

# Culture in the Pacific and Seamus Heaney's Poetry

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**Abstract.** This article attempts to seek resemblance between culture in the Pacific and Seamus Heaney's poetry. His poetry has defined him culturally. This article intends to envisage how the culture can be identified throughout his poetry. This article applies an archival research method, and it adopts Antony Hooper's view on the culture. The method traces Heaney's poetic life, and the analysis results in building individual characteristics for the cultural complex. This article mentions Heaney's religion, education, and profession, and it shows that the poet's characteristics exceed nationalities.

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## 1 Introduction

There is some sort of resemblance between culture in the Pacific and the poetry of Seamus Heaney. In the Oceania culture is stated as legitimate as civil liberties, of which structure becomes central to the politics in each of the countries. When legitimation is given to Seamus Heaney's poetry, his poetry can structurally be cultural; the poetry may literarily resemble the politics in the countries. That is to say, the poetry may bear resemblance of the culture.

Again, most Pacific countries have constitutions which assert national legitimacy in terms of their distinctive culture and traditions, and these are given at least as much attention as universal notions of democracy and individual rights. In these ways, culture in one form or another is right at the heart of national economic and political life [1].

The possible similarities between the culture and poetry initiate the writer's effort to envisage the resemblance.

The writer's effort starts off with his thought which states that a work of poetry is that of culture. Culture has transformed historically, encompassing individuals and societies time after time. Individual transformation culturally involves awareness, reality, and sign which are deemed to contravene oppressions. Social transformation culturally involves multiculturalism which deems for equivalence. The transformations affirm that defining culture has never been simple.

The meaning of culture went to another historical transformation, becoming a self-conscious, objectified reality, a universally valorised marker of difference which could be used in good effects in struggle against colonial and other political oppressions and which directly reflected the ways in which multiculturalism in the industrial world used culture to refer to diverse collective social identities engaged in struggles for social equality. The background to this historical transformation of the meaning of culture is complex [2].

In this article, the writer makes his effort to explicate the definition of culture in order to enhance the resemblance. How culture is defined is expected to set a light on the description of the resemblance through the historical transformations. Accordingly, this article seeks to see the self-consciousness, objectified reality, and marker of difference through Heaney's poetry. This article is in search of the effects of his poetry fighting oppressions. Also, this article seeks to see multiculturalism in the industrial world through Heaney's poetry. This article is in search of the social identities striving for social equality in his poetry.

The writer believes that the historical transformation in how culture is supposed to mean remains unfinished yet. The transformation has already been, and it will still be in and around culture along the course of time. With regard to Heaney's poetry, the writer found that the transformation has not stopped yet, either.

Seamus Heaney 's death at the age of 74 is both shocking and premature. No part of his poetry seemed finished; no aspect of his work looked to be over [3].

It is notable that how culture should mean transforms similarly to how Heaney's poetry should. Referring to the situation, the writer considers that the description of the resemblance is worth discussion.

This article discusses the resemblance of Heaney's poetry to the culture. The discussion was ignited by the writer's query for the resemblance, and it is intended to describe the resemblance literarily. The writer applies an archival study.

There are two articles, both called 'Historical Research', in collections addressed to social work students and researchers, for example. In both pieces, students of social policy are told about the purpose of history and its importance: that there was a past and that it was important for the phenomenon under their scrutiny; they are told that they can find traces of that past (and very correctly, about the fragmentary, incomplete nature of those traces) in various kinds of repositories and archives. They must go to them with a series of questions, and there they must collect information, by either note-taking, transcription or photocopying. Then they must analyse [4].

The writer chose to do the archival study because he thinks the study will describe the resemblance most relevantly. The relevance of his study to the description falls into two aspects. First, his study belongs with social policy: mimetically Heaney's poetry resides in society; and, it will discuss the historical transformation socially. Latter, his study is connected to history: chronologically it puts Heaney's past life under its description; and it will discuss historical transformation individually. Both aspects of the resemblance between culture in the Pacific and Seamus Heaney's poetry were collected from the archives about the culture and the poetry.

## **2 Result and Discussion**

The writer took notes on Seamus Heaney's past out of the archives, which are majorly journal articles written by the poet's biographers. The writer intends to get information about the historical transformations in order to describe the resemblance between the Oceanian culture and Heaney's poetry. Then, the writer would like to share the information in this article. To begin with, the writer notes that Heaney's poetry has been celebrated across nations.

Seamus Heaney will be immensely missed. In Ireland he anchored a public witness to the life of poetry. Outside Ireland he was widely read and cherished. As well as being the poet that he was, he was also the keeper of a poetic conversation that was rich, challenging and generous [5].

It is obvious that Heaney's poetry has been extensively recognized, both inside and outside Ireland. The late poet will be well remembered because of his poetry. There is another reminiscence of the poet.

A friend throughout the poet's years in Boston, Tom Sleigh confessed in a recent article that he had yet to come to terms with the idea of Seamus Heaney as no longer among the living, imagining him instead as "hovering just out of sight on the borders of vision". This is probably not an uncommon reaction amongst the poet's countless admirers throughout the world for whom he continues to be a vital presence [6].

The confession reads Heaney has been admired solemnly: the poet is no longer alive, but his poetry will still be. Again, the following remark reminds Heaney's readers of his poetic legacy.

Seamus Heaney's funeral in Dublin was televised live, marking an event that occupied the front page in Ireland for several days. In his eulogy of the poet, Paul Muldoon told the story of being asked at Customs, on his arrival for the funeral, what he did for a living; when he replied that he taught poetry, the Customs officer said, "You must be devastated." No need to say why: the loss of the poet was felt everywhere. He had visited schools and given readings in almost every corner of the country, often for nothing; thousands of people had seen him on television, or had read of the Nobel Prize. The bleak fact that there would be no next volume of his poetry was a grief to his readers, but even those who knew his work best were mourning the man as much as the poet [7].

It can be inferred from the last homage how Heaney had thoroughly served himself to poetry of the nation. The writer would cordially share the feeling of the poet passing away, leaving lamentation behind his readers. Last but not least, Heaney's poetry exceeds nationalities: his poetry has grown vaster than a regional nation.

In ways that are only just now beginning to be realized, the best writers from Philip Hobsbaum's Belfast Group (1963-66), such as Seamus Heaney, Michael Longley, Stewart Parker, and Bernard MacLaverty, have articulated a regional literature that interacted fruitfully with regional literatures all over the British and Irish archipelago, including Scottish, Welsh, and regional English, and with regional writers from America, such as Robert Frost. The literary devolution that comprises the largely untold story of twentieth-century "English" literature suggests the viability of regionalism generally and a decline in the dominance of London-centered literature. The imaginative efforts of a series of Northern Irish writers beginning in the early twentieth century have led to the establishment of a regional, bicultural, and finally trans-cultural literature that has devolved aesthetically, albeit as a special case, from British and Irish literature [8].

It is deducible that Heaney's poetry has become integral as English, Irish, and American literature. His poetry seems to have surpassed borders

of the nations, and it is no wonder, then, how Seamus Heaney has claimed the rights as a distinguished figure in world literature.

In addition to the depth of the reminiscence of Heaney, the writer notes that the poet has his own poetic style. First, Heaney's poetry is acknowledged for its (de)familiarisation.

It is possible to detect within Seamus Heaney's poetry recurring patterns of alternating familiarisation and 'estrangement'. By poems of familiarisation I mean ones in which he strives towards an accurate portrayal of the places, events or individuals that his poems 'st[an]d in for', overcoming 'otherness' with a diligent scrutiny. Cycles of estrangement invariably follow those of familiarisation, as Heaney seeks to recapture something of the 'outsider's' perspective in order to revitalise the poetic energy that familiarity saps from the world around him [9].

It can be seen that the recurring patterns of familiarisation and estrangement have become Heaney's poetic style. The writer finds dynamics in the recurring patterns, and he is ascertained that the dynamics in Heaney's poetry is closely akin to that in the culture. Culture in the Pacific has transformed in history, and Seamus Heaney's poetry, correspondingly, has altered in style.

Later, Heaney is acknowledged for the persona in his poetry. The deployment of the first-person singular pronoun may refer not only to a human being, but it may also refer to other living things.

In Seamus Heaney's poetry the "I", rather than representing the poet, is only one of the constituents of the subject. The subject is a textual entity not to be confused with either the poet or the speaker. Although the three concepts are closely related and sometimes overlap, the subject, omnipresent and similar to a person, is yet not an ontological individual, not the poet, but a plural creature, an entity that is represented through language [10].

The personal pronoun in Heaney's poetry does not necessarily designate the poet speaking as himself in each of his poems. The pronoun, moreover, may designate alteration between singularity and plurality.

Besides the poetic style, the writer could note that Heaney's poetry has made a strong connection for the poet with politics in Ireland. With regard to the connection, the writer could note that, first of all, Heaney's poetic and politic aspiration were affiliated to his religiosity.

By associating social and religious counterweighting with a potential counterpart, he clearly affirms the relationship between the political, religious, and textual. Northern Ireland is a country where politics is based, more than most places, on religious affiliation [11].

Heaney's affirmation on how politics is based on religious affiliation is deemed to have transformed historically. The affirmation overtly associates Heaney's poetry with culture in Ireland, and perhaps with that

in the Pacific. The writer could notice that for Heaney political career never became his intention.

The writer, later on, could read through that Heaney found his pride and joy in poetry and the teaching of poetry. Heaney seems to mean to pursue his career with poems, teaching his various pupils how to enjoy reading the poems rather than accepting the honour of the acclaimed academic title.

In June 1989, *The Irish Times* carried a front-page story heralding the likely election of Seamus Heaney as Professor of Poetry at Oxford. The poet himself, the paper reported, was noncommittal on the eve of today's vote. "I'm a teacher," he told *The Irish Times*, "My professional life has been about teaching and the pleasure I have got from opening poems to people" Ostensibly, Heaney's remark seeks to displace attention from the question at hand: he is modestly and tactfully distancing himself from the political freight which others were loading on to that elevated, English professorial chair [12].

The newspaper reported that Heaney kept himself a distance from the university promotion. He even said that he chose to teach poems to general readership than particular one. The promising pretentious career with the university would not seem to bother him at all.

Last but not least, the writer could note that humanity becomes integral in the politics of his poetry.

I didn't know Seamus well, though he felt he knew me well enough to "recommend the poet and the poems" when I applied for a fellowship to complete a second book. A man without airs or snobbishness, he shaped those who read him into more inclusive reader. For those wary of mixing politics with poetry, his poems were as political as they were humane. For those skeptical of the canon, alert to those whose stories were left out, he translated *Beowulf*, finding in the Old English word meaning "to suffer" his aunt's phrase "to thole," disarming the "Irish/English duality, the Celtic/Saxon antithesis." In his signature poem "Digging," the pen begins as a sword and ends as a ploughshare. His life and writing were a piece [13].

The biographer of Heaney admitted that the poet kept himself among his readers. No matter how knowledgeable Heaney was when he wrote his poems, he would become a peasant when he got along with his folks. For Heaney, the readers are like his poetry: they are inseparable. The writer believes that this inclusiveness denotes humanity in Heaney's poetry.

Following the relation between Heaney's poetry and his politics, the writer could note a suggestion to study Heaney's poetry to encounter borderlessness in academic institutions.

The time seems ripe for such questions, in part because of the extraordinary outpouring of worldwide public and academic interest in Heaney at the time of his death, and in part because the words 'globe',

'global', and 'globalization' seem everywhere in higher education today, with academic institutions working to 'globalize' themselves and enhance the 'global' aspects of their curricula. At the same time that such questions should be broached, there is a risk and possibly even a violence in putting together the nuances of Heaney's poetry with such a large and bland abstraction as the word 'global'. Global studies emerged primarily in the social sciences, and so it often fits poorly with the qualitative reflections of the humanities. We should bring a word like 'global' into contact with poems like Heaney's only if we're willing to see how the poems test, challenge, and revise assumptions about it - and only if it enhances rather than damages attention to the poetry as poetry, its language, technique and self-reflection [14].

Heaney's poetry is worth studying in higher education. His poetry deserves studies on the poet's expressions, skills, and values. These qualities of the poet uphold humanity, which is relevant to this present situation of the world. Humanity has become essential in the historical transformation in cultures worldwide.

### **3 Conclusion**

In the writer's opinion, the resemblance between the culture in the Pacific and Seamus Heaney's poetry can be a literary verisimilitude. The culture has transformed historically, incorporating the individual and social transformation, and so has Heaney's poetry. In the course of history, Heaney will be remembered as the poet for himself solely, but also for Ireland as well as the world globally. The memoir of Heaney designates his celebrity with the legacy of poetry inside and outside Ireland. Heaney's poetry will be accredited by his readers for his use of (de)familiarisation and the special "I". Besides being connected to poetry, Heaney was often recorded to be connected to politics. Religiosity became Heaney's affiliation for his poetic and politic aspiration. Yet, politics itself was Heaney's unintended pursuit. Heaney would rather teach poetry worldwide than follow a politic career. The politics in which Heaney was involved with resides in the humane of his poetry. Heaney endeavours humanity through his poetry, and the writer is convinced that studies on Heaney's poetry at universities will naturally reveal how his poetry works for humanity. Being human is fundamental to the culture in the Pacific and other oceanic nations. In all, Seamus Heaney's poetry is mimetic to the culture in the Pacific.

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