The Troubled Workings of Multidirectionality: Reading Seamus Heaney's

Intertextualities

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To my wonderful mother, Ioana Zirra, who introduced me to Heaney's poetry

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Preface

Poetry and Cultural Memory?

With the vertiginous rise of Memory Studies from the 1980s to the present day, it is surprising how few studies or articles have been dedicated to the manner in which poetry circulates as a genre of cultural memory. In a recent keynote address, Michael Rothberg mentioned that one of the directions that Memory Studies seems to take in the United States academia is to move towards a theorization of genres of memory and their specific means of remembrance[1]. Nevertheless, most of the recent studies in literary cultural memory have been using the novel as an illustration. It is obvious why this literary genre is such a fertile ground for analysis: its narrative structure and manner of organizing information makes it "stick" because it structures historical discourse into a coherent, memorable (often moral) story; it plays a major role in creating and disseminating counter-memory and alternative history ideas in the service of emerging identity groups; its unwavering popularity as a commodity and object of leisure make it a very fertile ground for the conveyance of ideas and discourses about the past; and, last but not least its portability as a cultural memory monument allows it to circulate easily across the ages or acquire an "afterlife" (Rigney "Portable" 372). In recent years, historical and political theatre has also been read as performance of cultural memory in new contexts with the proliferation of hybrid adaptations (of, for instance, classical Greek plays); additionally, a rising tide of theatre with a moral and political message in response to various postcolonial issues and global issues such as the Apartheid, the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide, the 9/11 terrorist attacks makes theorization imminent. (Stalpaert 75) (Thomson 4).

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[1] Multidirectional Memory Postgraduate Workshop, Ghent, March 27, 2012

But when it comes to poetry and cultural memory merely a handful of articles address the issue. This is strange, since 20th century poetry, in particular, seems to me to also subscribe to cultural memory momentum. In relation to memory, poetry is still undertheorized for reasons that I will attempt to elucidate. As Jahan Ramazani notes in a recent seminal study, poetry is mostly read within national frameworks, and associated with the elites and specialist reading communities - its global circulation and public sphere impact tends to be neglected by theorists (Ramazani 3). But poetry does participate in the age's preoccupation with universality and global outreach . Most of the high-modernist and postmodernist leading poetic figures contributed amazing adaptations of canonic texts and made intertextuality their major theme and technique.

Owing to this surprising theoretical lacuna, I have set out to investigate how poetry participates in cultural memory circulation and discourses and what it brings to the table as a possible genre of cultural memory. I hope to remediate this gap by using what seems to me the most promising and exciting theory in the field nowadays, Michael Rothberg's *Multidirectional Memory*. I will try to prove that poetry participates in cultural memory dynamics *Multidirectional Memory* proposes that memory be seen as inherently relational and comparative, not being particularly grounded in a nationalist isolated container, but amenable to transnational travels, modeled on imported memory discourse and shaped by dialogue with the past. Memory for Rothberg circulates and is shaped comparatively by adapting, modeling, and differentiating itself from other discourses. For Rothberg, new (traumatic) memory emerges through a process of articulation with the help of the past. Whether consciously or not memory articulation is similar to working through problematic history.

The main question investigated in this dissertation will be whether the poetry of Seamus Heaney written in response to the Northern Irish Troubles can be studied through the lens of

multidirectionality in order to explain its cultural memory dynamics. Secondly, I investigate the possibility that intertextuality be associated with Rothberg's theory as a concrete literary means of multidirectionality. Although Rothberg frequently uses intertextuality as a multidirectional clue in his inspired case studies, it is never defined as a specific tool to tell multidirectional stories. Heaney's poetry about the Troubles is intensely intertextual and bent on adaptation and appropriation of foreign models and texts in order to articulate comprehensive responses to the bloody civil war which erupted in the late 60s in Northern Ireland and lasted close to four decades. Therefore, if Heaney's poetry is indeed multidirectional, I would be interested in gauging the degree to which intertextuality underwrites multidirectionality, and in the types of multidirectional intertextual stories that one can detect in the poet's oeuvre.

A third aim of my study is to dissociate the idea of multidirectional memory from the Holocaust as a main term of comparison and transfer it to a different space, that of contemporary Northern Ireland. While Rothberg's case studies are extremely interesting, his focus on how cultural memory discourse on the Holocaust was articulated and how it helped articulate other postcolonial traumatic histories is a bit too narrow for my taste. The true test for Rothberg's theory, in my opinion, is to see how it would operate in a different context where the terms of comparison are different. Northern Ireland is an interesting case study because it was not a space of deportation, nor did it participate extensively in the Second World War. Nevertheless, as a colonial space affected by a violent guerilla war of decolonization and divided by exclusivist sectarian discourse, contemporary articulation of Northern Irish identity often requires, as an ethical practice, thinking outside the Ulster box, thinking multidirectinally.

Seamus Heaney's poetry does precisely this: it adopts and juggles various intertextual screens to analyze and articulate a multidirectionally richer response to the frequently inward-

looking, navel-gazing, Manicheistic discourse animating the Troubles. Heaney engages in a series of cultural memory practices in his poetry ranging from translation, to citation, to adaptation and cultural memory modelling as strategies to come to terms with the Troubles. He uses a wide-range of memory discourses, from foreign archaeological memory as an intermedial intertext, to ekphrasis, translating canonical poetry from other languages and revisiting obscure medieval texts. As a poet, academic, critic and translator, Heaney is also aware of the ethical responsibility that should underwrite his attempts at representing the Troubles and his cultural activity always meditates on this important aspect. For reasons of space, our study will focus on only three of Heaney's volumes: *North* (1975), *Field Work* (1979) and *Station Island* (1984). In addition to being some of Heaney's most analyzed and discussed volumes, they also represent a series of early and very diverse responses to The Troubles which accurately diagnose the traits of what Rothberg calls "emergent memory articulation" (4).

Chapter Outline

In my introduction, I will give a brief overview of the debates shaping Memory Studies nowadays with added emphasis on their relation to Maurice Halbwachs' ground-breaking 1920s study *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*. I will then proceed to describe in more detail the theories of Ann Rigney, Astrid Erll and Michael Rothberg, which make up my guiding theoretical framework in the study of Heaney's intertextualities. The first part of my thesis will try to illustrate what I consider to be multidirectional engagements in Heaney's poetry. I have chosen "doubt" and "ambivalence" as two themes that resurface in almost all of Heaney's poetry about The Troubles. I see productive states of doubt as the main effect that multidirectional thinking seems to have on the poet's vision. Doubt and ambivalence, paradoxically, seem to

point towards traumatic working through in Heaney's work. To prove this, a series of related figures of dynamic memory embedded in intertextuality proper will be scrutinized as follows.

In chapters 1, 2 and 3, I try to categorize the various types of multidirectional stories that can be found in Heaney's work also emphasizing the functions that intertextuality plays in creating these typologies. In chapter 1, I will focus on some of Heaney's "object poems". I designate as "object poems" Heaney's works which start out as metonymical contemplations of an unidentified thing and proceed to tease out a series of meanings and associations that this object might have; these mostly connect cultural memory intertexts and sectarian violence. In part 1, the Northern/Viking motif and its multidirectional archaeologies of violence will be exemplified in "Belderg" and "Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces" from *North*. In part 2, the evolution of Heaney's "object poems" will be charted from *delirious intertextuality* in *North* towards a more flexible and dialogic type of multidirectionality in *Station Island* and *Field Work*. This will be illustrated in the poem "Sandstone Keepsake" from *Station Island*. The second chapter is devoted to tracing the inter-medial dynamics of visual memory as it passes into the verbal medium (Erll 392), namely how paintings are represented in ekphrastic poetry. In this chapter, it will be suggested that ekphrasis is a multidirectional memory practice especially suited to poetry as a genre of cultural memory. What is more, the transfer from visual to poetic media helps trigger processes of working through in Heaney's poetry. The main analytical focus will be the poem "Summer 1969" from *North* and a brief overview of Heaney's ekphrastic practices will be attempted as well. Chapter 3 will focus on the way in which some of Heaney's translations trickle into his poetry. Translation will be interpreted as a tool of cultural memory, paving the way to the later intertextual (multidirectional) engagements in Heaney's original poetry. To that end, I will be dealing with the influence of Heaney's translation of the Middle Irish legend *Buile Suibhne*

(translated as *Sweeney Astray*) on his cycle "Sweeney Redivivus" in *Station Island*. I will

compare the processes of translational identification and differentiation between the *Sweeney*

Astray translation and the "Sweeney Redivivus" cycle with the same interesting dynamics, but

this time at a transnational level, in Heaney's translations from Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

"Ugolino", Heaney's selective translation from Cantos 32 and 33 of the *Inferno,* included as

closing statement to *Field Work*, will be the analytical illustration for the latter interaction. The

way in which Dante's *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* inflect both *Field Work* and *Station Island* will be

discussed in this chapter. Additionally, the impact of Dantean modelling[2] in *Station Island* will

be briefly touched upon. Finally, Chapter 4 will shift away from a typological approach to the

symptoms of multidirectional stories in Heaney's poetry and undertake a tentative analysis of the

effects that multidirectionality might have on the poet's ethical outlook on the Troubles. In part

1, this chapter proposes that dramatic (intertextual) declarations of complicity between art and

political violence are crucially triggered through multidirectional practices. These declarations

and their subsequent deconstruction help to extend and complicate models of victimization from

the classic victim - perpetrator binomial relation, towards an ethically gray zone where

accomplices and indirect perpetration enter the stage. This complication of models of victimhood

is similar to the one described by Rothberg as a desirable effect of multidirectionality in the

conclusion to his book (295). The configuration of poetic complicity and ethical response to the

Troubles will be studied in the poem "Punishment", one of Heaney's best "Bog Poems". In part

2 of chapter 4, the manner in which multidirectionality triggers responsible mourning will be

outlined using "The Strand at Lough Beg" and its subsequent revisitation in Section VII of

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[2] Modelling refers here to Rigney's concept discussed in the introduction. For a more detailed explanation see
Rigney "The Dynamics of Remembrance: Texts between Monumentality and Morphing"

"Station Island". In this section it will be suggested that multidirectional mourning should be supplemented by Derrida's concept of "the work of mourning". Finally, in the conclusions, a few methodological suggestions about approaching intertextual poetry as emergent cultural memory will be made in light of the diverse multidirectional forays that have been undertaken. As a last note for reflection I will try to outline a few possible contributions of poetry to cultural memory.

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Introduction

Cultural Memory Debates and their Multidirectionality

In this first chapter I will provide a short overview of the concept of collective memory and the way this concept came to be understood as cultural memory. Maurice Halbwachs' theory of the social frameworks of memory is at the root of a multitude of developments in memory studies and these will be briefly sketched summarily. I will then proceed to outline two of the major debates that are currently ongoing in Memory Studies by looking at the work of Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney. These will be framing my in depth-analysis of Michael Rothberg's concept of multidirectional memory, which serves as a red-thread for my project. This chapter will serve as the bedrock of the subsequent close readings of Heaney's poetry and will motivate my choice of using Michael Rothberg's theory as a test-case in this investigation about how memory travels in poetry. At the end I will briefly consider the challenges that one faces in studying poetry specifically as a medium for cultural memory.

The Many Cultural Memory Afterlives of Maurice Halbwachs

Any discussion in the field of Memory Studies nowadays is generally indebted to the pioneering work of Maurice Halbwachs from the 1920s onwards. Inspired by Bergson's concept of subjective time which meant that memory was conditioned by variable personal experience of it, as well as by Durkheim's contentions that memory depends on the structures of organization in a society (Olick 154), Halbwachs came up with the notion that individual recollection is formed through the various types of sociological frames of the collectives one belongs to such as the family, the occupational group, the national group, the religious affiliations. These collectives provide schemata by which the content of individual recollection takes shape. The processes by

which memory becomes articulated from the individual to the public sphere and is filtered

through available social schemata are defined by Halbwachs as *mémoire collective*. Halbwachs

did not conceive of collective memory as a homogeneous and unitary embodiment of memory;

rather, he stressed the multiple social frameworks that impact individual memories (Olick 157).

Memory schemata impact the individual mind by selecting highlights of recollection; individual

memory is subsequently shared and debated within the groups that the person is a member of; it

is further validated or tailored to the existing values and ideas about the past of the particular

group without being based primarily on "lived experience", but more on cultural icons. "Groups

themselves," Halbwachs shows, "also share *publicly articulated images of collective past*" (156)

and group-specific mythologies. Collective memory is not a subsumption of individual

memories, but derives from at least bidirectional contacts and interactions with the past whose

dynamics can be explained by the intersection of the various networks of memberships

individuals are part of. Halbwachs' innovative ideas had a great impact among the members of

an elite research group of sociologists and anthropologists before the Second World War, but the

interest in this type of method of research dwindled after 1945. Halbwachs' theory is very

important to this dissertation because it underlines the multiplicity of memory discourses and

socially mediated views of the past which determine the formation of a literary text. The idea

that an individual can belong to a number of groups with intersecting or divergent views also

encourages a new cosmopolitan current in memory studies. Studying how literary texts as

embodiments of cultural memory move across borders or groups and circulate to new, radically

different contexts is vital to theorizing cultural discourse in a globalizing world.

Significantly, even earlier than our era of globalization, Halbwachs' theories about collective

memory being formed within shared frameworks had a consistent echo. In the late 1970s and

1980s both the advent of poststructuralist theories aiming to deconstruct the mechanisms of subjectivity and the so-called narrative turn in historical studies were supported by Halbwachs' synthesis of collective memory processes. Hayden White's *Metahistory* (1975), for example, set out to prove that history-writing is also informed by rhetorical narrative patterns and that most historical discourse is shaped by certain collective political or emotive agendas which undermine the claim that objectivity is necessarily consistent with historical discourse. *Metahistory* has been the subject of fierce debate over the last 30 years and has influenced memory studies immensely with its focus on subjectivity and narrativity as features of a historical text.

The next important contribution to the study of collective memory was Pierre Nora's magnum opus *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (a work in ten monumental volumes which makes up an inventory of "all" the French sites of memory). Nora highlighted and explained the connection between national identity, its memory practices and objects of recollection. Nora's focus on national identity clusters of commonplaces, sites of commemoration (museums, cathedrals, cemeteries), cultural artifacts (such as literary texts, monuments, inheritance) or memorial practices and the way they are perceived by society was groundbreaking. The *lieux de mémoire* were conceived as intermediate points between memory and history (which Nora conceives as radically opposed[1]) whose crucial function was to facilitate the connection between a national group and its past through artistic and performative practices (these are intensely investigated

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[1] The opposition between memory and history remains a debated topic. Nora sees history as divorced from the experience of "ordinary people". History for him is institutionalized and dead, normative and monological, whereas he attributes to memory a sort of democracy, spontaneity and an inextricable connection to preserving the vitality of the past and the everyday perception of reality. For Nora memory is always a counterdiscourse to history.Rigney notes that this is sort of oppositional thinking might lead to a new type of foundationalism glorifying memory without keeping in mind the extent to which memory is also mediated and "inauthentic" as it involves processes of distortion as well as acts of rememberance proper ("Portable" 366).

nowadays[2]). While making good use of Halbwachs' theories of memory construction using the nation as a collective framework of memory, Nora's focus on memory and national identity, misses out on the idea that frameworks of memory should be conceived of as multiple and that they are not necessarily cohesive or homogeneous at a national level. Another feature eschewed by Nora's analysis is the extent to which *lieux de mémoire* need not be tied to a geographic location but can be mobile. For instance , a novel could also become a portable lieu de mémoire[3] or a monument could "attract" memories from a different national space than originally intended[4]. When explaining processes of remembrance and their connection to material culture in the field, Nora insists on the memory sites' positive and negative capacities. He uses them to diagnose the gradual disappearance of *milieux de mémoire* (lived environments of memory whereby traditions and ideas interact and are renewed). Nora's theory about the disappearance of lived memory is countered by a group of German researchers, this will be discussed in the paragraphs below. Nora's *lieu de mémoire* concept will be used in this dissertation to chart the extent to which intertextuality can be considered the interaction between a textual *lieu de mémoire* and a dynamic graft of new discourse.

At the beginning of the 1990s another step forward was made in the domain of collective memory studies in Germany. Aleida Assmann and Jan Assmann revisited Halbwachs' theory and coined the concept of *cultural memory* or "kulturelles Gedächtniss". This move is crucial in the field was chosen as the focus of my study. Collective memory as charted by Aleida and Jan Assmann is related to historical periodization and emphasizes the mediated character of all

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[2] See Andreas Huyssen, "Voids of Berlin", Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory*

[33] See Rigney " The Many Afterlives of Ivanhoe"

[44] For more on this see Rigney "The Dynamics of Remembrance: Texts Between Monumentality and Morphing".

memory. It is divided by Jan Assmann into communicative memory and cultural memory (126). Jan Assmann defines communicative memory as the ensemble of informal and non-normative memory discourses that circulate in a particular era in socially oral contexts. It rests on everyday communications within contemporary social frames, and is associated with oral history whose limited lifespan is of no more than four generations. Jan Assmann's communicative memory is the equivalent of Halbwachs' collective memory in its direct relation to group identity, though Assmann stresses the lack of precise organization and the proteic, "lived" character of collective memory.

Cultural memory, the second type of collective memory, is the result of the objectivation of memory, its transformation into cultural material. When communicative memory becomes canonized and survives in the selective artistic and commemorative practices, it produces more lasting traces in the form of cultural memory. Jan Assmann claims that cultural manifestations of societies and their by-products are forms of memory and should be construed as being in power positions: the myth-making mechanisms of societies depend on them. Studying cultural memory engages with the ensemble of memory products engendered by a society or particular group from literary texts to commemorations, iconic representations and religious practices (which survive beyond the span of four generations by becoming stock objects of diverse identity groups)(Jan Assmann 130). The relative distance from everyday memory practices and the mediated character distinguishes cultural memory from communicative memory. Cultural memory clusters around fixed points in time, "fateful events", whose memory is preserved through "cultural formation" and "institutional communication" (129). Jan Assmann calls this process "crystallization" around certain "figures of memory" (monuments, literary works or practices). "Figures of memory" is a suggestive term because it describes products of cultural memory as

open to interpretation and underlines that these can be repurposed according to the "identity need" that Jan Assmann ascribes to collectives (131). My dissertation follows processes of crystallization using Seamus Heaney's poetry as a case study for cultural memory formation.

Aleida Assmann's findings about the dynamics of cultural memory complement Jan Assmann's by emphasizing the constant interaction between remembering and forgetting (whether conscious or involuntary), Processes of selection shape cultural memory patterns create norms of remembrance and determine which memories will become hegemonic. Aleida Assmann distinguishes between active and passive remembrance. She calls the active side "working memory" and insits on its great expressive potential and highly memorable features (98). Working memories circulate widely and "keep the past present" (Aleida Assmann 98) through reinterpretation and debate by "storing and reproducing the cultural capital of a society continuously recycled and reaffirmed" (100).The ensemble of working memory tropes (for example in literary texts used as a base for national identity) makes up the *canon* of cultural memory. It remains a stable point of reference to the past for a given group and is periodically reinterpreted, renewed and reappropriated for various different purposes.

In contrast, passive cultural memory or *the archive* is the repository of organized cultural representations outside canonic memory, which have the potential to be invested with new meaning (because they are not affixed in public schemata of meaning). Aleida Assmann describes archives as "the unhallowed bureaucratic space[s] of a clean and neatly organized repository" (102), while Foucault and Derrida see them as representative of the institutions which house more or less official discourses on memory[5]. They are embedded in their own

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[5] See Jacques Derrida *Archive Fever* and Michel Foucault *The Archaeology of Knowledge*

power relations, combined with processes of remembrance which can harm, censure or back up certain ideological stories. Because memory is inert in the archive[6], it needs to be interpreted by professional scholars or artists to gain contemporary meanings and enter working memory.

The processes of cultural memory formation described by Jan and Aleida Assmann are of utmost importance to this study and they provide the theoretical scaffolding on which Ann Rigney's theory of cultural memory dynamics is based on. I intend to combine Rigney's emphasis on cultural memory with Rothberg's theory based more directly on Halbwachs' *mémoire collective* and the emergence of memory in the public sphere. The Assmans provide me with the tools needed to make this connection.

Motions and Media of Memory

The concept of cultural memory as mediated is central to the work of Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney in particular and is one of the hotly debated issues nowadays. Such studies hark back to Aleida Assmann's insistence on the circulation of cultural memory from the archive to the canon, on memory as inherently mediated and on her explanation of the way tropes of working memory influence areas of cultural production (from commemorative practices to movies and literary texts)(100-104). Astrid Erll studies memory as it moves from one medium to another and analyzes the conditions under which some texts and films emerge as objects of cultural memory: some end up shaping perceptions of the past in a contemporary context, while others are forgotten. She channels Halbwachs' insights into the varied frameworks of collective remembrance and supplements Richard Grusin and Jay Bolter's theory of remediation to explain

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[6] Aleida Assmann ascribes passive memory in the archive as being situated halfway between remembrance and forgetting. Both Jeffrey Ollick (159) and Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney ("Cultural Memory" 2) also note that inert memory, memory that does not move in schemes of interpretation is liable to disappear from view.

processes of remembrance. According to Erll, figures of memory are always subject to a

"double logic of remediation" (Erll "Literature" 390) under two conditions: 1. Texts are always

pre-mediated through existing schemata of meaning and images of the past. 2. A figure of

memory becomes cultural memory precisely because it is represented time and again or

remediated in several types of media[7]. At the same time a cultural memory object which has

been remediated is marked by traces of its previous medial embodiment[8]. This premise will be

further explored in chapter 2 of the dissertation which charts the way in which paintings circulate

to another medium, from that of visual representation to that of ekphrastic poetry. In the

constitution of cultural memory objects, "figures" of memory are never unrelated or "authentic"

in a foundational sense: they achieve staying power through remediation. Nevertheless, all media

were not created equal, some "stick" (Rigney "Portable" 381) more than others and the

conditions that cause some media to exert more influence than others in the public sphere should

be scrutinized.

The factors which influence the success of a medium as powerful are: 1. the specific (intra-

medial) rhetorics of collective memory (to be scrutinized in the third chapter of the dissertation,

dedicated to translation and poetry); 2.the impact of inter-medial processes that structure it

(studied in chapter 2); 3.the collective contexts that enable certain cultural memories to emerge

(in Heaney's case, the context of the Troubles). In what concerns the intra-medial factors, Erll

concludes that literature has staying power because it "allows its readers both a first and a

second-order observation: It gives the illusion of glimpsing the past . . . and is – often at the same

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[7] Erll uses the example of the First World War and its great impact on several simultaneous as well as anachronistic
representations in novels and films and the way in which they are all more or less related

[8] For instance a book that is then adapted into a film will always keep traces of its first textual existence (Erll 392)

time – a major medium of critical reflection upon these very processes of representation." (Erll "Literature" 391). Both Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney support Hayden White's influential theory that all modes of remembrance are subject to specific strategies of emplotment. The power of premediation and remediation lies in the observable fact that the more memory circulates, the more it is solidified or stabilized as a cultural icon of an event (393). The fact that collective contexts enable certain cultural memories to emerge explains their *potential* appeal to pluri-medial networks. Much like today's social media, cultural memory needs to produce 'a hype' about itself: it needs an audience. The 'hype' and relevance to several contexts in the public sphere "channel" the reception of cultural memory and legitimate it: "'The memory-making film' and the 'memory-making novel' are made *in* and *by* the media networks surrounding them" (396). Erll's quest to prove that the "cultural mind" is also necessarily a "medial mind" also serves as important focalizer for my proposed study of intertextuality and the motions of memory in the poetry of Seamus Heaney. It is also intimately connected with Michael Rothberg's theory in the emphasis on memories in the cultural sphere as always emerging in relation to pre-existing discourse and past representations.

Aleida Assmann's emphasis on "working memory" also contributes to the changing focus from product to process as a paradigm shift[9] both in the cultural memory field and in the Humanities. The idea of process is embedded in the conception that all discourse is constructed and ensconced in complex patterns of subjectivity; this has proved very useful in many other branches of the Humanities and it is at the root of the renewed emphasis on how and why cultural memory travels.

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[9] For a more comprehensive and well-heeled analysis of this concept, see also Rigney "Dynamics" and "Plenitude"

Consequently, Ann Rigney has been concentrating on the manner in which literary texts circulate as both objects and agents of cultural memory across the ages. Her relevant, basic assumption is that the public sphere, where cultural memories emerge and are played out, is governed by a principle of scarcity: not all literary texts can become ensconced in the complex circulation processes of cultural memory. Like Erll, Rigney asserts that the more a work of memory is remediated, the more chances it has of outliving the generation that produced it and to enter cultural memory proper, or gain a a cultural "afterlife" (Rigney "Afterlives" 211). Furthermore, Rigney proposes shifting away from the idea that remembrance should be conceived as a vast 'storehouse' of memory to be recuperated from the past in view of replenishing an original plenitude of memory that has been lost. Though Rigney acknowledges that memory's past plenitude and retrievable loss is a very serviceable model for identity groups and their reliance on a certain "authenticity" of memory to legitimate them, in order to prevent abuses, memory might be better served by a "social-constructivist model that takes as its starting point the idea that memories of a shared past are collectively constructed and reconstructed in the present rather than resurrected from the past" (Rigney "Plenitude" 14). Rigney proposes that cultural memory should be considered *vicarious recollection* for this reason: all cultural memory is the product of representations and not of a word-for-word transposition from 'lived experience' (15).The vicariousness of cultural memory shall be taken up as a working concept in chapter 3.

This concept coincides with the insights that psychology has contributed to the study of individual memory: that there is no simple and direct "recording" of memory without a measure of interpretation and hardy principles of selection. It indicates that it is almost impossible to draw a straight line from individual experience in its entirety to individual memory, let alone to

collective representations of memory which are even more selective and subject to complex processes of circulation and shaping. Just as individual memory, collective memory is constructed, inherently mediated and intensely affected by social frameworks (which provide principles of selection and narrative patterns). Cultural (collective) memory is even more likely to be repeatedly mediated (cf. Erll "Literature" 390), therefore less amenable to claims of "authenticity" and "lived memory". According to Rigney, not every memory which emerges in the public sphere can become cultural memory proper. Not only is cultural memory constructed, highly structured and highly selective (cf. Jan Assmann 130) but it is invoked for utilitarian purposes: it is always oriented towards present agendas and interests. This makes the romantic idea of an "authentic" past resurrected from the archive in order to unite a historical group unsustainable, and it shifts the focus from opposition between history and memory to the processes that enable the circulation of cultural memory, its patterns of influence and its formation. This shift is particularly useful to study the various types of intertextual appropriations present in Heaney's poetry and to some extent frees the researcher from the shackles of "the anxiety of influence" by accepting influence as the norm.

Ann Rigney singles out five traits of cultural memory resulting from the principle of scarcity that governs it: "[the principle of scarcity] affects the selectivity of recall, the convergence of memories, recursivity in remembrance, the recycling of models of remembrance and memory transfers" (Rigney "Plenitude" 16)[10]. The tendency of public acts of recollection to converge and coalesce that Rigney stresses is important for this project. A *lieu of mémoire* is a point of reference for society at large therefore it might attract several other geographically unrelated discourses which cluster around it for their own purposes. They adopt its models and associate

with it in order to be legitimated - the site of memory then becomes multilayered. The idea of recursivity implies that the repertoire of cultural memory is limited in order to maximize the impact of certain memories over others. Acts of cultural memory, Rigney contends, need past cultural models to trigger them and oftentimes depend on rebuilding, recycling, repurposing and reframing those models to allow for new insights: the repertoire of cultural memory is limited, yet multipurpose. Memories activated from the archive supporting new groups and distinctive experience from the canonical mainstream often emerge as "counter-memory" discourses and define themselves in opposition to influential models of the past. Nevertheless, these discourses still use the past frames as reference to what is being countered and are constructed by means of "mnemonic technologies and memorial forms" currently available (24). Rigney makes an important (but related observation) is also vital to my thesis: "This means among other things that the pasts of particular groups are given cultural shape and expression in relation to each other, and that models of remembrance may be exchanged among groups with a similarly marginalized position within the public sphere" (24). Rigney calls this feature of cultural memory translation and transfer. Transfer also expresses the possibility of acts of remembrance to foster sympathies for other unrelated communities, groups and plights than are normally visible in national public sphere. Literary texts, Rigney argues, are more liable to participate in these dynamics because of their inherent portability and expressive capabilities. Translation and its transfers will be approached in chapter 3.

Of all the features that Rigney enumerates I find convergence and transfer the most useful concepts because they are both crucial steps in comprehending that cultural memories never emerge in isolated contexts and are not genetically owned by certain national groups, but subject to a sort of memorial bricolage: they are constantly influenced by the discourses circulating in

the world at large. Even though nationalistic ideologies create the illusion of originality and authenticity, they ceaselessly borrow and re-purpose past frames of memory. This type of bricolage often happens by means of intertextuality. Figures of memory are so potent precisely because of their ability to start and participate in several discussions: processes of intertextuality could be considered "figures of memory" because they revisit and re-activate past cultural memory artifacts. The notion of intertextuality will play a significant role in my study precisely because it means to interrogate the ways in which literary texts make use of past frames of memory. Curiously, though, the manner in which intertexts interact with those frames is quite underexplored in memory studies.

Rigney posits that literary texts are particularly interesting to cultural memory dynamics because they can be conceived as *portable monuments*. Monumentality implies that certain texts come to provide "fixed points" of reference for a particular era or event. As fixed common points of reference some literary texts become sites of memory. These are not as dependent on the dimension of geographical location as Nora's fixed *lieux de mémoire*. Literary texts have an inherent capacity of "memorability" given by their ability to offer both aesthetic and ethical pleasure, and, because they are easy to reproduce (i.e. reprint, recycle), they have greater durability than a monument per se (Rigney "Portable" 383). Owing to their transportability and expressive capabilities literary texts are more likely to be appropriated into new contexts and reinvested with new (often radically different) meanings. Arguably, they have a certain privileged position in terms of circulation over other types of writing which are subject to stricter rules of fidelity and emplotment.

Moreover, Rigney further qualifies literary texts as being defined both by their *potential monumentality* (as shown above) and by *continuous morphing* as cultural memory agents. The

position between landmark of cultural memory revered and commemorated, and that of agent of

cultural memory influencing subsequent remembrance in an active manner is an important

feature inflecting my study of intertextuality in the work of Seamus Heaney. My thesis will chart

the way in which foreign and Irish cultural remembrance interacts and transforms perceptions of

the Troubles in the poetry of Heaney. As such Heaney's poetry makes use of the monumentality

of certain texts all the while repurposing them to his own poetic means, thinking the present

through models of the past. Rigney explains that "literary texts continuously morph into many

other cultural products that recall, adapt and revise them both in overt and indirect ways"

("Dynamics" 349). As a result of their position between monuments and agents, Rigney singles

out five inter-related roles that texts can play as carriers of cultural memory (350-2). Literary

texts can act as *relay stations* for cultural memory; they can help *stabilize* certain periods in the

collective imaginary and provide frames for future remembrance based on the "memorable"

representations they offer; they might act as *catalysts* for the emergence of new memory

discourses. A question that my study addresses is whether Heaney's many intertextualities can

act as catalysts in diversifying public discussion of the Troubles or not. Texts can become *objects*

of recollection themselves in other media of commemoration by entering into new and

unexpected contexts. Finally, they can also be *calibrators* of taste. Rigney asserts that texts can

become benchmarks for critical reflection "on dominant memorial practices". Certain canonical

texts can become vehicles for new and often radically opposed views by appropriation through

postmodern bricolage. Authors of the 21st century (and not only[11]) rewrite and refashion highly

influential past texts that have jolted cultural imagination: "The result is a critical form of

cultural remembrance that is arguably different to artistic practices whereby writers exploit the

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[11] Henry Fielding, Laurence Sterne and Miguel Cervantes are frequent contenders

monumentality and malleability of earlier works in order to reflect critically on those earlier accounts and the memory they have shaped" (Rigney "Dynamics 352). Intertextuality understood as the dynamic relationship that obtains between established literary texts (which act both as monuments and agents of cultural memory) and the roles they play in the emergence of new literary texts with the potential of becoming cultural memory is the focus of my study. Ann Rigney's description of the dynamics of texts as agents and objects of cultural memory as well as Michael Rothberg's theory of multidirectional memory are my starting points for addressing how memory travels in poetry and how intertextuality shapes the poetry of Heaney.

An additional debate that is emerging in the field is the new focus on world memory. The many types of cultural memory dynamics and the repeated mediations that these entail are amongst the most influential debates in cultural memory studies, yet in recent years a focus on how memories travel across national and European borders is noticeable. This has been influenced on the one hand by the renewed emphasis on World Literature in Comparative Literature departments and the need to think outside and beyond Eurocentric, nationalistic or Western canons of cultural memory. On the other hand, it is motivated by the accelerating flows of globalization, the postcolonial thematic in literary theory and an enormous corpus of literature produced by migrants. A surge of theories about cosmopolitanism and transnational justice should be noted in connection to problems of globalization and the accelerated movement of population. Thinking literature in nationalistic terms no longer seems sufficient to encompass this wealth of writing. It is within this framework that Michael Rothberg's study on the contact between seemingly disparate memories from different spaces with the memory of the Holocaust comes into being.

Al l roads need not lead to Rome - *Multidirectional Memory*

Michael Rothberg's 2009 book *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* also participates in the debates that Rigney and Erll take up by attempting to chart the complex motions of memories as they come into contact in the public sphere. Rothberg proposes that emergent public memory is always the result of comparative work and should not be solely conceived as a bid to eliminate all other discourses of memory available by crowding them out. Similarly to Ann Rigney's argument that cultural memory is constructed with a particular agenda by groups, Rothberg rejects the claims of absolute singularity and authenticity of memory as the engines of memory creation. By acknowledging that memory is not unidirectional, that its trajectory is not always a straight line from "authenticity" of experience to faithful textual representation (implied by certain brands of identity politics), Rothberg claims that movements of memory and articulation work in more mysterious and sinuous ways which he describes as *multidirectional*: "Against the framework that understands collective memory as competitive memory – as a zero-sum struggle over scarce resources, I suggest that we consider memory as multidirectional: as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing, as productive, not privative" (3).

One of the questions that shape Rothberg's study is to see what happens when two memories with strong implications for the present come into contact. Rothberg rejects the idea that mutual competition is the only relation that obtains between separate public remembrance discourses. Viewing the public sphere as a boxing ring populated with winners and losers is unproductive: Rothberg insists that the more complex and cosmopolitan gestures of cultural memory become obscured by such attitudes whereas the logic of memory is simplified to an oppositional logic of conflict. Instead of foregrounding deadlocks and stalemates in memory, Rothberg chooses to view memory as agentive and inherently comparative. Rothberg's

suggestion that the manner in which memories cross each other's paths in the public sphere should be conceived as productive falls in line with Rigney's and Erll's ideas about cultural memory as a dynamic process and particularly with Aleida Assmann's concept of "working memory". This also entails that memory does not exist in septic isolation from other contemporary discourses and it supports Halbwachs' insight that memory is formed within shared frames.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the definition that Rothberg adopts to define memory (volunteered by Richard Terdiman) rests on two important assumptions: 1. "that memory is a contemporary phenomenon … while concerned with the past, [it] happens in the present;" (4) in other words, memory is created with present purposes in mind, with retrospective criteria of organization, rather than by recuperating an original plenitude and, 2. "that memory is a form of work, working through, labor, or action" (4). The latter implies that memory is rooted in practices and characterized by agency, as well as by structures of mourning (coming to terms with the past in an active, responsible way). The second part of his definition of memory is closely aligned with Rigney's emphasis on the need for a social-constructivist approach to cultural memory studies: memory is formed according to criteria of usefulness to present contexts. Rothberg's insistence on the "directionality" of public memory suggests that intentionality is at the root of cultural remembrance, however his emphasis on the multiple directions that memory moves in also indicates that some of the moves that memory makes in the public sphere might take unexpected forms[12].

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[12] Rothberg hopes that some of the effects of the intersections of memory in the public sphere might be gestures of unexpected solidarity

Both Rothberg and Rigney acknowledge the constructedness of memory and identity and the complex dynamics that these two are caught within. To this end, Rothberg's model aims to complicate the relationships between memory and identity by placing emphasis on the multidirectionality that characterizes them. He urges that memory and identity should not be conceived as direct correspondents of one another and that the idea of identity should not be limited to exclusionary processes eliminating all manner of "elements of alterity and forms of commonality" (5). Instead, he contends that the relationships groups have with their pasts do not determine their present in a straightforward or predictable manner and calls attention to the unexpected consequences that connect the members of a certain identity group to what they consider "other" (5). By allowing for multidirectional dynamics and their intercultural and productive outlook on identity, Rothberg expresses the hope that "new forms of solidarity and new visions of justice" could be come about (5). This is yet another question that I will explore in my analysis of Seamus Heaney's intertextualities. Do comparative intersections with alterity elicit surprising forms of solidarity and the extension of ethical systems or are they pretexts to sweep traumas closer to home under foreign rugs?

Rothberg's model of multidirectional memory is also inflected by Trauma Theory and the way in which memory of collective victimization plays out in the public sphere, hence the strong focus on processes of mourning and working through. I consider the joint background of Trauma Studies and Memory Studies a plus in terms of theory as Rothberg successfully bridges the gap between the individual subjectivities of trauma and the collective socio-historical focus of cultural memory. As Seamus Heaney's poetry is not just poetry within culture, but also poetry in times of civil war, Rothberg's approach is potentially illuminating to the mechanisms which

govern poetic thinking in times of postcolonial crisis on the one hand, and on the other it will try to chart the collective dissemination and circulation of poetry as cultural memory.

Rothberg contextualizes his approach to post 1945 traumatic reality as an indictment to discourses of uniqueness which tend to isolate traumatic memory from other related traumas in a cone of sublime unspeakability which paradoxically pander to the model of competitive memory. His study compares the relationships between the evolving memory of the Holocaust and histories of slavery and postcolonial struggles. Because genocide and several other major traumatic events of the modern world are viewed as exceptional occurrences that fall outside of the scope of regular ethics, attempts to draw comparisons between them have been constantly criticized in the media and through this type of understanding they came to be viewed as constantly contending for the title of "world's worst trauma". Just as Rigney's warning that oppositional logics may lead to undesirable foundationalist thinking, Rothberg seems to suggest that at the heart of discourses of collective memory and victimization there are also acts of comparison, rather than only static confrontations about who has a right to more space of articulation. A competitive model based on discourses of uniqueness cannot faithfully represent a complete understanding of twentieth century traumas because it creates hierarchies of suffering (which Rothberg qualifies as morally offensive) on the one hand, and at the same time it makes suffering less real by removing it from the field of historical agency and ascribing it to a traumatic sublime (which is both intellectually suspect and morally dubious) (9).

Rothberg asserts that instead of looking at memory as competing for public turf it is more useful to look at the way memories help articulate each other and the varied interactions

that they have[13]. He studies how discourses of the Holocaust emerged after the Second World War as a result of the dissolution of empires, and how Holocaust discourse later helped articulate late postcolonial quandaries. It is the model of mutual articulation that I find particularly interesting in Rothberg's work, the idea that some discourses of cultural memory help articulate present quandaries of memory that are just being crystallized in writing as potentially part of cultural memory (whether archival or working memory depending on their subsequent influence). I conceive of mutual recognition and articulation as a key aim in analyzing public memory comparatively[14]. Nevertheless, I wonder whether the dynamics that Rothberg describes work in the same way if the Holocaust is removed from the equation. Studies taking up Rothberg's bet have been proving how fruitful and diverse the tapestry of gestures of comparison between the Holocaust and other postcolonial quandaries has been over the past 50 years, yet I wonder what happens when multidirectional dynamics are applied to a space where the impact of the Holocaust and the Second World War was minimal (such as Northern Ireland[15]). Heaney's many references to other histories of suffering and turf wars do not generally make use of the Holocaust. Does Rothberg's model change when the focus of memory discourses is on civil war, rather than histories of victimization? This is my main research question for this lengthy project.

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[13] As a test case for the complex dynamics of articulation in the public sphere, Rothberg first investigates the formation of early Holocaust memory (pre-Eichmann trials) and its crystallization which occurred with the help of several other traumatic events articulated in the wake of the Second World War. In the latter part of his book, however, Rothberg addresses the way in which later postcolonial genocides have become more visible thanks to the enormous impact of the Holocaust as a cause célèbre

[14] This is also supported by Rothberg's many illuminating and informative case studies

[15] Ireland was neutral in the Second World War and Northern Ireland was not so dramatically affected by it, nor did it deport Jews or participate in the Holocaust (although Hitler did have plans to invade Ireland and attack Britain from a closer strategic point than France).

To explain how articulations of multidirectional memory work, Rothberg adapts Freud's notion of "screen memories" – a set of constructed "happy" memories covering up a deep childhood trauma – to veer away from a range of individual safe recollections and into a collective and historical provocative usage (although this is never "divorced from the individuals and their biographies either" (14)). The concept of multidirectional memory indebted to "screen memories" is useful to Rothberg's project by its focus on the complex temporal relations that obtain between the screen memory and the as yet inarticulate (or partly articulate) traumatic one. Rothberg puts the concept of screen memory at the center of his theory because he considers that the screen conceived multidirectionally is no longer merely a cover-up, or a way to evade the past, but it becomes semi-transparent: it can both hide and reveal an underlying trauma. Rothberg does not conceive of the screen as a comfortable memory, he asserts that more distant discourse on trauma can be considered a screen for problematic memory closer to home. At the same time, he asserts that if the idea of a screen that both hides and reveals, and, more importantly, connects disparate discourses of trauma is conceived in less pathological terms and comes to be seen as part of normal healthy associative phenomena of memory mediation, then the relational nature of cultural memory can become apparent: "Awareness of the inevitability of displacement and substitution in acts of remembrance points toward the need both to acknowledge the conflicts that subtend memory and work toward a rearticulation of historical relatedness beyond paradigms of uniqueness" (14)[16]. The notion of the screen as multidirectional is another

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[16] There are, of course differences between the notion of screen memory and the concept of multidirectional memory. Whereas multidirectional memory is a constructed relation and it is concerned with collective articulations of memory, screen memory is conceived by Freud as "real", individual and biographical. Whereas a screen memory is a comfortable memory covering up a disturbing past, multidirectional memory "frequently juxtaposes two or more disturbing memories and disturbs every day settings" (14).

important trait of Rothberg's theory and it fits very well with Heaney's intertextual walkabouts in depicting The Troubles.

Rothberg's conception of collective memory is closer to Halbwach's idea that memory is constructed within social frameworks of memory (which also implies 'lived' experience per se) than to Assmann's emphasis on cultural memory. Rothberg defines collective memory apud Halbwachs as being simultaneously individual and collective: "while individual subjects are the locus of the act of remembrance, those individuals are imbued with the frameworks of the collectives in which they live" (15). While Jan Assmann defines cultural memory as a crystallization of communicative memory[17]. Although it still stores the fossilized structures of group memory, it is more or less divorced from the individual 'lived' dimension of collective memory. The slightly different emphasis is due to the fact that Rothberg studies the mechanisms of emerging (cultural) memory where boundaries between communicative and cultural memory are slightly blurred. While Rothberg's study concentrates on post 1945 memory, Jan Assmann uses wider expanses of time, hence the need for more general mechanisms. At a first glance, Rothberg's suggestion that the public sphere need not be conceived as too limited to allow two strong discourses in the spotlight seems opposed to Rigney's contention about the logic of scarcity governing cultural memory, but this is another corollary of the way in which Rothberg defines memory. Rigney works less with the emergence of a text as a potential subject of cultural memory[18], but with already established "monuments" of cultural memory. Rothberg, on the other hand, is more concerned with the mechanisms of emerging memory and its use of

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[17] It was noted earlier that Assmann's notion of communicative memory is closer to the way in which Halbwachs conceives of his particular brand of collective memory

[18] Although the role of literary texts as cultural memory catalysts is hinted at by her in "Dynamics of Remembrance" and it is also taken up in her article "The Many Afterlives of Ivanhoe"

cultural memory artifacts. For my project, Rothberg's theory of emergent memory is more relevant to the interaction between past cultural artifacts and present crisis conditions in Heaney's work, whereas Rigney's theory will serve as a tool to analyze the incarnations or afterlives of the intertexts Heaney uses.

It is worth noting that Rothberg's study focuses on literary texts, geographical sites of memory and visual art as the locus of the many multidirectional case studies, but neglects to focus on the type of multidirectional stories that could emerge. Literary and philosophical writing make up the bulk of his study therefore it is surprising that intertextuality is not explicitly spelled out as a form of multidirectionality. Conversely, Renate Lachmann calls literature the memory of culture and intertextuality the dynamic process through which culture rewrites and reshapes itself (301). As such, my study chooses to take intertextuality as a particularly multidirectional tool with a potential to explain the dynamics of world memory. Intertextuality in Heaney's work often takes the form of invoking texts from distinct and disparate cultural spaces, thus illuminating one of the ways in which literary memory travels across national borders and over the ages. At the same time, intertextuality may be the locus of the unexpected solidarities and cosmopolitan acts that Rothberg aims for in his research of the relations obtaining between texts. By focusing on the relation between emerging cultural memory and established or archival cultural memory artifacts, intertextuality provides unique perspectives on what happens when two or more texts come into contact. It is my contention that in order for literary cultural memory to gain more visibility in the public sphere and come up with more sophisticated assessments of complicated political quandaries it often makes use of intertextual journeys to create an additional thinking space. Another interesting trait I hope to study would be what gets lost in translation when they are appropriated into new contexts, but also, as David Damrosch would put

it, what is gained in translation (Damrosch 281-303). Is there a mutually transformative interaction between the poetic mind and the intertext? By using both Rothberg's theory of textual interaction and Rigney's insight into the afterlives of texts one gains a complex model to study Heaney's poetry and the agentivity of cultural memory intertexts in chapter 3.

Last but not least, I have chosen to focus on poetry because a lot of cultural memory research in literary studies seems to be concerned with narratives in prose especially on the novel as a dynamic figure of cultural memory. Rigney studies the novels of Sir Walter Scott, Erll the connection between the novel and film adaptations, Rothberg uses mostly novels and non-fiction to illustrate his theory - there is considerable focus on memorial practices and monuments as well as spaces of commemoration, yet poetry seems to be scarcely present in debates on contemporary dynamic cultural memory. Another interesting lacuna is that poetry, when it is studied, is mostly approached within national literature frames of reading. This is curious since poetry, like novels is richly referential and it also travels intertextually past national borders. Heaney's poetry encapsulates both local and regional rural identities and constantly references various (urban or pastoral) traditions of European poetry. It stages various types of transnational and translocal dialogues that are very amenable to the idea of poetic memory being multidirectional and dynamic. Besides testing Rothberg's concept of multidirectional memory in poetry, this study also hopes to assess what are the cultural memory tools that are most useful in approaching poetry as an object and agent of memory.

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Chapter 1
Heaney's Object Poems:
Northern Etymologies, Northern Archaeologies, and Softer Option Intertextualities

This chapter will scrutinize two types of intertextuality present in Heaney's work, specifically in what I call "object poems". "Object poems" in *North* are contemplations of initially undefined objects which exfoliate archaeologically the multiple intertextual echoes, whether cultural, linguistic or historical as a strategy to fend off narrow-minded views of the sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland. Heaney explores the relatedness of memory discourses and traditions of violence by ascribing several objects which could be mythified as typically Ur-Irish to transnational spaces and a sort of archaeological Northern European tribal/Viking inheritance. Behind the Viking/Northern European screen comparisons, the contemporary state of turmoil in Northern Ireland is articulated and percolated as an implicit comparison. The language of the poems and the way in which the objects are presented seems to suggest experiential interaction with objects under bell jars, specifically as museum exhibits coming alive through poetry. Consequently, the importance of the museal gaze to Heaney's *North* is underlined as a manner of multidirectional cultural contemplation. In *Station Island* "object poems" reappear, but this time their presentation is less archaeological and more concerned with texture and tactile experience as exemplified by the preoccupation with metals and stones in the cycle "Shelf Life". The "object poems" in *Station Island* are also different from the ones in *North* because they take a less deconstructive stance on intertextual interaction. Whereas "Belderg" and "Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces" seem to suffer from what I will call *delirious multidirectionality*, "Sandstone Keepsake" is limited to two overt foreign intertexts, which it acknowledges by citation or direct

reference and proceeds to discuss self-reflexively their appropriatness to the Northern Irish predicament.

In my analysis of *North* I am indebted to Helen Vendler, who defines the volume as an archaeological search for deeper identity amidst the sectarian violence unfolding in the late '60s (39). Vendler also reads Heaney's persona in *North* as the voice of a comparative archaeologist, yet she contends that in later volumes this mask ceased to provide a satisfactory (active) answer to Heaney's quandaries of representing the Troubles (87). The separation from the North provided the poet with a multitude of alter egos (88) (Sweeney, for example) who were cheekier and less afraid of autobiographic subjectivity and also liable to intensified intertextual interactivity.This chapter will only begin to outline the shift in persona, which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3. Furthermore, I also take several cues from Eugene O'Brien's *Seamus Heaney and the Place of Writing*, and his inspiring ethical/deconstructive reading of *North* as a pluralizing point of articulation in order to describe the Northern politics of intertextuality more accurately.

Northern Intertextual Exposure

I consider *North* to be the apex of Heaney's early poetry because of its archaeological explorations in the causes and voices of The Troubles[1]. Not only does it delineate a few glimpses of what working through may ideally entail, but it sometimes reads as an anthropological study in how competitive voices of violence gain prominence in the public sphere. It presents a reader of poetry with dramatic monologues which can be read as cautionary tales about the ways in which one can become bogged down into narrow-minded competitive discourses. Heaney's first

two volumes *Death of a Naturalist* and *Door into the Dark* are more descriptive and ready to

explore the rural, bleak everyday life of farmers in Northern Ireland. *Wintering Out* starts to

timidly and indirectly approach the Troubles, often seeming passively aggressive in its anti-

colonial interludes interspersed with poems of paralysis and rural unrest. Heaney's early poems

are also not so consciously intertextual, sparking fewer dialogues with foreign, worldly or

cosmopolitan spaces. In contrast, *North*, manages to go beyond the Dylan Thomas-like rural

setting and dig deep into the ground for signs of alterity, or, as Heaney puts it in "Bogland", –

finding proofs that "Every layer [he strips]/ seems camped on before" (*Door into the Dark* 44).

Earlier poems trying to diagnose the unrest in Northern Ireland were also more inward-looking;

they sketched the roots of the colonial problem, presenting silent vignettes of victims of anti-

colonial revolts and imperialist figures, for example Edmund Spenser, shown in a bitterly

polemic light. However, by only relying on the space of Northern Irish politics and its colonial

problem to explain the armed conflict which erupted in the 1960s, one risks to give credence to

the inevitability of such postcolonial problems. Heaney's pluralizing *North* (O'Brien 65) comes

up with a possible multidirectional antidote to the navel-gazing binaries instilled by civil war in

adversarial, atavistic violence. *North* traces the need to diversify and read the civil war through

what seem to be unrelated figures of tribal and Neolithic Northern Europe. Its poetry suggests, as

it were, that understanding the conflict requires a multidirectional perspective. In adding the

multidirectional layer of reference, Heaney creates a supplementary space that may enable new

visions of justice to emerge in the future, while also providing wider and more diverse

perspectives on a conflict that often suffers from intrinsic short-sightedness (or narcissism[2]).

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[2] According to Freud one of the reasons of discontent in modern civilization is its inability to transcend the
narcissism of minor differences as a myopic affliction that leads to violence (52-9). This is precisely what Heaney is

North came out in 1975 at a time when the first cease-fire had been declared after the initial wave of sectarian violence which gradually intensified from 1969 to 1974[3]. This standstill would not last and the intermittent paramilitary warfare continued even during the ceasefire and the subsequent IRA truce. Caught in the middle full-fledged civil war, Heaney makes one of his first moves to find a voice for reckoning with this sudden outburst of violence. To analyze the moves of this new voice in *North*, namely its cultural mediation through archaeological and etymological multidirectionality, a comparison is in order here. *Wintering Out* had been a desperate attempt to use lyrical poetry to wish away the mounting violence and hide within a cultivated peace by weathering out the conflict. This strategy eventually proved ineffective, however. In *North*, Heaney explores several voices involved in the conflict by resorting to diverse media of memory and forms of response.

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fighting against throughout his career: without reducing his poems to impersonal views from above, he nevertheless acknowledges how "bogged" we are in the rejection of our neighbour.

[3] For additional information on the IRA cease-fire in December 1974 and the IRA Truce declared in January 1975 see CAIN (http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/truce/sum.htm)

Belderg

'They just kept turning up
And were thought of as foreign' -
One-eyed and benign,
They lie about his house,
Quernstones out of a bog.

To lift the lid of peat
And find this pupil dreaming
Of neolithic wheat!
When he stripped off blanket bog
The soft-piled centuries

Fell open like a glib:
There were the first plough-marks,
The stone-age fields, the tomb
Corbelled and turfed and chambered,
Floored with dry turf-coomb.

A landscape fossilized,
Its stone-wall patternings
Repeated before our eyes
In the stone walls of Mayo.
Before I turned to go

He talked about persistence,
A congruence of lives,
How stubbed and cleared of stones,
His home accrued growth rings
Of iron, flint and bronze.

So I talked of Mossbawn,
A bogland name. 'But *moss*?'
He crossed my old home's music
With older strains of Norse.
I'd told how it foundation

Was mutable as sound
And how I could derive
A forked root from that ground,
Make *bawn* an English fort,
A planter's walled-in mound,

Or else find sanctuary
And think of it as Irish
Persistent if outworn.
'But the Norse ring on your tree?'
I passed through the eye of the quern,

Grist to an ancient mill
And in my mind's eye I saw
A world-tree of balanced stones,
Querns piled like vertebrae,
The marrow crushed to grounds.

(*North* 4-5)

Hence in "Belderg", the fourth poem of *North*, the poet examines language as an archaeological tool which can reveal the complex traces and inheritances of Hiberno-English and Ulster English: they range from Old and Middle English, to Irish and Old Norse. The poet's etymological reconstructions are not stable and definitive, but tentative and shifting. They do not allow for oversimplification and simple patterns of oppositional thinking, although they do hint at traumatic linguistic colonization. Belderg or Belderrig is a village in County Mayo, home to a unique archaeological site called the Ceide Fields, where a village dating back from approximately 3000 B.C. was uncovered in the 1930s. This initial setting reinforces the idea of archaeology as a central trope to Heaney's poetry in *North*.

"Belderg" starts with an image of Neolithic mill-stones or querns found in a peat bog whose origin was deemed foreign when described by an unindentified speaker:

'They just kept turning up

And were thought of as foreign' –

One-eyed and benign,

They lie about his house,

Quernstones out of a bog. ("North" 4, emphasis added)

This poem's premise is that an archaeological dig might not uncover origins, but alterities or traces of different civilizations, rather than validate a fixed national identity. Archaeology could, then, hope to transcend "the narcissism of minor differences"(Freud 52-9) practiced by the

violent rhetoric of The Troubles. This small initial gesture of defamiliarization seems indicative

of the multidirectional approach of the second part of the poem. It proves what Pierre Nora and

Jan Assmann noted: that, though, cultural memory is generally predicated around objects and

rituals which validate group identity these objects have the ability to be interpreted in several,

even contradictory, ways (8)(129). The mill-stone in question had surprisingly not yet been

considered part of an ahistorical past of national identity, still the past tense of the verb 'to think'

might indicate that this is no longer the case. It is used to point to an intensification of the binary

opposition between Catholics and Protestants in 1960s Ulster. Sophia Hillan identifies the first

speaker in "Belderg" as possibly Michael McLaverty, Heaney's headmaster and colleague at St.

Thomas School in Belfast (Hillan 92). McLaverty, also a writer, had penned a cycle of short

stories in which he explored the Old Norse inflection of certain place names in Northern Ireland

and their impact on Hiberno-English. In "Belderg", after a brief fantasy of uncovering a

Neolithic landscape under the "foreign" quern[4], the first speaker describes his own origins thus:

> He talked about persistence,
>
> A congruence of lives,
>
> How, stubbed and cleared of stones,
>
> His home accrued growth rings
>
> Of iron flint and bronze. (4)

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[4] Associated with the Neolithic ruins at Ceide Fields

Once the material object, the quern is removed, language remains the one vestigial testimony of the past. "Congruence" and "growth rings" are words pertaining to the vocabulary of multidirectionality; in this context they should be read as cumulative and comparative, not as the competitive equation that Rothberg warns against (18). They also suggest a concentric stratification of identity in containing various radiating influences. This is further enlarged upon in the next sections of the poem. Inspired by the image of "the home acquiring growth rings", the lyrical I asks his interlocutor (McLaverty?) about the resonances of his own home place, Mossbawn.

> So I talked of Mossbawn,
>
> A bogland name. "But *moss*?'
>
> He crossed my old home's music
>
> With older strains of Norse. (5)

As a Catholic in Northern Ireland one would expect the poet to trace the origin of his home to a Celtic etymological background that would mark the painful colonization of the Irish language by the English, while, here the first association is unexpectedly Old Norse. The speaker introduces ambiguity directly into Heaney's homeplace by adding "an older strain" of Norse into its etymological derivation which could be rightly considered a multidirectional act. 'Moss' is an old Norse word for 'swamp' which still survives in Scottish English to mean 'peat bog'[5]. This meaning adds an extra layer to the original identification of Mossbawn as "a bogland name" by

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[5] O'Brien provides a complete and convincing etymological discussion of Belderg which will serve as the basis of my own limited etymological interpretation (75-80); See also Corcoran (78) for a slightly different interpretation

crossing the archetypal bog (typical for the early Heaney) with Old Norse (which plays a role in

the formation of English, Scots and the Hiberno-English dialect of the Northern Ireland). The

bog is shorthand for sedimentation as it refuses to presuppose a singular origin, but reveals,

instead, the stratified layers of history which mark the idea of home.

Additional "growth rings" become visible through the lyrical I's remark about the dual

etymology of *bawn*: on the one hand, it can be traced to the Planter Scots "walled enclosure"

and, on the other hand, to a possible corruption of the Irish *bánn* meaning "white" or "fair" (cf.

O'Brien 75) "I'd told how its foundation was mutable as sound/ And how I could derive a forked

root from that ground"(5). Heaney uses "English fort" to describe the provenance of

'bawn'(rather than the Scots dialect of the Ulster Plantation), hence, the walled-in enclosure

comes to stand for colonization and separation from the "native" Celtic dialects behind the

exclusivity of empire (5). Irish, however, gets a similar treatment when the possibility to read

the name 'Mossbann' is described as finding "sanctuary" when thinking it "as Irish" (5). This

action is immediately qualified as "[p]ersistent, if outworn" (5), and could also stand for a

limiting and narrowing action: a sanctuary holds the same connotation of exclusive separation

and protection as the "walled-in mound" (5), yet with added religious sonority. Since the

patterns of exclusivity become more apparent, they must be coupled with the earlier assertion

that "moss" is an Old Norse word. This movement into alterity complicates origins and evokes

the jagged line between memory and identity proposed by Rothberg (18). At the end of the

stanza, distancing is given prominence and repeated by the first speaker: "But the Norse ring on

your tree?" (5).

The perspective gathered by considering Norse as an origin, as well as acknowledging the dangers of simplifying origin stories brings about a second vision for the lyrical I. In contrast to the reverie of archaeological satisfaction that was originally envisaged, it is ominous and petrified:

 And in my mind's eye saw

A world-tree of balanced stones,

Querns piled like vertebrae,

The marrow crushed to grounds. (5)

Through a subtle sound shift, the word "quern" morphs into *cairn* a Scottish Gaelic word used in English to signify a mound made of stones[6] used either as a landmark on top of mountains or to mark a tumuli grave for commemoration purposes. Isolation is signified by the idea that the marrow - which unites and relates the bones of a skeleton – has disappeared: it was "crushed to grounds". The absence of the marrow as a result of a violent pounding may caution the reader of the dangers inherent in creating grand narratives out of glimpses of foundations, which should remain as mutable and complex as sound (as it was earlier indicated). Language as hybrid memory subject to diligent and often violent[7] reconstructive archaeologies is a potent theme in

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[6] Cairns were greatly admired as feats of Neolithic engineering and the construction here could recall the walled-in sanctuary from the previous stanza

[7] "Bone Dreams" is another deconstructive love poem to the stratified nature of English through the archaeological contemplation of a bone (Heaney, *North* 19). As Jones notes, "Bone Dreams" is a poem about learning to love the English language (Jones 208).

this volume and bears the mark of Heaney's careful intertextuality (specific to *North* as opposed to the less restricted one in *Station Island*).

The underlying narrative, wary of grand totalizing gestures, is obviously rooted in cautious self-doubt, which I see as constitutive of multidirectional movements in Heaney's poetry. I have argued elsewhere[8] that, for this volume in particular, origins are constantly depicted as liquid and elusive and, if this fact is obscured, violence takes over. This hypothesis is proven in the last image of "Belderg", when the sound is no longer mutable and everything is carefully balanced, the marrow gluing together the bones disappears. The marrow as a part of the neural system can have several association to thinking and cerebral response to the Troubles which are literally blocked by the violent constructions of exclusive identity that decolonization is stirring up[9].This discursive construction corresponds to what Rothberg explains about the multidirectional screen: the Old Norse language memory is not a comfortable and pacifying refuge.

Northern Archaeologies

Moreover, in various poems of this volume, Heaney criticizes the violence and sectarianism in Northern Ireland through a consistent Viking screen of Northern European traditions of tribalism and petty violence[10] (which indirectly implies Old Norse as a linguistic substratum). In "North",

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[8] Maria Zirra "Multidirectional Memory and Self-Doubt in the Poetry of Seamus Heaney and Derek Walcott", unpublished paper presented at the Multidirectional Memory Workshop in Gent, March 27 2012.

[9] The archaeology of words that Heaney practices in "Belderg" finds many echoes in *North*: "Funeral Rites", "Kinship" and "North" also trace the usage of Old Norse words which survive unchanged in English. A similar process of etymological deconstruction takes place in "Bone Dreams" but this time it is premised on Old English. "Bone Dreams" is a deconstructive love poem to the stratified nature of English through the archaeological contemplation of a bone (*North* 19).

[10] For more on this subject see O'Brien's analyses of "North", "Bone Dreams" and "Kinship"(76-90) and Helen Vendler's chapter on *North* (38-57)

one of the Viking poems, the role of etymological deconstructions for Heaney's art is revealed.
What is more, it connects the Viking motif to the multidirectional exfoliation of language and its
Neolithic echoes from "Belderg". In a vision similar to the one closing Belderg, the "swimming
tongue" of a Viking longship (its steering device) dispenses the following advice to the poet
exasperated by the incomprehensible violence of the public sphere:

> It said: 'Lie down
>
> in the word-hoard, burrow
>
> the coil and gleam
>
> of your furrowed brain.
>
> Compose in darkness.
>
> Expect aurora borealis
>
> in the long foray
>
> but no cascade of light.
>
>
> Keep your eye clear
>
> as the bleb of the icicle
>
> trust the feel of what nubbed treasure
>
> your hands have known'. (11)

The way to steer clear of the "hatreds and behindbacks" is to let language take you to unexpected (past) places within the "word-hoard" and to strive for an objective depoliticized clarity "keep your eye clear as the bleb of the icicle". Through the screening voice of the longship[11] in commenting on the rotten tribal politics of the Vikings described in Njal's saga[12], the poet receives advice to deal with the Northern Irish predicament. Lying down in the trove of the multiple poetic vocabularies also implies that multidirectionality often leads one to extended meditations, not necessarily direct reformatory/redressing actions. It is my contention that in *North* most of the multidirectional moments do not lead to new models of justice and solidarity as Rothberg hopes but to the painstaking depiction of an expectant paralysis.

"Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces[13]" seems to communicate directly with the poem that precedes it, "North", as it takes up from the final suggestion of the ship by approaching the world at a tactile level and following the sinuous associative trajectories of language: it opens with the tactile contemplation of a museum piece made of bone. Bones in particular sustain the multidirectional skeleton of mutual articulation in "Kinship", "Bone Dreams" and "Viking Dublin:Trial Pieces" since they can conjure both the idea of human remain and that of useful raw material in the Iron Age. The suggestion of bones as part of a former human being injects the uncanny realization that they might represent former victims of violence or part of the human price paid for the present (which is made relatively clear here as well as in "Bone Dreams"). What is the

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[11] O'Donoghue calls this voice a "middle voice" in between passive and active (91)

[12] Njal's saga is a long foundational narrative in Old Norse detailing the 50-year feud between several prominent Icelandic Viking families and is characterized by an endless proliferation of bloody murders as acts of revenge (with an added emphasis on legal "revenge" judged in the Althing - the ruling court of law in Iceland). In this volume, it is referred to in several other poems such as "Funeral Rites" and "Bone Dreams"

[13] Dublin was first founded by the Vikings and only conquered by the Celtic tribes very late around the 2nd century A.D.

significance of the fact that this poem starts with the poet looking at a (Viking) a drawing made on a bone object in a museum setting (*North* 12)? The title suggests that this might be a trial piece - a prototype or drawing on softer material made to test out the design and feasibility of objects such as jewelry, weaponry, coins etc. As was the case in "Belderg", the reader is first asked to metonymically contemplate the object in several filmic close-ups of fragments, textures and associations before finally relenting and naming it in the second section (12).The poem opens with the lyrical I wondering what type of bone the object is made from, then he goes on to trace the lines that delimitate the drawing from the unused surface (*North* 12). The lines making up the plan are then compared in turn to the trajectory drawn in the air by a child's outstretched tongue as he is concentrating on the task of writing calligraphically (he might be a junior Viking carver, or a jeweller's apprentice[14]), cut to the rural image of an eel slithering back into a basket of eels. Next this morphs "as the line amazes itself" (12) into the shifting contours of a bill as it flies through the air and finally settles on the image of a ship incised in bone in the form of a "swimming nostril" (Heaney, *North* 12).

Finally, in part two the fragmented object is named: it is a Viking trial piece - the plan of a ship sculpted in bone:

> These are the trial pieces,
>
> the craft's mystery
>
> improvised on bone:
>
> foliage, bestiaries, interlacings elaborate

---

[14] See Collins (83-5)

      as the netted routes of ancestry and trade.

      That have to be magnified on display

      so that the nostril

      is a migrant prow

      sniffing the Liffey,

      swanning it up to the ford,

      dissembling itself in antler combs, bone pins,

      coins, weights, scale-pans. (12-13)

The associative trajectories of Heaney's creative processes in poetry (they could be defined as liquid contemplations) are also at the basis of his rich intertextual tapestries and illustrate in an almost metapoetic manner the processes of morphing that texts undergo in their cultural memory motions to create new contexts (Rigney "Dynamics" 351-2). Like the jeweller's apprentice, the multidirectionally working poet incises into the poetic fabric several inroads for memory. They are made into present contexts before being deepened into actual patterns. The willingness to follow the lines of the past and to decipher their associations points to art's liberating function as a symbol of cultural memory which stretches the possibilities of the word-hoard, ,

Surprisingly it is not only the tactile and the visual that are engaged in this poem about museal contemplation, but the sense of smell and the nose, too, dominate the poem in a whole range of unexpected ways. First, "the nostril is a migrant prow" compares the outline of a ship to a swimming "nostril" coming alive in Viking Dublin and sniffing the Liffey. In the subsequent image of Hamlet smelling rot in Denmark, the sense of smell is an interesting, albeit unexpected addition to the contemplation of an archaeological object projected by a magnifying glass in a sterile museum. In part two, the slang and the geography of Dublin as well as the jokey cultural wordplay seems to be reminiscent of Joyce's *Ulysses* and the later reference to "old father" in section V might recall the final lines of *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*[15]. There is a sense of artistic joy and release to allow oneself to be led by the associations of the lines - a sensation rarely felt in the claustrophobic *North*. Nevertheless, this joyful artistic archaeology is complicated when the legacy of the Vikings is scrutinized more closely and echoes of violence and excess come to the fore.

Floyd Collins remarks that the poetic archaeological memory might refer to the uncovering of several Viking objects at Wood Quay on the banks of the river Liffey in Dublin in the 1960s and to the debate which followed it questioning whether these objects needed to be stored in a museum or not (83). Collins argues that the debate was fuelled by the fact that there two prevailing images of the Vikings circulated in the public sphere - one where they are

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[15] Floyd Collins and Eugene O'Brien also note the tonality and reminiscence of Joyce in this poem (84) (82)

depicted as pillaging and plundering barbarians and another where they are seen as artisans and innovators whose impact on European art and languages can still be felt (84)[16].

In this section Heaney engages with the image of the Vikings as prolific artisans and he represents the longship as an artistic object, rather than as a performative symbol of violence (affected by "the hatreds and behindbacks hinted" at in "North"). Heaney's finesse allows him to slowly veer towards the other image of the Vikings as a ruthless pilfering bunch through a multidirectional gesture: the first image of migrant artistic prowess is not cancelled out, but complicated. The two images about the Viking past need not be intrinsincally competitive, they can coexist in Heaney's museum poem. Hence, the reverie of Viking craftsmanship turns sour in the next half of the poem by reminding us that the bone used to be part of a mysterious human being. This type of complicating comparison writes the dead body as another medium for memory. The ship and its dissembled treasure trove sniffing around the banks of the Liffey has run aground and entered archaeological memory. It has become a part of a museum landscape, no longer a migrant line, much like the Vikings who settled in Dublin, but a scuttled boat. The trajectory of the ship and its wreck on land together represented by the extant artistic depiction on the trial piece make their way into the poet's writing; "the buoyant migrant line" of the trial piece is fleshed out into a "worm of thought" which burrows deep into the ground as well.

> That enters my longhand
>
> turns cursive, unscarfing

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[16] Heaney himself confirms that several of his archaeological poems were based on actual tours of archaeological sites and meditations on the stratification of history (O'Driscoll 163). He also acknowledges the influence of a Viking Dublin Exhibition at the National Museum in Dublin in 1973 that shaped the poems with a Norse motif as well as his close relationship with the prominent archaeologist Tom Delaney (163).

a zoomorphic wake,

a worm of thought

I follow into the mud. (14)

Just as the myth of Celtic civilization seen as time of freedom by the Celtic Twilight Movement has shown its darker undersides in contemporary Northern Ireland, so does the vision of the migrant Viking ship incised on bone have deeper implications of political violence and traumatic invasion that go beyond the peaceful fantasy of the Vikings as artisans. This becomes apparent in the following sections of the poem which mark the movement to another site of memory through an intertextual relation. The lyrical I contemplating the ship stuck in the mud both figuratively and literally (olfactively, too) becomes transmogrified into another well-known Northern figure, this time it is Hamlet the Danish prince. His incurable doubt sickness emerges from the intertext:

I am Hamlet the Dane,

Skull-handler, parablist,

smeller of rot

in the state, infused

with its poisons,

pinioned by ghosts

and affections,

murders and pieties,

coming to consciousness

by jumping in graves,

dithering, blathering. (14)

It is here that the bone from the beginning of the poem turns into a skull to provide the glue for the next three meditations on the damaging heritage of violence. This particular intertextual reference is very interesting, on the one hand because it is a lot more explicit in its citation than the previous Northern etymological forays and, on the other hand, because it can be read as two simultaneous multidirectional journeys: one to Elizabethan England, through the reference to Shakespeare's text, the other, to Denmark as a Northern European space (which is consistent with the comparison underwriting *North* as a volume). From the mud as a place of both blockage and a home to the "worm of thought" one deduces that it is a medium for multidirectionality per se: it connects the archaeology of the Vikings with a parallel textual archaeology which revisits an important lieu de memoire of Western Civilization, Shakespeare's Hamlet.

The dive into the mud recalls two important scenes in *Hamlet*: the famous gravedigger scene where Hamlet soliloquizes to the skull of Yorick about the futility of human life and posterity, and the subsequent scene with the burial of Ophelia where Hamlet publicly acknowledges his great love for the dead girl with immense pathos; he also subsequently

squabbles with Laertes in Ophelia's grave. The identification of the lyrical I with Hamlet, the

tormented character, is significant because it implicitly attracts attention to the ambivalence of

the poet towards the Troubles and the complexity of coming up with a suitable response. It is yet

another equivalent of lying down in the word-hoard. The transformation of the ambivalent bone

into a skull indicates the cache of victims that every (Northern) history stores in its

commonplaces. It is only through pointless small-talk and erring, babbling confusion that Hamlet

sobers up to the death of Ophelia and implicitly realizes his hand in it. This might suggest that

the multidirectional detour/dialogue with Shakespeare's text can be considered yet another

screen (or "ring" on the memory tree-trunk) for the percolation of the Troubles. Significantly,

doubt, ambivalence and thought are the themes that hammer home the inescapable other side of

the Viking civilization and arguably that of myopic nationalisms. Section V continues with the

image of corruption and rot that Hamlet smelled in Denmark by travelling again to the Vikings,

and the rotten underside of this civilization:

    come fly with me,

    come sniff the wind

    with   the expertise of the Vikings -

    neighbourly, scoretaking

    killers, haggers

    and hagglers, gombeen-men,

hoarders of grudges and gain.

with a butcher's aplomb

they spread out your lungs

and made you warm wings

for your shoulders. (*North* 15)

The sense of smell becomes here associated with the ability to know where loot is to be found, to tell when the time is ripe for pillage and profit. Now the reader is following a line of acts of dangerous violence along the migrant nostril prow. The next-to-last stanza in this section refers to the myth of a Viking type of torture called the "blood eagle" whereupon someone's ribs were broken by pulling out the ribs and lungs through the victim's spine to resemble wings[17] (Collins 85). The image of the migrant line is tinged with blood through the reference to this gruesome type of torture. This becomes and intertextual pointer to the bloody Troubles. Etymologically speaking, one significant trait here is Heaney's use of Hiberno-English and Ulster English (two dialectal variations specific to Northern Ireland) to describe the corrupt, cruel image of the Vikings and to slowly bring the poem towards contemporary Northern Ireland and its Troubles. "Hagger" is Ulster English for someone who cuts/hacks clumsily, while "gombeen-man" means usurer or someone who is involved in shady business or a small-time crook in Hiberno-English (Wall 77). The vernacular is an important feature here as it traces the movement from the

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[17] This practice is heavily contested although the expression "blood eagle" is a part of the many Icelandic sagas as it is believed it might be a result of the overly active imagination of translators. (see Collins 85)

cultural memory trope of the Vikings remembered in an official museum setting - The National Museum in Dublin connected to Ireland as a nation, and that of regional memory in Northern Ireland. This represents a different frame of memory in Halbwachs' terms, based in the unofficial communities marked by vernacular Englishes. It is here that multidirectional memory operates most conspicuously in the spaces of transfer of memory between an estranged Viking/Danish substratum, a species of Irish "official" identity, and within it a regional Northern Irish Identity. The combination of both varieties of Anglo-Irish dialects, Hiberno-English and its Gaelic inflections with Ulster English, the language of the Scots Planters, are means for Heaney to prove that, just like the two images of the Vikings, they too can share the space of one poem joined by the Viking screen. Juxtaposing the violence and betrayals with Northern Irish vernacular, this poem indirectly alludes to the Troubles and their gruesome unfolding violence, the treachery of political figures trying to mediate the conflict and the very controversial methods of public humiliation and torture used etc. The eye-for-an-eye ethics of contemporary Northern Ireland is also evident in the third reference to Njal's saga in *North* which is combined with the previously mentioned reference to Joyce (see also Collins 85). The many intertexts already make the poem dizzying and paralyzing for the reader ready to share the poet's own predicament.

In the next section of the poem (or should we say scene?) we return to Ireland through another intertextual reference by means of (Yorick's) skull from section IV. This time Heaney refers to parts of a scene from J.M. Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*. The play tells the story of a young man who arrives in a village in County Mayo claiming that he had killed his father by smashing his skull with a loy. In the scene from the play Heaney cites from, two men are discussing what would happen if someone discovered the skull of the young man's father.

Jimmy Farrell supposes that nothing would happen because the recent murder would be

compared to the archaeological remains of Vikings found in Dublin:

'Did you ever hear tell,'

said Jimmy Farell,

'of the skulls they have in the city of Dublin?

White skulls and black skulls

and yellow skulls, and some

with full teeth, and some

haven't only but one,'

and compounded history

in the pan of 'an old Dane,

maybe was drowned

in the Flood.' (*North* 15)

The stanza looks like a direct quotation from Synge, but the order of Farrell's words is in fact

slightly changed to suit the metonymically archaeological presentation favoured by Heaney in

his "object poems". The changed order also expresses the zig-zag motion of the intertextual

multidirectionality here, from the Western Irish setting in County Mayo to the final allusion to

the old Dane (and implicitly the Vikings). It heralds the totalizing idea of "compounded history",

which permits a more panoramic view on the poetic process of writing Northern Irish identity.

The reference to the old Dane also connects this section with the sequence where Hamlet

contemplates Yorick's skull, bringing together the two intertexts in the space of one poem as

well as the histories of the victims. It is the migrant line of the prow of the ship together with the

outline of the bone that stitch together the *delirious intertextualities* in the same poem and the

same cultural memory object, the trial piece. The conclusion is a renewed consciousness of the

risks of writing to stir up the past:

My words lick around

cobbled quays, go hunting

lightly as pampooties[18]

over the skull-capped ground. (16)

With an added sense of responsibility, the many journeys in the poem lay down a word-hoard.

Following the ossified ship outline as far as it can take him, the lyrical I realizes that there is no

escaping the responsibilities of a poet: the weight of the words as a public discourse will always

lightly impinge on the dead. Heaney adapts Synge's insight into tapping into a dialectal language

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[18] "Pampooties" are typical footwear from the Aran Islands and this is yet another allusion to Synge. Synge spent a considerable amount of time there hoping to be able to create art that is more invested in surviving rural pre-Celtic Irishness as opposed to the version based on myth proposed by Lady Gregory and Yeats during the Celtic Twilight. Art for Synge was supposed to have a grounded, real dimension that was more relatable in its timelessness than the Celtic myths that populated Lady Gregory's collections

memory by vernacularizing the Vikings, writing them in contemporary slang. He is, nevertheless, conscious of the delicate balancing act of poetry, which presupposes stirring the dead, especially in times of war[19].

In "Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces" one cannot quite shake the feeling that this poem is *too multidirectional* or *deliriously intertextual* for its own sake. In my opinion it illustrates the varied triggers that prepare articulation of contemporary memory of the Troubles, still it cannot escape the terror of contemporary sectarian violence: the poem shies away from making a direct dialogic or polemical comment on the spiky political situation in Northern Ireland. The poem definitely illustrates the way in which the implicit comparisons of multidirectionality work, but it fails to come up with a better vision of justice. No matter how heavily clad in multiple contexts and how richly tackled from various angles, the words are still scratching the surface lightly like pampooties.

In conclusion, I want to posit that the multidirectional stories in part I of *North* are framed by the *museum gaze* as a poetic technique of memory. Several critics have called part I mythical[20], yet this I find this characterization incomplete since the interexts that Heaney uses here are not limited to legends or mythological stories. As shown above, they include a medley of intertextual modes: archaeological observation of Viking and Neolithic heritage, quotes from Shakespeare's plays and J.M Synge's ruminations on Ireland, contemporary debates on language formations and exfoliating etymologies of Old English and Old Norse, as well as the deconstruction of foundational myths.

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[19] In the next sections of *North*, in the Bog Poems, these victims do indeed surface from archaeological digs, the words no longer lightly licking cobbled quays, but taking all the skeletons out of several types of poetic closets.

[20] See Edna Longley, Michael Parker, Eugene O'Donoghue

In the next chapter, the focus will be on the ekphrastic dimension of the second half of *North,* whose effect is to strengthen further the sense of thinking the Troubles from inside a museum where several types of exhibitions take place at the same time. What brings the museum pieces to life is their constant morphing and moving into new contexts - in our case a just and complete representation of the violence of the Troubles which resurrects and recycles past texts, and binds them together in new and surprising intertextual configurations. *North's* intertextualities are dense and often obscure and the connections that Heaney makes between texts and etymologies can seem overwhelming. To the reader these feel like visiting a museum similar to the Louvre where several exhibitions of significant artistic movements are running at the same time. Inside the museum of *North* the reader often experiences a queasy sensation of being trapped inside solidified history and its repeating patterns much like the bug trapped in amber in *Slaughterhouse Five*. It cannot be denied, however, that the varied tapestry of intertextuality gives some consolation to the blocked poet and frustrated reader alike through its imaginative and multiple trajectories of articulation. These trajectories might eventually prove to run in circles, but they have enormous expressive power. By sifting and stitching them together, wonderful poetry emerges. This has been proven by the fact that the "Bog Poems" and *North* as a volume is probably one of the most analyzed collections Heaney wrote about The Troubles. In addition to this, the idea of cultural memory as archaeology is something that has not been explored before and it warrants some further investigation.

Softer Option Intertextuality

In this section we will be looking at a poem from *Station Island* where object contemplation is still very much a part of Heaney's poetry, yet his comparative archaeologist and etymologist personas have been replaced with a more personal voice similar to the one in the last poem in *North* "Exposure". Texture and metonymical technique introduce the object and this is also what triggers multidirectional intertextualities, however, there is more sustained dialogic interaction with the intertext. The direct polemic voice that the lyrical I adopts is characteristic of this phase in Heaney's poetic creation and differs significantly from the exploration of collective voices in part I of *North*. In "Sandstone Keepsake" it is no longer a question of going into archaeology as a tool for sounding out the many voices of collective memory, but more of teasing out the relation that obtains between striving to find a distinctive poetic voice and the idea that poetry can help to redress or console in times of trouble. The idea that literature and poetry could console is also something that might be implied in the conception of multidirectional memory that Rothberg puts out when he defines the screens of multidirectionality as a form of work or working through (3).

HelenVendler calls *Station Island* a volume marked by meetings with various poetic alter egos which are tested, kept or discarded (86). She stresses that this phase is different from his earlier encounters with figures of alterity in *Wintering Out* (87-8). I would add that this voice (which slowly emerged in *Field Work*) is also less concerned with the dramatization of collective archetypal voices and echoes of the Troubles than the personas of *North* were. *Station Island* can be seen as an encyclopedia of various steps taken towards mourning the dead in a more responsible manner peppered with active conversational encounters of working through. The

heavy mythologies of *North* are gone and an explicit theme interrogating means of poetic growth parallels that of coming to terms with harsh political reality. Object contemplation remains a trigger of multidirectional intertextualities proving the consistent preoccupation with visual and material realities that Heaney deals in. These processes are illustrated by "Sandstone Keepsake" and the six-poem sequence titled "Shelf Life".

Sandstone Keepsake

It is a kind of chalky russet
solidified gourd, sedimentary
and so reliably dense and bricky
I often clasp it and throw it from hand to hand.

It was ruddier, with an underwater
hint of contusion, when I lifted it,
wading a shingle beach on Inishowen.
Across the estuary light after light

came on silently round the perimeter
of the camp. A stone from Phlegeton,
bloodied on the bed of hell's hot river?
Evening frost and the salt water

made my hand smoke, as if I'd plucked the heart
that damned Guy de Montfort to the boiling flood
but not really, though I remembered
his victim's heart in its casket, long venerated.

Anyhow, there I was with the wet red stone
in my hand, staring across at the watch-towers
from my free state of image and allusion,
swooped on, then dropped by trained binoculars:

a silhouette not worth bothering about
out for the evening in scarf and waders
and not about to set the times wrong or right,
stooping along, one of the venerators.
(*Station Island* 20)

"Sandstone Keepsake" starts with the poet metonymically contemplating an unnamed object which is described by its texture, shape and colour. "Gourd" would remind a Heaney reader of the head of the bog body in "Strange Fruit" described as "exhumed gourd", so it might foretell

the apparition of the victim later on. The tactile contemplation of the stone is more geological,

than archaeological here, part of a landscape, than an excavation. This is not a man-made object,

yet it acquires human properties when it is characterized as "ruddier" and "with an underwater

hint of contusion" in the next stanza. The object/pebble had been discovered underwater when

the lyrical I was taking a walk on a beach in Inishowen[21]. One notes a more narrative tone to this

poem than to the previous explorations in *North*. As the lyrical I picks up the stone he gazes to

the other side of the gulf:

> Across the estuary light after light
>
> came on silently round the perimeter
>
> of the camp. (20)

 The camp mentioned is most likely the Magilligan camp for internees[22] considered the worst

prison for Ulster Catholics because of the violent treatment of the inmates by the guards. We can

infer that the object is a touchstone, a medium of remembrance which adds a personal note to the

poem, since Heaney's move over the border to the Republic happened in 1972, during

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[21][21] The Inishowen Peninsula is situated in County Donegal which is a border area between County Derry in Northern Ireland and The Republic of Ireland; the beach is probably situated on the estuary of the River Foyle

[22]Internment was imprisonment without trial of a great number of people suspected of being members of violent illegal paramilitary groups causing grave disturbances in the late 60s and early 70s lasting from 1971-1975. Although Internment was a move supposedly intended to contain both sides of the conflict, no members of the Ulster Volunteer Force, the Protestant paramilitary group, were ever interned without trial. Internment is also notorious for having targeted mostly official figures such as MPs or regional leaders suspected to be involved in the IRA. This benefitted the Provisional IRA since most of the radical members of this movement did not hold any political office whatsoever, and internment was used as a platform for escalating sectarian violence. (for more information see http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/intern/sum.htm and *The Troubles: Ireland's ordeal 1966-1996 and the search for peace* by Tim Patrick Coogan.)

internment. From the looming image of the prison at Magilligan Point, the poem moves into intertextual imagination in the same verse:

. . .A stone from Phlegeton,

Bloodied on the bed of hell's hot river?

Evening frost and the salt water

made my hand smoke, as if I'd pluckd the heart

that damned Guy de Montfort to the boiling flood

but not really, though I remembered

his victim's heart in its casket, long venerated. (20)

The intertext here is Dante's *Inferno*. In Canto XII the poet is guided by Nessus the centaur through the 7th circle of Hell past a river of boiling blood, Phlegeton, where authors of violent crimes are being simmered alive. The centaur points out various sinners guilty of this type of crime in the river as they are crossing it, and one of them is Guy de Montfort. Guy de Montfort was an English count who killed his cousin Henry of Almain in the Viterbo cathedral while he was praying at the altar. De Montfort ruthlessly murdered Henry in order to take revenge for the killing and mutilation of his father in the Battle of Eversham. This is the act that damned him to the seventh circle and Henry's heart was afterwards placed in a casket in the Tower of London where it became a place of pilgrimage. The motif of the son avenging the murder of the father by

committing another murder[23] resurfaces here as a part of the repertoire of Heaney's criticism of

the Troubles. Another recurring motif in Heaney's poetry is the sanctification of victims as part

of an allegory of sublime suffering, a subject treated at large in his Bog cycle. Often used for

Manichean purposes because of its strong emotional appeal, this type of discourse instigates

"zealous" violence in Northern Ireland as more random local victims are canonized. Plucking the

heart of the victim from the "boiling water" would imply that the poet can be an agent of change

in troubled times. Poetry then would have the potential to redress suffering which would be in

line to Heaney's 1982 essay, "The Redress of Poetry". This possibility, one that Dante also

advocated, is threatened by doubt and laced with ambivalence for the contemporary poet. And

the ambivalence is also what causes the lyrical I to reject the comparison as too hopeful and not

entirely fitting. The comparison to Dante's text is noted and its features artfully explored, but it is

softly rejected through the "not really" that the poet utters (20). Michael Parker reads the

rejection as the intervention of a humble Derry voice cautioning the young poet to watch his

tongue hinting at the need to keep the grandiose voice in check when dealing with actual

suffering (106). I would agree with the added humility in the voice of the lyrical I, but I would

not concede to a total rejection of the intertext and would call it more of an acknowledgement of

the differences between the original artifact of cultural memory and the specificities of the

emergent memory with its contemporary complications. An added nuance one could discern in

this encounter between texts is the difference in status - as the Divine Comedy is a proper object

of cultural memory there is a marked monumentality about it (Rigney "Dynamics" 249). If

anything, Dante's text has a canonical dimension to it, that Heaney might feel uneasy about

assuming for his own poetry. As we will see in chapters 3 and 4, Heaney's repeated engagement

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[23] Also present in the encounter with Njal's saga in "Kinship"

with Dante is a leitmotif of his commentary on the Troubles as well as a motivation to seek just representation of its victims.

I see the informal "not really" as a more dialogic move in relation with the intertext. Since it seems to interrogate the adequacy of the comparison, a feature that was not felt so explicitly in *North,* a more flexible relation obtains between Heaney's poem as an emergent cultural memory candidate and Dante's monumental text as a relay station of Western Civilization. Instead of layering "compounded history" in the skull of an Old Dane as we have seen in "Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces", the otherness of Dante's text is respected: equation would be the wrong move for the humble poet, just as the road to transcendence through poetry requires active working through (this will follow in the "Station Island" cycle and the "Sweeney Redivivus" sequence a bit later on in the volume). Cultural memory artifacts may be appropriated into new contexts, in this sense, the internment camp is implicitly written as the *Inferno*, the poet is a Dante apprentice figure in his quest for poetic enlightenment. Yet, at the same time, the contemporary situation is not a perfect fit with Renaissance Italy. The dejection of the final two stanzas reinforce this sense of difference as they bank on the separation of the poet from the conflict and his impotence to change the world around him:

Anyhow, there I was with the wet red stone

in my hand, staring across the watch-towers

from my free state of image and allusion,

swooped on, then dropped by trained binoculars

a silhouette not worth bothering about

out for the evening in scarf and waders

and not about to set the times wrong or right,

stooping along, one of the venerators. (*Station Island* 20)

The last part of the poem is not entirely naturalistic as the rejection of Dante might imply. In "The Government of the Tongue", Heaney acknowledges the influence of Czeslaw Milosz and Zbigniew Herbert on *Station Island* and *The Haw Lantern* (97) and Michael Parker also detects a not to Zbigniew Herbert in the similarities between "Sandstone Keepsake" and Herbert's "The Pebble" (107). The idea of poetry under surveillance and censorship will be more prominent later on in *The Haw Lantern* and this is illustrated here by the "trained binoculars" swooping on the poet's dialogue with the stone. The martial meets the parabolic[24] here: the binoculars swoop on the poet looking at the watch towers "from [his] free state of image and allusion". Free state alludes to the Irish Free State[25], as well as the fact that the poet is no longer in the thick of The Troubles since his move to Glanmore over the border. Whereas in *North* Heaney engaged with sectarian violence by creating the illusion that he is in the thick of it[26], here the vantage point is explicitly one of remembrance and memory triggered in a tactile manner through the touchstone. The "free state of image and allusion" formulation also echoes Herbert and Milosz's hermetic

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[24] For more information on Heaney's "parabolic mode" and his engagement with Eastern European poets see Jerzy Jarniewicz "The Way via Warsaw: Seamus Heaney and the Post-War Polish Poets" in *Seamus Heaney Poet, Critic, Translator* and Eugene O'Brien's "The Ethics of Translation" in *Seamus Heaney and the Place of Writing*

[25] The first name of the Republic of Ireland after its emancipation from British rule in 1922

[26] Although he had moved to Glanmore Cottage in 1972, therefore, most of *North* was not written in Northern Ireland per se.

parabolic poetry whose manner of communication had to be allusive and frequently coded in order to escape censorship and transmit a dissident message to the readers. Additionally, one of the problems which will be discussed briefly in chapter 3 and 4 will be the brand of intertextuality based on Rigney's concept of modeling that Heaney seems to adopt by adapting new Northern Irish stories to old scaffoldings of texts, in this case Dante's *Inferno*: a sort of structural intertextuality which is not explicitly citational seems to emerge in *Field Work* and *Station Island*. As such, I will argue that it is not only subject matter and direct quotation which brings texts together in multidirectional relations, but also adopted structures. It could be easily argued that the final section of "Sandstone Keepsake" is influenced by the object poem structures that Herbert and Milosz wrote. In the spirit of these two figures, one could affirm that the martial binoculars of doubt might be wrong to drop the silhouette from sight. As well as the feeling of being inconsequential to the world of the Troubles that is tucked away in the internee camp that Parker emphasizes, one also detects an undercurrent of camouflage as Heaney would put in it in *Wintering Out* "a turn in the tang of possibility" - what if art does indeed have the power to redress, console and create comprehensive images of a violent past? What if the silhouette of the poet will be consequential in the end?

The flexibility and willingness to have a dialogue with cultural memory artifacts which we have detected in the rejection of the intertext is also present in the connected series of six object poems that follows. One of the poems in the series "Shelf Life" seems to me to perfectly describe Heaney's newer intertextualities. "Old Pewter" is not just an object-contemplation poem per se, but the tactile description of a metal as material or medium of memory: "I love unshowy pewter, my soft option/when it comes to the metals." (Heaney, *Station Island* 22). The soft option of pewter is then connected to several images of the associations it holds to various

childhood memories for the lyrical I and deep sensorial images before reaching a conclusion co-terminous with the ambiguous ending of "Bogland":

Glimmerings are what the soul's composed of.

Fogged-up challenges, far conscience-glitters

and hang-dog, half-truths earnests of true love.

And a whole late-flooding thaw of ancestors (23).

This poem could also be connected to Heaney's "Belderg" and the "foundations mutable as sound" which seem to provide another interesting trope of the openness with which one must approach the late-flooding thaw of ancestors and political situations. Unlike in "Belderg" the softness of pewter is also an indication of the malleability of memory material which Heaney seems to be aware of in this poem and in the dialogue with Dante's text in "Sandstone Keepsake".

In conclusion, I want to propose that Heaney's intertextualities shift from *North* to *Station Island* as the nature of the tropes governing them changes from the balanced stones of archaeological comparisons to the softer, more flexible and more vulnerable pewter. It is not that the nature of the objects changes necessarily, but the explorations take a more dialogic, communicative dimension as Heaney's poetic voice grows more secure in its vocation and his poetry envisages mourning as a possible and necessary process.

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Chapter 2

Picturing the Troubles: Ekphrastic Intertextualities and the Intermediality of Cultural Memory

A few theoretical considerations

In this chapter, the ways in which visual representation is intertwined with the verbal will be

scrutinized in-depth in one of Heaney's poems, "Summer 1969". Some of his other ekphrastic

attempts at engaging with the visual medium will be mentioned briefly. Heaney's ekphrastic

strategies will be read as yet another means of intertextuality defined by the intermedial

relationship between the visual and the verbal. The manner in which the visual is connected to

public violence will be analyzed with specific emphasis on how the verbal remediates the visual.

In "Summer 1969" the poet describes three paintings by Goya which transport him from the

Prado Museum in Madrid towards an imaginary engagement with sectarian violence erupting at

home. By using Astrid Erll's concept of remediation and premediation of cultural memory

relationships I hope to explain how the ekphrastic poem should be considered multidirectional,

as well as intertextual.

Ekphrasis, defined by James Heffernan as "the verbal representation of visual representation"

(3), is typically a poem or a section of a poem describing a painting or another artistic object.

This technique has had a long career in poetry, from Homer to John Ashberry, as Heffernan

comprehensively proves in his study, where he traces its evolving functions. It was generally a

brief decorative aside in Greek epic poems, it featured in the Romantic oscillation between love

and fear of the painted image, and, in the late nineteenth and twentieth century, ekphrastic poems

emerged as a genre and became increasingly specialized reflections on visual art as part of

museum spaces. The latter channel the cognate discourse of art criticism to frame ekphrastic

engagement in a process that Heffernan qualifies as creating a "museum of words" (6-10). As

such, poets either curate their private "museums of words", or sometimes interact with an actual

public institution, such as the Louvre, or in Heaney's case with the Prado. The association

between cultural memory and the museum is something that was also stressed in chapter 1and

will continue to inflect my analysis in this chapter as well.

Valerie Robillard proposes that the notion of ekphrasis needs to work within a broader

conceptual framework and urges scholars to adopt an intertextual framework when dealing with

ekphrasis (55). The comparative intertextual approach would, in her opinion, also help to expose

the complex power relations that govern ekphrastic encounters (56)[1]. Analyzing Heaney's

poetry some of Robillard's suggestion that ekphrasis be considered a type of intertextuality will

be further explicated as it helps to track the intermedial relations between verbal re-framing and

visual cultural memory. I believe Robillard's detailed account of criteria of intertextual intensity

in ekphrasis can be associated with Astrid Erll's concept of the "intermedial dynamics" which

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[1] This hope is also expressed by James Heffernan in his insightful chapter on ekphrasis and images of rape "Weaving Rape" (46-90)

describes how cultural memory objects circulate in different contexts, since they attempt to chart

how the visual moves into the verbal ("Literature"391). On the one hand, circulation strengthens

the paintings' status as objects of remembrance or *artifacts of cultural memory*; on the other, the

individual artifacts are embodiments of schemes for the process through which new (textual)

objects of cultural memory emerge (this constitutive process is called pre-mediation) (Erll

"Literature" 393)[2]. The pre-mediated object still preserves traces of its former medial

embodiment and these can spark a productive intermedial dialogue (Erll "Literature" 395). The

intermedial dialogue between visual plastic arts and poetry can be seen as multidirectional

because it proves that there are complex dynamics of interrelation and mutual articulation

between the visual arts and the literary trade. Most ekphrasis scholars (Krieger, W.J.T. Mitchell,

Heffernan) perceive ekphrasis as the overt confrontation between the visual and the appropriative

verbal and call it a "paragonal", therefore competitive, relationship (Heffernan 8). Without

denying the tension between the two, Rothberg's model of multidirectionality allows me to make

a comparison against the odds and observe the fuzziness of medial borders and the cumulative

effects of intermedial transfer. Moreover, ekphrastic dynamics might be an interesting

contribution that poetry as a genre consistently makes to (literary) cultural memory, since it tends

to use mechanisms of verbal to visual remediation more intensely than any other literary genres.

Goya's Vistas and "Summer 1969"

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[2] See also Rigney "The Dynamics of Remembrance: Texts between Morphing and Monumentality"

"Summer 1969" is a poem from the second part of *North*. Here the archaeological/mythical poems we have analyzed in chapter 1 make way for more polemical and personal poems. It is the fourth poem in the controversial cycle "Singing School"[3] which contains various vignettes recalling Ulster everyday life, Heaney's boarding school experience and various subtleties of divisive faith and sectarian violence. "Singing School" is also a meditation on exile and the move of the Heaney family away from the conflict raging in Northern Ireland to Glanmore in the Republic of Ireland: "Exposure", "Fosterage" and "Summer 1969" evoke spatial distance as well as the attempt to keep mental distance from the polarities in Ulster.

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[3] Several critics such as Edna Longley, Desmond Fennell, David Lloyd and James Simmons have criticized Heaney for this cycle as they consider it too "realistic" and lacking in rhetorical prowess (see Crotty 52-56)

SUMMER 1969

While the Constabulary covered the mob

Firing in the Falls, I was suffering

Only the bullying sun of Madrid.

Each afternoon, in the casserole heat

Of the flat, as I sweated my way through

The life of Joyce, stinks from the fishmarket

Rose like the reek off a flax-dam.

At night on the balcony, gules of wine,

A sense of children in their dark corners,

Old women in black shawls near open windows,

The air a canyon rivering in Spanish.

We talked our way home over starlit plains

Where patent leather of the Guardia Civil

Gleamed like fish-bellies in flax-poisoned
waters.

'Go back', one said, 'try to touch the people.'

Another conjured Lorca from his hill.

We sat through death-counts and bull-fight
reports

I retreated to the cool of the Prado.

Goya's 'Shootings of the Third of May'

Covered a wall - the thrown up arms

And spasm of the rebel, the helmeted

And knapsacked military, the efficient

Rake of the fusillade. In the next room,

His nightmares, grafted to the palace wall -

Dark cyclones, hosting, breaking; Saturn

Jewelled in the blood of his own children;

Gigantic Chaos turning his brute hips

Over the world. Also that holmgang

Where two berserks club each other to death

For honour's sake, greaved in a bog, and sinking.

He painted with his fists and elbows, flourished

The stained cape of his heart as history charged.

(*North* 64-5)

"Summer 1969" aims to pinpoint the complex predicament of the poet as a public figure and the

impossibility to escape the abject political realities of the Troubles. This realization is dramatized

in the poem during a visit to Madrid. The event referred to in the poem is the Falls riot, a violent

sectarian revolt which erupted in Belfast on August 14th 1969 echoing the ones in Derry which

came to be known as "The Battle of the Bogside" (12-13 August 1969). On August 15, the riot

culminated with the RUC(Royal Ulster Constabulary), the Northern Irish (Protestant) police

force, shooting a Browning machine-gun into the unruly crowd on Divis Street in the Falls Road

Catholic neighbourhood killing and wounding several people[4].

The poem starts thus:

> While the Constabulary covered the mob
>
> Firing into the Falls, I was suffering
>
> Only the bullying sun of Madrid. (*North* 64)

A sense of disconnection and uncomfortable exile obtains in the contrast between the bullying

sun and the allusion to the the Falls riot in the first two verses. Because of the discrepancy

between the objects of the verb "suffering" in the two contexts, the poet's sense of being exiled

or the "note of exile"[5] (*North* 66) as Heaney puts it a bit later on is later associated with Joyce's

Triestine exile further in the poem: "The life of Joyce, stinks from the fishmarket/Rose like the

reek off a flax-dam." (64). In an interview with Dennis O'Driscoll, Heaney confesses to "a sense

of undefined accountability" insinuating itself in Madrid when he was thinking of the events

back home (182). Consequently, the ekphrastic engagement with Goya later on bridges the gap

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[4] See CAIN Chronology for more information on the events of August 1969
(http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/othelem/chron/ch69.htm#12869) and for an extended analysis of the rioting in the late 1960s
and the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland see Bob Purdie on CAIN
(http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/crights/purdie/index.html)

[5] This is the theme of Heaney's next poem, "Fosterage" (*North* 66)

effectively – and it does so through the multidirectional connection between Spain as a distant space and Northern Ireland. This is manifest in the choice of words for this first (non-ekphrastic) stanza: The Spanish fish-market stench is compared with the reek of a flax-dam[6], a typical Northern Irish experience of softening the fibers of flax by leaving them to rot in small pools of water, as described in "Death of a Naturalist" (*Death of a Naturalist* 3-4). In this first part of the poem there is also a brief suggestion of police brutality when the uniform of the Spanish police, the Guardia Civil is compared with "fish-bellies in flax-poisoned waters" (*North* 64). This threatening olfactory comparison can be connected to a later allusion (in the second stanza) to Federico Garcia Lorca's assassination by the Guardia Civil at the beginning Francisco Franco's regime. Lorca wrote critical poems about unwarranted acts of police brutality and it is though that this angered high-powered officials. The Guardia Civil are notorious for acting as an abusive secret police during Franco's regime, killing political adversaries, brutally beating and kidnapping Catalonian and Basque nationalists and meddling into politics in general[7]. It is clear that in the first stanza there is an underlying comparison between the silent but threatening Guardia Civil and the RUC. It is also worth noting that in 1969 Franco was still in power in Spain and the ominous echoes of his dictatorship might also be part of the imaginary of this

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[6] See Heaney "Death of a Naturalist" and for more on "retting" and "flax-dams"
http://www.universalteacher.org.uk/anthology/seamusheaney.htm and http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/definitions/retting+dam

[7] See *The Franco Regime 1936-1975* by Stanley G. Payne for information about the role of the Guardia Civil in Franco's Spain

comparison. Censorhip of artistic expression is also a major theme in the second part of *North*

broached in "Whatever You Say Say Nothing", "The Unacknowledged Legislator's Dream",

"Exposure" and "Fosterage". Nevertheless, the suggestion of the distant impact of the RUC, the

note of multidirectional exile and the potent stench of rot in the state of Spain are not the most

intense intertextual relationships of the poem. I would argue that the main multidirectional

realization that the horrors of home are impossible to eschew comes when the poet visits the

Prado museum. It would seem that ekphrasis and intermediality are stronger bonds than the

vague allusions at the beginning of this poem:

> I retreated to the cool of the Prado.
>
> Goya's 'Shootings of the Third of May'
>
> Covered a wall - the thrown up arms
>
> And spasm of the rebel, the helmeted
>
> And knapsacked military, the efficient
>
> Rake of the fusillade. (*North* 64)

The first line clearly marks the entrance into the world of the museum by evoking the Prado

Palace as a concrete *lieu de mémoire* and refiguring it as a privileged site for Heaney's own

"museum of words" (Heffernan 138): "Twentieth-century ekphrasis springs from the museum,

the shrine where all poets worship in a secular age". The visit to the Prado temple is prefigured

as an escape into the shade of masterpieces of consoling art, where the tactical word "retreat" is

opposed to the tyranny of the "bullying sun", the suffocating fish stench and the foreboding

echoes of home that these recall. The subtext is a hope that the encounter with several of Goya's

paintings can enrich and re-frame the threatening mental image of what is going on at home

lurking at the edge of consciousness.

Fig. 1 Francisco Goya, "The Third of May 1808" or "The Shootings of the Third of
May, Prado Museum, Madrid

The first intertextually evoked painting is Goya's "The Shootings of the Third of May 1808"

(Fig. 1) which depicts the surrender and execution of the Spanish rioters protesting against

Napoleon's occupation. Heaney proves very sensitive to Goya's unconventional representation

of a historical subject departing from the traditional commemoration of symbolic victory found

in painters such as Delacroix or David: his choice of words conveys the simplicity and almost

realist depiction of defeat in this section of the poem. The ekphrastic engagement with this

painting attentively follows the main structures of organization that govern it by zooming first on

the surrendering rebels and then on the French firing squad. He responds to the barren tenseness

of the rebel surrendering in the foreground and his expression of fear and defeat: "-the thrown up

arms/And the spasm of the rebel" (64). Heaney next presents the French firing squad. In the

original painting it is shown with the back to the viewer, faceless and hooded, defined by the

straight nozzles of the guns pointed at a cowering group of rebels. Heaney notes the organized

block-like quality of the firing squad and presents it as an efficient, homogeneous, impersonal

collective: "the helmeted and knapsacked military,/ the efficient rake of the fusillade" (64). Upon

a closer look, the crucified position of the main Spanish rebel figure, the stigmata on his hand,

the Franciscan (?) friar on his side as well as the poses of the people around him are reminiscent

of various pietàs or crucifixion scenes. Even though the pietà is a distinctly Catholic visual

tradition, Heaney chooses not to engage with it in the space of his poem, rendering instead the

dejection and singularity of the head rebel and the efficiency of the French army as they

dominate/colonize the painting. Given the configuration of the ekphrastic scene and its earlier

framing and the previous references to the RUC and the Guardia Civil, it might be easily inferred

and that here the French army is implicitly juxtaposed with the RUC "Firing into the Falls" (64)

in their attempt to suppress the Catholic rioters in Belfast. The horror of public violence

emanates from Goya's painting in a disturbing and entrancing way, and it is by way of the visual

comparisons that the impact of the violent conflict back home leaves an overwhelming mark on

the poetic imagination. There is a subtle heroic effect in Goya's painting conveyed by the pietà

and the upright position of the defeated head rebel suggesting dignity of the victim. There is

marked contrast between the "police"/army and the civilians in peasant clothes, surrounded by

hay suggesting an inequality of forces which might contain another judgment on unjust police

violence in Belfast.

Robillard calls the interaction between a painting and a new contextual usage verbal

reframing (59) and this term is also relevant when associated with cultural memory. As the

painting is transferred to a new context through its association with the Troubles, it also crosses

from the predominantly visual to the verbal medium; in the process, it is re-activated and

subjected to re-interpretation. On the other hand, as a significant object of art history available

for study, it also retains its specificity in representing a different event than the contemporary

Northern Irish situation and is still subject to Goya's taste and his pictorial conventions. Heaney

interprets Goya's paintings as successful in their engagement with history and myth and he

appreciates them as works of art (and implicitly memory) on their own terms as well, as we have

seen in the previous paragraph. Additionally, the multidirectional comparison with the home

front is merely insinuated in this first ekphrastic section. This type of cultural memory movement

is theorized both by Erll in her survey of intermedial processes ("Literature" 392-5) and by

Rigney's observation that texts[8] are caught in between morphing and monumentality

("Dynamics" 249). As a cultural memory construct, this painting illustrates Erll's assertion that

when an object of cultural memory is re-mediated (repeated with a difference), it is automatically

subject to new interpretive practices, yet it still preserves strong traces of its past medial

embodiment ("Literature" 395). The "Shootings of the Third of May" might be repurposed to

convey the foreboding feeling of the Troubles, but it nevertheless commemorates the Spanish

rebels and their visual specificity, their position in the Prado and it is referred to by means of the

painting's name. Heaney's poem is multidirectional, it speaks of Northern Ireland using the

screen of the Spanish trip and in its multidirectionality it interacts with the environment and

carefully marks the differences.

This poem is also an example of James Heffernan's concept of creating a museum of

words. Besides defining the space as Madrid and the Prado palace museum, it also mimics a

sense of walking through a gallery of Goya's paintings for the benefit of the reader: before

describing the painting itself, Heaney qualifies its scale compared to the wall of the Prado

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[8] Even though Rigney referred specifically to the circulation of literary texts in her article, I believe her concept can easily adapt to the way the in which paintings are caught in a dynamic of morphing and monumentality. As means of reproduction and concrete travelling have become more commonplace, so did the memory of art history become more commodified. ("Dynamics")

"Goya's Shootings of the Third of May"/*Covered a wall*" (*North* 64, emphasis added). In an

interview, Heaney describes the strong impression Goya's paintings made on him during the

1969 visit. He qualifies this particular painting as "overwhelming" (O'Driscoll 183) and he

professes his awe in front of its great scale: "it can make you reel" (183). The scale and violence

of the painting are suffocating, much as the sun was "bullying", but this can also be extended to

the dizzying sense of responsibility which encroaches on the poet as the civil war is brewing.

Heaney calls Goya's painting a "Bloody Sunday *avant la léttre*" and asserts that Goya is one of

the few painters of his age to confront political violence head-on (184). He refers to Goya's

Black Paintings (which we will deal with shortly) as pictures concentrating on "the force of

terrible events" (182).

Helen Vendler contends that Heaney is presenting the paintings in this poem in climactic

order aiming to build up and dramatize his own complex feelings towards the intimately known

and felt blackness of the Troubles (51). In accordance to Vendler's insight and strengthening

Heffernan's supposition that contemporary ekphrastic poetry adds to the canon of visual re-

representation the need to depict the experience of the museum (8), the lyrical I walks into

another room of Goya's paintings at the Prado. This time it is a room containing the 'black

paintings' series and his sketches for a series titled the Disasters of War:

…In the next room,

His nightmares, grafted to the palace wall -

Dark cyclones, hosting, breaking: Saturn

Jewelled in the blood of his own children.

Gigantic Chaos turning his brute hips

over the world. Also that holmgang

Where two berserkers club each other to death

For honour's sake, greaved in a bog, and sinking. (*North* 64-5)

Goya's "Black Paintings" are a series of nightmarish canvases of very large scale depicting

grotesque, funereal subjects such as a witches' sabbath or a corpse-like woman in mourning, a

deformed pilgrimage or nightmarish visions. These are all painted in dark colour schemes and

their atmosphere is horrific and oppressive. Goya never intended these to be seen by the public

and they were all painted on the walls of the first floor dining room of his estate *Quinta del*

Sordo. As mentioned earlier, the reader does get the sensation of being inside the Prado, as he is

asked to visualize the nightmares alias the Black Paintings secured to the palace wall. Heaney

chooses the words "grafted" to stress the anchoring, or holding down of such potentially

threatening vistas. It is unclear which one of the paintings the line "Dark cyclones, hosting,

breaking" refers to[9], but it is most likely that the line refers to the ensemble effect that these

tormented paintings have on the visitor as their visual powers are compounded. Additional

gruesomeness is added by the looming new context that they are framed into by the poet visitor,

namely the simmering Troubles. The message could be connected to Heaney's earlier

affirmation about the force of terrible events that can be felt in Goya's style resounding in his

own predicament. This line could also be a meditation on Goya's style, foretelling the last lines

of the poem which undertake art-critical commentary in a more significant, less indirect manner.

The next painting alluded to by the poem is Goya's most famous nightmarish work "Saturn Devouring his Sons" (Fig.2). This painting is an illustration of the mythological tale about Saturn eating his newborn children one by one in order to avert the prophecy that one of them will kill him. Goya's painting shows a giant with long white hair and a strong sinewy body, half kneeling, all smeared in the blood of a headless body he has just taken a bite out of. The figure of Saturn is painted against a dark background and the

Fig. 2 Francisco Goya, Saturn
Devouring his Sons,

Prado Museum, Madrid

[9] It could be Goya's Asmodea/Fantastic Vision depicting a couple in an eerie flight

technique of chiaroscuro gives the painting a deathly glow. Heaney's description of the painting

captures the intensity and shock of watching this giant crooked man in the act of devouring

another human being: "Jewelled in the blood" is an accurate and strong representation of the

dramatic glimmering of blood trickling down from Saturn's mouth and across what appears to be

the hand of the child. In Goya's painting the child is not represented as a baby, but an older

young body which makes the representation even more shocking. Heaney's graphic image helps

an unfamiliar reader to visualize the dread captured by this work of art by adding the tacit

comparison of the Troubles as symptoms of ancestral impulses for licensing violence. Heffernan

points out that ekphrasis is usually a trigger for the poet or writer to weave a small narrative to

fill in the gaps in a painting (6): in the verse describing Saturn's awkward position in between a

crouch and a kneeling moment Heaney adds an extra narrative dimension to Goya's terrifying

painting: "Gigantic Chaos turning his brute hips/over the world". This added narrative dimension

is ascribed by Heffernan to the paragonal struggle between the "driving force of the narrating

word and the stubborn resistance of the fixed image" (6). Yet, it is here that Heaney's

imagination reactivates the image and its impact on the poetic mind most successfully. The

position of the giant devouring the human body is skewed as if he is preparing to break out of the

frame and Heaney's observation that the "brute hips" will be turned over the world as if to

suffocate it is a bold interpretive move in line with the crushing responsibility of the poet to react

to a world plunged in chaos. This reader is also reminded of Yeats' "The Second Coming" given

the apocalyptic imagery and the allusion to political violence and old grudges devouring the

people in Northern Ireland amongst visible rivers of blood. In a way, the image of Saturn eating

his children sums up all the mythical and archaeological explorations of *North* which had sought

to expose the subtle and potent dangers of symbolic violence and oppositional thinking taking

over art and politics. The giant could then be read as Antaeus and an analogous figure to the Bog

Queen rising "hacked" and angry, a main character from part 1 of *North*. If one considers Saturn

a father devouring his children, it could be extrapolated that the motif of past grudges and

ancestral wounds reopened further dramatize the encounter with Goya's horrific painting. This

painting is less canonically ekphrastic than the description of "The Shootings of the Third of

May", the descriptive fidelity in the first one giving way to a more interpretive mood as seen

above.

Fig. 3 Francisco Goya, Fight With Cudgels, Prado Museum, Madrid

"Fight with Cudgels" (Fig 3), an equally famous Black Painting, is the next exhibit in the private

Goya gallery that Heaney creates. The painting appears in the text as "that holmgang" (a type of

Old Norse honour duel). This reference already suggests Heaney's interpretation of the painting

as twinned with the Northern motif poems in the first part of *North*. The painting has lighter

tones than Goya's other Black Paintings in the series and it depicts a duel between two frowning

figures of indefinite age in a hilly setting. The two duelists are fighting with raised sticks and

their legs blend in the scenery eerily from the knee down. Heaney's departure from the context

of the poem is increasingly narrative, whereas in the two earlier paintings he only subtly strays

from the task of describing the picture, here more acts of interpretation occur. In keeping with

the Northern mythos that we described at length in chapter 1, here the Northern violence

substratum of the "althing" and the "honour killing" resurfaces as an added level to Goya's

disturbing painting of primal violence. Goya's duelling men are read by Heaney as "berserks" -

literally bear-shirts in Old Norse, meaning frenzied warriors in this context (Vendler 52) ; the

fight with cudgels becomes a "holmgang" - a Nordic duel invoked for the sake of honour which

motivates the syntagm "for honour's sake" from the poem; the cudgels in the Spanish painting

are read as "clubs" and the hilly random setting morphs into a "bog" - Heaney's symbolic setting

in *North* and *Wintering Out*. The sense of pointlessness, atavism and raw inhumanity is enforced

by the inflationary image of the holmgang swiftly evoked after the horrific Saturn painting. This

sensation is further heightened when the two fighters are presented as sinking in the quicksandy

bog, eventually destroying themselves instead of forfeiting revenge: "greaved in a bog, and sinking" (65).

In terms of intermedial transfer, the structure of the painting remains the same, yet it is uprooted from its unspecific hilly environment in Goya's depiction and transported to a Northern context. While the basic elements and characters of the paintings are still there, the painting is heavily interpreted and appropriated into a Heaney-specific narrative. The reference to "Fight with Cudgels" is signalled mostly through allusion[10]: for someone unfamiliar with Goya or the Prado it would prove very hard to identify (as there is no name or true to form description of the visual setting). This painting in particular is hinted at and recognizable for a more cultivated or worldly audience (someone who has visited the Prado for instance). It is also heavily dialogic, as it makes obvious the confrontation between the visual and the verbal - the verbal narrativization wins in the paragonal relationship.Goya's painting is auto-reflexive (Robillard 62) since it triggers a change in the poet's attitude towards the consoling nature of art. Strangely, the contemporary context is not the fusillade of the RUC, but the uncomfortable screen of Northern atavism adding another symbolic level to what had started as a personal, intimate "note of exile" (*North* 66).

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[10] Robillard categorizes indeterminate marking and allusion are marks of weaker ekphrastic referentiality, hence of a less intense relationship with the painting itself (62)

In the conclusion of the poem one senses the importance of Heffernan's proposition that

poetic ekphrasis has become specialized and informed by art criticism to create a museum of

words: after creating his personal exhibition of climactic Goyas, Heaney, wearing his poet's cap,

offers a unified theory of the artist's technique:

He painted with his fists and elbows, flourished

The stained cape of his heart as history charged. (*North* 65)

In the case of Goya, Heaney suggests that through personal sacrifice (and in the painter's case

insanity) art can be a counter-force to the gravitational pull of history. History is personified as a

bull charging, while Goya the frenzied (and insane) artist is its absorbed matador. In the same

interview mentioned earlier, Heaney recalls that the spectacle of running with the bulls

fascinated, transfixed and repelled him all at the same time (O'Driscoll 184-5). He ascribes a

hypnotic, Satanic effect to the movements of the cloak in the *corrida* (185) and we see these

impressions recounted in the image of Goya's painting bouts: "[he] flourished/The stained cape

of his heart as history charged". The very depiction of the artistic fervour ascribed to Goya is

something that Heaney admires, yet as it is indicated in "Exposure" (*North* 67-8), he feels

incapable of following. The ending of the poem is a conclusive example of associative

ekphrasis(Robillard 63): after experiencing a series of associative and multidirectional facets of

Goya's paintings, the poet comments on the general impression and the style of the painter, as

well as the importance of his art to the world. As such no painting in particular is referred to while the artist is associated with a particularly potent and dangerous mythos, that of the toreador.

Heaney and the Intermediality of Cultural Memory

Astrid Erll's insight into intermedial dynamics proves quite useful in defining ekphrastic relations in poetry because, while it distinguishes between the visual and the verbal and recognizes their different modes of communication, it also allows for a certain fuzziness of borders between media; she acknowledges that medial traces are preserved when an object of cultural memory is transposed in a newer medial context (Erll "Literature" 392). In the analysis of the three paintings we have charted the stronger or weaker (but more heavily interpretive) imprint of past visual media on Heaney's poetry. In Heaney's own Goya museum, the poet has the ability to re-represent paintings with various degrees of accuracy by making use of existing schemata to suggest the way that the Troubles encroach on life. "The Shootings of The Third of May" depicts the fear that authority cannot protect civilians, and what is more, it threatens them with extinction at any sign of public unrest - this applies, of course, to the Revolt of 1808 and to the Falls riots and the exaggerated violence of its suppression. In "Saturn Devouring his Sons", horrific multidirectionality illustrates the dire (almost pornographic) aesthetic consequences of allowing the past to gobble up the present by sacrificing the young. Goya's paintings are

recontextualized by transposing them to one of the poet's own mythical structures as we have

seen in Heaney's engagement with "Fight with Cudgels" and "Saturn Devouring His Sons". The

specific ekphrastic judgements finally qualify the artist's style and extrapolate on the desirable

role of art in society in the poem's last lines. The three paintings are, however, not just passive

blank screens which allow the poet to project what he wants on them. Especially where the first

two are concerned, one feels how they are reactivated in their circulation and how they re-enter

the canon of "working memory" while retaining their specificity (Aleida Assmann). The visual

works, like texts are also subject to the mechanisms that Halbwachs defined as the multiple

frameworks of memory since we witness the journeys they take as they are unmoored from the

framework of Spanish national identity and are reappropriated within a Northern Irish and even

cosmopolitan group identity. Goya's paintings are stratified *lieux de mémoire*, yet unlike the

monuments Nora conceives of, these are simultaneously robust in their circulation as European

art and affixed to a museum. Rigney suggests that the dynamics of cultural memory might be

subject to a paradoxical mechanism: as soon as something is officially commemorated, it might

be licensed to enter into oblivion (Rigney "Plenitude" 12). Paradoxically, as soon as it becomes a

monument or a touchstone, the discussion around it might fade. By expertly commenting on their

original message and context Heaney's poems reactivate the monuments of visual art by

recontextualizing them both from an art-lovers' perspective and from a personal perspective in

an intimate troubled reading . It is the monumental paintings which trigger the hope that art

might be a potent agent in the fight with terrifying history. Yet, art's potential of circulation might require its own baggage in this deal: some of its visual specificity must stick in the verbal representation, some features might be inextricable from their original context. These then reflect in the verbal reframing of the visual sources.

As a coda to my demonstration,the modes of ekphrasis in "Summer 1969" are not Heaney's only engagement with the art world and verbal re-framing. His artistic repertoire ranges from Bruegel to Mondrian by way of Matisse and Cezanne. For instance, the prologue to *North* contains a less conventional ekphrastic approach to Pieter Breugel the Elder's "Seasonal Paintings" cycle in the poem "The Seed Cutters". The poet sets himself the task of creating a detailed fresco of windswept agricultural work (preparing seed potatoes) set in Northern Ireland and inspired by Bruegel's technique. The season is relevant since the months of May/June, precisely when Heaney's potato seed preparation should occur, are missing from the six paintings representing the seasons that Breugel painted. Heaney tries to imitate the style of Bruegel's seasonal paintings to alert the readers and make them take a step back to observe the heterogeneous voices of the conflict that he will explore in *North*. "The Seed Cutters" is reminiscent of the two other "Flemish" poems in *Wintering Out* "The Wool Trade" and "Linen Town" which express the ardent wish for peace and balance by using Osip Mandelstam's metaphor of Brussels lace to create a field of force which can bind and contain all the differences and similarities of the Irish world (O'Brien 109). Heaney apostrophizes Bruegel by invoking his

shade to assess his poetic work and to confirm whether his style coincides with that of the Old

Master: "Brueghel,/You'll know if I can get them true" (*North* xi). The reason Heaney uses the

painter in this particular poem is to certify to the need of distancing himself from his subjects:

"They seem hundreds of years away" and also to paint them devoid of name and religious

affiliation: "compose the frieze/With all of us there, our anonymities" (xi). At the same time the

care with which the poem treats the details of the poem, how he zooms in on the scene of the

peasants preparing seed potatoes for planting is reminiscent of Brueghel's organization of space

in his paintings. Since the painting described is an imaginary artistic object in the museum of

words (Robillard and Heffernan call this "notional ekphrasis"[11]), it cannot refer to an actual

visual depiction, however, it points at an important concept in memory studies, namely that of

modelling (Rigney "Plenitude" 21). Heaney's vignette takes Bruegel's style as the schemata on

which he mounts his depiction of Northern Irish peasant spring, showing again how cultural

memory helps emergent memory become articulated in the public sphere.

Four other telling examples of Heaney's ekphrastic practices can be found in *Station*

Island in the poems "Sheelagh na Gig", "Remembering Malibu" (in the miscellaneous collection

of sketches at the beginning), with "An Artist" and "Old Icons" as a diptych from the "Sweeney

Redivivus" series. "Sheelagh na Gig" contemplates a symbol of pre-Christian fertility found on

several churches in England and Scotland as an artistic object of mystery and defiance.

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[11] A term coined by John Hollander in *The Gazer's Spirit* (4).

"Remembering Malibu" is a comparison between the mental image that the poet had of the

Pacific Ocean, the encounter with the actual Pacific in Malibu, California, and the Atlantic vistas

of Western Ireland from the Skellig Islands. The mild chill of the Pacific is compared to "early

Mondrian and his dunes/misting towards the ideal forms" (*Station Island* 30). Visual art once

again inflects poetry in "An Artist" which is a description of Cezanne's perfectionism and his

frenzied search for artistic excellence. "An Artist" is a subtle and engaging ars poetica - it

suggests a possibility of working-through the traumatic time of the Troubles by commenting on

the passion and stubbornness of Cezanne, who ardently worked out the essence of colour in his

painting. In some way this poem echoes the frenzied end in "Summer 1969" by suggesting that

art can be an agent of change. On the contrary, the next poem which should be seen as the

dialogic counterpart of the previous, "Old Icons" centers on the impossibility of escaping the

damaging visual symbols of Irish victimhood and nihilistic existence in Heaney's mental gallery.

This poem is a meditation on how "timeless" images of violence and corruption inflect the

structures of poetic memory through notional ekphrastic practices.

As a conclusion to this investigation into the varied ways of ekphrastic engagement of

Heaney's poetry, I want to propose that ekphrasis be considered as a mechanism of cultural

memory in poetry. It was shown that ekphrasis, far from being a simple description of a painting,

is often a vehicle for meditation on the role of art in politics and the position of the poet in the

world at large. I have proposed that the circulation of paintings and cultural artifacts can be

conceived as caught between monumental commemoration and contextual morphing. The

relation between the visual and the verbal has been explored by pointing out tendencies of

narrativization in the poetic medium of the visual artifact. The verbal reframing or visual

remediation that ekphrasis proposes have proven efficient tools of multidirectional memory and

have illustrated the intermedial impact of this theory. What is more, ever since the story of

Simonides and the memory palace, mnemonic techniques have been connected to visualization,

then why should cultural memory not be strongly connected to the processes of repetition and

reframing of visual artifacts that some contemporary poetry proposes? Heaney himself

comments on the regrettable complication and demise of the connection between mnemonics and

visual strategies in section xix from part 2 of his cycle "Squarings":

> "Memory as a building or a city,
>
> . . . .
>
> Ancient textbooks recommended that
>
> Familiar places be linked deliberately
>
> With a code of images. You knew the portent
>
> In each setting, you blinked and concentrated. (*Seeing Things* 75)

Inspired by Heaney's ekphrastic engagements, cultural memory studies could then blink and

concentrate on the visual interactions that poetry specializes in.

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Chapter 3

"The Impact of Translation[1]": Heaney's Sweeney, Heaney's Dante

This chapter will argue that more attention ought to be paid to the way in which activities of

translation inflect multidirectional texts and, in particular, Heaney's heavily intertextual poetry.

New translations are also part of cultural memory dynamics and circulation since they imply that

a text is recovered from the archive and brought into the canon of "working memory" (Aleida

Assmann "Canon" 101). Rigney and Erll mention *en passant* that translating certain texts is also

part of the dynamics of memory used by emerging groups to consolidate their identity[2] and make

their specific plights heard by relating these texts implicitly to certain shared assumptions of a

common past (Erll "Travelling Memory" 9) (Rigney "Plenitude" 20). Translation shows

precisely that national identities are carefully constructed and they need models and guidelines

possibly imported from other spaces to define themselves by. I understand translation in the

narrow sense of a text being transposed from one language to another, but also in its wider

connotation of the ensemble of movement, circulation and appropriation of texts happening

globally and locally. For Heaney, translation is another type of engagement that drives his

intertextual attempts at understanding the Troubles and has been a staple of his intellectual

activities from the 1970s[3] onwards. He has translated and edited a collection of Eastern European

poetry(1985) which includes poems by Czeslaw Milosz, Zbigniew Herbert, Osip Mandelstam

and Joseph Brodsky; he has produced a widely praised translation of the medieval Irish epic

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[1] "The Impact of Translation" is an essay by Heaney included in his critical volume *The Government of the Tongue* (1980)

[2] See Jan Assmann "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity" (130)

[3] First version of Sweeney Astray was produced in 1972 (O'Driscoll 152)

poem *Buile Suibhne* (under the title of *Sweeney Astray*)(1983) from Old Irish into English, which

we will analyse in this chapter; he has engaged with the Greek classics by producing a creative

translation, or "version" as he calls it, of Sophocles' *Philoctetes,* called *The Cure at Troy* (1992),

and an adaptation of his *Antigone,* titled *The Burial at Thebes* (2005)[4]. Heaney's most acclaimed

translation is the Modern English version of the Old English anonymous epic *Beowulf*, which has

become an instant classic in the English-speaking world[5]. As Heaney's translation activities

intensify in his later years, the citationality of his poems also increases.

Given the focus of my study on the evolution of the poet's intertextuality over three of

Heaney's volumes, this meditation on the multidirectional influence of translation in Heaney's

troubled poetics will be illustrated in *Station Island* and *Field Work*. The impact of the

"homegrown" translation of *Buile Suibhne* will be proved by analyzing "The First Flight", one of

the "Sweeney Redivivus" poems which resulted from the prolonged engagement afforded by the

translation. It will clarify the complex manner in which Heaney adopts the persona of Sweeney,

the mad bird-king to voice tart concerns about the political situation. Among the effects of

Heaney's engagement with Sweeney is that the poet's persona acquires an uncharacteristic

vehemence and can respond in a caustic, mocking manner to the unfavourable Northern Irish

reception of *North* (O'Driscoll 262). Next, I turn to Heaney's persistent engagement with the

(foreign) intertext of Dante's *Divine Comedy* which is particularly intense in *Field Work* and

Station Island. I will use Heaney's selective translation of the "Ugolino" episode (parts of Canto

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[4] These combine the context of the Troubles with the original plot of the plays.The chorus is used as a source of explicit (*The Cure at Troy*) or implicit (*The Burial at Thebes*) comparison with the Troubles (O'Brien 118-126)

[5] This translation is notable because of its use of regional Ulster English and Hiberno-English words to make the idiom of Beowulf at once strange to the Standard English speaker and closer to Old English because of the dialectal persistence of Middle English idioms in Ulster English. (this is also discussed in detail by O'Brien (126-132))

XXXII and XXXIII) from the *Inferno* to explain Heaney's peculiar appropriative translation practice and show how it is integrated among the elegies of the *Field Work*. I will briefly reflect on how it relates intertextually to the "ghostly colloquies" (Hart 159) of "Station Island".

"Heaney" Astray

The multidirectional impact of translation as cultural memory practice can be seen in the intertextual echoes of the *Divine Comedy* and *Buile Suibhne* both in the individual poems and at a global level in the two volumes scrutinized here.These two intertexts are consistently present in the two volumes as several critics have conclusively proven in their exegeses echoes of Dante and Sweeney[6] in Heaney's verse, respectively. The combination of local attachment and global resonance illustrates the intense layering of cultural memory, a main trait of this particular period in Heaney's creation. Dante's Catholic lyrical masterpiece is often counterbalanced with Sweeney's delirious mistrust of religion and authority: this combination serves to properly illustrate the tensions and focal points of the Troubles in *Field Work* and *Station Island*.

The Sweeney intertext with its careful details of space, place and vegetation of Ireland, England and Scotland "beds" Heaney (*Wintering Out* "Traditions" 21) in the British Isles and in their multiple local and vernacular traditions. Setting the Heaney/Sweeney persona in the British Isles introduces subtle objections to imperialism, whether religious or otherwise. Heaney declared his engagement with Sweeney primarily "topographical" since many of Sweeney's places of peregrination coincide with or neighbour on several of the poet's home places and

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[6] See Maria Christina Fumagalli, especially the chapters "Breaking the Tribe's Complicity" (81-106) and "Out of Avernus" (131-158) and Bernard O'Donoghue "The Limbo of Lost Words"(88-108) and "Heaney's Ars Poetica" (135-152), as well as Neil Corcoran "Opened Ground: Field Work" (83-109) and "Writing a Bare Wire: Station Island"(110-134).

consequently mediate the translational identification with the mad-king(*Sweeney Astray* iii). A reader of Heaney's from outside the target audience for this translation[7] would also be introduced to the specificities and sonorities of this old Gaelic song including the *dinnseanchas*[8] tradition, while keeping in mind the intention of the translator to prove its relevance to contemporary politics.

By transposing *Buile Suibhne* from Gaelic into English the poet proves two crucial assumptions about memory that also underwrite the concept of multidirectionality:

1. That memory, like the English language itself, cannot be owned solely by a group of people who have "crafted" it: the translated *Sweeney* travels to London where it is published and made available to the colonizer as well as their Protestant descendants in Ulster. At the same time, it participates in the practice of writing back to the empire in a constructive and interesting way by questioning the idea of ownership of a language and national idiom for remembrance[9].

2. That memory is a type of relational working through occasioned by the (translated) other as Heaney declares in his notes on translating *Buile Suibhne*:

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[7] Heaney himself expressed the hope that Sweeney might help mitigate the Protestant bias towards Catholics and explain the situation in a more transparent way (Vendler 102)

[8] Middle Irish poetic and mnemonic tradition of writing descriptive origin stories for placenames. O'Donoghue points out that several of Sweeney's laments and songs participate in this tradition , and while Heaney's translation faithfully renders these, "the diction [of Sweeney Astray] is decidedly plain-style English throughout" (90). The Sweeney intertext, therefore, participates in a sort of joint *dinnseanchas* of regional identity which affirms the translocal specificities of Heaney's project and translates them into English.

[9] This complex of ideas is always on Heaney's mind, whether in the biting "Traditions" of *Wintering Out* "We [the Irish] are to be proud of our Elizabethan English"(21) or the pieces of advice given by the figure of Joyce in "Station Island" section XII "Who cares,'/he [Joyce] jeered, 'any more? The English language/belongs to us." (*Station Island* 93)

I wanted to deliver a work of imagination that could read universally as the thing-in-itself but which would also sustain those extensions of meaning that our disastrously complicated predicament at home [in Ulster] made both urgent and desirable. (qtd Fumagalli 152)

To illustrate how these things are actually performed, a look into the background story of this translation is in order.

Sweeney Astray tells the story of a Celtic king in the 7th century, who is offended by the plans of a Catholic monk, St. Ronan, to build a church in his realm. In a fit of rage, the king throws the monk's psalter into a nearby lough and insults him. The psalter is later recovered unharmed from the water by an enchanted otter. During the battle of Moira, in 637, Sweeney also kills a follower of St. Ronan who was dousing the king in holy water to bless him for the upcoming battle. The saint curses Sweeney, who loses his mind and is transfigured into a bird. Most of the epic tells the story of his wanderings in frenzied bird form through the North and South of Ireland, Scotland and even England, unable to trust his own kin, obsessed with betrayal and penitent, feeding off berries and fresh grass, perched in trees, occasionally hounded by demons and other nuisances – all the while writing poetry. Heaney calls the variations in tone and subject of Sweeney's songs "a primer of lyric genres - laments, dialogues, litanies, rhapsodies, curses" (*Sweeney* iii). Sweeney is eventually redeemed by telling his story to a hermit, St. Mullins, who baptizes him, records his story and helps him restore his sanity before his untimely death.

Heaney started translating Sweeney in 1972 on a whim after moving to Glanmore in County Wicklow and planned to adapt it into a children's radio play (qtd in O'Driscoll 152).

This initial endeavour was characterized by the blank verse quatrain he had innovated for *Wintering Out* (O'Driscoll 151), in disregard of the formal traits and language precision of the medieval text. Nevertheless, the form and tone of this first attempt eventually proved unsatisfactory for the poet. This first draft was eventually abandoned (in 1972) due to Heaney's sense of overwriting the original by unjustly appropriating it for political and personal purposes. He complains of "a strong sense of bending the text" to the present political circumstances, rather than "earning his rhyme" (Hart 152). This draft was revised seven years later to a six-syllable verse form "with an Elizabethan air to it" consciously aspiring to "the rhythmic contract of …iambic pentameter and long line which implies audience" (qtd. in O'Donoghue 79), instead of the heptasyllabic Old Irish diction of the original version (79). O'Donoghue notes that adjustments in form were not made to forego Irish tradition, but to help with the modernization of a medieval text and translational flow, a quality widely admired in Heaney's later *Beowulf* translation. At any rate, the *deibidhe* rhyme of the original is preserved (the Celtic model of rhyme that bards often used) echoing Heaney's adoption of it in *Wintering Out* (79-80). A second, more successful engagement with the medieval text followed in 1982.To avoid the previous sense of being unfaithful to the original and bending the text to the newer political circumstances with references to the Troubles and direct parallels, the poet translated *Buile Suibhne* by paying renewed attention to the form. However, the political parallels and the mask of Sweeney were so pervasive that the political comments and identifications resurfaced in the brief appearance that the mad bird-king makes in "The Strand at Lough Beg" (*Field Work*), in his haunting presence in "The King of the Ditchbacks" (the first part of *Station Island*), most importantly the embodiment of a poetic alter ego heralded in "Sweeney Redivivus".

Henry Hart convincingly describes the complex attitudes of identification and differentiation that underwrite Heaney's prolonged relationship with Sweeney (137-158), which he concludes is somewhat paradoxical. Multidirectionally Heaney, on the one hand, identifies with Sweeney's flight through the need to rise above the pressing sectarianism of contemporary politics while he, on the other hand, feels complicitous with the violence perpetrated by his tribe and paralyzed, unable to take flight. In his introduction to the translation, Heaney outlines the reasons for his fascination with Sweeney: he saw the hero not just as a political figure niggled by religion encroaching upon his daily life, but also more abstractly as "a figure of the artist, displaced, guilty, assuaging himself by his utterance" (*Sweeney Astray* ii). For Heaney, Sweeney also embodies "an aspect of the quarrel between free creative imagination and the constraints of religious, political, domestic obligation" (ii). Heaney's most intense identification with the Sweeney persona hinges on poetry and on the aspiration of being able to rise above problematic ethical situations. Nevertheless, the poet is always careful to declare that his Sweeney poems are dramatic monologues rather than autobiographical statements[10] (qtd in O'Driscoll 261).

Another important aspect of Sweeney's story for Heaney is the suggestion of conviviality and mobility of the bird-king character: "the easy sense of cultural affinity with both western Scotland and Southern Ireland [i]s exemplary for all men and women in contemporary Ulster" (ii). The (mostly) unproblematic transnational wanderings and the naive conviviality that Sweeney practices in his flight is a desire that Heaney, through his translation, hopes to instill in the midst of the sectarian conflict. This wish forms a counterpoint to Sweeney's alienation from his home and his constant heckling by his enemies. The way Sweeney is ousted from his

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[10] Just as he had remarked about his most attacked poems in *North*, for example "Bog Queen", "Antaeus" or "Punishment" (O'Driscoll 159)

favourite nesting places and his intense suffering is a sentiment familiar to the readers of *Wintering Out* and its fantasies of peace being constantly trampled by history. As a final note to his translation and an additional multidirectional touch, Heaney suggests that the medieval epic might be the fruit of transnational borrowing: "the Irish invention may well have been a development of a British original, vestigially present in the story of the madman called Alan (Sections 46-50)" (ii). This final suggestion seems to refer to the English myth of Merlin or the Madman in the Woods: indeed, Hart also points out that this is one of the traditions which has inspired the Sweeney lyric (150).

Field Work and especially *Station Island* are trying to move away from the delirious multidirectional paralysis in *North* and *Wintering Out*. It seems that the multidirectionality of the latter is slightly more generative and transformative of the political situation than the former. Sweeney's voice is interesting for the evolution of Heaney's response to the Troubles because it allows the poet to (temporarily) multidirectionally take flight on the wings of the bird-king and contemplate the political turmoil in Northern Ireland from a distance. This is an important shift from the poems in *North*, which, although heavily intertextual and multidirectional, do not manage to transform the situation ethically, as Rothberg hoped (308), but only to richly diagnose various types of paralysis and causes of sectarian violence across the ages. Poems such as "Exposure", "Whatever You Say, Say Nothing" and "The Unacknowledged Legislator's" analyse and contextualize diverse artistic and political blockages, from "censorship" (prescriptive aesthetics of the Troubles), the inability to respond publicly to sectarian violence ("Summer 1969" and "Whatever You Say Say Nothing") to the unhealthy obsession with land and possession of the Northern Irish Catholics ("Antaeus", "Antaeus and Hercules) etc. As an important aside, it should be noted that the many intertextual multidirectional poems in *North*

seem to indicate that multidirectionality might not always produce a new ethical perspective on a conflictual situation (in our case The Northern Irish Troubles), but it remains a very useful tool to imaginatively illustrate the competitive dead-ends of civil war situations and nationalist conflicts since its comparisons provide useful screens of diagnostic and reflection. In addition by presenting the deadlocks and augmenting them intertextually, the poet seems to invite the reader to ethical action and transformation where the lyrical I is paralyzed. Conversely, the translational (multidirectional) mask of Sweeney allows the poet to temporarily rise above the blockages and paralyses of the sectarian conflict and even formulate some much-needed critical *apologias*.

In the game of masks of the "Sweeney Redivivus" sequence and the "Station Island" dialogues, the poems reckon with alterity more efficiently and express some therapeutic anger in contrast to the blocked and speechless mood of the two previous volumes. Most notably, it is through translation that this therapeutic anger is expressed - a turn to cultural memory as panacea seems to be one of the strategies in which Heaney trusts more and more in his later years. The cultural memory text with its specific translational engagement is updated and appropriated in a new context and serves a different purpose from its original one. Still it retains certain traits from its former embodiments, as Astrid Erll contends (Erll "Literature" 394). The energetic perspective of the doomed Sweeney pervades the third part of *Station Island* and metaphors of flight and of being airborne abound in "Sweeney Redivivus".

Consequently, the process of responsible takeoff and the specifics of Heaney's/Sweeney's condition merit some in-depth analysis in "The First Flight". A secondary aim of my reading is to illustrate how translation allows the tormented and boxed in imagination of the poet to take flight. It must be mentioned that this is not the only time thatflight and poetic

freedom occur in translation in Heaney's work. Part XI and Part VI of "Station Island" serve similar purposes as Thurston and Corcoran note (174) (121): the activity of translation somehow sets the soul free. The purpose of my demonstration is, on the one hand, to stress that translation should be considered a type of multidirectional activity liable to produce intertextual effects. On the other hand, the ensuing analysis will show how Heaney's practicing poetic voice gains more Sweeney-like confidence through vicarious identification to refute his own critics.This leads to a cultural memory interaction between translation and original poetry. As a multidirectional screen, *Sweeney Astray* also helps to articulate the emergent aesthetics of the Troubles.

The First Flight

It was more sleepwalk than spasm
yet that was a time when the times
were also in spasm -

the ties and the knots running through us
split open
down the lines of the grain

As I drew close to pebbles and berries,
the smell of wild garlic, relearning
the acoustic of frost

and the meaning of woodnote,
my shadow over the field
was only a spin-off,

my empty place an excuse
for shifts in the camp, old rehearsals
of debts and betrayal

Singly they came to the tree
with a stone in each pocket
to whistle and bill me back in

and I would collide and cascade
through leaves when they left,
my point of repose knocked askew.

I was mired in attachment
until they began to pronounce me
a feeder off battlefields

so I mastered new rungs of the air
to survey out of reach
their bonfires on hills, their hosting

and fasting, the levies from
Scotland
as always, and the people of art
diverting their rhythmical chants
to fend off the onslaught of winds

I would welcome and climb

at the top of my bent. (*Station Island* 102-3)

First of all, the term "flight" in the title is ambiguous: in the context of Sweeney's bird-form it could mean the action of flying, but it could also be read as "escape" or "elopement", which connote Heaney's preoccupation with desertion and willed self-exile (relevant for the poet, as already shown). Ambiguity is a main trait in "Sweeney Redivivus" and it could be read as the tension between vicarious poetic identification with Sweeney and the acknowledgment of radical difference between the lyrical I and the bird-man. It surfaces in the opening stanza of "The First Flight", which reinforces the ambiguity of the title without defining the action decisively and describes what the mysterious activity feels like instead. This type of metonymical description is a constant trait of Heaney's poetry. Rigney suggests that the vicariousness of all cultural memory should be accepted as *de rigueur* in order for the discourse on memory to better acknowledge its constructed character ("Plenitude" 14). Heaney's oscillation between identification and differentiation from Sweeney could then be perceived similarly to Rigney's move, as an acknowledgement of the constructed nature of this voice.

Qualifying the mysterious activity (the flight?) as "[m]ore sleepwalk than spasm" the poem indicates that this is Sweeney's rather than Heaney's typically cautious voice. Sleepwalking also points back to the haunting, nocturnal, "Dr. Jekyll" quality that he ascribes to himself-as-Sweeney's double in "King of the Ditchbacks": "He was depending on me as I hung out on the limb of a translated phrase like a youngster dared out to an alder branch over the whirlpool. Small dreamself in the branches"(*Station Island* 57). The somnambulant ease with which the words are turned out in this poem is ascribed to translation and its dependencies. Heaney calls this tempo his "sprint mode" and characterizes the Sweeney poems as inspired and instinctive poems (qtd. in O'Driscoll 262). These are less overwrought than the ones in *North*

and tend to be written as sprightly dramatic monologues closer to the "bare wire" quality aspired to by Heaney in *Station Island* (qtd in Corcoran 110).

Through the double vision of translation, the next verse "yet that was a time when the times/were also in spasm" could be read both as referring to the current Northern Irish context of Heaney's poems and to the advent of more formal Christianity in Ireland (the context of *Buile Suibhne*). By translational juxtaposition, the situation in contemporary Northern Ireland and its spastic prolonged sectarian troubles is superimposed on the period that the Sweeney epic is set, when Christianity was more programmatically disseminated in Celtic Ireland. Consequently, the spasm could be seen as the imposition of the more centralized authority of the church on the sovereignty of the Celtic state: the religious power is symbolized by St. Ronan's attempt to establish a church on Sweeney's turf[11]. Sweeney's madness might represent an evasion of authority and eremitical exile, rather than an accursed driving out. This sort of comparison is closer in connotation to the way Heaney discusses his escape to Glanmore Cottage over the south border as a retreat from twisted politics and obligations. The imperative for Heaney to leave was caused by the "obols" imposed upon his tongue (to borrow a phrase from "Fosterage"), in other words, the repeated suggestions for him to adopt a certain type of realist leftist aesthetics and take sides as an ethically responsible move. Meanwhile, this is why some activist poets as well as the critics of *North* accused the cautious Heaney of complacency and irresponsibility for failing to confront the Troubles head-on. These interdictions are described as disintegrating in the

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[11] According to Hart, the Sweeney character and his organic isolation in the trees might be associated with the very early religious hermits or *gealta* in Ireland and England who practiced a form of penitential and self-sufficient devotion isolated in nature (the Catholic Church disapproved of this, however): "St. Patrick's arrival in Ireland around A.D. 432 and St. Augustine's in Kent in A.D. 597 and the Synod of Whitby in A.D. 663 . . .were all attempts to crush the eremitical tradition in the British Isles in conformity with the church of Rome" (Hart 147).

second stanza with the image of "ties and knots" bursting. Nevertheless, if one thinks of

Heaney's poetry through the prism of multidirectionality, a more sophisticated and ethically

responsible answer can be derived out of the cosmopolitan and diverse responses he has provided

us with. Then the very dry aesthetics of political critique practiced by some of his

contemporaries could be re-envisaged or corrected.

The next two stanzas describe a return to specifically Irish landscapein incredibly lyrical

language reminiscent of Caliban's description of his island as full of noises in *The Tempest*[12]: As

I drew close to pebbles and berries,/the smell of wild garlic, relearning/the acoustic of frost//and

the meaning of the woodnote" (102). The delightful imagery is directly reminiscent of several

sections in *Sweeney Astray* especially the paradisiacal episodes in Glen Bolcain where Sweeney

experiences his most poetical airborne moments of peace. Especially here, the voice of the lyrical

I translates clearly as the voice of Sweeney in his moments of natural sublime[13].

"The First Flight" intertextually refers to the multiple wonderful verses Sweeney

dedicates to Glen Bolcain, but there are several additional points of articulation between Heaney

and Sweeney in this multidirectional translational duality. As Helen Vendler points out,

Sweeney's organic voice is not just a return to nature, but also a device through which the poet

echoes the pastoral preoccupations in *Death of A Naturalist* (Vendler 26). Hence, "Sweeney

Redivivus" is not just a recontextualization of the Sweeney epic, but also the revisitation of a

poetic site of memory. Nevertheless, the exulting Dylan Thomas-like style that launched Heaney,

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[12] In *Field Work* Caliban's famous monologue is referred to in the poem "Triptych" in part II "Sibyl" where an oracular voice indicting the incubation of violence in Northern Ireland declares: "Our island is full of comfortless noises" (*Field Work* 5). Hart also notes that Caliban could be a mute intertextual figure for this poem in particular (150)

[13] See sections 17 and 27 of *Sweeney Astray* for similarly delightful descriptions of Glen Bolcain (13);(23)

is tainted by paramilitary intrusion in almost all of the Sweeney poems (as will be shown later on) [14]. And whereas, the poems from the debut collection were speaking from within the rural community, the Sweeney poems adopt a critical bird's eye view of it.

The revisitation of personal poetic sites of memory through translation should serve as an argument in favour of multidirectionality, whose power of articulation can be gauged in this particular example. To support the translational comparison, Sweeney's lyrics in the epic poem alternate between deep nostalgia for being part of a human community and niggling painful mistrust of his kin. In the same way, Heaney's own voice in *Field Work* and *Station Island* seems to fluctuate between nostalgia and apprehension. This particular dilemma confronting Sweeney also finds its expression in the lush sonnets in *Field Work*, the "Glanmore Sonnets" - a cycle of poems where domestic bliss and love of natural landscape in isolation blend with worries of exclusion from the community of Northern Irish poets and the guilt of fleeing from the dangerous "real" life of the Troubles. In this way, Glanmore can be seen as Glen Bolcain in its embodiment of lushness and sanctuary, translating Heaney's personal site of memory into Sweeney's *as a cultural memory monument*.

Sweeney's literal flight from the face of authority and his exile are read in the next stanzas as opportunities for his people to squabble and foment intrigue: "my shadow over the field/was only a spin-off,//my empty place an excuse/for shifts in the camp, old rehearsals of debts and betrayal" (*Station Island* 102). This stanza is spoken from Sweeney's bird's eye view, but it can equally be read as a multidirectional comparison between the king's mad peregrinations and Heaney's own defection to the south, to Glanmore. There is a second ethical

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[14] A good example of this tendency can also be detected in "In The Beech" and "The First Kingdom".

association to be made with Heaney's troubled Northern Ireland in the usage of "camp". Here it might refer to the camps for internees (already touched upon in chapter 1). The connotation of bondage and imprisonment seems to persist in the next three stanzas as the lines connecting the artist to his community constrict him tighter and tighter[15]. Equally, the idea of camp might be a critique of the intense camp thinking that pervades sectarian politics and the British army camps set to quell paramilitary activity in the area.

It is significant that in an interview with Dennis O'Driscoll, Heaney defines the Sweeney translation project as "spin-off work" and this syntagm reappears in the "Sweeney Redivivus" poem analyzed here (O'Driscoll 168). In the interview, the translation is seen as the chance to do some secondary cultural work besides teaching or writing poetry, but this spin-off activity also eventually intrudes on the poetry, his principal preoccupation. This process also illustrates the dynamics of textual engagement at work in Heaney's translation. It is not just the act of transposition itself entailed in translational activities, but a process of articulation seems to be at work in this as well (a concept underlying multidirectionality): the Sweeney text helps Heaney, the poet, articulate criticism about the civil war and its political maneuvering while Heaney's quatrains and short verse give Sweeney a more unencumbered modern existence[16]. Rothberg sees multidirectional comparisons as possible screens for articulation of traumatic histories or difficult political situations(): the Sweeney mask in "Sweeney Redivivus" helps Heaney gain a

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[15] This sentiment is also echoed in the first poem of *Station Island*. There Sweeney appears uncannily as "King of the Ditchbacks" (not part of "Sweeney Redivivus"). In the poem, the lyrical I, a compound between the poet and the bird-king, is caught in a net: "they dressed my head in a fishnet/and plaited leafy twigs through meshes/so my vision was a bird's/at the heart of a thicket" (*Station Island* 57)

[16] O'Donoghue concludes that Heaney's translation of the *Buile Suibhne* makes the epic more lithe and accessible to a public potentially put off by the more complex Gaelic syntax of scholarly translations such as that of O'Keefe (one of Heaney's reference texts in his translation) (90)

new viewpoint on his problem of articulating the Troubles in a faithful and critical manner. This happens as a consequence of his intertextual comparison (resulting from the translation activity) between the context and condition of the king from *Sweeney Astray* and his own traumatic condition reckoning with a violent civil war. As an aside, Heaney's translation also helps with articulation: it helps the medieval text cross temporal boundaries by being updated and re-articulated in a modern context.

The "empty place", which causes shifts in the camp could be read as referring to an episode in the medieval epic, where Sweeney meets his wife who had taken up with one of his cousins after Sweeney's defeat and transformation. The human complications inherent in the shifting of camps is narrated in sections 31-33 and is the first of the subsequent series of meetings of the mad-king with people he had formerly trusted, only to flee in horror and get more mired in doubt and mistrust at their professions of good-faith. Sweeney's second separation from his wife happens by the intervention of brute force: the arrival of two armies in the camp where she now lived. The military manoeuvering scares Sweeney and sends him off wandering in his madness again away from his beloved who pines for him. The idea of the intrusion of armed forces into poetry is a motif echoed in several of Heaney's other poems such as part IV of "Whatever You Say, Say Nothing", "Toome Road", "In the Beech" and "After a Killing" - all of these poems dramatize the violent intervention of political conflict in art. In the next stanza there is a reference to another episode from *Sweeney Astray* (sections 33-37) where the bird-king is tricked into falling out of his tree and taken back to Dal-Arie (his kingdom) in shackles.

The implication of shackling is compounded with that of being shut up, since "to bill" here might mean to tie the beaks of birds together after they have been caught and also to court someone

with sentimental words[17]. Remembering one of Heaney's readings of the medieval king as the figure of the artist caught in the battle between free creative imagination and political, ethical, familial constraints[18], the connotations of censorship, bondage and betrayal become more pronounced. The expanding nets of family and community become for Sweeney/Heaney lassoes or nooses which bring him back guilty from his enchanting natural ramblings. The political reality wakes the lyrical I from his reverie and disturbs his leafy nest. The intrusion makes manifest the extent to which the figure of Sweeney/the lyrical I is tied to his community of "traitors" (something he also addresses in the superbly ekphrastic "Old Icons"): he is stuck or "mired in attachment" (*Station Island* 102).

In the eighth stanza of "The First Flight", the strong attachment to place and community snaps when the artist is falsely accused of taking advantage of suffering to create his art:

I was mired in attachment

Until they began to pronounce me

a feeder off battlefields

so I mastered new rungs of the air

to survey out of reach

their bonfires on hills, … (102-3)

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[17] For OED definitions see http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/bill--2

[18] In the introduction to *Sweeney Astray* (ii)

For a moment, there seems to be less ambiguity about which is Heaney's mask and which Sweeney's voice. This particular stanza does not translate as intensely as the others the narrative of the mad king, but supplements the quandary of the Northern Irish poet and the lack of perspective civil war entails through the bird-like takeoff. It also prefigures the vitriolic mockery that Heaney, well-clothed in the Sweeney persona, spews at his critics and fellow Northern Irish writers in "The Scribes"[19]. The phrase "feeder off battlefields" retrospectively echoes Ciaran Carson's review in *The Honest Ulsterman* which reproached the poet for "abandoning his 'gift of precision' and accepting the crown of 'laureate of violence – a mythmaker, an anthropologist of ritual killing, an apologist for the 'situation'" (qtd in Hart 76-7). Nationalist critics, such as Desmond Fennell, have accused Heaney of being too complacent and saying nothing useful or inspiring in his poems responding to the Troubles in 1975 (qtd in Crofty 52). "Feeder" suggests passivity and plundering, rather than an active response to the battlefield.

To conclude, Sweeney is a therapeutic multidirectional screen where frustration and anger can be vented safely in the guise of a Celtic airborne Hamlet. Yet, the Sweeney figure and its translational (intertextual) therapy allows the figure of the lyrical I to gain an even wider perspective – the protracted accusation of art taking advantage of suffering, feeding off battlefields is what gives the shackled bird the final push into flight. Moreover, the flight is no longer a guilty escape into nature, but a lookout over the troubled situation. Something impossible to conceive in the paralyzed poems of *North* occurs here: while wearing Sweeney's mask, the poet can multidirectionally transcend the political tangle to some extent (by means of a textual monument recontextualized through "imaginary translation"). The "bonfires on hills" and

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[19] This feature is also noted by Vendler (100-1)

the "hosting and fasting" probably refer to the secret paramilitary and British military activity

happening in the Fews mountains, where Sweeney had fled. "Host" then should be read as

"military host": "the levies from Scotland" might refer to conscription and the colonization of

Ulster by Scottish "planters". But it might also refer to the preferential treatment that the Scottish

settlers had over the majority of native Irish Catholic population during colonization. "Host"

might then be interpreted as being Ulster who is the host to the colonizing parasites. The last and

next to last stanzas, however, reserve the most interesting insight that the Heaney/Sweeney voice

offers:

> . . . and the people of art
>
> diverting their rhythmical chants
>
> to fend off the onslaught of winds
>
> I would welcome and climb
>
> at the top of my bent. (*Station Island* 103).

Sweeney's freedom from attachment affords a moment of absolutely panoramic viewing of the

political world. Moreover, this detachment also encompasses the artistic world, where the

competitive model of boxing in and isolating art from life in containers, seems to reign supreme.

Rothberg himself rails against the idea of boxing memory in and creating artificial borders,

hence by undertaking defensive isolationist moves (18). In this last stanza the fellow artists are

mocked by Sweeney from up high: they are painted fighting Don Quixote's windmills, instead of

welcoming the current of inspiration and art. To sum up things, the useless efforts to fight the

times are presented here in contrast to Sweeney's multiply associative free peregrinations and

suffering. This recalls another of the traits of the Sweeney text mentioned by Heaney in his introduction to the translation: Sweeney's ease of habitation and his "cosmopolitan" communication with various other "nationalities" in his flights outside of Ireland and his disregard of borders. He flies from region to region in Ireland writing *dinnseanchas* poems and cursing his fate, to Scotland and even to England: the sad tune of exile loosens his tongue and sharpens his critical sense.

This last moment of airborne freedom is an exception to Heaney's usually restrained and measured tones which make this burst of poison and the previous natural enchantment flight delightful and precious. Only while cradled within the translated text, screened by the assumed identity of Sweeney, can the poet articulate such acerbic criticism. He is also is momentarily lifted by an upward waft from his world of worries and penitential interrogations depicted in *Station Island*. The interplay between translated text and original poems or versions is complex and multi-faceted in the "Sweeey Redivivus" poems, but consistent and responsibly assumed. This type of engagement is also characteristic of the inspiring generative influence that translation has on Heaney's poetry as I hope to be able to demonstrate in the next few lines.

Dante's Island

The other predominant intertext of *Field Work* (1979) and *Station Island* (1984) is that of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The lasting impression made on the poet by the Florentine bard materialized in cultural (memory) work around 1978 when he translated the "Ugolino" episode, which was subsequently included in *Field Work*. The next translational engagement Heaney has had with the *Commedia* was in 1982-3 when he decided he would try his hand at translating the whole masterpiece into English (Fumagalli 136). Unfortunately, Heaney's translation of Dante

was not as fortuitous or comprehensive as that of his Sweeney: he only translated four cantos

from the *Inferno* before abandoning the task claiming lack of sensibility and linguistic prowess in

Italian, as well as a less pragmatic failure, that of finding it hard to strike the balance between his

own poetic voice and Dante's complex and self-assured tone (qtd in Fumagalli 136). Although

Fumagalli reads *North* as a descent into Hell unconsciously similar to that in Dante's *Inferno*

(xii), I would disagree with her on this point, or counter that if there is some Dantean influence,

it is extremely weak and not necessarily relevant to the project of *North*. Nevertheless, Dante's

masterpiece has exerted enormous influence on Heaney's poetic work from the late 1970s

onwards. In a letter to Fumagalli, Heaney mentions that even though his desire to translate the

entire *Divine Comedy* never came to fruition, he trusts that his translation activities paid off in

"Station Island" (136). I would date, and almost all of Heaney's critics agree[20], Heaney's

intertextual interaction with Dante from *Field Work* onwards when the interaction intensified

with more direct quotation and modelling. Incidentally, this also corresponds with the time of his

first Dante translation (1978), the "Ugolino" episode (subsequently included in the volume). This

occurrence strengthens my thesis in this chapter that translation activities presage

multidirectional intertextual engagements in Heaney's poetic work. Indeed, the first explicit

creative poetic interactions with Dante's masterpiece occur in *Field Work*, which is riddled with

references, quotations, and the selective translation from Cantos 32 and 33 of the *Inferno*

"Ugolino". Dante's *Divine Comedy* makes its presence felt in "The Strand at Lough Beg",

which uses the end of canto I of *Purgatorio* explicitly and translates another bit to use for its

motto; in "An Afterwards" the poet's wife jokingly places her husband in the ninth circle of Hell

for abandoning his family for his art;Thomas Cromwell also ends up in a circle of the *Inferno* in

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[20] See O'Donoghue (83-7), Corcoran (86;94), Vendler (92-3)

"Leavings". Furthermore, in *Station Island* the engagement with Dante's *Divine Comedy*
intensifies even more as several poems either quote or refer to it: "The Loaning", "Shelf Life",
"Sandstone Keepsake" and section VI of "Station Island" all quote from the *Inferno*. In fact, the
whole cycle of poems is conceived as a descent into the *Inferno* as most of Heaney's critics have
noted[21]. This latter structural similarity can be considered a compelling example of modelling as
theorized by Rigney ("Dynamics" 351; "Plenitude" 21). For reasons of space, a close-reading of
the "Ugolino" translation will be foregone to dwell, instead, on the peculiar traits relevant to
further building the case for translation to be considered a step towards multidirectionality.

"Ugolino" is the last poem of *Field Work* and it may seem strange to use a translation as
the closing statement to a heterogeneous volume mainly centred around Heaney's elegies for the
victims of the Troubles and on the pastoral meditations in "The Glanmore Sonnets". However,
the translation serves two important purposes in the economy of the volume. First, it is placed in
counterpoint to the last elegy of *Field Work* "In Memoriam Francis Ledwige" commemorating
the ambivalent status of Francis Ledwige, an Irish poet and soldier who was killed in the First
World War fighting for the British while his Irish compatriots were clashing with the British to
earn their emancipation from the Empire. It is this implication of the poet seen as a figure ready
"to betray" country and sectarian allegiance/political faction that "Ugolino" picks up on, since
Dante meets the sinner in Antenora, the section of the ninth circle of Hell reserved for traitors of
nation, city or party (Durling 511). And, secondly, the translation provides a bridge between the
mourning of *Field Work* and the infernal "ghostly colloquies" (Hart 159) in "Station Island"
whose explicit use of the *Divine Comedy*, as mentioned earlier, constitutes an important scheme

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[21] See Michael Thurston (161-175), Helen Vendler(92), Maria Christina Fumagalli(131-158), Bernard
O'Donoghue(94), Neil Corcoran(114-116), Hart (159-166).

of articulation and model for the entire sequence. Here translation should also be interpreted as movement or mediation because it provides a go-between from one collection to the next and a point of articulation with the previous cycle of elegies in *Field Work*. Before going into a brief analysis of the way in which the translation subtly recontextualizes Dante's text, a brief summary of the episode seems to be in order.

In Cantos 32 and 33 the pilgrim listens to the story of a Pisan count, Ugolino, who had betrayed his political faction, the Ghibellines, in favour of a rival ruling family, the Guelfs. When the Guelfs fell out of favour, he tried to switch sides again and take over Pisa in the name of his former family. He was betrayed by his ally, Archbishop Ruggieri, and was locked in a tower together with his young sons. Ugolino's enemy ordered that they stopped being fed, the cell door be nailed shut and the key thrown into a river. The count and his young sons eventually died of starvation and the name of the tower they were locked into was changed into Torre di Fame (The Tower of Hunger) after their horrific death circumstances. Dante meets Ugolino with his head frozen in the ice of Antenora where the count is punished by constantly having to gnaw on the back of the head of Archbishop Ruggieri (soldered in the ice next to him). Horrified by such a sight, Dante asks the sinner to tell him his story in exchange for eternal infamy for the sinner's enemy. Ugolino obliges and at the end of the scene Dante rails against the inhumanity of the Pisan rulers who doled out justice to the traitor as they were wont to, but also unjustly sacrificed his family in their thirst for revenge.

Translating "Ugolino" is clearly an act of cultural memory creation. As Maria Christina Fumagalli shrewdly points out, "Ugolino" is one of the most translated episodes of Dante's *Inferno* and, in engaging with it, Heaney is also consciously writing himself into a long English

tradition of translating these two cantos (100-4). From Chaucer's adaptation of the episode in the

"Monk's Tale", to the eighteenth-century image of the count as an enduring tragic hero and

finally the nineteenth century "gothic" image of gruesome sinner Ugolino[22], Heaney's

contribution to this tradition is similar to the one he intends to make by translating Sweeney. He

subtly relocates this episode to Ireland and reads his contemporary circumstances slightly

vicariously through the prism of the translated text. Fumagalli remarks that Heaney supplies two

interesting touches to the text (100-105). First of all, he adds an Irish connotation to a

comparison with Dante: he writes that Ugolino's act of biting on the back of the skull of

Archbishop Ruggieri is comparable to the way a starving person gobbles up bread: "Gnawing at

him [Ruggieri's skull]…/like famine victim at a loaf of bread" (*Field Work* 60). "Famine victim"

is a peculiar detail and it could refer to the Great Irish Famine, a bloody colonial episode in the

history of oppressed Ireland[23] or might refer to the hunger strikers[24]. It must be stressed that

Dante's original line did not contain such a precise reference to "famine", in Durling's scholarly

translation, it reads: "and as bread was eaten by the starving, so the one/ above put his teeth to

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[22] Maria Christina Fumagalli undertakes a very interesting analysis of all interpretations of the "Ugolino" episode in English literature which is well-worth reading (93-8)

[23] The Great Potato Famine (1845-1849) was a period of mass starvation and subsequent immigration in Ireland when the potato crop (the main food crop of the poor) failed several years in a row due to a blight. It disadvantaged the Catholics primarily because they had severely restricted rights by the Penal Laws - they were not allowed to own land, they were not allowed to receive education, to enter professions or even to lease land. Consequently the Catholics were the poorest (majority) population in Ireland. The Great Famine is a very strong cultural memory event in Ireland and caused a massive exodus of Irish people to the United States. (see Encyclopedia Britannica for more information http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/294137/Irish-Potato-Famine)

[24] Several groups of suspected I.R.A. members were sent to internment camps in the early 1970s. The prisoners demanded that they be treated like political prisoners rather than regular felons and "campaigned" for this through desperate means, mostly by going on hunger strike in 1980-1981. Several of them died of starvation when the government refused to concede. The hunger-strikers have become iconic for the Troubles and their deaths were used as a pretext to intensify the sectarian violence. (See http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/hstrike/index.html for more detailed information)

the other" (Durling 505). This small addititon to Dante's text is in line with Heaney's impression in "Envies and Identifications: Dante and the Modern Poet" that "when poets turn to the great masters of the past, they turn to an image of their own creation, one which is likely to be a reflection of their own imaginative needs, their own artistic inclinations and procedures" (5).

A second addition to Dante's text occurs in the previous line, where Heaney translates the unusual Italian word "nuca" (the place where the brain meets the marrow right before the skull (Durling 530)) as "where the neck and head/are grafted to the fruit of the brain"[25] (*Field Work* 60). The translation thus adds an extra visual detail to the original coinage, it highlights the brain through the poetic formulation and omits the nape. He extends this metaphor a few lines later by adding another image which is not part of the original word-for-word repertoire "So the berserk Tydeus gnashed and fed/Upon the severed head of Menalippus/*As if it were some spattered carnal melon.*" (60, emphasis added). Fumagalli and Durling (in his translation notes) both observe that these two sections from canto 31 and 32 abound in metaphors of food, eating, chewing and the mouth (Fumagalli 100) (Durling 513), therefore Heaney's imaginative "cerebral" feasting seems to be in line with Dante's imagistic universe. Citing Heaney's essay "Envies and Identifications: Dante and the Modern Poet", O'Donoghue argues that the poet's interpretation of Dante is also indebted to Osip Mandelstam's "Conversations with Dante" which brought Dante "from the pantheon back to the palate" (141). The emphasis on the brain also adds to the sensationalist "gothic" tradition of translating "Ugolino" because of its gruesomeness.

Additionally, the way the brain and head are associated with metaphors for food and eating in "Ugolino" also echoes two images from *North*, from the "Bog Poems" cycle. The poem

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[25] In Durling's translation, it reads: "there where the brain joins the nape" (530)

"Strange Fruit" opens with the contemplation of the head of a bog body (an Iron Age sacrificial victim found mummified and beheaded in a Danish bog) as "an exhumed gourd"; the brain and flesh are depicted as "pash of tallow, perishable treasure" (*North* 32). "Strange Fruit" is related to "Punishment" since the both use metaphors for the brain as an edible thing and they are both "bog bodies": the poet proclaims himself "the artful voyeur/of your [the victim's] *brain's exposed and darkened combs*(*North* 31, emphasis added). Like the translation from "Ugolino" these two poems (and all the other bog body poems in the sequence) are concerned with the slipperiness of terms like victim and perpetrator and the need for an ethical approach to suffering (a crucial idea discussed in the next chapter). In "Ugolino" the appeal of a traitor or perpetrator to the public of the *Commedia* and his highly rhetorical exhortations for empathy and that he be pitied for his situation are central and they also serve to interrogate the line separating perpetrator and victim and the need for nuance. It seems safe then to view the translation of "Ugolino" as another revisitation of a personal poetic site of memory by way of translation.

Besides its role as a go-between and bridge between *Field Work* and *Station Island* this translation might also carry an ethical connotation, since, as we will make clear in the next chapter, multidirectionality can sometimes be associated with a space where models of victimhood can be more thoroughly scrutinized. Heaney's translation, as most of his poems on ethical subjects, shows virtuosity in depicting the perpetrator in a sympathetic light in the translation. This "sympathy[26]" does not imply excusing the traitor, in fact Ugolino's cannibalism is presented in accentuated horrific detail. Nevertheless through Heaney's plastic metaphors and his emphasis on the starving innocent children, he manages to depict the humanity and

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[26] Fumagalli also highlights "sympathy" as a main trait of Heaney's translation of Ugolino.

desperation of the perpetrator, as well as the ploys for sympathy he tries to use. The silent

parallel between the sectarian clashes in Ulster and the conflict between the Guelfs and the

Ghibellines that Dante is constantly criticizing in the Divine Comedy can be seen as the

backdrop to this translation. Heaney declared that his foremost fascination with the *Commedia*

was with "its local intensity, the vehemence and fondness attaching to individual shades, the way

personalities and values were emotionally soldered together" ("Envies" 18). The intrinsic human

values are the main point of articulation between Dante and Heaney, something that

O'Donoghue notes is specific to Heaney's interpretation of Dante (151). Could it be then, that

for Heaney translation is almost always used as an ethical exemplar when it is viewed in

conjunction with the Troubles? Similarly, O'Brien suggests that Heaney's translation activities

and his cultural memory "versions" are always explicitly or implicitly concerned with

elucidating an ethical dilemma of representation (112-132).

Dante is an important multidirectional translation model for Heaney because, unlike

Sweeney, he is not Irish, therefore not amenable to an Irish origins narrative[27]. Dante is clearly

"foreign", but part of the universal community of the Catholic faith providing a religious type of

translational/transnational *rapport*. This type of engagement is truly transnational as it testifies to

the ease with which some literary texts become moveable sites of memory and how they are

adapted to new contexts. It also proves that memory cannot be isolated within national

containers, as was earlier hinted at in my Sweeney analysis. Heaney crosses memory "borders"

by bringing into multidirectional discussion a poet from a very different space, Dante, who also

grounds his lyrical masterpiece deeply in local characters, topography as well as comments on

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[27]The possibility of reading Sweeney as a "cosmopolitan" figure specific to the British Isles has been mentioned
above

accent and linguistic specificities of Italian vernaculars, while commenting on the Catholic

tradition. As O'Donoghue remarks, whereas Heaney's engagement with Sweeney was primarily

topographical, his interaction with Dante is primarily linguistic and theoretical (104). The

linguistic translational engagement heralds the intense modelling and borrowings from Dante

which are the mark of Heaney's next volume, *Station Island*. Hart notes that the translations

from Dante are in a sense penitential exercises preparing *Station Island* (143), where translation

is repeatedly described as penance for inability to act more decisively to counteract the narrow-

mindedness of propaganda poetry during the Troubles[28].

To conclude, in this chapter it was proposed that translation be considered more explicitly

a preparatory step for telling multidirectional stories and engendering original material based on

the close-encounter that translation presupposes. The tension between identification and

differentiation has been underlined as an important feature of Heaney's translational practices

and his creative appropriations. The particular intensity of vicarious memory involved in

translation was stressed by analyzing the relation between *Sweeney Astray* and Heaney's

"Sweeney Redivivus". It seems that in terms of Heaney's cultural work, translating often entails

the revisitation of personal sites of poetic memory which might be an effect of

multidirectionality triggered by translation. By discussing Heaney's translation of "Ugolino" the

subtle mechanisms of multidirectionality involved in re-locating one of Dante's cantos from the

Inferno to the Northern Ireland 'situation' have been tentatively identified. Finally, the

transnational circulation of Dante's masterpiece has been briefly touched upon.

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[28] In order for Heaney to enter "Purgatory" in section XI of *Station Island* the poet is made to translate an hymn by St. John of the Cross; his erotic experience is counterpointed through a translation from the *Inferno* about Beatrice's intercession for Dante in the name of pure love

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Chapter 4

The Ethical Effects of Multidirectionality: Complicitious Poetics and Infinite Mourning

Introduction

What does multidirectionality do?

In the previous chapters, some types of multidirectional stories that appear in Heaney's poetry were investigated so as to argue that intertextuality should be associated more overtly with the concept of multidirectional memory in Heaney's poetry. An archaeological and an etymological model were identified in the poet's early work, in *North*. In *Field Work* and *Station Island,* the mark of intertextuality was a more dialogic engagement with intertexts . It was also argued that ekphrastic engagements with European art should be considered multidirectional. It was concluded that more sustained attention needs to be paid to intermedial interactions of the verbal with the visual where poetry and cultural memory are concerned. Consequently, after the attempt to create a short typology of the multidirectional stories, here the focus will be on the ethical effect of multidirectionality.

Chapter 4 draws on Rothberg's suggestion that new visions of justice can emerge by thinking relationality in multidirectional ways. This contention will be applied globally to two of Heaney's cycles of poems: the "Bog Poems" (which also channel the Neolithic/Northern motif already/previously analyzed in chapter 1), and the elegies in *Field Work,* specifically "The Strand at Lough Beg", which is inflected by Dantean schemata. Heaney participates in the crafting of new visions of justice not by suggesting a radical reconceptualization of ethics in a crisis but by professing, after analyzing it, the possible complicity of art in glamourizing disaster

and tragedy (together with all the facets of this complicity). Heaney's doubts and his interrogation of the role the poet plays in times of crisis might in the end provide an extension of victimhood models. Because the poet identifies himself in turn with the victim and the perpetrator in trying to understand the Troubles, readers come to see the figure of the artist and intellectual as inhabiting a grey area in between these two roles. Another point of contention, connected to "The Strand At Lough Beg" and Section VIII of "Station Island", has to do with the types of discourses of mourning and working through that Heaney's poetry encodes. The starting point for the analysis proposed will be Rothberg's ethical model.

Rothberg's Ethical Model

Michael Rothberg stresses the potential that multidirectional memory has for creating new visions of justice: "this study seeks to emphasize how memory is at least as often a spur to unexpected acts of empathy and solidarity; indeed multidirectional memory is often the very grounds on which people construct and act upon visions of justice" (19). By mapping the associations with other spaces of memory, texts or situations, Rothberg expresses the hope that new and better frames of justice might become visible as unexpected associations determine alternative communities to emerge into the public sphere. Rothberg also stresses that although the nation-state is an important, potent frame of reference for memory, it may not be the most useful, nor perhaps the most suited instrument for addressing the needs of a globalizing world fraught with postcolonial concerns (21). The Northern Irish conflict exemplifies this contention perfectly well as it is framed in terms of religion (Catholic versus Protestant), in terms of insular integrity or imperial cohesion (Nationalist versus Unionist), inflected by regional identity and tempered by its close-community specificities (Ulster-specific or county-specific). This can be

used to explain the way in which Heaney switches between several frames of reference, from personal memory, to a regional sense of collectivity, to Irish Catholic sensibility, to Protestant otherness, to neighbourly feelings and frequently to a type of cosmopolitan European intertextual sensibility. My thesis for this chapter is that Heaney's strategy fits into Rothberg's model and refines it.

Rothberg enlists Nancy Fraser's concept of shifting frames of transitional justice needed by global communities to express the way in which multidirectionality might work at a macro-level. One of the most important contentions of his model is that multidirectionality should always have an ethical agenda (22). Rothberg invokes Alain Badiou's "ethic of truths" which foregrounds "fidelity" to historical comparison as the foremost need for justice in a society (27). Badiou defines ethics as articulating a response to a troubling public situation by making visible the "hidden contradiction or 'void' of a situation" (qtd in Rothberg 272); in order to reach this void *ethical fidelity* is required, which is, for Badiou "'a sustained investigation of the situation' in light of the event made in order to potentially 'induce' a new subject who will construct a new truth and reconstruct the social situation" (272). The need to see the ethical subject as *potentially* emerging in the process of thinking the gaps in the present is important for the purpose of our demonstration about the effects of multidirectionality, especially because Rothberg sees this emerging ethical subject, more as a desirable outcome than a palpable consequence (273). This implies first and foremost that a new species of ethical subject capable to transcend the situation need not emerge directly in a text, and, second, that multidirectional explorations could be a modality of achieving historical fidelity.

Rothberg calls for an extension of models of ethical responsibility to include indirect

collective responsibility and transgenerational complicity (294). He also hopes that

multidirectional practices will eventually lead to new unexpected patterns of solidarity and a

"just entreatment of mourning" which will transform the situation ethically in the sense proposed

by Badiou and supply it with a type of textual closure (308). The inclusion of ambiguous indirect

complicity invites scholars of multidirectionality to consider what Primo Levi has termed "the

moral gray zones" as crucial spaces of articulation associated to a just comparative project (295).

I believe these professions of guilt provide an extension of models of victimhood from the

classic roles of victim and perpetrator to one that considers the ambiguous roles situated in the

gray zone: indirect perpetration or complicity. This position invites the reader to inhabit the

voids of Civil War in Northern Ireland and participate in the search for ethical fidelity. From the

point of view of memory studies, my tentative emphasis on the extension of models of

victimization can contribute to thinking memory intertextually and can provide more creative

and nuanced moral insights into the comparative frames. This evokes Rigney's assertion about

the important advantages of the literary text over the non-fiction chronicle: the narrativization

allows the writer to orient the text towards telling a moral story which makes it instantly

interesting to the public looking to come to terms with history (Rigney "Portable" 21). On the

one hand, Heaney weaves a compound story by joining the narrativized images of tribalistic

sacrifice victims with the victims of sectarian violence in the bog body poems. Through this

technique he is enabled to zoom in on problems of ethics and justice – specifically, guilt and

complicity. On the other hand, by re-narrativizing the Italian poet's masterpiece and by

transporting Dante's *Inferno* and his *Purgatorio* to an entirely new context, the cultural narrative

in poetry acquires the power to approach configurations of complicity and responsibility by

creating a space of compound mourning. Intertextuality then becomes the obvious instrument for

multidirectional memory-work and specifically a medium where mourning can be performed

relationally. In the second part of the chapter, I will propose that multidirectional mourning

practice could use the emphasis on the infinite nature of the work of mourning that Derrida

proposes (144).

The Bog Bodies

The first case study in the ethics of multidirectional memory presented here focuses on the "Bog

Poems", Heaney's most well-known, controversial and, in fact, critically acclaimed thematic

cluster[1]. They appear in three of Heaney's volumes *Door into the Dark* (1969), *Wintering Out*

(1972) and *North* (1975), where most of them are concentrated. The nine poems use the bog as a

setting for archaeological forays into the complex layering that makes up Northern Irish identity

and shapes Heaney's artistic consciousness. The bog is a potent symbol for Northern Ireland as

an idiosyncratic geographical landscape and it has been read as such by most of Heaney's critics

who commented on this cluster[2]. However, the way the poems shuttle back and forth through

different boggy landscapes in Northern Europe should motivate an approach that goes beyond

static nationalistic frames of reference to which Heaney's poetry has been unjustly assimilated in

some early critical accounts[3]. Heaney uses the bog as a sounding board or a "midden, floe of

history" (*North* 34) through which he travels in time and space by way of his multiple

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[1] See Patrick Crotty "The Context of Heaney's Reception" in *The Cambridge Companion to Seamus Heaney ed. Bernard O'Donoghue*.

[2] Bernard O'Donoghue, Helen Vendler and Thomas C. Foster are the most notable in this respect.

[3] Specifically Edna Longley, T.C. Foster and Elmer Andrews view Heaney's bog poems in a strictly Northern Irish frame of reference

archaeologies to either English or Scottish moorlands, to Viking Northern European swamps and to mysterious Neolithic sites of memory. His intertextualities work towards depicting the conflict in a wider historical frame, contextualizing the situation in Northern Ireland through the prism of diverse texts and memorial spaces. After arguing for the multidirectionality of the archaeological motif that underwrites Heaney's poetic explorations in time and space in chapter one, it becomes possible to interpret the ethical dimension of these explorations, which allow violence to insidiously infiltrate and affect the archaeological journeys. O'Brien views the bog in Heaney's poems as a place of deconstruction and defamiliarization, rather than a site of exploration where digging for origins is supposed to uncover some echt-Irish essence (68). O'Brien's whole analysis of *North* maps the ethical dimensions of the volume as pluralizing Northern Irish identity (64-111). He reads the bog as the shuttling between the poet's own element and an *unheimlich* region which makes the bog a space for the radical deconstruction of origins (70).

In "North" there is a cycle of five "bog" poems which revolve around the contemplation of mummified corpses found in peat bogs all over Northern Europe. The Iron Age bodies are consistently and multidirectionally compared with the troubling situation in Northern Ireland in a parallel between the civil war culture of violence and tribalism and the primitive Neolithic human sacrifice. The contemplation of the foreign ancient victims[4] becomes a screen for the articulation of more complex moral quandaries related to the contemporary conflict and its worrying violence triggers ethical epiphanies. These epiphanic poems were inspired by the illustrations of an anthropological archaeology book by P.V. Glob which studies the accidental

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[4] "Bog Queen" is an exception to this rule since it deals with a mummified body of a woman who had died of natural causes in Northern Ireland on the property of Lady Moira (O'Brien 82)

preservation of victims of violent ritual sacrifice drowned in Northern European swamps[5]. The book contains superbly detailed plate illustrations of mummified corpses found in Denmark, Northern Germany and Sweden which are accompanied by brief descriptions of the supposed causes of their death[6], archaeological reconstructions, quotes from various chronicles and historical sources and even a few literary quotes.

The substratum of Northern European tribalism in the Iron Age bog body elegies[7] is also relatable to the Viking inheritance, which was studied in chapter 1. The bodies preserved in peat thought to be the victims of ritualistic murders had an immediate impact on Heaney's poetic imagination since they stood for a destructive connection to land and property in the veneration and sacrifice to the fertility goddess Nerthus. Multidirectionally, this provided a good parallel to the destructive myth of the Shan van Vocht, Mother Ireland or Kathleen ní Houlihan[8]. The nearly perfect mummified preservation also recalled the reliquaries of "saints' kept bodies" (*Wintering Out* "Tollund Man" 36) worshipped by Catholics. More specifically, for Heaney, the space of the bog and (of) Glob's book provided useful multidirectional screens:

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[5] Peter Vilhelm Glob *The Bog People: Iron Age Man Preserved*

[6] Most of them were sacrificed to a fertility goddess common to the Scandinavian area and Northern Germany, Nerthus, who required human slaves to draw her chariot during the harvest festival. The slaves would then be drowned into the bog at the end of the revels.(http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/409554/Nerthus)

[7] Ramazani reads the bog poems as part elegies for two sets of victims the Neolithic ritualistic murder mummies and the Northern Irish contemporary casualties (Ramazani 337)

[8] Mother Ireland, Shan van Vocht or Cathleen ní Houlihan is a mythical character, Irish nationalist/anti-colonial icon and symbol of the defeated Rebellion of Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen in 1798. The legend tells of an old woman homeless woman (supposedly dispossessed by the British) arriving to the house of a young man on his wedding day and recruiting him to fight and sacrifice himself in the rebellion instead of marrying the girl he loves. The young man follows her (implicitly to his death) and the old woman suddenly turns into a young girl renewed by the sacrifice of the man. Kathleen ní Houlihan represents Ireland and the continuous fight and sacrifices the Irish must make in order to regain independence. She has been the subject of numerous plays and poems including a famous play by Yeats (Countess Kathleen). (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathleen_Ni_Houlihan)

Taken in relation to the tradition of Irish political martyrdom for that cause whose icon is Kathleen ní Houlihan, this [the sacrifice of bodies in bogs that Glob described as a religious ritual] is more than an archaic barbarous rite: it is an archetypal pattern. And the unforgettable photographs of these victims blended in my mind with photographs of atrocities, past and present, in the long rites of Irish political and religious struggles. When I wrote this poem [The Tollund Man], I had a completely new sensation, one of fear. It was a vow to go on pilgrimage and I felt as it came to me - and again it came quickly - that unless I was deeply earnest about what I was saying, I was simply invoking dangers for myself. (*Preoccupations* 57-8)

The poet's affirmations above indicate that the bog poems arose out of a desire for ethical engagement akin to the fidelity theorized by Badiou. The fear associated with the need for earnestness is what engenders the conclusion to "The Tollund Man", the unsettling feeling of being "lost, unhappy and at home" (*Wintering Out* 36) in the Danish Iron Age bog landscape of the poem. It becomes apparent only during a multidirectional shuttling between the victims of political violence in Ireland and the Neolithic victim of tribal sacrifice in Denmark. Helen Vendler calls the shuttling back and forth in the bog poem a "binocular vision of the present and the past" (42) and her coinage can also be connected to the ethical dimension of this multidirectional comparison since the knobs on the binoculars serve to sharpen the focus on questions of public humiliation and their inherent moral rottenness by relating the Northern Irish context with the Iron Age sacrificial punishments in stages, as follows.

 "Punishment" and the Multidirectional Extension of Victimhood

Punishment

I can feel the tug
of the halter at the nape
of her neck, the wind
on her naked front.

It blows her nipples
to amber beads,
it shakes the frail rigging
of her ribs.

I can see her drowned
body in the bog,
the weighing stone,
the floating rods and boughs.

Under which at first
she was a barked sapling
that is dug up
oak-bone, brain-firkin:

her shaved head
like a stubble of black corn
her blindfold a soiled bandage,
her noose a ring

to store
the memories of love.
Little adulteress,
before they punished you

you were flaxen-haired,
undernourished, and your
tar-black face was beautiful.
My poor scapegoat,

I almost love you
but would have cast, I know,
the stones of silence.
I am the artful voyeur

of your brain's exposed
and darkened combs,
your muscles' webbing
and all your numbered bones:

I who have stood dumb
when your betraying sisters,
cauled in tar,
wept by the railings,

who would connive
in civilized outrage
yet understand the exact
    and tribal, intimate revenge. (*North* 30-31)

"Punishment" is the most striking example of ethical engagement of Heaney's five moving elegies. It begins with an ekphrastic[9] contemplation of the victim of ritual murder (Ramazani 337). Hart and Vendler identify this body as the Windeby Girl (Vendler 29) (Hart 92), a corpse found in Northern Germany and who had by all indications been drowned in the bog blindfolded and subjected to public pillory. Her shaved head, Glob notes, quoting Tacitus' *Germania,* might indicate that this was a ritual punishment for adultery (qtd in Hart 92). This poem is interesting for the subject matter of this chapter as it explicitly extends the black and white view about the victim-perpetrator roles and prepares for scrutinizing the position of complicity between the poet and the perpetrators, a position situated in the "gray zone".

The poem starts with the lyrical I identifying with the victim (*North* 30). "I can feel" suggests intense empathy. The initial setting suggests exposure to public humiliation, rather than the gorgeously organic connection to the bog that was a primary feature of "The Tollund Man" or "The Grauballe Man"[10]. Like the "Bog Queen", the Windeby Girl is rising "hacked" and "frayed" from the earth that housed her body, but unlike the "Bog Queen" she is silent and frail. The perspective in this first stanza is of suffocating danger and this is suggested by the noose around the neck of the young woman; the victim is sexualized and put on display in her vulnerability which makes the identification of the male poet with the female subject slightly suspect or perverse. The next stanza marks a distancing from the woman as the subject of intense identification to another more removed sensorial experience:

> I can see her drowned

---

[9] The contemplation is ekphrastic because the contact of the lyrical I with the bog body happens by means of the plate illustrations from Glob's book. This will be further explained later in this chapter.

[10] Other bog body poems included in *North* and *Wintering Out*

body in the bog,

the weighing stone,

the floating rods and boughs. (30)

Identification with the body on display starts however to feel uncanny and the lyrical I switches to visual contemplation: "I can see". The male gaze, as well as the previous suspect identification can be read in tension with the feminine visual representation which is being fetishized and exposed. This deconstructs the declaration of empathy from the first stanza and casts the identification as vicarious, rather than empathetic. Empathy implies a type of identification with another person that searches to respectfully connect with them in order to begin to understand an unpleasant situation. Vicariousness implies a type of abusive/fetishistic identification with someone else's trauma in order to profit from it to some extent, and pretend to be the victim for the sake of victimization[11]. The fragile body is indeed abusively on display and this is further confirmed by the following stanzas:

her shaved head

like a stubble of black corn,

her blindfold a soiled bandage,

her noose a ring

to store

---

[11] For more on this subject see Jill Bennett *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma and Contemporary Art* and Dominick LaCapra *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (86-114)

the memories of love. (30)

To understand the implied vicariousness of the lyrical (multidirectional) memory sequence, it is interesting how Heaney gradually builds up the foreboding sentiment that the victim is somehow abused by being encased in beautiful poetry. The poetic description of the shaved head as "a stubble of black corn" fetishizes violence by comparing it to a normal agricultural activity.The blindfold used to terrorize the condemned girl is given a palliative dimension as a "soiled *bandage*"; and the most shocking image of all is the noose tied around the neck of the girl, suffocating her. It is re-envisaged as a leash connecting the victim to a guilty, but illicitly enjoyable past "a ring to store the memories of love". The reader feels uneasy following the practices of irresponsible description, where appropriation of the victim, vicarious contemplation and aesthetic rewriting are associated. They are accompanied by the fear of succumbing to atavistic sentiments and the wrongful patterns of victimization, which Heaney expressed in the *Preoccupations* essay cited above. The dramatic build-up of the first section of this poem already hints at the fact that the practice of identifying oneself with the victim might be abusive .Such epiphanic cultural memory processes serve to deepen the readers' contemplation and understanding of the victims and caution the Northern Irish public against the lure of victimization and sacrifice of the Shan Van Vocht, Mother Ireland and Kathleen ní Houlihan myths.

As a brief aside about the way in which the bog victim is presented here, it must also be noted that Glob's book should be considered more explicitly as a cultural memory intertext inflecting the bog poems. Hart points out that the language of autopsy and explanations of the rites of sacrifice in "Punishment" is derived from the text accompanying Glob's illustrations

where we learn about the fertility rituals and the punishment for adultery which included shaving the head of the accused, stoning, suffocation and public display of the killing (91-96). The bog bodies become highly intertextual cultural icons which map the circulation of an anthropological archaeology study into a new medium, that of poetry. Interestingly, O'Brien suggests that the word "bog" should also be read in its etymological Danish connotation: it means book, which makes "the bog people" also "book people" (101). Also, the intertextuality of the bog poems could be read through the filter of ekphrasis[12] since the poems directly engage with the haunting visual representation of the bog bodies in Glob's book. The ekphrastic engament with the awe-inspiring images in Glob's book, this first part of "Punishment" narrativizes the visual and heightens its memorability.The transfer of the bog body into poetry also adds a disturbing moral dimension to the body on display, which is usually absent from an anthropological study. The narrative of the first two stanzas focalizes on the body in a fragmented manner and grotesquely sexualizes it just before the reader is made aware of the necrophiliac overtones of the encounter. The third stanza reveals the body on display as another one of Heaney's ancient victims, perfectly mummified and removed from its peaty grave. By means of the gruesome detail, the power of ekphrasis as a narrativizer of the silent visual suggests the immoral and abusive identification that the lyrical I claims with the victim.

The next section of the poem finds the lyrical I addressing the victim directly as "little adulteress" and decrying the degradation of her body (*North* 30). The switch in the type of address from a more neutral third person description to the more intimate second person of a dramatic monologue is significant since it further marks the acknowledgement of distance

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[12] Jahan Ramazani's analysis also reads the bog poems as part-ekphrastic elegies (337)

between poet and the "other" by passing from identification and subsequent objectification - indicated by the way in which the girl is described and analyzed in the first part of the poem - to something which resembles a dialogue (even if rhetorical at this particular point).I consider dialogic configurations a mark of heightened ethical concern in Heaney's poetry. Additionally, dialog confession and ethical vulnerability are correlated in this poem's subsequent verses:

> My poor scapegoat,
>
>
> I almost love you
>
> but would have cast, I know,
>
> the stones of silence. (30-1)

It is in the last part of this stanza that the lyrical I acknowledges the limits of identification and empathy presupposed by an ethical response to murder. The adverb "almost" undermines the possibility that the male gaze is capable of love and empathy, but can only appropriate and possess the object. It also shows that the patterns of vicarious victimization of indirect participants can be dangerous and immoral. More precisely, the empathetic look is revealed to be a vicarious gaze in this section and the lyrical I admits that were he a member of her Germanic tribe, he would have participated in the collective violence. Despite the professed empathy and understanding that he claims to have for her situation, the tribal peer pressure proves too strong and ingrained in his consciousness for him to fight - and this is duly expressed as a failure. This admission of imagined complicity in an unethical act is then swiftly juxtaposed with a consideration that art might pervert suffering by presenting it in an enjoyable, sublime light:

I am the artful voyeur

of your brain's exposed

and darkened combs,

your muscles' webbing

and all your numbered bones.

Poetics of Complicity

The poet should no longer be perceived as a figure who speaks for the victims and has the power to criticize atrocity from a high moral standpoint, but might become an accomplice to the blood-thirsty public sphere; art itself becomes complicitous and vicarious in times of political unrest this stanza seems to suggest. The poet situates himself closer to the perpetrator of the humiliating act than to the victim on the spectrum of roles of victimization, while by-standers and artists equally are rewritten as impotent voyeurs unable to respond adequately to public injustice. The fact that the subjectivity of the victim has been appropriated clandestinely is also indicated by the language of mental control implicitly exercised by the male gaze which annexes the "exposed" and "darkened combs" of the girl's brain. It also has a necrophiliac physical counterpart in the "muscle's webbing" and the archaeological metaphor of tagged and "numbered bones".

The dramatization of doubt and ambivalence towards one's position in regard to victims is a leitmotif of Heaney's poetry which Helen Vendler diagnoses as the oscillation between trying to interact with alterity and composing suitable alter egos (78). At this point in the poem

we are reminded that the bog girl is not Northern Irish but belongs to a watery grave in

Germany.This renders the multidirectional comparison in "Punishment" explicit:

> I who have stood dumb
>
> when your betraying sisters,
>
> cauled in tar,
>
> wept by the railings, (31)

The role of victim subjected to public pillory is what juxtaposes the Windeby Girl with the tarred

and feathered Northern Irish Catholic girls. In the early seventies the Provisional I.R.A.

organized several campaigns of public humiliation where women suspected of consorting with

British soldiers were subjected to tarring and feathering. Tarring and featheringwas a medieval

punishment forcing the guilty party to do a walk of shame through a public square[13] while by-

standers chucked hot tar and feathers at the accused. The juxtaposition between the bog body

being exposed and ritually murdered and the victims of contemporary political violence is further

validated by the measure of gruesomeness that the punishment (theoretically) holds for the

twentieth century women. This seems so far removed from contemporary punitive practices, that

it is both shocking and unbelievable. The inability to act that the poet has diagnosed throughout

the volume perversely allies the artist in his guilt with the ones doing the actual violence: "I who

have stood dumb" marks the irritating extension of responsibility to by-standers analyzed by

Rothberg(275). The poet suggests that responsibility should be assumed by artists approaching

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[13] This image could also be associated with the public practice of shaving the heads of collaborating women in Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War

the conflict in Northern Ireland; accepting the status quo in stunned silence would amount to a morally reprehensible alliance with perpetrating forces. It is implied that art should somehow "break the tribe's complicity" (*Field Work* 16).

Indicting art as being too slow to react to political turmoil and of being complicitous to the sectarian perpetrators of the conflict is a particularly strong accusation uncharacteristic of Heaney's writing and it serves here to dramatize the plight of the artist as a public figure and the enormous responsibility that comes to that. In contrast to some of Heaney's more ferocious critics[14], I believe that this should not be taken at face value, but be seen as a dramatic performance for the sake of the reader who, following Heaney's ethical demonstration, is sensibilized to the pressures, ambivalences and contradictions of art as an object of emerging cultural memory[15]. Although "Punishment" dramatizes a failure for art to play the role of agent of countermemory and a stay against violence, its effect on the reader is precisely that of reading an attempt at a meditation on how art can indeed play the role of countermemory - a possibility similarly represented in "Summer 1969". Like Rothberg's example of the irritating ethics of multidirectionality which extends responsibility towards the viewer, so Heaney seems to invite the reader to take a moral stand against victims of political violence.

The failure of art to stand up for fellow human beings is further acknowledged in the final stanza of the poem:

[I] who would connive

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[14] Desmond Fennell (qtd in Crotty 52), Edna Longley (150) and Simmons (qtd. Crotty 51)

[15] A similarly strong indictment of fellow artists and critics only occurs later in *Station Island* under the mask of Sweeney in "The Scribes" and "The First Flight" as was already demonstrated in Chapter 3 of this dissertation

in civilized outrage

yet understand the exact

and tribal, intimate revenge. (31)

With its connotation of small-time plotting, "connive" casts the by-stander's association with the perpetrators in an insignificant, gossipy light. The guilt of the artist as bystander is not, of course, equal to those inciting and doling out sectarian violence. Even more so this "conniving" is not a conspiracy with the perpetrators *per se*, but the weak and impotent condemnation of savage violence. The association of the three words "connive", "civilized" and "outrage" is also significant because it shows the hypocrisy and lack of moral standing by which the situation is approached. The qualifying adjective "civilized" suggests the moral superiority of the intellectual public figure who can see the sectarian conflict from a universal humanistic perspective; meanwhile the verb qualifying the deed deconstructs the illusion of superiority and proves the inconsequence and false illusion of ethical purity. The conclusion of the poem also backs up the sense of impossibility of transcending the conflict through poetic humanism and the lyrical I makes another startling confession: not only did the poet's persona fail to react to the unjust victimization of the Catholic girls, but he also comprehends the virulent perspective of the perpetrator: "understand the exact/and tribal, intimate revenge". However, the conclusion of the poem also enables the reader to capture the vulnerable traumatic situation panoramically and to identify a wider spectrum of existing roles besides those of perpetrator and victim in a conflict. The lyrical I is neither a perpetrator in the direct sense of the word, nor is he a victim of his tribe, yet his confessions of guilt and complicity illuminate an entire spectrum of indirect responsibility and ethical impurity.

The efforts made towards ethical fidelization to the civil war situation culminate in the final stanza. The contemplation of the foreign victim enables the comparison and highlights the complexity of both Heaney's Northern Irish home and the exigencies of historical recontextualization. Consequently, the "void" of the present situation becomes apparent in the final declaration which outlines the paradox of being able to pinpoint unjust sectarian practices, but also comprehend the passions that lead to such violence. The lyrical I's admission of being able to understand the perspective of the perpetrators as well seems rather scandalous. But he pleads guilty, not to suggest that poetry is inherently reprehensible, but more as an anthropological observation of perpetration and complicity which extends patterns of victimhood. Rather than providing a countermemory discourse proper, the last stanza makes apparent the "void", that is, the fifty shades of gray that fill the gaps between the simplified roles of victim and perpetrator stressed by Primo Levi. In a recent article on the future of Trauma Theory, Susannah Radstone urges a similar revision of models of ethics associated with trauma to include and analyze fantasies of victimization and vicarious identification (23). For scholarship, this suggests abandoning the idea of ethical purity which underwrites Trauma Studies (24). To ward off Manichaean impulses in the public sphere, Radstone argues, the discipline "needs to sustain rather than retreat from an awareness of both ambiguity, and of the inevitability of ethical impurity" (26). If multidirectionality should necessarily be seen as a memory strategy intrinsically predicated on creating an ethical response to a problematic and traumatic situation, it is in this poem that Heaney confirms Rothberg's supposition: by proposing a model of guilt which sweepingly scrutinizes indirect participants, for example artists, and makes them bearers of heavy responsibility in the scheme of a conflict.

I want to suggest that "collaborationist" confessions are a staple of poetry dealing with traumatic history and represent effective multidirectional thinking (outside the box). As indicated earlier, doubt and ambivalence are pervasive themes in Heaney's work and especially of the volumes which engage directly with the Troubles (dealt with in this dissertation). This echoes Radstone's invitation to foreground ambiguity and abandon essentialist thinking: the prism of the poem's figuration has a constructive multidirectional memory effect. By foregrounding the potential vicariousness of contemplation, the poet is enabled to express shocking ethical dilemmas plaguing him. In an interview Heaney declared that the sight of Glob's illustrations affected his poetic sense of language faster than the gruesome images of political violence he had witnessed in Northern Ireland. This affirmation proves that a multidirectional screen is needed for the poet in order to craft a fitting and honest response to the Troubles and overcome silent traumatic shock.

> My emotions, my feelings whatever those instinctive energies are that have to be engaged for a poem, those energies quickened more when contemplating a victim, strangely from 2000 years ago than they did from contemplating a man at the end of a road being swept up in a plastic bag - I mean the barman at the end of our road tried to carry out a bomb and it blew up. Now there is of course something terrible about that, but somehow language, words didn't live in the way I think they have to live in a poem when they were hovering over that kind of horror and pity. (qtd in Vendler 40-1)

Only through the screen of the bog and the bog body is Heaney able to address the victims which are closer to home. Most importantly, ethical fidelity requires perspective, ambiguity and comparison to function correctly in a transnational frame.

Multidirectional Mourning - Heaney's Elegy

In the final chapter of his study, Rothberg proposes that one of the effects of multidirectional memory articulation would be a contribution to the "just entreatment of mourning", the burial of the dead as the ethical transformation of a traumatic situation (308). Rothberg's theory of multidirectional mourning is, however, very tentative and only briefly sketched in a short case-study. This chapter proposes to further illustrate what multidirectional mourning looks like in Heaney's poetry and to argue that Derrida's concept of "the work of mourning" where mourning is conceived as an infinite duty is in line with Heaney's multidirectional mourning. Timidly, I want to suggest that Derrida's concept could be a useful addition to the connection between multidirectionality and mourning.

In *The Work of Mourning,* Derrida presents the following paradox: mourning is an insult or wound to the memory of the dead person because it involves ventriloquizing the dead and carrying on a monologue instead of a dialogue, but at the same time it is a permanent duty of remembrance which must be carried out (55). Given this paradox mourning can only be accomplished well, when it fails, when it never acquires the desired closure completely, when it keeps the wound open; this paradox is what he calls "the law of mourning" one must always work at mourning, but with no end in sight (143-145). Therefore true mourning should be infinite, an endless process of transformation and monologue with the dead as an ethical strategy. It is precisely in this vein that we will approach two of Heaney's poems: "The Strand at Lough Beg" which envisages mourning of a dead with the help of Dante's *Purgatorio* as an articulating multidirectional screen and its subsequent revisitation in Section VIII of "Station Island" as a closure-refusing gesture. I will analyze Heaney's strategy of revisiting and dramatically

reframing this poem in Section VIII of "Station Island" and will discuss this revision as another more covert meditation on poetry and complicity similar to the one in "Punishment".

Heaney's pastoral strategy of mourning in "The Strand at Lough Beg" articulates regional identity with a larger European perspective through the interactive frame of the *Purgatorio*. "The Strand At Lough Beg" is a superb elegy written in memory of Heaney's cousin Colum McCartney, who was killed by the sectarian militia "Protestant Action Force" close to Newtonhamilton in County Armagh at a fake roadblock[16]. It is the first of six personal elegies for friends and intimate acquaintances[17] in *Field Work* which stand out through their strong evocative quality, minute local colour and intimate address. The bog poems (also read by Ramazani as elegies (337)) were meditations on the imaginative connections between the anonymous victims of ritual punishment and the Northern Irish ones represented mostly as collectives such as that of the tarred and feathered girls in "Punishment", the croppies or the internees. In contrast to this approach, the elegies in *Field Work* are individual and more aimed at mourning and commemorating, rather than breaking down the myriad violent specifics of a complex civil war situation. Ramazani also diagnoses this shift in Heaney's poetic persona in *Field Work* and states that: "he changes from an epicure of corpses to what Blake Morrison calls an "embalmer or anointer" of the dead (344). Moreover, Vendler remarks that in *Station Island* and *Field Work* Heaney became less interested in teasing out the complexities of sectarian culture and alterities, but more concerned with how to deal with the mounting set of spectres of

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[16] Road blocks were checkpoints set either by the British Army aimed at monitoring sectarian violence or by the RUC; (http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/police/police.htm)

[17] "In Memoriam Francis Ledwige" is an exception; Ledwige a soldier and the lover of Heaney's aunt Mary who was killed in Flanders in 1917. Ramazani argues that he was included because of his being a poet, an artist and a victim in an imperial army (Ramazani 344).

recent victims which had begun to haunt him (85). Nevertheless, the elegies should not be read as solely introspective bits as they try to mediate between mourning as a personal need and mourning as a public poetic act constitutive of collective memory. Mourning, as Rothberg indicates in the final remarks of the chapter on the ethics of multidirectionality, has a strong ethical dimension as it depicts the transformation undergone by a situation, the active engagement with the past needed for a new ethical subject to emerge(307).This type of poetic engagement would then weave the discourse needed to bury the dead (308).

"The Strand at Lough Beg" is explicitly nestled within a cultural memory intertext, the Purgatorio.The constant dialogue with Dante's text facilitates the dimension of mourning and, more importantly, it reads Dante's legacy in a new context and regional landscape - Lough Beg, in Northern Ireland. Secondly, this particular poem was revisited in Heaney's "Station Island" and re-read through a different intertext than that of the *Purgatorio*: Dante's *Inferno.* The revisitation efficiently illustrates what Vendler calls Heaney's "second thoughts", his constant tendency to return to his past poems and revisit particular themes in later poems. The poet's subsequent self-reflexive practices of auto-textuality also add more ambivalence and complexity to his various engagements with the Troubles. More interestingly for this dissertation's subject, in part VIII of "Station Island", Heaney deconstructs the elegiac mood of the previous poem to foreground again questions of complicity and the infinite character of the work of mourning prescribed by Derrida, for instance.

The Strand at Lough Beg

IN MEMORY OF COLUM McCARTNEY

All round this little island on the strand

Far down below there, where the breakers strive,

Grow the tall rushes from the oozy sand.

Dante, Purgatorio, I, 100-3

Leaving the white glow of filling stations

And a few lonely streetlamps among fields

You climbed the hills towards Newtonhamilton

Past the Fews Forest, out beneath the stars -

Along that road, a high, bare pilgrim's track

Where Sweeney fled before the bloodied heads

Goat-beards and dogs' eyes in a demon pack

Blazing out of the ground, snapping and squealing.

What blazed ahead of you? A faked road block?

The red lamp swung, the sudden brakes and stalling

Engine, voices, heads hooded and the cold-nosed gun?

Or in your driving mirror, tailing headlights

That pulled out suddenly and flagged you down

Where you weren't known and far from what you knew:

The lowland clays and waters of Lough Beg,

Church Island's spire, its soft treeline of yew.

There you used to hear guns fired behind the house

Long before rising time, when duck shooters

Haunted the marigolds and bulrushes,

But still were scared to find spent cartridges,

Acrid, brassy, genital, ejected,

On your way across the strand to fetch the cows.

For you and yours and yours and mine fought shy,

Spoke an old language of conspirators

And could not crack the whip or seize the day:

Big-voiced scullions, herders, feelers round

Haycocks and hindquarters, talkers in byres,

Slow arbitrators of the burial ground.

Across that strand of yours the cattle graze

Up to their bellies in an early mist

And now they turn their unbewildered gaze

To where we work our way through squeaking sedge

Drowning in dew. Like a dull blade with its edge

Honed bright, Lough Beg hald shines under the haze.

I turn because the sweeping of your feet

Has stopped behind me, to find you on your knees

With blood and roadside muck in your hair and eyes,

Then kneel in front of you in brimming grass

And gather up cold handfuls of the dew

To wash you, cousin. I dab you clean with moss

Fine as the drizzle out of a low cloud.

I lift you under arms and lay you flat.

With rushes that shoot green again, I plait

Green scapulars to wear over your shroud.

(*Field Work* 9-10)

The poem starts with a quotation from the end of Canto I of *Purgatorio* where Dante and Virgil have reached the foot of Mount Purgatory and they are briefly taking in the surroundings before starting their penitential ascent. From the beginning, the poem dedicated to the memory of Colum McCartney is filtered through a recognizable European cultural intertext motto. Without losing its specificity, the personal elegy is in constant dialogue with an established monument of cultural memory which it reactivates in Northern Ireland. Seen in conjunction with the quotation from the *Purgatorio,* this is symbolically reflected upon the *in memoriam* dedication to Colum McCartney to suggest a kind of resurrection or penitential ascent, a glimmer of hope for the victim. The first part of the poem, however, is much darker and hopeless in mood, which makes the quotation seem ill-fitted at first. In a conspicuous second person singular address it describes a journey at night climbing up a hill in the south of County Armagh:

Leaving the white glow of filling stations

And a few lonely streetlamps among fields

You climbed the hills towards Newtonhamilton

Past the Fews Forest, out beneath the stars -

Along that road a high, bare pilgrim's track (*Field Work* 9)

The stars recall the first canto of the *Purgatorio,* where Dante and Virgil take a moment to contemplate the sky and the morning star upon emerging on the other side of the world at the foot of Mount Purgatory. Nevertheless, in great contrast to the *Purgatorio*, the mood of the first part of the poem becomes gradually more threatening, eerie and uncanny, channeling another

pervasive intertext: *Buile Suibhne* (*The Madness of King Sweeney*). The Sweeney reference

heightens the danger and gives the impression that the "pilgrim" is being ominously followed:

> Where Sweeney fled before the bloodied heads,
>
> Goat-beards and dogs' eyes in a demon pack
>
> Blazing out of the ground, snapping and squealing. (9)

This particular mention of Sweeney refers to an episode where the mad bird-man is relentlessly

hounded by a bevy of disembodied heads and torsos through the Fews mountains. The

disembodied heads are "strange apparitions" (*Sweeney Astray* 69) invoked by Saint Ronan to

deter Sweeney from returning to his home in Dal-Arie. They are presented as a cross between

demons and hell-hounds (or cerberi) with goat beards and dog heads ceaselessly bleeding,

barking, breathing down Sweeney's neck, taunting him, following and terrorizing the bird-king

(69-70). The fact that the disembodied bleeding heads are demons invoked by Saint Ronan, a

representative of the church and God, in order to torment the penitent and exiled Sweeney adds

to Heaney's consistent criticism of the religious dimension of the civil war employing zealous

unnecessary cruelty inflicted on the religious "other". The reference to Sweeney might then be

seen as being subtly inflected with afterimages of Hell from the *Inferno*. I would then argue, in

contrast to other commentators of this poem[18], that Heaney's narrative in this poem channels

both the last two cantos of the *Inferno* and the first canto of the *Purgatorio*.

The Sweeney intertext juxtaposed with the tense atmosphere of the *Inferno* gives a strong

local dimension to the poem by making the Northern Irish landscape of the Fews, the high

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[18] Maria Christina Fumagalli, Helen Vendler, Neil Corcoran

mountain range surrounding Newtonhamilton, a new context for Dante's masterpiece. In

addition, during the Troubles the South of County Armagh and the Fews Forest were among the

most militarized and paramilitary-controlled zones in Northern Ireland. They played host to

heightened violence and bloody clashes between the Provisional IRA, the Protestant militias and

the British army which is also the context of the random sectarian killing of Heaney's cousin.

The threatening phantasms of Hell, the demons hounding Sweeney and the generally gloomy

mood of this first part of the poem culminate with the forensic reconstruction image of the

murder of McCartney by Protestant militiamen:

> What blazed ahead of you? A faked road block?
>
> The red lamp swung, the sudden breaks and stalling
>
> Engine, voices, heads hooded and the cold-nosed gun?
>
> Or in your driving mirror, tailing headlights
>
> That pulled out suddenly and flagged you down
>
> Where you weren't known and far from what you knew: (*Field Work* 9)

The poet is trying to imagine the death of his cousin in the uncanny threatening landscape

sounded out carefully by Sweeney and Dante and weighs the scenarios of perpetration with a

tone akin to that of a political thriller. The possible scenarios   are detailed as the perpetrators are

only perceived metonymically: the fake road block signifies the sectarian highwaymen

masquerading as the imperial authorities; the hooded head stands for the unknowable faceless

terrorists also encountered in "Summer 1969"; the gun is the uncanny perpetrating object, an

extension of the paramilitary men. Owing to the earlier references to the snapping and squealing terrors of the infernal dogs, alias the anonymous powers of militant Christianity harassing Sweeney while he was trying to return home in a moment of sanity, the perpetrators of the sectarian crime are stripped of their quality as humans, attaining a sort of supernatural impersonality. They are defined by their guns, the taillights, the engine and the hoods and this purposefully class them together with Sweeney's tormentors. The worst offense in the death of McCartney as perceived by the poet is the fact that he died amongst people who did not know him and was left in an unknown place, where his family and relatives could not organize a wake and undertake all of the complex rites of mourning characteristic to Irish Catholicism (something that Ramazani also mentions in passing (334)). Additionally, in an interview with Dennis O'Driscoll, he identifies the grasslands close to Lough Beg as the concrete inspiration for this part of the mourning poem: "The McCartney's lived near Lough Beg, so that was the proper place to encounter Colum's shade. The strand there is remote and rushy and misty, and there's an island called Church Island out in the middle of the water" (221). Further in the interview the poet reminisces about the quiet times spent with his father on the strand and he testifies to being reminded of "his" strand instantly when reading Dorothy Sawyers' translation of the first canto of the *Purgatorio* (O'Driscoll 221). It is thus that the familiar images of home interact and penetrate the cultural memory intertext of the *Purgatorio*.

Ramazani also notes that this particular elegy is not canonically transcendental and universalizing, but very much grounded in an aesthetics that "ingeniously fulfills the demands of apotheosis and worldliness" (344). Since mourning is a personal affair directed at an actual person, it can be inferred that Heaney grounds it firmly within local specificity, as well as in the more mobile universal outreach frame fulfilled by the use of elegy and the European intertext of

the *Purgatorio*. This particular lyric and the next sections of the poem serve as a poetic

repatriation of the victim of the Troubles to a known landscape where he can be properly

mourned. The victim is rewritten in the specifics of the place where he "belongs" amongst the

cows and vegetation which are more redolent of the image of the *Purgatorio* to be contrasted

with the dark forests blazing with paramilitary activity. Here the guns are not used to randomly

attack "pilgrims", but to acquire sustenance - to hunt ducks. The change of scene to Lough Beg

is also indicated by Heaney's own approximate version of *terza rima* that marks this part of the

poem and was absent in the previous section. It is here that the impact of Dante is felt most

decisively: when Dante and Virgil surface at the foot of Mount Purgatory, they pause briefly to

take in the splendor of the vegetation and the light of dawn; canto II ends with an idyllic scene

where the grimy Dante is brought into communion with nature. Still the power of the weapon is

seen as threatening, unnecessary and to some extent castrating as its traces are discovered in the

grass: "Acrid, brassy, genital, ejected". The earlier imagery of threatening flight and movement

is replaced by a slow and languid country walk and the active perpetration of the first part is

opposed to the considerations about the type of mentality of the tribe the victim and the poet, his

relative, belong to:

> For you and yours and yours and mine fought shy
>
> Spoke an old language of conspirators
>
> And could not crack the whip or seize the day:
>
> Big-voiced scullions, herders, feelers round
>
> Haycocks and hindquarters, talkers in byres,

Slow arbitrators of the burial ground. (*Field Work* 9)

 The inability to actively respond that was dramatized in "Punishment" and the resulting accusation of complicity in inactivity is echoed in this section of the poem. What is more the state of doubt and paralysis is extended genealogically, thus fatalistically to the poet's ancestors who would not take a public stand, but only "spoke an old language of conspirators", "fought shy" and "could not crack the whip or seize the day". Again, the models of victimhood are extended to include the "irritating" indirect responsibility of by-standers. As Neil Corcoran notes this criticism also implies that the tribe of the poet's ancestors are also not full-on perpetrators since the people doing the whip cracking are the paramilitaries who killed the cousin (94), rather they are seen as disengaged, irresponsible country people. The same sense of gossipy conniving and ambiguous paralysis echoed in the failure to defend the tarred and feathered Catholic girls is also visible in the incapacity of giving the perpetrators a human face in the first part. Neil Corcoran also judges Heaney's poetry as being predicated on "anxiety as a fundamental principle of creativity" (95).The supplementary ethical role of complicity as the inability to respond properly to a situation is echoed here again as one of the themes of reflection for the poet and I wish to suggest that it should be investigated as a master trope for Heaney's poetry and the way in which it achieves ethical fidelity.

Yet, as opposed to "Punishment", in the "Strand at Lough Beg" the act of writing seems to be also capable to more or less confidently build a mourning monument to the dead: the last part of the poem is concerned with a penitential embalming moment. This is already suggested by the reference to the poet's relatives as "slow arbitrators of the burial ground" implying that although slow to act, they act nevertheless when it comes to taking care of their dead. In the

idyllic pastoral landscape of Lough Beg, the victim can die a rightful - though no less shocking - death, amongst his kith and kin:

> I turn because the sweeping of your feet
>
> Has stopped behind me, to find you on your knees
>
> With blood and roadside muck in your hair and eyes, (*Field Work* 10)

Through the multidirectional filter of the *Purgatorio*, however, the poet assumes the role of Virgil, Dante's guide, and leads his cousin (Dante) towards the idyllic mysterious landscape of the shores of Lough Beg where he undertakes the active symbolic and moving gesture of mourning:

> Then kneel in front of you in brimming grass
>
> And gather up cold handfuls of the dew
>
> To wash you, cousin. I dab you clean with moss
>
> Fine as the drizzle out of a low cloud.
>
> I lift you under the arms and lay you flat.
>
> With rushes that shoot green again, I plait
>
> Green scapulars to wear over your shroud. (*Field Work* 10)

The scene in the *Purgatorio* that the lyrical I rewrites here occurs at the end of the first canto when Virgil washes the dirt, grime and tears from the *Inferno* off of Dante's face with morning dew. Then he picks up a rush from the seashore nearby which he refashions into a magical

natural belt for Dante; in a nod to Virgil's *Aeneid* and the episode of the Golden Bough[19], the

rush that Dante's Virgil plucks regenerates instantly. These rituals are necessary and prescribed

by Cato the younger, the first guardian of the Purgatory as a condition for the ascension towards

the top of Mount Purgatory (Dante 124-136). Hence, Ramazani's focus on embalming, a very apt

choice for this portion with the *Purgatorio* scene updated and re-enacted close to Lough Beg as a

ritual preparation of the dead cousin's body to access Purgatory (344). Heaney seems to imply

that just like his ancestors can tend to their dead, poetry might have if not the power to condemn

and confront paramilitary violence, at least it can serve as an effective tool for symbolic

interment. I very much agree with Ramazani's suggestion that for Heaney mourning is bound to

the earthly dimension, rather than to an incomprehensible transcendentalism. To the moment of

Dante's of pastoral ablution Heaney, the Lough Beg poet, adds the characteristic flora of the

swamplands around the Irish lake: moss which is used as a sponge to clean the dead body; the

cousin's prone body is prepared to be returned to the earth in a position of repose (also not

present in Dante's text - where the pilgrim is very much alive); Although the rites of interment

are redolent of the Catholic practice, the elegy is more focused on nature and a pastoral regional

dimension than a politicized engagement with sectarianism and side-taking: there is no

intonation of mourning chants and all the ministrations to the cousin are undergone in reverent

silence.

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[19] In the *Aeneid*, after the Trojan War, the Sybil of Cumae tells Aeneas that to assess whether his descent into Hell to meet the shade of his father would be successful, he needed to bring back a bough from a tree growing on the edge of a precipice. If the bough sprouted anew, then he would be allowed to make the descent. The bough also signified a proof of good faith in Virgil's story. Durling, in his notes to the *Purgatorio* also notes that the golden bough also alludes to Christ's chrown of thorns (qtd. in Dante 33)

As a poetic act mourning "The Strand at Lough Beg" is simultaneously public and private. The public dimension can also be read as an ethical one because it is supposed to embody the complexity of coming to terms with the ultimate othering - that of death as radical other as Derrida would put it (55). For the complicitous poetics case, this means finding a way to deal with the personal and communal consequences of loss during a civil war which will neither erase the gruesomeness of the conflict, nor glamourize and pervert the victim by turning it into merely a symbol. The use of Dante's *Purgatorio* simultaneously inscribes the poem within the transnational elegiac framework as a specifically European genre (Ramazani *Transnational Poetics* 72) and within that of Catholic rites of mourning. But these transnational frames are not merely normative universals: Dante's *Purgatorio* is not emulated, but reinterpreted when the first canto is transported to a Northern Irish rural setting. The ministration to the dead is made possible by the intertexts just as the narration of the uncanny chase scene and murder are intensified by the devilish imagery of Sweeney and the *Inferno*. The "just entreatment of mourning" (Rothberg 308) or transformation of the hellish situation into a reverent pastoral embalming is enacted with the help of the optimistic image of Earthly paradise and ablution of the *Purgatorio*, rather than hindered by heavy masterpieces of literary tradition.

The foreign text is also adopted as an alternative multidirectional framework to think personal contemporary issues and in the case of the *Purgatorio* it opens up a possibility to mourn poetically. As we have remarked earlier, ethical fidelization, embodied in this case in the commemorative response to the victim of the Troubles, is only reached by using the intertext as a thinking space to replay and sound differently the details of the situation. In contrast to the earlier usage of intertext outlined in "Punishment" and *North,* Heaney's strategy of mourning in *Field Work* and *Station Island* is more citational and relaxed as the poet allows himself to

comment and appropriate and even add regional detail to the source-texts. *Field Work* and *Station Island* are also more intensive in their modeling activities: they allude to the intertexts not just by citing and directly commenting, but several of the poems inspired by the Divine Comedy are written in terza rima; the configurations of the meetings with ghosts in *Station Island* is frequently inspired from the dialogues Dante has with the souls in the *Purgatorio* and the *Inferno* etc. I would connect this development with the intensive activities of translation simultaneous to *Field Work*. Since translation involves a certain measure of fidelity to the original that only allows limited appropriation and narrow creative license, the more personal imaginative engagement of the poet with the translated text finds another outlet in his own poems where interpretation, appropriation and imagination can weave more freely.

from Section VIII of "Station Island"

…

But he [Tom Delaney] had gone when I looked to meet his eyes

and hunkering instead there in his place

was a bleeding pale-faced boy, plastered in mud.

'The red-hot pokers blazed a lovely red

in Jerpoint the Sunday I was murdered,'

he said quietly. 'Now do you remember?

You were there with the poets when you got the word

and stayed there with them, while your own flesh and

blood

was carted to Bellaghy from the Fews.

They showed more agitation at the news

than you did.'

'But they were getting crisis

first-hand, Colum, they had happened in on

live sectarian assassination.

I was dumb, encountering what was destined.'

And so I pleaded with my second cousin.

'I kept seeing a grey stretch of Lough Beg

and the strand empty at daybreak.

I felt like the bottom of a dried up lake.'

You saw that and you wrote that - not the fact.

You confused evasion and artistic tact.

The Protestant who shot me through the head

I accuse directly, but indirectly, you

who now atone perhaps upon this bed

for the way you whitewashed ugliness and drew

the lovely blinds of the *Purgatorio*

and saccharined my death with morning dew.'

…

The Duty of Infinite Mourning in Section VIII of "Station Island"

Yet, the mood of pastoral languid aesthetics is not the only poetic attitude towards the Troubles as Heaney's subsequent revisitation of "The Strand at Lough Beg" in "Station Island" reminds us. In section VIII of the long poem, the poet goes on a penitential literary pilgrimage to Station Island or Patrick's Purgatory in Lough Derg. There he encounters the shade of his cousin once again, but this time the meeting takes place within the intertextual bounds of the *Inferno* far from the pacifying aegis of the *Purgatorio*[20]. In the poem, the spectre of the cousin materializes on a

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[20] Fumagalli identifies this part of "Station Island" as one of the lower circles of the Inferno (137)

hospital bed; he appears as: "…a bleeding, pale-faced boy, plastered in mud" (*Station Island* 82) which immediately evokes the earlier image in "The Strand at Lough Beg" of the kneeling, prostrate figure covered in "blood and roadside muck" (*Field Work* 10). The bleeding ghost has not found peace and he accuses the poet of not doing his own duty towards the dead properly, which seemingly cancels the transformational climactic effect of the previous poem. First, the shade accuses the poet of not bothering to rush to the side of the murdered relative, therefore keeping at a tangent from his tribe, exchanging family community for the company of artists[21] (82); secondly, he critizes the poetic license resorted to by Heaney in transposing the cousin's soul from the Fews to the shores of Lough Beg - a lack of fidelity which is seen as criminal by the cousin; The lyrical I tries to defend himself against the accusations which come his way from the ordinary world and justifies his aesthetic choices of setting for "The Strand At Lough Beg" by invoking traumatic "dumbness" and the possibility that other poets may perceive the situation more objectively than him.

Yet, the strongest criticism of the dead cousin is the usage of the *Purgatorio* as a filter for Northern Irish suffering. By employing the pacifying schemes of the *Purgatorio,* the poet seemingly glosses over the actual suffering and context. Therefore, geographical translation is not the worst offender, but it is precisely the intertextual multidirectionality which is the main culprit for the angry shade:

'You saw that, and you wrote that - not the fact.

You confused evasion with artistic tact.

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[21] As he explains in an interview, Heaney was organizing the Kilkenny Arts Week in 1975 when he found out about the death of his cousin. Since it was his duty to introduce all the poets and oversee the event, he decided against attending the funeral of his distant cousin. (O'Driscoll 220)

The Protestant who shot me through the head

I accuse directly, but indirectly, you

who now atone perhaps upon this bed

for the way you whitewashed ugliness and drew

the lovely blinds of the *Purgatorio*

and saccharined by death with morning dew.

The cousin accuses him of changing the context of the threatening Fews to the wistful, misty, familiar Lough Beg so as to gloss over the gruesomeness of the murder by hiding behind the screen of an unrelated classical text. Whereas the accusation of complicity in "Punishment" was an earth-shattering admission made by the lyrical I himself, while negotiating the space between the public role of poetry and the private response to disturbing history, here this question is posed by ventriloquizing a dialogue with the dead.This is a practice reminiscent of Dante's oblique political commentary cleverly encoded in the encounters of the *Inferno*. Like many of Heaney's critics, the shade accuses the poet of aestheticizing violence and promoting "illegal" artistic delight in response to atrocity. Although similar to the one in "Punishment", this accusation is not necessarily founded since, as we have seen, the first part of the poem remains faithful to the geographical and regional setting and the connection to the Troubles is quite overtly spelled out in the middle section. Heaney himself declares that "In the opening stanza there is probably enough hard information about the context of the killing to offset the healing landscape passage at the end" (O'Driscoll 221). Moreover, the *Purgatorio* that Heaney creates is

a regionally situated space. In it, the intertext is hybridized and reinterpreted through the prism of the Northern Irish conflict and the two distinctive landscapes Lough Beg and the Fews Forest.

Ethically understood, the dead relative's attitude seems to indict multidirectionality as a strategy used to eschew specific responsibility.The cousin's accusation exhibits all of the traits Rothberg cautions against when criticizing the competitive model of memory as limiting and myopic. The angry shade starts from the supposition that memory is something that belongs to a specific community and geographic space, and to shroud it in the veil of a foreign text would be paradoxically chipping away its autonomy. Even though the shade opposes multidirectionality, the encounter is slyly configured as both Irish and Dantean: on the one hand it participates actively in the Irish poetic tradition of "doing the station" (going on a penitential pilgrimage to Lough Derg had been the subject of other Irish poets whose shades Heaney meets in "Station Island"); and on the other, the whole setting of "Station Island" is analogous to the various meetings of Dante with shades of dead people in the *Inferno* or the *Purgatorio* (Thurston 167) (Hart 171). Moreover, the rhyming pattern is once again Heaney's approximate version of *terza rima* (Fumagalli 137), the same strategy as that used for the second part of "The Strand at Lough Beg" and the imagery of this previous poem is repeatedly cited, as further proof that the poem is in fact in dialogue with Dante. As mentioned earlier in the chapter the configuration of this encounter as a dialogue heightens the sense of an ethical exploration, since it proposes that fidelization to a situation is an interactive practice. By confronting and finally rejecting several of the accusations of the cousin and of the various other shades Heaney encounters in "Station Island", the poet is repeatedly obliged to defend his art and vocation and in the end, this sets him free to write one of the most sure-footed, aesthetically delightful and acid cycles of poems in his career, namely "Sweeney Redivivus" which follows "Station Island" (discussed in the previous

chapter). This should be read in contrast to the ekphrastic approach to elegy that we have noted in the bog poems and the silent communion of mourning in "The Strand at Lough Beg". More importantly, multidirectionality (or traumatic transference) is foregrounded yet again as this poet's gut instinct in times of adversity. The non-competitive conceit of multidirectionality counters the accusation of illicit pleasure derived from atrocity and overaestheticization of trauma that is implied by the final strong indictment of whitewashing ugliness and drawing the blinds of the *Purgatorio* in order to "saccharine"[22] and minimizing death through a foreign intertext.

One final thing that should be mentioned about Heaney is that the poetic mourning he undertakes should not be associated with finite, successful mourning[23], but rather with multiple processes of working through. Rothberg's emphasis on memory as working through or creative labour (4) and Rigney's emphasis on memory as both process and product ("Plenitude" 348) are also useful conceptual frames for illuminating Heaney's responsible revisitation of past poems and his generally self-reflexive poetic practices. Helen Vendler's emphasis on "second thoughts" and my own emphasis on doubt as master-tropes for Heaney's poetry also testify to this. Consequently, it seems more fitting to associate the type of intertextual mourning that Heaney undertakes in "The Strand at Lough Beg" and the other elegies in *Field Work* with Derrida's concept of "the work of mourning" (144) which stresses the creative endeavour of mourning as something interminable and infinite and highlights the paradoxical nature of dialogues with the

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[22] Maria Christina Fumagalli reads this adjective as Dantean per se (135)

[23] Mourning and melancholia are for Freud two distinct processes of dealing with grief - mourning is associated with a constructive confrontation of grief that will eventually result in coming to terms with the traumatic death or separation, whereas melancholia is a prolonged state of despondency. These two concepts have been the subject of a heated academic debate in Trauma Studies and Postcolonial Studies for the past two decades.

dead. Moreover, Derrida's concept of mourning seems to me an interesting and necessary addition to the ethical frame of multidirectionality used by Rothberg in his study. This must be connected with Ramazani's introduction to his brilliant study on modern elegy which pairs the prevalence of the modified elegy in twentieth century poetry with a professionalization and standardization of funeral services (1). Heaney's poetry illustrates Ramazani's observation that as death became a taboo subject relegated to the service of hospitals, asylums and mortuaries, "poetry increasingly became an important cultural space for mourning the dead" (1). The poems analyzed also illustrate the tendency noticed by Ramazani in modern elegies to differ radically from the concept of successful mourning, preferring instead a type of mourning tinged with melancholia as a predominant mood (3). In the dyad of "The Strand at Lough Beg" and section VIII of "Station Island" the infinite work of mourning tinged with melancholia is apparent, especially in the dialogue staged between the two poems in terms of complicity, guilt and aesthetic pleasure.

Explorations of the gray zones in models of victimhood and the delicate balance between ethics and aesthetics of mourning are two of the constant concerns of Heaney's poetry when dealing with the Troubles as I hope to have conclusively proven in this chapter. As such the way in which these concerns are spelled out is often the result of thinking multidirectionally which in turn creates a ripe space for ethical fidelization. Occasionally, by means of an intertextual intervention the poet is able to craft a modest transformational response to the situation, yet this is never presented as the ultimate and irrefutable answer to the conflict. The idea of mourning as infinite (Derrida 144) or bound to a failure out of respect for the memory of the dead "other" is also useful to describe part of the reason behind Heaney's multiple different engagements with the Troubles from every angle possible. Moreover, these engagements have produced an

encyclopedic wealth of ways in which to read a contemporary conflict responsibly, and more importantly for cultural memory, have repurposed, reactivated and commemorated, wide variety of monuments of cultural memory and brought them back into the canon of working memory. It is primarily for this reason that I consider Heaney's poetry as a worthy candidate for survival in the canon of cultural memory for a long time to come: it illustrates the diversity of European literature while creating quality poetry and responsible specific reactions to recent traumatic history.

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Conclusions

Poetry is indeed a good medium for cultural memory discourses. Although, sometimes its

mechanisms and memory dynamics are not as readily observable as those of the novel, I hope

that the many multidirectional case studies presented here prove that it merits more attention

from cultural memory scholars. My thesis has also shown the viability of multidirectional

memory as a concept to discuss the intertextuality of poetry. Seamus Heaney's poetry in

particular is heavily multidirectional and intertextual, sometimes it is even too overwhelmingly

multidirectional, as I have shown in chapter 1. Poetry has the power to bring old texts from the

archive and refresh the canon of working memory but it might do this in different ways than the

novel.

To begin with, in chapter 1, the connection between objects of cultural memory and the

way they relate to several literary texts and operate as veritable stratified *lieux de mémoire* was

presented. One gain of poetry as a genre of cultural memory is its predilection towards object-

contemplation and quick-draw associations. This is a memory dynamic that merits more

sustained specialist attention. Does the fact that poetry is generally compact allow it to travel

better or worse? Extended object-contemplation, its re-contextualization and articulation with

other cultural memory intertexts is not exclusively the domain of poetry, naturally, but to me, it

seems that poetry does this most successfully and often most succinctly. In chapter 1, I have also

designated the museum gaze as a cultural memory strategy of contemplation able to carefully

gauge the foreignness and familiarity of objects metonymically.

Moreover, the museum gaze can also be traced to chapter 2 where I discussed the need to

associate multidirectionality in poetry with ekphrasis. I have built a case around the need to see

ekphrasis through the lens of Astrid Erll's theory of inter-medial dynamics("Literature" 392),

and have analyzed the manner in which famous paintings circulate in Heaney's poetry about the

Troubles. In this chapter the way Heaney's poem "Summer 1969" connects a visit to the Prado

Museum to see Goya's paintings to the sectarian violence back home is studied in detail. As a

secondary theme of chapter I have shown how the Prado gallery itself is reconstructed as a space

by Heaney's poem. Again, no one can claim ekphrasis is only specific to lyrical poems, but it

seems to me that it is used more often and to more spectacular effect in poetry than in prose[1].

Additionally, ekphrasis has a long and rich tradition in poetry from classical Greek literature

onwards which warrants a serious cultural memory dynamics study. Poetry's predilection for the

thinking in images helps to promote ekphrasis as a privileged memory practice and this might be

another gain brought by poetry as a genre to cultural memory - renewed emphasis on the visual

in memory studies.

   In chapter three, I discuss how translation activities are multidirectional preparatory

activities for renewed intertextual intensity and conclude that adaptation and residual

identification helps Heaney's poetry soar towards formerly inaccessible voices and perspectives.

The difficulty of translating poetry is probably a minus of poetry which might hinder its word-

for-word circulation, yet adaptation of fixed rhyme patterns, as well as creative licence make it

circulate in more surprising ways than prose sometimes. Amongst the "surprising" effects of

failed poetry translation I also include Heaney's abandoned translation of the *Inferno* which

resulted in the intense modelling of the "Station Island" sequence after the Dante's *Divine*

Comedy (Fumagalli 136). Another gain of cultural memory studies from an emphasis on poetry

as a genre of memory would be the inherent ambiguity of poetic language which allows the

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[1] With maybe the exception of Zadie Smith's *On Beauty* and Proust's memorable descriptions in *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*

reader to travel in two or more directions at once verging on one word and its suggestive powers. As I have shown in my analysis of *The First Flight*, ambiguity allows several interpretations related to the revisitation of sites of memory to emerge and provides a satisfying trend.

Finally, in chapter 4, I discuss the ethical gains and consequences of a multidirectional approach to poetry and I identify two resulting strategies in Heaney's work. First, I claim that multidirectionality and its sinuous trajectories help the poet dramatize declarations of complicity between the artist who is not able to react artistically to counteract injustice and the actual perpetrators of the injustice. These theatrical declarations, do not actually serve to incriminate the artist per se, of course, but they widen the spectrum of roles of victimhood from the classic victim-perpetrator divide, towards the gray zones of morality theorized by Primo Levi. It must be noted that it is only through the screen of a foreign intertextual interaction that the "complicity" becomes visible. Declarations of artistic complicity are a staple of 20th century poetry reacting to disaster and might actually indicate empathic unsettlement towards the traumatic situation, rather than "illegal" vicarious identification, to borrow two terms from LaCapra[2]. The second major point discussed in chapter 4 was to analyze multidirectional strategies of mourning and the way they are triggered and fomented by foreign intertexts. The proposal I made in that chapter, was that given Heaney's penchant for "second thoughts"[3], multidirectional strategies of mourning might benefit from some emphasis on Derrida's concept of "the work of mourning" which conceives of the grieving process as interminable, as leaving the wound of memory open. It seems to me that Heaney always leaves a door open for further reflection on the Troubles in all

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[2] See LaCapra (86-114)

[3] Vendler coined this important term in relation to Heaney's tendency to revisit his earlier poems in subsequent volumes (10)

of his volumes, for revisitation and new recontextualizations of different texts in relation to old obsessions.

Furthermore, I hope to have conclusively proven that multidirectionality is a very useful and adaptable theoretical tool for the study of poetry's transnational and translocal circulation. With the added emphasis on intertextuality, it works perfectly well without its original case studies on the Holocaust and it articulation with postcolonial discourses. Even when the terms of comparison shift continuously (in Heaney's work), it has managed to hold fast and always provide interesting insights in the workings of cultural memory and representation of the recent Northern Irish civil war. It must be said, that contrary to Rothberg's desire, I feel that multidirectionality might not always lead to the ethical transformation of a situation or towards transnational justice. I have briefly discussed the matter of paralysis in *North* and how multidirectionality cannot lift the disabling affection from Heaney's agenda in the second part of the volume in a brief aside in chapter 3. Sometimes multidirectionality is a useful tool for diagnosing such paralysis, but it might not be a way out. Similarly, multidirectionality need not always be seen as an ethical tool, it can be easily repurposed (and Rothberg attempts to do so in his epilogue) to Manichaeistic ends and practices. This is not necessarily the case in Heaney's poetry, but the Manicheistic usage of multidirectioanlity warrants some more research.

As a final note, this is a small-scale study and its conclusions are quite limited, but I am sure more interesting conclusions about what poetry brings to the table of cultural memory can be reached with sustained analysis. It is my honest opinion that a more extensive study of Heaney's cultural memory practices merits to be undertaken. Additionally, with the rise of World Memory in as a new thematic area in the field, the need to see how literary texts travel

across borders and how they become globally commodified is taking centrestage and I see no reason why poetry's impact on cultural memory cannot be saved a seat at this particular table.

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