### Poem 'PUNISHMENT' A Critical Analysis.

                       PUNISHMENT- Poem by Seamus Heaney

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The purpose of this paper is to analyze critically about the poem ‘PUNISHMENT’ written by Seamus Heaney. In this paper I presented about the background of the poet, structure of the poem, analysis of the poem, summary of the poem and at last conclusion. This poem is about a young girl who was believed to killed on the charge of adultery.

*Background of the poet.*

Seamus Heaney was born on April 13, 1939, on a farm in Castledawson, County Derry, Northern Ireland, the eldest of eight children. In 1963, he began teaching at St. Joseph's College in Belfast. Here he began to write, joining a poetry workshop with Derek Mahon, Michael Longley, and others under the guidance of Philip Hobsbaum. In 1965 he married Marie Devlin, and in 1966 year he published his first book of poetry, *Death of a Naturalist*. His other poetry includes *Door into the Dark* (1969), *Wintering Out* (1972), *North* (1979), *Selected Poems* 1965-1975 (1980), *Station Island* (1984), *The Haw Lantern* (1987), *New Selected Poems 1966-1987* (1990) and *Seeing Things* (1991). In 1999 he published a new translation of the Old English heroic poem *Beowulf*.

I think these two questions that the poet tries to ask to the readers.

“Is love crime for getting punishment?”

“Is only girls/women responsible for sexual relationship?”

*Structure of the Poem*

The poem is written in iambic pentameter lines - mostly blank verse, but with half-rhyming couplets at the beginning and end. The poem opens confidently, explaining why the island dwellers trust in their preparations - but when the storm breaks, they can do nothing but “sit tight. This poem is a bog (about land, sky, sea)poem and this poem is written on Ireland.

The writer used some metaphorical term like-Flaxen-haired/ undernourished, and your/ tar black face was beautiful.

 “  nipple in the cold wind”

 “  she was a barked sapling” .

*Analysis of the Poem*

This is an imaginary poem in the sense that the writer imagines some beautiful condition of the girl before getting punishment and some fearful condition after discovering the preserved body. He imagines and describes a corpse that was found in 1951 of a young girl who had been brutally tortured and killed as a punishment for adultery. Whole poem divided into three parts, description of the preserve body after discovers it, Before getting the punishment, and His personal feelings about punishment. The writer made a critical comment on the culture and human nature of Ireland through this poem. He described about past and presant by using his imagination, presumptions and his own memories. This poem shows the mythical associations with the connection between violence and religion. This poem shows the cruelty of human nature. This poem is a symbolic of the unchanging and resilient aspect  of the manner with which human regard one another.

*Summary of the poem*

The poem ‘Punishment’ by Seamus Heaney was inspired by the discovery of a dead body of a young girl who was believed to be killed on the charge of adultery. Heaney takes this discovery as an ancient example of brutality and links it with the modern form of brutality which is evidence of Irish rebel’s killing of Irish girl who marry British soldiers. This poem putting brutality at the center links past and present, history and modern time then and now and there and here. What continue from ancient time to modern time are cruelty/brutality and primitivivism.

In the first section Heaney presents the tasting of the blackberries as a sensual pleasure - referring to sweet “flesh”, to “summer's blood” and to “lust”. He uses many adjectives of colour (how many can you find?) and suggests the enthusiasm of the collectors, using every available container to hold the fruit they have picked. There is also a hint that this picking is somehow violent - after the “blood” comes the claim that the collectors' hands were “sticky as Bluebeard's” (whose hands were covered with the blood of his wives. The second section appears like a punishment from offended nature for the boy's arrogance - when he sees what nature in the raw is really like, he is terrified. This part of the poem is ambiguous - we see the horror of the plague of frogs, “obscene” and “gathered...for vengeance”, as it appeared to the young boy. But we can also see the scene more objectively - as it really was. If we strip away the effect of imagination, we are left with a swarm of croaking amphibians. This may bring out a difference between a child in the 1940s and a child in the west today. The 21st century child knows all about the frogs' habitat and behavior from wildlife documentaries, but has never seen so many frogs at close range in real life. The young Heaney was used to seeing nature close up, but perhaps never got beyond the very simple account of “mammy” and “daddy” frogs. The teacher presents the amphibians as if they were people.

*Conclusion*

This poem shows that love is not crime for giving that kind of violence punishment. Girl/woman is not only responsible for love and relationship. This poem is a comment on Irish culture, tradition or  the convention. The poet seems to be mocking the claim of modern man being civilized. Through  there is a constant claim of civilization but the base of it is constituted by atrocity, brutality, inhumanity and cruelty. The poet is Irish, mostly he engages with Irish culture, tradition or the convention. He always relates the individual Irish culture to general theme of humanity.

*References*

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