

**T.C**  
**KARABUK UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

**FROM REGIONALISM TO COSMOPOLITANISM: A STUDY OF  
SELECTED POEMS OF ROBERT FROST AND SEAMUS HEANEY**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**Prepared By**  
**Murat KARAKAŞ**

**Thesis Supervisor**  
**Associate Professor Harith Ismail TURKİ**

**Karabuk**  
**DECEMBER/2018**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>THESIS APPROVAL PAGE</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>FOREWORD</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>ÖZ (ABSTRACT IN TURKISH)</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>ARCHIVE RECORD INFORMATION</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>ARŞİV KAYIT BİLGİLERİ (in Turkish)</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>METHOD OF THE RESEARCH</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH / RESEARCH PROBLEM</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS / DIFFICULTIES</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>1. CHAPTER ONE: Introduction</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>1.1. Regionalism in the United States</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>1.2. Cosmopolitanism</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>2. CHAPTER TWO: Aspects of Regionalism in Frost’s Poetry</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>2.1. Life of Robert Frost</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>2.2. Nature</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>2.3. Speech</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>2.4. Yankee Character</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>2.4.1. Companionship</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<b>2.4.2. The Yankee Humor and Puritan Hard Work</b> .....	<b>39</b>

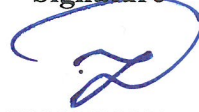
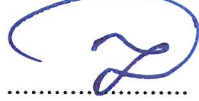

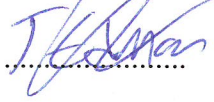
2.4.3. Rural vs. Urban .....	41
2.5. Frost's Use of Tools and Manuel Labor.....	44
3. CHAPTER THREE: Aspects of Regionalism in Heaney's Poetry.....	48
3.1. Life of Seamus Heaney.....	48
3.2. Heaney's Use of Landscape and Tools .....	49
3.3. Language.....	54
3.4. Irish Identity in Bog Poems.....	60
CONCLUSION .....	68
REFERENCES.....	71
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	77



## THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

To Karabuk University Directorate of Institute of Social Sciences

This thesis entitled "From Regionalism to Cosmopolitanism: A Study of Selected Poems of Robert Frost and Seamus Heaney" submitted by Murat KARAKAŞ was examined and accepted/rejected by the Thesis Board unanimously/by majority as a MA / Ph.D. thesis.

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Thesis Exam Date: 28/12/2018

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own work and all information included has been obtained and expounded in accordance with the academic rules and ethical policy specified by the institute. Besides, I declare that all the statements, results, materials, not original to this thesis have been cited and referenced literally.

Without being bound by a particular time, I accept all moral and legal consequences of any detection contrary to the aforementioned statement.

**Name Surname:** Murat KARAKAŞ

**Signature :**



## **FOREWORD**

It is a great pleasure for me to express my appreciation for those who helped me achieve such a study.

First and foremost, I present my gratefulness to Associate Professor Harith Ismail Turki for he has revived my love of literature and guided me with his constructive feedback. Without his direct help and guidance this thesis would not have been completed.

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Finally, I would like to thank my family for their spiritual support and endless patience, not only during my studies but throughout my whole life.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to explore regionalist elements in Robert Frost and Seamus Heaney's selected poems. The works of both artists are studied under the light of rooted cosmopolitanism as their regionalism goes beyond the regions they reflect in their art. Their small regions are microcosms which shed light on a broader world with the use of the colloquial language, local people and specific cultures of these regions.

The first chapter gives a broad outline of the regionalism, cosmopolitanism, and the other two chapters in the thesis. Chapter II focuses on the works of Robert Frost and tries to show regionalist aspects of his poems. Chapter III displays Seamus Heaney's regionalism in his use of language, tools, landscape, and Irish identity. As a result of the thesis, one can understand that the poems of Frost and Heaney have many regionalist elements which go from the local to the universal.

**Keywords:** Regionalism, cosmopolitanism, Robert Frost, Seamus Heaney, local, universal.



## ÖZ (ABSTRACT IN TURKISH)

Bu tez Robert Frost ve Seamus Heaney'den seçilen şiirlerde bölgeselcilik öğelerini irdelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Her iki şairin bölgeselciliği sanatlarında yansıttıkları bölgeleri aştığı için bu sanatçıların çalışmaları kozmopolitinizim ışığı altında çalışılmaktadır. Bölgelerinin günlük dili, yerel insanları ve kültürleri sayesinde, bu küçük bölgeler daha geniş bir dünyaya ışık tutan küçük evrenleri haline gelmiştir.

İlk bölüm bölgeselcilik, kozmopolitinizim ve tezdeki diğer iki bölümün genel bir çerçevesini sunar. İkinci bölüm Robert Frost'un çalışmalarına odaklanır ve şiirlerindeki bölgesellik öğelerini gösterir. Üçüncü bölüm Seamus Heaney'nin bölgeselciliğini dil, araç, kırsallık ve İrlanda kimliği açısından ele alır. Bu tezin bir sonucu olarak, Frost ve Heaney'nin şiirlerinin yerelden evrenselliğe giden birçok unsuru olduğu anlaşılır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler (Keywords in Turkish):** Bölgeselcilik, kozmopolitinizim, Robert Frost, Seamus Heaney, yöresel, evrensel

## ARCHIVE RECORD INFORMATION

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<b>Tezin Yazarı</b>	Murat Karakaş
<b>Tezin Danışmanı</b>	Doç. Dr. Harith Ismail Turki
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<b>Anahtar Kelimeler</b>	Bölgesellik, kozmopolitinizm, Robert Frost, Seamus Heaney, yöresel, evrensel

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Etc.</b>	: Ve benzeri gibi
<b>ed.</b>	: Baskı
<b>Ed. by</b>	: Editör
<b>p./pp.</b>	: Sayfa/sayfalar
<b>Vol.</b>	: Sayı
<b>Vs.</b>	: Karşı



## **SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH**

This study fundamentally examines the selected poems of Robert Frost and Seamus Heaney which go from the local to the universal in the light of regionalism and rooted cosmopolitanism.

## **PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

The purpose of this study is to find out regionalist elements in Robert Frost and Seamus Heaney's poetry. This study also aims to show that both poets' art has a universal value which takes them from regionalism to cosmopolitanism. This study displays that they focus on their own regions and narrate the daily life there. Their small towns and farms are their microcosms which help them create cosmopolitan works of art.

## **METHOD OF THE RESEARCH**

The terms of regionalism and cosmopolitanism are defined by widely accepted articles and encyclopedic works by giving essential examples from the well-known writers and philosophers of the genres. Also, the poems of poets are analyzed in terms of language, tools, landscape, and identity. By referring to these aspects of their selected poems, the regionalist and cosmopolitan features of the poems are revealed.

## **HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH / RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Robert Frost and Seamus Heaney portray the people, traditions, lifestyle, and language of two specific regions and achieve universal acclaim. Both poets focus on their own regions and reflect the daily life in these places in order to go from the local to the universal.

## **SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS / DIFFICULTIES**

The selected poems in this study show regionalist aspects of Robert Frost and Seamus Heaney's poetry. However, as cosmopolitanism is a broad term used by different fields, the type of cosmopolitanism used in this thesis may not be applied to every written work.

# 1. CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

## 1.1. Regionalism in the United States

Taken from the French, the word “region” means “an area, especially a part of a country or the world having definable characteristics but not always fixed boundaries” and “regional” is “relating to a characteristic of a region” according to Oxford Dictionaries (“Region,” 2018). Although we can find different examples of regionalism all over the world, the term is primarily associated with American Literature. “Region” refers to a place defined by culture and nature. The word “regionalism” comes from the Latin meaning “to rule.” On the other hand, “regionalism” means “socio-political movements which seek to foster or protect an indigenous culture in particular regions” (Bullock & Stallybrass, 1997, 532). In addition, the term is used to emphasize the everyday speech of a specific area. In literature, regionalism is a movement which makes a literary work particular in a specific culture. The place is important in literature, and as all artists have their own hometowns, they reflect their style accordingly. People’s personal identity is constructed in their birthplaces and homes, so their home is their first universe.

The first steps of regionalism as a movement emerged with the Declaration of Independence in 1776 when thirteen colonies declared their independence from Great Britain. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, regionalism and local color fiction appeared on important journals like *Harper’s* and the *Atlantic Monthly*. It started as a cultural and literary answer and contributed a lot to the development of a new country in Literature. Writers like Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, Hawthorne, Poe, James F. Cooper, Whitman, and Dickinson helped to construct a national identity with their local characters, settings, and events. This cultural and literary revolution grew from a shared experience in a shared place. Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* reflects the Puritan world and shows us how adultery was important at that time in a specific culture like the Puritans’. *The Great Gatsby* shows the decline of the American Dream in the 1920s. Fitzgerald tries to portray New York as a socially and morally decayed place through his novel. Furthermore, Seamus Heaney’s compatriot James Joyce’s *Dubliners* is a vivid example of regionalism as he depicts Dublin and Irish culture distinctively. Similarly, while Robert Frost presents us rural world, setting, characters and events through New

England, Heaney does it with his hometown, Derry. All these artists mentioned above gained a universal reputation and respect through their localism.

However, this national unity in literature, politics, and culture was shattered during the Civil War (1861-1865). The disagreement on the abolition of slavery and economic problems divided the nation into two- South and North. This division between ideologies and geography changed the concept of regionalism. The differentiation in geography led to the emergence of new regions in American Literature such as the North, the South, the East, and the West. At first, there was a literary difference between New York and Boston in the region of New England. Later, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these places became homogenous, and there were more regionalists in the South and West.

With the rise of the Industrial Revolution, people began to move from the countryside to cities for a living. The population of rural areas diminished radically, and there was more emphasis on the cities. The development of the printing press changed the course of world literature. It made literature available to a larger part of the population. Every city had their local printer, and every printer was a book publisher:

Changes in publishing and the reading public also contributed to the demise of regionalist and local color fiction: for example, the perfection of a photoengraving process that allowed cheaper magazine printing; a younger generation of writers and readers who were less tied to the Civil War; greater emphasis on the commercial potential of magazines and aggressive marketing techniques of new popular magazines such as McClure's, Collier's, and The Saturday Evening Post; and the reading public's new interest in historical romance and adventure stories. Political expansionism also drew attention away from the local to extended national and international arenas. (Meyers, 2001).

As seen in the quotation above, with the widespread of the printing press, magazines, and marketing, the emphasis on the local color and regionalism faded. Because the time and technological developments changed, the view of regionalism also changed in time. One should not mix regionalism with realism as the former values local and rural subjects and is interested in the literary landscape, customs, minorities, etc. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, modernist writers and critics saw regionalism and local color degraded while they called their own works high culture. Modernism was seen as cosmopolitan and transnational; however, modernists were not aware of the danger coming with the globalization and industrialization which led to a homogenous culture. Regionalist writers were the last castle defending individualism and local customs. In his definition of regionalism, Grant Wood puts it bluntly:

Regionalism seeks to direct preponderating attention to the natural landscape, human geography, and cultural life of particular areas of the country, in the belief that writers who draw their materials from their own experience and the life they know best are more likely to attain universal values than those who do not (1965, 3).

Throughout the thesis, regionalism is going to be discussed with Lewis Mumford's theory of regionalism as his approach is different from classical regionalism. Lewis Mumford wrote an article for *The New Yorker* magazine in 1947 and shifted the perception of regionalism. Before him, regionalism and the universal were opposing forces, and they were independent of each other. However, Mumford's idea of regionalism does not locate regionalism in contrast to the universal; instead, he believes that there is a strong link between the local and the universal. In his view of regionalism, a region or community does not consist of a society having a strict national identity, and it has its strength from multiculturalism. There is an interaction between the local and the universal. In literature, such interaction takes place on the text.

Modernism which looked down on regionalism as mentioned before was questioned with the rise of postmodernism by the philosophers such as Roland Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, etc. The aim of postmodernism is to deconstruct the clashes between opposing forces and show that everything exists and is meaningful with its opposite. In short, as Derrida points out, the "binary opposition" such as black/white and dark/light can produce a meaning when they are together. Similarly, we cannot analyze an artist or work just as a regionalist artist or work without using its opposition. In his widely-known and quoted book, *Literary Theory an Introduction*, Terry Eagleton tells us about Derrida's idea of deconstruction as follows:

Ideologies like to draw rigid boundaries between what is acceptable and what is not, between self and non-self, truth and falsity, sense and nonsense, reason and madness, central and marginal, surface and depth. Such metaphysical thinking, as I have said, cannot be simply eluded: we cannot catapult ourselves beyond this binary habit of thought into an ultra-metaphysical realm. But by a certain way of operating upon texts - whether 'literary' or 'philosophical' - we may begin to unravel these oppositions a little, demonstrate how one term of an antithesis secretly inheres within the other (1983,133).

When readers read Frost's poems first and then read Heaney's poems, the latter becomes cosmopolitan. One cannot think of Heaney alone without Frost in his/her mind. Also, Heaney cannot reflect a sole regionalism without being affected by his readings of Frost. Heaney and Frost's being regionalists is natural, it is not planned or predestined. They do not apply regional manners but accomplish universal appeal. They combine localness with universal values, and the latter is primarily cosmopolitan. Both poets are



simultaneously American and Irish, and at the same time, they are world citizens. Therefore, the text is a cosmopolitan place in which authors and readers interact with each other constantly. Frank Waters believes “The rooted artist has found his own center: his geographic homeland, his race, his time. . . For just as his work faithfully reflects his own microcosmic background, so does it reflect the macrocosmic; the human, emotional, psychic background of all humanity” (Kishbaugh, 2017, 177). Like Waters, Mumford did not think that the local and universal were opposing forces. He believed that each local culture has universality. Thanks to Mumford, regionalism took its place somewhere between the local and universal.

## **1.2. Cosmopolitanism**

The idea of cosmopolitanism dates back to Greek and Roman times in the Stoic and Cynic traditions. The Cynic Diogenes of Sinope exclaimed, “I am cosmopolitan” to show his disagreement with other “polis” which he did not like the rules of, and he stated that his “polis” was the universe. In Greek, “kosmos,” “polites” and “polis” mean universe, citizen and city respectively and a new word was derived from them: cosmopolitanism. Here is the definition of Macmillan Dictionary: “the word cosmopolitan originated in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and was derived from the noun *cosmopolite* or ‘citizen of the world,’ from the Greek ‘kosmopolites.’ The Greek philosopher Diogenes, a key figure of the Cynic school in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, took the view that he was a citizen of the world at a time when ancient Greek identity was either city-state or referred merely to the Greek peoples” (“Cosmopolitan,” 2018). As understood from its etymological roots, “cosmos” and “polis” represent the universe and local. Therefore, locality is essential so as to make sense of the universe and achieve cosmopolitanism in literature. The poets studied in the thesis show that they have reached a high level in literature utilizing dynamics between rural contexts and broader contexts of world literature.

In the United States, in the colonial context, there are many examples of writers who contributed to the growth of cosmopolitanism. B. Franklin and T. Jefferson shared a universal faith in human rights, and this contributed to constructing a national identity in the country. Walt Whitman wrote *Leaves of Grass* in 1855 when Ireland was under the effects of “the Great Famine,” and the Irish were migrating to the States massively. Whitman serves as a good model for cosmopolitanism as he was the only one who

understood and appreciated the cultural difference of Irish culture. What is being implied with this example is that Ireland and America have a long and mutual history although they are in different continents.

During the Enlightenment, the evolution of cosmopolitanism continued with Immanuel Kant as an alternative to rising nationalism:

The people of the earth have thus entered in varying degrees into a universal community, and it has developed to the point where a violation of rights in one part of the world is felt everywhere. The idea of a cosmopolitan right is therefore not fantastic and overstrained; it is a necessary complement to the unwritten code of political and international right, transforming it into a universal right of humanity. Only under this condition can we flatter ourselves that we are continually advancing towards a perpetual peace (Kant, 1970, 107-108).

Politically, cosmopolitanism stands as an idea which is contrary to the idea of nationalism. On the other hand, literarily, it was multicultural and most exclusive in the works of colonial writers even though some of the writers used it inclusively. Kwame Anthony Appiah is the most crucial figure of cosmopolitanism with his rooted cosmopolitanism which is a more moderate version. There are many types of cosmopolitanism, but what I am going to use throughout my thesis is rooted cosmopolitanism as used in Appiah's *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in World of Strangers* (2006). Onara O'Neill, in *Bounded and Cosmopolitan Justice* (2003), expresses that rooted cosmopolitanism has a place between cosmopolitanism and localism. Therefore, it can be understood that rooted cosmopolitanism has the ability to meet the needs of global and particular worlds together. It appeals to both universal values and particularism. Appiah believes that people ought to respect the diversity in the world, and the life of each person in any community is valuable. Intercultural dialogue is the essence of his cosmopolitanism, so it is in a continuous relationship with the plurality of life in which intercultural dialogue stands out. People should respect each other's life and come up against any kind of discrimination. Here, cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism part their ways away. Both give importance to cultural diversity and defend plurality; however, multiculturalism is not very eager for intercultural dialogue. Cyrus R.K. Patell, summarizes the logic behind as follows:

I like my culture because it's mine, but I respect yours, and I want you to respect mine. I happen to prefer mine because it's mine, and I imagine that you prefer yours because it's yours. I really can't comment on yours because it's yours, and I don't belong to it. I cherish my long-standing practices and values; out of respect, I'll refrain from commenting on your long-standing practices and values. If I happen to find some of

your long-standing practices and values distasteful or even repugnant, well, we'll just agree to disagree (Patell, 2003, 9).

As the countries become more multicultural and heterogeneous, personal identities become weaker, and the bond between identities is easy to break. Appiah's cosmopolitanism changed the previous types of cosmopolitanism as it was for liberal individualism and emphasized the importance of local identities. In the rest of this chapter, the understanding of cosmopolitanism used in the thesis will be exemplified with two novels from world literature. Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1951) was popular when it was first published and is a famous novel now because of its cosmopolitanism. By using biblical allusions and characters from different cultural and racial backgrounds, Melville creates art of work read even today by many readers. With his cosmopolitan point of view, Melville achieved what Appiah calls cultural dialogue and interaction. The novel begins with "Call me Ishmael" which is a direct allusion to the Bible. Melville wants his reader to read the novel as the Puritans read the Bible.

Ahab, another character in the novel, is an example of the Calvinistic theory of predestination. His ego and evil side take him to a tragic end. Also, he is associated with Fedallah who represents the evil side of Ahab. In Arabic, "feda" means "sacrifice" and "Allah" means "God." However, Fedallah is a Zoroastrian in the novel and with this Melville tries to show his own confusion over religion. In short, Melville reaches universality by using various aspects of different religions and so *Moby Dick* has protected its popularity for more than a century and become a classic in the American canon.

As mentioned before, cosmopolitanism rose as a challenge to nationalism. In Irish Literature, James Joyce is one of the most important advocates of cosmopolitanism and criticized Irish nationalism severely in his works. In his bildungsroman *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Stephan Dedalus, the writer's literary alter ego, says "Ireland is the old sow that eats her farrow" (1977, 231). Nationalism and Catholicism were the most important issues at the time, and Joyce rejected them through his works by using the cosmopolitan side of literature. Stephan- Joyce desired to "fly by the nets" of nationalism religion in the way "Daedalus" does with "Icarus."

To sum up, the first chapter of the thesis focuses on the ideas of regionalism and cosmopolitanism. The first section summarizes the history of regionalism in the US and

world with examples from world literature. Following this, the idea of cosmopolitanism is clarified by explaining the roots of the word and giving ideas from writers like Kwame Anthony Appiah and Cyrus R.K. Patell.

In the second chapter, Robert Frost's regionalism is analyzed in detail. "Nature," "speech," "Yankee character" and "rural vs. urban" are the sections which are studied deeply. In the section of "nature," the poems of "New England" and "The Road Not Taken" are discussed to see how Frost uses the pastoral life of New England. In the section of "speech," Frost's use of "sound of sense" and local language are shown in the poems like "Mending Wall" and "Death of the Hired Man." In the section of "Yankee character," New England people's personal traits like companionship, humor, thrift, and hard work are seen in a few selected poems. In the next section of the chapter, "rural vs. urban," one can see how Frost compares and contrasts city and country life in the poems of "The Need of Being Versed in Country Things" and "A Roadside Stand." In the last section, Frost's use of tools and manual labor are treated in an important poem like "Out, Out."

The third chapter mainly examines Seamus Heaney's poems from a regionalist point of view. In the first section of the third chapter, a brief biography of Seamus Heaney, as well as his use of landscape and tools, are presented. The poems of "Digging" and "Blackberry-Picking" are analyzed to show how Heaney uses farmers, landscape, and tools while reflecting the rural life of Northern Ireland. The next section displays the Irish Poet's use of local language and place-names in "Mid-term Break" and "Broagh." In the last section, Heaney's bog poems are discussed in terms of Irish identity. "Punishment" and "Bogland" are the poems in which Heaney's search for his origins and national identity is expressed.

## 2. CHAPTER TWO: Aspects of Regionalism in Frost's Poetry

### 2.1. Life of Robert Frost

Born in 1874, Robert Frost is an American poet and known for his realistic descriptions of local life and excellent usage of New England colloquial speech. He often used the region as background to employ universal themes and achieved to win four Pulitzer Prizes. Contrary to popular belief, he grew up in the city and attended schools there in his early years.

He published his first poem in *New York Independent* when he was twenty years old. After this success, he made a proposal to his love Elinor Miriam White and one year later, in 1895, they got married. Frost studied at Harvard University for two years and had to quit because of his illness ("Robert Frost," 2018).

Frost's grandfather bought a farm for Frost who worked on the farm with his wife. In that farm, he used to write in the mornings and work in the afternoons. Here, he wrote many poems which would later be very successful. Although he was good at writing then, he was not able to work the farm, and he gave up. After farming, he started working as a teacher at several schools in New Hampshire ("Robert Frost," 2018).

Frost went to England with his family in 1912 and lived in a small town near London. After his fresh start in London, he had the chance to publish his first poem collection, *A Boy's Will*. Also, he was lucky enough to meet two notable poets like Ezra Pound and Edward Thomas who positively affected his life. Frost wrote his famous poem *The Road Not Taken* after his long walks with Edward Thomas in London ("Robert Frost Biography," 2018).

*Selected Poems* and *New Hampshire* were published in the year of 1923, and he was awarded the first of four Pulitzer Prizes. When the Second World War started, he went back to America and purchased a farm where he continued his writing and teaching career. These years are the proof of how he gave importance to vernacular speech in real life. In his lectures at Amherst College, he taught his students how to use intonations and sounds of colloquial English which he called "the sound of sense" ("Robert Frost," 2018).

After his first Pulitzer Prize, Frost published his *West Running Brook* (1928) and *A Further Range*, which received a second Pulitzer. 1930s were terrible because of some family disasters. He suffered the death of his youngest daughter in 1934. Four years later, his wife died of a heart attack. After a long depression period, his son committed suicide while another daughter of Frost suffered from mental illnesses and was institutionalized. His grief because of his losses showed itself in the poems written in that period (“Frost’s Life and Career,” 2018).

Due to the deterioration of his lungs, Frost moved to Florida in 1936 and started to spend cold times of the year there. Between 1936 and 1937, he worked as Harvard staff until his wife’s death and had to quit his job. He published *Collected Poems* in 1939 (“Robert Frost Biography,” 2018).

After the Second World War, he wrote from time to time. His writing collections continued with the publication of *A Witness Tree* (1943), *Come In and Other Poems* (1943), *Hard Not To Be King* (1951), and *In The Clearings* (1962). When he was eighty-seven years old, Frost attended the inauguration of John F. Kennedy, and he recited his poem “The Gift Outright.” The following year, upon Kennedy’s request, he was sent to the Soviet Union, and he met Soviet Premier Khrushchev. The same year, Frost died in Boston after his prostate surgery and was buried in Vermont. Nine months later, John F. Kennedy paid tribute to Robert Frost in his speech at Amherst: “The death of Robert Frost leaves a vacancy in the American spirit... His death impoverishes us all, but he has bequeathed his Nation a body of imperishable verse from which Americans will forever gain joy and understanding” (“Robert Frost,” 2018).

## **2.2. Nature**

A writer who writes on a region cannot escape the traditions, customs, attitudes or nature of that region. For Robert Frost, local culture of his region is the source of his poetry, and he expresses New England through his vernacularism. Unlike Heaney, he does not refer to mythology or the Bible, but he prefers colloquial speech and everyday life of the ordinary people. Frost deals with geography, people, speech, customs and manners of New England, but this is not a simple description of the place. His art is creative, in other words, he makes something new and unique using the ordinary materials mentioned above. By bringing these localities together, he reaches

universality and is known by many readers all over the world. Frost has an essential place in modern poetry, and unlike his contemporaries, he succeeded universal acclaim utilizing his localism. His art is different from other contemporary poets as his poetry is always clear, his language is colloquial, his anecdotes are simple, and his verse form is not irregular. On the other hand, modernist poets tend to use myths, biblical allusions, the subtle point of views, paradoxes, etc.

Robert Frost is known as the poet of New England. However, one should not focus on New England as a reflection of Frost's own experience or s/he can miss his art through which he presents the regional world. For Frost and his art, New England is a microcosm in which he reflects what is universal. Frost manages to describe a particular place, a farm or two roads in the woods and makes us think beyond them. By using the New England setting in his poems, Frost desires to make us compare our world with the life of New England.

His "New Hampshire" poem which is one of the poet's longest poems is a notable example to see Frost's regionalism. For Irving Howe, the poem "foreshadows the sly folksiness" and is a clear "display of provincialism" (Howe, 1963, 144). The introduction part of the poem consisting of 60 lines deals with conversations Frost has with different people from different provinces. He talks to "a lady from the South" and meets "a traveler from Arkansas." Then, he talks about the climate when he encounters a Californian. He sees "a poet from another state" who does not "even offer a drink." The first part of the poem includes Frost's humorous talks with people from other regions.

The second part of "New Hampshire" is related to the region's specimens. For Frost, the folk of the province is "not quite short for Art" but "She's still New Hampshire, a most restful state" (Faggen, 2007, 237). The people of the region are good enough; therefore, he prefers spending his time elevating "the already lofty mountains" (1960, 206) and elevating the people of the area. On the other hand, the kind of encounters Frost has in the previous part of the poem cannot be seen as he claims:

Just specimens is all New Hampshire has,  
One each of everything as in a showcase,  
Which naturally she doesn't care to sell (Frost, 201).

John Lynen, the writer of *Pastoral Art of Frost* (1960), believes that the poem is the best example to see Frost's regionalism in which Frost reflects common human experience through local elements: "Regionalism expresses universals through local particulars" (74). For Lynen, this part of the poem below is "the focal point" of the poem as Frost here writes "the central fact of his regionalism" more clearly than other passages of the poem (67):

I may as well confess myself the author  
Of several books against the world in general.  
To take them as against a special state  
Or even nation's to restrict my meaning.  
I'm what is called a sensibilitist,  
Or otherwise an environmentalist.  
I refuse to adapt myself a mite  
To any change from hot to cold, from wet  
To dry, from poor to rich, or back again.  
I make a virtue of my suffering  
From nearly everything that goes on round me.  
In other words, I know wherever I am,  
Being the creature of literature I am,  
I shall not lack for pain to keep me awake.  
Kit Marlowe taught me how to say my prayers:  
'Why, this is Hell, nor am I out of it.'  
Samoa, Russia, Ireland I complain of,  
No less than England, France, and Italy.  
Because I wrote my novels in New Hampshire  
Is no proof that I aimed them at New Hampshire (206).



By using New England, Frost is trying to reach universal values as he states in the last lines of the quoted poem: "Because I wrote my novels in New Hampshire is no proof that I aimed them at New Hampshire." Frost defends himself in that he writes beyond regionalism as he claims to have written books for the "world in general." He is not just telling his readers how New England is, but he is using New England as a background to show common human experience. For Frost, New England is a microcosm through which he reflects shared experience of real people, and Lynen states as follows:

Poetic theories are always, in one way or another, concerned with the problem of explaining how art reconciles the particular with the universal. In Frost's aesthetic, the particular is identified with the local. He thus solves the issue through a concept of the regional world itself, a world which is at once particular in the extreme and, by virtue of this very particularity, a world of archetypes, or ideas (1960, 72).

Nature is frequently used by Frost; however, he does not use it in the same sense of that of Emerson and Wordsworth. One cannot call him a poet of nature and Robert Frost himself once said, "I guess I am not a Nature poet. I have only written two poems without a human being in them" (Kornizer,1952). Nature is a crucial element in his poems, and he also said, "Some people call me poet for nature, there is also something else in my poems." What makes Frost different from Emerson and Wordsworth is his use of the nature of New England to depict common people of the region. Unlike his contemporaries, he focuses on psychological conditions of these people like the tragedies in "Home Burial," individualism in "The Road Not Taken," or the conflict between duty and imagination in "The Sound of the Trees." He mentions Emerson in "New Hampshire":

Emerson said, 'The God who made New Hampshire

Taunted the lofty land with little men.'

In 1836, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote *Nature* which expresses his ideas of nature and started the movement of Transcendentalism at that time. In the essay, Emerson states that the beauty of nature can only be understood when a man is in solitude. For Emerson, nature is an essential source to appreciate our lives. The sublimity of nature is beyond human comprehension according to Emerson (1979). On the other hand, Frost uses nature as a background in order to reflect his art. Frost's poetry is more social than other nature poets as he gives more emphasis to the relationships and tragedies of people and reveals human psyche by using nature as a medium. When Frost first became popular in the world literature, he was thought as a nature poet. However, if one wants to put him

in a category, s/he can call him a pastoral poet. In pastoral poetry, nature is just the setting through which the poet tells real human experience. Frost uses nature as background in his art, and he attaches nature to different themes. The nature poets like Emerson use nature for nature; therefore, Frost can be linked to pastorals rather than poets of nature. What is meant here is that regionalism is pastoral. Thus, the poem talks about the poet's depiction of the regional. He started his poem with reference to the general to define what is regional.

Another poem that shows Frost's reliance on nature to portray the regional is "The Road Not Taken." Published in 1916, the poem is one of his well-known poems from the collection of *Mountain Interval*. The verse goes as follows:

#### THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;  
Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,  
And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.  
I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

This poem uses New England as its main setting. Moreover, Frost uses nature here as a background to reflect man's psychological dilemma. The poem is about two roads, and

the speaker has to choose one of them. As stated in the first chapter, one cannot analyze a poem just as being a cosmopolitan or regionalist. Kwame Anthony Appiah in his *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in World of Strangers* proposes rooted cosmopolitanism which has a place between localism and cosmopolitanism. In "The Road Not Taken," Frost reaches universalism through his usage of localism. The archetypal dilemma in the poem is one that everyone can face throughout his or her lives, each in a different way:

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,

And sorry I could not travel both

An individual can choose either of these roads which symbolize free will and fate. He cannot separate free will and fortune, or he cannot define free will without fate as one is not able to define regionalism without cosmopolitanism. Derrida believes that "binary oppositions" can produce a meaning when they are together (1978). Similarly, a poem cannot be evaluated just in the light of regionalism without using its opposition. If we return to the poem, it begins with imagery of nature: "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood." Frost links the destination of the speaker in life to two roads in the forest in New England. He is not looking for oneness with nature or trying to find true love in nature. What he is doing here is reflecting a real human experience by using New England and its nature as a background. The speaker is in a dilemma whether to choose this road or the road less travelled by. The visual image of "yellow road" is Frost's usage of nature as a medium. Through this imagery, Frost tells the reader that it is Autumn. Also, yellow symbolizes uncertainty here. In *Catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield, the narrator of the novel describes himself as yellow since it means he is a coward (Salinger, 1951). "Two roads" which is a representation of nature again symbolizes the speaker's dilemma of irresolution and indecision.

"The Road Not Taken" and Frost's many other poems have regionalist aspects in them. His telling the way of life and experience of Yankees in New England by using nature imagery shows us his regionalism. Lynen tells us how Frost uses nature in the following quotation:

Frost's nature poetry is so excellent and so characteristic that it must be given a prominent place in any account of his art. In our attempt to understand this aspect of Frost, the idea of pastoral proves useful. Not that the nature poems are to be considered as pastorals in any strict sense-obviously the two kinds of poetry differ. In pastorals the subject is a special society, or, more generally, a way of life, and nature is merely the setting within which we see this. The pastoralist does not write *about* nature, he uses

nature as his scene, and it is important only in that it defines the swain's point of view. Nevertheless, Frost's nature poetry is closely related to his pastoralism (Lynen, 1960).

Another nature imagery can be seen in the 8<sup>th</sup> line. "The road less travelled by" is described as "grassy and wanted wear." If one empathizes with the speaker, he can understand his indecision. Robert Frost shows the speaker's choice of the road with visual imagery. The speaker chooses "the road less travelled by" which is still "grassy." From a rooted cosmopolitan outlook, people may face difficult choices in life and have to make a decision to choose between two different roads. It is interesting to notice that the speaker tries to define his personal experience by relating it to the law of human nature: Man is facing a situation in which he has to make a decision. Thus, this personal experience is viewed in the lenses of the universal.

The repetitions of "woods" in the poem is a clear representation of nature. Imagery is an important device for Frost and other poets to get the reader to illustrate the setting. Frost depicts New England's "woods" with its roads, flowers, leaves, trees, but his main aim is to direct his readers to decide which path to take through the imagery of nature. His focal point is not nature itself, but the real human experience. Consequently, nature is used to reflect the dilemma and the inner conflict of the speaker and his endeavors to rationalize his decision. Here the readers are reminded of Hamlet's "To be or not to be." Regionalism is again reflected in Frost's use of nature.

### **2.3. Speech**

Frost's language in his poems shows his locality in many ways. He masters native speech in most of his poems. He describes the life in New England through the speech of the ordinary man. T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and other contemporary poets were influenced by his use of language and Pound appreciated him verbally for using the colloquial speech of New England. He uses the common speech freely and without restrictions and once he said:

Poetry, for example, was tried without punctuation. It was tried without capital letters. It was tried without any image but those to the eye. It was tried without phrase, epigram, coherence, logic and consistency. It was tried without ability, these many things was it tried without, and what had we left? Still something (Robinson, 1935, 79).

The American poet writes his poems with the local language of the Yankees. His style captures the essence of New England characters, and he uses intonation excellently. He does not say everything at once but leaves the meaning in many instances to his readers. While doing this, he employs stories, people and life of New England. He does

not use many words in his art but makes the best use of Yankee dialect. As Frost himself puts it bluntly, his poems are conversational like the real speech of the Yankees. Unlike the artificiality of other contemporary poets, his lyrics are more direct and more straightforward. Also, his writings are good references to the people, nature, and life of the New England region. The countryside of the province is the source of his natural and straightforward style. He enjoys depicting ordinary people's life. He is not fond of ambiguity and complexity of modernism. Frost says on the simplicity of his art, "Occasionally I am a bit ashamed when a technical name of a flower gets in one of my poems because I feel a poet should not include in his writing anything that the average reader will not understand" (Maynard, 1924, 172).

Thereupon, Robert Frost does not like ambiguity in his works, and he keeps his poems simple so that an average reader can understand them. In order to do this, he uses the colloquial speech of New England Yankees. In this sense, he differs from T. S. Eliot who refers to mysteries and obscurities in his poems. By looking at "Mending Wall," one sees how Frost employs speech and portrays Yankee farmers.

This poem is an excellent example of Frost's use of regionalism. Wall-building is a tradition in less developed provinces like New England. Frost uses ordinary people like farmers here to deliver his message. By using a communal ritual of the region, he reaches universality. He also draws our attention to specific traditions like neighborliness, wall-building and property ownership in New England. "Good fences make good neighbors" which is made popular by the poem shows the way of life in the province. Fences are a sign of social order, and one can understand that farmers stick to these rules. The fence-building tradition reflects a specific characteristic of the region.

In the poem, Frost's intention is not to give a message about human relations among Yankee farmers in New England. He illustrates a problem and a paradoxical issue with the symbol of the "wall." It is a symbol of all kinds of barriers in life. Frost is trying to say that he is against all sorts of boundaries, not only in New England but all. The "wall" symbolizes different kinds of barriers such as physical, psychological, educational, economic or regional. Frost catches a universal success with his usage of rural sensibility. Also, by questioning the relationship between the speaker and Yankee neighbor, one can easily understand the mentality of New England people. Frost is more

empathetic towards the neighbor who shows the tolerance and friendship of New England people. He does all these by using a colloquial and realistic language.

The poem opens with “something” and readers are left with the question of what something is. One can easily understand the feelings of anger and surprise from the speaker’s voice tone in the lines.

To each the boulders that have fallen to each.  
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls  
We have to use a spell to make them balance:  
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"  
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.  
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,  
One on a side. It comes to little more (47).

Building a wall is hard, but he is not very keen on the reconstruction of the wall. For the speaker, it is “just another kind of out-door game.” Frost portrays the Yankee humor when the speaker says “Stay where you are until our backs are turned!” which is written with a spell. The speaker goes on to mock the neighbor with his characteristic humor:

I could say "Elves" to him,  
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather (48).

The emphasis is on “could” and “Elves” which is a clear sign of Yankee humor again. The lines hint that the “elf” is the neighbor in the poem.

Frost in “Mending Wall” comments on important subjects of individualism, regionalism, and universalism. The important thing here is the way he speaks about them in the poem. He creates two men who talk to each other like characters in a play. The speaker is created with Yankee humor, and he uses a colloquial language and simple words to make the old man understand what he means. On the other hand, the neighbor prefers short replies and favors order in the neighborhood traditionally. He does not use polysyllabic words and repeats the word “good” several times: “He only says, ‘Good

fences make good neighbors.” His economy of syllables suits his preference for a wall which is “traditionally built to avoid any misunderstanding between neighbors” (Bhattacharyya, 2016, 543). Therefore, these two distinct voice tones of the region present the conflict over the wall in a dramatic way.

For Frost, New England region is a microcosm where he tells his readers about himself. Essentially, life is the same everywhere, but the idea that Frost tries to assert here is that he goes from the local to the universal by reflecting common themes. In doing that, in his every poem, he uses the nature, people, language, traditions, manners, and beliefs of New England. In the United States, Robert Frost is one of the best in employing regional speech. Weygandt comments as follows:

Wordsworth fits no more perfectly into the background of England’s Lake Country than Frost into the background of New Hampshire. Hot-heartedly individual as Frost is, with an intensity of lyric feeling, and a keenness of vision, and a firmness of artistry independent of place and time, there is much of New Hampshire in him. All rural New England shares a laconic speech, a picturesqueness of phrase, a stiffness of lip, a quizzicality of attitude, a twistiness of approach to thought, but there is a New Hampshire slant to all these qualities, and that slant you find in the verse of Frost (Weygandt, 1934).

Another aspect of regionalism is seen in the American poet’s “sound of sense” theory. Robert Frost is famous for employing free verse by using colloquial language in his poems. He is believed to be the creator of “Sound of Sense Theory.” According to his theory, the words in his poems cannot be enough to understand what his poems are really trying to convey. To overcome this, Frost benefits from the relationship between sound and meaning. He believed that poetry could be grasped through the help of sound. By doing so and using the local language of New England, he broke away from Victorian poetry. He applied the “sound of sense” to facilitate colloquialism and provide a conversational rhythm in his art. The daily local life of New England is present in this form and Frost does this with great simplicity to be understood by his average readers.

His interest in the sound of words comes from his short stay at Harvard College where he became familiar with the local speech of New England. Through his art, Frost depicts how sound contributes to the multiple meanings of his poems. In Elizabeth Isaac’s book, Frost gives an example of two people in a room. These two people are speaking in the room, but their speech is indistinguishable. Can one understand the context of the speech in the conversation? Frost answers with yes and continues: “You hear talk in the next room; but you hear the tone of voice, and you have the essential

meaning of what is said” (Isaacs, 86). John Bartlett was his family friend, and in one of the letters written to him, Frost described his “sound of sense” theory:

The ear is the only true writer and the only true reader. I have known people who could read without hearing the sentence sounds and they were the fastest readers. Eye readers we call them. They can get the meaning by glances. But they are bad readers because they miss the best part of what a good writer puts into his work. Remember that the sentence sound often says more than the words. It may even as in irony convey a meaning opposite to the words. I wouldn't be writing all this if I didn't think it the most important thing I know (Frost, 1995, 677).

What Frost is trying to clarify here is that the meaning is produced with the help of sound in his poems. Therefore, readers read a conversation made between readers and Frost or between characters. While doing it, Frost uses Yankee language and characters in the setting of New England. Frost's “Sound of Sense” provides a visual image of his poems. Readers have the chance to visualize the setting, characters, monologue or dialogue by means of “Sound of Sense.” Readers do not need an extra description of the setting or characters. Frost writes as if he was making a conversation with the reader using actual characters and setting of New England and this contributes a lot to the pleasure of reading his poetry. His conversational style with his straightforwardness enables his readers to read his art easily. His local characters and settings with his “sound of sense” gives a colorful description of the meaning.

In his interview with W.S. Braithwaite, Frost explained his theory by giving historical examples:

To carry this idea a little further: It doesn't seem possible to me that a man can read on the printed page what he has never heard. Nobody today knows how to read Homer and Virgil perfectly, because the people who spoke Homer's Greek and Virgil's Latin are as dead as the sound of their language. On the other hand, to further emphasize the impossibility of words rather than sound conveying the sense of meaning, take the meter of translation. Really to understand and catch all that is embodied in a foreign masterpiece it must be read in the original because while the words may be brought over, the tone cannot be (Newdick, 1937, 292).

For Frost, the tone in poetry is essential and must be used elaborately. In its dictionary definition, “tone” means “the poet's attitude toward the poems, speaker, reader... Often described as a ‘mood’ that pervades the experience of reading the poem” (“Glossary of Poetic Terms,” 2018).

The tone of a poem is important as it is used to emphasize the “mood” of the work. With the help of the “mood,” one can understand the emotions of love, greed, pity, pain, enthusiasm, etc. in the poems. As mentioned before, one can understand the



meaning of a conversation between two people in a closed room by means of the poet's usage of tone. His theory allowed him to use local New England dialect with flexibility. In the same interview with W.S. Braithwaite, Frost makes an emphasis on the importance of folk speech:

The beginning of poetry there is in some turn given to the sentence in the folk speech. Art is the amplification and sophistication of the proverbial turns of speech. All folk speech is musical. In primitive conditions man has not at his aid reactions by which he can quickly and easily convey his ideas and emotions. Consequently he has to think more deeply to call up the image for the communication of his meaning. It was the actuality he sought; and, thinking more deeply, not in the speculative sense of science or scholarship, he carried out Carlyle's assertion that if you 'think deep enough you think musically' (292).

By using all the elements of the "sound of sense" like the rules of metrics, Frost plays his music with the rhythms of New England dialects. The poems of Frost have been translated into many languages for about a century. However, the effect of these translations is weak, and the music in the original ones is lost. It is difficult for readers to catch the spontaneity and feel comfortable as in Frost's conversational style. In fact, the artificiality of translations comes from its simplicity and loss of tone. Frost uses the colloquial language of New England with New Englanders in New England settings. He does not use fancy words or decorate his poems with stylish adjectives, so it is not difficult for a translator to find exact words in his own language. However, catching the music and locality Frost has in his poems is impossible for the translator. Playing his own music with the help of New England dialect is special to Robert Frost. In Frost's words, "poetry is a reproduction of the tones of actual speech." He believes that colloquialism is the basic element to write poems in his understanding of art. He does this with great simplicity so one can underestimate the value of his art. However, providing such a tone with common words an average person speaks is what makes the New England poet one of the best poets of all time.

He writes with "the ear" to touch the heart of his people and uses distinct features of local language. By "the sound of sense", he refers to colloquialism: "I am as sure that the colloquial is the root of every good poem as I am sure that the national is the root of all thought and art...One half of individuality is locality: and I was about venturing to say the other half was colloquiality" (228, 1918)

As previously mentioned, this music can be seen in Frost's "Mending Wall." The poem starts with two men making discussion on a wall between their places. The poem's

music which is played by the narrator in the poem is welcoming, and it takes the reader into the conflict of the poem.

From the first lines on, it can be understood that he is surprised and angry. The tone goes from annoyance to amusement. Frost achieves this change of emotions with the tone and his conversational style as in other poems. In an interview, he explained that he was inspired by a man whom Frost spoke on his farm while living in Derry. In a letter, Frost declared that harmony of poetry could be caught with “fresh from talk” of others (McNair, 1998, 70). As we see here, Frost’s regionalism comes from ordinary people in New England. His poetry is a reflection of the New England region and Yankee characters. However, the meaning produced in his poems goes beyond New England, and his art has a universal value. Poetry itself is universal. Primitive people in ancient times used it and more civilized people built upon it gradually. Most of them used the same words in different languages. What makes Frost distinguishable from the rest of the world is his usage of local characters and settings with his own music.

The value of Frost's art comes from its simplicity. He prefers New England's local dialect, and his poems are like a conversation. He refers to tone and rhythm to produce meanings. We can check his word choice in “Mending Wall.” In the poem, Frost avoids subtle words and chooses simple ones like “wall”, “dogs”, “neighbor”, “fences”, “stone”, “spring”, “apple”, “balls”, “cows”, “trees” etc. “Mending Wall,” as in Frost's other poems, does not have words an average reader cannot understand. Frost manages to reach universalism by using these simple words. The “wall” in the poem means much more than the word itself, and it is Frost’s gate from New England to the world.

Robert Frost is intensely rooted in the tradition of New England. Using a vernacular speech, he portrays traditions of the rural world and depicts the actions of ordinary man in his poems. He is keen on Yankee speakers who act as dramatic characters. He uses iambic pentameter with blank verse which helps him create a dramatic effect. His conversationalist style is a reflection of common people’s speech. He gets his strength from the incidents of rural life in New England. While doing so, he avoids complexities and uses real New England accent so that common man can read like they are having a conversation. The region has its specific traditions and archetypes. Frost benefits from them to go from the rural to the universal. He uses real human

experience in his art. His conversationalist style makes his readers read his poems with great joy. His respect for the countrymen of New England can be seen in his speeches and poems. He grasps their traditions, and they help him create a new world. Frost is not only the poet of rural New England, but he is the representative and ambassador of its traditions. He is the bridge between the Yankees and the world.

Frost's art is whole in itself. Tradition and duty are two components which complete his style of art. Throughout his career, Frost did not bore himself with the realities of modern life. He worked on the life of ordinary people and traditions of New Englanders. "Death of the Hired Man" is one of his poems where he shows the understanding of duty and tradition in New England through his conversational style. Robert Faggen asserts as follows:

*Death of the Hired Man* carefully constructs in everyday language a New England rural scene. In this instance, the subtle unfolding explores one of Frost's most memorable lines: "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, / They have to take you in." The line appears roughly halfway through the poem, but it largely sums up the conflict on which the understated, unsentimental drama hinges (2007, p. 78).

The poem is written in a conversational style, and readers can feel like they are reading a drama. The dialogue is told simply, that is Frost tells all without saying much as in all of his poems. Also, the dialogue is very natural and reflects the everyday speech of New England people. Frost is direct and warm from the title to the end of the poem. Therefore, readers feel as if they are in a conversation with the characters. One can easily understand from the first lines of the poem that the setting is a farm in New England as usual. There are three main characters in the poem: a couple, Mary and Warren, and an old "hired" man called Silas. The farm wife is a clear representation of love and emotion while her husband symbolizes rationality. In spite of economical usage of vocabulary, Frost manages to reveal the life of ordinary New Englanders through the tone.

The poem has many of the features of Frost's art like a rural setting, everyday life of farmers and colloquialism. He succeeds excellently in showing the tradition of duty. "Silas is back" in order to complete his contract with the farm couple. Silas is old, and he does not have a family. His only commitment to life is through hard work as other "hired" men do. However, throughout his life, his work has not been satisfactory for the people who employ him. He is around when it is "off season," but he cannot be seen when it is time to gather the crop. "What good is he? Who else will harbor him at

his age for the little things he can do?" Mary's welcoming entrance with "Silas is back" leaves itself to a different tone. The poem is like a drama, but Frost does not need to use the names of the characters as readers can understand who is speaking from the voice-tone in the poem.

Frost portrays a traditional farm couple of New England. Mary is a domestic housewife who waits for her husband "to meet him in the doorway with the news." She tries to be kind to her husband and talks smoothly unlike her husband who is annoyed and shouts all the time. Because of her sensitive nature, she cares about "worn-out," "miserable" old man more than her husband. Silas is "asleep beside the stove," and Mary is affectionate towards him. Frost uses Mary to show emotional and domestic nature of New England women. Their duty is to sit at home "musing on the lamp-flame at the table" and wait for their husbands. When they hear their footsteps, they run "on tiptoe" to meet them. Frost shows us that women in rural New England have a traditional lifestyle. When it comes to the husband, he is a traditional New England man who is rational, uncaring, and angry unlike his wife's soft nature:

Off he goes always when I need him most.  
'He thinks he ought to earn a little pay,  
Enough at least to buy tobacco with (49).

Warren, the husband, is annoyed, as the old "hired" man cannot fulfill his duties. His sentences are shorter than Mary and Frost turns to a monosyllabic style when Warren is on stage. Frost uses the pronoun "I" a lot when Warren speaks in the poem, and this shows that man is the only authority in New England tradition. Warren tells the death of the old man with one word, "death" which is similar to Meursault's reaction to his mother's death in Albert Camus' *The Stranger* (1942): "Mother died today." In addition to this, Mary's reaction shows Frost's existentialist outlook on life:

And nothing to look backward to with pride,  
And nothing to look forward to with hope,

Known as the father of existentialism, Soren Kierkegaard believes that the only responsibility of man is to give meaning to his life (Kierkegaard, 1941). Silas tries to give this meaning to his life through his work although Warren does not like how he works. With the lines above and repetitions of the pronoun "I," we can see how Frost

examines man's loneliness, individualism, and hope in the modern world. The dynamics between Mary and Warren are a clear representation of couples in New England and other parts of the world. Like in his other poems, Frost adds a universal value to his art by using the setting and characters of the rural New England. Silas' hope and individualism in the poem stand for mankind's hope and individualism.

In "Death of the Hired Man," Frost makes good use of blank verse and benefits from dashes to add more to his conversational style:

When I came up from Rowe's I found him here,  
Huddled against the barn-door fast asleep,  
A miserable sight, and frightening, too—  
You needn't smile—I didn't recognize him—  
I wasn't looking for him—and he's changed.  
Wait till you see (50).

Mary's thoughts are shown through dashes to indicate her surprise and lack of a certain aim (Charney, 200, 151). Frost adds a dramatic effect by showing Warren's answer to Mary's speech: "You needn't smile." The conversational style reflects powerful feelings of well-characterized speakers. He refers to many other dashes to create the impression of colloquial conversation:

He jumbled everything. I stopped to look  
Two or three times—he made me feel so queer—  
To see if he was talking in his sleep.  
He ran on Harold Wilson—you remember—  
The boy you had in haying four years since (51).

The poet enhances the narrative with the daily speech of ordinary people as seen in "jumbled" and "He ran on." Silas spoke too much about the boy called Harold and he "ran on" to speak about him. Mary tells that she "stopped to look" to learn whether Silas was speaking in his sleep. Literally speaking, she tries to say that she stopped to listen. Frost's method of colloquial speech makes readers feel like they are reading a highly characterized play. The speech over the boy, Harold, is highly colloquial:

He asked me what I thought of Harold's saying  
He studied Latin like the violin  
Because he liked it—that an argument!  
He said he couldn't make the boy believe  
He could find water with a hazel prong—  
Which showed how much good school had ever  
done him.  
He wanted to go over that (51-52).

Harold is the boy who helps on the farm, and the summer Silas had with him disturbs him “like a dream” as he lost all the debates to a young student. He tries to overcome his inferiority by criticizing his learning Latin which is a useless subject for Silas: “Because he liked it- that an argument.” This line shows how Frost uses vernacular speech in a very effective way.

Frost's art needs a careful eye and ear to be fully appreciated by his readers. When read carefully, one can grasp the multi-layered world of voice which increases the intellectual level of his art. Awareness of the sound of sense enables his readers to read his poems with the joy of a drama. Colloquial language of New England is used flexibly, and this provides readers with a kind of poetry which can be read and heard. It is definitely Frost's success that he manages to apply the spoken language of the region to his art and it creates a dramatic effect.

#### **2.4. Yankee Character**

As is known, the United States and American literature has many customs, traditions, and habits which differentiate one region from another. There are no territorial borders, but these various customs change from region to region, and this gives color to these places. New England is a region with many diversities. What makes New England different from other regions is its history, nature, people, culture, and climate. Robert Frost portrays these different characteristics of New England successfully in his poems. He is mostly interested in the north of Boston, not other parts of New England such as Massachusetts, Maine etc., and keeps himself away from the big cities of the region. Boston has a long history in American literature as it was the center of literary

tradition. Thanks to Boston, people read many important writers such as R. W. Emerson, H. D. Thoreau, W. Longfellow. Early settlers of the region were well-educated and brought many books with them while immigrating to New England. Also, surprisingly, they had a printing press set up at Cambridge in 1638, eight years after the foundation of Boston (Hosmer, 1966, 127).

In 1636, the first university, Harvard, was established and together with the printing, this contributed a lot to the intellectual development of New England. Also, Puritanism and Puritan work ethic accelerated the cultural developments in the region. Robert Frost was not interested in the growth of industrialization so one cannot see factories, big buildings, engineers etc., but rural New England as Granville Hicks states:

He has chosen to identify himself with a moribund tradition. Many poets, these hundred and fifty years, have written of mountains, fields, and brooks, and of farmers at their humble tasks; these things have become part of our imaginative inheritance, and one must be insensitive indeed not to be conscious of the beauty in them. But there are other objects now more frequently before our eyes – factories, skyscrapers, machines. We see mechanics, shop-girls, truckdrivers, more often than we do farmers (Hick, 1935, p.246).

When Frost uses a specific part of rural New England, it symbolizes the whole region, and when he uses a specific kind of local person in the region, it symbolizes the essential trait of New England people. The landscapes he depicts, the local people and language he presents in his art all belong to this specific place. As people of New England has a different background from the rest of the US, they have certain definite characteristics associated with New Englanders.

#### **2.4.1. Companionship**

Fear of loneliness is one of the themes Frost uses frequently in his poems. He shows that man is alone in this world and needs companionship to get rid of his frightening loneliness. Because of New England's difficult nature and harsh winters, New Englanders are portrayed as they are in isolation and looking for comradeship by Frost. In "The Hill Wife," Frost uses nature as the name suggests and nature is portrayed as threatening. In the first part of the poem which is composed of 5 parts, the woman's loneliness is introduced:

One ought not to have to care  
So much as you and I  
Care when the birds come round the house

To seem to say good-bye;  
Or care so much when they come back  
With whatever it is they sing;  
The truth being we are as much  
Too glad for the one thing (Frost,160).

The wife is looking for companionship, and her only friends on this isolated farm are the birds. In the second part which is called "House Fear," the woman's loneliness can be felt even more as she returns "to the house from far away." The house is described as lonely and emotional as well. Readers can feel the mental state of the woman better when they think of her alone on this isolated hill. They are so lonely that "they learned to rattle lock and key" to give "warning and time" to any intruder which can be human or animal in the house (Perrine, 1983, 3). In part three, the woman speaks herself, and it can be readily understood that she is having a severe mental breakdown. A stranger comes to their house and asks for food, and she fears the smile on his face:

I wonder how far down the road he's got.  
He's watching from the woods as like as not (161).

In the last part of the poem, she goes out as the house "was too lonely for her there and too wild... and no child." The reader understands her disappearance before her husband does. He looks for everywhere but cannot find her. Frost leaves the husband and readers with a closing thought:

Sudden and swift and light as that  
The ties gave,  
And he learned of finalities  
Besides the grave (162).

He learns the seriousness of life and human psyche which is as important as death. In his condition, the end of his marriage is a harsh reality he has to face on his isolated farm. In "The Hill Wife," Frost gives us a drama with a few words. One can feel Regionalism here through the presentation of this local story. Frost gives an account of a typical New England domestic life. Moreover, The geographical setting is a hill and



farmers are separated from each other like New Englanders in real life. The couple is poor, and the stranger who asks for food is poorer. This reveals the economic situation of rural people in New England:

Perhaps because we gave him only bread

And the wretch knew from that that we were poor (160).

The technology was not developed in the region at that time, and this heightened the feeling of loneliness for the farmers in New England. They did not have electricity so "they had lit the lamp," and they did not have phones so the husband "asked at her mother's house/was she there." The telephone which is a good way of communication in rural areas was only used in populated areas during the time the poem was written. For housewives, the telephone means socializing with other people but the woman in "The Hill Wife" was deprived of this technological device which would fulfill her loneliness as W. Storrs Lee suggests, "Perhaps the farmer himself does not realize the loneliness of a woman on an isolated farm remote from neighbors and friends. Without a telephone she talks with them only occasionally. With a telephone in the house conversation is possible at any time" (1955, 14). Thus, this sense of loneliness is more personalized when we look at the story of these individuals as New Englanders.

#### **2.4.2. The Yankee Humor and Puritan Hard Work**

Frost is very good at describing Yankee traits in his conversational style. The Yankee humor is one of these traits. Frost himself has this Yankee humor and uses it with a bitter irony. For instance, at the end of his "The Mountain," The Yankee answers the question of "Warm in December, cold in June?" with his own words in a humorous way:

I don't suppose the water's changed at all.

You and I know enough to know it's warm

Compared with cold, and cold compared with warm.

But all the fun's in how you say a thing (Frost, 59).

As seen from the lines above, the Yankee humor is not the type that makes you into laughter. It has Yankee wit in it. While writing his poems, Frost uses the Yankee's

shrewdness. Shrewdness is a trait of New Englanders which they inherited from their Puritan ancestors.

Another trait which the Yankees took from their ancestors is the emphasis on hard work. In Puritanism, a person is sinful by birth and only through hard work they can achieve well. Working hard is an honor to God in that they will be rewarded in the end. Puritanism contributed to the shaping of national character in America, and it encouraged material gain by means of hard work and thrift. This was encouraged by socially important people like Benjamin Franklin. However, this hard work is not always portrayed by Robert Frost as something gratifying as seen in the example of "The Death of Hired Man." Dorothy Willis and Manual Carolan comment on Frost's outlook on hard work doctrine in Puritanism:

Mr. Frost describes the disintegration of the moral fibre of the New England farmer. The hired man is an illustration of this deterioration. In order to lure a living from the reluctant matter of New Hampshire, these men have put their faith in the grim, unhumorous, salvation through work doctrine of the Puritan. The grace of beauty, the lilt of gaiety, the joy of laughter, the touch of kindness and the exhalation of love have been banished. Mr. Frost, through his individual characterizations, reveals a society which has collapsed before the nature it abused. His is the cry of the individual in anguish (1924, 124).

Before his death, "Silas is back" to complete his contract with the farm couple. Hard work is his only commitment to life, but his work is not satisfactory for the owner of the farm. Frost tries to portray how the work doctrine of the Puritans deteriorated. Thrift is another virtue of Puritan society in New England, and Frost reflects it in his portrayals of Yankee farmers. Rural Yankees had to save and think carefully about their expenses as they lived on a difficult land and climate. Thrift of the Yankees can be seen as an obligation for them to survive in these harsh conditions. As there were not big factories in the province, people had to work on farms and save what they earned: "Perhaps the rugged land fostered in the settlers of New England an attitude of making the most of what was available to them. Whatever the causes, the Yankees early developed the fine art of making the best of things. Thrifty and hard-working, they had little time for idle talk" (qtd. in Bhise & Fartode, 2017, 53).

The thrifty nature of New Englanders is evident in Frost's "Blueberries." The poem shows a farmer family through the eyes of another family from the same region. The poem tells the difficulty of earning a living for a big family:

He seems to be thrifty; and hasn't he need,

With the mouths of all those young Lorens to feed?  
He has brought them all up on wild berries, they say,  
Like birds. They store a great many away.  
They eat them the year round, and those they don't eat  
They sell in the store and buy shoes for their feet (Frost, 79).

The farmer, Loren, has to feed his children, "those young Lorens" so he needs to pick "wild berries." The children eat them "the year round" and sells the rest "in the store" to "buy shoes" for his children. This observation of Frost shows us that New England farmers have to work hard to survive in such a difficult region. Also, they need to be thrifty and save to spend the winter without suffering from hunger.

### **2.4.3. Rural vs. Urban**

In his poems, Robert Frost often compares and contrasts rural and urban life. As one can guess, he sides with rural life and enjoys living in the countryside with farmers throughout his career. He celebrated the manual labor of these farmers by using them and their work in his art. He was not born into this life and had the chance to taste city life when he moved to London to find some literary contacts. Therefore, he had enough experience to write about the city and country life. With this knowledge of his, he used both places to do his art. "The Need of Being Versed in Country Things" is related to this contrast between rural and urban life. The poem is an excellent picture of rural life in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when villagers moved to big cities so as to start a new life. Because of industrialization, rural dwellers migrated to cities and began a new life. Using New England as background Frost illustrates how life continues in the region:

The house had gone to bring again  
To the midnight sky a sunset glow.  
Now the chimney was all of the house that stood,  
Like a pistil after the petals go.  
The barn opposed across the way,  
That would have joined the house in flame  
Had it been the will of the wind, was left

To bear forsaken the place's name (Frost, 300).

Leaving only a chimney behind, a burnt country house is described in the opening lines of the poem. The house is abandoned because of immigration of villagers and is in ruins as there is no one to look after it:

The birds that came to it through the air  
At broken windows flew out and in,  
Their murmur more like the sigh we sigh  
From too much dwelling on what has been (300).

The house is occupied by birds who "flew out and in." Nature is indifferent to human beings as the birds still "sigh" as people do in cities. Frost's portrayal of the burnt house shows us that the farmers are leaving their houses in their villages for the sake of cities, however, nature is irresponsive to their absence. Robert Faggen, in his *The Cambridge Introduction to Robert Frost*, points out this situation of the villages: "The life in the country and the village bears a memento mori, a remembrance of death, yet even the names have become obscured by growth" (2007, 52).

"A Roadside Stand" is another example of the conflict between cities and countries. A roadside stand is a fruit and vegetable stand used by poor villagers to sell their crops on roadsides. For Faggen, these stands are ignored by drivers coming from cities, and it can be seen as the last stand "against absolute poverty doomed to failure" (62). The roadside stand is a tradition in New England and other small regions in the world. However, it is diminishing as the stands are poisoned by the atrocities of the cities:

The little old house was out with a little new shed  
In front at the edge of the road where the traffic sped,  
A roadside stand that too pathetically pled,  
It would not be fair to say for a dole of bread,  
But for some of the money, the cash, whose flow supports  
The flower of cities from sinking and withering faint.  
The polished traffic passed with a mind ahead,

Or if ever aside a moment, the out of sorts

At having the landscape marred with the artless paint

Of signs that with the N turned wrong and S turned wrong (Frost, 370).

Frost uses words which reflect his regionalist side such as "berries," "wooden," "stand" etc. and illustrates a harsh reality for the villagers. The city drivers ignore the villagers who want to earn some money by selling their crops they grow on their farms. By giving reference to Lewis Mumford, Guy Debord, in *The Society of the Spectacle*, clarifies this very well:

The explosion of cities into the countryside, covering it with what Mumford calls "a formless mass of thinly spread semi-urban tissue," is directly governed by the imperatives of consumption. The dictatorship of the automobile — the pilot product of the first stage of commodity abundance — has left its mark on the landscape with the dominance of freeways, which tear up the old urban centers and promote an ever-wider dispersal... But the technical organization of consumption is only the most visible aspect of the general process of decomposition that has brought the city to the point of consuming itself (1967, 67).

The roadside stand is a depressing symbol of the past, and it is a kind of proof that rural prosperity is in decline. The villagers at their stands hope to earn "some of the cash, whose flow supports." But it is a futile effort:

The thought of so much childish longing in vain,

The sadness that lurks near the open window there,

That waits all day in almost open prayer

For the squeal of brakes, the sound of a stopping car,

Of all the thousand selfish cars that pass,

Just one to enquire what a farmer's prices are.

And one did stop, but only to plow up grass

In using the yard to back and turn around;

And another to ask could they sell it a gallon of gas

They couldn't (this crossly): they had none (371).

In the comparison between the city and rural, the villagers "far from the city" are seen as beggars, because they have to "ask for some city money to feel in hand." "The party

in power” is responsible for the deterioration of rural lifestyle as they give the villagers “the life of the moving-pictures’ promise.”

It is in the news that all these pitiful kin  
Are to be bought out and mercifully gathered in  
To live in villages next to the theater and store  
Where they won't have to think for themselves anymore;  
While greedy good-doers, beneficent beasts of prey,  
Swarm over their lives enforcing (370).

In the second stanza, the villager states that the folk will live in large places which are “next to the theater and store.” In these larger places, people “won’t have to think for themselves anymore” as the ability of thinking for themselves will be taken from them by the “good-doers.” Again, the “party in power” is criticized because they are “greedy good-doers” and “beneficent beasts of prey” who “swarm over” poor villagers’ lives enforcing benefits.

“A Roadside Stand” underlines the difference between rural and urban people. Economically, the villagers are more vulnerable when compared to city dwellers. As industrialization develops, the roadside stand becomes just a symbol of the past. Robert Frost embraces the country life and “dispels the myth that the country people and life are as simple as city people often think they are” (Faggen, 2007, 374).

## **2.5. Frost’s Use of Tools and Manual Labor**

In Frost’s art, manual labor is done with the help of tools which is a clear sign of his regionalism. These tools can be seen as a way of farmers’ relation to and communication with the world. A spade is used to bury the little child in “Home Burial.” One can see the image of a ladder which has a biblical imagery in “After Apple Picking.” The chainsaw is a major character in “Out, Out” and the scythe in “Mowing” is full of symbolism. These are the tools the farmers leave their traces in this world. For Frost, these tools are typically regional tools. In an online lecture at Yale University, Professor Langdon Hammer comments on Frost’s usage of tools in his poetry. The workers make use of the tools to do and make things. Things are not “made up” in Frost, “not made up” imaginatively, like fairies and elves. Things in his poems are constructed. They're

the output of particular performances, of the performances of a worker (Hammer, Lecture 2).

In his poetry, Robert Frost always celebrated the farmers' manual labor (e.g., picking apples, roadside stand, wall-building, harvesting). His usage of manual labor is another sign of his regionalism. "*Out, Out*" which was based on a true story, is one of the American poet's most touching poems and a good example of how he uses labor by giving vivid view of the region and its people. In 1910, edition of *The Littleton Courier* in New Hampshire reported an incident following the death of a boy in the region. Frost, as a regionalist, took this incident which happened in New England and wrote: "Out, Out." The poem starts lyrically, portraying a regional life on a farm in Vermont:

The buzz saw snarled and rattled in the yard  
And made dust and dropped stove-length sticks of wood,  
Sweet-scented stuff when the breeze drew across it.  
And from there those that lifted eyes could count  
Five mountain ranges one behind the other  
Under the sunset far into Vermont (Frost, 171).

The title of the poem refers to the speech in *Macbeth*, act 5, scene 5 where Macbeth speaks about the meaninglessness of life upon lady Macbeth's death:

Out, out, brief candle!  
life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
that struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
and then is heard no more.

The poem focuses on an innocent boy who dies accidentally like the boy in "Out, Out." The boy employed as manual labor on the farm is helping the sawing of wood. He is "doing a man's work, though a child at heart." In the first line of the poem, the saw is introduced with effective words like "snarled," "rattled" and this adds a personification to the saw. As stated before, Frost uses these tools a lot, and they are the worker's relation to the world. Hammer points out that "these are not something that the man controls as a simple extension of himself" (Lecture 3). The buzz saw here is described as another

person who is very veracious, so one can assume that Frost is against the industrialization in farming (Parini, 2001).

The boy's sister comes on stage and calls the workers for dinner:

His sister stood beside him in her apron

To tell them "Supper." At the word, the saw,

As if it meant to prove saws know what supper meant,

Leaped out at the boy's hand, or seemed to leap -

He must have given the hand.

The saw knows "what supper meant" like the workers on the farm and "leaped out at the boy's hand." The young boy "must have given the hand" to the saw so that it could go to supper with them. The description of the accident is so dreadful. "The boy's first outcry is a rueful laugh" as if he had understood the seriousness of the incident and now, he is waiting for his death in a "rueful" state. The poem finishes with a cruel reality:

The doctor put him in the dark of ether.

He lay and puffed his lips out with his breath.

And then - the watcher at his pulse took a fright.

No one believed. They listened to his heart.

Little - less - nothing! - and that ended it.

No more to build on there. And they, since they

Were not the one dead, turned to their affairs.

The doctor puts him "in the dark of ether" and the rest of the people turns to "their affairs." The last lines of "Out, Out" reminds us of Frost's another poem "Home Burial," where the man turns straightaway to his duty of burying his son. Jay Perini, in his *Robert Frost: A Life* states:

However heartless these lines have sounded to some ears, Frost is making a point about a way of dealing with grief; by plunging back into the affairs of life, which demand attention (especially in the context of a poor farm at the turn of the century), the grieving family is able to work through their grief (70).

One can easily understand that death was common on farms in rural New England and accepting it, even if it was the death of a young boy, was an admissible



behavior at the time at the time. Frost's allusion to Shakespeare's play with the title is noteworthy. He compares the death of a farm boy with the death of a royal person. The farm boy's work is essential for the community of his region. The families in New England need their contribution to the household.



### 3. CHAPTER THREE: Aspects of Regionalism in Heaney's Poetry

#### 3.1. Life of Seamus Heaney

Born in 1939, on a farm in rural Mossbawn, Seamus Heaney is considered as "the most important poet since Yeats" by Robert Lowell (Bloom, 2003,18). He was a Catholic and grew up in Northern Ireland where the Protestants were the majority. Religious, political and linguistic divisions in the region can be explicitly seen in his works. The family farm and Mossbawn were the sources of inspiration for many of his poems, and he clarifies the importance of his hometown as follows:

Our farm was called Mossbawn. Moss, a Scots word probably carried to Ulster by the planters, and bawn, the name the English colonists gave to their fortified farm houses. Mossbawn, the planter's house on the bog. Yet in spite of this Ordnance Survey spelling, we pronounced it Mossbann, and 'ban' is the Gaelic word for white. So might the thing mean the white moss, the moss of bog cotton? In the two syllables of my home, I see a metaphor of the split culture of Ulster (Heaney, 1980).

He started school in Anahorish and studied there for six years. When he was twelve, he went to St. Columbus College in Derry, which was his first separation from his family farm. 1953 was the year when the Heaney family had a life-changing experience because of the untimely death of Heaney's brother. The Irish poet tells the tragedy the family faces in his "Mid-term Break" which will be analyzed later in this chapter. After this terrible event, the family had to leave the farm in Mossbawn to erase the bad memories. Moving from the Mossbawn farm added more to Heaney's sorrow as the place was the repository of his art.

His early poetry draws its strength from the landscape and his rural upbringing in Mossbawn. Also, his art relies on the relationship between tradition and creative freedom as they carry him from the local to the cosmopolitan. Nature and local culture of Mossbawn is the provenance of his universal success. The names of his poetry collections confirm Heaney's reference to the landscape. *Death of a Naturalist* (1966) displays his farm life by focusing on the labor, culture, and traditions of the region. The collections of *Door into the Dark* (1969) and *Wintering Out* (1973) presents the nature in the countryside and describes the life of ordinary people. These books also have poem

related to the violent human history of the country. In *North* (1975), the Irish poet deals with the “Troubles” in Ireland and searches for Irish identity using the bogs as symbols.

While portraying the landscape and local traditions of the region, Heaney was greatly influenced by the works of Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh who lived in rural areas like Monaghan and Derry. Both poets had a lot in common: both were Catholics growing up in farming communities. As Parker claims, both poets “coming from non-literary small farming communities” had great “pride and confidence in the local, the parochial” (Parker, 1993, 33). Kavanagh had a great impact on the development of Heaney’s regionalism. For the two Irish poets, “Parochialism is universal; it deals with the fundamentals” (Kavanagh, 237, 2003).

In the 1980s, he spent his time in three different countries: Ireland, England, and the United States. In 1982, he worked as a professor at Harvard University where he spent six months a year for five years. During his stay at Harvard, he had the chance to publish his two poetry collections, *Station Island* (1984) and *The Haw Lantern* (1987). In 1989, he was chosen to be the Professor of Poetry at the University of Oxford. In 1988, he published *Government of the Tongue*, a collection of essays and in 1991, his poetry collection of *Seeing Things* was published.

1995 was a significant year for Heaney as he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature and the Nobel committee described his work as “lyrical beauty and ethical depth, which exalt everyday miracles and the living past” (“Seamus Heaney,” 2018). Upon winning the award, he was asked how he felt and replied: “It’s like being a little foothill at the bottom of a mountain range. You hope you just live up to it. It’s extraordinary” (“Laureate and Symbol,” 2018).

In 1996, he translated the epic poem *Beowulf* and then in 2001; he published his next poetry collection, *Electric Light*. His life ended in 2013, aged 74 after an illness. Upon his death, he was described as “probably the best known poet in the world” by *The Independent* (“Seamus Heaney obituary,” 2018).

### **3.2. Heaney’s Use of Landscape and Tools**

Seamus Heaney who was raised on a farm in Derry presents landscape utilizing nature, farm life and place-names. Daily farm life and traditions of his region enable him

to write on his home culture. Like Robert Frost, he prefers to use colloquial speech of the common people while reflecting the pastoral side of Derry. Through his vernacularism, he manages to tender "profound family affections, eloquent landscapes as well as vigorous social concern" and reach universalism (Vendler, 1998, 5). Tradition and landscape permit the regional poet to benefit from the local experience. With the help of his poetic talent, he makes this experience accessible to people from different walks of life (Tobin, 1999, 15). In order to accomplish regionalist aspects of his poetry, Heaney follows the footsteps of Patrick Kavanagh who writes at the heart of pastoral poetry. By making use of the sense of place, Heaney makes the parochial and regional gain a universal significance like his predecessor Kavanagh who draws from the ordinary daily life of common people and thinks that the real inspiration to write poems comes from the belief in the local. Heaney supports the argument in one of his interviews: "Whatever success I've had has come from staying within the realm of my imaginative country and my own voice" (1981, 69). Kavanagh persists in digging for the parochial and chooses the ordinary life in Monaghan as his subject matter. Similarly, influenced by his mentor, Ulster poet Heaney presents the rural life of the region.

The landscape of farming is prevalent in Heaney's poems, and "Digging" is one of them showing farm practices of his family with distinct local features. Published in 1964, the poem is Heaney's first poem in the collection of *Death of a Naturalist*. The poem presents three generations of the Heaney family "digging" on the farm with different tools. P.R. King asserts that the poem is about the Irish poet who wants to locate his art within the rural traditions that hold "the historical roots of a nation" (1986, 79-80). The ancestral roots of the family are shown with a rural background on Mossbawn farm where Heaney grew up when he was a child. His grandfather digs the turf, and his father digs potatoes with his spade while Heaney himself digs with his pen.

Heaney, like Frost, uses farmers, farm practices and tools while portraying the landscape of his region. For both poets, the dynamic relationship between poetry and farming is a source of inspiration. In *Plow Naked*, Fred Chappell supports the claim: "The ageless relationship between poetry and farming has always been sentimental and ironic, the two disciplines would seem to have mostly accidental requirements in common: patience, fatalism, renunciation awe of nature, reverence for the earth" (1983,

74). As Chappell states, poetry and farming have a lot in common and Heaney makes use of these requirements to pursue his art.

The Irish poet begins “Digging” with the image of a “squat pen” between his “finger and thumb” resting “as a gun.” His father is “digging” with the “spade” under the window while the speaker is writing his poem at home. The poet utilizes the tools of pen and spade to indicate that his writing and farming are indispensable components of his art. Writing is as difficult as farming, which is conveyed with the simile of “gun.” Therefore, Heaney does not present his poetry and writing “as something beautiful and easy,” instead, the process of writing is “difficult and requires hard work” (Turki & Saeed, 2013, 78). His father is a traditional Irish farmer, and he prefers not to follow in his father's footsteps. Instead of farming, he chooses to be in the pursuit of his dreams, which is shown with the instrument of “pen” in the poem. Unlike his father, the poet rejects the “spade” which is a symbol of physical labor and locates himself in the realm of intellectual labor. He narrates his father digging potatoes as follows:

My father, digging. I look down  
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, 1966, 1).

While the speaker is at home, his father is digging in the garden, and this signifies that educated middle class is improving and moving from manual labor and difficult farm life to an intellectual level. However, he does not look down on farming as he praises his father and grandfather in the following lines. He is proud of his family's manual labor, and he shows this to his readers with his “pen” instead of a “spade”:

My grandfather cut more turf in a day  
Than any other man on Toner's bog.  
...  
Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods  
Over his shoulder, going down and down  
For the good turf. Digging.

...

But I've no spade to follow men like them (1).

The farm is the memory of family and local history in the region. In the poem, Heaney records three generations of men his family using provisional tools. His father and grandfather dig the land for food, and the poet himself digs for meaning with his pen. As Andrew Murphy states, the poet can dig by revealing the details of the family's lifestyle and giving them publicity in his poems, by this way, he can honor them (1996,13). This is what Heaney succeeds in his poetry:

Between my finger and my thumb

The squat pen rests.

I'll dig with it (2).

Although he cannot dig literally, he digs metaphorically with his pen by displaying ancestral identity and spreading local Irish culture. He uses regional words like potato, turf, and spade which are the representation of local culture, and he reaches the universal with the help of them. These tools and provincial words enable him to pursue his art and dig into the roots of the landscape.

In the poem, the farm activities of two generations may be seen as Irish tradition and his orientation towards writing, instead of an Irish tradition, does not mean that he is a nonconformist. He observes the local tradition and reflects it in his art to continue the tradition still by clinging to the soil of the region. He digs for deeper meanings hidden in the soil while his former two generations of men have dug the land for food.

In short, Heaney, like Frost, manages to convey what he means through the tools, mostly pastoral ones. Although he is proud of his grandfather's turf-digging and his father's potato-digging, the poem marks the poet's separation from manual labor. While choosing the intellectual world, he is sensitive to the land, and he does not distance himself from his region and farming. Daniel Tobin corroborates as follows:

Yet, while the resolve in the phrase "I'll dig with it" seems to equate the skills of spade and pen, the analogy assumes imaginative distance. The adult poet's displacement from his childhood world emerges from his need to probe critically the sources of his imagination while remaining sensitive to his origins (1999,19).

Heaney does not escape from the difficulties of farming, instead, as Tobin states, he is digging with his pen to find deeper meanings by staying close to the soil. Also, the poet's

portrayal of the landscape of farming confirms the relationship between farming and poetry.

Another poem, "Blackberry-Picking," from the same collection as "Digging" reflects nature and landscape. The Irish poet portrays the geography and local people through his vernacularism. As in his other poems, he prefers colloquial speech and everyday life of the common people and displays the traditions, customs, and manners of the region. Derry's landscape is a microcosm in which Heaney's universalism echoes. The poem, as its name suggests, relates what is cosmopolitan through the aesthetic pastoral of the region. The poem starts with the picturesque description of the land:

Late August, given heavy rain and sun

For a full week, the blackberries would ripen (Heaney, 1966, 9).

The poet uses pastoral images, so readers can infer that the poem takes place in the countryside in late summer. The children are forming an interaction with nature, and the "lust" for picking fruits allure them into the fields with "milk cans, pea tins" and "jam-pots." The "lust" for picking with different containers suggest that the children are disorganized, and they hurry because of their childish nature. Here, Heaney, like Frost, makes good use of tools to tell what he means in the shortest way. Throughout the first stanza, the poet portrays hope and excitement with the vital colors like "summer's blood" which he uses to describe the blackberries. The mood of the poem shifts as he alludes to "Bluebeard" in the last line of the stanza and he indicates harsh realities of life in the second stanza:

With thorn pricks, our palms sticky as Bluebeard's.

We hoarded the fresh berries in the byre.

But when the bath was filled we found a fur,

A rat-grey fungus, glutting on our cache.

The juice was stinking too. Once off the bush

The fruit fermented, the sweet flesh would turn sour.

I always felt like crying. It wasn't fair

That all the lovely canfuls smelt of rot.

Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not (9).

Bluebeard is a French folktale in which the rich, violent man kills his wives habitually. Similarly, the children's palms become sticky with "thorn pricks" like the blood in Bluebeard's hands. This allusion sweeps away the pastoral beauty of the land and creates a darker mood in the poem. Moreover, in order to add more darkness, the poet chooses more negative words like "fur" and "fungus" which are connotations of infection. This is in contrast with the vivid colors of the stanza in which the landscape is described as a paradise. The poet presents this harsh reality and infection from a child's perspective: "I always felt like crying. It wasn't fair.../Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not." As "always," Heaney understands that life is cruel and there is death even in Irish pastoral. The theme of death is seen sometimes in a poem narrating his brother's death like "Mid-term Break" and sometimes in pastoral poems like "Blueberry-Picking" where the blueberries die.

To sum up, Heaney's choice of pastoral words and imagery help him to express himself explicitly. He fills the poem with the images of landscape and children swarming all over pastures. While portraying the aesthetic beauty of nature, he is able to change the tone of the poem masterfully. He contrasts the allure of the landscape with the difficulties of life with the help of his provincialism. Through the people and landscape of the region, he manages to reach universalism.

### **3.3. Language**

"We think the Word 'provincial' is a shameful word in America... You cannot be universal without being provincial, can you? It is like embracing the wind" (Frost, 1966, 19). Frost uses local speech in a way that readers are attracted to his art because of his natural usage of the language. His application of "sound and sense" creates music in his poems. The quotation mentioned attracted a lot of attention from Irish poets at the time who wanted to use their local languages rather than standard English. One of these Irish poets is Seamus Heaney who, in his review "Voices Behind a Door: Robert Frost", praises Robert Frost:

His notion of poetry being dependent upon 'the sound of sense' is probably under-regarded as "poetics" because of its huge simplicity, but it has been deeply relevant to that historically important shift in English language poetry in this century which saw (and heard) the entry of specific local intonations - Irish, Scottish, Caribbean, Australian - into the central English line" (Heaney, 1993, 31).



Together with the artists like Wordsworth and Hardy, Frost plays an important role for Heaney who places local language at the heart of his poems. Similar to Frost and other eminent regionalists, he appreciates “traditional forms” which are “charged with the rhythms of natural speech” (Russell, 2014, 6). Frost’s employing a direct language in order to portray the daily life of his region is also true for Heaney who reflects his own region’s joys and tragedies with colloquial speech.

Northern Ireland is Heaney’s home region and natural source of his art. He reflects the culture, history, customs and people of his province through rooted regionalism. Using Northern Ireland, he transcends the region as he reaches cosmopolitanism. Like Frost, he is local and international at the same time, and this kind of regionalism is called “global-regionalism” as John Montague asserts:

The real position for a poet is to be global-regionalist. He is born into allegiances to particular areas or places and people, which he loves, sometimes against his will. But then he also happens to belong to an increasingly accessible world ... So the position is actually local and international (1972, 153).

While going beyond regionalism, Heaney uses the power of Gaelic language. He was born in British Ulster as an Irish man who was torn between two different cultures and languages. His poetry must be examined under the socio-economical context of his province. In 1969, Northern Ireland riots took place and his poetics started to be affected by the situation in his region. This led him to focus on his own province and language which can be understood as a way of national struggle. He had a feeling of “in-betweenness” in his own region as he was exposed “simultaneously to the domestic idiom of his Irish home and the official idioms (of English education) and already picking signs of existing distress between the two cultures” (O’Brien 2003 177).

Like Frost, Heaney chooses his subject matters from the events of his region. As Frost writes about the death of a child in "Home Burial," Heaney writes about his own brother's death in "Mid-term Break," a poem in his collection of *Death of a Naturalist*. The poem tells the death of his sibling, and Heaney transfers his sorrow to readers with the colloquial language of the daily routine. Similar to "Home Burial," "Mid-term Break" has a rural setting and the poet uses a conversationalist language while telling the tragedy the family faces. The poem consists of twenty-two lines with traditional iambic pentameter, and like Heaney's other poems, the syntax is in a formal

conversational style. With the first lines of the poem, he manages to draw readers attention to people at home with first-hand observation:

I sat all morning in the college sick bay  
Counting bells knelling classes to a close.  
At two o'clock our neighbours drove me home.  
In the porch I met my father crying—  
He had always taken funerals in his stride—  
And Big Jim Evans saying it was a hard blow (Heaney, 1966, 16).

He describes the atmosphere in the house with the idiomatic expressions of English language like "take something in one's stride" and "it was a hard blow." The tension of the poem increases from the first stanza to the second stanza, and the conversational tone gives way to a formal tone confirming the seriousness of the occasion. The speaker, Heaney, sees his "father crying" who always "taken funerals in his stride." This is an unusual condition in Irish culture which is defined by patriarchy. He softens the tension in the third stanza with the cooing and laughing of the baby:

The baby cooed and laughed and rocked the pram  
When I came in, and I was embarrassed  
By old men standing up to shake my hand (16)

Heaney creates sound to portray the rural people's feelings. The poem describes a tragic event with everyday language and background noises as in the example of the baby who "cooed and laughed and rocked the pram." Heaney expresses his own feelings about the death of his brother: "I was embarrassed/ By old men standing up to shake my hand." The old men's reaction is a communal response to the death of a person in the region as they show that they share the neighbor's sorrow:

And tell me they were 'sorry for my trouble.'  
Whispers informed strangers I was the eldest,  
Away at school, as my mother held my hand (16)

The enjambments help to sustain the sound and tone in the poem. Heaney uses the phrase "whispers informed strangers" which gives an explicit imagery of the people

in the house. His homespun language enables readers to enjoy the joy of the poem fully. He goes on using enjambments in the following stanza to continue the scene:

In hers and coughed out angry tearless sighs.  
At ten o'clock the ambulance arrived  
With the corpse, stanced and bandaged by the nurses (16).

The mother waits for the funeral with "angry tearless sighs" showing the solemn side of Irish people as they are used to that kind of sufferings in their lives like the Yankees in Frost's poems. The speaker's holding his mother's hand is another sign of gender role in a patriarchal society. As in Frost's method of "Sound of Sense," the tone of the poem is decided according to the rhythm. For instance, Heaney uses loose rhythms until the last two lines where strict iambic pentameter displaces the former rhythm. He shows the child's coming of age with the tone and rhythm in the poem:

Wearing a poppy bruise on his left temple,  
He lay in the four-foot box as in his cot.  
No gaudy scars, the bumper knocked him clear.  
A four-foot box, a foot for every year (16).

Heaney breaks the flow of the poem and finishes it with one line. The poem closes with the couple rhyme which hints that the acceptance of such tragedies is inevitable in rural regions. Thus, Heaney portrays a personal tragedy in a simple language common to his people. This personal experience is made universal through the poet's portrayal of the theme of death.

In "Mid-term Break," Heaney employs "Sound and Sense" and uses colloquial speech to tell his own loss and sorrow. Like Frost, he chooses a plain language and ordinary people to convey his messages. Also, the Italian poet Dante Alighieri has a significant effect on Heaney's poetry. Both poets prefer iambic rhythms and like Heaney and Frost, Dante, in *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (On Eloquence in the Vernacular) supported the use of vernacular (Dante, S. Botterill, Ed., 1996). On the use of simplicity as a form, Michael Cavanagh asserts as follows:

Once again, the style is studiously simple. The poem has scarcely any rhyme, but it is a plain Dante-style narrative—a swiftly moving story with little editorializing—and is

arranged in tercets, with a closing trailing line that rhymes with the last line of the previous tercet. There is something else about this poem. The connection between the Dantean style and Heaney's conception of the masculine mode of writing has been mentioned. It is apparent here, for the poem is about a fourteen-year-old coming into his own through the apprehension of tragedy and the necessity of maintaining a stoic coolness in its presence (Cavanagh, 2012).

Another feature of language in Heaney's works is his use of *Dinnschenchas* and place-names. *Dinnschenchas* means the science of places developing from the onomastic text (place-name traditions) in early Irish literature (Smith, 2001, 33-34). It is the knowledge of topography that shows the dynamics between place and language in early Gaelic culture. Heaney refers to *Dinnschenchas* frequently as Mianowski asserts, "language and landscape are consistent" (2012, 28). Topographical features of places are firmly linked with the language spoken in regions. "Broagh," "Mossbawn," "Toome," "Derrygarve," and "Anahorish" are some of his poems which originate in Irish language *Dinnschenchas*. In these place-name works, he unites both the Irish and English cultures with the help of linguistic aspects of two cultures. He puts the local features of his culture in a universal structure. Through *Dinnschenchas*, the Irish poet places the local in the global and vice-versa.

As he is an Irish man born in Ulster, which is a British district, he believes that he needs to be "faithful to the nature of the English language" while not breaking away from his "own non-English origin" (Heaney, 1977, 65). His place-name poems are examples of his faithfulness to his language traditions in Gaelic culture. In his *Preoccupations*, he once stated that "[w]e have to retrieve the underlay of Gaelic legend in order to read the full meaning of the name and to flesh out the topological record with its human accretions. The whole of Irish landscape [...] is a manuscript which we have lost the skill to read" (Heaney, 1984, 132). Heaney uses this kind of etymology as an archeological background most vividly in "Broagh" from *Wintering Out* (1972):

#### BROAGH

Riverbank, the long rigs  
ending in broad docken  
and a canopied pad  
down to the ford.  
The garden mould

bruised easily, the shower  
gathering in your heelmark  
was the black O

in Broagh,  
its low tattoo  
among the windy boortrees  
and rhubarb-blades  
ended almost  
suddenly, like that last  
gh the strangers found  
difficult to manage (Heaney, 1972, 17).

In the poem, Heaney uses a place and probes the underlying origin of the language. The title of the poem has a Gaelic origin meaning “riverbank” which is closely related to the landscape. The first line of the poem shows the background of Heaney’s language as it has words from Scottish, Irish and English. “Broagh” meaning “riverbank” has an Irish origin, while the word “rigs” means “riverside field” in Scottish and “docken” is a coarse waterside plant in English. “Pad” is the local pronunciation of the word “path.” The first stanza provides a pastoral image of the riverbank with its plants which indicates the relationship between language and nature.

In the third stanza, Heaney follows the same fashion: the word “bower trees” is pronounced as “boortrees” which is the local expression of the word. The most important word in the poem is “Broagh” and for Heaney, it is “difficult to manage” for strangers. The word’s pronunciation is made clear by the poet to help readers have a better understanding of the word. “The last gh” sound in “broagh” cannot be pronounced easily by non-Irish people. However, it is not impossible to manage as Michael Molino suggests:

[a]lthough strangers may find the term 'difficult to manage,' broagh is not presented as a term that invaders could not conquer, that the English could not subsume within their dictionary, that Protestants could not master. The term is difficult but not impossible to manage, and the reader, in some measure, enters the community of users (1994,74).

As Molino states, the word is manageable although it cannot be mastered by the colonizers. While Molina lightens the difficulty of the word, he also believes that it has a discriminating effect in it. The word "broagh" is not included in an English dictionary, which can be seen as a sign of exclusion of Irish language by the British hegemony. In fact, the word "broagh" is originally "bruach" as the word was transliterated by the British because of the difficulty of the old Irish phonetics. Mary Homer clarifies this in *Putting Ireland on the Map*:

In one sense, the famous ordnance survey project in Britain could make no intervention in the cognitive mapping processes of the Irish, for the Survey officers were not themselves creating a new environment, only recording a given one. But the very process of their record...involved some modification of that environment: ancient boundaries were not always left undisturbed, place-names were anglicized, either directly or more subtly by the attempt to arrive at spellings that looked acceptable to an English eye. So an official Ireland was produced, an English-speaking one, with its own ideology of Irish space (1989, 88).

Homer summarizes how the British hegemony has modified the local dialects of Ireland to make them look "acceptable to an English eye." The colonizers impose their own ideology by changing the place-names which are the reflections of Irish culture and language. By means of his poems, Heaney tries to preserve the language and uses place-names deliberately.

The Gaelic pronunciation of "broagh" which is "difficult to manage" for the "strangers" undermines the British cultural hegemony even if it does not eradicate it completely. The word represents and defends Irish identity by awakening national consciousness. Heaney manages to tell unique human experience and landscapes of his region brilliantly with the Irish dialect, which is "difficult to manage" by non-Irish people outside Northern Ireland. Although it does not wipe away the English hegemony, it can be seen as a cultural resistance of Heaney's art.

### **3.4. Irish Identity in Bog Poems**

The bog poems are significant for Heaney's art as they tell genuine and historical background of different regions and people. After reading the Danish archeologist, Peter Vilhelm Glob's *The Bog People* (1985), Heaney was impressed by the information about the bog bodies. He was very interested in reading about the corpses in Northern Europe. His interest in these corpses was a new turn in for Heaney's career and has an American influence. In *Preoccupations*, Heaney talks about this American effect: "At that time I

was teaching modern literature in Queen's University, Belfast, and had been reading about the frontier and the west as an important myth in the American consciousness, so I set up—or rather, laid down—the bog as an answering Irish myth” (Heaney, 1980, 55).

The American method opened a new path for Heaney to use place and history for Irish identity. He parallels the myths and violence inflicted on the bog people to the violence on Irish people. In bog poems, he draws disturbing comparisons between ancient and today's violence, and the bogs are a myth like the frontier in America. For the Irish poet, this model is a platform which enables him to use nature and history to form national consciousness and identity for Irish people.

His attraction to these bog lands has a deep history for Seamus Heaney. He was born in "Mossbawn" and "in Derry they call a bog 'moss,' a word of Norse origin probably carried to the North of Ireland by planter in the early seventieth century" (Donoghue, 1986, 90). Therefore, he has a special interest in the words "moss" and "bog," and he uses them in many of his poems. Also, when he was a child, he was frightened of the bogs and not allowed to go near them as he states, "The demesne was walled, wooded, beyond our ken, the bog was rushy and treacherous, no place for children. They said you shouldn't go near the moss-holes because 'there was no bottom in them'" (Heaney, 1980, 35). However, his curiosity gets the best of him, and he digs the bogs not as an archeologist, but as a poet. Through the bogs and corpses found, he reaches universal acclaim in Poetry.

One of Heaney's most important bog poems is "Punishment" from *North*, a collection published in 1975. The body in the poem belongs to a Windeby girl who is used as a metaphor for Ireland. The girl who was totally naked and blindfolded was punished because of adultery in Iron Age (Glob, 116). The poem changes from Iron Age to contemporary Ireland and reflects significant Irish historical facts of "Troubles." Like Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, "Punishment" starts *in medias res* meaning "in the middle of things" in Latin:

I can feel the tug  
of the halter at the nape  
of her neck, the wind  
on her naked front (Heaney, 1992, 30).

The practice of beginning the poem in the middle draws the readers in. The poet uses the pronoun “I” to reflect his sympathetic imagination in the poem. The first part focuses on the body of the girl who is tugged with a rope from her neck and made naked: “I can feel the tug/of the alter at the rope.” The emphasis on the senses and “the nape” which is a sensual part of the body shows the girl’s vulnerability. The second and third stanza continue to describe the body:

It blows her nipples  
to amber beads,  
it shakes the frail rigging  
of her ribs.

I can see her drowned  
body in the bog,  
the weighing stone,  
the floating rods and boughs (30).

Heaney uses vivid imagery which makes “Punishment” more memorable for readers as the wind “blows her nipples to amber beads” and “shakes the frail rigging of her ribs.” The girl is shown as weak and fragile because she can be easily shaken by the wind and trembles. Heaney’s use of tone renders an eloquent picture of the girl to show her suffering. The fourth stanza goes on with the same scene shown in the previous stanzas:

Under which at first  
she was a barked sapling  
that is dug up  
oak-bone, brain-firkin:

Her youth is emphasized with the description of the girl as a “barked sapling.” As in his other poems, Heaney uses pastoral words showing his provincialism: “oak-bone” and “brain-firkin.” He refers to regional means to describe the girl’s bones. “Oak-tree” as the strongest and most enduring tree suggests that her body is still intact after so many years. In the following stanzas, the Irish poet attributes to the Great Famine of Ireland:

to store



the memories of love.  
Little adultress,  
before they punished you (30)

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

My poor scapegoat (31),

The girl is "undernourished" and "flaxen-haired," which is a reference to the Great Famine, a period of starvation and disease in the country. Then, by calling the girl as "My poor scapegoat," Heaney tells his own sadness for the girl who is a victim of the society. He admits his own guilt as he is not able to intervene in the punishment on girls inflicted by the I.R.A. He feels affection for the girl who carries the sins of the whole region as a scapegoat. The word "scapegoat" shows that the girls in Ireland like the Windeby girl in Iron Age have been unjustly accused and punished by society. The last stanzas of "Punishment" are essential as the poet likens the girl's punishment to violence in today's Ireland:

I who have stood dumb  
when your betraying sisters,  
cauled in tar,  
wept by the railings,  
who would connive  
in civilized outrage  
yet understand the exact  
and tribal, intimate revenge (31).

Heaney feels guilty as he does not interfere in the injustice and "stood dumb." Iron Age resembles "Troubles" as the "tribal, intimate revenge" of the Iron Age is almost the same in the Irish society. Two different societies with different histories show similar characteristics of identity which is rooted in violence. Floyd Collins, in *Seamus Heaney: The Crisis of Identity*, supports this claim: "It acknowledges Heaney's sense of guilt, or

at least complicity, about certain aspects of the present cycle of violence in Ulster” (2003, 97).

Also, “Betraying girls” in the poem is a term used to describe the Catholic girls who married a member of the British Army. These girls, like the Windeby girl, were killed by Revolutionary Armies as they were thought to have betrayed the nation. Andrew Murphy comments on the subject as follows:

The woman victim retrieved from the bog provides an image for those young Catholic women in Heaney's own Northern Ireland subjected to 'tarring and feathering' by members of their own community. The punishment was most often inflicted on those who became involved with members of British Army. Like Glob's female victim, the women typically had their heads shaved, before having hot tar and feathers poured over them and being tied up in a public place, as an act of ritual humiliation (1996, 45).

Through the poem, Heaney draws a picture of these girls who have been punished in Iron Age and contemporary Ireland “as an act of ritual humiliation.” He presents a universal outlook on human nature and identity. The violence in two different periods of time are the same and modern man is as savage as the tribes. In short, literature and history are linear and interconnected. Adultery is an important subject matter in Iron Age, in Hawthorne’s *Scarlett Letter* and also in Heaney’s “Punishment.” In all these different time periods, societies feel justified while killing people savagely, especially women. The theme of regionalism, as a result, is represented by presenting a traditional Irish folktale. Yet, one can see the marriage between regionalism and universality in the way Heaney presents the subject of his poem.

Another important bog poem is “Bogland” in the collection of *Door into the Dark*. The poem is dedicated to T.P Flanagan, a companion of Heaney, whose perception of Irish pastoral had a great impact on him. While he was painting the Irish landscape, Heaney was putting it into words. The poem displays his rural background and portrayal of the region’s landscape. The discovery of an Irish Elk’s skeleton urged Heaney to write about the bog which is metaphorically the archive of Irish culture. His own reflection on the “Bogland” as follows:

I had been vaguely wishing to write a poem about bogland, chiefly because it is a landscape that has strange assuaging effect on me, one with associations reaching back into early childhood. We used to hear about bog-butter, butter kept fresh for a great number of years under the peat. Then when I was at school the skeleton of an elk had been taken out of a bog nearby and a few of our neighbours had got their photographs in the paper, peering out across its antlers. So I began to get an idea of bog as the memory of the landscape, or as a landscape that remembered everything that happened in and to it. In fact, if you go round the National Museum in Dublin, you will realize that a great

proportion of the most cherished material heritage of Ireland was 'found in a bog'" (Heaney, 1980, 50).

Therefore, the bogs in Ireland inspire Heaney to write the poem, and he refers to these bogs as the repository of the country's culture. In the poem, he broadens the metaphor of "digging" he uses in other bog poems and uses the metaphor of landscape for Irish identity:

We have no prairies  
To slice a big sun at evening--  
Everywhere the eye concedes to  
Encroaching horizon (Heaney, 1969, 55),

"Bogland" starts with a comparison between the Irish landscape and "prairies" of North America which is used as a myth in American literature. America has vast land to explore, and for progress, however the Irish territory is limited. Because of this, they have a limited vision and search for their identity inwardly without looking at the "encroaching horizon." Also, the use of "we" in the stanza shows that Heaney speaks for the whole nation and this adds a nationalistic tone to the poem. He digs for a national consciousness for the Irish people through the poem. In the following stanzas, Heaney mentions "bog" and "Great Irish Elk" as symbols:

Is wooed into the cyclops' eye  
Of a tarn. Our unfenced country  
Is bog that keeps crusting  
Between the sights of the sun.  
They've taken the skeleton  
Of the Great Irish Elk  
Out of the peat, set it up  
An astounding crate full of air (55).

The "bog" is the memory of Irish culture and history which helps to form the Irish national identity. As Heaney states in an interview: "in a symbolic Jungian way," the bog is the "repository and memory of the landscape, with the psyche of the people" (Walsh, 1976, 5). The bog witnesses the time when "Great Irish Elk" lives although it is extinct now. The bog will be there to witness many more; therefore, the bog can be seen

as the memory of the Irish culture and history. The next stanzas talk about a different preservation:

Butter sunk under  
More than a hundred years  
Was recovered salty and white.  
The ground itself is kind, black butter  
Melting and opening underfoot,  
Missing its last definition  
By millions of years.

They'll never dig coal here (55),

He chooses another regional object: "butter" which is "more than a hundred years." The bog conserves not only historical objects, but also the region's culture and history. The "butter," a human-made artifact, stands for the works of the old Irish society. "The ground itself is kind," and its kindness provides the nation with identity and consciousness. The enjambment connects the fourth stanza to the following one, and there the poet states that culture and history are changing continuously as the ground is "melting and opening underfoot, missing its last definition." This indicates that the multilayered and collective culture of Ireland is intertwined and the accumulated history in the history becomes unclear for its people. In the following stanzas, there are other enjambments to sustain the continuance of the poem's theme:

Only the waterlogged trunks  
Of great firs, soft as pulp.  
Our pioneers keep striking  
Inwards and downwards,

Every layer they strip  
Seems camped on before.  
The bogholes might be Atlantic seepage.  
The wet centre is bottomless (55).

The bog does not have material value in it; thus, the local people of the region will "never dig coal here." The value in the bog is that it hosts the culture, history, and

identity of the Irish people. Unlike the Americans who have "prairies," the Irish "pioneers" have to go "inwards and downwards" in order to find real Irish identity. However, digging in the bog for the identity may never come to an end as the "the wet centre is bottomless." It implies that "this process of exploration will never find an origin, that any attempt at an authoritative account of the bog will be doomed to failure" (O'Brien, 2002, 17). Heaney, in "Bogland," tries to reflect Irish national consciousness through the bogs and landscape in Ireland. For him, the bog is a "genuine obsession" and "an illiterate pleasure" that he takes in the landscape (Randall, 1979, 8). With the help of the bog, he has the opportunity to search for his origins and form a common national identity, but the bog he is digging in is "bottomless."



## CONCLUSION

Regionalism in poetry deals with folk, traditions, lifestyle, and language of a specific region. Regional poets highlight unique characteristics of a place through various ways. They present the readers with a rural setting, characters, and events with the help of small farms, towns, or villages where they have the chance to observe and reflect in their art. Their being regionalists is not planned, but natural. Regional artists reach the universal from the particular as the specific region is a symbol of a larger world. Their small towns or farms are their microcosms which display a bigger territory. Robert Frost and Seamus Heaney are great regional poets who narrate the daily life in their small towns and create cosmopolitan works of art.

They do not just describe the geography, speech, and people of their regions, but create something new by means of their localities. Therefore, art is creative, and it is not a mere portrayal of life in a region. The success of their creative art and universal acclaim comes from the fact that their work reaches a cosmopolitan status through their vernacularism. In this respect, their art is different from their contemporaries as they prefer a simple language and make use of ordinary people by escaping from complexities of literature. By this way, they both reflect the life of small regions of New England and Northern Ireland and present a cosmopolitan world beyond these regions.

Both poets' rooted cosmopolitanism can be seen in their treatment of nature, language, tools, and locals. The landscapes of their regions provide a fruitful source of material through which they perform their art. Unlike nature poets who use nature for nature's sake, they use the landscape as background in their poetry. Their use of nature has more human interaction than nature poets, in other words, their art is social. By employing the landscapes of their regions as a medium, they tell the joys and tragedies of local people. The roads, flowers, mountains, farms, and trees of Frost's New Hampshire and Heaney's Derry are used to illustrate universal human experience.

Speech is another aspect of their regionalism in which they prefer the plain language of the local and avoid any linguistic complexities. For Frost, poets should not use anything that an ordinary person cannot understand (Maynard, 1924, 172). Therefore, both poets avoid any ambiguities and complex sentences to reach average

readers. In this way, they differ from modernist poets who use a complex and obscure style in their poetry. Frost and Heaney's poems are more straightforward and more direct compared to the modernists. Also, they benefit from the local language of their regions to create a conversational style. Their colloquialism adds a dramatic effect to their art in that readers feel as if they read a play. Both poets apply Frost's "sound of sense" to elevate the conversational rhythm and hereby, intonation gains importance. The meaning in their poems is mostly produced with the help of sound. The readers do not need an additional description of the setting or characters as the language and intonation provide them with enough details. Their colloquialism and straightforward style help their audience read their poems easily and with great pleasure. The local characters and settings contribute to the "sound of sense" while giving colorful descriptions of the regions.

Also, the local people in New England and Derry help the poets to go from the local to the universal and vice versa. Both poet's subject matters are the everyday rural life and traditions of local people in their provinces. While Heaney digs for the Irish identity with his bog poems, Frost presents Yankee characteristics elaborately. To achieve this, they make use of such daily activities as wall-building, apple-picking, turf-cutting, etc. These are communal rituals which reflect the specific characteristics of each region. Farmers, homemakers, and children are the characters who do the manual labor in these activities. Both poets use the specific places and people of their provinces, however, most of these places symbolize a bigger world beyond.

In both Heaney and Frost's poetry, tools play a significant role and show how they accomplish regional aspects of their art. They benefit from farm practices, manual labor, and tools while illustrating the local lives of their regions. The dynamic relationship between poetry and farming is a source of inspiration for these regional poets. They use a pen, spade, ladder, scythe, chainsaw, etc. in order to reflect the rural life and convey their ideas.

Cosmopolitanism, as a result, is shown to be an outcome of the poets' portrayal of the region. As poets, no matter how personal or local their poems are, by virtue of their poetry, the personal and the regional become cosmopolitan and universal. This is

why both regionalism and cosmopolitanism are not binary oppositions, but more like complementary terms that lead to each other.





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## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

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