

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Department of English Language and Literature
M. A. Programme “English Studies: Literature and Culture”
“The Greek Element in Anglophone Literature”
2019-2021

“H.D. and Seamus Heaney: *In Illo Tempore* Today. Reimagining the Present through
the Past.”

Student’s Name: Melissanthi Papapanagiotou

I.D. Number: 219034

Date of Submission: 15-03-21

Committee (Department of English Language and Literature):
Evangelia Sakelliou-Schultz. Professor. (Supervisor)
Maro Germanou, Professor.
Christina Dokou, Assistant Professor.

Declaration: This submission is my own work. Any quotation from, or description of,
the work of others is acknowledged herein by reference to the sources, whether
published or unpublished.

Signature: Melissanthi Papapanagiotou

ABSTRACT

Although the poetry of Seamus Heaney and H.D. may at first appear to be disparate, it shares numerous traits. Heaney has been looked at through the prism of literary modernism, but never in relation to H.D. However, some of the particularities of H.D.'s modernism are reflected in Heaney and the purpose of this thesis is to trace motifs and themes that are employed by both poets, even if there is no evidence of direct influence. At the basis of the comparison is the observation that the violence of war and the displacement that both poets experienced during the time they were writing results in poetic creation that strives for unity and regeneration. The common means through which this is expressed in the poetry of both encompasses elements from ancient civilisations but also material coming from direct experience, with landscape figuring crucially. The synthesis of the aforementioned sources of inspiration in both poets is the central preoccupation of this thesis. This is achieved through the observations of Mircea Eliade concerning ancient civilisations and regarding the concepts of the sacred Centre, the *axis mundi*, and the cyclical conception of time expressed as the periodical return to what he calls *in illo tempore*, either as an unspecified time of communion with the divine, or as the time when the cosmogonic event of creation took place. Most of Eliade's concepts have been detected in Heaney by Daniel Eugene Tobin, The occultism that critics now agree influenced the poetry of H.D. will also be traced in Heaney, by relying on the work of George Morgan, while it will be extended to the concepts introduced by Eliade, as it is related to the desire for divine communion, to the initiation that leads to rebirth, much like the cosmogonic event was the primal act of creation. Conclusions will be reached about how these concepts appear in both poets as the foundation of their poetics of rebirth through elements of the past. Ultimately, without obscuring present discords, both Heaney and H.D. envision a more optimistic outcome for the present by relying on ancient resilient patterns.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. MODERNISM	2
2.1 Literary Modernism; Context and Style.....	2
2.2 Literary Modernism and Past Cultures.....	4
2.2.1 Literary Modernism and the Occult.....	4
3. OCCULT CHARACTERISTICS IN THE POETRY OF H.D. AND SEAMUS HEANEY	5
4. H.D.....	10
4.2 Use of Landscape in H.D.'s <i>Sea Garden</i>	12
4.4 Ancient Greek and Occult Elements in H.D.'s <i>Sea Garden</i>	14
4.6 H.D.'s <i>The Walls Do Not Fall</i> : Mystical Rebirth Through Mythology.	25
5. SEAMUS HEANEY	30
5.1 Seamus Heaney and Modernism	30
5.2 Seamus Heaney's Connection to the Past	33
5.3 Seamus Heaney's Mythology.....	33
5.3.1 The Bog	34
5.3.2 The <i>Omphalos</i>	35
5.3.3 Ancient Greece	35
5.4 Seamus Heaney and Occult Elements	36
5.5 Poems from Various Collections.....	37
5.5.1 <i>Death of a Naturalist</i>	37
5.5.2 <i>Door into the Dark</i>	40
5.5.3 <i>Wintering Out</i>	42
5.5.4 <i>North</i>	44
5.5.5 <i>Field Work</i>	47
5.5.6 <i>Station Island</i>	48
5.5.7 <i>The Spirit Level</i>	51
5.5.8 <i>Human Chain</i>	52
6. CYCLICAL CONCEPTION OF TIME	55
7. CONCLUSION.....	56

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to explore the use of mythological elements, particularly of ancient Greek mythology, in the poetry of H.D. and Seamus Heaney, and show how both poets rely on this material, combine it with elements of their times, and generate a synthesis that encompasses the past and the present, towards a hopeful vision for the future. Even though Heaney and H.D. share common content and style, they have not yet been considered in parallel. A crucial similarity between the two poets is their use of mythology. The systematic employment of ancient Greek material in both poets is the main reason that drew me to their comparison. However, as the two poets shared a profound interest in ancient cultures, I will also draw similarities and differences between the ways they employ other ancient material as well, in a broader attempt to identify the significance of the past in their poetry. Emphasis will be placed on the function of the pre-Christian system in contributing to the bridging of ancestral ground with the experience of today, for the creation of a view that is faithful to a subjective understanding without neglecting the objective common past and present. Ultimately, I wish to show how the past offers itself to the process of regeneration, while considering the crucial role of seemingly unrelated themes and tropes to this end. H.D. was writing amid WW1 and WW2 after moving to Europe, while Heaney was experiencing the Troubles in Northern Ireland and decided to move to the South of Ireland during their peak. Displacement, loss, and division figure in both poets, and both resort to similar tropes in order to contain place, feeling, fragmentation, and depict the force of creation, regeneration, and rebirth. My focus will be on their use of imagery, especially landscape and how it is tied to internal states, as a means of representing disparate or even antithetical elements that nonetheless coalesce.

H.D. and Heaney's connection to land materialised in their travels to Greece, where they experienced the *loci* of their inspiration in person. Their preoccupation with the classical world is part of their profound interest for ancient cultures and archetypal forms, through which they can channel their concerns. Even if both have their own way of approaching ancient material, including Greek mythology, similarities in their use of it are traceable. I will rely on several poems by Heaney, from most of his collections, and on H.D.'s *Sea Garden* and *The Walls Do Not Fall*, as representative of her early Imagist period, and the later emergence of her particular voice.

2. MODERNISM

My main stop on the journey from pre-Christian times to Heaney is that of modernism. Before linking Heaney to modernism, I will be referring to the common elements of literary modernism and will then focus on the particularities of H.D.'s poetry. A central element which modernists share is their interest in mythology and ancient cultures, knowledge of which they incorporated in their new style. The modernists were also interested in the occult, and at least in some form, occult elements can also be traced in Heaney.¹ I will also refer to other characteristics that Heaney shares with the modernists, especially H.D.

In the poetry of both Heaney and H.D., primordial whispers are reconstructed into modern poetic speech which resonates with the current ear, by virtue of the need for a firm grounding in a common past. Although it has been documented how the modernists were actually more heterogeneous than what might be believed, even to the extent that there was friction between them, poets such as Pound, Eliot, Joyce, and of course H.D. all contain instances of a stitch of the ancient thread. Such instances also appear in Heaney, with the difference that Heaney pulls on yarn that is not only ancient, but also passes through modernism. In a manner similar to that which the modernists brought pagan elements and primitive consciousness into the 20th century, so does Heaney remind us that modernism was not just an explosion that can only be seen in the ripples of what we call post-modernism, but breathes in poetry that is considered contemporary without bearing the label of post-modernism. The yarn that Heaney pulls on, for example, comes out on the side of post-colonialism, but preoccupation with this point would stray from the purposes of this thesis.

2.1 Literary Modernism; Context and Style

Virginia Woolf has described this period as such: “on or about December 1910 human character changed” (Stansky 2). Publications such as James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and Freud's prominent studies on the unconscious are only a couple of examples that demonstrate her claim. In his introduction to *The Matrix of Modernism*, Sanford Schwartz claims that “Modernist poetics ... is part of a major intellectual development

that produced significant changes in philosophy, the arts, and other fields as well” (3–4). In tracing common elements in “philosophy, poetics, and the human sciences”, he finds “the tendency to pose a sharp opposition between conscious ‘surfaces’ and unconscious ‘depths’, between ordinary experience and a hidden realm of mental life of which we are generally unaware” (4). He concludes that “in the human sciences, philosophy, and the arts we find the shared assumption that consciousness is not fully transparent to itself” (4). In terms of literary modernism, it can thus be deduced that artists were concerned with representing not only the immediately perceivable, but also the obscure internal processes that were related to it.

Schwartz then delves into the literary specificities of this phenomenon and draws attention to a line of modernists such as “Pound, Eliot, and their successors”, who demonstrate the tension between “abstraction and sensation” and highlights the importance of the middle ground, namely, “the use of constructs that integrate abstraction and sensation, thereby achieving the unity of conceptual form without sacrificing the variety of sensory particulars” (7). It is in this third tendency that I place H.D., but also Heaney, while its resilience up to our time testifies to its importance. Though H.D. is more inclined towards abstraction, in the poems that I will be considering, her reliance on concrete sensory material is vital and becomes the basis for my comparison to Heaney. Even if Heaney sides towards sensation, there are numerous instances in which abstraction is necessary for creating the atmosphere of his poems. A similarity in the integration of sensation and abstraction in both poets is the conjunction of ancient material with contemporary stimuli coming either from memory or from direct experience and involving landscape centrally. Finally, for Schwartz, the “architects of the Modernist tradition explored the dialectic of form and flux, and were attracted to constructs that unify concrete particulars without suppressing the differences between them” (7). In H.D. as in Heaney, this translates into poems that contain the coexistence of opposites.

Schwartz’s is another study in which H.D. is not considered, even if her work can be described by his observations. He does however mention that “the tension between abstraction and experience ... is crucial to other twentieth-century poets as well”, but only mentions “Yeats, WCW, and others” (10). I will now be concerned with further similarities between modernist writers which involve their treatment of the past.

2.2 Literary Modernism and Past Cultures

Although Modernism emerged as part of the larger intellectual break of the early twentieth century and its ground-breaking introductions, it is generally agreed that it relies on past elements, which it incorporates into new methods. Michael Schmidt succinctly captures this common tendency by saying that “Modernism emerged with its instant breaks from the immediate past, its different inventions, ‘making it new’ with elements from the distant past and from cultures remote in time and space” (3).² T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and James Joyce are only a few of the artists who made extended use of Greek mythology in their oeuvre.³

2.2.1 *Literary Modernism and the Occult*

Leon Surette presents a “radical revision of the standard view of literary modernism” (ix) in 1993. He distances his view from “twentieth-century scientific materialism” through which mythological elements of Pound and Eliot had been aestheticized and viewed, even by himself, as “factitious formal and thematic devices” (ix), and offers instead the argument that “the ubiquity of myth in modernist literature must be attributed at least in part to the occult belief that myths represent a record of contact between mortals and the *au delà*” (ix).⁴ He aims to “identify ... a set of ideas, attitudes, and concerns that are ubiquitous in modernism”, and which he calls “the occult” instead of the “commonly used” terms: “‘wisdom tradition’, ‘Platonism’, ‘symbolism’ ... or simply ... ‘the tradition’” (5), especially in WB Yeats, Ezra Pound, and TS Eliot, but also in D.H. Lawrence and Wallace Stevens. He reads *The Cantos* as “an occult interpretation of history” (36), and states that “everyone ‘dabbled’ in the occult”, although it “commonly passed muster as symbolism, philosophy, romanticism, aestheticism, or ... visionary” (36). As Surette argues, “the ubiquity of mythological allusion within modernism cannot be entirely attributed to anthropology”, especially considering “the extent of personal and literary contacts between major figures of modernism and the occult” (18).⁵ Even if H.D. is not mentioned in Surette, not only did she participate in the occult circles of her time, but her insistent use of Greek mythology and the merging of it with Hermeticism and Christianity in her later work can be considered as resulting from the influence of the occult. Demetres Tryphonopoulos mentions that “H.D.’s debt to occult thought is by now both understood and well

documented ... thanks to a small number of critics, including Susan Stanford Friedman, Gregory, Materer, and Helen Sword” (232). He adds that “during the early years of World War II, [H.D.] joined the London Society for Psychological Research ... and participated in weekly séances” (236–237), and that these preoccupations can be considered responsible for her *Trilogy*.

Tryphonopoulos, in 2003, is also preoccupied with the question “Why modernist scholars, with few exceptions, have chosen to skirt the occult provenance of literary modernism” (229). I will simply refer to one of the reasons he gives, namely that, much as Surette argues, the aesthetic features of modernist art were given prevalence, and will not dwell on his explanations. He seems to assert though, that “the reception and acceptance of the work of such scholars as Leon Surette and Timothy Materer suggests that there is no longer any need for ruminations regarding the status of this kind of inquiry” (230). Tryphonopoulos offers his own understanding of the occult in a similar, though more concise manner than Surette, calling it “an exclusively Western phenomenon ... characterized by radical syncretism, eclecticism, monism, non-theism, and one that offers the possibility of direct contact with the spirit world” (231). As Tryphonopoulos asserts, Materer, in 1995, “deals not only with just the three figures Surette examines, but extends the area by considering an additional five poets who were influenced by occult speculation and/or practice: H.D., Robert Duncan, Sylvia Plath, Ted Hughes, and James Merrill” (231) and “makes a very convincing case for occultism’s enduring presence beyond Modernist writing and into our own time” (231). Materer persuasively claims that “The ancient connection between poetry and religious ritual suggests a natural link between poetry and occultism” (xiv). In the following chapters, I will refer to specific occult characteristics that appear not only in H.D., but also in Heaney.

3. OCCULT CHARACTERISTICS IN THE POETRY OF H.D. AND SEAMUS HEANEY

Materer argues that “the fascination with occultism often arises in reaction to an increasingly scientific and secular culture” (xi). He adds that “occultism is usually seen as an inversion or direct challenge to Christian doctrine; for example, occultism may emphasize the feminine or androgynous nature of the deity in defiance of Christianity’s

God the Father” (xiii).⁶ Drawing a difference between Pound’s and H.D.’s use of the occult, Tryphonopoulos remarks that for H.D. “the occult embraced the notion” which Hollenberg describes as the ““primal existence of a divine One, a latent androgynous ... whole that incorporates equally both and masculine and feminine potential”” (Hollenberg 209 in Tryphonopoulos 235),⁷ an idea which he also detects in Susan Friedman.⁸ Heaney, in turn, is in many poems preoccupied with the female pagan deity of Mother Earth. More generally, the merging of female and masculine energies is a central motif in both poets.

Surette argues that through their interest in mythology and history, “occultists typically seek to establish a line of transmission of the gnosis from high antiquity, through the classical and medieval works, to the present”, a line which he calls the “secret tradition” and which “distinguishes occultists from ordinary mystics whose revelations conform to the dogmas of the religion to which they belong” (19). An important remark that Surette makes is that “All varieties of occultism of which [he is] aware assume the possibility of direct contact between living human beings and ultimate reality, the noumenal, the transcendent, or the divine” (13). He adds that this contact “can be achieved either through a spontaneous mystical revelation or through some ritual initiation” which “distinguishes the occult from mysticism” (13). Additionally, “The wisdom is ‘occult’, or hidden from all but the initiates” (Surette 13). The notion of communicating with the divine realm and being initiated to ancient wisdom permeates the poetry of both H.D. and Heaney.

I will also discuss the poets in terms of what Surette claims is “a constant in the occult tradition, although not exclusive to it”, namely, “the motif of transformation, of being ‘born again’” (15), and which, “in conformity with Demetres Tryphonopoulos” he calls “‘palingenesis’, literally ‘backward birth’ or ‘rebirth’; a death of the old life and rebirth to a new, higher one” (15). Surette then remarks that “as Reitzenstein points out, within literature and the arts palingenesis is commonly represented as metamorphoses” and adds that the “*hieros gamos*, or divine marriage” is “an equally ubiquitous representation of palingenesis” (15).⁹ Mircea Eliade describes hierogamy as the cosmogonic “primordial event which occurred *in illo tempore*” (24); “the union of heaven and earth” (23), or “the cosmic union of the elements” (25). As he explains, “The cosmogony first of all represents Creation” (Eliade 25), and concludes that “The hierogamy is a concrete realization of the ‘rebirth’ of the world and man” (Eliade 58). Tryphonopoulos views the *hieros gamos* as representing the “communion between the

human and the divine” (233) and forefronts the centrality of metamorphosis in the occult by claiming that “The aim of the occult enterprise/agenda is to occasion palingenesis or soul-making” (238).

Surette argues that “occultist hermeneuts ... behave much like literary hermeneuts” (32) in their study of their material, a simile which I believe can be reversed in the study of Heaney and H.D. which will follow, as the literary analysis of their material must include an occultist hermeneutics that will reveal the importance of mythopoeia in their oeuvre. The *hieros gamos* appears in both poets as a desire to commune with the divine, the spiritual realm, that leads to regeneration, rebirth, creation. For example, H.D. ends *The Walls Do Not Fall* with the hope that “possibly we will reach haven, / heaven”. That these lines were written amid the hell of WWII indicates a wish to perform the *hieros gamos* which will once again unleash the creativity that was obtained through the process of metamorphosis that occurs in the previous pages. Heaney, in turn, experiences an actual three-day pilgrimage to St. Patrick’s purgatory, on Station Island in N. Ireland, which results in his poetic rebirth, as the “Sweeney Redivivus” sequence suggests. This pilgrimage is portrayed in the Station Island I-XII sequence that precedes it and exhibits traces of the occult, as it involves an initiation through spectral encounters and a literary metamorphosis that cannot be sustained in the Catholic context of the pilgrimage. More centrally, both poets exhibit a desire to communicate with ancient wisdom through their preoccupation with the pre-Christian elements that they employ, drawing not only on ancient Greece, but also on other mythologies. Heaney, is preoccupied, for instance, with the Delphic Oracle and *omphalos*, or with Nerthus, the Mother goddess of fertility in pagan pre-Celtic civilisations. H.D. also heavily relies on ancient Greek material and employs Egyptian mythology as well.

In reference to the practices of the ancient peoples that he examines, Eliade observes that “Any ritual whatever ... unfolds not only in a consecrated space ... but also in a ‘sacred time,’ ‘once upon a time’ (*in illo tempore, ab origine*), that is, when the ritual was performed for the first time by a god, an ancestor, or a hero” (21). He adds that “All rituals imitate a divine archetype and ... their continual reactualization takes place in one and the same atemporal mythical instant” (Eliade 76). The sacred space, but also the “sacred time” that Eliade refers to as “*in illo tempore*” (21) appears in the poems of both Heaney and H.D. Heaney, for instance, is communicating the desire to return to this time and perform the ritual at the Delphic shrine in “Stone From

Delphi”. The atemporality of *Sea Garden*, combined with its shrines, temples, and offerings, can be said to express a desire, a quest even, to return to the ancient times, when these shrines and offerings occupied an important part of humanity, when the possibility of healing was dependent on a communion with the divine. The association between the poetry of Heaney and Eliade’s concepts such as *in illo tempore*, the cyclical conception of time, the sacred Centre, and more, from other books of Eliade that I am not referring to in this thesis, is comprehensively addressed by Daniel Eugene Tobin. In his study cited in this dissertation Tobin is preoccupied with highlighting the prominence of the Centre in the poetry of Heaney.

Eliade draws on ancient civilisations and their rituals to formulate what he calls “the architectonic symbolism of the Centre” (12). He arrives at the observations that, for these pre-Christian societies:

- “1. The Sacred Mountain—where heaven and earth meet—is situated at the Centre of the world. 2. Every temple or palace—and, by extension, every sacred city or royal residence is a Sacred Mountain, thus becoming a Centre. 3. Being an *axis mundi*, the sacred city or temple is regarded as the meeting point of heaven, earth, and hell” (12).

Eliade describes “the road leading to the Centre” being represented by different cultures as “difficult” and “arduous, fraught with perils, because it is, in fact, a rite of the passage from the profane to the sacred, from the ephemeral and illusory to reality and eternity, from death to life, from man to the divinity” (18). In these descriptions he includes “pilgrimage to sacred places (Mecca, Hardwar, Jerusalem); danger-ridden voyages of the heroic expeditions ... wanderings in labyrinths” among more, but also “difficulties of the seeker for the road of the self, to the “Centre” of his being” (18). As Eliade asserts, “obtaining the Centre is equivalent to a consecration, an initiation; yesterday’s profane and illusory existence gives place to a new, to a life that is real, enduring, and effective” (18). The symbolism of the Centre, as described by Eliade, permeates Heaney’s¹⁰ and H.D.’s poems, even if it acquires different representations and functions in each poet.

¹The modernist interest in the occult has been foregrounded by critics such as Leon Surette, Timothy Materer, and Demetres Tryphonopoulos, and will be addressed in the following chapter, along with the connection between Heaney and occultism made by George Morgan.

²It is noteworthy that, again, H.D. isn’t included in Schmidt’s treatise on *The*

Great Modern Poets.

³For an interesting account of the modernist “turn to Greece as the site of haunting continuities” see Vassiliki Kolocotroni. “Still Life: Modernism's Turn to Greece”. *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 35, No. 2, 2012, pp. 1-24.

⁴Herbert Schneideau, as Surette mentions, had “anticipated [him] by some twenty years” with “his 1969 study of Pound and Imagism” (10). He is referring to *Ezra Pound: The Image and the Real*.

⁵ Surette discloses how “Pound came into contact – either personally or through publications” (34) with occultists of his period such as G.R.S. Mead, Mme Blavatsky, Joseohin Péladan, and Allen Upward.

⁶ Materer provides a detailed account of H.D.’s Hermeticism, and insightfully illustrates how H.D. transformed the *corpus hermeticus* (86) to include the Greek god Hermes, and Mercury, while he observes that the alchemy involved in this process results in a Hermes that is neither male nor female (89).

⁷ Donna Krolik Hollenberg. *H.D.: The Poetics of Childbirth and Creativity*. Northeastern UP, 1991.

⁸ Susan Stanford Friedman. *Psyche Reborn: The Emergence of H.D.* Indiana UP, 1981. p.205.

⁹ Richard Reitzenstein. *Hellenistic Mystery-Religions: Their Basic Ideas and Significance*. [1911] 1978. Reprint. Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press. Renan, Ernest T.

¹⁰ As demonstrated by Tobin.

4. H.D.

Hilda Doolittle was one of the central poets of modernism. She moved from Pennsylvania to London early in her life, in 1911. Ezra Pound, who she had been involved with in Pennsylvania, and who had been there since 1908, introduced her to artistic circles, where she met her future husband, Richard Aldington in 1912. This was the year when “the three began to discuss the ideas of poetics” (Barbara Guest 35), “agreed upon [the] three principles” of Imagism: “1) direct treatment of the subject, 2) allow no word that was not essential to the presentation, 3) in their rhythms to follow the musical phrase rather than strict regularity” (Guest 36) and “H.D. became directly associated with the imagist movement” (Guest 35). After H.D. showed Pound her poem “Hermes of the Ways”, he assigned her the penname H.D. Imagiste. However, Guest remarks that “although Pound claimed that he invented Imagism to launch H.D.’s career, the evolution had been in fact more complicated, beginning with the Poet’s Club of 1908” (41), and quotes one of its members, the poet F.S. Flint from the May 1915 issue of *The Egoist* saying that there was a lot of talk and practice among us with what we called the ‘Image’” (69). As she concludes, “Pound did not invent ‘the image’, he was the publicist of the movement under the word *imagisme*” (Guest 69). Thus, the first steps of H.D. were anchored in what was more of a *zeitgeist*, rather than the conception of Pound. In her discussion on Imagism, Burton Hatlen states that “as Cyrena Pondrom has shown ... [imagism] grew up around H.D.’s early poems, which became paradigmatic” (108) of the movement.¹¹ After the first publications, H.D. was considered “the Goddess of Imagism” (Guest 44). Considering Guest’s remark that “this kind of poetry exerts a powerful discipline” (42), and how H.D. did not abide to it for very long, it can to some extent be deduced that Imagism did not offer her what she wanted to achieve in her poetry.

Michael Boughn and Victor Coleman mention in the introduction to *The H.D. Book* that by 1960, “H.D. had been dismissed from the ranks of serious poets by the official arbiters of literary taste and had largely disappeared from public recognition. Until the 1950’s her reputation had rested, however incorrectly and fragiley on her ongoing identification as the quintessential ‘Imagist’” (5). They add that after her *Trilogy*, “even her Imagist poems” were banished from “academically acceptable poetry” (5). Susan Friedman, in “Who Buried H.D.?” provides an interpretation of this based

on what she calls a “male-oriented bias” that governed the reading of her poetry: “As a woman writing about women, H.D. explored the untold half of the human story, and by that act she set herself outside of the established tradition” (803). She claims, however, that H.D.’s “both epics attempt to transcend the divisions into male and female as they reach for a vision of individual identity, society, and religion based on an androgynous union” (Friedman 811). Friedman was writing this in 1975, and since then, H.D. has indeed entered the literary discussions and earned her place as a significant poet, and feminist criticism such as Friedman’s has played a catalytic role in this. Her claim that H.D. combines both female and male elements in her poetry is likely one of the most important reasons why H.D. has become increasingly relevant. In the following pages, I will trace the presence of this union alongside other elements that H.D. employs, such as landscape, memory, mythology, and a momentum that brings all of these into poetry which resonates with the present and the contemporary poetry of Heaney.

4.1 Imagism and H.D.

Despite the many reasons that have obscured the particularities of H.D.’s poetry; her unique voice among those of her time, there are critics who have turned their interest to the uniqueness of her poetry, while avoiding the danger of essentialising its initial phase of Imagism. In view of the many differences in “Pound, Williams, H.D., Lowell, and Fletcher”, Hatlen argues that we can “see [Imagism] as a site of contestation over the question of what it meant to be a ‘modern’ poet” (109). In tracing the origins of Imagism, Hatlen states that the Symbolist tradition “decayed ... into a diffuse Impressionism”, and that while some Imagists, “especially Flint, Fletcher, and Lowell, were direct heirs of this decaying French tradition”, Pound and Williams developed what L.S. Dembo calls an “Objectivist” poetics (Dembo in Hatlen 110),¹² which, as Hatlen remarks “differs sharply from the Impressionist poetics” (110).

Hatlen continues to say that “Dembo himself groups H.D. with Fletcher and the camp of the ‘aesthetic mystics’, and he contrasts their work with the Objectivist poetry of Williams, Pound, and Moore” (111), while he explains that according to Dembo, the “aesthetic mystic is generally more interested in the visionary experience than in the thing perceived” (Dembo in Hatlen 111).¹³ Hatlen goes on to say that “in general, H.D. criticism since Dembo has accepted his basic judgment that the thing itself, as distinct from the poet’s vision of the thing, is not central to her work” (111). Additionally, Hatlen

claims that H.D. avoids “explicit appeals to the subjectivity of the poet and the heavy reliance on figurative language”,¹⁴ properties that she contrasts with the “Impressionist poetry of Flint and Fletcher” (117). Hatlen concludes that “the very absence of overt subjectivity within the poems turns into its opposite; ... The poet’s subjectivity is present, not as a self-referential pronoun, but as an acute sense of desire ... reaching out towards the things of the world” (128). Thus, as Hatlen shows, H.D. acquires her own traits, even as early as her first Imagist poetry, that set her apart from the—also diverse—rest of the Imagist poets.

I agree with Friedman’s observation that “H.D.’s imagist poems are phenomenological in emphasis; they are poems about consciousness, not the world of objects external to consciousness”¹⁵ (Friedman 56 in Hatlen 111). Even if Hatlen makes a point of emphasizing how “rather than starting with the transcendental, H.D. began her career as a poet by focusing on the physical object, as it gives itself to the senses” (111), her point does not contradict Friedman. At this point I would like to argue that although, as mentioned in 2.1, Heaney’s point of reference is that of the immediate object, or in Schwartz’s term, the “sensation”, he too meditates strongly on what is being perceived, or remembered, and the perception is metabolized together with the internal world of consciousness, the resulting effect being that of an externalisation of the latter either in the concrete world, or sometimes, and this is what I intend to look into, in abstract mythological, or even metaphysical terms. Thus, in Heaney, the subjective finds its way through the objective, much like in H.D.

4.2 Use of Landscape in H.D.’s *Sea Garden*

In H.D.’s early (imagist) poetry, landscape plays an important role. Debo claims that H.D.’s “valuation of the landscape ... echoes Transcendental beliefs” (7), agreeing with Friedman, who as Debo acknowledges, was the first to make this claim, based on H.D.’s “use of nature as objective correlative for spirit” (Friedman 99 in Debo 20n6).¹⁶ Although the landscape may seem abstract and constructed, Guest’s view that it is “‘never anchored in human geography because the ‘country’ is imaginary and symbolic” (Guest in Debo 20n3) has been contested by Friedman (Debo 20n3). Debo builds on Friedman’s observation that the landscape of *Sea Garden* is actually American, in order to identify its role in H.D.’s construction and portrayal of identity. That the

landscape in *Sea Garden* is American also occurs from Norman Holmes Pearson saying in an interview that H.D. “often told me that her nature imagery . . . was never really Greek but came from her childhood reminiscences of Watch Hill and the coasts of Rhode Island and Maine, which she used to visit with her friends as a child” (Dembo 437 in Debo 4).¹⁷

As Debo remarks, “H.D. began *Sea Garden* only a year after leaving Pennsylvania for Europe, and the North-eastern coast as well as the Pennsylvanian country side clearly emerge in *Sea Garden*’s imagery” (6). Specifically, Debo posits that the flowers of *Sea Garden* are “wildflowers native to New England” (9), and that “the seashore itself in *Sea Garden* is New England imagery—a beach of gravel or sand, or craggy rocks meeting the sea directly—”, while “The steep cliffs, the craggy coasts, the rocks meeting the sea evoke the southern side of Casco Bay” (10). Debo concludes that “in H.D.’s landscapes while the Greek layer may be the top layer of H.D.’s palimpsest, it is overlaid upon a very real portrayal of the northeastern U.S.” and thus, that “shards of her past are ever present” (3). Ultimately, the objective landscape becomes subjective through H.D.’s poetic process combining Greek mythology and her Imagist aesthetics that, apart from the three principles, also consist of combining contrasts such as beauty and strength, safety and torment, land and sea.

4.3 National Identity in *Sea Garden*

Celena E. Kusch argues that “*Sea Garden* engages the same questions of international, cosmopolitan identity and American national belonging that are central to modernist debates about defining US literary identity” (47-48), and points out that the focus of the collection is “the ocean that defines the geography of transatlantic modernity” (48). As Kusch then points out, “the collection dislocates national identity from its geographical foundation and sets it in motion and in contact with other nations”, thus it “Rewrites the landscape, and by extension the culture, of the modern US” (50). That Greek mythology is part of the synthesis of *Sea Garden*, shows that H.D. includes it in the process of constructing new, modern identities.

While Heaney gives his poems a more concrete Irish grounding, he nonetheless allows a more abstract realm for Greek mythology to seep in and form a more universal and timeless understanding of the poet’s quest, and ultimately of life itself. Also, the

liminal and unstable poetics of *Sea Garden* that capture the experience of being a modernist US expatriate in search of an authentic voice at a time of war can be juxtaposed with Heaney's experience of trying to find a voice amid the sectarianism of N. Ireland caused by the violent conflict between the Unionist/Nationalist opposition; the Irish particularities that have constantly been in a tug of war with his poetic calling. In "Station Island XII" Heaney turns to the ghost of Joyce,¹⁸ the archetypal Irish modernist wanting to be liberated from the strings that bind him to his national ground, for guidance, though accepting memory as a central force of consciousness.

4.4 Ancient Greek and Occult Elements in H.D.'s *Sea Garden*

The Greek layer in *Sea Garden* is made up of gods, nymphs, dryads, nereids, shrines and temples, descriptions of statues, spearsmen, and nautical imagery. The purpose of the next section is to demonstrate how *Sea Garden* combines Greek themes and occult elements with the landscape which, as mentioned above, comes from H.D.'s American memories. The poems I have chosen for this purpose manifest a psychological affinity to ancient schemata, as H.D. employs the Greek borrowings mentioned above but also the occult tropes mentioned previously, to ground her understanding of her inner world through the resilience of these forms. A permeating pattern in this process is the desire to combine fragments of the self into a unified whole encompassing female and male traits, which only together can form a coherent, potent self. Even if her subjectivity is questionable, it can nevertheless be distilled from the speakers of her poems, especially considering that the landscape comes from her memory and is imbued with mythological and occult overtones.

In "The Helmsman" the speaker is part of a plural "we", wandering and worshipping "inland", in what can be considered a pastoral setting. They have become so absorbed in the landscape that they resemble dryads, wood nymphs of ancient Greece.

We fled inland with our flocks,
we pastured them in hollows,
cut off from the wind
and the salt-track of the marsh.

We worshipped inland—

We stepped past wood-flowers,
 We forgot your tang,
 We brushed wood-grass.

We wandered from pine-hills
 Through oak and scrub-oak tangles,
 We broke hyssop and bramble,
 We caught flower and new bramble-fruit
 In our hair: we laughed
 As each branch whipped back,
 We tore our feet in half-buried rocks
 And knotted roots and acorn-cups

We forgot—we worshipped,
 We parted green from green,
 We sought further thickets,
 We dipped our ankles
 Through leaf-mould and earth,
 And wood and wood-bank enchanted us—

And the feel of the clefts in the bark,
 And the slope between tree and tree—
 And a slender path strung field to field
 And wood to wood
 And hill to hill
 And the forest after it.

We forgot—for a moment
 Tree-resin, tree-bark,
 Sweat of a torn branch

Were sweet to the taste. (Doolittle, “The Helmsman” 4–5)

However, the poem is an invocation to “The Helmsman” of the title, to “be swift”, and apparently help them steer their boat more confidently:

But now, our boat climbs—hesitates—

drops—
 climbs—hesitates—crawls back—
 climbs—hesitates—
 O be swift—

we have always known you wanted us.” (Doolittle, “The Helmsman” 5)

The element of desire implies that the Helmsman also has a need to unite with the group inland. Without him, the composition is rendered incomplete. That his name belongs to the maritime realm, while the speakers indulge on land, points to the necessity of the combination of both elements, land, and sea, to form a complete unity and navigate successfully. These two elements can also be considered to embody the female and male aspects, especially since the group is portrayed as druidical, while the Helmsman is presumably male. This poem could thus be H.D.’s longing for a unification of female and male elements, towards a more complete entity.

“Loss” takes place on the liminal landscape between land and sea, where the speaker, and apparently all humans, perish. The only one who escapes is the hero of the poem, as I like to call him, who belongs to the realm of the gods, and is reclaimed by them, creating the impression that the traits he embodies belong to the realm of the divine. He is depicted as a god-like ancient Greek warrior, with his “shoulder strap”, his “shorn locks”, his “sun-burnt neck”, his “knee-cap”, his “tunic” and his “sharp muscles”, discernible under the tunic (31). The heroic element is prevalent in the glorified descriptions of the hero, and is reinforced by the form of the poem, which begins *in medias res*. The sea is the means through which the hero returns to the gods, thus it is portrayed as a channel between the human realm and that of the divine, the central trait of the latter being the combination of beauty and strength, an unattainable fusion for humans, and the hero is worshipped precisely for this.

Your feet cut steel on the paths,
 I followed for the strength
 of life and grasp.
 I have seen beautiful feet
 but never beauty welded with strength.

I marvelled at your height. (Doolittle, “Loss” 30)

The speaker is admiring the hero, who in the end the gods reclaim: “but the gods wanted you, / the gods wanted you back.” Although the speaker is “glad” (29) that he has “escaped” the “peril” of liminal landscape comprised of an “estuary”, a stifling “sea-

mist”, a “marsh”, a “bay”, a “crumbling bank”, and “cliffs” (29-31), there is no indication that she will have the same fate. It thus appears that the desired traits of the hero that the speaker admires are unattainable and unfit for the human condition, while the realm of the divine is cherished as the ideal *topos*.

There are two poems in *Sea Garden* that contain direct references to ancient Greece. In “Hermes of the Ways”, Hermes “of the triple path-ways” is contrasted to the “many-foamed” ways of the sea, “welcoming wayfarers” from his sheltered “sea-orchard”.

But more than the many-foamed ways
of the sea,
I know him
of the triple path-ways,
Hermes,
who awaits.

Dubious,
facing three ways,
welcoming wayfarers, (Doolittle, “Hermes of the Ways” 55)

By the end of the poem, it is revealed that he provides a refuge from the sea, at their liminal point of contact, as a constant that signifies the coexistence of both elements.

Hermes, Hermes,
the great sea foamed,
gnashed its teeth about me;
but you have waited,
where sea-grass tangles with shore-grass. (Doolittle, “Hermes of the Ways” 57)

In Greek mythology, Hermes communicated the gods’ messages to humans, but also functioned as psychopomp, guiding the souls to the underworld. The “triple path-ways” could be an allusion to Hermes’ intermediary role between the sky (the gods), the earth (humans), and the underworld, thus encompassing all the realms of the ancient wisdom, and H.D. looks to him for guidance. This way, H.D. creates an *axis mundi* out of the god. In “Acon”, the speaker expresses a desire to find herself in Greece, from where the gifts, the offerings of “dryads”, “nereids”, “nymphs” (45-46); the “dittany” (45), can heal the “broken” Hyella (45).

Bear me to Dictaeus,
and to the steep slopes;
to the river Erymanthus.

I choose spray of dittany,
cyperum, frail of flower,
buds of myrrh,
all-healing herbs,
close pressed in calathes.

//

dryads
haunting the groves,
nereids
who dwell in wet caves,
for all the white leaves of olive-branch,
and early roses,
and ivy wreaths, woven gold berries,
which she once brought to your altars,
bear now ripe fruits from Arcadia,
and Assyrian wine
to shatter her fever. (Doolittle, "Acon" 45-46)

Through the last two poems it becomes apparent that H.D. draws on those elements of Greece that she feels can provide guidance and healing.

In *Sea Garden*, H.D. includes numerous shrines and temples which can be considered to represent the ancient sacred Centre, as described by Eliade, as they appear at liminal positions, between heaven—represented by the sky—and earth, while the speakers face arduous conditions in the process of reaching them. "The Shrine" is a characteristic example of this difficult destination, being depicted as an "evil", dangerous place, promising refuge but causing peril to those who seek it:

Nay, you are great, fierce, evil—
you are the land-blight—
you have tempted men
but they perished on your cliffs. (Doolittle, "The Shrine" 6)

In the second part of the poem, however, the speaker cherishes the sacred shrine,

demonstrating that it is in fact possible to reach this destination and place an offering:

O but stay tender, enchanted
 where wave-lengths cut you
 apart from all the rest—
 for we have found you,
 we watch the splendour of you,
 we thread throat on throat of freesia
 for your shelf. (Doolittle “The Shrine” 8)

The third part of the poem reminds the reader of the dangers of approaching the Shrine, as apparently nobody has ever succeeded in reaching it alive:

Many warned of this,
 Men said:
 there are wrecks on the fore-beach,
 wind will beat your ship,
 there is no shelter in that headland,
 it is useless waste, that edge,
 that front of rock—
 seagulls clang beyond the breakers,
 none venture to that spot. (Doolittle “The Shrine” 9)

The last part of the poem is a declaration of belief in its power, despite the disasters it has caused to those who have sought it. In the end, it “leans forward” and grants forgiveness to those who accept its “ragged coast”:

But hail—
 as the tide slackens,
 as the wind beats out,
 we hail this shore—
 we sing to you,
 spirit between the headlands
 and the further rocks.
 //
 your eyes have pardoned our faults,
 your hands have touched us—
 you have leaned forward a little
 and the waves can never thrust us back

from the splendour of your ragged coast. (Doolittle “The Shrine” 9)

In “The Wind Sleepers” the speaker cries out:

Tear—
 tear us an altar,
 tug at the cliff-boulders,
 pile them with the rough stones—
 ...

Chant in a wail
 That never halts,
 Pace a circle and pay tribute
 With a song. (Doolittle “The Wind Sleepers”)

This poem expresses the desire for a sacred altar, for rituals performed in a circle in order to protect those who had been exposed to the harsh conditions of the unsheltered landscape. The altar will however be placed at the liminal side of the cliff, between sky, land and sea, but the sacred rituals and the natural song of the birds will serve as protection. The poem thus expresses the desire to return to the time when rituals were performed in sacred temples in equilibrium with nature.

In “The Gift” the speaker recalls the initiatory rites which she has witnessed, and likens them to her own struggle to go through each day. “I have lived as they” is telling of how the speaker lives her present through a ritualistic confrontation with its struggles (Doolittle, “The Gift” 22).

Sleepless nights,
 I remember the initiates,
 Their gesture, their calm glance.
 I have heard how in rapt thought,
 In vision, they speak
 With another race,
 More beautiful, more intense than this.

//

I reason:
 I have lived as they
 In their inmost rites—
 They endure the tense nerves

Through the moment of ritual.
 I endure from moment to moment—
 days pass all alike,
 Tortured, intense. (Doolittle “The Gift” 22)

In part I of “The Cliff Temple” the speaker conveys the experience of being high up, close to where the temple is, above earthly contingencies:

Great, bright portal,
 shelf of rock,
 rocks fitted in long ledges,
 rocks fitted to dark, to silver granite,
 to lighter rock—
 clean cut, white against white.

High—high—and no hill-goat
 tramples—no mountain-sheep
 has set foot on your fine grass;
 you lift, you are the world-edge,
 pillar for the sky-arch.

The world heaved—
 we are next to the sky:
 over us, sea-hawks shout,
 gulls sweep past—

...

//

And under and under,
 the wind booms:
 it whistles, it thunders,
 it growls— ... (Doolittle, “The Cliff Temple” 37-38)

However, there is an ambivalence expressed in parts II and III, where the speaker contemplates the arduous road that leads to that apparently unreachable temple, and goes as far as to consider giving up, and plunging back down again, asking if the sacred spirit would save her nonetheless. The temple, thus, can be seen as a manifestation of Eliade’s definition of the Centre. What is more, it also represents an ambivalent *axis*

mundi.

I said:

For ever and for ever, must I follow you
Through the stones?

I catch at you—you lurch:

You are quicker than my hand-grasp.

//

Shall I hurl myself from here,
shall I leap and be nearer you?
Shall I drop, beloved, beloved,
ankle against ankle?

Would you pity me, O white breast? (Doolittle, “The Cliff Temple” 39-39)

In “Cities” the speaker is dissatisfied with the current condition of human cities, but considers an optimistic explanation based on the possible existence of a splendid city that was too beautiful to build. Instead, the builder dispersed traces of it in the form of “larve” (Doolittle, “Cities” 61), of eggs that must be nurtured in order to hatch the beauty. Thus, the modern cities are clusters containing the seeds of the ancient beauty that is optimistically depicted as awaiting to be reborn and flourish. The task falls on a few who have the capacity to accomplish this quest and bring beauty back to human dwellings. The “temple”, “arch”, “pillars”, “strange court-yards and porches” of the initial plan, point to an ancient city that existed *in illo tempore*, a city whose beauty and splendour the poet wishes to reappear, to be regenerated, reborn, in the modern context (Doolittle, “Cities” 59). That “*the city is peopled / with spirits, not ghosts*” shows that the past is not dead, and there is a possibility of this rebirth (Doolittle, “Cities” 62).

Can we believe—by an effort
comfort in our hearts:
It is not waste all this,
not placed here in disgust,
street after street, each patterned alike,
no grace to lighten
a single house of the hundred
crowded into one garden-space.

Crowded—can we believe,

not in utter disgust,
in ironical play—
but the maker of cities grew faint
with the beauty of temple
and space before temple,
arch upon perfect arch,
of pillars and corridors that led out
to strange court-yards and porches

//

For alas,
he had crowded the city so full
that men could not grasp beauty,
beauty was over them,
through them, about them,
no crevice unpacked with honey,
rare, measureless.

So he built a new city,
ah can we believe, not ironically
but for new splendour
constructed new people
to lift through slow growth
to a beauty unrivalled yet—
and created new cells,
hideous first, hideous now—
spread larve across them,
not honey but seething life

And in these dark cells,
packed street after street,
souls live, hideous yet—
O disfigured, defaced,
with no trace of the beauty men once held so light.

Can we think a few old cells
 were left—we are left—
 grains of honey,
 old dust of stray pollen
 dull on our torn wings,
 we are left to recall the old streets?

Is our task the less sweet
 that the larve still sleep in their cells?
 you are useless. We live.
 we await great events.
 we are spread through this earth.
 we protect our strong race.
 you are useless.
 your cell takes the place
 of our young future strength.

Though we wander about,
 Find no honey of flowers in this waste,
 is our task the less sweet—
 who recall the old splendour,
 await the new beauty of cities?

The city is peopled

With spirits, not ghosts, O my love: ... (Doolittle, "Cities")

4.5 Landscape and Ancient Greece in H.D.'s *The God, Heliodora, and Hymen*

H.D.'s three collections following *Sea Garden* are explicitly based on Greek mythology, to the extent that it becomes their subject matter. What H.D. is preoccupied with in these collections is giving new content to mythological figures to sketch her own mythology and re-write elements according to her understandings. Debo cites H.D. claiming in a letter to Pearson that:

“Leda” was done at the same time as “Lethe”. Lotus-land, all this. It is nostalgia for a lost land. I call it Hellas. I might, psychologically just as well, have listed the Casco Bay islands off the coast of Maine but I called my islands Rhodes, Samos and Cos. They are symbols. And symbolically the first island of memory was dredged away or lost, like a miniature Atlantis. It was a thickly wooded island in the Lehigh river [in Pennsylvania] and believe it or not, was named actually, Calypso’s island. (Collecott 72 in Debo 3)¹⁹

These collections can therefore be read as H.D.’s desire to reconstruct elements of her memory together with elements of mythology to keep them alive in her own particular understanding of them. It should thus be noted that again, memory, (Greek) mythology, and present, are somehow intertwined, even if these poems will not be included in this comparative study, for lack of affinities to Heaney. *The God*, however contains H.D.’s most characteristic imagist poem, “Oread”, which I will compare to Heaney’s “Lovers of Aran”. In “Oread”, the sea is merged with the trees of the land to create a dual identity, equally composed of both male and female elements, which in turn engulfs the human condition. In ancient Greece, oreads were nymphs believed to reside at mountains. We are thus, once again, transported to ancient Greece and invited to see it as a site of inspiration. The poem also exhibits a desire for a pagan fusion with landscape, something which is also present in Heaney.

Whirl up, sea—
whirl your pointed pines,
splash your great pines
on our rocks,
hurl your green over us,
cover us with your pools of fir. (Doolittle, “Oread”)

Nonetheless, these collections indicate H.D.’s gradual distancing from imagism, leading to her later, more mature works, in which she develops her own poetic voice.

4.6 H.D.’s *The Walls Do Not Fall*: Mystical Rebirth Through Mythology.

The Walls Do Not Fall opens with war-torn London amid the Blitz, and asserts how “eternity endures” (70), like the ancient shrines in Egypt, and “inspiration” has not been defeated by the violence of war, or of time, while still, the “Pythian pronounces”

(71). In section 3, Hermes is evoked through his sceptre, the Caduceus, which “bears healing” or “brings life to the living” (78). According to Θανάσης Ντόκος, the two intertwined serpents symbolize the cure (*φάρμακο*) and the poison (*φαρμάκι*) respectively, while together, they represent the balance of nature (424). The speaker’s aim is to “recover” this, and through it promote healing and restore balance to life. Aliki Barnstone mentions in her notes, in reference to the Caduceus, that “in alchemy, it is the symbol of the union of opposing forces” (175).

In section 8, the first plural is identified with poets as messengers of the ancient wisdom, but who have been unjustly accused of being “intellectual adornment ... / useless”.

we, authentic relic

bearers of the secret wisdom,
living remnant

of the inner band
of the sanctuaries’ initiate,

are not only ‘non-utilitarian’,
we are ‘pathetic’:

this is the new heresy; (Doolittle, *The Walls Do Not Fall* 92)

The speaker considers that poets should be cherished, “for gods have been smashed before / and idols and their secret is stored / in man’s very speech” (94). Section 10 pays homage to “Mercury, Hermes, Thoth” who “invented the script” that endures “beyond death”, while it ends with the affirmation that “in the beginning / was the Word”, and that it will prevail over the “latter-born” Sword (98). Thus, for the speaker, poetry is more resilient than violence, and she rests her hope on the power of words to overcome it. In section 14, the speaker further asserts:

we are the keepers of the secret,
the carriers, the spinners

of the rare intangible thread
that binds all humanity

to ancient wisdom,
to antiquity (Doolittle, *The Walls Do Not Fall* 112)

In section 17, the speaker's desire for rebirth is stated explicitly:

let us light a new fire
and in the fragrance

of burnt salt and sea-incense
chant new paeans to the new Sun
of regeneration; (Doolittle, *The Walls Do Not Fall* 116).

In section 21, through her dream, the deity she calls "Amen-Ra, / *Amen*, Aries, the Ram;" (124) tells her to "be cocoon, smothered in wool, / be Lamb, mothered again", as it is "time for [her] to begin a new spiral" and thus be reborn. In section 22 she pleads

take me home, take me home,
//
hide me in your fleece,
crop me up with the new grass;

let your teeth devour me,
let me be warm in your belly,

the sun-disk,
the re-born Sun (126)

In section 24, this home can be the realm of the "stars" of antiquity, such as "Sirius, Vega, Arcturus" (130) which she wishes to:

become, as they once were,
personified messengers,

healers, helpers
of the One, *Amen*, All-father" (132)

This way she will be initiated to the sacred knowledge. As Θανάσης Ντόκος explains in the notes, Ra is "the king of all gods of Ancient Egypt", who "corresponds to Zeus of ancient Greece" and "with the name Amen-Ra or Ammon-Ra is the god of mystery" (421). Also, as Ντόκος explains, "the Egyptians make the statue of Zeus with a face of

a ram”, owing to a myth found in Herodotus according to which Zeus presented himself to Heracles in the fleece of a ram, holding its head in front of his own (424). In section 30, the desire for creativity is expressed as such: “the elixir of life, the philosopher’s stone / is yours if you surrender // sterile logic, trivial reason;” (144). Towards the end, in section 39, the speaker asserts

... I know, I feel
the meaning that words hide;

they are anagrams, cryptograms,
little boxes, conditioned

to hatch butterflies . . . (170)

Butterflies not only represent the soul in ancient Greece, but, as Ντόκος points out in the notes, “represent regeneration, resurrection, as from earthly caterpillars they turn into winged creatures of the sky” (436). The ancient Greek meaning attributed to this image is further reinforced in *Tribute to the Angels*, and the following lines, referring to “the new Eve” (262), “Our Lady” (264): “she is Psyche, the butterfly, / out of the cocoon” (266). Sarah Louis Mitchem also refers to the Greek association of butterflies with the soul (49).

In *The Walls Do Not Fall*, the contact with the divine is achieved through her dream involving initiation and metamorphosis. The process of metamorphosis through “Amen-Ra” in *The Walls Do Not Fall* has been thoroughly analysed by Mitchem. H.D. employs the syncretism involved in the occult in a rebirth which begins with a view of the poets as the bearers of the wisdom of antiquity. Through her transformation involving the deity she calls Amen-Ra, she emerges to perform poetic practice as messenger of the divine. The ritual described is a highly personalized one, and involves wisdom that is not transmitted directly to the reader. Instead, the poet is initiated to the occult knowledge and commits to the vocation of communicating it through her poetry. H.D. confounds ancient Egyptian and Greek mythology, but also Christian elements to assert her hope that poetry can overcome war and provide healing. Through the combination of all these, the speaker, who can be assumed to be H.D., is herself reborn, acquiring a new voice through which she can perform the task of the divine messenger. As Mitchem remarks, “She has seen her role as unleashing the hidden meaning in words. It is in words that the hidden knowledge lies; and this wisdom, if translated, can sanctify

the psyche and allow it to reach heaven” (49). Even in London, where war continues, hope is still alive, as the last lines of TWDNF read: “possibly we will reach haven, / heaven” (182). For H.D., the brutality of war leads to a conception of metamorphosis that places hope in the task of the poet to guide humanity through the shadows. Although this cannot be considered as a political act, it can nonetheless be aligned with Heaney’s claim that poetry is not “an aesthetic retreat from politics” (Leah Flack).²⁰ I will now proceed to look at the contemporary poet, Seamus Heaney.

¹¹ Cyrena N. Pondrom. “H.D. and the Origins of Imagism”, *Signets*, edited by Susan Stanford Friedman and Rachel Blau DuPlessis. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1991, pp. 85-109.

¹² Hatlen is quoting from: L.S. Dembo. *Conceptions of Reality in Modern American Poetry*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1966, p. 3 ff.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 10-47.

¹⁴ Hatlen argues that the eleven poems that make use of the first-person singular can be argued to be “dramatic monologues”, while those which employ the first-person plural “rather ... evoke the ritual voice of a community” (118).

¹⁵ Susan Stanford Friedman, Susan Stanford. *Psyche Reborn: The Emergence of HD*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1981.

¹⁶ Susan Stanford Friedman. “Exile in the *American Grain*: H.D.'s Diaspora.” *Women's Writing in Exile*. Edited by Mary Lynn Broe and Angela Ingram. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989. 87-112.

¹⁷ Debo cites this quote from L.S. Dembo, “Norman Holmes Pearson on H.D.: An Interview.” *Contemporary Literature* Vol. 10 No. 4, 1969, pp. 435-446.

¹⁸ That it is indeed Joyce is agreed upon by critics and as Fawbert claims is “confirmed by Heaney in his notes”. See David Fawbert, *Connecting With Seamus Heaney*. “Station Island XII”. <https://fawbie.info/station-island/station-island-the-sequence-xii/> Accessed March 2021.

¹⁹ Collecott, Diana. “Memory and Desire: H.D.'s ‘A Note on Poetry.’” *Agenda* 25, Vol. 3, No 4, 1987-88, pp. 65-76.

²⁰ This is from an online source with no page numbers.

5. SEAMUS HEANEY

I will begin with placing Heaney within the broader context of modernism, and continue with the poems that can be compared to H.D.'s early *Sea Garden* but also to her *Trilogy*. Finally, I will distil those aspects of their poetry that point to a continuity between the ancient world, modernism, and contemporary poetry, by largely relying on their treatment of ancient cultures, with an emphasis on ancient Greece. The return to mythology provides, for both poets, a point of reference through which they understand and depict their place in the world. The particularities of living in N. Ireland are welded into this quest for identity, as is the sense of existing in a land the past of which has been obscured by colonisation, rendering an assertiveness towards the present situation almost impossible to achieve for the poet. Heaney thus turns to the past in search of a sense of unity and integrity. According to Henry Hart "Heaney has always portrayed himself as a man pushed and pulled by opposed factions—Britain and Ireland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, Protestant and Catholic" (*Review* 176). Hart then refers to John F. Desmond's interpretation of this situation: "'Like Weil's principle of metaxu, [Heaney] stands 'in between' the contending views—weighing, balancing, judging, and poetically transforming the particular circumstances of his life while trying to hold fast to the root integrity of the personal self'" (Desmond 33 in Hart, *Review* 176). This condition of being "in between" can be compared with H.D.'s experience as an expatriate during WW1 mainly, but also throughout her life, and can be thought as the common drive behind looking to the past for a poetic creation that offers vital roots and that is able to contain the disparate parts of experience. This poetic creation is, for both poets, central to a liberating, regenerating process that looks to the future with an optimism that does not disregard the grievances of the past or present, instead draws on them for guidance.

5.1 Seamus Heaney and Modernism

Heaney wrote some years after the modernists of the early 20th century. The poetry of Heaney that I am considering was written between 1957 and 2010. While critics such as Flack have acknowledged Heaney's indebtedness to modernism, Matthew McGuire notes that critics have largely viewed Heaney as "anti-modern".²¹

By focusing on his play, *The Burial at Thebes* he “seeks to relocate Heaney amid the emerging critical framework of New Modernist Studies”. My aim is similar, though my concern is how his poetry—which has generally received the “anti-modern” criticism that McGuire refers to—relates to the poetry of the modernist H.D. in particular. As Hart asserts, while critics “accuse [Heaney] of stubbornly refusing to modernize himself, his unsettled attitudes with regard to both past and present seem particularly modern” (“Poetry of Meditation” 15). He adds that “Heaney typically reveals a dialectical relation where oppressively one-sided relations were the rule” (“Poetry of Meditation” 15). This dialectic is reminiscent of the modernist tendency, prominent in H.D. as well, to bring opposites to a proximity without obscuring their differences.

Robert Sheppard contends that “quaintly inhabiting a world in which Ezra Pound and ‘making it new’ might never had happened, [Heaney] has embraced the role of Romantic poet, drawing his theories of composition from Wordsworth” (127). Although Heaney may draw on Wordsworth’s gaze, to say that for him modernism never occurred is to erase vital components through which his poetry breathes. In “The Peninsula”,²² for example, Henry Hart comments how “Rather than write an imagist poem Heaney writes a poem about how one gets written” (“Poetry of Meditation” 8). In the poem, Heaney wants to recall the images he witnessed during his drive and unlock the impression they left in his consciousness. Interestingly, this process converges with the characteristic trait of H.D., namely, that of internalising perceived objective forms to generate a subjective impression of reality filtered through consciousness. That landscape is the subject matter of the poetic creation mentioned in this passage strengthens the conversion of the poetic process in both poets.

In reference to the “Joycean leap” of language, Darcy O’Brien argues that just as Yeats both resists and accepts the “traditional meters”

Seamus Heaney also resists, yields, and then resists again. He takes what he will and must from the modernists: Pound, Joyce, and Eliot have been assimilated, although no more so than many non-English-speaking writers, Mandelstam, Milosz, Neruda among them ... But his more recent work employs stricter, more traditional forms than ever before—the sonnet, for instance, or the *terza rima*” (61-62).

He then argues that “fear of drowning” keeps him from swimming “in Joyce’s ocean” or in “the post-modernist ether, neither in form nor in attitude” (62). However, that Heaney does not adopt the Joycean style but instead relies—somewhat—on traditional

forms, is not sufficient to render him conservative. Also, as McGuire claims, Heaney makes use of the Joycean “mythic method”²³ in his later poetry.²⁴ As McGuire remarks, Heaney’s involvement with various myths, such as those of Joyce, takes on a role “of both reimagining the past and re-aligning the co-ordinates for the future”. Even though traditional forms are not a characteristic of modernism, the reliance on past cultures is. And Heaney is employing the traditional forms in modernist tropes steeped in mythical undertones, much like those of the modernists. As Hart concludes, “‘Make it new’, for Heaney as for Pound, also means ‘make it old’” (“Poetry of Meditation” 16). By comparing Heaney with H.D., I intend to link Heaney to modernism on what McGuire calls “the planetary and transnational” level, in contrast to the “more local and culturally specific context” of Irish modernism.

Heaney has said that “Pound and Eliot and Joyce may have regarded themselves as demolitionists of sorts but from a later perspective they turned out to be conservationists, keeping open lines to the classical inheritance of European literature” (*Government of the Tongue* 42-43). It is this conservation that I believe Heaney is contributing to, though Heaney also transports modernism. As Flack remarks, Heaney read “James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Osip Mandelstam” and “returned to the modernists over the course of his career to determine his own role in continuing their work of cultural conservation”. In an interesting appraisal of his work, Flack posits that “His critical and creative engagement with modernism shows him doing precisely what James and Seshagiri identify as the work of twenty-first century metamodernism: ‘open[ing] up alternative futures’ for his poetry ‘through engagements with [his] modernist past’”.²⁵ Flack is referring to the authors that influenced Heaney. In the following chapters I will look into Heaney’s poems that bear affinities to H.D., even if such a connection cannot be considered to emerge from Heaney’s direct engagement with her work, as proof of this does not appear in the bibliography.

Heaney has said that “Our sense of the past, our sense of the land and perhaps our sense of identity are inextricably interwoven”.²⁶ His poetry portrays this relationship, as Heaney makes extended use of the landscape in a manner which reveals new levels of meaning underneath its surface. Although the use of landscape may appear to be indebted to the romantics and the manner in which it is treated to the transcendentalists and the symbolists, Heaney’s concise poetry is reminiscent of the modernist trait described in chapter 2, of obscurely concealing meaning beneath the surface of what is perceived, and transmitting various levels of meaning through

imagery that blends memory and mythology; perception and consciousness. This tendency also appears in H.D.'s *Sea Garden* in poems such as "The Helmsman", "Loss", "The Shrine", and "The Cliff Temple", where the landscape is employed to represent internal states.

5.2 Seamus Heaney's Connection to the Past

That Heaney places great importance on the past is evident in his poetry and becomes explicit in his prose. He begins his essay "Place, Pastness, Poems: A Triptych" by saying that "the sense of past constitutes what William Wordsworth might have potentially called a 'primary law of nature,' a fundamental human gift, as potentially civilizing as our gift for love" and remarks, in reference to objects of the past, that "The air which our imaginations inhale in their presence is not musty but bracing" (31). This quality is extrapolated to the effect of the past in poetry when he claims in the same essay that "For all poets ... pastness is to a greater or lesser degree enabling" (38). While at the Ulster Museum in Belfast, looking at the Mesolithic artifacts, Heaney recalls how "My neighbor", the catechism declared, "'is all mankind'", and it becomes apparent that this relationship is not limited by time when he adds "So I think of my Mesolithic Ulster neighbor" ("Place, Pastness, Poems: A Triptych" 37). His belief that the past has a unifying power occurs from his statement that "I do not say that a sense of the Mesolithic ancestor could solve the religio-political conflicts of the Bann Valley but I do say that it could significantly widen the terms of the answer which each side could give to the question, Who do you think you are?" ("Place, Pastness, Poems: A Triptych" 37). Thus, the notion of a common ancestor, of a common ancient culture, creates the common ground on which humanity can identify with each other because of their shared qualities. While Heaney draws on the Irish past in his poetry, he also includes Greek mythology, thus suggesting an even broader context that humanity shares, one that transcends nationality.

5.3 Seamus Heaney's Mythology

5.3.1 *The Bog*

In “Mossbawn”, the first essay of *Preoccupations*, and the name of the place in Derry where he grew up, Heaney describes his initiation to the mysteries of the land through his childhood passage involving a darkening metamorphosis. He depicts his “betrothal” to the “watery ground and tundra vegetation” in the following event: “another boy and myself stripped to the white country skin and bathed in a moss-hole, treading the liver-thick mud, unsettling a smoky muck off the bottom and coming out smeared and weedy and darkened. We dressed again and went home in wet clothes, smelling of the ground and the standing pool, somehow initiated” (Heaney, *Preoccupations* 19). As George Morgan comments, “A skinny dip becomes a form of baptism and a ritual marriage with the Earth Goddess, the archetypal roots of fertility” (128). In 1969, Heaney discovered *The Bog People*, a book by Danish archaeologist P.V. Glob, which “described in detail the finding of bodies in the peat-bogs of Jutland in Denmark ... dated to the 4th Century” (Morgan 133). The bodies “were often perfectly intact though tanned and blackened by the preservative effect of iron contained in the bog-water” and “were shown to be the remains of sacrificial victims ... placed in the sacred bed of the bog to lie with the Mother Goddess in order to ensure fertility at the coming spring” (Morgan 133). A similar cult existed in Ireland during the same time and, for Heaney, the Irish bogs are not only a channel to the past, but also represent a ritualistic union with the female attributes of fertility and regeneration. On this matter, William Pratt argues that by *North* (1975), “Heaney had found his true subject ... The bog is quite literally Heaney’s turf, for he has come to join that distinguished line of modern poets who sought the prehistoric and primitive roots of civilisation” (262). Heaney reveals that while he was teaching modern literature in Belfast, he “set up—or rather, laid down—the bog as an answering Irish myth” to the “frontier and the west as an important myth in the American consciousness” (Heaney, *Preoccupations* 55). He refers to the bog as “a landscape ... with associations reaching back into early childhood” and the stories about “bog-butter, butter kept fresh for a great number of years under the peat” and even recalls an elk being dragged from a bog (Heaney, *Preoccupations* 44), while, he discloses that “a great proportion of the most cherished material heritage of Ireland was ‘found in a bog’” (Heaney, *Preoccupations* 44). “So”, he says, “I began to get an idea of bog as the memory of landscape, or as a landscape that remembered everything that happened in and to it” (Heaney,

Preoccupations 44). The bog appears in numerous poems of Heaney's, some of which will subsequently be discussed.

5.3.2 *The Omphalos*

In "Mossbawn", Heaney also introduces the idea of the *omphalos*, the sacred Centre of the ancient world believed to reside at the Delphic shrine, demonstrating its importance in his poetics:

I would begin with the Greek word, *omphalos*, meaning the navel, and hence the stone that marked the Centre of the world, and repeat it, *omphalos*, *omphalos*, *omphalos*, until its blunt and falling music becomes the music of somebody pumping water at the pump outside our back door ... That pump marked an original descent into earth, sand, gravel, water. It centred and staked the imagination, made its foundation the foundation of the *omphalos* itself. (*Preoccupations* 17, 20)

The ancient Greek Centre is thus conflated with the imagery and sound of pumps and water and with his childhood yard in Ireland. Hart claims that "Phallogocentric and gynocentric images proliferate as [Heaney] discovers his links to the creative power of an omphalos that is ultimately androgynous" (*Poet of Contrary Progressions* 112) and that Heaney's "poems reveal that this omphalos is an original unity, womb and phallus combined, where feminine and masculine waters necessary for poetic and biological production mingle" (*Poet of Contrary Progressions* 14). The pump and the omphalos feature in numerous poems of Heaney's. Through his conflation of the omphalos with the water pump, he is transferring the Centre to the Ireland of his childhood. As revealed by poems such as "Bogland" and "Personal Helicon", the dark, limitless Centre comes to represent artistic inspiration that resonates through to the present from an a-historical past. In the following chapters I will discuss the motif of the Centre as it appears in numerous poems of Heaney's.

5.3.3 *Ancient Greece*

Ancient Greek mythology is employed by Heaney throughout his poetic oeuvre. In fact, every single poetry collection of his contains several poems relating to Greece. In the following chapters, I will look at poems that make use of it in a manner that can

be compared to H.D. These poems combine landscape, memory, and mythology, in ways that link the past to the present, while also featuring the themes of poetic inspiration, rebirth, and the union of disparate elements—especially of female and male aspects.

5.4 Seamus Heaney and Occult Elements

Heaney's engagement with the past is not merely historical or mythological; There is also a metaphysical quality that emanates from his use of these elements, which can be considered as an indebtedness to the modernist abstraction described in Chapter 2, but which can also be compared to the modernist interest in the occult seeping into their poetry. The latter argument is supported in this thesis by engaging the viewpoint of Morgan, who claims that Heaney's "imaginative focusing on the world of reality ... penetrates and ultimately opens up a magic dimension connecting the world of sense and an extra-sensorial dimension" (127). He goes as far as to link this to alchemy and claims that "the vocabulary and the processes of the alchemical work recur in virtually all of the poems in which Heaney deals with the earth and particularly in the 'bog poems'" (129). He identifies the etymology of alchemy in "an Arabic word signifying 'black earth' and referred to the black, life-giving silts of the Nile on whose banks is believed to have originated" (129). He does not place any importance on whether Heaney "was aware of this etymology or whether he is familiar with alchemy at all", instead places weight on how "he has unearthed, in the rich black soils of his native bogs, the archetypal symbolism and spiritual patterns" of the Egyptians (129).

The description of the bog in "Bogland" is reminiscent of the black shores of the Nile, while the reference to an a-historical past points to the transformation that has occurred during the years: "The ground itself is kind, black butter // Melting and opening underfoot / Missing its last definition / By millions of years." (Heaney, "Bogland" 55). Here, the earth, the ground that one steps on becomes the same ancient ground that has supported generation after generation of feet. As Morgan explains, "The aim of the alchemical opus was primarily a spiritual ... quest, to raise the disparate elements of experience into coherence" and to lead "the divided mind into a harmonious marriage of opposites" (128). I will be tracing this alchemical objective described by Morgan, but also other occult elements described in Chapter 2 of this thesis, in several

of Heaney's poems. For instance, the motif of mystical and poetic rebirth, discussed as "palingenesis", "*hieros gamos*", and metamorphosis in Chapter 2, features in Heaney in a number of ways in various poems. "Kinship", for example, depicts the eternal cycle of decay and regeneration, through the wonderful image of "a windfall composing / the floor it rots into" (Heaney, "Kinship" 43), while the poet goes through an initiation and emerges renewed in the "Station Island" sequence. As Morgan claims,²⁷ there are poems by Heaney that "attest to this propensity for fusion with the dark queen of the earth", the earth goddess that was worshipped by the pre-Celtic pagan cults. I will be looking at his poem "The Tollund Man", in which this motif is clearly manifest. Through the bog victims, and their fusion with the Earth goddess, Morgan argues, Heaney

identifies in imagination with this mythic pattern of descent, death, communion and renewal. In doing so, he not only reiterates the tribal customs of his Celtic forbears ... he also explores a metaphor of his own personal attempt to heal the split consciousness of male and female awareness. For in Heaney's best poems, he identifies simultaneously with both the male and female spirit. (134)

One of the poems which demonstrate this last point is "Undine", in which Heaney speaks as a female sprite fusing with a male farmer.

5.5 Poems from Various Collections

5.5.1 *Death of a Naturalist*

Heaney opens his first poetry collection *Death of a Naturalist* (1966) with "Digging", in which he parallelises the memory of his father digging with a spade to his own labour of writing with a pen. I chose to start with this poem, just as Heaney did, to foreground the pivotal look backwards, through memory, as he turns to the pen.

The cold smell of potato mould, the squelch and slap
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge
Through living roots awaken in my head.
But I've no spade to follow men like them.

Between my finger and my thumb
 The squat pen rests.
 I'll dig with it. (Heaney, "Digging")

The language is particular of his childhood environment, and directly associated with his concrete experience, but the poem affirms his vocation to unearth the past through the labour of poetry. The word "follow" suggests a desire for continuity. Heaney wants to keep the "living roots" alive, but his is a different kind of labour through which he will affirm his own place in time.

In "Lovers of Aran" Heaney makes use of the liminality of the Irish coastline in a manner that brings to mind H.D.'s "Oread", but also her constant use of the liminal landscape between land and sea. Both poems merge the sea with land and create a feeling of unity between masculine and feminine elements in a latent erotic atmosphere manifest in the masterful use of landscape. In "Lovers of Aran", the "full identity" seems to suggest the necessity of both female and male in an equal relationship. And since the waves are timeless, and coming from the Americas, the union is also timeless, and the present is incomplete without the remnants that have survived the crossing, the "sifting" of time.

The timeless waves, bright, sifting, broken glass,
 Came dazzling around, into the rocks,
 Came glinting, sifting from the Americas

To possess Aran. Or did Aran rush
 To throw wide arms of rock around a tide
 That yielded with an ebb, with a soft crash?

Did sea define the land or land the sea?
 Each drew new meaning from the waves' collision.
 Sea broke on land to full identity. (Heaney, "Lovers of Aran")

Heaney's preoccupation with the importance of the past is also manifest in "Personal Helicon", in which he employs ancient Greek ground and personal memory and forms a mature outlook. Imagery of his childhood is transported into the present, transmuted into verse about verse, about the power of poetry to provide self-realisation and creation. Imagery of water is recurrent in Heaney's poetry. Here, the pump and the deep well of childhood become the spring of adulthood that Heaney looks away from,

avoiding the Narcissistic trap. Heaney affirms that he will not get lost in his own reflection, he will not simply echo himself, but he will provide a channel for what is harboured beneath the surface. To unleash his imagination and create out of the unseeable depths, he resorts to poetry. There is an ambivalence in the last line, as to whether there can be a regeneration from this process, but there is also an interplay between the opposites of shallowness and depth in the poem. Thus, the shallow well is fructified, whereas the deep one seems empty, while the other deep one can reverberate creatively, and Heaney appreciates all three. Interestingly, Heaney also alludes to Echo, the female subject of the myth, and while he does not identify with her either, he nevertheless appears more associated with her. The presence of female energy also emanates from the elements of earth and water, but also from the mention of the fructified pond. The “Helicon” of the title is an allusion to Mount Helicon in Greece, which was considered to be the habitat of the Muses, and together with the sacred spring of Hippocrene, represented poetic inspiration.²⁸ Additionally, according to Pausanias,²⁹ the spring in the myth of Narcissus is located on Helicon. Heaney thus conflates the Irish scenery with that of Greece and finds his “personal” poetic pool of inspiration through the combination of both. Finally, the reference to the pump in the first stanza places the poem in the larger mythology of Heaney conflating the *omphalos* at Delphi, and thus, the Centre of the ancient world, with his childhood yard as the Centre of his poetic, creative world. The interplay between pump, water, rope, round wells, and the dark centre of the bottomless well all reflect Heaney’s fascination with the notion of the sacred Centre of creativity, that can generate new life.

As a child, they could not keep me from wells

And old pumps with buckets and windlasses.

...

One, in a brickyard, with a rotted board top.

I savoured the rich crash when a bucket

Plummeted down at the end of a rope.

So deep you saw no reflection in it.

A shallow one under a dry stone ditch

Fructified like any aquarium.

...

Others had echoes, gave back your own call
 With a clean new music in it. And one
 Was scaresome ... /
 Now, to pry into roots, to finger slime,
 To stare, big-eyed Narcissus, into some spring
 Is beneath all adult dignity. I rhyme
 To see myself, to set the darkness echoing. (Heaney, "Personal Helicon")

5.5.2 Door into the Dark

In his next collection, *Door into the Dark* (1969), Heaney introduces his use of bogs as formations of Irish landscape inextricably linked with the past but also to an understanding of the present. The bogs are also one of the many representations of the symbolism of the Centre in this collection. In "Bogland" Heaney compares the Irish restricted horizon to the open one of the USA and the binaries of vast surface and infringement set the scene for the first appearance of the bog as a formation offering a view "inwards and downwards" instead of far across (Heaney, "Bogland" 56).

We have no prairies
 To slice a big sun at evening—
 Everywhere the eye concedes to
 Encroaching Horizon,

Is wooed into the cyclops' eye
 of a tarn ... (Heaney, "Bogland" 55)

A tarn is a small lake in a mountain, created after the melting of a glacier, while the Cyclops were the one-eyed sons of Uranus and Ge in ancient Greece. Heaney once again conflates the Irish landscape with Greek mythology, but also with pre-historical elements, thus pointing to the strong influence that the past has on his understanding of the present. However, this understanding is also one that looks forward, towards the creation of an informed future.

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. (Heaney, "Bogland" 55)

As Daniel Eugene Tobin remarks, the "small pools" of "Personal Helicon" now become the vast round tarns of Ireland, as Heaney "moves beyond the personal to embrace the transpersonal" (66). The "I" becomes "we", and it is a group of "pioneers", leading the way towards the future, that look down in them, retrieve the past through them, and are faced with the centrality of eternity; of a Centre so far back that it cannot be grasped.

In "The Plantation" Heaney ponders on an unspecified wood and its magical powers. It is portrayed as a *topos* that encompasses all eternity, despite appearing as a place with "its limits defined" to those "outside" (50). The "treadmill" (50) represents the constant passing of time, at a fixed point in space, at least the way humans perceive it. The trees grow "improvising charmed rings" (49) in their trunks; the only evidence of time passing. The Centre is a constant symbol in this poem, and it is placed in the woods, which represent an archetypal *topos* of magic, while in the poem they reflect the eternal *topos* of creation. They are an invitation to skilfully navigate in their labyrinth encompassing timelessness, and to re-emerge, recall their lure, and reflect on their magic powers. Interestingly, the speaker acquires an identity combining female and male in the process. He becomes a "witch / Hansel and Gretel in one" (50). The eternal *topos* thus requires both male and female elements to fully live its experience.

Any point in that wood
 Was a Centre, birch trunks
 Ghosting your bearings,
 Improvising charmed rings

Wherever you stopped.
 Though you walked a straight line
 It might be a circle you travelled
 With toadstools and stumps

Always repeating themselves.
 Or did you re-pass them?
 ...
 Someone had always been there

...
 Hedging the road so
 It invited all comers
 To the hush and the mush
 Of its whispering treadmill,

Its limits defined,
 So they thought, from outside.

...
 You had to come back
 To learn how to lose yourself,
 To be pilot and stray—witch,
 Hansel and Gretel in one. (Heaney, “The Plantation” 49-50)

When considering his poem “Undine”, Heaney gives this definition: “An undine is a water-sprite who has to marry a human being and have a child by him before she can become human” (*Preoccupations* 53). Heaney explains that he reads the myth “as being about the liberating, humanizing effect of sexual encounter. Undine was a cold girl who got what the dictionary called a soul through the experience of physical love” (*Preoccupations* 53). He then describes the image of the farmer clearing out a channel for a stream to pass through, that this myth invoked in his mind. Susan Shaw Sailer then, is mistaken when she says that “Undine” is simply about “marrying water to human uses of it” (60). This view ignores the active role mythology plays in activating Heaney’s imagination, generating images, and channelling ideas into forms through the words that are simultaneously invoked and employed. Heaney does not simply write about Undine. He “takes on” her “persona” (Sailer 60), and writes *as* her, through the female viewpoint. By the end of the poem, which reads: “He explored me so completely, each limb / Lost its cold freedom. Human, warmed to him” (Heaney, “Undine” 26), Undine has become human through the farmer’s handling, and Heaney has experienced this process as “the cold girl” of his description. This poem also expresses a desire for a pagan fusion with nature.

5.5.3 *Wintering Out*

In “Oracle” Heaney sketches a “secret spirit world in which he could commune with Nature” (David Fawbert, “Oracle”).³⁰ As Fawbert comments, in the poem “Heaney relives a childhood moment” while “prophesies” that his poetry will “echo the sounds of nature”. Heaney becomes the tree that listens to and vocalises the stimuli coming from its surroundings, thus sees himself as a poet who can merge with nature and reproduce the sounds coming from his past, and his place of origin. The “oracle” in the title possesses the supernatural ability of the Sibyl to foresee the future. It could be that Heaney is speaking from his childhood, believing that it was his destiny to perform the task of listening and conveying as “a druidical figure” (Tobin 79), a female spirit of the woods in ancient Greece, which is merged with Heaney’s childhood memories. According to Fawbert, “mossy” is “a reference to wet Ulster climate”. Thus, once again, Heaney combines memory and mythology, male and female; only then is he in contact with nature, and may perceive and convey her secrets, initiated as he is through the druidical metamorphosis. Again, the desire for pagan fusion with landscape is present.

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

“The Tollund Man”, Heaney says, “was a vow to go on pilgrimage” (Preoccupations 58) to the body that was retrieved from a bog in Denmark. He ruminates on the cult of the goddess Mother Earth and the sacrificial victim that was offered to her with “winter seeds / Caked in his stomach” to ensure fertility of the soil (Heaney, “The Tollund Man”).³¹ He wishes to be united with the earth, through the pagan goddess, much like the Tollund Man himself:

Naked except for
 The cap, noose and girdle,
 I will stand a long time.

Bridegroom to the goddess, (Heaney, "The Tollund Man")

The use of "bridegroom" suggests Heaney's desire to merge with the female divinity of the Earth owing to a will to be reborn and ensure the fertility of his "seeds" of creation, after the union. However, in the next section of the poem, Fawbert mentions that "[the cauldron] and the bog are presented as agents of regeneration" and the germination refers to the body parts of the Catholic victims of the 1920s Protestant ambush. Pre-historic, pagan rituals are thus merged with Catholic prayer to create new life from death and suffering. The poem is another instance of Heaney's desire for pagan fusion with landscape.

I could risk blasphemy,
 Consecrate the cauldron bog
 Our holy ground and pray
 Him to make germinate

The scattered, ambushed
 Flesh of labourers,
 Stockinged corpses
 Laid out in the farmyards, (Heaney, "The Tollund Man")

5.5.4 *North*

In the six poems that make up "Kinship" (Heaney, "Kinship" 40-45), Heaney depicts the connection he feels to the ancient rituals in terms of the communion with nature that is part of his "origins" ("Kinship" 40). Carlanda Green remarks, that "Despite the grimness of death, Heaney does not give up his faith in the creative aspect of the Earth Mother. He rejects the violence associated with her worship, yet he continues to see potential only in man's union with her" (10). Thus, he perceives the union of the victim with the earth, the "bride" as a "love-nest" that will bear offspring, participating in the "floe of history" (Heaney, "Kinship" 41, 42). As Morgan remarks, "The opening lines cannot fail to recall Yeats's lines in 'The Second Coming', in which he prophecies the centrifugal eruption of civilization as we know it: 'Things fall apart;

the centre cannot hold; / Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world”³² but “As ‘Kinship’ shows, [Heaney’s] is a world in which the power of the imagination can transform division and decay into unity and fertility” (135).

“Kinship I”

Kinned by hieroglyphic
peat on a spreadfield
to the strangled victim,
the love-nest in the bracken,

I step through origins

...

//

I love this turf-face,
its black incisions,
the cooped secrets
of process and ritual; (Heaney, “Kinship” 40)

“Kinship II”

Insatiable bride.
Sword-swallower,
casket, midden,
floe of history.
... (Heaney, “Kinship” 41)

“Kinship III”

...

I stand at the edge of centuries
facing a goddess. (Heaney, “Kinship” 42)

In the next part of the poem, Heaney alludes to the regenerative power of the bog. Following the natural succession of the seasons, the “mutation” of the “windfall”—the fruit blown off a tree—will feed the soil through its degeneration. So does the speaker, as a part of “all this”, grow, but feels a firm connection to the ground, and ultimately, to the Centre that pulls towards it, through the “gravity”, or, the importance of the past that it represents (Heaney, “Kinship” 43).

“Kinship IV”

This centre holds
 and spreads,
 sump and seedbed,
 a bag of waters
 //
 mutation of weathers
 and seasons,
 a windfall composing
 the floor it rots into.

I grew out of all this
 like a weeping willow
 inclined to
 the appetites of gravity. (Heaney, "Kinship" 43)

In the last part of the poem, Heaney links the sacrifices to the innocent deaths of the Irish, the "faithful" that "lie" in the "sacred heart" of their "mother ground, also alluding to the Catholic faith of the inhabitants, especially through the reference to the "sacred heart" (Heaney, "Kinship" 45), a Catholic symbol of Christ. He calls on Tacitus to bear witness of the "slaughter" and the punishments,³³ thus forging a historical link between the ancient rituals and the contemporary murders, along the cycle of violence.

"Kinship VI"

And you, Tacitus,
 observe how I make my grove
 ...
 ...
 Our mother ground
 is sour with the blood
 of her faithful,

 they lie gargling
 in her sacred heart
 ...
 //

...
 report us fairly,
 how we slaughter
 for the common good

and shave the heads
 of the notorious,
 how the goddess swallows
 our love and terror. (Heaney, "Kinship" 45)

5.5.5 *Field Work*

The transcendence involved in communicating with the Sybil, in the poem of the same title, is apparent from the very beginning. The message of the Sybil is one against individualism and materialism, while foreshadowing transformation and rebirth as hopeful events that will follow the violent years. As Tobin remarks, "Sibyl" "expresses directly the apocalyptic strain in Heaney's imagination ... Yet while Heaney's vision is grim, it is not without hope. The poem finally affirms the possibility of 'hatching' something other than the profanity of recurrent violence" (148).³⁴ Tobin also insightfully notices that the "helmeted" tree recalls the "helmeted pump" of Heaney's backyard, and also mentions the significance of the tree as a historical and intertextual symbol of "transcendence and immanence as a single perception of cosmic unity" (148).³⁵ The "buds" that will open in the tree point to the regeneration of the lost unity, as people will cease to function on "single acquisitive stems".

My tongue moved, a swung relaxing hinge.
 I said to her, 'What will become of us?'
 And as forgotten water in a well might shake
 At an explosion under morning
 Or a crack run up a gable,
 She began to speak.
 'I think our very form is bound to change.
 Dogs in a siege. Saurian relapses. Pismires.
 Unless forgiveness finds its nerve and voice,
 Unless the helmeted and bleeding tree

Can green and open buds like infants' fists
 And the fouled magma incubate
 Bright nymphs ... My people think money
 And talk weather. Oil rigs lull their future
 On single acquisitive stems. Silence
 Has shoaled into the trawlers' echo-sounders.
 The ground we kept our ear to for so long
 Is flayed or calloused, and its entrails
 Tented by an impious augury.
 Our island is full of comfortless noises.' (Heaney, "Sibyl")

"The Toome Road" features the *omphalos* as a symbol of eternal life, against those hindering progress and perpetuating the sectarian violence. It is yet another instance of Heaney blending ancient Greece with the familiar Irish landscape, indicating the resilience of life.

Sowers of seed, erectors of headstones...
 O charioteers, above your dormant guns,
 It stands here still, stands vibrant as you pass,
 The visible, untoppled omphalos. (Heaney, "The Toome Road")

5.5.6 *Station Island*

The speaker in "Stone from Delphi" seems to be wishing to return to the ancient shrine at Delphi, make an offering to Pythia, hoping for exoneration from the stain of war, and clear the channel through which the divine can communicate itself through him. "Again" seems to point to Heaney imagining that he identifies with the humans that once used to visit the Pythia and ask for guidance, especially since "Stone from Delphi" was written before Heaney visited the ancient shrine. The notion of timelessness is thus an element which connects the people of a pre-Christian era to those of today, who seem to have lost their way through the years, warring against each other and who have committed hybris by not respecting the sacred realm of the gods. That this poem appears in the cluster titled "Shelf-Life", but speaks of timelessness, ironically imbues the stone with a quality that transcends the material world. The stone on his shelf has a life of its own, one that relies on the power of the imagination, but is sustained only insofar as the poet chooses to remember. Although it is possible that

Heaney simply wishes to visit Delphi in person, that his wish involves a “dawn” I believe means that he is referring to a new beginning for humanity, or rather a return to the ancient contact with the revered realm of the divine.

To be carried back to the shrine some dawn
 when the sea spreads its far sun-crops to the south
 and I make a morning offering again:
that I may escape the miasma of spilled blood,
govern the tongue, fear hybris, fear the god
until he speaks in my untrammelled mouth. (Heaney, “Stone from Delphi”)

Heaney describes the second part of *Station Island* as “a poem-cycle, with a central protagonist on his fixed route through the pilgrimage. The three-part Dantean journey scaled down into the three-day station, no hell, no paradise, just ‘Patrick’s Purgatory’” (O’Driscoll 235). Heaney actually did complete a three-day pilgrimage at St Patrick’s Purgatory on Station Island. Poems I-XII recount this pilgrimage through ghostly appearances of important people of Heaney’s past, ending with the ghost of Joyce,³⁶ who offers absolution and freedom to follow his own poetic voice. Thus, as Steven Hawlin remarks, “In Heaney’s case the spiritual renewal brought about by the purgatorio of the island takes the form of a re-dedication to his vocation as poet” (35). Tobin comments that “since the Purgatory is located on the Ulster border and was itself a sectarian contention, Heaney’s personal journey also involves cultural liminality” (178), something which is characteristic of H.D.’s poetry as well.

In “Station Island XII” Heaney returns from his three-day pilgrimage at Station Island, and encounters the ghost of Joyce, who advises him to break free from the restrictions that are holding him back. The words of Joyce reflect his own escape from the stifling he experienced in Ireland. His mentor is inciting him to find a new voice, to forget his old method. This poem can be an explicit reference to the influence of modernism, with its new styles, even if the central point of contact between Joyce and Heaney may be the burden of the locality and religion of Ireland.

...

Take off from here. And don’t be so earnest,

 let others wear the sackcloth and the ashes.
 Let go, let fly, forget.
 You’ve listened long enough. Now strike your note.

...

You lose more of yourself than you redeem
 doing the decent thing. Keep at a tangent.
 When they make the circle wide, it's time to swim

out on your own and fill the element
 with signatures of your own frequency,
 echo soundings, searches, probes, allurements, (Heaney, *Station Island* XII)

Tobin reveals how “Heaney himself has stated that ‘Station Island’ is patterned on the monomyth of individuation discussed in Joseph Campbell’s *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*: the mythological adventure of the hero magnifies “the formula of rites of passage: separation—initiation—return: a hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder” (176).³⁷ Tobin then refers to Eliade’s observation that:

such rites repeat the transformation from virtual life to formed existence enacted *in illo tempore*, at the beginning of time. Through such rites an initiate leaves profane time and embarks on a return to sacred origins. The passage presupposes that we are not complete at birth and must be born, spiritually, a second time. (176)

Returning to Heaney, Tobin remarks:

It is this dramatic quest for spiritual as well as artistic maturity that is tacitly present in the mythic and religious import of Heaney’s earlier poems, a quest that reveals itself again in his seemingly insatiable need to ‘retrace the path back’³⁸ to origins. This central preoccupation is taken up again in “Station Island”, where, as in any rite of passage, the pilgrim encounters the psychological, artistic, tribal, historical, and mythical forces that have shaped his life and his world. (176)

Heaney’s rebirth is embodied in the third part of *Station Island*, “Sweeney Redivivus”, Sweeney representing the “freedom and thoroughness” Heaney wished for upon starting the collection (O’Driscoll 236). Flack remarks that “After Joyce liberates him from the conflicts of the past at the end of ‘Station Island’, Heaney embraces Mandelstam’s mode of rewriting tradition in the ‘Sweeney Redivivus’ poems. The word ‘redivivus’, meaning ‘brought back to life’, signals an ambition to remake the literary past”. The pilgrimage depicted in the sequence titled “Station Island” is a spiritual

journey of individuation, resulting in a liberated self, free to follow his inner poetic calling. The “Sweeney Redivivus” sequence is not only a calling to “rewrite tradition”, as Flack argues, but as a manifestation of the liberated and reborn self, much like Sweeney, as a bird, represents both freedom and Irish tradition for Heaney. In 1983 Heaney’s translation of *Sweeney Astray: A version from the Irish* was published, while in 1984, he appropriates the legend in *Station Island* to assert his poetic freedom, though firmly grounded in the past.

5.5.7 *The Spirit Level*

“Mycenae Lookout”, written after the 1994 cessation, is Heaney’s version of Aeschylus’s *Oresteia*, and mainly of its first part, *Agamemnon*. The poem merges the Mycenaean setting with that of N. Ireland. The pump³⁹, and water, join N. Ireland and his familiar landscape to the ancient site of the Acropolis. As Elmer Kennedy-Andrews remarks, “The attraction of classical myth is that it liberates Heaney from a sectarian politics of Catholics and Protestants ... and grants him larger perspectives on present realities” (363), while he concludes that “Mycenae Lookout” may be seen as “a point of intersection between demoralizing historical reality and the suggestion of spiritual possibility, a liminal space between what is and what might be” (364). In the end, the water is “fresh”, representing the spirituality that can be attained today by those who see the possibility of peace. This wisdom existed in a time before the bloodbath, much like the water that resides in wells before it is drawn up fresh. Those who have been “at the source” are “deeper in themselves”. They become “seers”, prophets of the ancient wisdom.

“5 His Reverie of Water”

At Troy, at Athens, what I most clearly
 see and nearly smell
 is the fresh water.
 //
 And the well at Athens too.
 Or rather that old lifeline leading up
 and down from the Acropolis

to the well itself, a set of timber steps
 //
 And then this ladder of our own that ran
 deep into a well-shaft being sunk
 in broad daylight, men puddling at the source

 through tawny mud, then coming back up
 deeper in themselves for having been there,
 like discharged soldiers testing the safe ground,

 finders, keepers, seers of fresh water
 in the bountiful round mouths of iron pumps
 and gushing taps. (Heaney, "Mycenae Lookout" 36-37)

5.5.8 *Human Chain*

In "The Riverbank Field" Heaney merges the river Moyola of his land with the river Lethe of the ancient Greek Underworld, and the Elysium fields are fused with the fields along the Moyola. Heaney relies on imagery particular to the local river of N. Ireland to render it mythical. The souls of the dead drank from the river Lethe in order to forget about their earthly lives, and only until they had no memory of it could they be reincarnated. However, Heaney makes the souls drink from the river in order to forget about their endless lives in "this underworld" and long for a life in flesh. It could be that Heaney is conflating the troubled land of N. Ireland with the realm of the dead. Ireland was conquered more than 1000 years back, its language essentially died, and up to the point when Heaney was writing it was tormented by the sectarian conflict in Ulster. The theme of rebirth and regeneration thus reappears in this poem as Heaney's wish for Ireland to heal.

After *Aeneid* VI, 704-15 & 748-751
 Ask me to translate what Loeb gives as
 'In a retired vale... a sequestered grove'
 And I'll confound the Lethe in Moyola
 //

...

‘In my own words’:

‘All these presences
Once they have rolled time’s wheel a thousand years
Are summoned here to drink the river water

So that memories of this underworld are shed
And soul is longing to dwell in flesh and blood
Under the dome of the sky.’

²¹ This is an online source with no page numbers.

²² At dusk, horizons drink down sea and hill,
The ploughed field swallows the whitewashed gable
And you're in the dark again. Now recall

The glazed foreshore and silhouetted log,
That rock where breakers shredded into rags,
The leggy birds stilted on their own legs,
Islands riding themselves out into the fog.

And drive back home, still with nothing to say
Except that now you will uncode all landscapes
By this: things founded clean on their own shapes,
Water and ground in their extremity. (Heaney, “The Peninsula”)

²³ in reference to Eliot’s modernist term for Joyce’s *Ulysses*.

²⁴ McGuire is referring to the poem sequence “Route 101”, where “Heaney pairs a bus journey from Belfast to Derry with the image of Charon, ferrying the dead across the river Lethe ... and the gathering of shades on the riverbank becomes coupled with the ghosts of the Troubles”.

²⁵ The internal quotes are from: James and Seshagiri p. 88. See: David James and Urmila Seshagiri. “Metamodernism: Narratives of Continuity and Revolution”. PMLA, Vol. 129, No. 1, 2014, pp. 87-100.

²⁶ See: Terence Brown. *Northern Voices: Poets from Ulster*. Gill and Macmillan, 1975, p.180. The quote is from Molino 14.

²⁷ He specifically mentions “The Wife’s Tale”, “Bog Queen”, and “Punishment”.

²⁸ Hesiod refers to Helicon in his *Theogony* as such: “From the Heliconian Muses let us begin to sing, who hold the great and holy mount of Helicon, and dance on soft feet about the deep-blue spring” (1-5). See: Hesiod, *Theogony*, trans. Evelyn-White, Hugh Gerard. Loeb Classical Library. G. P. Putnam's Sons, Heinemann. 1914. Perseus Digital Library.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0020.tlg001.perseus-eng1:1-28>

²⁹ See: Pausanias, *Description of Greece*. Edited by L Jones, W. H. S. (William Henry Samuel). Translated by Ormerod, Henry Arderne. Loeb Classical Library. W. Heinemann, G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1918-35. 9.31.7.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0525.tlg001.perseus-eng1:9.31.7>

³⁰ Quotes by Fawbert are from his website, thus have no page numbers.

³¹ As Morgan discloses, “Some of the victims ... were found to have over 60 different types of spring grass seed in their stomachs” (133).

³² From “The Second Coming”, in *W.B. Yeats: Collected Poems*. Macmillan, 1958, p. 210 as Morgan cites the source.

³³ According to Tobin, “Tacitus wrote about Ireland in his *Agricola* and described the cult of Nerthus in his *Germania*” (131).

³⁴ “The phrase ‘Dogs in a siege’ hints at the destruction of Actaeon” (Tobin 148).

³⁵ Yeats and Virgil, and the Christian Cross are the examples Tobin cites.

³⁶ See note 17

³⁷ “personal correspondence with the author” (Tobin 313n3).

³⁸ “Retracing the path back” is a phrase from Heaney’s poem “The Underground”, which opens *Station Island*.

³⁹ Elizabeth Lunday makes an insightful argument of how “Heaney’s pump symbolizes the cleansing waters at the omphalos” (124) in “Violence and Silence in Seamus Heaney's ‘Mycenae Lookout.’” *New Hibernia Review*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2008, pp.111-127.

6. CYCLICAL CONCEPTION OF TIME

Eliade observes that “there is everywhere a conception of the end and the beginning of a temporal period, based on the observation of biocosmic rhythms and forming part of a larger system—the system of periodic purifications (cf. Purges, fasting, confession of sins, etc.) and of the periodic regeneration of life” (52). He then reaches the more important observation, that “a periodic regeneration of time presupposes ... especially in the historical civilisations—a new Creation, that is, a repetition of the cosmogonic act. And this conception of a periodic creation, i.e., of the cyclical regeneration of time, poses the problem of the abolition of ‘history’” (52-53), as “the primitive, by conferring a cyclic direction upon time, annuls its irreversibility” (89). He then claims that “The work of two of the most significant writers of our day—T.S. Eliot and James Joyce—is saturated with nostalgia for the myth of eternal repetition and, in the last analysis, for the abolition of time” (153). Hart asserts that “Heaney’s imagination is similarly ritualistic⁴⁰, gravitating toward ‘Centres’ in order to repeat profane as well as sacred acts of creation” (PMDD12). The elements of ancient cultures and references to ancient practices that appear in the poems of Heaney and H.D. I have considered point to a common tendency of both to merge the a-historical past with the present. Ultimately, the motif of rebirth and regeneration that appears in both poets aims at a reappearance of the creative powers that lie in the past and which can enlighten the present and indicate the wisdom with which the cycle of violence can be confronted and annihilated. “*In Illo tempore*”, Eliade states, “the gods descended to earth and mingled with men; for their part, men could easily mount to heaven. As the result of a ritual fault, communications between heaven and earth were interrupted and the gods withdrew to the highest heavens” (91). Both H.D. and Heaney exhibit a desire to return to that a-historical time, the time of communion between the human and the divine; to reach the Centre that assigns meaning to life, and transport that meaning into the current situation, to provide healing and regeneration.

7. CONCLUSION

The strongest similarity that can be drawn between the two poets is the permeating motif of divine communion. The means through which this is expressed are also common in their poems; the sacred, eternal Centre, ancient *loci*, initiation, regeneration, and rebirth are all present in both Heaney and H.D. Another important similarity is the presence of these alongside contemporary experience, manifest in their use of landscape. The marriage of experience to ancient mythologies and pagan rituals points to a desire to channel the wisdom of the past towards the present, where it can provide healing and regeneration. This process involves initiation and *palingenesis*, thus also involving the atemporality of the *hieros gamos*, as the cosmogonic event, but also of the cyclical conception of time, each time it is repeated.

There are, however, differences in the treatment of the aforementioned elements between the two poets. A characteristic one is the different expression of the Centre. In H.D. it appears to fall under Eliade's observations, as a temple or sacred city, an *axis mundi*; "the meeting point of heaven, earth, and hell" (Eliade 12), particularly in *Sea Garden*. The sense of Hell emanates from the ardours that are involved in the process of reaching the Centre, much like Eliade comments on the respective ancient "rites of passage" (18). The direction, however, for H.D. is upwards, towards the sky, something which also emanates from TWDNF, although in the latter, initiation and rebirth occur from within Amen-Ra. Generally, in H.D., the destination of the sacred, of the divine that can provide guidance, healing and regeneration requires an ascent; the lifting of the head. The Centre in Heaney also represents the channel to what he considers sacred, be it ancient cultures and their practices, or illuminating guidance from a more tangible past, or even present moment. It appears more explicitly in many of his poems and is more associated with the regeneration that it provides. Instead of being a meeting point between the sky (heaven) and the earth, like the sacred mountain in Eliade's observation, and as it appears in H.D., the Centre in Heaney, is located downwards.⁴¹ The process of reaching it represents the act of unearthing vital underground currents, and metaphorically, of revitalising creativity by functioning as a channel to the past.

The landscape in H.D.'s earlier poems and in Heaney serves as the ground on which their preoccupations with the past are acted out. As Debo remarks about H.D., "the Greek qualities ... are superimposed onto American places, which become the bedrock for all her landscape imagery" (5). In Heaney, the landscape is that of Ireland

and exhibits a comparable liminality in terms of form, but also of feeling, as much like H.D., there is a sense of displacement and uncertainty in the notion of home. In both poets, concrete experience is imbued with mythological and pagan elements, rendering a more personalized depiction of reality, but which is at the same time objective and universal, as it is placed in the sphere of timelessness. The landscape may be concrete, but it is channelled through consciousness and adorned with mythological and pagan elements, and comes out in abstract, obscurely ciphered, many-layered, palimpsestic poems. Finally, though the subjective mode is favoured in Heaney, while H.D. presents a more objective poetics, both modes are interweaved in their poems; subjectivity conceals objectivity in Heaney, and the reverse can be traced in H.D.

Both poets were greatly disturbed by the violence taking place at the time they were writing, and both wished for the cycle of violence to end. This is expressed in their depictions of regeneration and rebirth, reminiscent of the ancient rituals that Eliade interprets as depicting the cyclical conception of time, repeating the primal act of creation, or *hieros gamos*, and involving a periodical cleansing and renewal. In accord with Eliade again, the motif of rebirth is employed in both poets as the result of initiation to occult or ancient wisdom. Heaney is interested in the archetypes that join humanity under common traits. His statement that he is “Jungian in religion” testifies to this. “My neighbor is all mankind” is the catechism that he extends towards the past, in reference to his “Mesolithic Ulster neighbor”, thus emphasizing the shared descentance of humans, in an attempt to strengthen the feeling of union (“Place, Pastness, Poems: A Triptych” 37). The unity of opposites, of opposite notions in general, but of sexual opposites more prevalently, that appears in his poems, attests to this propensity. The tendency to merge female and masculine traits appears firstly in H.D., where it also strengthens the common ground that humans *can* share if they join in harmony. That she places great importance on the common past and shared traits between humans is evident in *Tribute to Freud*, her account of her psychoanalysis with Freud—steeped in Greek mythology—where she ruminates about the common ground of all humanity lying in ancient civilizations still being present today:

[Sigmund Freud] had brought the past into the present with his *the childhood of the individual is the childhood of the race* – or is it the other way round? ...

In any case ... he had opened up, among others, that particular field of the unconscious mind that went to prove that the traits and tendencies of obscure aboriginal tribes, as well as the shape and substance of the rituals of vanished

civilizations, were still inherent in the human mind – the human psyche, if you will. (Tribute 12-13)

In conclusion, H.D.'s strand of modernism is reflected in Heaney and resonates with our present. Both poets repudiate division and instead envision the emergence of a hopeful future, borrowing elements and motifs that have survived from the past.

⁴⁰ To that of Joyce's

⁴¹ That Heaney emphasizes the motion "downwards" is also evident in his preoccupation with the Underworld, something which is not apparent in the poems that have been dealt with in this thesis.

WORKS CITED

- Barnstone, Aliko. Readers' Notes. *Trilogy*, by H.D., New Directions, 1998, pp.173-201. Google Books. Accessed March 2021.
- Boughn, Michael and Victor Coleman. Introduction. *The H.D. Book*, by Robert Duncan, University of California Press, 2011. Google Books. Accessed March 2021.
- Debo, Annette. "H.D.'s American Landscape: The Power and Permanence of Place". *South Atlantic Review*, 2004, Vol. 69, No. 3/4, pp. 1-22.
- Doolittle, Hilda. "Acon". *Collected Poems of H.D.* Boni and Liveright, Inc, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1925, pp. 45-46. Internet Archive. Accessed March 2021.
- . "Cities". *Collected Poems of H.D.* Boni and Liveright, Inc, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1925, pp. 59-62. Internet Archive. Accessed March 2021.
- . "Hermes of the Ways". *Collected Poems of H.D.* Boni and Liveright, Inc, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1925, pp. 55-57. Internet Archive. Accessed March 2021.
- . "Loss". *Collected Poems of H.D.* Boni and Liveright, Inc, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1925, pp. 29-31. Internet Archive. Accessed March 2021.
- . "Oread". *Collected Poems of H.D.* Boni and Liveright, Inc, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1925, p. 81. Internet Archive. Accessed March 2021.
- . "The Cliff Temple". *Collected Poems of H.D.* Boni and Liveright, Inc, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1925, pp. 37-39. Internet Archive. Accessed March 2021.
- . "The Gift". *Collected Poems of H.D.* Boni and Liveright, Inc, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1925, pp. 20-23. Internet Archive. Accessed March 2021.
- . "The Helmsman". *Collected Poems of H.D.* Boni and Liveright, Inc, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1925, pp. 4-5. Internet Archive. Accessed March 2021.
- . "The Shrine". *Collected Poems of H.D.* Boni and Liveright, Inc, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1925, pp. 6-9. Internet Archive. Accessed March 2021.
- . *The Walls Do Not Fall. Εισαγωγή στην Τριλογία της Η.Δ.: Κείμενο, Απόδοση, Ερμηνευτικές Σημειώσεις.* Συγγραφείς: Λιάνα Σακελλίου, Θανάσης Ντόκος, Θωμάς Στραβέλης. Επιμέλεια: Λιάνα Σακελλίου. Gutenberg, [1999] 2005.

- . "The Wind Sleepers". *Collected Poems of H.D.* Boni and Liveright, Inc, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1925, pp. 18–19. Internet Archive. Accessed March 2021.
- . *Tribute to Freud: Writing on the Wall; Advent*. David R. Godine, 1974. Internet Archive. Accessed March 2021.
- Eliade, Mircea. *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*. Translated by Willard R. Trask. Harper and Brothers, 1959.
- Fawbert, David. *Connecting With Seamus Heaney*. "Oracle".
<https://fawbie.info/wintering-out/oracle/> Accessed March 2021.
- Fawbert, David. *Connecting With Seamus Heaney*. "The Tollund Man".
<https://fawbie.info/wintering-out/the-tollund-man/> Accessed March 2021.
- Flack, Leah. "'Whatever Is Given / Can Always Be Reimagined': Seamus Heaney's Indefinite Modernism". *Modernist Afterlives in Irish Literature and Culture*. Edited by Paige Reynolds, Anthem Press, 2016. Google Books. Accessed March 2021.
- Friedman, Susan. "Who Buried H. D.? A Poet, Her Critics, and Her Place in 'The Literary Tradition'". *College English*, Vol. 36, No. 7, 1975, pp. 801-814.
- Green, Carlanda. "The Feminine Principle in Seamus Heaney's Poetry". *Ariel*, Vol.14 No.3, 1983. Pp.54-63.
- Guest, Barbara. *Herself Defined: The Poet H.D. and her World*. Doubleday and Company Inc., 1984.
- Hart, Henry. "Gravity and Grace: Seamus Heaney and the Force of Light". Review of *Religion & Literature* by John F. Desmond. Vol. 41, No. 3. 2009, pp. 175-178.
- . *Seamus Heaney: Poet of Contrary Progressions*. Syracuse University Press. 1993. Google Books. Accessed March 2021.
- . "Seamus Heaney's Poetry of Meditation: *Door into the Dark*". *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol. 33, No. 1, 1987, pp. 1-17.
- Hatlen, Burton. "The Imagist Poetics of H.D.'s *Sea Garden*". *Paideuma: Modern and Contemporary Poetry and Poetics*. 1995, Vol. 24, No. 2/3, pp. 107-130.
- Hawlin, Steven. "Seamus Heaney's 'Station Island': The shaping of a modern purgatory". *English Studies*, Vol. 73, No 1. 1992. p.35.
- Heaney, Seamus. "Bogland". *Door into the Dark*. Faber and Faber, [1969] 1972, pp. 55-56.
- . "Digging". *Death of a Naturalist*. Faber and Faber, [1966] 1969, p.13.

- . "Kinship". *North*. Faber and Faber, 1975, pp. 40-45.
- . "Lovers of Aran". *Death of a Naturalist*. Faber and Faber, [1966] 1969, p.47.
- . "Mycenae Lookout". *The Spirit Level*. Faber and Faber, 1996, pp. 36-37.
- . "Oracle". *Wintering Out*. Faber and Faber, 1972, p. 28.
- . "Personal Helicon". *Death of a Naturalist*. Faber and Faber, [1966] 1969, p.57.
- . "Place, Pastness, Poems: A Triptych". *Salmagundi*, No. 68/69, 1985-1986, pp. 30-47.
- . *Preoccupations: Selected Prose 1968-1978*. Faber and Faber, 1980.
- . "Sibyl". *Field Work*. Faber and Faber, 1979, p. 13.
- . "Station Island XII", *Station Island*.
<https://rlbourges.wordpress.com/2015/12/04/station-island-part-xii/> Accessed March 2021.
- . "Stone from Delphi". *Station Island*.
<http://nickgardner.blogspot.com/2005/12/seamus-heaneys-stone-from-delphi.html> Accessed March 2021. Accessed March 2021.
- . *The Government of the Tongue: Selected Prose 1978-1987*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1989. Internet Archive. Accessed March 2021.
- . "The Peninsula". *Door into the Dark*. Faber and Faber, [1969] 1972, pp. 55-56.
- . "The Plantation". *Door into the Dark*. Faber and Faber, [1969] 1972, pp. 49-50.
- . "The Riverbank Field". *Human Chain*. <https://willson.uga.edu/your-weekly-poem-may-12-the-riverbank-field-by-seamus-heaney/> Accessed March 2021.
- . "The Tollund Man". *Wintering Out*. Faber and Faber, 1972, p. 47.
- . "The Toome Road". *Field Work*. 1979, p. 15.
- . "Undine". *Door into the Dark*. Faber and Faber. [1969] 1972, pp. 55-56.
- Kennedy-Andrews, Elmer. "'Mycenae Lookout', Seamus Heaney" *Irish University Review*, Vol. 39, No. 2, 2009, pp. 358-366.
- Kusch, Celena E. "H.D.'s American 'Sea Garden': Drowning the Idyll Threat to US Modernism". *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol. 56, No. 1, 2010, pp. 47- 70.
- Materer, Timothy. *Modernist Alchemy: Poetry and the Occult*. Cornell University Press, 1995. Google Books. Accessed March 2021.
- McGuire Matthew. "Heaney's Mythic Method: Modernist Afterlives in *The Burial at Thebes*". *C21 Literature: Journal of 21st-Century Writings*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2018, p.3. <https://c21.openlibhums.org/article/id/505/> Accessed March 2021.

- Morgan, George. "Seamus Heaney and the Alchemy of the Earth". *Études irlandaises*, No 14-1, 1989, pp. 127-136.
- Mitchem, Sarah Lewis. "Mythic Metamorphosis: Re-shaping Identity in the Works of H.D." 2007. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Master of Arts Thesis.
- O'Brien, Darcy. *Piety and Modernism: Seamus Heaney's "Station Island"*. *James Joyce Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 1988, pp. 51-65.
- O'Driscoll, Dennis. *Stepping Stones: Interviews with Seamus Heaney*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2008. Internet Archive. Accessed March 2021.
- Pratt, William. "The Great Irish Elk: Seamus Heaney's Personal Helicon". *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 2, 1996, pp. 261-266.
- Sailer, Susan Shaw. "Time against Time: Myth in the Poetry of Yeats and Heaney". *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 1991, pp. 54-63.
- Schmidt, Michael, editor. Introduction. *The Great Modern Poets*. Quercus, 2006. Internet Archive. Accessed March 2021.
- Schwartz, Sanford. Introduction. *The Matrix of Modernism: Pound, Eliot, and Early Twentieth-Century Thought*. Princeton University Press, 1988. Google Books. Accessed March 2021.
- Sheppard, Robert. *The Poetry of Saying: British Poetry and its Discontents, 1950-2000*. Liverpool University Press, 2005. <https://epdf.pub/the-poetry-of-saying-british-poetry-and-its-discontents-1950-2000.html> Accessed March 2021.
- Stansky, Peter. *On or About December 1910: Early Bloomsbury and its Intimate World*. Harvard University Press, 1996. Google Books. Accessed March 2021.
- Surette, Leon. *The Birth of Modernism: Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats, and the Occult*. McGill-Queen's Press, 1993. Google Books. Accessed March 2021.
- Tobin, Daniel Eugene. *Passage to the Center: Imagination and the Sacred in the Poetry of Seamus Heaney*. The University Press of Kentucky, 1999. Google Books. Accessed March 2021.
- Tryphonopoulos, Demetres. "Fragments of a Faith Forgotten: Ezra Pound, H.D. and the Occult Tradition". *Paideuma: Modern and Contemporary Poetry and Poetics*, 2003, Vol. 32, No. 1/3, pp. 229-244.
- Ντόκος, Θανάσης. Ερμηνευτικές Σημειώσεις. *Εισαγωγή στην Τριλογία της Η.Δ.: Κείμενο, Απόδοση, Ερμηνευτικές Σημειώσεις*. Συγγραφείς: Λιάνα Σακελλίου,

Θανάσης Ντόκος, Θωμάς Στραβέλης. Επιμέλεια: Λιάνα Σακελλίου. Gutenberg, [1999] 2005, pp. 405-478.

ΣΥΝΟΨΗ ΔΙΠΛΩΜΑΤΙΚΗΣ ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑΣ

Τα ποιήματα του Seamus Heaney και της H.D. μπορεί να φαίνονται εκ πρώτης όψεως ετερόκλιτα, εντούτοις τα κοινά τους σημεία είναι πολλά. Ο Heaney έχει μεν αναλυθεί υπό το πρίσμα του μοντερνισμού, αλλά ποτέ έως τώρα δεν έχει συγκριθεί με την H.D. Ορισμένα από τα χαρακτηριστικά γνωρίσματα του μοντερνισμού της H.D. αντανακλώνται στον Heaney και ο σκοπός της παρούσας διπλωματικής εργασίας είναι η ιχνηλάτηση κοινών μοτίβων και θεματικών μεταξύ των δύο, παρότι δεν υπάρχουν ενδείξεις άμεσης επιρροής. Στη βάση της σύγκρισης βρίσκεται η παρατήρηση πως η βία του πολέμου και η αυτο-εξορία που βίωναν και οι δύο ποιητές κατά την περίοδο της ποιητικής τους ωρίμανσης, έχουν ως παράγωγο μία ποίηση η οποία επιδιώκει την ενότητα και την αναγέννηση. Οι κοινοί τρόποι μέσω των οποίων αυτή εκφέρεται είναι η συμπερίληψη στοιχείων από αρχαίους πολιτισμούς αλλά και το υλικό που προέρχεται από βιωματικές εμπειρίες, με το τοπίο να αποκτά καίρια σημασία. Η σύνθεση των πηγών έμπνευσης και στους δύο ποιητές, αποτελεί το κεντρικό θέμα της παρούσας διπλωματικής. Αυτή πραγματοποιείται μέσω των παρατηρήσεων του Mircea Eliade σχετικά με τους αρχαίους πολιτισμούς και την έννοια του ιερού Κέντρου, *axis mundi*, καθώς επίσης και της κυκλικής αντίληψης του χρόνου η οποία εκφέρεται με την περιοδική επιστροφή σε αυτό που ο ιστορικός της θρησκείας ονομάζει *in illo tempore*, είτε ως απροσδιόριστος χρόνος κατά τον οποίο οι άνθρωποι επικοινωνούσαν με τους θεούς, είτε ως χρόνος κατά τον οποίο έλαβε χώρα η κοσμογονία. Οι περισσότερες έννοιες του Eliade έχουν εντοπιστεί στο έργο του Heaney από τον κριτικό Daniel Eugene Tobin. Ο αποκρυφισμός που οι κριτικοί πλέον συμφωνούν πως επηρέασε την ποίηση της H.D., θα εντοπιστεί και στον Heaney, από τον ερευνητή George Morgan, ενώ θα επεκταθεί και στις έννοιες του Eliade, καθώς σχετίζεται με την επιθυμία για επικοινωνία με τη σφαίρα του θεϊκού, μέσω της μύησης που οδηγεί σε αναγέννηση, όπως η κοσμογονία ήταν η αρχέγονη πράξη δημιουργίας. Τα συμπεράσματα αφορούν στο πώς οι έννοιες αυτές εμφανίζονται στους δύο ποιητές ως θεμελιώδεις μιας αναγέννησης μέσω στοιχείων του παρελθόντος που χαρακτηρίζουν την ποίηση τους. Συμπερασματικά, χωρίς να συγκαλύπτουν δυσαρμονίες του παρόντος, και οι δύο ποιητές βασιζόμενοι σε διασωθέντα αρχαία μοτίβα οραματίζονται μια αισιόδοξη έκβαση για το παρόν.