

**İlker ÖZCAN**

**THE TIME ASPECT AND CULTURAL MEMORY IN SEAMUS  
HEANEY'S AND TONY HARRISON'S POETRY**

**Thesis submitted to the  
Institute of Social Sciences  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of**

**Master of Arts  
in  
Department of English Language and Literature**

**by  
İlker ÖZCAN**

**M.A. Thesis in English Language and Literature**

**May - 2010**

**Fatih University  
May 2010**

© İlker ÖZCAN  
All Rights Reserved, 2010

*For my beloved wife...*

## APPROVAL PAGE

**Student** : İlker ÖZCAN  
**Institute** : Institute of Social Sciences  
**Department** : English Language and Literature  
**Thesis Subject** : THE TIME ASPECT AND CULTURAL MEMORY IN SEAMUS HEANEY'S AND TONY HARRISON'S POETRY  
**Thesis Date** : May 2010

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

(Prof. Visam Mansur)  
**Head of Department**

This is to certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

(Assist. Prof. Verena Doris Laschinger)  
**Supervisor**

### Examining Committee Members

(Assist Prof. Verena Doris Laschinger) .....

(Assist Prof. Şaban Çepik) .....

(Assist Prof. Kimberly Anne Brooks Lewis) .....

It is approved that this thesis has been written in compliance with the formatting rules laid down by the Graduate Institute of Social Sciences.

(Assoc. Prof. Mehmet Karakuyu)  
**Director**

### **AUTHOR DECLARATIONS**

1. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.
2. The program of advanced study of which this thesis is part has consisted of:
  - i) Key elements such cultural and individual memory.
  - ii) Analysis of how Seamus Heaney and Tony Harrison use time aspects and reflect cultural memory in their poetry.

İlker ÖZCAN

May, 2010

## **ABSTRACT**

**İlker ÖZCAN**

**May 2010**

### **THE TIME ASPECT AND CULTURAL MEMORY IN SEAMUS**

### **HEANEY'S AND TONY HARRISON'S POETRY**

This thesis aims to explore the time aspects and cultural memory in Seamus Heaney's and Tony Harrison's poetry. The thesis consists of three chapters apart from the Introduction and Conclusion. The first chapter explains concepts such as individual memory and cultural memory. It explores cultural memory within different perspectives with reference to various scholars working in this field, and explains its relationship with individual memory. It also touches on conveyers of cultural memory through its various constituents. The second chapter explores the large time aspect in Seamus Heaney's poetry and illustrates how he reflects cultural memory in his poetry. Some specific poems will be given as reference to elaborate the topic. The third chapter explains the limited time aspect in Tony Harrison's poetry and how cultural memory is explored in his poetry, with reference to some of his poems. The conclusion part of the thesis compares and contrasts the similarities and differences in Seamus Heaney's and Tony Harrison's poetry in terms of the time aspects used in their poetry in dealing with cultural memory, and how these poets explore cultural memory.

#### **Key words:**

Cultural memory, Time Aspect, Seamus Heaney, and Tony Harrison.

## KISA ÖZET

**İlker ÖZCAN**

**Mayıs 2010**

### **SEAMUS HEANEY VE TONY HARRİSON’UN ŞİİRLERİNDE ZAMAN VE KÜLTÜREL HAFİZA**

Bu tez Seamus Heaney ve Tony Harrison’un şiirlerindeki zaman mefhumunu ve kültürel hafızayı incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Tez giriş ve sonuç kısmı hariç 3 bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölüm bireysel hafıza ve kültürel hafıza gibi kavramları açıklamaktadır. Bu konu üzerinde hatırı sayılır çalışma yapmış bazı akademisyenleri referans olarak kültürel hafızayı değişik yönlerden incelemekte ve bireysel hafıza ile ilişkisini açıklamaktadır. Bunun yanında kültürel hafızanın taşıyıcılarını ele almaktadır. İkinci bölüm Seamus Heaney’in şiirlerindeki geniş zaman mefhumunu ve Heaney’in şiirlerinde kültürel hafızayı ne şekilde yansıttığını ele almaktadır. Heaney’e ait bazı şiirler konuyu pekiştirme adına teze dahil edilecektir. Üçüncü bölüm Tony Harrison’un şiirlerindeki kısıtlı zaman mefhumu ve bazı şiirlerine atıfta bulunularak Harrison’un kültürel hafızayı şiirlerinde nasıl yansıttığını açıklamaktadır. Sonuç bölümü Seamus Heaney ve Tony Harrison’un şiirlerindeki zaman mefhumunu ve kültürel hafızanın bu iki şair tarafından nasıl işlendiğini benzerlikler ve farklılıklar yönünden karşılaştırmaktadır.

#### **Anahtar Kelimeler**

Kültürel hafıza, Zaman mefhumu, Seamus Heaney, Tony Harrison.

## LIST OF CONTENTS

Dedication Page.....	iii
Approval Page.....	iv
Author Declarations.....	v
Abstract.....	vi
Kısa Özet.....	vii
List of Contents.....	viii
Acknowledgements.....	ix
Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER 1: Key concepts: Individual Memory and Cultural Memory.....	8
CHAPTER 2: Time Aspect and Cultural Memory in Seamus Heaney’s Poetry.....	27
CHAPTER 3: Time Aspect and Cultural Memory in Tony Harrison’s Poetry.....	47
CHAPTER 4: Final Discussions and Conclusion.....	63
Works Cited.....	70



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I acknowledge all those who have helped and contributed to this thesis. Above all, I owe my special thanks to my thesis supervisor Assist. Prof. Verena Doris LASCHINGER without whose contribution I could not have completed this thesis.

I am grateful to my beloved wife Nihal ÖZCAN who has always supported me in my academic pursuits and given me inspiration.

I also thank to Assist. Prof. Kimberly Anne Brooks LEWIS who contributed to the editing of my thesis. I should also mention Osman PEKER who assisted organizing my thoughts and gave some ideas about cultural memory.

Finally, I owe my special thanks to Fatih University electronic library from which I benefited for my research.

## INTRODUCTION

Seamus Heaney and Tony Harrison are contemporary poets writing in the English language. Not much research has been conducted on them to my knowledge. The existing research does not cover the poets comparatively; studies focus on these two poets separately. Some research has been done on Seamus Heaney about how he connected old literary traditions to comment on the present. As Anthony Juda asserts: “Heaney revisits the memories of the literary tradition to help him make sense of the crisis of the present, bringing the poetic tradition into what he had called a “significant relationship” (162) Heaney creates significant relationships between past and present in some of his poems and he uses these relationships as ways of commenting on the present situation and problems in Ireland.

Some research has been conducted on how Seamus Heaney deals with local themes and issues of identity in his poetry, as Shelley C. Reece states: “In *North* (1975), his next collection, Heaney continues to explore the themes of Northern origins and Irish identity.” (Reece 96). Heaney reflects Ireland, its problems, and Irish people in terms of their living standards as well as touching upon the issue of politics in Ireland.

Furthermore, there has been research on how Seamus Heaney reflects the geography of Ireland, which consists of bottomless bogs, to symbolize the memory banks. (Stallworthy 167). Through these bottomless bogs, Heaney digs through the cultural memory of Ireland and makes connections between past and present cultural memories.

When compared to Seamus Heaney, Tony Harrison has hardly been studied. There are not many resources about his poetry, to my knowledge. The existing resources usually focus on his themes about the working class and its problems as well as his holocaust writing.

My thesis will cover cultural memory from different perspectives, with references to various scholars and the analysis of how Seamus Heaney and Tony Harrison reflect cultural memory in their poetry. It will also mention Heaney's and Harrison's time aspects in exploring cultural memory and compare their use of time aspects. My thesis will hopefully fill some gaps in studying these two poets and make some contribution to points such as the detailed analysis of cultural memory and the comparison of the two poets in terms of how they reflect cultural memory in their poetry.

In the first chapter of my thesis I will try to explain the general concepts such as individual memory and cultural memory. As the concept of memory is interrelated to many disciplines and conveys importance for many fields, it becomes harder to define these concepts. Therefore, I will touch upon the different perspectives of individual memory and cultural memory.

The approaches to individual memory are mainly psychological, biological, social, and therefore define individual memory from different standpoints. The psychological perspective focuses on the functions of memory, whereas the biological perspective emphasizes the structure of memory. The social perspective of individual memory focuses on how it is constructed and its relationship with cultural memory.

I will also mention the brief history of the concept of cultural memory and touch on the approaches of prominent scholars to the concept. Some of these scholars are Astrid Erll, Maurice Halbwachs, Jan Assman, Aleida Assman, and Alon Confino.

Astrid Erll defines cultural memory as an umbrella term which is related to the many other disciplines as he states that: “Cultural memory is certainly a multifarious notion, a term used in an ambiguous way. Media, practices...monuments, historiography, ritual, conversational remembering, configurations of cultural knowledge, and neuronal network are nowadays subsumed under this wide umbrella term.” (3) Erll, basing cultural memory on such constituents, perceives it as a general term relating to many different sciences and this generality also brings ambiguity.

Maurice Halbwachs gives one of the very first definitions of the cultural memory in his work named as *Les Cadres Sociaux de la Mémoire Collective*. Halbwachs bases his definition of memory on individual memory and touches on the relationships of individual and cultural memory as he perceives these two as integrated concepts.

Alon Confino emphasizes and illuminates the historical aspect of cultural memory which unites the members of the society under a shared roof called cultural memory. Confino focuses on the mutual relationship of history and cultural memory, as history serves as a common ground for individual memories and is also mutually supported by cultural memory to form a shared sense of the past and history which provide a common background for the members of the society.

Aleida Assmann structures cultural memory on remembering and forgetting. Perceiving these two activities as the dynamics of cultural memory, Assmann points out that cultural memory and individual memory work in the same directions. She also illustrates the significance of culture as a frame structuring the relationships between individual and cultural memory.

Jan Assmann bases cultural memory on 'memory culture' and 'reference to the past'. Memory culture "...is the way a society ensures cultural continuity by preserving, with the help of cultural mnemonics, its collective knowledge from one generation to the next, rendering it possible for later generations to reconstruct their cultural identity" (Rodriguez and Fortier 1) 'Reference to the past' functions as a frame which 'memory culture' functions.

In the second chapter of the thesis, I will try to explain how Seamus Heaney deals with memory issues in his poetry, such as individual memory, cultural memory and the interconnection between them. Heaney uses a very large time aspect while expressing and illustrating the constituents of cultural memory related with individual memory. Therefore, the constituents of cultural memory are extended to different time intervals, including ancient time, recent history, and present time. Heaney explores the long process of formation of these constituents between these time intervals, making comments on the present cultural memory of Ireland by giving specific references to the past.

Heaney makes use of his individual memory along with his personal experiences, and he enlarges upon them by making some references to cultural experiences and cultural memory of Ireland especially Northern Ireland. I will give some specific

examples from his poetry that illustrate this issue, such as his most famous poem, *Digging*.

Heaney, perceiving the type of work as one of the constituents of cultural memory, illustrates the fact that the occupations of individuals determine their place in society and shape their individual memories, as well as functioning as the conveyers of the cultural memory. In defining the cultural memory of Ireland, undoubtedly field work plays a significant role. Seamus Heaney makes use of field work as a step to remark on the cultural memory of Ireland.

Heaney emphasizes the indispensability of language for linking to the past from which cultural memory is fed with cultural elements. Heaney, using English language in writing his poetry, uses some Irish words that function as the conveyer of Irish cultural memory. He also uses Irish place names that connote additional meanings perceived within the context of cultural memory.

In the third chapter of the thesis I will focus on how Tony Harrison uses a narrower time aspect and focuses on his own time period in exploring the constituents of cultural memory. I will compare this to Seamus Heaney, with specific examples from his poetry, such as his poems *Timer* and *v*.

Similar to Seamus Heaney, Tony Harrison makes use of his personal experiences to explore cultural memory. Using his individual memory as a door in his approach to cultural memory, Harrison employs his own memories to comment on cultural memory. There are many poems of his that point up the relationship between his individual memory and cultural memory. His poem *Book Ends* exemplifies this issue very clearly.

Tony Harrison makes use of types of work to determine identity, as in most of his poems he shows the close attachment of the type of work with class identity. What is more, Harrison creates relations between types of work and cultural memory and demonstrates how occupations function as a conveyer of cultural memory. His poems *Thomas Campey and The Copernican System* and *Marked With D* exemplify the issue of occupation and its function as a conveyer of cultural memory.

As an important conveyer of cultural memory, language plays a significant role for Tony Harrison in determining the status of the members of society and the borders dividing the existing classes. Harrison typifies the language of the two in his poetry, as the elevated languages spoken properly by the higher class, obeying the rules of the language, and the language spoken by the working class, which is usually accented.

The ways that people speak the language does not only reflect their eloquence in the language but also provides background information about these people, such as their education, whereabouts, cultural level, and cultural memory. Therefore, it can be argued that language, consisting of signifiers, also functions as a signifier as a whole. Harrison reiterates the language issue in most of his poems, but he emphasizes this issue more in some of these poems, such as *A Good Read*, *Them & [uz]*, and *v*.

In the Conclusion of the thesis, I will compare and contrast the poets Seamus Heaney and Tony Harrison in terms of their time aspects and explain why they use different time aspects(Heaney is using a large time aspect. Harrison is using a limited time aspect.) Also I will compare and contrast the ways that Heaney and Harrison

reflect cultural memory in their poetry and how they use conveyers of cultural memory in reflecting cultural memory. Finally, I will make my final remarks about these two poets and conclude my thesis.



## **CHAPTER 1**

### **KEY CONCEPTS: INDIVIDUAL MEMORY AND CULTURAL MEMORY**

As the concept of memory is interrelated in many disciplines and conveys importance for many fields, it becomes harder to agree on its definition. Being a very broad concept, definitions of memory tend to be subjective. Given the different views employed examples are psychological, biological, social, and cultural views and from these main perspectives scholars go about delineating different categorizations of the concept. Individual memory and cultural memory are the subcategories of memory and their definitions are also subjective. In this chapter of my thesis, I will review a number of categorizations about memory and explore individual and cultural memory.

As a psychological term, memory functions through three basic processes which are “acquisition, storage, and retrieval” (Matlin 208). These three processes are closely related to each other, as the function of each makes the other processes possible. The acquisition process, which is the first exposition of memory to the indicated knowledge, includes the perception and a formation of temporal record of the information. The storage process includes keeping information for a period of time which can be long or short depending on the density of the attention of individual to that specific information. Retrieval (the final step) is the process in which individuals remember and use information. The retrieval process and the frequency of retrieving the information are parameters for testing the power of one’s memory.

Based on these three interconnected processes, there are three types of memories, listed as “sensory, short-term, and long-term memory.”(Matlin 208) Sensory memory is related to senses in which information is stored as it is perceived through senses. Sensory memory can record any kind of information quickly but it can only keep it for a very short time period. Later, information stored in sensory memory is transferred to short-time memory. Short-time memory is very similar to the RAM of computers conveying information which will only be used at the moment of necessity for that information. Long-term memory can keep information for very long time periods and its capacity is incomparably large, for it can store and retrieve immense quantities of information.

From a biological perspective, memory can be defined as a part of the human body belonging to the mental structure of human beings, and is strongly related to the overall mental faculties of individuals. Being a unique mental structure, each individual has his or her own memory which is sculpted by the experience of that individual. Therefore, there is a mutual relationship between the biological and social aspects of the memory as the biological structure of memory influences experience and experience shapes this aspect of memory. Siegfried J. Schmid illustrates this relationship as he claims that:

The human neuronal apparatus is determined by the connectivity of the neurons which are interconnected in complex networks. Both genome and experience specify the connectivity of the components of the neuronal system. Experiences modify the connectivity through activities which are

based both on events in the system's environment as well as on system-internal processes. (191)

From this quote it is possible to draw a conclusion that memory is not just an empty space that individuals fill with their knowledge and experiences but also an active component of the brain affecting their complex behavioral system. As stated above, there is a mutual relationship between experience and memory and experiences shaping the memory produce behaviors which will also be an experience. Memory, a part of our mental system, both creates experiences and allows these experiences to shape the later ones

Experience will be demonstrated to matter not so much in terms of what happened in the past but in terms of how we build the past with the future in ways that make for the possibility of becoming different. In other words how we actualize alternative trajectories of living. (Middleton and Brown 241)

Rainer Sinz bases the definition of memory on learning, proposing that learning influences the nature of memory as learning and memory are in a reciprocal relationship and their functions are closely interrelated.

Memory is the learning-dependent storage of ontogenetically acquired information. Generally formulated, memory is based on conditioned changes of the transfer properties in the neuronal "network" whereby under specific circumstances the neuromotoric signals and behavior patterns corresponding to the system modifications (engrams) can completely or partially reproduced. (Sinz 19)

As Sinz suggests, learning produces changes in the neuronal network to store the knowledge and through these changes in the network, the knowledge can be retrieved from where it is stored.

Jan Assmann, a German Egyptologist, briefly defines memory as a “faculty that enables us to form an awareness of selfhood both on the personal and collective level.” (Assmann 109) Assmann describes memory as a requisition for ‘being’ and for recognizing the existence of the individual on inner and external levels which are personal and collective. So, it can be argued that memory is the key factor in helping individuals to be conscious of themselves and their places in society. Without memory, individuals are unable to construct an identity, because everything that shapes the identity needs to be stored via memory. For instance, in the case of a loss of memory in an individual, the identity of that individual also falls apart because of the fact that all the elements forming his identity, such as the way he or she was brought up, the characteristics shaped by the environment in which he or she grew up, past memories, and behavioral attitudes are also lost. Memory conveying everything that differentiates one individual from the other is vital for being aware of self-existence.

Assmann categorizes memory into three levels, inner, social, and cultural and calls these three levels individual memory, communicative memory, and cultural memory respectively. He explains these three levels in relation to time and identity because individuals have a “diachronic identity [built] of the stuff of time” (Luckmann 67). As Luckmann pointed out, individuals possess identity which has been formed, shaped and changed over time. This diachronic characterization

emphasizes the vitality of the memory for building an identity without which individuals cannot accumulate the diachronic elements which construct their identities.

Individual memory is related to the mental faculties of individuals, and the mental characteristics of each person determine and shape their individual memory. This represents both the biological and social sides of memory, which are more subjective than cultural memory. Individual memory is based on subjective time and inner self. (Assman 109) Subjective time is a significant marker that delimitates one's perception of time from that of the other. The notion of time differs in terms of individuals' different perceptions of it. Each individual has a different time-line filled with different events and emotions according to their importance to the individual. An individual's memory records events in terms of their significance level, and individuals remember or forget these events based on this. Therefore, it can be argued that individual memory omits some periods of time (which are not considered interesting and worthy enough) while recording and retrieving others. Memory is formed not on the basis of a smooth and linear time-line but on a fragmented time-line. Thus, a subjective past is constructed due to the omission of certain time intervals.

Because of the fragmented time line, individual memory is "considered less coherent in temporal structure and content" (Till 330) as it is subjectively selective, exclusive, and narrow, causing inclusion and exclusion of certain elements regarding personal choices and background. (But regardless of a linear time line when compared to cultural memory). Despite being shaped by cultural memory, individual

memory is still less consistent as an individual frame acquired through cultural experience in terms of his own interpretation. Therefore the will of individual is distinguished here in controlling the subjectivity of individual memory.

The construction of individual memory is based on many factors but surely the most important in structuring the individual memory is cultural memory. Eleanor Winsor Leach states that: "People acquire memories as members of society." (47) She correlates the construction of memory with society because she considers societal values to be the most significant frames which individual minds are comprised. On this issue, Middleton and Edwards argue that "memory, however commonly conceived as a property of individual minds, has an inherently social aspect related to the circumstances and conduct of day-to-day life (1). As social beings, people conform to the values of their surroundings, and this brings about socialization of individual memories.

Being a very broad and versatile concept makes it harder to find a proper common definition for cultural memory as it is interrelated to many disciplines conveying much importance for many fields, including literature. As the concept is interdisciplinary, it is possible to produce many different types of definition from different perspectives. This versatile and interdisciplinary structure of the concept at one point illustrates "its terminological richness but also...its disjointedness" (Erll 3). The various approaches to cultural memory within different perspectives make it an incoherent and ambiguous term as Astrid Erll states:

Cultural memory is certainly a multifarious notion, a term often used in an ambiguous way. Media, practices, and structured as diverse as myth,

monuments, historiography, ritual, conversational remembering, configurations of cultural knowledge, and neuronal network are nowadays subsumed under this wide umbrella term (3)

Erll, being quite right, I feel, in his umbrella analogy, emphasizes the obscurity of the term caused by its usage in many fields and social sciences with changes in its meaning and issues that it implies.

Cultural memory is a kind of very broad network consisting of indicators and indicated with which the accumulation of all human experience is transferred and finds meaning. All indicators in this network are interconnected to each other, without which they could not be construed. To make sense of one indicator and the indicated meaning, other indicators and indicated meanings must be used. For example, 'book' as a name is perceived in the human mind with other indicators such as 'reading', 'writing', and 'pages'. Another example can be 'to swim'. 'to swim' is meaningful within the context of other indicators such as 'water', 'floating on the water' and 'certain harmonic movements of body' to remain on the surface of the water. In this immense mental network, everything that individuals make sense of, are included.

Categorizing acquired knowledge in the human mind into two points such as current knowledge and the knowledge which is ignored and forgotten, it can be argued that cultural memory is the pot in which two kinds of knowledge are melted. Being motivated by specific reasons, individuals sometimes try to remember forgotten knowledge. By doing so, they use their current knowledge to remember that forgotten, because these types are interrelated through common indicators. These

common indicators are provided by cultural memory, which serves as an immense common database using the indicators to find their meanings through others.

Studies on cultural memory date back to the beginning of other 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, the concept of cultural memory has been paid more attention only since the 1980s. Since 1980 scholars have focused on this concept more, as Astrid Erll states:

The importance of the notion of cultural memory is not only documented by rapid growth, since the late 1980s, of publications on specific national, social, religious, or family memories but also by a more recent trend namely attempts to provide overviews of the state of the art in this emerging field. (1)

Cultural memory came into prominence for studies owing to its extensive involvement with various sciences, such as psychology and sociology along with the prominent concepts and issues involved in art, religion, language, politics, and society. As these sciences and concepts are indispensable for humanity, cultural memory, being closely related to these sciences and matters, gains more importance and becomes a more central study area.

One of the first definitions of cultural memory comes from Maurice Halbwachs, who explains *mémoire collective* (collective memory). In 1925, Halbwachs introduced this term in his work *Les Cadres Sociaux de la Mémoire*. Halbwachs begins defining cultural memory with the critique of psychologists, claiming that they simplify individual memory by focusing on the organic in other words biologically recognizable elements, such as the complex structure of the brain.



Physiological psychologists...were especially interested in what they considered to be the most simple, the most immediately perceivable and observable elements of the psychic life-namely, sensation, imagery, and organic tendencies (813)

However, apart from this biological surface of memory there is a social side that is deeper and harder to observe. This aspect of memory contributing to the cultural memory is more abstract and subjective to analyze.

Halbwachs bases his definition of cultural memory on individual memory and creates a correlation between individual and cultural memory as these two entities are not entirely separate from each other. He asserts that cultural memory is not a disjointed conception unrelated to individual memory. It is actually a composition of unique individual memories, as he states that cultural memory “is not a metaphysical entity to be sought in a metaphysical world but exists only in individual consciousness and presents the interacting states of consciousness of a number of individuals comprising the group”.(Halbwachs 812) Halbwachs perceives individual memory as the carrier of cultural memory and adds that cultural memory as a whole exists in the compilation of individual memories. Through his creating a reciprocal relationship between cultural and individual memory, cultural memory can be analogized to a pool consisting of individual memories. Individual memories shaped by cultural memory also shape the cultural memory, because the human mind subjectifies every input while turning it into output. This subjectification is a result of the function of the mind as a frame.

Similarly, individual memory is existent thanks to cultural memory as it is like raw material from which individual memories spring up.

The individual does not invent his religion, his morals, his law, his aesthetics, his science, his language, the patterns of his everyday behavior...All these he receives ready-made, thanks to education, to instruction and to language, from the society of which he is part....A mental reality which constitutes and at the same time transcends the individual consciousness, such is the essential nature of collective representations. (Sorokin 92)

Individuals accept certain fundamental concepts ready-made and apply them to their behaviors. Therefore, these significant concepts place a certain influence on the framing of the mind.

Analyzing the relations between individual memory and cultural memory, Halbwachs questions the pure individual memory and comes to a conclusion that individual memory does not solely conserve the past. Instead cultural memory helps the construction of individual memory and shows a clearer picture of the past. What makes Halbwachs so prominent in this field is his “fundamental contribution...to establish the connection between a social group and collective memory, [arguing that] every memory is carried by a specific social group limited in space and time.” (Confino 77)

Other scholars draw attention to different aspects of cultural memory. Alon Confino, a professor of modern German and European history, emphasizes the historical aspect of cultural memory which bears a function of uniting the members

of society under the roof of a shared cultural memory. Confino also explains the relationship between cultural memory and cultural history, stating that:

The notion of memory, more practiced than theorized, has been used to denote very different things which nonetheless share a topical common denominator: the ways in which people construct a sense of the past. As such, it has contributed tremendously to our historical knowledge. (79)

Confino, focusing on the relationship of cultural memory and history, illustrates their effect on each other. History, serving as a common ground for individual memories, is also mutually supported by cultural memory to form a shared sense of past and history. This perspective to cultural memory underlines the fact that cultural memory is a reflection of collective identity that unites the individuals of a certain society.

Aleida Assmann, in her book named *Cultural Memory Studies*, discusses the dynamics of memory, basing them on remembering and forgetting. These two dynamics and the relationship between them structure the main function of the memory as Assmann points out: “The dynamics of individual memory consists in a perpetual interaction between remembering and forgetting. In order to remember some things, other things must be forgotten.” (Assmann 97) Assmann also applies these dynamics to cultural memory.

On the level of cultural memory, there is a similar dynamic at work. The continuous process of forgetting is part of social normality. As in the head of the individual, also in the communication of society much must be

continuously forgotten to make place for new information, new challenges, and to face the present and future. (Assmann 97)

Assmann's evaluation of cultural memory on these two basics illustrates her opinion that individual memory and cultural memory function in the same directions. Therefore, her definition of culture plays a vital role in understanding the relationships, similarities and differences between individual memory and cultural memory. Aleida Assmann starts defining culture with a citation from Jurij Lotman and Boris Uspenkij in which culture is defined as "the memory of a society that is not genetically transmitted" (3). However, she also enlarges this basic definition with culture as a frame:

Through culture, humans create a temporal framework that transcends the individual life span relating past, present, and future. Cultures create a contract between the living, the dead, the not yet living. In recalling, iterating, reading, commenting, criticizing, discussing what was deposited in the remote or recent past, humans participate in extended horizons of meaning-production. (Assmann 97)

Based on her definition of culture as an intermediary agent between different time frames, Assmann approaches cultural memory from the same perspective. She takes cultural memory as an intermediary agent that unites different time intervals within the scope of cultural elements as she states that, "cultural memory creates a framework for communication across the abyss of time." (Assmann 97) The individuals in a society need their memory to make connections between the past and

present. Similarly, societies need cultural memory to actualize such kinds of connections.

Assmann's approach to cultural memory as an "outer dimension of human memory"(19) also bases cultural memory on "memory culture" and "reference to the past". These two concepts provide the continuity and conservation of cultural memory. Memory culture

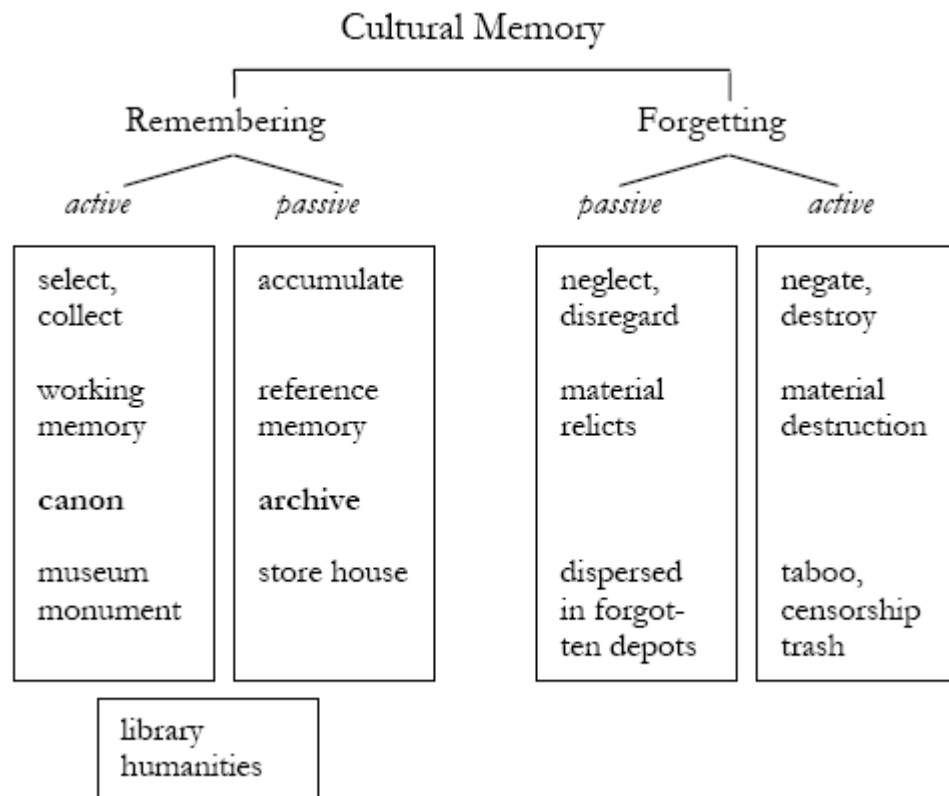
is the way a society ensures cultural continuity by preserving, with the help of cultural mnemonics, its collective knowledge from one generation to the next, rendering it possible for later generations to reconstruct their cultural identity.

(Rodriguez and Fortier 1).

The preservation of culture through cultural icons contributes to the permanence of cultural memory and makes it possible to transmit to new generations and strengthens the cultural links preserving cultural memory between generations.

References to the past arouse awareness of collective identity and unity among the individuals of the society in terms of time and space. (Assmann 30) Sharing the same collective identity in the same place and time process producing a shared past is that makes the cultural memory of that group is unique. This uniqueness strengthens the ties between the members of the group because they share a cultural memory and a past giving them a common difference from other people. Therefore, any reference to the past becomes more meaningful because it conveys special connotational meanings. These references to the past link the past and present culture of the group and contribute to the conveyance of cultural memory.

Aleida Assmann subcategorizes forgetting and remembering into active and passive. Active forgetting is deliberate. Passive forgetting is not on purpose and it usually stems from reasons such as “losing, hiding, dispersing, neglecting, abandoning, and leaving behind.” (Assmann 98) When compared to cultural forgetting, cultural remembering requires much more effort. Similar to cultural forgetting, cultural remembering is also divided into active and passive. Active remembering is based on preserving “the past as present” (98) while passive remembering is based on preserving “the past as past” (98) Assmann explains these two types of remembering with an analogy: a museum exhibits its most valuable articles in places which attract the attention of the visitors and exhibits unimportant articles in out-of-the-way places. Starting from this analogy, the former is active remembering whereas the latter is passive remembering because the former intends to unite the past and present, whereas the latter intends to illustrate that these articles remain in the past.



**Diagram 1: Assmann's categorization of cultural memory. (Assmann 99)**

Assmann approaches the concept of cultural memory with a different categorization. This categorization is based on the choice of individuals, as their wills have a strong impact on active and passive remembering and forgetting. The analogy of the museum is a good example to illustrate this argument. Placing the valuable articles in more attractive places of the museum and less valuable articles in less attractive places of the museum stems from the choice of individuals. Similar to this situation, individuals tend to make use of active or passive remembering and active or passive forgetting in terms of the significance of the knowledge.

There are various carriers of cultural memory which exist in the human mind and culture. The carriers in the human mind can be categorized as conceptual and

emotional. The conceptual is carried through language, which is an acquisition of human mind. Individuals perceive meanings through language as language functions as a group of signifiers conveying the signified meaning. Ferdinand de Saussure points out that “each linguistic term is a member, an articulus in which an idea is fixed in a sound and a sound becomes the sign of an idea.” (111) The signs in the language attached to certain ideas are the most important means through which individuals perceive the world around them and communicate with others. Therefore, individual memories contribute to and are contributed by cultural memory through language.

The emotional is carried via perceptions of the human mind. Individuals’ emotions also function as the carriers of cultural memory. Individuals ascribe certain meanings to their emotions. These emotions function as the indicators of these ascribed meanings and become one way of sharing and conveying cultural memory. What is more, human beings as producers of the cultural memory are in the constant process of producing ideas, concepts, values, works, and many other things to express their emotions. These produced materials contribute to cultural memory.

The carriers of cultural memory in culture are again language, and objects given meaning by individuals. Language, to a great extent, conveys cultural elements such as ideas, values, beliefs, institutions, customs, habits, food, dress, lifestyles, behaviors, folklore, music, art, and literature. Therefore, culture and cultural memory can be expressed and transmitted to new generations via language. Also, the vocabulary in language loaded with cultural references that conserve cultural memory and disseminate it to the members of society as Edward Sapir, a prominent



anthropologist and linguist, wrote “language as the symbolic guide to culture” (70) and he points out that “vocabulary is a very sensitive index of the culture of people and changes of the meaning, loss of old words and borrowing new ones are all dependent on the history of culture itself.” (36) For instance, ‘cream tea’ is a cultural British word whose definition in the dictionary is given as “refreshment, consisting of scones, jam, and clotted cream served with tea, usually served in the afternoon.” (Thefreedictionary.com). The meaning of this word is culturally connotational and understandable only in the context of that specific culture. Such words with connotational meanings contribute to the conveyance of culture and cultural memory. Considering the extensity of such words in each language, the influence of language as a carrier of culture and cultural memory cannot be underestimated.

Besides language, some objects given specific meanings by individuals function as carriers of cultural memory. These objects can be classified into two parts: produced and natural objects. Produced objects are made by human beings and these objects have additional cultural references besides their function. For example, the minarets of the mosques in Muslim societies are used to call people for prayer. However, the minaret also represents the oneness of God. Such produced objects imbued with additional meanings are included in the network of cultural memory and they contribute to the conveyance of it.

Natural objects are ones which are not formed by human beings such as mountains, lakes, and valleys. People impose certain meanings upon these objects, and these connotational meanings contribute to the conveyance of cultural memory. For example, the highest mountain of Turkey, Mount Ağrı, represents country and

motherland for most Armenian people as they believe that it is the centre of Armenia. However, it does not arouse such meanings for Turkish people; instead it only signifies the highest mountain of Turkey. The cultural background in other word cultural memory plays a significant role in perceiving signifiers as they find their meanings in cultural memory.

Besides these carriers of cultural memory, Assmann adds other elements contributing to the dissemination and transition of cultural memory as he points out that cultural memory consists of a “body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose cultivation serves to stabilize and convey the society’s self-image” (Assmann 132). I will mention these elements in the next chapter with references to Seamus Heaney and Tony Harrison’s poetry while describing the cultural memory in their poetry.

To sum up, there are various approaches to individual memory such as psychological, biological, and social. These different approaches define individual memory from different standpoints. The psychological perspective focuses on the functions of memory, whereas the biological perspective emphasizes the structure of memory. The social perspective of individual memory focuses on how it is constructed and its relationship with cultural memory. Similarly, there are various approaches to cultural memory. While Maurice Halbwachs explains cultural memory in terms of its relationship with individual memory, Alon Confino emphasizes the historical aspect of cultural memory paying special attention to the mutual relationship between history and cultural memory. Aleida Assmann bases cultural memory on two dynamics which are remembering and forgetting and compares

cultural memory and individual memory as they function on the basis on similar dynamics. Jan Assmann bases cultural memory on ‘memory culture’ and ‘reference to the past’ and explains cultural memory on the two terms. These approaches defining individual memory and cultural memory do not undermine each other but define these terms from different perspectives complementing and supplementing each other. While analyzing Heaney’s and Harrison’s poetry, I will focus on the social aspect of individual and cultural memory. Due to the fact that, there are strong reciprocal relationships between individual memory and cultural memory and they depend on each other and function only in relationship to each other, I will use this relationship in interpreting Heaney’s and Harrison’s poems.

## CHAPTER 2

### TIME ASPECT AND CULTURAL MEMORY IN SEAMUS HEANEY'S POETRY

Seamus Heaney focuses on individual memory and cultural memory in his poetry and explores how cultural memory is conveyed. Heaney uses some ways to explain cultural memory such as using personal memory, using types of works, geography, and language as the conveyers of the cultural memory. While doing so, Heaney uses a very large time frame while expressing and illustrating the constituents of cultural memory as he extends the constituents of cultural memory to different time intervals, including ancient time, recent history, and present time. Heaney explores the long process of formation of these constituents within the time intervals, making comments on present cultural memory of Ireland by giving specific references to the past.

Heaney's *Antaeus* from his *Death of a Naturalist* collection and his *Hercules and Antaeus* from *North* collection are two poems with which Heaney enters ancient times and explores some constituents of cultural memory. *Antaeus* was published in 1966 whereas *Hercules and Antaeus* was published in 1975. Although these two poems are located under different collections, they complete each other. The publication dates of these poems are parallel to the time frames that they narrate and symbolically illustrate the development in cultural memory. These two poems divide the cultural memory of Ireland into two segments, the former one representing Irish people when they were closely attached to their lands whereas the latter one represents the devastating results of detachment from the land. The first poem being

published first and narrated from Antaeus' perspective, functions as an introduction to this mythical character.

Antaeus, being a mythical character, takes his power from the ground and he is insuperable as long as his feet are on the ground because in mythical understanding he is believed to be the son of the earth. In the poem, Antaeus explains the vital significance of remaining connected to the land for his survival and the continuation of his life as the land operates "as an elixir" which "nurtured in every artery /like a small hillock" (Heaney 16) To strengthen the focus on the importance of the land, he also says:

When I lie on the ground  
I rise flushed as a rose in the morning.  
In flights I arrange a fall on the ring  
To rub myself with sand. (Heaney 16)

With the analogy of a rose fed with the nutrients taken from the earth, Heaney illustrates how Antaeus is empowered and fed by the earth like a rose is fed from the soil. Therefore, for Antaeus, the land is vitally necessary to stay alive as well as to be strong enough to challenge to the possible future enemies aiming to terminate his life.

The second poem, entitled *Antaeus and Hercules*, narrates the struggle (wrestling) between Antaeus and Hercules with detailed depictions. They wrestle for quite a while until Hercules recognizes that he must detach Antaeus from the land to terminate his life as Antaeus foreshadowed at the end of the first poem that his

detachment from the land will result in his failure and fall in the struggle in other words his death.

But let him not plan, lifting me off the earth,

My elevation, my fall. (Heaney 16)

Heaney, rewriting this reputable mythological story, links it to Ireland as he places Antaeus as an epitome of Ireland. Via this character, Heaney represents how the land is notably important for the Irish nation and how the detachment from the land will produce fatal results for Ireland and Irish people. This concern about the land forms a significant constituent of Irish cultural memory, as the land issue is influential in Irish identity and literature. In most of his poems, Heaney describes the Irish landscape and agricultural society, both obviously closely associated with the land. Therefore, the land takes an additional meaning for Irish people within the context cultural memory. The land signifies the money they earn, the food they eat, the home they live in, the rituals they perform, the scope of every kind of activity, and the means of survival. The land also signifies an active component of social life, arranging the division of labor and all kinds of social organizations. What is more, the land is a source of verbiage. People closely related with the land use such colloquations in transmitting their experiences in life. All these find their meaning within the context of cultural memory.

The concept of nation is very broad and it can be defined in many ways however a brief and general definition of nation can be as such

A nation is the expression of a great solidarity, constituted by a feeling for the common sacrifices that have been made and for those one is prepared to make

again. It presupposes a past; however, it is epitomized in the present by a tangible fact: consent, the clearly expressed desire that the common life should continue.... Nations are not something eternal. They have begun, they will end. They will be replaced. (Renan 58)

Renan stresses the solidarity and the past in defining nation as well as the changeability of the nation. As Renan suggests the changeability of the nation, it should also be pointed out that newly emerged nations are shaped by the former nations and can also be evaluated as the accumulation of them. Corresponding to Renan's idea of nation, Heaney goes into mythical past imposing certain symbols as representatives of the Irish nation such as Antaeus, a mythical figure empowered by the land. He broadens the time aspect to ancient time, even when Irish nation did not exist, in interpreting Irish cultural memory. Although this seems to be a paradox, I think that by doing so, Heaney demonstrates that the land matter is a prehistoric question of the Irish nation continuing since the ancient times. He aims to show the fundamentality of that matter via elaborating on the land issue within a perspective including different time periods. Then, Heaney travels in time in his poetry, coming closer to the present, and elaborates on these important issues contributing to cultural memory.

Heaney contributes to his broad perspective of evaluating Irish cultural memory via dating back to the time of the Viking invasion in Ireland, which were between the eighth and eleventh centuries. In his poem entitled as *Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces*, the persona of the poem begins by mentioning trial pieces such as a jaw-bone and a rib, and he slowly goes back in time through the help these objects and obtains a

persona from Shakespeare's famous play *Hamlet* as it can be drawn from the following lines:

I am Hamlet the Dane

Skull-handler, parablist,

Smeller of rot (Heaney 60)

The persona describing himself as skull-handler is drawing a classical image from Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* in which Hamlet speaks to a skull which he is holding. Skull as a shuddery object contributes the violent atmosphere of the poem and reflects the eeriness of time.

There are strong links between historical facts and cultural memory. Historical facts directly shape cultural memory because individual memories composing cultural memory are influenced by the results of historical facts such as wars. In the poem, Heaney focuses on this relationship and illuminates it. Heaney describes the violence and the war in Ireland via this poem using elements such as "long sword", "scoretaking killers", "skulls", "cage", and "trellis" that create war images in the minds of people. These war images portray a picture of war in Ireland. About the images in these poems, Patricia Boyle Haberstroh, the Chair of the Fine Arts Department in La Salle University, states that: "On the most obvious levels, these cages and cells graphically describe the war in Northern Ireland, but they also suggest the poet or artist's plight in trying to make sense of social disorder."(213) These objects that connote the violence of war also emphasize how the artist perceives this social disorder through these objects. Therefore, these objects take additional meanings such as signifying the violence. The reason that Heaney uses



historical images to comment on the present problems in Ireland is to put emphasis on the continuity of violence and war in Ireland in other words the continuous incidents of war since ancient times and show that this social problem has been going on for centuries. Whatever Heaney exposes about the historical processes has a corresponding meaning within the context of cultural memory, as the issues he touches upon function as metaphors that attach meaning within the context of cultural memory.

Heaney continues using a large time frame in his poems, such as *The Tollund Man*, *Bogland*, *Bog Queen*, and *The Grauballe Man*. These poems dig through Irish history and touches upon important elements of Irish cultural memory. These poems focus on bodies, as David Kennedy suggests that: “The body as re-enactable and legitimating origin and as literal and historical transcript is central to Seamus Heaney’s bog poems.” (39) Although these poems deal with ancient bodies, “text and narration are present in the language of the poems.” (39) However, Heaney continues to work through the history through these bodies, with certain transitions in the time of narration.

Before explaining the poems, it is more appropriate to define Heaney’s main motivation and inspiration for composing these poems. John Stallworthy suggests that Heaney is influenced by P.V. Glob’s *The Bog People*: “What [Heaney] found there confirmed the truth of his intuitions and opened his eyes-as Jessie L. Weston’s *From Ritual to Romance* opened Eliot’s- to deeper levels of mythic and historical congruence.” (165) Heaney states that:

It was chiefly concerned with preserved bodies of men and women found in the bogs of Jutland, naked, strangled or with their throats cut, disposed under the peat since early Iron Age times. The author . . . argues convincingly that a number of these, and in particular, the Tollund Man, whose head is now preserved near Aarhus in the museum at Silkeborg, were ritual sacrifices to the Mother Goddess, the goddess of the ground who needed new bridegrooms each winter to bed with her in her sacred place, in the spring. Taken in relation to the tradition of Irish political martyrdom for the cause whose icon is Kathleen Ni Houlihan, this is more than an archaic barbarous rite: it is an archetypal pattern. And the unforgettable photographs of these victims blended in my mind with photographs of atrocities, past and present, in the long rites of Irish political and religious struggles. (57)

Explaining the background of his poems about ancient bodies, Heaney integrates these images of ancient bodies with the famous Irish heroic emblem of nationalism, Kathleen Ni Houlihan. Identifying these bodies with Kathleen and composing these poems from this state of mind, Heaney surely comments on the present and past of Irish memory by going back and forth through time.

The poem *Tollund Man* is about an ancient body of the same name from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC and dug out intact. It was suggested that he was probably killed during a sacrificial ceremony as some evidences support this argument. In this poem, Heaney narrates his experience of visiting the Tollund man in the museum as a child. Metaphorically, Heaney perceives such intact bodies dug from bogs as the

inheritance of earlier generations' memories. These violent memories of the past haunt Ireland with the ongoing violence in the Northern Ireland during the time that Heaney composed these poems. Stallworthy explains that :

Heaney's perception that the 'bog bank is a memory bank provided him with an inexhaustible metaphor for the unforgiving memory that in Ireland, perhaps more than any other country, has been each generation's legacy to the next. (167)

Perceiving bog bodies as the emblems and conveyers of the cultural memory of Ireland, Heaney keeps his time frame broad in order to include the very old elements of cultural memory inherited from very ancient times.

Heaney starts his poem *Bogland* with a comparison of Irish landscape with other countries when he writes that "We have no prairies/ To slice a big sun at evening" (17). Then, he narrates the excavation of a great Irish elk from bog, along with intact butter which is still tasty. The excavators keep digging the bog layer by layer:

Every layer they strip

Seems camped on before.

The bogholes might be Atlantic seepage.

The wet centre is bottomless. (Heaney 18)

Metaphorically, the excavators dig the history layer by layer and they discover things that belong to their memory. The intact materials that they find represent the roots of Irish culture and history. No matter how deep these roots are, they will keep popping out because the history of Ireland is 'bottomless', like the bogs. Once again, Heaney

places the indisputable influence of these roots in Irish cultural memory by using a broad time frame.

What constitutes the cultural memory of a nation is as variable as what forms the exceptionally sophisticated structure of human mind. Seamus Heaney uses various ways to reflect cultural memory in his poetry. First and foremost, Heaney, in most of his poems, makes use of his personal experiences, as Anthony Juda put it: “Heaney revisits the memories of the literary tradition to help him make sense of the crisis of present. He brings the poetic tradition into what he had called significant relationship with his own experience” (1) Using his individual memory in approaching cultural memory, Heaney focuses on language, names of places, occupation, shared history, identity, geography, and mythical elements as the conveyers of cultural memory. These constituents of cultural memory exist in Heaney’s poetry and they will be explained successively with examples from his poems.

One of the constituents of cultural memory can be the type of work that people are involved with, as the occupations of individuals determine their place in the society and shape their individual memories. In defining the cultural memory of Ireland, undoubtedly field work plays a significant role. Seamus Heaney makes use of field work as a step to remark on the cultural memory of Ireland through describing his family.

Heaney’s first poem in his collection named *Death of A Naturalist* is ‘Digging’. Heaney narrates a childhood memory in that poem reverting to his personal history. Starting from his individual memory, the circle enlarges to his family history through mentioning about his father and grandfather. Then Heaney includes the cultural

memory of his country in his poem, creating a correlation with his individual and family memory as he represents agricultural structure of Ireland.

Having a sense of time, the poem starts with the narrator writing in the present time, illustrated with the usage of present tenses in the first seven lines.

Between my finger and my thumb  
The squat pen rests; snug as a gun.  
Under my window, a clean rasping sound  
When the spade sinks into gravelly ground:  
My father, digging. I look down (Heaney 1)

After these lines, watching his father digging the ground and hearing the sound of this action, Heaney shifts from present tense into past tense introducing his family memory.

Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds  
Bends low, comes up twenty years away  
Stooping in rhythm through potato drills  
Where he was digging (Heaney 1)

He suddenly goes twenty years into the past creating an image of his father digging potatoes. Then he goes back father in time to his grandfather's time, drawing upon an image of his grandfather cutting turf in a bog, and inserting a childhood memory in which he brought milk to his grandfather while he was cutting turf. With these memories, Heaney shows the agricultural background of his family and their close relationship to the land, which have been their sources of income for generations. These memories are not limited to his family, owing to the fact that

Heaney reflects the cultural memory of Ireland through his and his family's memories. For centuries, cutting turf and digging potatoes have been the traditional ways of earning money for Irish people. Therefore, Heaney represents the significance of field work for Ireland through the body of his own memories.

Another poem by Seamus Heaney named *Follower* illustrates how Heaney relates his personal memories to the cultural memory of Ireland. In that poem, Heaney briefly describes how his father works hard in the field. In the last stanza of the poem, Heaney and his father exchange their power roles in doing the field work. This shift signifies the continuation of the agricultural work from generation to generation. This exchange of roles can be generalized for a certain group of people in Ireland. Heaney makes use of the type of work to define the cultural memory of Ireland by using the work commonly associated with a large ratio of society.

As mentioned above, occupation is a significant determiner and conveyer of cultural memory because the ways that people earn money influence their life styles, culture, and cultural memory. As they spend a large portion of their time working, they are strongly shaped by their work type. Also, the products of cultural memory are contained in the behaviors, actions and language that the type of occupation promotes. Therefore, occupation becomes a direct vehicle of cultural transition, and this type of occupation plays an active role in reproducing collective memory. Occupations that have nearly disappeared can be good example to illustrate this issue. For example in the past, there were many tanners in Turkey but now there are few tanners. With the disappearance of this occupation, the special effects of this occupation, such as the jargon that the tanners spoke, their practical experience, and

the social status disappear from cultural memory as long as they are not conveyed by other actors.

Heaney, as in his poems *Digging* and *Follower*, as well as most of his other poems, associates agricultural work with Irish people, and he places the field work as a determiner of Irish Identity and cultural memory. As he put emphasis on the connection with the land, he pays great attention to the agricultural work as if it were a national work type. Furthermore, Heaney emphasizes the works related with bogs, turf, and peat as these are special characteristics of Irish geography and they have offered ways of earning money for centuries, along with agricultural work.

Heaney's poem *The Seed Cutters* from his North collection starts with addressing to Breughel. "They seem hundred of years away. Breughel/ You will know them if I can get them true." (Heaney 51). Then it draws-with words- a picture of peasants doing agricultural work.

They seem hundreds of years away. Breughel,

You'll know them I I ca get them true.

They kneel under the hedge in a half circle

Behind a windbreak wind is breaking through.

They are the seed cutters. The tuck and frill

Of leaf-sprout is one the seed potatoes

Buried under that straw. With time to kill,

They are taking their time. Each sharp knife goes

Lazily halving each root that falls apart

In the palm of the hand: a milky gleam,

And, at the centre, a dark watermark.

O calendar customs! Under the broom

Yellowing over them, compose the frieze

With all of us there, our anonymities. (Heaney 51)

Among many other painters, Breughel is purposefully addressed thanks to his painting style and fashion. Breughel, in most of his paintings, painted the peasants, their ceremonies, their work on the land, and nature. Besides Breughel's artistic fashion, Heaney also addresses him because of the fact that his "paintings of sixteenth century Flemish life represent an earlier 'Northern Attempt' to express in art the beauty and ritual of peasant life" (Haberstroh 208) While Breughel painted the 'North' and agricultural life with a brush, Heaney paints the 'North' and agricultural life with words in his poetry.

Heaney creates an image of Irish field workers and strengthens this image with an allusion to Brueghel. Heaney illustrates that, since the time of Brueghel who lived in sixteenth century, people in the 'North' have been dealing with the same types of work emphasizing the agricultural work that has been going on for centuries. This association of Irish people agricultural work functions as a significant constituent of cultural memory as the things that people are busy for their lives strongly influence people's lives.



Heaney also focuses on the continuation of agricultural work from one generation to other generation as he stated in his *Digging*, narrating how the field work passed from his grandfather to his father, and in his *Follower* in which the inherited agricultural work from father to the son was ongoing. This continuation is purposefully stressed because the type of work is an influent determiner of cultural memory, as Carol D. Hansen pointed out: “The most extensive form of subcultural patterning is linked to the kind of work people do” (253) People’s occupations shape them in every aspect of their lives and culture as well as their individual memory. Individual memories forming cultural memory place a certain meaning to the land work. Therefore, field work represents a significant part of Irish memory as people perceive it as a way to survive.

As a part of cultural memory, besides agricultural works, working in bogs is also emphasized in most of Heaney’s poems. As Ireland has a huge number of bogs, many people earn their living digging peat in these bogs both for money and for heating their homes. Besides being a national occupation, working in bogs has metaphorical meanings for Heaney. The bogs in Heaney’s understanding are not only physical places to work; they form the relationship between past and present, functioning as the basis for helping in the construction of Irish identity, metaphorically feeding the individuals working on them.

Heaney’s poem *Bog Oak* is one of the examples where he emphasizes working in the bog. In this poem, an intact oak tree is excavated by people working on the bog. Instead of being used for heating, this million- year old oak tree will be used for construction of a house as “a cobwebbed, black, / Long-seasoned rib/Under the first

thatch.” (Heaney 19) Being used under the first thatch means being the skeleton of the construction. Coming from many years ago and being used as the main support for construction, this oak tree symbolically represents that Irish history, no matter how old it is, functions as the skeleton of the Irish cultural memory. People doing traditional works inherited from their ancestors are digging the bogs physically as well as digging of their history in a literal sense, and furthermore provide physical things needed for their life and cultural elements coming from their history for their culture. Heaney digging the Irish cultural memory from the bogs that preserve many conveyers of Irish memory makes use of these kinds of work types.

The Tollund man described as the success of turf cutters as Heaney says in his poem:

Trove of the turfcutter’s

Honeycombed workings.

Now his stained face

Reposes at Aarhus. (31)

The way that the Tollund man is found is underlined by Heaney to lay emphasis on the occupation of the turf cutters. Similarly, while the Bog Queen

Lay[s] waiting

Between turf-face and demesne wall,

Between heathery levels

And glass-toothed stone (66)

She “was barbered/ and stripped/ by turfcutter’s spade” (67). Again, Heaney puts emphasis on the occupation of turf cutter.

Irish geography surely has an immense effect on people choosing these types of occupations. Heaney lays an emphasis on this fact by illustrating people cutting turf, digging peat, and digging bogs to take out some materials. As these occupations have been the indispensable parts of the Irish cultural memory for many years, Heaney lays emphasis on them as the conveyers of cultural memory that have been serving for a very long time.

As mentioned in the first chapter, language is a significant conveyer of cultural memory as people place additional connotational meanings to the words as signifiers. The signified meaning is perceived in terms of the individual and cultural memory of the perceivers. Heaney refers to the functions of language as such:

I believe they are afflicted with a sense of history that was once the peculiar affliction of the poets of other nations who were not themselves natives of England but who spoke the English language.... A desire to preserve indigenous traditions, to keep open the imagination's supply lines to the past... to perceive in these a continuity of communal ways, and a confirmation of identity which is threatened-all this is signified in their language. (150)

Heaney emphasizes the indispensability of language for linking to the past from which cultural memory is fed with cultural elements. Heaney, using the English language in writing his poetry, adds some Irish words that function as the conveyer of Irish cultural memory. He also uses Irish names of the places to connote

additional meanings. David Lloyd points this out in his essay "'Pap for the Dispossessed": Seamus Heaney and the Poetics of Identity."

Place, identity and language mesh in Heaney, as in nationalism, since language is seen primarily as naming, and because naming performs a cultural reterritorialization by replacing the contingent continuities of an historical community with an ideal register of continuity in which the name (of place or of object) operates symbolically as the commonplace communicating between actual and ideal continua. (328)

As Lloyd expressed, Heaney relates place, identity, and language to each other and uses names belonging to the Irish culture with which a specific cultural memory is formed.

Heaney's poem *Anahorish* in his collection of *Wintering out* is an example of this issue. The word 'Anahorish' is the name of a place in Northern Ireland. This place is near Moss Bawn in which Heaney grew up. 'Anahorish' is also the name of the school where Heaney studied. The word means a "place of clear water" (Heaney 21), and Heaney identifies the physical features of the earth with the word's linguistic features as he says "*Anahorish*, soft gradient/of consonant, vowel-meadow."(21) This identification emphasizes the strong link between the structure of the signifier, which is an Irish word, and the signified which is the Irish landscape. Through this place name, Heaney reflects the geographical characteristics of the place.

Anahorish etymologically means place of clear water. This place is "the first place in the world/ where springs washed into/ the shiny grass/ and darkened cobbles/ in the bed of the line."(Heaney 21) The school illuminates the people like clear water

washes the shiny grass. Heaney also creates an opposition between the school, the source of education, and the place around the people, which is described as “dark cobbles”. Heaney, using an Irish word signifying additional meaning within the context of cultural memory, uses it as a metaphor to convey the meaning of the world on a cultural level.

Karen M. Moloney states that,

The extermination of the Irish aristocracy who were its patrons, led to the disappearance of bardic poetry in Irish-‘the Irish language itself . . . in retreat, into isolated areas, apparently on the way to extinction, and taking an entire literature with it (286)

Heaney, being aware of this danger, is purposefully using Irish words that only made sense with the possessing of cultural memory which can be a ground to understand these words.

Heaney, in his poem *Broagh*, makes strong references to the issue of language. Despite being written in English, the poem consists of various words of Gaelic origin. For example, the word ‘rig’ is of a Scandinavian origin, which is close to the Norwegian word ‘rigga’ meaning ‘to bind’. “The word ‘pad’ is the local pronunciation of “path”; and “ford,” deriving from the Old Norse word *fjord* (found as a suffix in Irish place names like Waterford and Wexford) and...has clearly been retained in the vernacular from the time of the Viking invasions of Ireland in the 9th and 10th centuries.” (O’Grady 25) Also, the title of the poem ends with the letters ‘gh’ which Heaney argues that English people have certain incapability of pronouncing “ended almost/ suddenly, like that last/ *gh* the strangers found / difficult

to manage” (25) Through using the names of the places and specific Irish words, Heaney enlivens and revises the roots of Irish cultural memory by making references to lexis. David Lloyd explains what Heaney, using such Irish elements in his poetry, seeks in doing this:

Heaney seeks to give an Irish "bend," grafting it on to roots which are identified as rural, Catholic, and more remotely, Gaelic. That grafting is enabled by the return to place, a reterritorialization in a quite literal sense initially, which symbolically restores the interrupted continuity of identity and ground. An implicit theory of language operates here, for which the name is naturally integrated with place, the sign identified with the signified, the subject with the object. The putative sameness of place supplies an image of the continuity underlying the ruptures so apparent in the history of language usage in Ireland (328)

Heaney conveys the cultural roots, cultural values, and cultural memory through lexis that can be deciphered with background information provided by cultural memory.

To sum up, Seamus Heaney explores cultural memory in a broad time aspect as he uses different time frames in his poetry to illustrate the constituents of cultural memory formed in different time periods such as ancient times, the ninth and eleventh century, late nineties, and today. He also makes use of his personal experiences as steps to comment on the more general issues about cultural memory such as his family experience and childhood experiences which Heaney use in making connections with cultural memory. What is more, Heaney illustrates how

types of work, language, names of places, mythical figures, and geography can be important conveyers of cultural memory. He demonstrates these elements in his poetry.

## CHAPTER 3

### TIME ASPECT AND CULTURAL MEMORY IN TONY HARRISON'S POETRY

The famous English poet Tony Harrison deals with individual memory, cultural memory and the interconnection between them in his poetry. Harrison uses his individual experiences (in other words his individual memory) as a step to uncover English cultural memory. Harrison uses a limited time aspect in exploring cultural memory and focuses on a certain time period. Harrison, born in 1937, usually focuses on the time interval starting from his childhood memories up to the present. He reflects the cultural memory of England and he prefers focusing on class issues: working class identity, problems of the working class, working class occupations, and the language during that time period in England. Different from the usual readings of Harrison's poetry on these issues, I will focus on how these issues turn into a matter of cultural memory and show how Harrison makes use of these issues as conveyers of cultural memory, rather than reflecting working class issues.

His poem entitled *Timer* exemplifies the limited time aspect that Harrison structures his poetry upon. The poem, being about the corpse of Harrison's mother being burnt in an oven and her ring being taken after the process, portrays a limited time interval as his mother died in 1987. The poem is written in the past tense; however, the end of the poem is written in the present tense. "I feel your ashes, head, arms, breasts, womb, legs/ sift through its circle slowly." (Harrison 167) The time shift between the last part of the poem and the body of the poem is not that strong, as



the time interval between them is short and this short time interval approves the limited time aspect.

Another poem exemplifying the limited time aspect is *v.* in which Harrison mentions his conversation with a working class person in the graveyard while visiting his mother's grave. The poem narrates a decent memory of Harrison's which took place after 1987, the year of her mother's death. Harrison prefers touching on events in the present and recent past, which narrows down his time aspect.

Harrison makes use of his personal experiences and individual memory to explore cultural memory. There are many poems of his that point to the relationship between his individual memory and cultural memory. One of these poems, entitled *Book Ends*, demonstrates this relationship and the transition from an individual memory to a cultural memory. The poem reveals events taking place on the day of his mother's death. However, that specific personal and family experience turns into an issue of cultural memory as soon as Harrison uses this family memory to illustrate the contrast between his father and himself, because the differences between them represent the differences between two different classes of the society. Thus Harrison not only centers on a family problem but also a social problem.

The class issue is an important aspect that influences English cultural memory immensely. Different classes of society have characteristics that differentiate one class from the other. Classes are differentiated in terms of their cultural characteristics as well as their cultural memory because the members of different classes are exposed to different life conditions. So, while talking about cultural

memory, these sub-cultural memories of these classes should be taken into consideration.

Harrison provides two different personas in the poem, he and his father, to illustrate the accumulative aspect of English cultural memory. In the last line of the poem, Harrison points out the major cause of difference between them: “What’s still between’s/ not the thirty or so years, but books, books, books.” (126) His dead mother’s voice in the poem also emphasizes this difference as she says: “You’re like book ends, the pair of you, she’d say, /Hog that grate, say nothing, sit, sleep, stare.” (126) The books representing education between the father and the son place these two individuals into different classes.

Tony Harrison makes use of types of employment to determine identity as he shows the close attachment of the type of work with class identity in most of his poems. What is more, Harrison creates relations between types of work and cultural memory, and demonstrates how occupations function as conveyers of cultural memory and how they contribute to cultural memory. He categorizes two types of work, working class occupations and upper class occupations, which function as social markers in the society. The working class occupations are those involving more physical effort and less mental effort whereas the higher class occupations are those involving less physical effort and more mental effort. Harrison derives this categorization from the cultural memory of the society, due to the fact that such a categorization originates from meanings imposed for these occupations. These imposed meanings are located within the cultural memory and make certain occupations ignite additional meanings within the context of cultural memory. This

relation is signified within the context of cultural memory because understanding of working class occupations based on physical power is produced through cultural memory.

Harrison, in his poem entitled *Thomas Campey and The Copernican System*, portrays a typical working class person whose job is to collect old books. This work is based on the physical power of the collector and Harrison puts emphasis on this point by describing the strain on the worker's body while doing this work: "Familiar last straws. His back's strained arch/Questioned the stiff balance of his knees." (Harrison 13) As understood from the lines, the collector is in such physical rigidity that he may lose his balance if even one more book is added. In this poem, Harrison, by identifying the harsh physical circumstance while describing a working class person, shows the relation between physical effort and a working class occupation.

Another of Harrison's poems, entitled *Marked With D*, from his collection of *The School of Eloquence*, is also a good example of Harrison's usage of working class occupations as the markers of identity and the constituents of cultural memory. This poem is about the process of the corpse of Harrison's father being burnt after he dies. The poem starts with the lines: "When the chilled dough of his flash went in an oven/not unlike those he fuelled all his life" (Harrison 155) First and foremost, Harrison, narrating a very personal memory, starts enlarging this memory, through including elements such as his father's occupation, thus involving cultural memory. Mentioning his father's occupation, which we learn from the first two lines of the poem that he is a baker, Harrison places his father in the working class and

minimizes the significance of his father for the society in that no one will even realize his death:

The Baker's man that no one will see rise

And England made to feel like some dull oaf

Is smoke, enough to sting one person's eyes

And ash (not unlike flour) for one small loaf. (Harrison 155)

Harrison shows the importance of a working class member for the society as he reduces his father, in a metaphorical way, to a "small loaf".

What is important in this poem is that the occupation of being a baker is given an additional meaning derived from cultural memory. This attached meaning to that occupation arises as a marker of social status in individual memories shaped by cultural memory. Therefore, the occupation takes the function of a signifier not only for the work the individual is doing but also for his place in the society. The placement of his father with working class status is emphasized even more when Harrison, comparing himself to his father, points up the difference between them thanks to his education and eloquence in English language. Being a poet, Harrison contrasts the occupational difference and illustrates how occupation places his father to the working class and himself in the upper class.

As an important conveyer of cultural memory, language plays a significant role for Harrison in determining the status of the members of the society and the borders dividing the existing classes. Harrison typifies the language into two types in his poetry: the elevated languages spoken properly by higher class by obeying the rules

of the language and the language spoken by the working class which is usually accented and improper. The ways that people speak the language not only reflects their eloquence in the language but also provide background information about these people, such as their education, their whereabouts, their cultural level, and their cultural memory. Therefore, it can be argued that language consists of signifiers and functions as a signifier as a whole. Harrison reiterates the language issue in most of his poems, but in some of these poems this stands out more, such as in the poem *A Good Read*.

Harrison's poem *A Good Read*, which is also about a personal memory, shows how the usage of language illustrates cultural memory. The poem starts with the names of famous men of letters such as Ibsen, Marx, and Gide: "That summer it was Ibsen, Marx and Gide./ I got one of his you-stuck-up-bugger looks." (Harrison 141) The names of literary giants whose books Harrison is reading at the very beginning of the poem reflect his educational level. Harrison puts this difference from his father at the very beginning and then comes to the main event. While Harrison is reading a book, he sees his father's criticizing look and articulates his father's thoughts, of course in his own mind. "ah sometimes think you read too many books./ ah nivver' ad much time for a good read." (141) Although his father is not an educated person, he comments on Harrison's reading and there is an observable difference between his speech and Harrison's. While Harrison speaks elevated English, his father does not speak English properly and uses slang. While Harrison is mentioning Ibsen, Marx, and Gide, his father is using "f" word. Also, some of the lines in which Harrison's father speaks start with small letters, representing his father's uncultured use of the

language although they should start with capital letters in a poem. Furthermore, some words are misspelled, showing his father's inability to use elevated English.

In the context of cultural memory, Harrison's father's way of using the vernacular is perceived as a sign of the working class, whereas Harrison's way of using the vernacular is perceived as higher class because individuals with this cultural memory accept and interpret that way of using language as a signifier of the class. Furthermore, his father's accent reflects his educational level, which is very low when compared to Harrison's. Also, reading a book is ascribed a new social meaning and becomes a sign of belonging to the upper class, as reading provides self-education. This ascribed meaning is conveyed with the cultural memory and is also conveyed via language.

Another of Harrison's poems, entitled *Them & [uz]*, centers on the issue of language. The poem narrates a school experience of Tony Harrison. His teacher at the school wants to change the way Harrison speaks the vernacular. However, Harrison rejects this and insists on maintaining his accent. He purposefully pronounces the word 'us' as [uz] instead of pronouncing it as [ʌs]. As he states in the poem "We say [ʌs] not [uz], T.W.!" (Harrison 122) In the second part of the poem he also says:

...I'd been harried as

And used my name and own voice: [uz] [uz] [uz].

Ended sentences with by, with, from,

And spoke the language I spoke at home." (123)

Harrison, emphasizing his working class roots, repeats his way of saying the word 'us' three times to show his insistence on his accent. Belonging to a working class family, Harrison uses language as a distinctive factor to differentiate himself from other people belonging to other classes of the society. His accent is not only a parameter of his eloquence in language but also it is an identity marker shaped by the cultural memory. He identifies the accent with class as he says 'we', indicating the working class, and this identification is derived from cultural memory because as an individual he perceives the accent and social status as an integrated union within the context of cultural memory.

Harrison makes reference to Shakespeare to reinforce his argument: "'Poetry's the speech of kings. You're one of those/ Shakespeare gives the comic bits to: prose!" (122) Harrison, repeating the issue of language in Shakespeare that higher class people speak poetically while the lower ones speak more in prose, says that he "played the Drunken Porter in Macbeth" (122), as the Drunk Porter has a lower status and his speech is in prose. However, being a poet now, Harrison indicates a change in his social status. This change comes from his ability to write poetry, in other words to master the language. Years later, Harrison as a poet states that:

I was very conscious at the same time as I was being shepherded towards [...] great founts of eloquence that I had a family about me with an uncle who stammered and an uncle who was dumb, and others who were afflicted with a metaphorical dumbness, and lack of socially confident articulation. Much of my writing has been a long slow-burning revenge (436)

His inarticulateness in language and the reaction he was exposed to become the main motives for Harrison striving to be one of the leading poets of England.

Tony Harrison, coming from working class, also belongs to the upper class thanks to his education and elevated usage of the English language. He is knowledgeable about both the upper and working class uses of the language. While talking about the problems of the working class, he changes to a working class accent which shows him to be more trustworthy and more sincere as he includes himself in that group. However, one of the most important reasons for the changes in his way of using language is that he shows himself as a living example of how education and language are determiners of identity and class.

Another important reason for Harrison's purposefully using working class language is that he reminds and reflects the cultural memory of the inarticulate working class people which is tried to be erased by the dominant higher class cultural memory. As Linden Peach states that Harrison's poetry represents

a sense of enforced inferiority, the struggle against hegemonic forces that would erode and destroy cultural identity, and the reclamation of wealth of accumulated experience which mainstream culture would deny. (Peach 154)

Harrison becomes the voice of the working class and struggles for the survival of the working class cultural memory which is weakened and forgotten in the hegemonic culture of England.

Harrison, in his most famous poem entitled *v.*, also touches upon the language issue. He gives a quotation from a newspaper about the importance of language shaping one's life before starting the poem: "My father still reads the dictionary



every day. He says your life depends on your power to master words". (Scargill, Sunday Times, 10 Jan. 1982) That quotation illustrates what Harrison wants the reader to focus on while reading the poem. The plot of the poem is simple. It takes place in a graveyard where Harrison visits his father's grave. He sees graffiti in the graveyard and words such as "CUNT, PISS, SHIT, (mostly) FUCK." (Harrison 237) Then he sees a person whom he names as Skinhead and starts talking with him. The poem is like a conversation and debate between the two. What grabs the attention most is the multi-discourse, and the considerable differences in the terms used by the two. In the excerpt below taken from this poem, the italicized words are those used by skinhead and the others are Tony Harrison's. He asks skinhead:

What is it that these crude words are revealing?

What is it that this aggro act implies?

Giving the dead their xenophobic feeling

or just a cri-de-coeur because man dies?

Harrison, asking the meaning and the purpose of the words written by skinhead is not properly understood by skinhead because Harrison's choice of words is not at Skinhead's level of understanding because Harrison uses words such as 'cri-de-coeur'. The answer that Harrison gets from the Skinhead is shocking:

*So what's a cri-de-coeur, cunt? Can't you speak*

*the language that yer mam spoke. Think of 'er!*

*Can yer only get yer tongue round fucking Greek?*

*Go and fuck yourself with cri-de-coeur!*

Skinhead, not understanding Harrison, swears and blames him for not speaking the language of his mother. In the culture that Skinhead is used to, his way of speaking the language is normal, whereas Harrison's is abnormal. The conversation goes on:

'She didn't talk like you do for a start!'

I shouted, turning where I thought the voice had been.

*She didn't understand yer fucking 'art!'*

*She thought yer fucking poetry obscene!*

I wish on this skin's words deep aspirations,  
first the prayer for my parents I can't make,  
then a call to Britain and to all nations  
made in the name of love for peace's sake.

*Aspirations, cunt! Folk on t'fucking dole*

*'ave got about as much scope to aspire*

*above the shit they're dumped in, cunt, as coal*

*aspires to be chucked on t'fucking fire.*

'OK, forget the aspirations. Look, I know

United's losing gets you fans incensed  
and how far the HARP inside you makes you go  
but all these Vs: against! against! against!

*Ah'll tell yer then what really riles a bloke.*

*It's reading on their graves the jobs they did –*

*Butcher, publican and baker. Me, I'll croak*

*doing t'same nowt ah do now as a kid.*

Looking at the pronunciations, choice of words, and level of education reflecting through language, there are big differences between the two. Harrison, by portraying such differences, puts the emphasis on the class difference between them.

There are strong ties between language and formation of ideas. As language is a very important medium ascribing ideas to signifiers, it conveys, limits, and shapes the hermeneutic of the words as signifiers. Thus, the lack of required words to ascribe the intended meaning to the necessary signifiers ends up in the failure of conveying a premeditated message. Considering the fact that political and ideological implications are seriously interrelated with the rhetoric and persuasive power of language, it is appropriate to express the significance of language as a perceptive and interpretive means for political and societal issues. Harrison makes effective use of language via using it as a touchstone about conflicts between the classes.

Tony Harrison uses place names as signifiers not only for the actual places but also for the connotational meanings that these place names suggest. Harrison

provides inherent information with these names, such as class, economic status, cultural and educational levels and also illustrates the function of these place names as the conveyer of cultural memory. In his poem entitled *Background Material*, Harrison describes the pictures of his father and mother focusing on the backgrounds of the pictures. In other words, the focus is on the places that these pictures were taken. His mother's picture was taken in a 'Welsh cottage' whereas his father's picture was taken in a 'pub':

Dad's in our favorite pub, now gone for good.

My father and his background are both gone,

but hers has my Welsh cottage and a wood

that still shows those same greens eight summers on,

though only the greenness of it's stayed the same. (Harrison 171)

The 'pub' as a place name not only signifies a place where people drink and have fun, it also provides background information about the people who visit a pub. The pub Harrison's father goes to welcomes certain types of people coming from similar economic and cultural backgrounds. Therefore the place name acquires a new meaning within the cultural memory and brings this attached meaning to mind. The "Welsh cottage", in this context, not only means a place to live in but also signifies the economic status of his mother's family, their cultural level, and their educational background. The meaning imposed by this place name contributes to cultural memory functioning as a signifier.

Harrison, in his poem *A Good Read*, makes reference to the city of Leeds while mentioning the working class people, including his father, who have no time for reading. “These poems about you, dad, should make good reads/ for the bus you took from Beeston into town/ for people with no time like you in Leeds.” (Harrison 141) Leeds is a very industrialized city of England and therefore it has a large population of working class people. Because of this, with the life style, interrelationships, and especially the individual memories, in Leeds a specific culture has been formed. When thought of as a network of cultural memory, the name Leeds finds its meaning with the help of other signifiers, such as the working class. Therefore, this place name becomes a generalized name for carrying these connotational meanings for cultural memory.

Along with illuminating cultural memory and its constituents, Harrison also reflects the cultural crisis around 1980’s in England, and tries to provide solutions. Luke Spenser depicts Harrison’s attempt as an “uncompromising intervention in the politics of the 1980 [and] willingness to take risks in dramatizing a cultural crisis and imagining its solutions.” (91) In his poetry, especially in his poem *v.*, Harrison touches on the 1980’s events, including the Miner’s Strike, which caused a cultural crisis and social turmoil. The cultural crises is a significant and indispensable part of the cultural memory, as Neil Corcoran sees in the Harrison’s *v.* poem: “A central document of the remnants of the industrial working-class North of England in the mid-1980s, a country dangerous, derelict, despairing, on the dole, driven into an apparent permanence of division and decay.” (162) Harrison not only reflects on events in England at that time but also rewrites history, because writing the history does not indicate that it absolutely portrays everything as it really was as Walter

Benjamin states that: “To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it “the way it really was.” (257) By rewriting the past, Harrison places the cultural crisis as an important part of the cultural memory of England and illustrates it in his poems.

Furthermore, Harrison provides his readers a chance to follow the changes in cultural memory within the perspective of himself, who changes along with the culture. For Harrison uses different perspectives in his poetry, such as a child’s perspective in his poem *Them & [uz]* and an adult’s perspective in his poem *v*. From a child’s perspective, Harrison perceives and depicts cultural memory with sharper lines, whereas his adult perspective perceives and depiction of cultural memory follows milder lines. For example, in *Them & [uz]* Harrison approaches the language issue in a stricter way and rejects the imposed accent of language whereas in *v*. he goes between the two accents and uses them together. Comparing these two poems, these differences can easily be recognized.

To sum up, Tony Harrison uses a limited time aspect in his poetry in exploring the cultural memory, as can be seen in his poems such as *timer* and *v*.. He also benefits from his own experiences using them as the steps to explore the cultural memory in his poems such as *Book Ends*. Harrison uses types of work as determiners of the identity and constituents and conveyers of cultural memory which are exemplified in his poems *Thomas Campey and The Copernican System* and *Marked With D*. What is more, Harrison touches on the issue of language as an important conveyer of cultural memory and emphasizes how language determines class identity and how some lexis suggest connotational meanings that contribute to cultural memory. Finally, Harrison

focuses on cultural crisis that changes the course of cultural memory via different perspectives to illustrate the changes in cultural memory during different time intervals.

## FINAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There are many ways that cultural memory can be defined. Scholars focus on the different aspects while explaining cultural memory, such as Halbwachs' focus on the relationship between cultural memory and individual memory, Confino's focus on history in defining cultural memory, Aleida Assman's focus on the two dynamics of the cultural memory which are remembering and forgetting, and Jan Assman's focus on 'memory culture' and 'reference to the past'. These different approaches do not contradict but compliment and supplement each other.

Analyzing and comparing the poetry of Seamus Heaney and Tony Harrison, some similarities and differences in terms of their usage of time aspects and the ways they explore cultural memory in their poetry stand out. The time aspects used in their poetry are opposite as Heaney uses a large time aspect while Harrison uses a narrower time aspect. Heaney and Harrison have some specific reasons for these opposing approaches in terms of reflecting and exploring cultural memory.

Firstly, while Seamus Heaney uses a large time aspect in his poetry, Tony Harrison uses a more limited one in his poetry. Heaney goes back and forth between different time periods, including ancient time, from the ninth century, as well as his family's past, looking into ancient times with his poems *Antaeus* and *Hercules and Antaeus*; sifting through Irish history with his poem *Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces*; and relating his family history with his poem *Digging*. However, Tony Harrison focuses more on his lifetime, therefore his time aspect becomes more limited to recent and present times. Harrison's limited time aspect can be exemplified with his poem *Timer* in which he mentions a memory about his mother's death and in another poem



v., in which he mentions a recent memory that took place between Harrison and a fan of the Leeds United football team in the graveyard.

In my opinion, there are some specific reasons for these two poets using these different time aspects in their poetry. Seamus Heaney accepts the cultural memory of Ireland as an accumulative structure, the dynamics of which have been formed over a very long time. These dynamics could be attributed to reflecting cultural memory, as this can only be done via a large time aspect to provide a better understanding of these dynamics. For example, the close relationship between the land and Irish people is an important dynamic with which Heaney structures Irish cultural memory. As this relationship has a very long history, using a large time aspect is necessary. Therefore, Heaney purposefully uses mythical figures in his poems such as *Antaeus* and *Hercules and Antaeus* to express this historical aspect and relationship.

Furthermore, Heaney places certain significance on history and historical facts in explaining and reflecting cultural memory in the shaping and formation of individual memories and the contribution of Individual memories to cultural memory. Heaney shows this relationship by making references to the past, and this contributes to the exploration of cultural memory for a better understanding of it. For example, he makes reference to the Viking invasion of Ireland and portrays the chaotic atmosphere that the war created in his poem *Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces*. With this historical event Heaney not only narrates a historical event but also relates social problems in Ireland, such as conflicts between Ireland and England, especially in Northern Ireland. Looking at the recent history of Northern Ireland, it can be said that social problems have been going on. There have been conflicts in Northern

Ireland between Catholics who are Nationalists and Protestants who are Unionists. Nationalists do not accept Northern Ireland as a part of the U.K., whereas Unionists accept it. This disagreement has resulted in some catastrophic events and deaths. As a result, Heaney, in making reference to the past and relating recent social problems, reflects two different time periods and shows that Ireland has long been involved in such problems.

The reason Tony Harrison uses a more limited time aspect is apparent in his focus on the present influence of the dynamics of cultural memory rather than on the accumulative structure of these dynamics. Harrison's dynamics, when analyzed in the context of historical depth, are not as historically related as Heaney's in exploring cultural memory. What is more important for Harrison is the roles that these dynamics play in the general structure of cultural memory. For example, Harrison does not analyze the development of different usages of language. He only focuses on how language plays an important role in cultural memory.

Seamus Heaney and Tony Harrison benefit from their individual memories and experiences in reflecting the cultural memory of their society. There is similarity between them in terms of using their individual memories and experiences as steps to explore the constituents of cultural memory. On the other hand, there are slight differences between the two poets in terms of this issue. Heaney uses not only his individual memory but also his family memory, going back deeper in time, as to his grandfather's time in poems *Digging* and *Follower*. However, Harrison avoids going back in time much and his poetry is closer to the present time in this perspective.

Even when he mentions the youth of his parents in his poem *Background Material*, he chooses a present time perspective instead of going back to the actual time.

Another important similarity between the poetry of Heaney and Harrison is that both of these poets conceive types of work as conveyers of cultural memory, and they reflect in their poetry how types of work contribute to cultural memory. However, Heaney and Harrison can be differentiated even here. Heaney takes Irish geography and agricultural structure into account in showing how the types of works influence people to a great extent, convey and reflect the cultural memory. While doing so he does not categorize these work types. He has a more holistic approach to types of work than Harrison as can be understood from his avoiding categorizations. However, Harrison does categorize work types by dividing them as into working class and upper class and showing them as signifiers of the people's social status, emphasizing the involved meaning of the work types within the context of cultural memory.

Heaney and Harrison use language effectively in exploring and reflecting cultural memory in their poetry as they accept that language is one of the most significant conveyers of cultural memory. However, Heaney and Harrison have different approaches to language in terms of using language as the conveyer of cultural memory.

Heaney purposefully uses Irish words in some of his poems. Most of these words possess additional meanings within the context of cultural memory. These words function as a conveyer of the cultural memory, and therefore Heaney is able to reflect cultural memory in his poetry via these words. He uses words whose meanings are

located in cultural memory to give messages. For example, in his poem entitled *Anahorish* he uses the word *anahorish*, meaning ‘a place of clear water’, in relation to the school. He makes connections between the education given in the school and clear water, which represents education as a source that clears and illuminates its surroundings.

However, Harrison focuses more on how language is spoken. What is important for Harrison is whether the language is spoken properly or accented. Harrison concentrates on these differences in showing the relations between language and cultural memory. Within the context of cultural memory, different ways of speaking the language take on additional meanings and become signifiers of cultural differences. Therefore, the proper and elevated usage of the language is the signifier of upper class people, whereas the accented usage of the language becomes the signifier of the working class. Harrison’s categorization stems from the embedded meanings in the different ways of speaking the language influenced by cultural memory.

Heaney and Harrison both emphasize place names, which are arguably imbued with extra meaning provided by the interwoven network of cultural memory. With these imbued meanings, place names stand for not just the physical place but also the cultural experience, in other words the dynamics of cultural memory influencing the formation of cultural memory. Heaney’s poem *Anahorish* exemplifies how the signifier which is the place name functions as a conveyer of cultural memory. As pointed out in Chapter Two, Heaney notes the characteristics of this place name as such: “*Anahorish*, soft gradient/of consonant, vowel-meadow.” (21) This brief

description of the signifier parallels the physical structure of the Irish geography which is soft and consisting of meadows. With this similarity at hand, Heaney illustrates the features of the place which is important for Heaney in reflecting cultural memory, as characteristics of the landscape shape the people in it, and their relation to the land forms an important aspect of Irish cultural memory. With this place name Heaney turns the arbitrary relation between the signifier and signified into a logical relation and illustrates how a place name can contribute to cultural memory.

Harrison differentiates from Heaney slightly in dealing with the place names as contributors to cultural memory. Instead of creating a close relation between the linguistic features of the place name and place, Harrison focuses on the relation between the place name and the social atmosphere, human experience, and societal characteristics of this place. Harrison's poem *A Good Read* exemplifies this issue. While Harrison mentions working class people who do not have time for reading, he places these people in Leeds: "These poems about you, dad, should make good reads/ for the bus you took from Beeston into town/ for people with no time like you in Leeds." (Harrison 141) Leeds is a city which is highly developed industrially and employs many working class people, and Harrison creates a relationship between Leeds and its social structure and imposes a connotational meaning given in the context of cultural memory.

One significant difference between Heaney and Harrison is their approach in reflecting the changes in cultural memory. Cultural memory is not a stabilized concept: it is always developing and changing, which is an indispensable dynamic of

the concept. However, Heaney and Harrison focus on different points. Heaney emphasizes development of cultural memory in the context of history rather than contrasting cultural memory in different time intervals. For example, he starts from the time of *Hercules* going through the time of Vikings in Ireland and Shakespeare's time and comes to the present time by visiting his family's early past. This time travel has a continual and linear aspect. Although development means certain changes, it is different from showing the differences by comparing them. However, Harrison puts more emphasis on the changes in cultural memory and shows these differences via contrasting cultural memory in different time intervals by using different perspectives in his poetry. For example, Harrison compares two time periods in his poems *Them & [uz]* and *v.*. In the former poem, he looks into cultural memory from a child's perspective, whereas in the latter he uses an adult's perspective. Furthermore, in the former poem, he shows sharper differences between different classes whereas in the later one he takes a unionist approach uniting the different classes.

To sum up, there are various approaches to cultural memory explaining it from different standpoints. In my thesis, I focused on the social aspect of individual memory and cultural memory and the relationship between individual memory and cultural memory. As seen in the analysis of the poems by Seamus Heaney and Tony Harrison, they use different time aspects in their poetry for specific reasons. With these time aspects, they explore cultural memory in their poetry via different routes. Heaney demonstrates cultural memory of Ireland especially Northern Ireland. Harrison demonstrates cultural memory of England especially cultural memory of working class people with references to their lives. I hope this thesis will contribute

in exploring how Seamus Heaney and Tony Harrison reflect cultural memory in their poetry from different perspective by using different time aspects. I also hope that it will contribute in comparing the ways that Heaney and Harrison explore cultural memory in their poetry.

## Works Cited

- Assmann, Aleida. "Canon and Archive." *An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. Eds. Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, and Sara B. Yound. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co, 2008. 97-109.
- Assmann, Jan. "Communicative and Cultural Memory." *An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. Eds. Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, and Sara B. Yound. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co, 2008. 109-19.
- . "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity." *New German Critique* 65.1 (1997): 125-33.
- . *Cultural Memory: Writing, Memory and Political Identity in Early Advanced Civilizations*. Munich: Beck, 1997.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. London: Collins, Fontana, 1973.
- "Cream tea." [www.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com). 2010. 13 March 2010  
<<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/cream+tea>>
- Confino, Alon. "Memory and the History of Mentalities." *An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. Eds. Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, and Sara B. Yound. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co, 2008. 77-85
- Corcoran, Neil. *English Poetry Since 1940*. Harlow: Longman, 1993.
- De Saussure, Ferdinand. *Course in General Linguistics*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: Open Court Classics, 1949.



- Erll, Astrid. "Cultural Memory Studies." *An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. Eds. Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, and Sara B. Yound. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co, 2008. 1-19.
- Haberstroh, Patricia Boyle. "Poet and Artist in Seamus Heaney's North." *Colby Quarterly* 23.4 (1987): 206-15.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. "Individual Consciousness and Collective Mind." *The American Journal of Sociology* 44.6 (1939): 812-22.
- Hansen, Carol D, William M. Kahnweiler and Ava S. Wilensky. "Human Resource Development as Occupational Culture Through Organization Stories." *Human Resource Development Quarterly* 5.3 (2006): 253-58.
- Harrison, Tony. "Facing Up To The Muses." *Bloodaxe Critical Anthologies 1: Tony Harrison*. Ed. Neil Astley. Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books, 1991. 429-54.
- . *Selected Poems*. London: Penguin, 1987.
- Heaney, Seamus. *Preoccupations*. London: Faber and Faber, 1980.
- . *New Selected Poems 1966-1987*. London: Faber and Faber, 1990.
- . *Death of a Naturalist*. London: Faber and Faber, 1966.
- Juda, Anthony J. "The Use of Memory: Seamus Heaney, T. S. Eliot, and the Unpublished Epigraph to North." *Journal of Modern Literature* 28.4 (2005): 152-75.
- Kennedy, David. "Tell-tale Skins and 'Repeatable Codes: Historical Bodies and Mythic Readings in Seamus Heaney's 'Bog Poems.'" *English* 54.1 (2005): 35-47.

- Leach, Eleanor Winsor. "Personal and Communal Memory in the Reading of Horace's Odes, Books 1-3." *Arethusa* 31.1 (1998): 43-74.
- Lloyd, David. "Pap for the Dispossessed: Seamus Heaney and the Poetics of Identity." *Boundary 2* 13.2 (1985): 319-42.
- Lotman, Jurij M. and Boris A. Uspenskij. *The Semiotics of Russian Culture*. Ed. Ann Shukman. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1984.
- Luckmann, Thomas. "Remarks on Personal Identity: Inner, Social, and Historical Time." *Identity: Personal and Socio-Cultural*. Ed. Anita Jacopson-Widding. Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities, 1983.
- Matlin, Margaret W. *Psychology*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1992.
- Middleton, David and Derek Edwards. *Collective Remembering*. London: Sage Publications, 1990.
- Middleton, David and Steven D. Brown. "Experience and memory: Imaginary Futures in the Past." *An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. Eds. Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, and Sara B. Yound. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co, 2008.
- Moloney, Karen M. "Heaney's Love to Ireland." *Twentieth Century Literature* 37.3 (1991): 273-88.
- O'Grady, Thomas. "Heaney's 'broagh': The World Made Word." *The Boston Irish Reporter* 17.5 (2006): 25.

- Peach, Linden. *Ancestral Lines: Culture and Identity in the Work of Six Contemporary Poets*. Bridgend: Seren Books, 1993.
- Reece, Shelley C. "Seamus Heaney's Search for the True North." *Pacific Coast Philology* 27.1 (1992): 93-101.
- Renan, Ernest. "What is a Nation?" *Becoming National: A Reader*. Ed. Ronald Grigor. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Rodriquez, Jeanette and Ted Fortier. *Cultural Memory: Resistance, Faith, and Identity*. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2007.
- Sapir, Edward. *Culture Language and Personality*. New Jersey: University of California Press, 1949.
- Schmidt, Siegfried J. "Memory and Remembrance: A Constructivist Approach in Cultural Memory Studies." *An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. Eds. Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, and Sara B. Yound. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co, 2008. 191-203.
- Sinz, Rainer. *Neurobiologie und Gedächtnis*. Stuttgart: Fischer, 1979.
- Sorokin, Pitirim Aleksandrovich. *The Ways and Power of Love: Types, Factors, and Techniques of Moral Transformation*. West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2002.
- Spencer, Luke. *The Poetry of Tony Harrison*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994.
- Stallworthy, John. "The Poet as Archaeologist: W. B. Yeats and Seamus Heaney." *The Review of English Studies* 33.130 (1982): 158-74.
- Till, Karen E. "Memory Studies." *History Workshop Journal* 62.1 (2006): 325-41.

