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## **The Celtic Other in the Regionalist Poems of John Hewitt**

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### **Abstract**

Towards the end of his life and career, the poet John Hewitt (1907-1987) had become a celebrated elder statesman of literature and art in Northern Ireland. Alongside that of his contemporary, John Montague, his work was recognised as an important conduit for the later poetic flowering that occurred in Northern Ireland in the wake of the outbreak of the Troubles, as represented by such writers as Seamus Heaney, Derek Mahon and Michael Longley, among others. Perhaps best remembered for his advocacy of Ulster regionalism, Hewitt urged for the embrace and expression of an identity rooted in the province of Ulster (which spans counties in both Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic) that could bridge the sectarian divide between Catholic and Protestant communities. While certain aspects of his regionalist project gained currency, within his own poetry, a fully realised sense of achievement for his Regionalist goals fails to resonate. This paper intends to analyse one of the most significant reasons as to why that is, the poet's conception and depiction of the Catholic community, or the Celtic other. Through careful examination of some of Hewitt's poems that engage with or portray Irish Catholics, it will be shown that a sense of difference and distance could not be overcome and contributed to an inability to successfully integrate Protestant Planter and Catholic Gael identities in an Ulster regionalist ideal.

**Keywords:** Past and present, Timeless Humanities, Boethius, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Path through Life, Relevance of Literature, Philosophy.