

**The Transnational Dimension
in Seamus Heaney's Selected Poems**

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Abstract

Seamus Heaney's (1939–2013) poetry frequently grounds itself in particular Irish locales, yet it simultaneously resonates with a more universal human experience. The bog, a natural place in Northern Ireland, for instance, functions as a metaphor for both individual and shared memory, serving as a vessel of history that surpasses the confines of Irish identity. This transnational aspect of Heaney's work does not signify a rejection of the Irish landscape; instead, it enables that landscape to serve as a universal emblem of humanity's relationship with the Irish earth, memory, and history.

By examining transnationality through the perspectives of Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) in his essay *Building Dwelling Thinking* (1951) and Gaston Bachelard (1884–1962) in his *The Poetics of Space* (1958), this paper argues that Heaney's poetry, selected poems from *Wintering Out* (1972) and *North* (1975) reads through realms that surpass local or national boundaries through the use of imagination, memory, and history.

Through the lens of philosophical concepts from Heidegger and Bachelard, one can perceive Heaney's work as a negotiation between the grounding in a specific locale (a nation) and the exploration of wider, transnational human issues. His skillful use of language, landscape, and memory fosters a poetic environment where national identity and transnational themes coexist not in conflict, but in a dynamic and transformative interplay.

Key Words: Transnationality, Heaney, Bachelard, Heidegger, Irish landscape

Introduction

Heaney's poetry appeared to public consideration in the mid-1960s. The Troubles, an ethno-nationalist conflict in Northern Ireland, spanned approximately three decades from the late 1960s until 1998, commencing towards the end of the 1960s. For over three

decades, fear and violence would have permeated daily life in Ulster, where the religious divisions between Catholics and Protestants organized much of the region's social fabric of Northern Ireland.

The early 1970s was decisive for Heaney's self-formation and development as a poet, however Heaney has continuously resisted to being classified solely as an Irish poet. While Heaney takes great pride in his Irish identity, of which his poetry is deeply rooted in Ireland, his artistic expression often transcends the confines of the nation. This broader perspective arises from his extensive knowledge and reading related to Ireland and the cultures beyond its borders. Place plays a significant part in Heaney's aesthetics, yet his connection to specific location is continuously complicated by his social legacy, which is notably diverse. He primarily identifies himself as Irish and ultimately migrated from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland. (*The Redress of Poetry* 188)

Heaney's poetic oeuvre is profoundly intertwined with Irish history and the Irish landscape, while simultaneously probing the complexities of identity and belonging. The conflict between being anchored in a particular locale and responding to global dynamics resonates with Heidegger's reflections on exile, belonging, and humanity's connection to place which is profoundly linked to his overarching philosophy of Being and human existence. His thoughts on these subjects are most prominently articulated through the notion of homeland and the philosophical inquiry into the nature of dwelling. Heidegger's philosophical framework emphasizes the significance of establishing a profound and genuine relationship with one's environment. He cautions against the contemporary state of alienation, wherein individuals find themselves estranged from the earth and their authentic selves. Heidegger perceives this estrangement as a type of exile and advocates for a reconnection to more purposeful modes of existence within the world. Heaney's experience of residing in England as an expatriate, while remaining

deeply connected to his Irish heritage, can be interpreted as a quest to harmonize personal identity with the expansive forces of history and geography.

Through his poetic examination of landscape, memory, and identity, Heaney's work achieves a significant transnational resonance. Rather than idealizing the Irish landscape, Heaney portrays it as a vehicle to delve into universal themes such as struggle, history, and the sense of belonging. His focus on the bog, the earth, the Irish land, and the historical layers contained within the soil. Heidegger and Bachelard understanding how humans are grounded in the land while also possessing the ability to rise above geographical or national boundaries. Heidegger and Bachelard both investigate the relationship between humanity and the earth/land, though through distinct methodologies (68). Heidegger focuses on the concept of dwelling, advocating for a genuine and rooted connection to the earth/land. In contrast, Bachelard highlights the significance of imagination and the poetic experience of space as fundamental to human connection. Both philosophers assert that individuals are intertwined with their surroundings in ways that influence their identity, recognizing that this bond transcends mere physical presence. For Heidegger, the path to this authentic connection lies in a return to the world, while for Bachelard, it is realized through the faculties of imagination and memory (ii).

In a 1986 interview Heaney claimed that "bogland" was "one of the most important poems I had written." With the heather, the river, and the springy ground, the bogland was his favorite area and he believed it was "a beautiful place, physically." The fact that he spent so many days there with his father and "older people" gave him a strong emotional connection to the location. They were summer days, and he claimed that he always felt like he was "being in migration" while he was there. He sums up this by saying that "emotionally, then in memory, it represented a free place for me"(Randall 8).

The compassion in the direction of the bog body in Heaney's poetry comes to be so profound that he seems indeed "risk blasphemy" resisting anything consequences might happen to him for such fellow- feeling. In his meeting with the interviewer James Randall (1979), Heaney expresses a profound humanistic concern by suggesting that the Tollund Man appeared to him as a precursor, akin to an ancient relative or one of the timeworn, mustachioed faces that are prevalent throughout the expansive Irish landscape, evoking a deep connection to his lifeless form:

"Watching the pointing hands

Of country people,

Not knowing their tongue."

Out here in Jutland

In the old man-killing parishes

I will feel lost,

Unhappy and at home. (*Wintering Out* 70)

This sense of heritage compels him to implicitly draw an association amid the sacrificial, ritualistic, and religious aspects of the fierceness present in contemporary Ireland and the grim sacrificial religious themes depicted in "The Bog People" (Randall 18).

Bogland, in other words, does not only add depth to Heaney's landscape, it also extends its scope. By the time *North* (1975) was published, Heaney's poetic vision extends beyond Northern Ireland to incorporate Scandinavia, reflecting broader ways of connecting to the European Community. Like all his Irish predecessors, Heaney's expansion would not have occurred without first rooting himself in his homeland. Even as his later poems take

him as far as "wintering in California," 6,000 miles away, he remains tethered to the land that shaped him:

to look on nature, not as in the hour

of thoughtless youth.

And he comes to favors the inner world

more than the external one. (*Wintering Out* 24)

With "The Tollund Man", "The Grauballe Man" and "Punishment" enthused by Glob's *The Bog People* (1965), Heaney brings forth the concept of the transitional paradigm, as described by Kearney, an Irish philosopher and public intellectual known for his work in contemporary continental philosophy. This paradigm "exemplifies the essentially conflictual nature of contemporary Irish experience" (14). Similar to a collage, Kearney's paradigm presents Heaney "in transit between two worlds, divided between opposing allegiances" compelling the poet "write as emigres of the imagination, conveying the feeling of being both apart and not part of their culture, of being estranged from the very traditions of to which they belong, of being in exile while at home" (14).

Heaney's draws on Glob's outlined account of Danish bog bodies, that essentially closes with "Punishment" that is preceded before by two other well-known dramatic monolog poems "Come to the Bower" and "Bog Queen." These poems give voice to the bog bodies, including the first fully documented over recovered form a body. The bog body of the queen, unearthed in 1781 on the Moira estate, located approximately twenty miles from Belfast, provides Heaney with a concrete connection to the local landscape and "a really authentic, not just an inventive association between Ireland and Jutland" (Corcoran 69). However, this resting bog queen may be seen as another embodiment of Nerthus, the earth goddess to whom the Tollund Man

was sacrificed, therefore upholding the mythological continuum Heaney established in "The Tollund Man." The title "Come to the Bower" is taken from a Republican song, "Will you come to the Bower?" which passionately calls on Irish exiles to return home. (*Wintering Out* 25) The title also indicates that Ireland is in parallel with the arbor sacrosanct to legendary goddess Nerthus, that such myths of blood sacrifice are very tied to modern Irish history and particularly associated with Padraig Pears, the poet and executed leader of the failed 1916 Easter Rising—continue to shape Irish political life. These myths also exert an appeal that is almost sexual in nature, merging politics with personal identity (Corcoran 70). This allegory corresponds with "Bog Queen," another poem by Heaney, which is frequently and appropriately associated with "Come to the Bower."

In "Bog Queen," Heaney, for the first time in his collection of bog poems, designates the Moira bog woman, who embodies a figure reminiscent of Kathleen ni Houlihan, representing a Mother Ireland, by means of a voice so that she "depicts her history and her sense of waiting to be unearthed, and, symbolically, to be brought to brought back to some form of life in the poem" (O'Brien 33). The poem is, comments Neil Corcoran, a critic, "on one level, a delicately accurate account of the processes of her decay, of the body being reclaimed by, and turning into, the land itself. But the implications raise the bog queen to the status of a symbol of disaffected native resentment, biding its time underground" (70). Through this poem Heaney "achieves renewal through marrying elements of national and personal history, through myth and image" (Parker 136).

With Irish poet Ciaran Carson (1948–

2019), English poet Blake Morrison (1950), and Irish literary critic Edna Longley (1940), at the forefront, Heaney's poetics claims that the bog poems are at their best in the North, which has received mixed basic reactions for the tasteful delineation of sectarian sava

gery that they depict. Carson considers that with these poems, with bog poems in center, tend to normalize viciousness "as in case there never were and never will be any political results of such acts" (Carson 184). Morrison preaches that Heaney's "poetry grants sectarian killing in Northern Ireland a historical respectability which is not usually granted in day-to-day journalism: precedent becomes, if not a justification than at least an "explanation""(68). Longley analyzes Heaney's insinuation of the Catholics as the lone exposed side, by way of she articulates: "(Heaney) excludes the intersectorian issue, warfare between tribes, by concentrating on the Catholic psyche as bound to immolation, and within that immolation, to savage tribal loyalties" (Longley 154).

Through these bog poems, Heaney connects his renowned attentiveness and dedication as a writer to the harsh realities of violence inflicted upon humanity, all while addressing the lofty ideals that two factions held with nearly the same fervor as the ancient followers of Nerthus. Each of these poems "does nothing if not explore the violent outcome of a sacrificial crisis by inquiring into its origin in myths that have shaped the consciousness of his country and himself." (Tobin 124) As material for Heaney's poems, these "symbolic bog people allowed him to follow the Yeatsian example of writing in a public crisis ... he tells a truth about the Troubles in a way that is inclusive of the complicated different reactions of consciousness." (O'Brien 8)

Heidegger's concept of "dwelling" plays a pivotal role in his interpretation of human existence, which highlights that dwelling signifies a sense of belonging in the world, encompassing both the tangible experience of home and a broader metaphysical conception of place. Heaney's poetry frequently highlights the connection between identity and location, particularly in relation to the Irish landscape and rural environments. However, Heaney also demonstrates a profound awareness of the transient

and delicate nature of these dwellings. As his work contemplates the upheaval of Irish history alongside the broader influences of global dynamics—such as politics, migration, and conflict—it raises important questions regarding how individuals, communities, and nations can find a sense of "dwelling" in an increasingly interconnected and migratory world. Consequently, Heaney's examination of Irish identity and culture in poems in *North* addresses the complexities between being anchored in a specific place and the transnational forces that influence contemporary life.

Heaney's *North* is divided into two sections. The initial section presents a historical and geographical analysis of Ulster in relation to the Vikings and the bog-people, who were sacrificially interred in Danish bogs. The subsequent section features a poignant collection of personal poems that articulate the poet's immediate reactions to the violence and despair that have afflicted his homeland. These final poems are devoid of the "bog" metaphor and its associated symbolism (Lloyd 5).

Both Heidegger and Bachelard view poetry, along with language, as a conduit for exploring new realms and uncovering meanings that extend beyond the immediate physical or national circumstances. Heaney's poetry, frequently characterized by its profound connection to the Irish historical and cultural backdrop, similarly engages in a process of imaginative elevation. Through the evocation of the Irish landscape and its history, Heaney creates avenues for universal interpretations that resonate with wider human issues, including loss, identity, memory, and the quest for significance in contemporary society. In "Strange Fruit," the head serves as a component of a larger symbolic framework that addresses themes of artistry and creativity: "Here is the girl's head like an exhumed gourd. /Oval-faced, prune-skinned, prune-stones for teeth"(*North* 27). Through his representations of skulls and skeletons, Heaney established symbols that reflect the harsh realities of Northern Ireland and the broader historical backdrop of

Northern culture within which Ireland is situated. Typically, Heaney also discovered various imaginative references for these images. An interpretation of Baudelaire's poem, "The Digging Skeleton," may be included in *North*, which begins with a depiction of illustrations in books discovered in "forgotten crates" on "dusty quays". The poem compares these books to bodies decaying in graves, uncovering their pictures when bystanders choose them up. Heaney's portrayal of the books, "yellow like mummies," joins them to the marsh individuals, the allegorical combination of books and people proposing the esteem of revealing a hidden picture.

Baudelaire's poem conveys that the illustrations of skeletons observed by the speaker, are "touched with an odd excellence." Prototypical images, they motivate Heaney, whose interpretation interfaces them, within the setting of *North*, to the Irish planters he presented within "The Seed Cutters:"

"Your skinned muscles like plaited sedge
And your spines hooped towards the sunk edge
Of the spade, my patient ones
Tell me, as you labor hard
To break this unrelenting soil,
What barns are there for you to fill?
What farmer dragged you from the boneyard?" (*North* 29)

If the seed cutters of the dedicatory poem illustrate the tradition of preparing for a contemporary harvest, the excavated skeletons emerge as a stark contrast to this physically demanding toil, representing the routine hardships of labor that, throughout Ireland's extensive history, have resulted in a significant number of remains. The artist, Baudelaire,

and Heaney protect these pictures, denying to let them and what they speak to, pass on. Whereas Heaney underscores the excellence of nation life in his references to Breughel, was a significant artist of Dutch and Flemish Renaissance painting, a painter his tribute to Baudelaire draws upon the revolting, urban authenticity of *Fleurs du Mal* (*The Flowers of Evil*) 1857, with parallels to Belfast. There are simultaneous reflections of the bog bodies as well as the influence of the outlines presented in Glob's work on Heaney's imagery.

Heaney's interpretation of Baudelaire's depiction of outlines in an ancient text conveys the notion that human endurance is perpetual. This offers little comfort to those pursuing to resolve the complexities in Northern Ireland, yet it remains a reality that the artistic representations of the past reveal. Thematic implications indicate a social critique regarding a prolonged history of unacknowledged labor; however, the focus also lies on the skeletons as "symbols of truth" transmitted from one artist to another. The skeletons lament, "Some traitor breath revives our clay," as Heaney, in his translation of the French poet's expression, underscores the broader relevance of their suffering. The skeleton, in numerous varieties, repeats regularly all through North: bog bodies, executed heads, ancient bones, resting monsters within the scene, the confined victims of the Ulster war. In this context, the significance of interpreting Baudelaire's poem, along with the influence of the images the speaker encountered in a book, cannot be overstated. Heaney's portrayal of Baudelaire's Flayed men and skeletons, Sad gang of apparitions, and Death's lifer's, hauled from the narrow cell appear again and again in *North*. The confined spaces inhabited by these skeletons suggest the prisons of Northern Ireland; however, the imagery of the cell also emerges in "Bone Dreams," another poem by Heaney, reflecting the historical foundations of a term,

"Bone-house:

a skeleton

in the tongue's

old dungeons. "(*North* 32)

In this sense and according to Heidegger, dwelling denotes a feeling of inclusion in the world, which includes both the concrete experience of home and a more expansive metaphysical understanding of location. The relationship between identity and place is often emphasized in Heaney's poetry, especially when it comes to the Irish countryside and landscape.

By the nightmare cell of the poet-speaker in Heaney's poem "The Unacknowledged Legislator's Dream," and even the minor shape of the fresh carver in "Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces" might be a "cage / or trellis to conjure in" (*North* 33). On the foremost self-evident levels, these cages as well as cells graphically portray the war in Northern Ireland, nonetheless they too recommend the poet or artist's predicament in attempting to make sense of social clutter. The image taken from Shakespeare's Hamlet, "skull-handler, parablister, /smeller of rot/in the state" (*North* 37).

Heaney Recognizes the esteem of Shakespearean symbolism whereas it too permits to specific the trouble of composing almost Northern Ireland. These pictures offer assistance to associate Part I of North with Part II where Heaney tests his possess encounters against Shelley's defense of the poet as the unacknowledged administrator of the world. The skeletons in Heaney's interpretation of Baudelaire regret that they: "do not fall like autumn leaves /To sleep in peace" (*North* 29).

Nonetheless the skeletons are restored once more and once more to convey their story. These words ought to be reserved in intellect when one peruses the final lyric in North, where the poet strolls through fallen takes off, "Escaped from the massacre/ Taking

protective coloring/ From bole and bark" (*North* 91). He shares a similarity with the skeletons in that he is not at rest, being described as "neither internee nor informer." The title "Exposure," a poem by Heaney, encompasses various interpretations, one of which directs back to the original reference to Breughel: "You'll know them if I can get them true," making them true embodies a kind of disclosure. Though the speaker here suggests that he has missed "The onceina-lifetime portent, /The comet's pulsing rose" (*North* 91).

The elegance of the Irish language in *North's* poems that examine the etymology of Irish words as well as place names is numerous highlighted by Heaney. While his allusions and borrowings from his artistic ancestors are particularly evident in *North*, the poems also demonstrate how shared values unite people of all races and ethnicities. He also illuminates the political divisions that separate them on one level. Breughel is referenced in both "Sunlight" and the Shakespearean poem "The Seed Cutter". Breughel was a trailblazer among Northern artists, as he focused on painting directly from nature instead of borrowing landscape scenes from the works of previous masters, thereby highlighting the indigenous landscape. Breughel painted sequences of Flemish peasants in naturalistic landscapes at various times of the year, which is specifically relevant to Heaney's poem. This series is among his most inventive and popular paintings. The interaction of the natural and human worlds is a major theme in these paintings, as it is in much of Heaney's work. Peasants were the subjects of the Flemish painter's paintings, which drew criticism, especially given that his travels to Italy and exposure to the masters of the Southern Renaissance may have influenced him to adopt the more "elevated subjects" and classical ideals of the Italian painters. But Breughel faithfully depicted what he saw in his own country, immortalizing the peasantry, who were not thought to be suitable subjects for art. Doing so this, Breughel transformed painting and rose to prominence in the North during his time. He was also a true precursor of the Northern

Irish poet who would reference him hundreds of years later as he struggled to express his vision of how the Irish people interacted with the land and the seasons. Shakespeare, who was born five years before Breughel passed away, taught Heaney the poetic form, just as Breughel had taught him the power of the visual image. This relationship between Heaney, Breughel, and Shakespeare is one of art. The terrible political legacy from Elizabethan England that countless of the poems in *North* designate is offset by these two Renaissance legacies. While Heaney's allusions to as well as borrowings from his artistic descendants are particularly evident in *North*, the poems also demonstrate how shared values unite people of all races and ethnicities while also illuminating the political divisions that separate them on one level (Haberstroh 2009).

The imitation of Breughel and the use of language from the Renaissance is made by Heaney to paint beautiful pictures of the Irish seed cutters:

They kneel under the hedge in a half-circle
Behind a windbreak wind is breaking through.
They are the seed cutters. The tuck and frill
Of leaf-sprout is on the seed potatoes
Buried under that straw. . . . (*North* 8)

The image of the buried potatoes brings to mind the tin scoop hidden in the meal bin, highlighting the significance of these long-standing rituals that must be understood beneath the surface. The depiction of the milky sheen of the white potato, featuring a "dark watermark" at its core in "The Seed Cutters," presents a striking contrast to the luminous imagery found in "Sunlight." This dark watermark on the white potato alludes to the more somber aspects of the Irish peasant's history, a narrative that the potato has come to symbolize. In a similar vein, "Sunlight" illustrates a glimmer of brightness amidst

the prevailing darkness of the North. Heaney's images offer multiple interpretations, just like Breughel's. The dark watermark can be linked to other photographs found in North that portray violence and hatred in both Northern Ireland and Northern Europe. In order to inaugurate connections amid the poems and establish a structural unity, Heaney develops the light and dark symbolism throughout North. The imagery of darkness recurs frequently throughout the final poem, "Exposure," as does the light seen in the first poem, which is approved through *North* to the "sparks" described there. Gaston Bachelard's work, *The Poetics of Space*, provides a profound insight into the influence of spaces—particularly those that are intimate, personal, and commonplace—on the imagination. Heaney's poetry, with its focus on tangible landscapes such as bogs, fields, and the rural Irish environment, can be interpreted through the lens of Bachelard's concepts regarding space, memory, and identity. Both philosophers assert that individuals are linked to their environments in ways that influence their identities, recognizing that this bond transcends simple physical presence. For Heidegger, this connection is realized through a reconnection with the world in an authentic manner, while for Bachelard, it is achieved through the faculties of imagination and memory.

The reverence credited to the artist's portrayal in these two poems of devotion is consistently echoed through "North," where Heaney juxtaposes images of brutality and hostility derived from his personal experiences with those found in the art and artifacts of history. The funerals for "neighborly" murders, the sound of the Orange drums in Tyrone, the discipline of youthful girls in modern Ulster all affirm to the doubt between individuals in Northern Ireland. These, be that as it may, have their points of reference in European history, numerous communicated in works of art.

Heaney's curiosity with various viewpoints can be attributed to his upbringing in a neighborhood split up by arbitrary lines. Although his poetry shows an understanding

that limits are fictitious and may be overcome, his fascination with borders and boundaries can be traced back to his early years.

Heaney's *North* is an examination of the poet's native Ulster, historically and being a contemporary viewpoint. Heaney made the decision to address the Irish political problem head-on in *North*. The themes of *North* include the perplexity and frustration that a poet experiences in the face of tremendous societal instability. Although the poems focus on the role of the poet—and the artist, more generally—in societal crises, they also center on one poet's struggle to come to grips by means of a particular political issue. The main protagonist in these poems is the poet as artist (Haberstroh 260).

Heaney utilizes the symbolism of light to uncover the essence of love, which remains concealed beneath the ordinary activities of a rural afternoon. A look into history may actually remove belonging rather than support it. In a clutching, ensnaring environment, the speaker is no longer beyond otherness; instead, it has manifested itself within the code of pictures he created, maybe to allay his irrational dread of the otherness of the country and to demonstrate the integrity and fortitude of the poet-excavator. His northern pictures ability to unite stems from their chronological framework, which smoothes over identity differences or differences within identities by converting land into tradition as well as making the divided, heterogeneous people into the one constituent of the North.

The pursuit of harmony amidst diversity and the revival of antiquity are at odds. The pictures of warfare that are used to depict combat produce a contradiction since they do not represent the disparities that inspire it. The "iron flash of consonants" only illustrates the potential for violence in language, not the separation of the nation. The academic pursuit to analyze, support, and grasp the concepts presented by *North* illustrates the efficacy of its intervention; however, it fails to provide justification or clarification regarding conflict. It may be that justification cannot provide absolution, and knowledge

does not equate to a sense of belonging. Furthermore, comprehending history may not inherently necessitate an understanding of the self that feels "lost" within its own context (Kay 149).

"Something of his sad freedom

As he rode the tumbril

Should come to me, driving,

Saying the names

Tollund, Grauballe, Nebelgard,

Watching the pointing hands

Of country people,

Not knowing their tongue.

Out there in Jutland

In the old man-killing parishes

I will feel lost,

Unhappy and at home." (*Wintering Out* 70)

Heaney's *North* incorporates Viking symbolism and explores the significance of bogs in Northern Ireland. By placing the region's conflict within a historical framework, Heaney sheds light on the complexities of the situation. Throughout the collection, Irish poets like Yeats and Heaney depict the destructive nature of war as a catalyst for

rejuvenation, emphasizing the connection between the land and its inhabitants. This portrayal reinforces the notion of true ownership and belonging to a specific place.

Bachelard explores the notion that physical and localized spaces can embody profound psychological and existential significance. Similarly, Heaney's portrayal of Irish landscapes, particularly the bogs that encapsulate both personal and cultural memories, establishes a realm where local and universal themes intersect. While Heaney's work is firmly anchored in the Irish experience, the emotional resonance of these spaces—what Bachelard refers to as "the intimate spaces of imagination"—extends beyond the confines of national identity. The memories and histories interwoven in the landscapes Heaney depicts can resonate with global narratives of displacement, migration, and identity. Bachelard's idea of imagination further facilitates an appreciation of how local environments can surpass national or cultural boundaries.

The speaker's consideration of the Tollund Man heightens his wonder till generous spectatorship gets to be dynamic inclusion, and as the man reaches the status of a devout antique, the speaker's fear of his possess position develops. His craving to "pray/Him to create sprout" the dead creates a musical change inside the poem, in this way implying the inconceivability of this central idealistic vision, and concomitantly of his claim dynamic capacity. His "sad freedom" does not lead to its wanted outcome, whereas the "freedom" of the man himself is far from being true. The poem is often interpreted as a manifestation of an identity crisis, where the speaker aligns himself with the Tollund Man. Corcoran argues that this lack of identity disclosure gives the poem a deep emotional resonance. The mythical aspects are transformed into something "sharply immediate: the pain of personal incomprehension, isolation, and pity." Both Tollund Man and the poet are, in a sense, disgustingly revealed. (*Seamus Heaney* 79–80) At this minute, his control over the subject matter that he so deliberately brings out slips. After the inferred

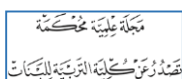
understanding (happening offstage, because it was, within the crevice between Portion II and III of the lyric) that his supplication is farfetched, his devout wonder winds down and is supplanted by childlike befuddlement ("Watching . . . pointing hands, / Not knowing their tongue") driving to a deduction that sounds like a self-castigation ("I will feel lost").

This renowned instance, despite happening in the earliest bog poem, anticipatorily foreshadows the failure of this monumental energy to establish a sense of complete belonging. The chronological gap separating the Iron Age from the present is equally remarkable, nearly overwhelming the speaker. Jean Comaroff's, Professor of African and African American Studies, hypothesis holds significant relevance for Heaney, as his initial sense of an inadequately formed self serves as the foundation for his endeavor to unify his identity through the use of literary metaphor. The poem "The Tollund Man" is significant as it reveals to the speaker that he has not created a sense of belonging in the present moment. Heaney forges a fluid relationship among the past, present, and future in the Human Chain by incorporating and transforming a range of texts.

Heaney increases and enhances the portrayals of his parents that were present in his previous works. The incorporation of Virgil's Aeneid as a tribute to his late father is initially presented in the last two poems of the "Album" series and influences the subsequent poems in the compilation, notably "The Riverbank Field" and "Route 110".

The poem "In Time," which was written posthumously for a different granddaughter, returns to some of the issues raised in "Route 110" and "Kite". In "In Time," Siofra places the Heaney family in the "human chain". Beginning with "Digging," a poem about choosing a different path from his father and grandfather, the two volumes of selected work conclude with "In Time," a celebration of the continuity of family ties. He envisions her in the future in the poem:

" I saw you years from now



(More years than I'll be allowed)

Your toddler wobbles gone,

A sure and grown woman." (*Death of A Naturalist* 57)

When she becomes a "sure and grown woman," the poem acts as her missal. Her "toddler wobbles" and his childhood memories are contrasted, and this creates a sense of continuity. He writes in the second stanza:

"Your bare foot on the floor

Keeps me in step; the power

I first felt come up through

Our cement floor long ago

Palps your sole and heel

And earths you here for real." (57)

Heaney describes his earliest recollection of the sensation of the kitchen floor under his feet in "Something to Write Home About". "The whole reassuring foundation of the earth coming to you through the soles of your feet," is how he describes the sensation (*Heaney at 70* 55). He had previously described his father as having the power of being earthbound, and he sees this as a family trait. In his speech for his seventieth birthday, he mentioned how Antaeus, a Greek god who "derived all his strength and prowess from contact with the earth," had always struck a chord with him (*Heaney at 70*). The speaker wishes for balance for Siofra, just as he had in "A Kite for Aibhin". He believes that an oratorio would be "just the thing" (85) for her in addition to staying grounded, the family characteristic that is discussed in the Kite poems: "Energy, balance, outbreak/ At play for their own sake" (85). Heaney and Heidegger share the view that memory is not a fixed

entity but rather a dynamic entity that both influences and is affected by people's relationships with time, location, and identity. For Heaney, memory can be a means of engaging with the past and reimagining it, as well as a personal and collective act while to Heidegger, memory is a dynamic process that shapes our authentic present-day existence.

Using the expression "Form now's" (57) from Heaney's poem "In Time" mentioned above, he stresses on the present proposes that the speaker recognizes that the future is uncertain and thus values the chance to retain "in time" with the child and practice striking a balance between "play" and remaining "earthed." The title's pun includes both the expression used to allude to the future and the musical practice of keeping time. Both "Digging" and "In Time," the poem that marks the end of the author's literary career, deal with family history, particularly the relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren.

Responding sympathetically to the cataclysmic event of human death (*Human Chain* 38), the landscape, or maybe more precisely the spirit of place, is the premium mobile in Guillevic as well as Heaney's herbals even though there is a central speaker. The birthplace of the Breton poet is Carnac "far from everything," as its life "proceeds beneath time" in a mythic and archetypal register (Harvey 3–4). Heaney's depiction of the landscape maintains an archetypal essence, which is accentuated by the sequence's wandering contemplation of death, even as it is grounded by mentions of broom, whims, hawthorn, and bracken. In this context, death stands in contrast to Heaney's elegies, embodying a universal characteristic. (*The Redress of Poetry*, 155–59) But unlike "The Tollund Man in Springtime," he places more emphasis on the wisdom gained from life and the ongoing renewal of this world after the death of a single figure than on the organic world's slow demise. The speaker's absence from "A Herbal" is important even if it is not reverberated by other poems in *Human Chain*. Identity has evolved to be more fluid than in the past,

presenting fewer challenges and complexities than a fixed point around which various elements converge. This brief depiction illustrates the act of sharing one's anxieties with trees and deriving therapeutic comfort from the aroma of herbs is the "purchase" evoked in "The Loose Box," (*Human Chain* 41) a more heartening "treasure/your hands have known" than the rocks and blades of "North". The speaker grounds his or her understanding of the world—couched in an all-purpose second-person pronoun—in sensory perception of the landscape:

If you know a bit

About the universe

It's because you've taken it in

Like that,

Looked as hard

As you look into yourself,

...

Because you've laid your cheek

Against the rush clump. (*Human Chain* 43)

Heidegger's concept of language as the "house of Being" offers a framework for understanding how Heaney's language, deeply embedded in the Irish context, can extend beyond national confines to resonate with universal experiences. While Heaney's poetry is rich with references to Irish history, culture, and landscape, it frequently explores existential themes—such as memory, identity, and mortality—that transcend the borders of Ireland. In this regard, Heaney's linguistic choices reflect Heidegger's idea that language

possesses the capacity to shape and surpass national or geographical limitations, thereby linking individuals to broader, more universal human experiences.

Heaney frequently deals with memory and historical themes, especially in his poetry about Ireland, which evokes identity, loss, and the past. In addition to honoring what has been lost or forgotten, he uses memory as a means of reestablishing a stronger sense of place and identity. His poems frequently examine the ways in which memory and history influence an individual's sense of self.

Conclusion

Heaney's engagement with transnationalism is fundamentally intertwined with his Irish identity, frequently examining the interplay between local and global dimensions. Although he maintains a profound connection to the landscapes and traditions of Northern Ireland, his poetry also addresses wider human issues, including history, politics, and shared experiences. His literary contributions can be interpreted as a dialogue between the local—characterized by the nuances of Irish existence—and the global, which encompasses the more universal challenges faced by humanity. His poetry demonstrates his interaction with classical and international themes, whereas pieces like "Digging" highlight personal and national narratives. Heaney's transnationalism thus embodies a fusion of profound connections to Irish heritage alongside an openness to universal human narratives. Heaney's poetry, deeply anchored in the particularities of Irish history and geography, extends beyond national confines by addressing universal themes such as identity, memory, and the essence of human existence

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