Karhio, A. (2025). Darkness: Invisible Imaginaries. *Folk, Knowledge, Place, 2*(2), 69–81.
https://doi.org/10.24043/001c.153890

CONCEPTS, THEORIES, & INTRODUCTIONS

Darkness: Invisible Imaginaries

Anne Karhio[1][a]

[1] University of Inland Norway

Keywords: darkness, imaginaries, Irish literature, Seamus Heaney, folklore

https://doi.org/10.24043/001c.153890

Folk, Knowledge, Place

Vol. 2, Issue 2, 2025

This paper introduces *Folk, Knowledge, Place*'s special section on 'Darkness: Invisible imaginaries' through discussions of the presence of darkness in literature, folklore, culture, and space.

In an interview with Dennis O'Driscoll (2008), the late Seamus Heaney addressed the "emphasis on death and darkness" in the titles of his first collections *Death of a naturalist* (1966) and *Door into the dark* (1969). Rather than a bleak or negative attribute, Heaney viewed "the dark" as "a conventionally positive element, related to what Eliot called 'the dark embryo' in which poetry originates":

> The phrase "door into the dark" comes from the first line of a poem about a blacksmith, a shape maker, standing in the door of a forge; and, as a title, it picks up on the last line of [the previous collection] *Death of a Naturalist*, where the neophyte sees a continuity between the effect he wants to achieve in his writing and the noise he made when he used to shout down a well shaft "to set the darkness echoing". There's also the usual archetype of the dark as something you need to traverse in order to arrive at some kind of reliable light or sight of reality. The dark night of the soul. The dark wood. (O'Driscoll & Heaney, 2008, p. 96)

Heaney's image and example of the blacksmith and this understanding only achieved in darkness was similarly addressed in the title poem of his 1975 collection *North*, which called its addressee to "Compose in Darkness. / Expect aurora borealis / in the long foray / but no cascade of light", and ultimately to "trust the feel of what nubbed treasure / your hands have known" (Heaney, 1975, p. 11). Here, the elusive and capricious northern lights echo the "unpredictable fantail of sparks" in the poem about blacksmith that Heaney mentions, 'The forge' (Heaney, 1969, p. 19). In both poems, the fleeting lights of the particles in Earth's atmosphere and the "fantail of sparks" flying from the anvil can only be detected in relative

a anne.karhio@inn.no; corresponding author

darkness, and are too ephemeral to provide any kind of sustained view or insight. Rather than seeing a "cascade of light" the speaker has to *feel* and listen, rather than *see* himself into words, to paraphrase a title of the poet's later essay.

Heaney's idea of composition in darkness also touches on the ways in which darkness is approached in many of the contributions to this special section 'Darkness: Invisible imaginaries' of *Folk, Knowledge, Place.* It characterizes the binaries of darkness as a modality in different traditions and forms of cultural expression: philosophical and pragmatic, spiritual and mundane, adverse and enabling. The critical debates that followed the use of specific imagery and motifs in Heaney's *North* also addressed a darkness of another kind, through the murky, peaty layers revealing prehistoric bodies preserved underneath and the outbreak of sectarian violence during the Northern Irish Troubles. The vertical depth of the boggy landscape and the complex colonial history that underpinned the conflict attracted praise and resistance in turns, as too literal or too symbolic, too partial and limited or too vaguely suggestive. Whatever the poet's intention may or may not have been, the collection's reception certainly demonstrated the continuing fissures of the historical/colonial legacy in contemporary society and literary culture, in Ireland and elsewhere.

The conflicted, contradictory, and contested approaches to language and landscape in Heaney's dark *North* thus situate the current special section on darkness at the intersection of the unsettling, terrifying strangeness, and the enabling power of yet-to-be realized potential. Importantly, darkness as an invisible imaginary demands those at its boundaries to reflect on the premises and consequences of their own knowledge and belief systems. Like the landscape photograph or painting that lures our mind to imagine the world beyond its frame as an extension of what can be seen, darkness tempts those at its fringes to envision what lies out of range as a continuum of their understanding and convictions. This is also the domain of the arts and other forms of cultural expression: the reconfiguring of, or expanding on the experience of the known or perceptible world, or the known versions of oneself, through itineraries in the unfamiliar, the dark, the inexplicable. Less "the dark as something you need to traverse in order to arrive at some kind of reliable light or slight of reality" (O'Driscoll & Heaney, 2008, p. 95), this is a re-thinking of the idea of 'reality' itself less as a fixed or orderly set of coordinates, and more as a relinquishing of one's subjective sense of self and identity. Theron Schmidt and the choreographer and performance artist Tru Paraha describe "choreography to be an occultist practice requiring the very conditions of darkness in which to thrive, and in which we might also become anonymous" (Paraha & Schmidt, 2020, p. 441). It is, at once, the threshold and what lies beyond it, the shifting edge between the visible and invisible, and openness to encounters that might otherwise remain nameless, concealed, and hidden. For the Irish artist Ian Joyce, "drawing in dark places is also drawing in the dark, with the lights switched off and with my eyes

closed" (Joyce & Staunton, 2020, p. 81). Embodied encounters beyond the literally visible breed strange new intimacies: "The whispering grafite or blunt pencil sets up a sonic sensitivity to rhythm and pattern" (Joyce & Staunton, 2020, p. 81); a take on Heaney's "feel of what nubbed treasure / your hands have known," perhaps. Occupying such a threshold and invitation to darkness is akin to the Keatsian "negative capability", or the capacity of "*being in* uncertainties" (Keats, 2009) through invisibility and anonymity.

While both Heaney and Joyce consider darkness as closely entwined with local, cultural practices, with language, and with knowledges of place and landscape as material and lived, as well as aesthetic foundations for their art and practice, ideas of darkness have at times involved problematic losses in translation in social and cultural encounters. Before Heaney's discovery and adoption of the imagery of bogs and peaty depths, the imperial project's darkness as ideological, corporal, and environmental violence was perhaps most famously and most problematically addressed in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of darkness*. The 1899 novella has been seen to depict Europe's lust for conquest and resources in Africa at the same time as it projects the colonizers' own anxieties on the unfamiliar cultures and practices seen as the target of atrocities. This is darkness as an existential void at the heart of the Conrad's depicting of large parts of the continent as "blank spaces on the earth" (Conrad, 1988, p. 11) ultimately forging an image of Africa as an image of the dark side of Europe.

The novella emerged from the author's own experiences and travel journals from the 1890s in the Belgian Congo, where Conrad served on the Belgian river steamer *Le Roi Des Belges*. Heaney's countryman, Ireland's Sir Roger Casement, joined Conrad, the pilot of the river ship, and would later report on the atrocities he witnessed as a part of an official investigation by the British Government. But while Conrad and Casement sought to reveal, expose, critique, and condemn Europe's inhuman ravaging of the colonized regions, their own views have themselves been criticized as blindness or a partial view of the land and cultures they witnessed, informed by European values, ideals, and narratives. It was Conrad's "image of Africa" which prompted Chinua Achebe to describe the author as "a thoroughgoing racist" (Achebe, 2016, p. 21). At the same time, Achebe turned to yet another Irishman for a title of his own novel, *Things fall apart*, which opens with an epigraph from W.B. Yeats's 'The second coming', including its famous lines "Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold / mere anarchy is loosed upon the world" (Yeats, 1994, p. 158). These complex entanglements related to power, exploitation, dispossession, agency, voice, justice and historical anxiety connect places and difficult cultural encounters across the globe. Yeats's poem has become a frequent reference point for addressing societal unrest and violence across the globe.

The texts by Conrad and Achebe also continue to appear as staple readings in English literature courses all over the world, and starting points for classroom conversations on literature, racism, and representation. Yet reading *Heart of darkness* alongside a selection of texts that align with some of its cultural and historical premises also helps highlight the very specific kind of 'darkness' the story engages with—or projects on its cultural and geographical setting—in the context of colonialism, and of indigenous and folk traditions. Whose story is being told, and whose knowledge is being revealed, shared, or challenged in such stories of curious, brutal, or contested encounters?

Eight years before *Heart of darkness* was published, another late Victorian traveller in service of the empire, the telegraph engineer Willoughby Smith, took the train to County Kerry in Ireland's west coast to board the cable ship Great Eastern which was to lay the first (functioning) submarine telegraph cable between Europe and North America, and eventually provide a stable connection between Foilhommerum Bay on Valentia Island and Heart's Content in Newfoundland, Canada. As the great cable ship was too big to dock in the local harbour, Smith had to be rowed there in the darkness of the night by a group of locals. His account of the nocturnal journey is another instance of Victorian scientific gothic, as the engineer found his own rational mind stumble at Europe's western fringe. After the initial, smooth and cordial exchanges between the engineer and his rowers, local knowledge was to be lost in translation:

> We now met with an instance of Irish superstition, which, had it not come within my own experience, I would not have believed possible. The men had pulled well and strong together, and, in response to a demand for my opinion, I had expressed unqualified approval both of their skill and speed, when, suddenly, with exclamations of fright, they "in oars," and refused to row another stroke. It then transpired that in the Kenmare river there was an island which, according to their reckoning, they ought to have made by this time; not having done so they solemnly affirmed that on dark nights like the present, evil spirits, to spite them, frequently removed the island. (Smith, 1891, p. 166)

My focus here is less on the characteristics of this local 'superstition' or folk belief—Smith does not dwell on it in much detail apart from assigning it to the seemingly primitive character of his oarsmen—but the speed at which the British traveller's mind arrives at an explanation that is a superstitious narrative of its own:

> Thinking that they had simply missed their way, and were treating me to a little blarney, I proceeded to jest upon the subject, but my guide, who was himself an Irishman, warned me to be careful ... My superstitious crew were huddled

> together in the bows talking in a low, and to me unknown language; for all I knew to the contrary they might have been under the impression that I was the evil spirit, and discussing how best to dispose of me. Thus, for three long hours, did we drift, and from the increased motion of the boat it was evident that the tide was carrying us seawards. (Smith, 1891, p. 166)

With no indication of ill will or sign of threatening behaviour, the locals speaking in an 'unknown' language (Smith fails to identify it as Irish Gaelic, though it would be more than surprising had he not known this), navigating their way through local waters and guided by local knowledge communicated through folk tradition, are suddenly imagined as conspiring against his life. Literal and figurative darkness rapidly merge in Smith's fearful imagination, and what he fails to understand is described as ominous, sinister, and malicious. Curiously, the fact that the boat and its passengers ultimately arrived safely at their destination does little to make him trust the oarsmen's knowledge and abilities. Smith does not consider that their safe passage may have require an overlap between belief and practice, or a coming together of local folk tradition and geographical knowledge.

Such examples abound in late 19th and early 20th century narratives of unfamiliar and often exoticized landscapes as backdrops for gothic and supernatural encounters. More recently, Ian Joyce's work has sought to distinguish between dark landscapes as environments for embodied cultural practices and narratives, versus blank canvases of the unknown for a newcomer's fear. Joyce's base in county Donegal is the site for *Cló* and *The living archive*, collective and personal artistic projects for thinking of, and through, the material landscape, and the dark peat of the bog—or *duibheagán*, the Irish Gaelic term for depth as abyss, combining the word *dubh* for black and *aigéan* for depth (Joyce & Staunton, 2020, p. 75). Connecting the language, everyday practices and history of a culture living by and from the bog is, for Joyce, a means of recognizing language and land as inseparable, rather than representing the dark layers of the wet and soft terrain as sites for superstitious projections from a distance: Joyce offers the example of H. P. Lovecraft's 1926 horror story 'The moon bog', in which "the otherworldly sights and sounds of the bog (offer) the perfect backdrop for a tale of terror." Local "peasants" bewilder the visitor with their "absurd" accounts, which "had to do with some preposterous legend of the bog, and of a grim guardian spirit that dwelt in the strange olden ruin on the far islet I had seen in the sunset" (qtd. in Joyce & Staunton, 2020, p. 78). Rather than accumulated knowledge of a living landscape and the language of its material history and culture, Lovecraft's bog becomes a flat canvas for stereotypical imagery and encapsulates "an aesthetic that can be reproduced in a studio to provide atmosphere but ... has no depth" (Joyce & Staunton, 2020, p. 78).

Magical and supernatural folk narratives, dreamscapes and spiritual, non-human actors are tools of navigating through dark or challenging environments. A considerable body of scholarship recognizes the gap between

Western enlightenment tradition's views on scientific and technological development, and the value of folk belief systems on embodied knowledge of local geography. These occur in the "information about relatedness, including connections with other beings or with other geographical spheres, as well as the narratives of dreams" in Chile (Hirt, 2012, p. 19), as well as in the practice of dowsing and recognizing "the boundaries of the material and immaterial worlds through the idea that the living world is influenced by the imperceptible ow of life-giving energy" in the Baltic countries (Kivari, 2018, p. 123), for example. In other words, the nocturnal, submarine, or subterranean domains and spaces of dreams, spirits, routes and resources are the invisible sites of local and indigenous knowledge.

Yet the understanding of darkness as resource can itself be co-opted for suspect ideas and practices. As increasingly dense and bright systems of electric lighting, networks of travel and communications, and the growing data infrastructure spread to new regions on the planet, darkness itself has increasingly become understood as threatened and vulnerable. The concept of a dark sky 'sanctuary' emphasizes this recognition of the diminishing presence of darkness as something to be sheltered by the increasingly bright light pollution. Furthermore, darkness allows for the view of subtle, delicate, or transitory sources of light in the night sky, or from bioluminescent flora and fauna. Darkness needs, and is, a shelter. This extends to how dark sky sanctuaries and other spaces of natural darkness face added pressure from the global industries of travel and tourism, which often commodify dark landscapes as exoticized experiences for wellness enthusiasts.

These different perspectives on dark sky sanctuaries and tourism are also addressed in the texts in this special section. Michael Haldrup's (2025) piece on night-time walking in rural and urban locations and their fringes in Denmark is prefaced by a discussion on the importance of darkness for the view of more fragile aspects of our visual environment. This has led, for example, to the emergence of Dark Sky International, a non-profit initiative supporting the establishing of dedicated Dark Sky Spaces. Haldrup (2025) discusses "embodied experiences of 'the night' through walking in the dark, as a speculative opportunity for exploring planetary imaginaries of the Anthropocene's essay in this issue." A scholarly itinerary through various forms of darkness (with theorists and authors such as Jane Bennett, Tim Edensor, Johan Eklöf, Donna Haraway, Robert Shaw, Henry David Thoreau, and others) takes place alongside personal entries or extracts constituting a lyric autobiography of sorts. Haldrup's essay reveals how walking at night challenges diurnal sense of scale: scarcity of light forces the nocturnal perambulator to find their foothold and direction by relying on that which is very close and felt through diminutive, tactile, olfactory, and aural perception, as well as the delicate light of planets and constellations at a distance that surpasses any experiential human sense of scale.

Like Haldrup, Ro Spankie (2025) directs the gaze upwards and downwards at once in her 'From shadow space to dark skies', which frames the discussion on her curation of Judy Goldhill's 'Dark skies' art exhibition with the acknowledgement of contradictory cultural, historical and environmental perspectives on darkness, or, as "inherited" ideas on darkness that "no longer [reflect] the environmental degradation of the present" (Spankie, 2025). For Spankie (2025), "the act of curating also involves caring," and "by shifting the collective narrative and encouraging the public to go out and experience dark skies," she has also hoped to direct the visitors to the exhibition to develop caring through imagination. Both Haldrup and Spankie recognize, in their own ways, darkness as caring, and in need of care as an increasingly diminishing part of the contemporary perceptual environment.

Dark spaces have also been co-opted for the marketing of spiritually-oriented lifestyle experiences with vague connections to indigenous beliefs and practices. In her contribution, Kristen Dorsey (2025) presents an 'Indigenous critique of darkness retreat center website marketing' and highlights how immersive darkness experiences offered by the "holistic wellness tourism market" (which often have little scientific evidence to support the claims on their health benefits), have dubiously informed connections to the belief systems of the indigenous cultures which they purport to follow. Dorsey parallels her critique of wellness tourism with an addressing of dark cave environments as ceremonial spaces through interviews with her own tribal community, the Chickasaw Nation. These interviews frame the analysis of 15 websites of darkness retreat companies, whose rhetoric and visual aesthetic build on commodified ideas of Eastern and Indigenous cultures and communities. Similarly, religious and ceremonial elements are the focus the article by Adam Grydehøj et al. (2025), which focuses on a specific village temple in South China and also offers a perspective on practices in religious spaces in a more global context. Their discussion underscores how darkness may, in the Buddhist, Daoist, and folk religious context specifically, signify "emptiness, silence, and tranquility" or "symbolise ignorance and evil" in a co-existing metaphorical system (Grydehøj et al., 2025). But rather than the essential qualities of darkness in material space, Grydehøj et al. (2025) consider light and darkness as mutually dependent. The significance of darkness and light, and shifts between the two, in religious space can guide visitors' movements and turn "movement inside the temple itself into part of visitors' ritual and spiritual journey."

The articles by Dorsey and Grydehøj et al. thus stress the interplay between dark, dim, or opaque spaces, and the visible and lit zones and routes they frame, as particularly important to sacred or ceremonial spaces. Darkness and light help distinguish such architectural and built environments from the secular and normative spaces and practices of everyday life, to paraphrase Michel de Certeau. They can be seen as varieties of Michel Foucault's concept of the 'heterotopia' (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986) uses the term to consider sites and spaces which stand out from the normative or normalized

environments for individuals and communal practices, "capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (p. 25). The cemetery, the brothel, the motel room, or the sauna as a site for purification are all examples of heterotopia, a site presupposing "a system of opening and closing", or one that may "hide curious exclusions" (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 25). As opposed to the sauna in the Finnish or Scandinavian cultural sphere, for Foucault a space for 'purification', the sauna, too, becomes a different kind of dark heterotopia Nick Mulé's (2025) article 'In the dark: Queer male social-sexual encounters'. Mulé (2025) examines a number of "queer male sexual spaces," including "bathhouses, saunas, circuit clubs, fetish balls, sex clubs, backrooms, and dark rooms," and argues that "in many of these settings, darkness plays an essential role both literally and figuratively." Mulé considers darkness in the context of queer male social and sexual encounters both a pleasurable and enticing dimension, as well as a protective and sheltering modality in the urban environments in which these spaces are situated. Yet darkness is also a complex condition, and its meanings range from figurative and literal discrimination and violence, and individual or communal self-censorship, to imaginative, permissive, and liberating experiences in sheltering and inclusive spaces.

Embodiment and material culture intertwine with darkness as a philosophical, religious, figurative and symbolic modality in the articles in this special section, as the examples above have already demonstrated. They also occur in the symbolic and religious-philosophical imagery and imaginary of death in Luisa Del Giudice's (2025) discussion on 'Light/life cycles and sundials as memento mori'. Del Giudice adopts the history of sundials in Italy as a specific cultural and geographical context, as well as an autobiographical focal point. In material culture, sundials become symbolic objects for reflections on "human death" as they are seen as "literally and metaphorically tracking time's passing and—as often made explicit in their mottos—functioning as memento mori" (Del Giudice, 2025). The iconography of death seen in sundials is in Del Giudice's discussion addressed alongside the interplay between light and shadow as a means to mark the passing of time, and thus the perpetual recognition of death in the material culture of living in the region surrounding Naples in Italy, and elsewhere in Europe. This would also be reflected in the mottos accompanying sundials: "*Vita fugit, sicut umbra,* 'Life passes like the shadow'; *Post tenebras spero lucem*, 'I hope for light to follow darkness'" (Del Giudice, 2025). Like in Haldrup's essay, in Del Giudice's contribution the scholarly account of sundials in Italian and European material culture and history are framed by more personal encounters with darkness, in this case in Svalbard and Greenland, as well as the experiences of birth, life, and death for a family gathered and separated in different locations across Europe and North America.

Haldrup's and Del Giudice's personal and family itineraries across local landscapes, and between countries and continents are both ways to engage with the invisible, partially visible, or unfamiliar and unknown imaginaries and spaces beyond the perceived, the seen, or the known. Such journeys trace the entangled connections between narrative, space, and place. Marjorie Perloff has drawn on Victor Turner's work to highlight how the term 'narrative' is intimately connected with our desire to 'narrate', to 'know' (also related to 'cognition', anticipated by from the Latin *cognoscere* and Greek *γνῶσις, gnōsis*). For Perloff (1982), 'narrative' is "rather an appropriate term for a reflexive activity which seeks to 'know' ... antecedent events and the meaning of those events" (p. 413). In this sense, "to tell a story is to find a way" (Perloff, 1982, p. 417) to knowledge, even limited. Such finding of one's way, through spaces and landscapes at the margins of one's experience, motivated many of the narratives of 18th and 19th century European travellers writing about their encounters in personal travelogues and diaries. In 'Lurking darkness: Darkness as an entity full of meanings', Susanna Lahtinen (2025) approaches darkness not as an ephemeral condition or aspect of figurative and material spaces, but the manner in which the authors of travel journals would describe it as a character with a degree of subjectivity and agency, a personification of the dark spaces they travelled through. "We narrate nightly darkness by giving it an active role," Lahtinen (2025) notes; "darkness falls, but sometimes it rises or grows. Darkness sneaks and obscures the landscape, leaving visions dim. Darkness hides, conceals, and lurks" (Lahtinen, 2025). Here it is not primarily through personifications as imagined or mythological beings or characters in folk tales, but through language that darkness reveals its agency and character. At the same time, such a sense of darkness as an entity with a degree of agency resists essentializing definitions and strict borders for traditional senses of subjectivity. Instead, the agency of darkness is envisioned relationally, through "an interaction between the darkness and the experiencer of darkness" (Lahtinen, 2025).

Finally, while the discussions by Lahtinen and others mainly foreground darkness as an aspect of the material environment and the consequent partial or complete lack of sensory access to this environment, Shira Stav's (2025) 'Reading with our eyes closed' focuses on the lack of visual access to the surrounding material world through a blind character in a short story, Ya'akov Steinberg's 'The blind woman'. Stav demonstrates how the story challenges received notions of knowledge as visibility and mastery of the perceived world. Drawing on the work of e.g. Édouard Glissant, Luce Irigaray, Martin Jay, and Eve Sedgwick, Stav's reading of 'The blind woman' moves away from "conceptions that identify light and sight with knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, and position the absence of sight as a dark space of error and misunderstanding" (Stav, 2025)—in other words, conceptions that conflate figurative and literal darkness in order to posit reading (understood widely) as a means of control through transparency. An alternative reading here,

however, balances the figurative and the literal senses of darkness by connecting the blind woman's feeling her way through a path that remains invisible with the reader who is similarly "groping through thick darkness" (Stav, 2025). Instead of narrative as *gnosis* or knowledge, communicated through an itinerary through a visible landscape, Stav (2025) foregrounds an encounter with the text as a "listening to murmurs from a position of partial understanding".

Heaney's (1969) blacksmith who stands at "the door into the dark", and "picks up" on the final line of 'Personal helicon' in order "to set the darkness echoing" (p. 19) is, like the blind woman in Steinberg's story, similarly listening from a position of 'partial understanding': his grasp of the space that remains invisible is built on felt intuition and experience, rather than precision of visual perspective. Listening to the sounds of the interior darkness of the forge, and seeing the occasional sparks light up and then vanish, suggest rather than reveal that "the anvil must be somewhere in the centre" (Heaney, 1969, p. 19). This partial blindness remains its own ambition and resists the idea of "the dark as something you need to traverse in order to arrive at some kind of reliable light or sight of reality" (O'Driscoll & Heaney, 2008, p. 96), similarly to Stav's (2025) description of the "paranoid" (à la Sedgwick) "reading process [that is] essentially constructed as taking us from darkness to light, from blindness to vision".

This special section of *Folk, Knowledge, Place* approaches darkness through various ways of re-thinking the relations between human experience and its various others in the Anthropocene. They examine planetary entanglements and nocturnal navigation through rural and urban spaces; the marking of time and mortality with sundial shadow and light; the commodification of sacred underground spaces by darkness experience tourism; artistic responses to the shifting cultural sensibilities of darkness; the dark spaces for queer male sexual encounters; darkness and light in demarcating passage through religious space; agency of darkness as entity in historical travelogues; and darkness as feeling one's way to partial knowledge as an alternative to controlling vision. Importantly, each of these discussions is situated in place and connects darkness with specific cultural and geographical locations. Inasmuch as darkness is the condition of the invisible imaginary, the realm beyond rational and institutionally sanctioned systems of knowledge that may prompt us to project on it our existing systems of thought, or accept and reimagine the limitations of that which already is, each of the articles in this special section addresses demonstrates the importance of acknowledging the shifting edge of the familiar and visible.

Submitted: November 28, 2025 CST. Accepted: December 05, 2025 CST. Published: December 22, 2025 CST.

References

Achebe, C. (2016). An image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of darkness. *The Massachusetts Review*, *57*(1), 14–27. https://doi.org/10.1353/mar.2016.0003

Conrad, L. (1988). *Heart of darkness*. Norton.

Del Giudice, L. (2025). Light/life cycles and sundials as memento mori: Reflections on time and place. *Folk, Knowledge, Place*, *2*(2). https://doi.org/10.24043/001c.138458

Dorsey, K. (2025). Darkness, land, and capitalism: An Indigenous critique of darkness retreat center website marketing. *Folk, Knowledge, Place*, *2*(2).

Foucault, M., & Miskowiec, J. (1986). Of other spaces. *Diacritics*, *16*(1), 22–27. https://doi.org/10.2307/464648

Grydehøj, A., Lin, Y., Pan, Q., & Gong, X. (2025). In the darkness of the gods: A visual autoethnography of mystery and illumination in a South China village temple. *Folk, Knowledge, Place*, *2*(2). https://doi.org/10.24043/001c.151310

Haldrup, M. (2025). In the dark: Walking, sensing and navigating planetary imaginaries. *Folk, Knowledge, Place*, *2*(2). https://doi.org/10.24043/001c.144096

Heaney, S. (1966). *Death of a naturalist*. Faber & Faber.

Heaney, S. (1969). *A door into the dark*. Faber & Faber.

Heaney, S. (1975). *North*. Faber & Faber.

Hirt, I. (2012). Mapping dreams/dreaming maps: Bridging indigenous and western geographical knowledge. *Cartographica*, *47*(2), 105–120. https://doi.org/10.3138/carto.47.2.105

Joyce, I., & Staunton, M. (2020). Thinking into the bog: Art practice and connection from inside a language under pressure. *Études Irlandaises*, *45*(1), 67–87. https://doi.org/10.4000/etudesirlandaises.8811

Keats, J. (2009, October 13). *Selections from Keats's letters*. Poetry Foundation. https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69384/selections-from-keatss-letters

Kivari, K. (2018). Webs of lines and webs of stories in the making of supernatural places. In Ü. Valk & D. Sävborg (Eds.), *Storied and supernatural places* (pp. 114–136). Finnish Literature Society/SKS.

Lahtinen, S. (2025). Lurking darkness: Darkness as an entity full of meanings. *Folk, Knowledge, Place*, *2*(2).

Mulé, N. (2025). In the dark: Queer male social encounters in dark spaces. *Folk, Knowledge, Place*, *2*(2). https://doi.org/10.24043/001c.147179

O'Driscoll, D., & Heaney, S. (2008). *Stepping stones: interviews with Seamus Heaney*. Faber and Faber.

Paraha, T., & Schmidt, T. (2020). Blackout: Thinking with darkness. In L. Cull Ó Maoilearca & A. Lagaay (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to performance philosophy* (pp. 437–446). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003035312-51

Perloff, M. (1982). From image to action: the return of story in postmodern poetry. *Contemporary Literature*, *23*(4), 411–427. https://doi.org/10.2307/1207941

Smith, W. (1891). *The rise and extension of submarine telegraphy*. JS Virtue.

Spankie, R. (2025). From Shadow Space to Dark Skies – A Journey from Inner Space to Outer Space. *Folk, Knowledge, Place*, *2*(2).

Stav, S. (2025). Reading with our eyes closed. *Folk, Knowledge, Place*, *2*(2). https://doi.org/10.24043/001c.147181

Yeats, W. B. (1994). *The collected poems of W.B. Yeats*. Wordsworth library.