, barricades, diversions, Peace Lines" (*Belfast Confetti* 58). Thus, Carson's poetry can be taken as a challenge to test the potentials of the poem, the text, as a type of a map. He tries to exploit the potentials of the textual space by making use of different languages, Latin, Gaelic or English. He benefits from the layout of the page, like playing with the template to situate the poem, or using a wide range of figurative speech to extend the possibilities of language.

## **5.2. *Opera Et Cetera* (1996):**

Language as another site or space is one of the concerns for Carson in his collections after the early 1990s. In the poems, Carson's constant focus moves away from the city to the generative language itself. His subsequent collections *First Language* (1994) and *Opera Et Cetera* (1996) include translations from several different languages, as well as a new narrative technique; that is, he experiments with long-lined rhyming couplets echoing Irish ballad metre with its criss-cross assonances. With these experimental poems, Carson depends more on the structure and the language of the poems. *Opera Et Cetera* is basically framed by two long sequences based upon the letters of the alphabet and the radio operator's code, respectively. They act as distorting mirrors for each other and continually call into question how people tell each other their stories. Two other sequences; *Et Cetera* and *Alibi* complete the collection. While



the former is characterized by near-moribund vocabulary of Latin labels, the latter consists of versions from Romanian poet Stefan Augustin Doinas<sup>19</sup>.

Carson discredits the idea of a centre capable of providing discursive unity and fixity and undermines the belief that a culture may have a homogenous body of values. In a city space, which is in a state of flux and invaded by contingency, Carson's aesthetic invests more in the unique experience and constitutive interrelatedness. In the collection *Opera Et Cetera* (1996), in 'Letters from Alphabet' section, Carson sets an alphabetical format, a pattern making attempt, which is repeated in another part of the same collection 'Opera,' which is based on the radio operator's alphabetical code. These attempts may be taken as a step towards unifying or organizing the particulars within a single pattern. Yet, his encyclopaedic form which seems to create a unified pattern with alphabetical patterns is undermined in the very same collection by displaying the arbitrary, discontinuous and artificial nature of the pattern. As a result, the presupposed unity proves to be fragmented and lacking structure. By taking the alphabet as a framework or by putting the poems in alphabetical order and then challenging or problematizing linearity or unity as an organizing principle would also testify to Kennedy-Andrews' point

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<sup>19</sup> One of the collection's four sections is attributed to Romanian poet Stefan Augustin Doinas, who used to refer to the idea of how inhabitants of his country found themselves put under surveillance by the state apparatuses of State philosophy and/or with the help of an arsenal of strategies. In the same line of thinking, Carson extends this condition of being under watch to Irish context; indeed, he transnationalizes the theme that might take place at any time anywhere. Carson used the title "Alibi" for his poem in *Opera Et Cetera* after Doinas's collection *Alibi* (1975), and in the poem, he refers to the theme of "surveillance" explicitly as he addresses God as "O ubiquitous surveillant God, we are accomplices to / all assassinations" ("Alibi" 25-26).

that: “Carson’s aesthetic is poised between anti-essentialism and organisation” (*Writing Home* 218).

Though the social realities of the Troubles seem to remain an ever-existing background in Carson’s poetry, his linguistic experimentalism functions for him to launch a representational space, in which there is interplay of widely divergent discourses, languages and word plays. In the preface poem “Eesti”, Carson diversifies images and languages, which, in turn, brings forth as Kennedy-Andrews asserts “open, nonlinear, non-hierarchical, ‘dimension bending’, multivoiced” text, which “resists domination by any single, unitary or totalizing narrative or perspective” (*Ciaran Carson: Critical Essays* 247). This leads to bringing poetic form into the fore by making use of extensive rhyming, generally in order to underline the arbitrary connections. His bilingualism seems to enable him to respond to the differences and dissimilarities that may occur between and across languages.

In the inaugural poem “Eesti”, the sense of fluctuation between languages and the notion that words may go through transformation when the usage and the contexts change are quite evident. The poetic persona has been relocated into a new in-between soundscape where he experiences an amalgam of Estonian voices and words, with Irish vocabulary which is employed in English from the perspective of a both Irish and English flaneur. Starting with the Estonian title “Eesti”, the poem proceeds within the space of Estonian sounds. Another thing to be emphasized in “Eesti” is very much similar to the Irish word *éist*, which means “to listen.” The poetic persona is there in the land of Eesti to *éist* (to listen) to the sounds of the city: “*I wandered homesick-lonely*

*through that Saturday of / silent Tallinn* ("Eesti" 1,2). In the very first line, the poetic persona calls the city "silent" as he is not able to speak Estonian. He casts his own silence over the city. Then he starts to identify some sounds as he spends time in the city. Firstly, *"a carillon impinged a thousand raining quavers / on ... [his] ear, tumbling"* ("Eesti", 3,4). The city is beyond reach for a clear sight, yet quite apt to listen and apprehend: *"Dimly from immeasurable heights into imaginary brazen / gong-space, trembling"* ("Eesti" 5,6,). The spatial atmosphere is so distinct that he can recognize:

*imaginary brazen  
gong-space, trembling  
Dimpled in their puddled, rain-drop halo pools,  
concentrically assembling.* ("Eesti" 5-8)

Unfamiliar with the Estonian language, the poetic persona is still *"inveigled towards the church / Through an aural labyrinth of streets until ... [he] sheltered / in its porch"* ("Eesti" 10-12). He visits the church, which is calling him with its sonorous temptations. Entering the church he was *"[i]nvoked by murmuring and incense, hymns that father / passes on to father"* ("Eesti" 21-22). The poetic persona has the chance to juxtapose the languages and the sounds he is exposed to in the city of Tallinn. Wavering between languages and pluralism in such a context, he questions the idea of pure origins and/or the organic link with the first language. What is more, in order to defy decipherment or show the impossibility of clear meaning, he makes use of ancient and esoteric expressions like *"quod erat demonstrandum"* or *"Panjandrums"* ("Eesti" 18, 20). In these

lines, it becomes quite evident that language is generative and meaning is contextual.

Carson's poetry is situated in the corporeal city space, which he uses as a representational stretch. The poetic persona acts like a flaneur, the pedestrian observer of this corporeal city space experimenting with the "subjective experience of urban space," and "as reader of the city, transforms the city into a text" as Kennedy-Andrews asserts (*Writing Home* 208). In "Eesti", strolling the city streets makes Carson collocate impressions and the sounds he is exposed to in Tallinn, which he visits as an adult, in his mind with a memory of attending mass with his father as a boy in West Belfast:

*...They evoke  
another*

*Time, where I am going with you, father, to first Mass.  
We walked  
The starry frozen pavement, holding hands to stop  
ourselves from falling. There was no talk,  
("Eesti" 23-28)*

The sounds and the atmosphere make the poetic persona recall his memories with his father. He juxtaposes his childhood memory of silence in Belfast with that of his present silent experience in Tallinn, and Estonian sounds with Irish and English words:

*This red-letter day would not be written, had I not  
wandered through the land of Eesti.  
I asked my father how he thought it went. He said to  
me in Irish, Listen: Eist. ("Eesti" 41-44)*

Although the poetic persona wanders “*homesick-lonely through that Saturday of / silent Tallinn*” (“Eesti” 1-2), and “*Through an aural labyrinth of streets*” (“Eesti” 11) until he shelters himself in the church porch, he is encompassed by Belfast of his childhood. Thus, as Alexander Neil discusses, Belfast becomes “a frame of reference through which other places may be brought into focus” for Carson (46). In such a frame, the hierarchy and/or the compatibility between here and elsewhere, home and away, Belfast and the rest of the world is blurred and dissolved. In the same line of thinking, the space of nomad thought here, that is, the smooth space, is in action by making the movement in any direction possible, by arraying the poetic persona in an open space. In such a context, Alexander argues, “‘Eesti’ links the present and the past, here and elsewhere, and enacts a moment of clarification or epiphany by way of experiences that include estrangement and disorientation” (46). The poetic persona used to position Belfast as a frame of reference through which he deciphered the familiar and the unfamiliar. Yet, this frame indeed proves to be ineffective when the poetic persona sees that any sense of belonging to only one place is impossible as well as seeing another place as unfamiliar or strange.

In one of the eleven poems in “Et Cetera” which are all initiated by Latin tags entitled “*Jacta Est Alea*<sup>20</sup>”, Carson creates an in-between space, in which strict binary oppositions are dissolved. The poetic persona is in a border pub with a fellow drinker after the political peace process takes place. The dissolution of binaries; North and South, Catholic and Protestant, or British and

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<sup>20</sup> The phrase is Latin for ‘die is cast’. This is what Julius Caesar said on January 10, 49 BC as he crossed the river Rubicon in Northern Italy when he prepared for a long civil war with the Roman Senate and its allies.

Irish takes place in a strangely traumatic and absurd way. Carson switches to his comic and riddling mode by calling attention to the division between language and experience, and to the voice's unstopability. He poeticizes this uncanny state quite ironically in a pub in the Irish border that is likened to a frontier or a threshold:

It was one of those necks of the wood where  
the South was in the North, the way  
The double cross in a jigsaw loops into its matrix,  
like the border was a *clef*

With arbitrary teeth indented in it. Here it cut clean  
across the plastic  
Lounge of The Half-Way House; my heart lay in  
the Republic ("Jacta Est Alea" 1-8)

The poetic persona meets another drinker there. In such a relaxed and informal condition, the two drinkers are thrown into the context of post-ceasefire negotiations. The poetic persona makes fun of them by showing them as pondering about deep issues, while they are in this situation simply because they are drunk:

While my head was in the Six, or so I was inclined.  
You know that drinker's  
Angle, elbow-propped, knuckles to his brow like one  
of the Great Thinkers? ("Jacta Est Alea" 12-15)

Still, a sense of strangeness is set in the pub with Carson's bodily vocabulary selection, which arouses some kind of a sinister atmosphere. The space, where the North and the South are combined is described as "necks of the wood", the

border was resembled to “a clef / With arbitrary teeth indented”, the poetic persona lays his “heart in / the Republic”, but his “head was in the Six”. The other drinker’s angle is set as “elbow-propped, knuckles to his brow” and what is more, the fellow drinker is staring at his “throat in the Power’s mirror” (“Jacta Est Alea” 1, 4,5,7, 8,9,11,13,). With all these bodily words, Carson textualizes a material, life-like space, which gives the reader the impression that they might be involved in fight. Trivialization of the two drinkers’ prospective talk, which is expected to be about the post-Troubles, lessens this tense atmosphere:

He’s staring at my throat in the Power’s mirror,  
debating whether  
He should open up a lexicon with me: the price of  
beer or steers, the weather. (“Jacta Est Alea” 13-16)

The pub is a fluid space that is open to influences and encounters. It is named the “Lounge of the Half-Way House” and acts as a historical transitional space for different counterparts (“Jacta Est Alea” 7). Being one of Carson’s most surreal collections, *Opera Et Cetera* hosts poems that have “one foot in Belfast, one in bizarre fantasy, and their head in the clouds” as Jonathan Baines puts (60). In addition, the poem “Jacta Est Alea” objectifies the volume’s refusal to have any grounding in common sense. What is more, the generative function of language and how it performs differently as contexts change is made evident with Carson’s deliberate use of puns and double entendres:

We end up talking about talk. We stagger on the frontier.  
He is pro. I am con.  
Siamese-like, drunken, inextricable, we wade  
into the Rubicon. ("Jacta Est Alea" 17-20)

This kind of word play locates the poem in an ambiguous and a liminal space. The two drinkers, who belong to different parties, are reported to talk about talk, which does not say anything about their conversation. That they "stagger on the frontier" is another ambiguous statement that makes the pub a historical transit space. The so-called steady and constant nature of binaries is upset as they are ready to permeate into one another. That they are "pro" and "con" yet "Siamese-like", yet "inextricable" at the same time lays bare the working mechanism of dualistic thinking. The poem's Latin title "Jacta Est Alea" – "the die is cast", is connected to the very last line of the poem as they are on the verge of crossing the river Rubicon<sup>21</sup>. Carson puts these two fellow drinkers of two different parties on the brink of a triumphant border, yet without any result. Jonathan Baines makes a telling comment on this, as the

proverbial significance of crossing the Rubicon is turned on its head: Carson recasts the decisive moment preserved by the tag as the infinite postponement of decision. It is perhaps just possible to imagine this plunge into the Rubicon as a triumphant moment, but it is easier to see it as a kind of despair. (60)

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<sup>21</sup> The idiom "Crossing the Rubicon" means to pass a point of no return, and refers to Julius Caesar's army's crossing of the Rubicon River (in the north of Italy) in 49 BC, which was considered an act of insurrection and treason. Julius Caesar uttered the famous phrase "*alea iacta est*"—the die is cast—as his army marched through the shallow river.



The post-Troubles Belfast has become a space of paranoia and fear because of the omnipresent threat of surveillance and policing in all routes and passageways of the city. In one of his poems with Latin tags, in “Et Cetera” part of his collection *Opera Et Cetera*, “Cave Quid Dicis, Quando, et Cui<sup>22</sup>”, Carson advises his readers to be vigilant about disclosing themselves in terms of where they live, how they look or about their body language in order not to convey treacherous messages. In the post-Troubles period, Belfast continues to be seen as a shattered and divided city between two opposing groups as the uncanny atmosphere leaks into every part of the city. As Neal Alexander points out, “city streets ... are planted with hidden traps for the unwary” (103). The poetic persona, thus, counsels: “Make sure you know your left from right and which side / of the road you walk on” (“Cave Quid Dicis, Quando, et Cui” 5-6). All movements and acts of city dwellers are taken as markers of political, social or religious stance. That is, movement in this striated space is confined “by gravity to a horizontal plane, and order of that plane to preset paths between fixed and identifiable points” as Massumi explains (xiii). The State Philosophy, then, by making use of state apparatuses encloses the movement.

After the Troubles comes to an end, Belfast is no more seen as a place of fixity or unity, but it turns out to be a mobilized space or simply void. For the poetic persona, the city loses its status as a rooted and fixed home as he likens the city space to “the pantehnicon<sup>23</sup>”, which emphasizes its being open to any

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<sup>22</sup> Beware what you say, when, and to whom.

<sup>23</sup> A very large van for transporting furniture.

kind of move (“Cave Quid Dicis, Quando, et Cui” 8). Even there, the inhabitants would not be welcomed and might face a risk or precariousness:

If one stops beside you and invites you in, do not enter  
the pantehnicon.

You’d be participating in another’s house removal.  
You could become  
A part of the furniture, slumped in some old armchair.  
That would be unwelcome.  
 (“Cave Quid Dicis, Quando, et Cui” 7-12)

Along with the city and the city streets, language also acts as a space to police one another. That is, as Alexander sets the connection: “[i]n the wrong place at the wrong time, a breakdown in communication can be fatal, and Carson parallels the experience of spatial disorientation with the violent foreshortening of language itself” (102). The poetic persona gives another set of lifesaving advice:

...Watch it if they  
write in screeds,

For everything you say is never lost, but hangs on in  
the starry void  
In ghosted thumb-whorl spiral galaxies.  
 (“Cave Quid Dicis, Quando, et Cui” 15-19)

In this stanza, the poetic persona refers to the dialogic<sup>24</sup> nature of language under any circumstance. It is an evident reference to language’s distrustful potential, which does not have the ability to generate any direct link to meaning:

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<sup>24</sup> Bakhtin’s idea of dialogism: although he favours novel as a genre over poetry in terms of having a dialogic nature, the idea in this stanza runs parallel to the idea that language does not disappear at once, but one can be exposed to it in other speeches, which form dialogic relationship with one another.

Welcome is the mat that does not spell itself. Words  
don't speak as loud as deeds,  
Especially when the safety is off.  
(“Cave Quid Dicis, Quando, et Cui” 13-15)

What is more, language does not help the reader to configure the identity of agents who put others under surveillance. From the very beginning of the poem, they are always referred to as “they” without any specification:

You will recognise them by their Polaroids that make  
the span between their eyes  
Immeasurable. Beware their digital watches; they are  
bugged with microscopic batteries.  
(“Cave Quid Dicis, Quando, et Cui” 1-4)

That the poetic persona is equipped with all kinds of information about “them” arouses questions in the mind of the reader as “they” might also have the potential to police Belfast dwellers. This adds more to the unsafe atmosphere of the striated city space. He seems to be sure that their “fingerprints / are everywhere” as he recommends them to “*Be paranoid*<sup>25</sup>” (“Cave Quid Dicis, Quando, et Cui”, 19-20). Thus, he is in search of lines of flight for a smooth space. Eric Falci points out that the omnipresent surveillance “of the state’s security apparatus continually plays across the surface of Carson’s cartographies, and such multiplying panopticons result in a forceful textual paranoia” (216). In other words, the poetic persona contributes to the uncertain and unsafe spaces of the city by acting as a voyeur observing his “familiar” city like an outsider.

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<sup>25</sup> Italics in original.

That, of course, would jeopardize his so-called organic tie to and rootedness in Belfast.

*Opera Et Cetera* is a collection that encompasses almost all themes and motifs Carson tries to embody. While idling in the spaces of the city, Carson conveys his very subjective urban experience in the textual space he generates by experimenting with language, too. He reflects on street violence, surveillance by the hand of state apparatuses, and a multitude of disengaged impressions, all of which contribute to the sense of being lost in the city space. Thus, Carson struggles to open up space for alternative histories, myths, memories or everyday experience.

### **5.3. *Breaking News* (2003)**

Carson represents a generation of poets who were exposed to extreme political turbulence with the Troubles. In his “Troubles” poem collections, *Belfast Confetti* (1989) and *First Language* (1994), he resolves to convey the violent and volatile atmosphere of the city of Belfast from his peculiar vantage point, Belfast, as an unstable physical city space, is a site of alienation, confusion and violence. Carson refrains from the modernist tendency to view the city as a sacred past image that was lost for some time, instead, he takes his native city as a route to new opportunities, modernisation, flux and change where questions of identity and nationality should be readdressed and taken into consideration. In depicting his native city along with the other cities, rather than unleashing

himself to the conformity of essentialism, he attaches significance to experience as a unique source of understanding the world.

In one of the recent collections, *Breaking News* (2003), Carson takes a remarkable departure from his previous collections by extensive use of fragmentation; his long lines are reduced to short lines which resemble newspaper headlines. The poems in the collection are consistently minimalistic and even almost telegraphic. As Neal Alexander also points out, the lines are “often of only one or two words, where the placing of line breaks and the shape of the poems on the page are integral to their subtle effects of disclosure and elision, connection and disconnection” (10). Minimalist style, with occasional silences, fragments and intrusions, is there not only for radical experimentalism in form, but also to indicate the losses and wreckages in the city in the post-Troubles period. Most of the poems saying too little is more about the disbelief in the potential of textual space to reflect city space. As Sarah Broom states, the poems in this collection “convey in their hesitations and silences a sense of difficulty of saying anything at all about Belfast” (176).

In *Breaking News*, the contemporary urban space of Belfast after the Good Friday Agreement (1998) is portrayed. The poems in the collection are inspired by and dedicated to the war correspondence of the Anglo-Irish journalist, William Howard Russell (1820-1907). This so-called “peace-agreement” proves not to recede the peace-walls, barricades and/or the dividedness of the city from view. The concerns about the espionage or surveillance are still in existence. Even in 2013, so many years after the peace

agreement, in the parade of Pride of Ardoyne Band<sup>26</sup>, Catholic and Protestant residents of Belfast were involved in a big and bloody riot (BBC Documentary Northern Ireland Belfast, 2013). In the documentary broadcast in 2013, huge barricades between districts – peace-walls – can be seen to keep two communities separate and the walls are all covered with graffiti<sup>27</sup>. Although it has not been long since people voted for peace, still plenty of disturbing incidents are recorded. Inhabitants of Belfast of two parts still act on politics and the peace agreement does not seem to change the way they feel.

In *Breaking News*, Carson not only focuses on Belfast's peculiar situation but also draws historical and political parallelism between Belfast and the wars and conflicts in other places as diverse as Crimea and India. Hence, the collection gives the impression that between Belfast, Gallipoli, Varna and India, or here, there or anywhere contemporaneous or ubiquitous relations can be observed. Carson has adopted a documentary register of a journalist in reporting analogous spaces. Ramazani comments on the interrelatedness of the genres of poetry and journalism as a result of the connectedness of spaces and times: "[g]enres change as they absorb and resist other genres. Hence, all genres are ineluctably intergeneric, and all genres are genera mixa" (*Poetry and its Others: News, Prayer, Song, And the Dialogue of Genres* 5). Finding to homogenize

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<sup>26</sup> The loyalist flute band has been organizing a parade for 300 years in order to show their loyalty to the Queen though Catholics despise it. The parade takes place every year on the 12th of July, and causes bloody riots and fights.

<sup>27</sup> The walls are full of either KAT: Kill all Taigs (an offensive word for a Catholic) or KAH: Kill all Huns (to refer to Protestant community) graffiti.

any genre impossible, Ramazani further analyses the contemporary textual space as follows:

Intergeneric dialogue has been an especially pronounced feature of poetry in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, when media spectacle and mass-reproduced or digitally circulated texts, sounds, and images have increasingly permeated the private spaces once thought to be poetry's preserve. (*Poetry* 10)

The multilayeredness in spatial and temporal relationships between cities is also observable between genres and forms.

A multi-layered and hybrid depiction of city space is evident starting from the first poem in this collection. He accumulates the cultural materials and symbols important in Irish culture and builds a new urban spatiality of the Irish context in this poem. Carson takes Belfast as a space, reimagines it and puts it into contemporary urban setting with the help of textual space. Belfast is a space that Carson's writing returns to again and again. He finds it altered each time, still he goes on reworking the spatiality of its social life after its own fashion. As Peter Denman observes, Carson is very much aware of the difference in taking the city as a place and a space: "'Space' is the scope and extent of a vision that includes historical and speculative dimensions" on the other hand, 'place' is "the grounded territory of Belfast as mapped, named and remembered" (220). Belfast, being always on the move and a centre of conflicts, is impossible to be mapped and cannot be taken on stable grounds. Thus, Carson makes use of writing as "the transformative and fixative process that locates momentary apprehension in an imaginative amber" (Denman 220).

In the collection *Breaking News* (2003), Carson takes fragmentariness even further, with the help of an extremely-short lined and a broken format. Yet he can make his title work on many different levels. *Breaking News* refers to many-layered conjectures as Kennedy-Andrews sums up: the title

alludes to the continuous stream of reportage that brings the most up-to-date news of what is happening around the world, but also refers to the convulsions of war in the poet's home place and around the world, and to the breaking up of conventional poetic form under pressure of violent events. (*Writing Home* 218)

The titular poem "Breaking News" is broken across two facing pages. As soon as a car disintegrates in a quiet yet uncanny street on the page where the poem "Breaking" takes place, on the next facing page, the poet has already given the news with the poem "News". He reports the incident from the paper seen under the film of dust on the shop window:

alarms  
shrill

lights  
flash

as dust  
clears

above  
the paper

shop

*The Belfast Telegraph*  
sign reads

*fast rap.* ("News" 1-12)



The poem “Breaking” portrays the scene just before the explosion takes place and “News” refers to the time after the explosion. Yet, there is no direct reference to the explosion itself. Textual space converging with the corporeal city space acts as a site for Carson to situate the explosion. The explosion must have happened somewhere between the two poems; that is, the bomb explodes in the middle of the page. The textual space acts as a space for the imaginative realm to combine all elements of the city in itself. The news appearing in *The Belfast Telegraph* in the aftermath of the explosion runs parallel to both the title of the poem and the title of the collection. The news, in Belfast, is breaking so fast that it is impossible for journalism to catch up with this rapid and violent change. As Neal Alexander states, the poems “make narrative connections across space and time that further destabilize Belfast’s location” (47). From the titular poem, it is understood that the city may turn out to be anything at any time even faster than the poet who passes onto the other page.

With *Breaking News* (2003), the evident urge to collapse the lyric transcendence becomes even more discernible in his depiction not only of Belfast but also of other cities; such as, Crimea, Balaklava and Varna. Rather than taking Belfast as the image of the past land and/or the place of traditional ways with an organic society, Carson portrays Belfast as a many-layered space and as a city in flux and change. In the first poem of the collection “Belfast”, lines seem to be broken into two parts; east and west of Belfast. The city is portrayed in an uncanny silence except for the blackbird whistling in the east and rusting of a black taxi in the west. Dividing the poem into two directions as “east” and

“west” reflects the divided topography of Belfast by the river Lagan’s cleavage. The river flows northeastward along the Lagan valley and through the city to its estuary at the neck of Belfast Lough. The geographical division of the city as the east and the west, and reflecting it on the textual space of the poem have further spatial indications; the east of the city is thought to represent Protestant Unionist East Belfast, whereas the west stands for the Catholic Nationalist West Belfast, a division which is very much indicated with peace-walls, ghettoization and demographic unionism of the dwellers. This stark division of the physical space of the city is even fostered by the dissection of the city space mentally with no-go areas excluding the other community members from certain spaces, like bus stops. These social, political and spatial polarities may encourage a reading of the poem in the light of these metonyms; such as “the yellow / shipyard cranes” and “a blackbird” whistling referring to the yellow and black colours of the iconic Harland and Wolff shipyard, which was one of the biggest shipbuilders in the world having constructed more than seventy ships for the White Star Line, including The Titanic (“Belfast” 2,3,4). Then, the first part of the poem portraying the east, with reference to Harland’s, metonymically represents the Protestant Unionist Belfast with its glorious history which was woven through the politics of the place, giving the unionists power and authority during the Home Rule.

Carson’s “Belfast” seems to be starkly divided in terms of content and form. It would be a fallacy to reduce the poem to a space for clashing binaries, as the poem has become a field of heterogeneous spaces, contexts and collages of literary works. The poem, written in haiku-like conciseness and compactness

also bears the traces of the early Irish nature poems with its attentiveness to the minute elements of nature like the specialties of a blackbird and what it means for Irish history and mythologies. By trying to establish a network of intertextual relations, the poem presents Belfast in a transhistorical spatial existence. Carson's positioning the city in the middle of this complex, many-layered figuration of spatiality and historicity is a sign for his resistance to reduce Belfast to a polarized sectarian web of forces and insensitive binary oppositions.

The poem offers a new site of conjunctions and coexistence. The urban or industrial modernity is juxtaposed with the images drawn from the natural world, such as the blackbird, which is believed to be the symbol of reincarnation. Rather than demarcating the urban and the rural from one another, Carson superimposes these so-called distinct areas and communities; the east and the west Belfast and they are both "beyond" and "beside" ("Belfast" 2, 7). The multi-layered spatiality of the city is laid bare by juxtaposing natural rural elements with those of urban figures; in that, the whistling of blackbird reminds one of the iconic cranes of Harland & Wolff's shipyard, and the black taxi is somehow in harmony with the blue thistles. These so-called opposite spaces, rural and urban seem to be juxtaposed at the level of form and sound, as well. The two separate halves of the poem; "east" and "west" are connected with the alliterative repetition of "b" sound; such as, "beyond", "blackbird", "bush", "beside", "black" and "blue" and all of which are linked to the title of the poem which again starts with "b", Belfast. In other words, by material space of the poem, too the poetic persona tries to refer to city space of Belfast:

Belfast

east

beyond the yellow  
shipyard cranes

a blackbird whistles  
in a whin bush

west

beside the motorway  
a black taxi

rusts in a field  
of blue thistles ("Belfast" 1-10)

The representation of Belfast in the poem is open to superimposition of heterogeneous times and contexts as Belfast amalgamates different historical processes and the poem depicts how they are transformed in time. The yellow shipyard cranes and the black taxi seem to belong to the past. They may be taken as redundant in the city space of Belfast, on the other hand, the blue thistles and the blackbird's whistles are there as an extension of archaic conception of the natural world of the past rural space. Yet, these seemingly different contexts of the past hover over the present time and space of the city. The concomitance of the diverse spaces and times gives way to a new semiotics to understand the city. Carson himself, too, touches on the issue in his interview with Elmer-Kennedy Andrews: "I used to be very absorbed in the fabric of Belfast, but it's changed so much in recent years that I hardly know where I am any longer. Nevertheless its fractured history keeps impinging on what I write"

("For all I know: Ciaran Carson in conversation with Elmer-Kennedy Andrews" 17).

Carson's urban experience is rather a subjective one, which includes media and consumer culture, virtual environment and cyberspace, and which evinces how city space is commodified. Carson's poetic persona as the flaneur is trapped in this subjective urban experience, which manifests itself with campaigns, surveillances, dangers and complexities of the city. His flaneur in the city of Belfast is rather different from Baudelaire's: the latter is an observer and a stroller of city streets. Yet, Carson's flaneur is not an outsider of the city; rather than welcoming such a privileged vantage point, Carson's flaneur is a part of the city and transforms the city into a text. Not being able to enjoy omnipresence over the city, Carson's flaneur is only apt to portray momentary and fragmentary images and/sounds. According to Kennedy-Andrews, the "continual shifting of perspective creates a montage of moving images, fleetingly and impressionistically registered" (*Writing Home* 208). In this respect, Carson's flaneur, for, "indicates a transformation of perception in the new metropolitan milieu, and it is this perspective of situatedness, historicity and fragmentariness that forms the basis of Carson's new urban poetics" (*Writing Home* 208). Thus, the poetic persona has to read and decode the meaning of urban space from the clues, traces and fragments available to him.

For the poetic persona portrayed as a flaneur, the city of Belfast is unfathomable to make generalizing statements. Because of the repeated concerns about surveillance, frustration about the consequences of war or the peace process, and due to the limitations of language in referring to political

pressure and social complexity, most of the poems especially in *Breaking News* abound in spacings, voids, suppressions and limitations as signifying strategies. In the poem "Wake", the flaneur homes himself in a site of in-betweenness. He is awakened by the sound of the bomb at dawn, neither in the morning nor at night. Thus, the lyric "I" is not even sure about what sound trembled the window. The full form of the poem, is understood to be written in the moment of suspension and in-betweenness; it is just about the immediate aftermath of a bomb explosion:

Wake  
  
near dawn  
  
boom  
  
the window  
trembled  
  
bomb  
  
I thought  
  
then in  
the lull  
  
a blackbird  
whistled in  
  
a chink  
of light  
  
between  
that world  
  
and this ("Wake" 1-15)

The flaneur is far from giving the exact coordinates or information about the bomb going off; he is homed in a break, uncertainty or a lull. The blackbird is

heard again and with its specific acoustic, it contributes to the in-between space of the city. The flaneur is sure that the bird's and his world are different, still he cannot specify them; the bird's world is "that world" and his world is "this" ("Wake" 14-15). The constant sound of the army helicopters and/or the bombs is felt in the acoustic space of this in-between world, which is shared by the blackbird who "whistled in / a chink / of light / between / that world / and this" ("Wake" 9-15).

The sound of the army helicopters hovering over the flaneur's home constantly represents in the context of the poem the sound of political violence. The revs of the helicopters dominate the acoustic space of his home to such an extent that the poetic persona as the flaneur cannot hear himself. In the first poem "Spin Cycle", the sound of the helicopter is interpreted as follows by Kennedy-Andrews: "the whir of a washing-machine is like the spin cycle of the poem itself" (*Writing Home* 220). The sound and the movement of the helicopter, according to Michael McAteer can be taken as reminiscent of "Vorticism", which refers to Pound's notion of vortex, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing (220). In other words, the sound of the political violence acts as a centripetal space, yet the poetic persona is very much alert and cautious in order not to put it in his centre. Though it seems that the poetic persona cannot escape from the vortex of the political violence, as he is in the city space, he alienates himself from the centre of violence represented by the sound of the helicopter. His ear-plugs are used functionally in order to turn this imposed centre into centrifugal. In other

words, he stops the possibility of the political violence from being in his centre  
with the help of his acoustic device, earplugs:

Spin Cycle

here it comes  
again I said

I couldn't  
hear

myself  
speak for the

thug-thug

helicopter  
overhead

I put in  
the ear-plugs

everything went  
centrifugal ("Spin Cycle" 1-13)

Although it seems he has the authority to annihilate the effect of the violent  
space in the second poem "Spin Cycle 2", the speaker completely disappears and  
is obliterated totally into an everyday life, even diminished into a childish  
experience:

Spin Cycle 2

gun-gun  
ear-plugs in  
blank-blank ("Spin Cycle 2" 1-3)

Political violence is represented metonymically using a child's language. Though  
the poetic persona wears the earplugs in order not to hear the sound of the gun,



he cannot isolate himself from the space of violence. The city space and the textual space are dominated and proven to be sterile being in connection with violence: “blank-blank” (“Spin Cycle” 3). Language, being unable to refer to anything outside itself, has become another empty space, which has nothing to express. Losing the authority to express things with the help of his tool, language, the author is understood to be figuratively dead.

Carson’s depiction of urban and city space is multidimensional and all embracing. Rather than the escapist tendency to seek for relief and refuge in the country being disappointed in the urban context, Carson is trying to generate smooth spaces where he could enjoy the movement in any direction without being gridded by the State philosophy. Once the sound of the helicopter vanishes, self-assurance, composure and calmness return again in the city space. In “Breath,” another poem in the same collection, after getting rid of the disturbing acoustic space in the city, he embraces the silent city space:

Breath

watching  
helicopter

gone

there’s a  
clear blue

space

above  
my head

I feel

rinsed

clean  
  
you know  
that quiet  
  
when the  
washing-machine  
  
stops  
shuddering (1-17)

The city space, in other words, engulfs and has command over the atmosphere of the city and the “clear blue / space / above” (“Breath” 5-7) is reflected in his mood and psychology, too. In “Minus,” the poetic persona is again relieved in the city space once the sound of the helicopters is gone. He welcomes a world with mysterious vividness and silence, not without ambiguous negativity, though. The title of the poem “Minus”, a metonymic representation of language of negation, at the very beginning of the poem, sets a troubled textual space; that is, the poetic persona announces language as a discreditable object. The effect of negation is fostered in the first line of the poem: “no” (“Minus” 1). The poetic persona is without helicopter noise, yet, with minus degree weather, feels ambiguously positive in the city space:

Minus  
  
no  
helicopter  
  
noise  
this hour  
  
gone by

the room

still  
dark

I raise  
the blind

on  
a moon

so bright  
it hurts

and oh  
so cold

my breath  
sounds

like frost ("Minus" 1-19)

Getting rid of the noise of the violence, the poetic persona is ready to be awakened and refreshed with the equivocally positive feeling of the city space, which is at minus degree and dark. The title "Minus," acts as a polysemic term; apart from manifesting language as negation, minus refers to the cold weather as well as showing a lack or deprivation of something. He is ready to embrace and perceive the vividness of the city space at any occasion; indeed, he does not feel nostalgic or sentimental for either the rural or the past.

In *Breaking News*, with the minimalist poems without punctuation, Carson, as the flaneur and the poetic persona, depicts the city of Belfast in between sound and silence, motion and motionless, order and disorder, presence and absence, life and death that characterize the disjunctive and unsettling conditions of the metropolitan terrain. In "Home," the second poem

of the collection after “Belfast”, the poetic persona achieves a momentary clarity in and preternatural distance towards his home city. As he is “hurtling from / the airport down / the mountain road”, his eye “zooms / into the clarity / of Belfast / streets” and he stops to look down over Belfast, as if reading a map: “motionless / at last / I see everything” (“Home” 1-3, 12-15, 22-24). He finds solace and reassurance in the city in contrast to the disorder and vagueness of the rural; as he went “past barbed wire / snagged with / plastic bags / fields of scrap / and thistle / farmyards” (“Home” 6-9). Yet, his attitude is not proprietorial towards the home ground, and he acknowledges the possibility of the city space to shift not to be sealed or bounded by communal ties. Carson maps a world where nothing stands still, where there are no absolute fixed points, where boundaries are always porous and where it is always possible to envisage the possibility of change. The poetic persona “zooms” into the city “from the edge / of the plateau”, rather than assigning himself an omnipresent place (“Home” 10-12).

Belfast becomes a more open and extensive space which is very much like the other spaces and histories. The city does not stand as a symbol for a set and definite place, but it is a transient and fluctuating signifier, which opens itself to diverse interpretations and relations. Belfast stands as a figural city space for other spaces; therefore, Belfast, for Carson, has become a site of intersection between and an encounter with other cultural spaces as diverse as Indian, Crimean and Irish. Likewise, he draws analogies between different cities in Crimea, India, Russia and Ireland. In *Breaking News*, in the poem “Exile,” where the poetic persona announces: “motionless / at last / I see everything”

(22-24), he adopts the role of the flaneur. Kennedy-Andrews states that the atmosphere is as “in the mythical half-light of imagined foreign battlefields” (*Writing Home* 221). He declares himself to be in exile, as he walks along “the smouldering / dark streets / Sevastopol / Crimea / Inkerman / Odessa / Balkan / Lucknow” (“Exile” 4-11). He relates all these cities and different histories to Belfast without reducing one to the other: “Belfast / is many / places then / as now / all lie in ruins” (“Exile” 12-17). He likens the Russian Revolution, the Indian Mutiny and the Crimean War to the context in his native city Belfast as most of these events are somehow related to Britain’s imperial heyday. By setting Belfast and the dark streets of these cities (Sevastopol, Crimea and Lucknow) in the same space, he dismisses these cities as places with specific features, which would have given them specific identities. Seeing the all-likeness in between all these cities, it is quite unlikely for Carson to re-experience in-placedness in Belfast, as his home place; on the contrary, he encounters an ambiguous gap once he notices that the whole world is just one space in ruins.

Carson’s poetic persona as the flaneur challenges the command of the official maps and the division of the world and the borders. This kind of deterritorialization and confusion creates a new awakening, which will help Carson to decode the meaning of urban space from hints, pieces and fragments. Carson’s literary form in *Breaking News*, as a structure of fragments also resists the organization and categorization generated by grand narratives. In the same poem “Exile”, Carson sees Belfast as “many places” in fragments “all lie / in ruins” (“Exile” 13,14,16,17). This image of the city reminds one of Benjamin’s

words: In *The Arcades Project*, Walter Benjamin concludes that the ruin of a building or a city could only awaken a true sense of history in people. For him, ruin is the opposite of urban spectacle (ix). Ruin will, then, make people see history not as a smooth chain of events in a linear progression, but as the sign of death and collapse, which would create an unhomely space in the city. Carson experiencing the city space presents a textual space in which he could create a new spatiotemporality, in which he can make at least a fragment of Belfast exist as he concludes the poem:

Belfast  
is many  
  
places then  
as now  
  
all lie  
in ruins  
  
and  
it is  
  
as much  
as I can do  
  
to save  
even one  
  
from oblivion ("Exile" 12-24).

Like Benjamin, Carson discovers the cities in ruin. Everything is engulfed by street violence and surveillance. The poetic persona surrenders to the textual space to put cities in history although he cannot even be sure about the potential of the textual space: "it is / as much / as I can do / to save / even one /

from oblivion" ("Exile" 19-24). He is ready to clear space for alternative histories, stories and memories as he also welcomes the subjective experience of cities over generally presented borders and/or inscriptions. In this textual space, Carson enjoys the socially creative experience in constructing and reconstructing space and subjectivity. He is never after an implied original unity that has been lost; his understanding of space and subjectivity is based on fragmentation, dissemination and scattered origins and identities.

Carson refuses to be omnipresent over Belfast or any city space. Instead, he welcomes any urban experience that gives way to alternative narratives or opportunities. The city space he depicts is so multi-layered that his poetry embodies different fragments of time, referring to various segments at the same time, challenging linearity. What is more, he creates in his poetry as diverse spaces as possible like urban, rural, domestic or international at the same time, to problematize the homogeneity and uniqueness of a place. In *Breaking News*, he reiterates these experimental themes and styles with the help of his avant-garde use of language, which forms another space to contribute to city space he is trying to envisage.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the totalizing narratives were challenged, monolithic national labels were put under constant question and epistemological categories inferring a homogenous wholeness for communities or identities were problematized. The categories of land, nationality and borders ceased to fulfil their function to configure uniform places with fixed boundaries and communities. These epistemological categories have been reconsidered in the light of poststructuralist viewpoints, which, aware of global influxes and effluxes, have reviewed grand discourses in a new light. Traditionally, the priority was assigned to time and history over space and geography due to privileging of historical materialism. Space was no more perceived as subordinate to place after the spatial turn, against the backdrop of which Cartesian understanding of space was questioned. Space is no more seen as a priori to place which was acknowledged to build homogenous links to a community or a land. In other words, space is no more taken as isotropic and absolute as in Cartesian way of thinking. Space became a critical analytical tool itself. This study discusses how Heaney and Carson responded to this spatial turn by employing the conceptual tools about space, like thirdspace, rhizome, nomadic space and smooth/striated spaces. It also aims to explain how, in their poetry, the traditional tie or link between places and the communities dissolved and how these places turned out to be spaces which welcome movement and



flexibility in any direction without submitting to hierarchies or dictations of fixed identities.

Irish poetry responded to the transformation in spatial conception and welcomed spatialization of closed places with set images of identities and dwellers. Seminal developments in the archipelago from the early 1990s on gave way to economic, social and political changes opening the archipelago to the rest of the world. Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson experienced the same kind of cultural, historical, social and spatial atmosphere and the paradigm shift in the early 1990s and in its aftermath in the archipelago. Feeling growing disenchantment with the traditionally assumed symbiosis between land and identity, Heaney and Carson experienced rootlessness creating a space at the crossroads of dichotomies beyond the dualistic thinking. Being aware of the loss of the symbiotic tie between place, nation and identity and of the impossibility of going back to it, they experimented with these new sensibilities in a new liminal space where various kinds of transformations in identity, history or place took place. Both poets came to poeticize the fluid and unstable images of place, identity and history.

Tracing the trajectory of space, this study consults key concepts which characterise space with multiplicity and constitutive interrelatedness. With such an understanding of space, the traditional binary oppositions metamorphose in such a way that the global is constituted locally or vice versa, and there is no more distinction between the global and the local. This multipolar understanding of space can be extended to the dynamics between the rural and the urban, the private and the public, the past and the present. To

analyse and understand the process of spatialization in Heaney's and Carson's poetry, this study consulted Soja's "thirdspace" and Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of space in the framework of "rhizome" and "smooth/striated spaces". For Edward Soja: "Space itself maybe primordially given, but the organization, use, and meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation and experience" ("The Socio-Spatial Dialectic" 210). What he calls thirdspace is fecund, open to movement and embraces multipolarity. In a similar line of thinking, Deleuze and Guattari offer their own account of these spatial transformations. For them, the disappearance of hierarchical, vertical space and the emergence of horizontal, rhizomatic spatial formations open new possibilities for resistance and deconstruction of the modern subject. Thus, through a movement between different types of spaces, this study aimed to unfold in Heaney's and Carson's poetry several types of becomings of the modern subject positions beyond the binary oppositions.

What both poets have in common is a view of place and the relation of identity to a place that is generally plural and complex. In Heaney's poetry from the early 1990s on, one can see the process of spatializing of places in the thirdspace, in Edward Soja's sense. In this spatiotemporal site of existence, Heaney makes his poetic persona move back and forth between different geographies with shifting perspectives. In *Seeing Things* (1991), his first collection in the 1990s, in order to make sense of the chaos in the modern world in the wake of the Troubles, Heaney looks back on the spaces of the ancient past of Virgil or Dante as a reference point. When he juxtaposes the terrestrial and celestial spaces in the pot of the thirdspace, he comes to notice that the disarray

or confusion he comes across in the modern world is not unique and specific to their context, on the contrary, the chaos or troubles might take place anywhere anytime. By providing the poetic persona with the flexibility to move in and out of the terrestrial and celestial places, Heaney not only opens the spaces to infiltration but also weakens the boundaries and borders between these spaces. In other words, he challenges the idea of the existence of places with clear social, geographical or political borders. Thus, it is quite meaningful for Heaney to start and end the collection with two translation poems, one from Virgil and the other from Dante, focusing on the movement and transformation between this world and the underworld as two different sites of spatial existence. In this line of thinking, he extends the juxtaposition of the celestial and terrestrial spaces to those spaces of the political past, and personal memory to his present spatial existence, which is free from the hierarchies or organizing principles of the totalizing narratives in the wake of the Troubles.

In *The Spirit Level* (1996), Heaney questions the role of nationality, politics or religious sects in creating places and comes to the conclusion that spaces cannot defy infiltration, thus, the so-called opposites are not separate places with clear cut borders, yet each of them bears the qualities of the other in itself. Following the thirding process, Heaney embraces a new type of spatial awareness and subject positions which are defiant of the symbiosis between space and its inhabitants. Questioning the traditionally acknowledged mythos of place to shape the national identity of a community, this time Heaney employs an excavatory and scopic approach to spaces to challenge the drive to seek the home place. With this thirdspace, he liberates, indeed, the poetic persona from

the romantic, mythic and atavistic notions of identity building. Thus, the alter ego of the poetic persona in this collection has a freer stance which is distant from past cultural and national narratives. Rather, he welcomes the endless experience of constant reterritorialisation as in the case of a boat which becomes a perfect trope for a challenge to fixity. In this collection, Heaney sets even the Tollund Man free from his ties and poeticizes him footloose defying all kinds of associations with the rooted existence.

In *District and Circle* (2006), Heaney engages in a different kind of spatialization process in which he converts places with porous and permeable borders into a new spatial existence with a nexus of relations among social activities and artifacts. When this approach is looked into closely, Heaney, this time, intertwines contemporary urban space outside Ireland with reminiscences of spaces of his childhood or past life. In this experience of thirthing, the city or the global urban space indeed becomes “an open non-totalizable set of idioms, singularities, styles” and “a place to welcome the other within oneself, a place open to what is coming, the very coming of what is to come, open to imminence” (Wolfrey 172). The poetic persona in the urban space relocates himself to the thirdspace relieving himself from the tension he lives because of the conflict between his rural heritage and the uncanny atmosphere of the city. In other words, Heaney occupies a threshold space which is in complete opposition to the rooted existence and the stable identity.

Ciaran Carson, similar to Heaney, though not without his own peculiar ways of spatializing places, responds to this paradigm shift. To make more sense of Carson’s process of spatialization, this study borrows Deleuze and Guattari’s

conception of the rhizome and explores how Carson welcomes a city space which is open to change and any kind of movement between so-called fixed coordinates. Belfast appears as a rhizomatic city space which is characterised by movement, plurality and performativity in Carson's poetry. During the Troubles in the archipelago, spaces taken to belong to a certain sect, community or a political party proved to be, indeed, rhizomatic, that is, they were under constant construction and deconstruction defying any strict and fixed coordinates. This finds perfect expression in Carson's poetry, which can be taken as a challenge to state apparatuses which are designed to control and grid space by exploiting power. His poetry reveals smooth spaces that include more movement in any direction. This study consults Deleuze and Guattari's spatial model to discuss how subjectivities are exposed to continuous variance and movement between smooth and striated spaces in Carson's poetry

In his first collection in the decade, *First Language* (1994), Belfast is depicted as a city space which defies any fixed coordinates mapping requires. Different from his previous collections before 1990, in which Belfast was taken as a frame and a place for a constant reference, in this collection, Carson's city space is disintegrated and lacks any of fixed coordinates. Being aware of the close relation of space to power, Carson's poetic persona seeks for routes of escape from striated spaces of the State philosophy and looks for smooth spaces where movement is more possible. Trying to link space and writing, Carson takes language and poetry as a refuge to poeticize Belfast everywhere and nowhere.

In his next collection in the 1990s, *Opera Et Cetera* (1996), Carson's focus of attention shifts to the generative nature of language. From this collection onwards, Carson has experimented with language in his poetry, which involved translations from different languages and new narrative techniques like long-lined rhyming couplets echoing Irish ballad metre with its criss-cross assonances. By experimenting with language, Carson commences a rhizomatic space, which has become a site for myriad languages, word plays and discourses without setting any kind of hierarchical relationship. This challenge to the traditional Cartesian understanding of space can be extended to invalidating the function of a centre to provide discursive unity and fixity in any kind of experience and to questioning the belief that a culture might have a homogenous body of values. In this deviation, Carson's choice of another city space other than Belfast is a case in point. This time, Carson juxtaposes diversified images and languages in the new textual space underlining the arbitrary connections and relations between them. In such a frame, the hierarchy and the affinity between here/there, home/away, Belfast and the rest of the world is blurred and invalidated.

The final collection explored in this study, *Breaking News* (2003) takes fragmentariness and experimentation with language to such an extent that the statements in the poems are minimalistic or even telegraphic. This discreetness in style contributes to the idea that language is impotent to represent Belfast or city space. Like the previous collection, *Opera Et Cetera*, where he juxtaposes city space of Belfast with that of Tallinn, in this collection, too, Carson extends geospatial stretch to as different city spaces as Crimea, Gallipoli and Varna

emphasizing that regarding cities one cannot freeze stable identities or cannot map them as fixed places, which highlights the simultaneity or omnipresence of historical, social or political incidents. This kind of coexistence can only take place in smooth spaces and grants the freedom to move between spaces and to liberate one from the gridded striated spaces. At the heart of city space of Belfast, Carson indeed points out the destabilized aspects of the metropolis by poeticizing the arbitrariness of sound and silence, motion and motionlessness, order and disorder, presence and absence, and life and death.

Although the two poets belong to different generations in Irish poetry, the time they wrote about is rather consequential in terms of the domestic and international ground-breaking changes that took place. What I find most interesting is that in the face of seminal transformations, and being nurtured by the same culture and space, there are only minor variations in their responses to the radical paradigm shift. They tried to defy the hegemonic discourse by spatializing fixed places with frozen identities and by turning them into spaces of relations and multiplicity, in a similar fashion.

In regard to contemporary Irish poetry, this study lays bare how Ireland, which was treated as Europe's and England's backyard for such a long time, is influenced by the spatial turn. Heaney and Carson aestheticize changing epistemological categories of space, thus, subjectivity. Seamus Heaney, highly influenced by the poststructuralist mode of thinking, transforms his conception of the self to subjectivity or to subject positions which are fluid and which spill over the limits of "identity". Leaving the issue of whether to become the spokesperson of his community behind, he welcomes a different type of

response to reality. The image he is exposed to in the Underground is far from empirical reality; that is, he spatializes truth in a spatiotemporal site which is nonlinear and non-figurative, and questions the possibility of reflecting reality. In other words, in Heaney's poetry, we can talk about the move from the sensible in his early poetry to the conceivable which is elusive, beyond the stable categories, in his later poetry. As for Carson, one can see that he has always moved on a more slippery ground than Heaney. What is revolutionary in him is that he manages to spatialize the local in the wake of the transformation in stable categories like nationality or roots. At this point, different from Heaney, Carson combines the formal concerns with his themes and goes far beyond the exact representation of empirical reality with the help of the freedom he acquires in textual space. That is, he succeeds in representing the unrepresentable not only through the words but also through the textual space which acts out his content.

To teach at Harvard, Heaney left the Irish "thing" for the US between 1981-2006 and relocated himself to a more transnational space both literally and metaphorically. Unlike Heaney, Carson opted for living in Belfast. Carson's response to the spatial turn without moving location is significant as he strips himself of the binary logic by defying the markers of Britishness including the literary forms associated with the Anglophone tradition and by turning his focus on Far Eastern haiku or by experimenting to write in Gaelic and Gaelic tradition. Carson is more experimental in exploiting the potentials of textual space, in breaking the symbiosis between language as an agent of representation, and the



so-called meaning. In his poetry, language has become a subject matter in itself, thus, it becomes a space for the free interplay of any feeling or occasion.

By way of conclusion, Heaney's reaction to places becoming spaces for the free interplay of subject positions and his speakers' breaking the shell of a stable identity and its markers, and relocating themselves on a slippery spatial site should be taken as a reflection of his response to the spatial turn. Likewise, Carson responded to the spatial turn in his own way. Not leaving the archipelago and being more experimental in terms of both subject matter and form, he has depicted nomadic subject positions, who experience a kind of self-inflicted exile in his so-called home-place. These two poets sharing the same background with minor individualistic differences reveal a shared response to and awareness about the spatial turn of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the historical framework of the 1990s when there was a search for experimentation and transformation of the epistemological categories, the aesthetic journey of these two poets also reflects the attitude of their contemporaries to totalizing grand narratives.

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## APPENDICES

### A. CURRICULUM VITAE

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Doğan, Buket

Nationality: Turkish (TC)

Date and Place of Birth: 15 July, 1981, İstanbul

Email: [buketedogan@gmail.com](mailto:buketedogan@gmail.com), [dbuket@metu.edu.tr](mailto:dbuket@metu.edu.tr)

#### EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MA	METU English Literature	2008
BA	METU Foreign Language Education	2004

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2014- Present	METU Department of Modern Languages	Instructor of English
2009-2014	METU Department of Foreign Language Education	Research Assistant

2008-2009	Ankara University Faculty of Letters; Department of English Language and Literature	Instructor of English
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2004-2008	Atilım University Preparatory School	Instructor of English
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### **FELLOWSHIP**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
2011-2012	Columbia University, English and Comparative Literature Department, City of New York, USA.	Visiting Graduate Student

### **FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

Turkish (Native), English (Advanced), German (Upper-Intermediate)

### **PUBLICATIONS**

#### **INTERNATIONAL**

##### **Journal Papers**

**A. 1.** Doğan, Buket, Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* as Epitome of a Dysfunctional Family. *International Journal of Arts and Sciences*, 2(1): 41-45 (2009) CD-ROM. ISSN: 1943-6114 InternationalJournal.org

**A.2.** Dogan, Buket. A Review of *Harold Pinter's The Dumb Waiter*, by Mary F. Brewer. *European Legacy*, Jun 2012, Vol. 17 Issue 3, p405-406.

### **Conference Papers**

**A.1.** Dogan, Buket. "Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* as Epitome of a Dysfunctional Family." *International Journal of Arts & Sciences (IJAS) Conference*: 9-13 November, 2009. (organized by) Central Connecticut State University in Gottenheim, Germany.

**A.2.** Dogan, Buket. "Eugene O'Neill's Heroes Haunted by Their Tragic Choices in *Long Day's Journey into Night*." *First International BAKEA Conference: Hero (ine)*: 7-8-9 October, 2009. Pamukkale University, Kınıklı Campus, Denizli, Turkey.

**A.3.** Dogan, Buket. "Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as a Precursor of the Theatre of the Absurd." *Fourth International IDEA Conference: Studies in English*: 15-17 April, 2009. Celal Bayar University, Manisa, Turkey.

**A.4.** Dogan, Buket. "A Hegelian Look at Harold Pinter's *Old Times*." *12<sup>th</sup> International Conference of ISSEI (International Society for the Study of European Ideas: Thought in Science and Fiction)*: 2-6 August, 2010. Cankaya University, Ankara, Turkey

**A.5.** Dogan, Buket. "Joseph Conrad's 'The Lagoon': in the Light of Homi Bhabha's The Uncanny". *Conrad's Polish Footprints. Fifth International Joseph Conrad Conference, Lublin*", (2011).

### **Book and Chapter in a Book**

**A.1.** Dogan, Buket. *Shakespeare's Hamlet as a Precursor of the Theatre of the Absurd*. Köln: Lambert, 2009.

**A.2.** Dogan, Buket. "Joseph Conrad's 'The Lagoon' in the Light of Homi Bhabha's the Uncanny". *"Wine in Old and New Bottles': Critical Paradigms for Joseph Conrad*, "Conrad: Eastern and Western Perspectives", 23, (2013), pp. 219-237.

## **NATIONAL**

### **Conference Papers**

**A.1.** Dogan, Buket. "London Staged as a Postcolonial City in Hanif Kureishi's *London Kills Me.*" *17th METU British Novelists Conference: Hanif Kureishi and His Work*. 17-18 December, 2009. METU, Ankara, Turkey.

**A.2.** Dogan Buket, Celik Seda Cosar. "What is Pleasurable in Jane Austen's Fiction?" *18th METU British Novelists Conference: Jane Austen and Her Work*. 16-17 December, 2010. METU, Ankara, Turkey.

## **EDITING**

**A.1.** Editors: Birlik Nurten, Dogan Buket, Celik Seda Cosar. *17th METU British Novelists Conference Proceedings: Hanif Kureishi*. Ankara: British Novelists Series, 2010.

**A.2.** Editors: Celik Seda Cosar, Dogan Buket, and et al. *18th METU British Novelists Conference Proceedings: Jane Austen*. Ankara: British Novelists Series, 2011.

## **CURRENT RESEARCH INTERESTS**

Contemporary and Modern Poetry, Critical Literary Theory with special focus on Post-structuralism, Deconstruction, Theories of Space, and Ecocriticism, Shakespeare & 20<sup>th</sup> Century British and American Drama, Opera and Stage Adaptations and Translation Studies

## B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKE ÖZET

Seamus Heaney ve Ciaran Carson, şiirlerinde yirminci yüzyılın son çeyreğinde gerçekleşen uzamsal evrilme üzerinden, o ana kadar geleneksel olarak kabul görmüş mekan, ulus ve kimlik gibi kategoriler arasında olduğu düşünülen organik bağı sorgulamış ve sorunsallaştırmıştır. Her iki şair de kendine özgü yöntemlerle bu epistemolojik kategorileri yeni bir zeminde alımlarken, mekan ve kimliği sabit ve değişmez olarak algılamak yerine, bunları uzam ve öznellik gibi kavramlarla değiştirmişlerdir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma her iki şairin de geçmişin tanıdık mekanlarını yeniden değerlendirerek, şiirlerinde mekan, kimlik, ulus ve tarih arasındaki bağları nasıl çözdüklerini tartışmıştır. Bu şairlerin şiir estetiği aracılığıyla bu paradigma değişikliğine verdiği tepkiyi daha iyi anlayabilmek ve yorumlayabilmek için, bu çalışma Edward Soja, Deleuze ve Guattari ile Doreen Massey gibi kuramcıların uzam ve öznellik alanında geliştirdiği kavramsal araçları kullanmıştır.

Seamus Heaney kırsal miras ve şehirselle kozmopolit mekanlar arasında gidip gelirken, şiirlerini kırsal/şehirselle, geçmiş/şimdi ve kamusal/özel gibi kavramları yan yana getirerek yeni bir ara yüzde kurgulamıştır. Geçmiş ve çağdaş mekanların çok ötesinde kurgulanan bu yeni uzamsal farkındalık önceki ikici görüşü de sorunsallaştırmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Heaney'nin bu yeni uzamsal farkındalığını Edward Soja'nın "üçüncü uzam" kavramından yararlanarak tartışmıştır. Öncelikle, Heaney geçmiş mekanlara baktığında şiirlerinde kurgulamak istediği öznelliği içerecek bir gönderme noktası görememiş, fakat aynı zamanda, çağdaş, küreselle ve kozmopolit kültür ile de sorunsuz bir ilişki

kuramamıştır. Bu nedenle, Heaney şiirlerinde geçmişin tanıdık mekanlarını Soja'nın birinciuzam olarak adlandırdığı özdeksel alandan üçüncüuzamın yeni farkındalığı ile yepyeni bir bağlama taşımakta ve bu değişim ile birlikte ikinci düşünce tarzının çalışma mekanizmalarını da eleştirel yeni bir bakışla değerlendirme fırsatı yakalamaktadır. Heaney'nin şiirlerinde temsil ettiği bu üçüncüuzam üretken, çoklu bağlantılara sahip, birçok yönde gerçekleşebilecek farklı ilişkilere açık ve aynı zamanda hakim söyleme de karşı koyar niteliktedir. Mekan ve uzam, kırsal ve şehirsal, küresel ve yerel gibi kavramlar arasında oluşturulmaya çalışılan hiyerarşik ilişkileri bu şairlerin nasıl sorunsallaştırdığını çözümlenmeyi amaçlayan bu çalışma aynı zamanda Doreen Massey'in kullandığı uzam, küresel ve yerel tanımlamalarından yararlanmıştır. Massey uzam anlayışında vurguyu daha çok, çoğul kökler ile çoğul tarihler ve mekanlar ile kurulan bağlantılara gönderme yapan çoğulculuk üzerine yapar. Aynı zamanda, Massey uzamı yorumlarken farklı ve heterojen grupların birlikte yaşamalarına gönderme yapan yapısal bağlantıların (constitutive interrelatedness) önemini de altını çizer. Bu anlayışa göre, bu tip bir uzamsal alanda, öznellik de ona göre kurgulanmaktadır; şöyle ki, vatan, ulus, tarih ve özne arasındaki organik bağ sarsılır ve bu tip kapsayıcı büyük söylemlerin aslında özneler üzerinde birleştirici bir etkisi olmadığı ve bu nedenle de tek bir homojen topluluğun yaratılmasının mümkün olmadığı ortaya çıkar. Bu uzamda, ifade şansı verilen özneler, çoklu ilişkilere, bağlantılara açık, hareketli ve önceki şiirsel geleneğin kurguladığı bütüncül benliğin (unified "I") yitirilmiş olduğunun farkındadır. Soja ve Massey'nin yanı sıra, bu çalışmada, Heaney'nin şiirlerinde farklı kültürler ve uzamlar arasındaki çoklu ilişkileri anlayabilmek için Jahan



Ramazani'nin uluslar-arasılık (transnationalism) kavramından da faydalanılmıştır.

Aynı bağlamda düşünüldüğünde Ciaran Carson da belli bir mezhep ya da grupla ilişkilendirilen geçmiş mekanları ele alarak onları yeni bir farkındalıkla uzamsallaştırmıştır. Bu yeni uzam anlayışı, mekanları koordinatlayan mantığın çalışma mekanizmalarını eleştirel bir şekilde açığa vurmaktadır. Böyle bir eğilimdense, Carson mekanların arasında var olduğu düşünülen katı ve kesin sınırların aslında şeffaf ve geçirgen olduğunu göstererek, Kartezyen uzam ve benlik algısına meydan okumuştur. Tüm bunları yaparken de yazınsal uzamdan hem gerçek hem de mecazi olarak faydalanmıştır. Kırsal ve şehirsal uzamları betimlerken ikili zıtlıklar arasındaki gerilimi azaltmak için uzlaştırıcı bir tavır benimsemiştir. Bir başka deyişle, mekanları sabit koordinatlarla haritalamayı reddetmiş, bunun yerine esnek ve değişik bağlantılara açık şehirsal uzam anlayışını sahiplenmiştir. Bu tip bir uzamsallaştırma bağlamında, öznellik de çoğulcu ve çok yönlü bir anlayış ile ele alınır ve özne artık şehirde sadece pasif bir gözlemci olan bir gezginden (flaneur) çok şehir uzamı ile birebir aktif ilişki içinde olan şiir kişisi (poetic persona) olarak bir gezgine dönüşmüştür. Bu harekete, çoğulculuğa ve eyleme dayalı uzamı şiirde konumlandırmak için, bu çalışmada Deleuze ve Guattari'nin köksap (rhizome), pürüzsüz ve çizgili uzamlar (smooth and striated spaces) gibi kavramsal araçları kullanılmıştır. Ciaran Carson şiirlerinde sürekli bir yapı ve yapıbozum sürecinin içinde herhangi bir hiyerarşik sınıflandırmaya dahil olmayan köksap ile tanımlanabilecek uzamları kurgulamaya çalışmaktadır. Çatışmalar, sıkıntılar ve devlet aygıtlarının (state apparatus) sıkı kontrolleri ile tanımlanan bir döneme

tanıklık etmiş biri olarak Carson'ın bu tip bir uzamsal alanda kurguladığı özneler en iyi bu öznelerin pürüzsüz ve çizgili uzamlar arasında sürekli çeşitlilikteki hareketleri ile açıklanabilir. Deleuze ve Guattari tarafından sunulan bu uzamsal modeli kullanarak bu çalışma, Carson'ın şiirlerinde pürüzsüz uzamların üçüncül öznellikleri barındırarak değişik yönlere nasıl daha çok hareket içerdiğini analiz etmiştir.

Bu çalışmada, bu iki şairin bir araya getirilme nedenlerinden en önemlisi her ikisinin de, yirminci yüzyılın son çeyreğinde gerçekleşen uzamsal evrilmeye İrlanda bağlamı içerisinde cevap vermeleridir. Her ikisi de İrlanda kültürünün gündemini büyük ölçüde şekillendiren ve "Sorunlar" (Troubles) olarak tanımlanan, kanlı ve çatışmalı birçok olaya sahne olan bir döneme tanıklık etmişlerdir. Tarihi birçok sebepten dolayı, mekan İrlandalılar için en önemli kimlik göstergelerinden biridir ve kimlik de benimsenen politik görüş ya da mezheple yakından ilgilidir. Kimlik ve mekan İrlanda bağlamında çok önemli bir yere sahip olduğu için, bu çalışma aynı arka plana sahip iki şairin bu kategorileri şiirlerinde nasıl ele aldıklarını incelemiştir. 1990 sonrası döneme yoğunlaşan bu çalışma, bu iki şairin kapsayıcı söylemi (totalizing narrative) – daimi kimlikleri ve ortak kültürü – sorunsallaştırırken paradigma değişikliğini nasıl yansıttıklarını ele almıştır. Benzerliklerinin yanı sıra, bu çalışma şairlerin geçmiş mekanları uzamsallaştırmadaki farklılıkları üzerine de yoğunlaşmıştır. Görünürde bu kadar ortak özelliği olan iki şairin aynı epistemolojik kategorilerin dönüşümüne nasıl farklı tepkiler gösterdiğini görmek de ilginç olmuştur. Onların şiirlerindeki farklılıklar aslında kapsayıcı söylemin benzer kültüre mensup iki şairi bile aynı merkezde ya da hatta tutamadığını da

kanıtlamıştır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında bu çalışma, çağdaş İrlanda şiirinin çoğul sesler duyma ve merkez ile marjin arasındaki bozulmuş ilişkiyi açığa çıkarma eğilimine de değinmiştir.

Tüm bu temalar biraz daha geniş bir çerçevede konumlandırıldığında, şiirin edebi bir tür olarak bazı özellikleri bu çalışma için avantaj sağlayacak nitelikte olmuştur. Öncelikle şiir, bünyesinde, çoğul kökler, ve birçok tarih ve mekanlarla kurulmuş farklı ilişkiler barındırır. Edebi tür olarak şiire giriş kitaplarında bile, şairlere dilin esnek bir şekilde kullanılarak kendini geniş bir şekilde ifade etme olanağı tanıyan bir yazınsal uzam sağladığı belirtilir (Wainwright 8). Her ne kadar editörler şairleri genellikle, İngiliz, İrlandalı ya da Galli gibi uyruklarına göre sınıflandırmayı tercih etseler de, bu çalışma şiiri çok uluslu bağlantılara ve öznelere serbest bir ifade alanı yaratan üretken bir uzam olarak görmektedir. Bu çalışmaya konu olan iki şair de genellikle antolojilerde tekli uyruklarına göre sınıflandırılmışlardır. Fakat bu çalışma bu şairlerin vatanla ve sabit kimliklerle olan bağlantılarının nasıl çözüldüğünü incelerken, uluslar-arası bağlantılarına da odaklanmıştır.

Tek uyruklu olarak belirtilmiş şairlerin bile diğer ülkelerle ve uluslarla diyaloglu (dialogic) bir ilişkide olmaları, değişik kültürlerin ve mekanların farklı tarihler ve uluslar ile çoğul bağlantılarının olmasının da bir kanıtıdır. Bu çalışma bu ilişkilerin izlerini sürerken, özellikle 1990 ve sonrası İrlanda'sının özel tarihsel bağlamını da dikkate almıştır. Michael Thurston ve Nigel Alderman da şiirin kendi özel şartlarında çalışılması gerekliliğinin altını çizmektedir: “Şiirler konumlandırılmışlardır ve bu onların özel tarihsel durumları dahilinde, üretildiğini, dağıtıldığını ve okunduğunu gösterir” (19). Fakat, tam bu noktada

Ramazani'nin şu uyarısı dikkate alınmalıdır: "birbiri ile bağlanmış ya da yan yana getirilmiş kültürler, konumlar ve kimlikler aslında tek bir kökenin değil tam tersi bileşik kökenlerin bir araya gelmesi ile oluşmuştur" (47). Mekan, kimlik ve tarih gibi epistemolojik kategorilerin 1990'lardan itibaren gerçekleşen önemli gelişmeler ışığında nasıl bir paradigma değişikliği geçirdiğini anlamak için bu çalışmada son yirmi - otuz yılın tarihsel, sosyal ve politik atmosferi de ele alınmıştır. İngiliz yönetimi altındaki Kuzey İrlanda ve İrlanda Cumhuriyeti, adanın sosyal, ekonomik ve politik hayatı üzerinde büyük etkisi olan birçok çatışma, gerginlik ve kanlı olaylara sahne oldular. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma bu iki şairin tam olarak nasıl bir ortamda şiir yazdığını anlamak için tüm bu olaylara ve etkilerine kısaca değinmiştir. Bu tez, bir taraftan İrlanda'nın özel tarihsel anlarına, diğer taraftan da kapsayıcı büyük anlatıların küresel düzeyde nasıl erozyona uğradığına bakarken, bu iki şairin geçmişin tanıdık mekanlarını hangi bakış açısı ile yeniden ele aldığını ve mekan, kimlik ve tarih gibi bağların yeni yarattıkları uzamda nasıl kurgulandıklarına odaklanmıştır.

Yazıldığı ortama dair göndermeler her ne kadar şiirin çokanlamlı (polysemic) doğasını zenginleştirse de, anlam hala her bir kelimenin okuyucunun zihninde nasıl karşılık bulduğuna bağlıdır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma çerçevesinde dil kullanımı, şiirsel araçlar ve biçim incelemesine de önem vermiştir. Dil bu çalışmadaki şairler için çok uzun zamandır içerik yansıtan bir araç olmaktan çıkıp sadece kendisine odaklanan bir varlık olarak algılanmıştır. Özellikle temsili olmayan ve estetiksel olarak da kendine gönderme yapan modernist şiirdeki dil algısından sonra, metin dışındaki her şeyin önemini kaybetmesiyle dil deneyimleme yapılacak tek varlık olarak görülmeye

başlanmıştır. Bir başka deyişle, geleneksel bağlamda anlam sabit bir kavram olarak algılanırken, bu yeni dil algısıyla ikincil bir öneme sahip olmaya başlamıştır. Aynı şekilde, dilin ve şiirin dışında düşünülebilecek her şeyi geçersiz ve anlamsız olarak gören çağdaş şiir, özgür yazınsal uzamda dil ile gerçekleştirilebilecek tüm deneyselliği teşvik etmektedir. Ciaran Carson, özellikle, şiirsel dili ve hatta sayfa düzenini dilin kendisinden başka bir şeye gönderme yapamayacağını ispat eder nitelikte kullanmıştır. Çağdaş şiirde dil ana odak noktası olarak alındığı için, bu çalışma son zamanlarda şiirsel dilin geçirmiş olduğu aşamaları da kısaca bu iki şairin şiirleri bağlamında örnelemiştir.

Kapsayıcı söylemlerin ya da merkez ve merkez dışında kalan yerler (periphery) arasındaki hiyerarşik yapının etkisini kaybetmesi ile dilin geçirdiği dönüşüm şiirde çok daha açık bir şekilde görülmektedir. Bu nedenle, dilin kendisinden başka gönderme noktası olmadığından şiir dilinin ontolojik yapısını inceleyen ve somutlaştıran kuramsal bakış açıları bu çalışma için çok aydınlatıcı olmuştur. Bu kuramsal yaklaşımlar aynı zamanda, şiirin uzam, kimlik ve zamansallık (temporality) gibi kategorileri de kendi evreninde nasıl temsil edip kurguladığı ile ilgili olarak da yol gösterici olmuştur. Birçok şair ve eleştirmenin edebiyat kuramına karşı olan temkinli tutumuna rağmen, özellikle yirminci yüzyılın ikinci yarısından itibaren kuram ve şiir iç içe geçmiştir. Bir edebi eserin daha çok şekilsel yönlerine ya da biçimselliğine odaklanan Yeni Eleştiri (New Criticism) akımından beri, edebiyat kuramı, “dil anlama hükmeder, anlam dile değil” diyen ve bozuk şiir diline yaklaşmanın bir yolunu bulmak için okuyucu katılımının şart olduğunu öne süren “dil şairlerinin”

(language poets) deneyselliğinde paralel noktalar ve karşılıklar bulmuştur. Tam bu nedenlerden dolayı, şiir teorik önermelerle çok daha iyi çalışılmakta ve anlaşılmaktadır.

Edebiyat kuramının şiir geleneğine yaptığı bir katkı da yazara ait öznelliğin (authorial subjectivity) eleştirilmesidir. Öncelikle, çağdaş şiirde her şeyi bilen ve her yerde her zaman hazır olan şair özne ve bilinç sorunsallaştırılmıştır. Bu çalışmadaki şairlerin şiirlerindeki şiirsel ses (poetic voice) dilin ötesinde var olabilecek doğru ve geçerli bir uzam vadetmez; yani sabit bir gösterilen (signified) ile somutlaştırılmış aşkın bir varlığa hitap etmez. Çağdaş şairler için, sabit olarak algılanagelmüş özne, aslında çoğul öznelliklerin şiirsel materyalin ta kendisi olan dilbilimsel sistem aracılığı ile serbest ifade alanına dönüşmüş halidir. Heaney yazara ait özneyi (authorial subject) yerinden ederek, değişik varoluş alanları arasında gidip gelen çoklu öznelliklerle değiştirmiştir. Ciaran Carson, benzer bir şekilde, her tarafa nüfuz eden bütüncül özne (unified subject) önermelerini reddedip, yerine, değişik uzamlarda yaşadığımız şimdiki zamanda ikamet etmeye çalışan parçalanmış öznelliklere şiirinde yer vermeye çalışmaktadır. Kısacası, dilin varsayılan göndergesel (referential) doğası ya da bütüncül öznenin somutlaştırılması yoluyla dilin imleme (to signify) potansiyeli her iki şair tarafından da sorunsallaştırılmış ve reddedilmiştir. Heaney ve Carson kendilerine özgü yöntemleri ile dilin ötesinde aşkın bir bütünlük vadeden bütüncül özneyi bazı alternatif üçüncü seslerle değiştirmişlerdir. Her iki şairin eserlerinde de şiirin sabit “ben” i nasıl değiştirdikleri önemli bir noktadır ve bu nedenle de Heaney ve Carson’ın eserlerindeki şiirsel öznedeki paradigma değişikliğini belli bir bağlamda

yorumlayabilmek için bu çalışma Romantik şiirden başlayarak çağdaş şiire kadar lirik “ben”in (lyric “I”) izleşine kısaca yer vermiştir.

Bu çalışmada incelenmiş bir diğer şiirsel unsur da şiirsel sesin uzam ve zaman ile ilişkili olarak bu şairlerin şiirlerinde nasıl kurgulandığı olmuştur. Aydınlanma epistemolojisinin kurguladığı kişi hakim ideoloji ya da büyük kapsayıcı söylem çerçevesinde şekillendirilmiş tek ve sabit bir kimliktir. Fakat, çağdaş şiir, lirik özneyi sabit ve kısıtlanmış kimliklerden kurtarıp özgürleştirir. Böyle bir bağlamda, bu çalışma Nietzsche ve Freud sonrası, bütüncül öznenin yeniden gözden geçirildiği bir dünyada, Barthes ve Derrida tarafından da ifade edildiği şekilde, kişiyi çoklu pozisyon ve sesler arasında parçalanmış bir şekilde algılamıştır. Uzam ve öznelliğin son zamanlarda algılandıkları şekilde, şiirsel ses de yeni bir bakış açısıyla ele alınmıştır. Kartezyen ego ve uzam algısından ayrılarak, bölünmüş ya da çoğul öznellikler, köksap (rhizome) ve göçebe alanlarda kurgulanmış uzam ile yeni bir tip ilişki kurgulamıştır. Bu varoluş alanında, uzun zamandır yaşadığı tarih ve vatana sıkı sıkıya bağlı olarak kabul edilen kişi imgesi de sorunsallaştırılmıştır. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda, aşkın bütünlüğü teşvik eden ikili zıtlıkların çalışma mekanizmalarını köksap, göçebe ve üçüncüuzam gibi kavramsal araçlar kullanılarak açığa çıkartmıştır.

Yukarıda değinilen kavramsal araçların yardımıyla, bu çalışma Heaney ve Carson’ın şiirlerinde, özne ve mekan arasındaki bağın tarih ve ulus kimliği ile birlikte nasıl varsayılan bütünlüğü oluşturmakta yetersiz kaldığını incelemiştir. Uzamı, mekan ve organik bağlarla doldurulması gereken nihai ve boş bir oluşum olarak gören Kartezyen uzam ve öznellik algısından sıyrılan Seamus Heaney ve Ciaran Carson, hareketli ve eşyönsüz (anisotropic) uzamı destekleyen

mekandan bağımsızlaştırmaya açık yeni bir uzamsal farkındalık yaratmışlardır. İlk olarak, Seamus Heaney'nin şiiri için, kavramsal araç olarak "üçüncü uzam" ı kullanarak, bu çalışma Heaney'nin geçmiş ve küresel, şehirselle ve kozmopolit uzamlar arasında gidip gelirken nasıl yeni bir uzamsal anlayış yarattığını göstermiştir. Bu iki varoluşsal alanın üçüncü bir uzama taşınmasıyla, Heaney'nin üçüncüuzamı, çoğul kişiliklere açık ve hareket alanı sağlar niteliktedir. Aynı şekilde, Ciaran Carson Belfast'ın ortasında rizomatik, göçebe özneleri kucaklayan ve pürüzsüz ve çizgili uzamlar arasında kurgulanan yeni bir uzamsal varoluş yaratmıştır.

Seamus Heaney ve Ciaran Carson'ın 1990 sonrası şiirlerini inceleyen bu çalışma, öncelikli olarak Batı geleneğindeki özne ile sabit ve homojen bir alan olarak görülen mekan arasındaki organik bağ ile ilgili oluşturulmuş geleneksel varsayımlara odaklanmıştır. Bir sonraki sorgulama, uzam ve mekanı sadece birer coğrafi alan olarak gören geleneksel varsayımlara karşı olmuş ve uzamı çok yönlü bir alan olarak görüp, uzamın ırk, ulus ve özne gibi birçok epistemolojik kategori ile diyalojik (dialogic) bir ilişki kurabileceğini ispatlamaya yönelik olmuştur. Bu çalışma, bir taraftan bu iki şairin kendilerine özgü yöntemlerine odaklanırken, diğer taraftan da küresel boyutta gerçekleşen kavramsal dönüşümle ilgilenerek, mekanların tek parçalı olarak algılanabilecek homojen konumlar olmadığı için uzam ve mekanın aslında birbirinden ayrı birer alan olmadığını, Seamus Heaney ve Ciaran Carson'ın 1990 sonrası şiirlerinde uluslarötesi, rizomatik ve göçebe estetiğini kucaklayan yeni bir uzamsal farkındalık yarattıklarını göstermeye çalışmıştır.



Bu çalışma 1990 sonrasına odaklandığı için, İrlanda'nın ve adanın kısa tarihini 1990'lardan yirmi-otuz yıl öncesinden alarak incelemiştir. Bu dönem İrlanda'nın, öznelliklerin, uzam ve uluslarötesi kavramların kurgulanmasını ve yorumlanmasını yeniden şekillendirdiği birçok değişikliğine sahne olması açısından çok önemlidir. 1980'lerin ilk yarısı boyunca İrlanda'nın pek de iç açıcı olmayan politik ve ekonomik durumu ülkenin uzamında çok kapsamlı bir etki yaratmıştır. Batılı ülkelerin ekonomilerinde meydana gelen genel bir gerileme, İrlanda'yı daha savunmasız bırakmış ve işsizlik, yüksek suç oranları, depresif psikolojili insanlar ve bölünmüş/ayırışmış topluluklar gibi problemlerle de yüz yüze bırakmıştır. Thatcher hükümeti zamanında İngiltere ve İrlanda arasında çözüme kavuşamamış Kuzey krizi de dış politikayı olumsuz yönde etkilemiştir. Birçok farklı yazar, sanatçı ve entelektüel tarafından da yansıtıldığı üzere, devam eden Kuzey krizi İrlanda'daki kültürel anlaşmazlıkların yıkıcı etkisini hızlandırdı. Bu tarihi ve sosyal olaylar ile yakından ilgili olarak, Michael Parker, Heaney ve Carson'ın şiirlerinin 1990 sonrası bakış açılarına uygun olarak, nasıl yeni okumaları ve yeni yaklaşımları desteklediğine dikkat çekmiştir (5). Şairlerin 1990 sonrası şiirleri incelenirken, sıklıkla şiirler hem ulusal hem de uluslarötesi bağlamlarla ilişkilendirilmiştir.

1990'lardan itibaren İrlanda adasında çok şey değişmiştir. Giderek artan bir şekilde, sadece yerel okuyucuyu ilgilendiren konular değil daha geniş anlamda jeopolitik konularla ilgili çok çeşitli fikirler seslendirilmeye başlanmıştır. Scott Brewster ve diğer birçok eleştirmenin de dile getirdiği üzere, "İrlandalılık her yerde ve hiçbir yerde olabilecek esnek bir gönderme noktası oluşturmaya başlamıştır ve doğu-batı, ve kuzey-güney gibi İrlanda kültürünü

şekillendiren geleneksel zıtlıklar küresel düzeyde tekrar değerlendirilmelidir” (17). Çağdaş İrlanda şiirini uluslarötesi bir perspektife oturtmak, “yeni değişim rotalarının sadece İrlanda ve İngiltere, Kuzey İrlanda ve İrlanda Cumhuriyeti, İrlanda ve Amerika arasında değil, aynı zamanda İrlanda ve Avrupa’nın doğusu ile, İrlanda ve gelişmekte olan dünya ile oluştuğunu açığa çıkarmıştır” (17). Hem İrlanda tarihi hem de dünyanın genel tarihi, merkez/marjin ve gelenek/modernite gibi basite indirgenmiş kutupları sınırların da tamamen geçirgen hale gelmesi ile çürütmüştür. Heaney ve Carson’ın şiirleri çerçevesinde, ülkeler, uluslar ve vatandaşlar arasındaki uluslarötesi ilişkilere değinebilmek için bu çalışma Jahan Ramazani’nin *A Transnational Poetics* başlıklı kitabında incelediği “uluslarötesi” kavramını kullanmıştır.

Sonuç olarak, çağdaş İrlanda’da, mekan ve memleket sürekli değişen göstergelere dönüşmüştür. Kuzey İrlanda’nın durumunda, hem Birlikçi (Unionist) hem de Milliyetçi (Nationalist) gruplar, uzamsal değişkenlik ve geçirgenliktense kendine özgü güvenli sınırlarla belirlenmiş mekanları tercih etmişlerdi. “Sorunlar” (The Troubles) döneminin patlak vermesinden itibaren ise, hızla yayılmakta olan küreselleşme hareketine rağmen, Kuzey İrlandalı şairler memleket konusu ile yakından ilgilenmek ve belirsiz, parçalanmış aidiyetlerin oluştuğu bir ortamı sorgulamak durumunda kalmışlardır. Bu şairlerin kendilerini ait hissettikleri/hissetmedikleri memleket konusunu ele almalarında, dönemsel, coğrafi ve toplumsal cinsiyet gibi birçok faktör rol oynamıştır. Memleket artık sadece “doğum yeri, ailenin ikamet ettiği yer, ya da bir kişinin büyüüp yetiştiği hatta hayatının uzun bir dönemini geçirdiği yer ile de eşleştirilemezdi” (Kennedy-Andrews, *Writing Home* 3). Bu doğrultuda, bu

şairler bir mekana ait köklü bağlılıktan uzaklaşıp, köklerinden kurtulmuş, hareketli, açık ve çoğulcu bir politika ve şiirselliğe doğru hareket etmişlerdir. Seamus Heaney ve Ciaran Carson 1990 sonrasında adada gerçekleşen sosyal ve politik değişikliklere maruz kaldıktan sonra, sabit “ben”i, kendi memleketlerini, yerel bir yabancı ya da yerleşmek üzere başka bir ülkeye giden bir yabancı gözüyle bakarak sorunsallaştırmışlardır. Bu süreçte kişi ve mekan arasında kolay kurulabilecek her türlü ahengi sorgulamışlardır. Uzun zamandır kabul gören memleket ile ilgili kavramlar eleştirilirken, mekanın nasıl kurgulandığı ve kurgusunun nasıl yeniden bozulduğu açıkça gösterilmiş ve bunun sonucunda, her iki şairin de mekan ile ilgili değişmeyen söylemleri alaşağı etmelerinden çok daha fazlasını başardıkları ortaya çıkmıştır. Böyle bir ortamda, Kennedy-Andrews, çağdaş İrlanda şiirinin böylelikle “sınırların ötesine geçmek ve diasporayı deneyimlemek, mekanlar arasındaki ilişkileri yeniden anlamlandırmak, kültürler arası geçirgen ve tesadüfi olaylara da yer verebilen yeni bir farkındalık yaratmak ve kimlik ve memleket ile ilgili yeni kavramları oluşturmak” konularında yepyeni bir uzam yarattığını söylemektedir (*Writing Home* 3). Bu nedenle, bu çalışma, Heaney ve Carson’ın şiirlerinde sürekli değişen şehir uzamında, daha önceki mekan algılarının nasıl çözüldüğünü ve nasıl uzamsallaştırıldığı üzerine odaklanmıştır.

Onların şiirlerini tartışırken, sınır çizmek ya da sınırlamalar getirmektense belirli bir zaman içinde üretilen Heaney ve Carson’ın şiirlerinin belli tarihsel dönemlerin özgün sorunlarına nasıl değindiklerini ve bu tutumun şiirleri okumada ve değerlendirmede nasıl yeni açılımlar getirdiğini görmeyi amaçladım. Kullandığım strateji, şiirleri sadece kendine özgü ortamına oturtup

gelişimini izlemenin yanı sıra, şiirlerin uzam ve öznellik algısındaki değişikliklere nasıl tepki verdiğini de incelememde yardımcı oldu.

İrlanda adasında 1990'lar itibari ile yazılan şiirleri sınıflandırmaya çalışırken, postmodernizm ile birlikte, değişik şairleri tek bir başlık altında toplamanın imkansız hale gelmesinden dolayı, bu iki şair için tek bir şiirsel akıma gönderme yapabilecek edebi bir etiket kullanmayı uygun görmedim. Postmodernizm çoklu fikirlerin, öznelerin ve estetiğin çoğul olmasını değerli gördüğü için, şiirleri tek bir akım ya da grup adı altında toplamak da uygun olmayacaktı. Örneğin, Michael Thurston ve Nigel Alderman *Çorak Ülke*'yi (*The Waste Land*) modernizmin en büyük şiiri olarak adlandırırken, postmodernist şiirin "teklik, büyüklük, anıtsallık, ve bazen şiirin kendisi gibi kavramlara bile direnç gösterdiği için postmodernizmin büyük tek bir şiirini adlandırmakta" zorlanmışlardır (8). Bir diğer kullanılabilir kapsamlı terim de "savaş sonrası" (postwar) olabilirdi. Dönemsel bir gösterge olarak yirminci yüzyılı dönemlere ayırmak da, iyi bir yöntem gibi görünse de "savaş sonrası" terimi yine de tam olarak edebi eserlerin üretildiği dönemlere isabet etmeyebilirdi. Bütün bu tereddütleri aklımda tutarak, bu çalışmanın başlığında nötr bir terim olarak bir zaman periyoduna gönderme yapan ama bir edebi harekete ya da terime gönderme yapma riski de taşımayan "çağdaş" (contemporary) kelimesini kullanmayı tercih ettim.

Tezin amacının ve metodolojisinin açıklandığı bölümden hemen sonraki ikinci bölüm, bu çalışmanın içeriksel ve edebi arka planına ayrılmıştır. Bölümün ilk alt kısmı 1990'lara kadar olan İrlanda şiirine odaklanmış, İrlanda bağlamı ve şiiri ile ilgili dönemsel bilgi vermiş ve Heaney ve Carson'ı da etkilemiş bazı

önemli şahsiyetlere değinmiştir. Bir sonraki “Çağdaş Şiir” alt başlığı, son zamanlardaki akımlarla birlikte çağdaş Avrupa’da gerçekleşen büyük değişimlere odaklanıp, lirik “ben”in ve şiirsel sesin geçirdiği sürecin izini sürmüştür. Bir sonraki alt kısım “Çağdaş İrlanda Şiiri” diye adlandırılmış ve İrlanda şiirinin, kendine özgü ortamı içinde, son zamanlarda gerçekleşen değişimlere nasıl yanıt verdiği çerçevesini çizmiştir. Bu çalışma uzam ile ilgili kavramsal araçlardan yararlandığı için uzam ve mekan gibi kavramların İrlanda bağlamında ve şiirinde nasıl ele alındığının izini sürmüştür. Bunun dışında, bu bölümde ayrıca uluslararasılık (transnationalism) ile ilgili bir arka plan bilgisi verilmiş, uluslararası kavramının, tek uluslu olarak adlandırılan kültür ve dönemler arasında nasıl çok uluslu bağlantılar kurduğunu incelemiştir. Son olarak, bu bölüm şairlerin önceki eserleri ile ilgili olarak bilgi verip yaşadıkları paradigma değişikliğinin kıyaslanarak daha kolay anlaşılmasını sağlamıştır.

Bu çalışmanın üçüncü bölümü, okuyucuyu bu çalışmada kullanılacak kavramsal araçlar ile tanıştırmak için bir kuramsal çerçeve oluşturmuştur. Bu bölüm, mekan ve uzam arasındaki fark ile ilgili olarak kısaca bilgi vermiştir. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda, uzamı öznelliğin kendini ifade ettiği işlevsel bir araç olarak görmüştür. Heaney ve Carson’ın şiirlerinde mekanın uzama nasıl dönüştüğü ile ilgili olarak yeni bir anlayışa ve Kartezyen benlik ve uzam algısından nasıl ayrıldıklarına değinen bu bölüm nasıl bir paradigma değişikliğine gittiklerini de açıklamıştır. Bu çalışmanın ele aldığı bir başka ikili zıtlık da kırsal ve şehirsal uzam ile ilgilidir. İrlanda şiiri genellikle kırsal uzamdan beslenmiş olarak algılansa da, David Harvey’nin terimlendirdiği “zaman-uzam sıkıştırılmasının” da (time-space compression) ortaya çıkması ile

birlikte, kırsal ve şehirsal uzam arasındaki farklılık ayırt edilemez olmuştur. Bu nedenle, hem İrlanda'nın kırsalını, hem de adanın uzamını deneyimleyen Heaney ve Carson, her ikisini de kapsayan bir üçüncüuzam yaratmışlardır.

Bu çalışmanın dördüncü bölümü Heaney'nin 1990'dan itibaren yazdığı şiirleri irdelemiştir. Heaney'nin, toplumsal endişeleri ve acılarını yansıttığı ilk ve orta dönem şiirlerinden farklı olarak, *Seeing Things (Birşeyler Görürken)* (1991) seçkisi ile başlayarak 1990 sonrasında yazdığı şiirler ile tüm eserlerine bakıldığında ciddi bir değişikliğe gittiği anlaşılmıştır. Bu çalışma İrlanda politik hayatı ve Heaney şiirleri arasındaki paralelliklerin izini sürmekten çok, uzak geçmişin uzamları ile aile geçmişinin uzamları arasındaki bağlantıları/kopuşları yarattığı üçüncüuzamda, nasıl yeni bir farkındalıkla yan yana getirdiğini incelemiştir. Bir sonraki seçkisi olan *The Spirit Level' da (Su Terazisi)* (1996), Heaney, uzamlar ve Katolik/Protestan ya da Milliyetçi/Birlikçi gibi daha çok geçmiş epistemolojiye ait kimlikler arasında sabit ve değişmez kabul edilen sınırları bulanıklaştırmıştır. Son olarak, bu çalışmaya konu olan en son seçkisinde *District and Circle'da (Bölge ve Merkez)* (2006), Heaney'nin küresel eğilimler ve uzamların kurgulanması ile birlikte, uluslarötesi uzamlara ve anlayışlara daha fazla açık hale geldiği saptanmıştır. Heaney'nin 1990 sonrası şiirleri içerisinde *Electric Light (Elektrik Işığı)* (2001) ya da *Human Chain (İnsan Zinciri)* (2010) gibi seçkileri de bulunmasına rağmen, bunlar, bu çalışma içerisinde uzam ile ilgili kullanılan kavramsal araçlar ile uyumlu olmadığından bilerek bu çalışmanın dışında bırakılmıştır.

Ciaran Carson'ın şiirlerini tartışan son inceleme bölümü de şairin Belfast'ı nasıl rizomatik bir uzam olarak algıladığı üzerine odaklanmıştır.

Başlıkları ile belirtmek gerekirse - *First Language (İlk Dil)* (1994), *Opera Et Cetera (Opera ve Benzeri)* (1996) ve *Breaking News (Son Dakika Haberleri)* (2003) - Carson için Belfast bu üç seçkisinde, artık tek tipli kentli insanların yaşadığı bir coğrafi mekan değildir. 1990 öncesindeki seçkilerinde Belfast, daha çok “Sorunlar” dönemi ile boğuşmuş ve ikili zıtlıklar arasında homojen bir şekilde parçalanmış bir mekan iken, bu çalışmaya konu olan bu üç seçkide, Kartezyen koordinatları reddeden fakat aynı zamanda patlamak ve dolayısı ile de yok olmak üzere olan bir şehrsel uzam olarak kurgulanmıştır. *Opera Et Cetera* (1996) ile de, Heaney gibi, bir şehrsel uzam olarak algıladığı Belfast’ı uluslarötesi bir bağlama taşımış, ve onun özgüllüğü ile sabitliğini sorunsallaştırarak Belfast’ı ve diğer bazı şehirleri uzamsal olarak esrarengiz bir şekilde (uncannily) yan yana getirmiştir. *Breaking News* (2003) seçkisinde ise, Carson, Belfast ile ilgili açıklama yapma ya da şehri tanımlama çabalarının aslında boş olduğunu, Belfast’ı öngörülemez, gözden kaybolmanın eşiğinde, ve küresel ve uluslarötesi bağlamda kaygan bir şehrsel uzam ile ilişkilendirerek başarmıştır. Kısaca belirtmek gerekirse, bu bölüm Carson’ın, rizomatik bağlantıların ve uluslarötesi akışın izlerini sürerek nasıl yeni bir şehrsel uzam kurguladığı üzerine odaklanmıştır.

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