Marx and Spectres: A Hauntological Exploration of the Poetry of Seamus Heaney through the lens of Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx*

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Abstract

This thesis will examine the spectral inheritances and hauntings that dwell within the poetry of Seamus Heaney. It will use hauntology, an idea first coined by Jacques Derrida in *Specters of Marx*, as a way of locating and unearthing the influence of spectres over the unconscious of the poet. A sustained argument that spectres of the past haunt and influence the present and future will carry throughout the course of this thesis. It will be shown that Heaney inherits from these past spectres, be they national or international, and that these ghosts of the past haunt and influence not only Heaney's unconscious, but Northern Irish society as a whole.

The core objective of the thesis is to interrogate and analyse the continuity and repetition of the past in the present of Heaney's work; in a historical sense but also in a personal, literary manner. The degree to which colonialism, both British and Norse, impacts upon the present will breathe life into the argument that these spectres of past colonialism not only impact upon Heaney's use of language, his identity, and his place in the world, but also, through the workings of the Derridean spectre, influence and garner the violence that sprung forth in Northern Ireland during the Troubles. Similarly the absent presence of the bog people, Virgil, and Dante within the poetry finds Heaney inheriting, and being influenced by, wider, older, broader European mythical hauntings. The degree to which these spectres influence and repeat themselves in the poetry will culminate in the discussion

of 'Route 110' as a poem that incorporates all of these spectres and shows the overall spectral inheritance at play within the body of Heaney's work. This study will show that Heaney's poetry is deeply influenced by the workings of the spectre upon the unconscious of the poet.

Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work and has not been submitted, in whole or part, by me or another person, for the purpose of obtaining any other qualification.

Signed: _____

Date:

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of the rest). Similarly, my Dad's ability to ramble off a literary or lyrical quote, or some obscure piece of information by me mentioning one word constantly keeps me in awe and striving to be able to do the same. Similarly, his love of books and reading fortified the direction I wish to take in life. I am thankful for the support of my brother Evan, all my friends and Sarah during this Ph.D. journey. Finally, my sincere thanks to my aunt Margaret Hickey, who I am eternally grateful for and who without I would not be where I am today.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this volume of work to both my parents, Linda and John Hickey, and to my aunt Margaret Hickey, whose unrelenting support has enabled me to reach this stage.

Contents

Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to undertake an exploration into the haunting, spectral presences that reside within Seamus Heaney's poetry. The physical manifestation of ghosts, as well as voices of the dead, are a common feature of poetry and literature. However, it will be the place in between these two spectra that I wish to explore. The focus of this thesis will be on the spectral, absent presences that reside within the poetry, which cause the past to constantly repeat itself and haunt the present. Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx* will form the basis of my theoretical approach, and will be used as a lens through which to view Heaney's work from a theoretical perspective. I aim to shed light on a variety of hauntings that exist beneath the surface of the poetry.

This thesis will be divided into five chapters, each dealing with a different thematic haunting, with each chapter finding haunting presences with each other. The first chapter discusses *Specters of Marx* and hauntology while the remaining four focus on Heaney's poetry. Each of these chapters places an emphasis on close readings of six poems ranging from *Death of a Naturalist* to *Human Chain*, with references being made throughout to other poems in the Heaney canon that echo and haunt these specific poems. By choosing poems from different collections across his career, I aim to show that Heaney is consistent in reverting back to the past in both subject matter and thematic choice, and that this poetic methodology haunts the present and future of his writing. There is a haunting continuity present within the poetry, and this continuity allows for a tracing of the spectres that exist

beneath the surface of the texts. This tracing will also embody the Derridean notion that being does not necessarily entail presence, and that Heaney is haunted by cultural, societal and linguistic spectres of not only the past in general, but of a broader, older European cultural and historical sense of being.

Through the application of Jacques Derrida's idea of 'hauntology' to the poetry of Seamus Heaney I wish to attain a deeper understanding of what his poetry represents, but also a sense of from where it originates. Hauntology will be essential in opening up the Heaney canon to new meaning but also in learning how hauntology, whether consciously or unconsciously, plays a role in the formation in the poet's sense of self. Colin Davis, when writing of hauntology, claims that it 'holds open the possibility of an unconditional encounter with otherness' (Davis 2007, p.76). Only through the recognition and acceptance of the Other, or otherness, does Heaney form an identity of his own that is rooted in the memories of his past, both Irish and European. Otherness, in this sense, applies to other cultures and texts that are not uniquely Irish, but which form a parallel whereby Heaney seeks to understand his own world through the lens of Scandinavian and classical mythology, along with the impacts of Norse and British invasions. Heaney constantly seeks to understand his place in the world through looking at Northern Ireland within the context a wider, older, European vantage point, with Michael Parker suggesting that by writing from this vantage point Heaney is enabled to defend his place as poet but also to validate through aesthetic means how events in the past repeat themselves in an Irish context under a different guise:

> Accused and self-accused, he attempts to defend himself from the charge of evasion by asserting his identity as a creative artist, and invokes the aid of major figures from native, English and European tradition to justify and verify his stance. (Parker 1994, p. 146)

In essence, this is what Heaney achieves. He locates commonalities and parallels between his society and those of the past, not in an attempt to justify sectarian violence or strike an anti-British chord, but rather to further understand the conditions of the present, and his own identity.

Heaney's prose works and interviews will be used to interrogate and locate a locus that places Heaney's work within the realm of hauntology. *Preoccupations* and *Finders Keepers* will be key in attaining a ground from which to view Heaney and his world, with Eugene O'Brien noting of Heaney's prose work that 'his poetry is intimately connected with his prose and that the prose itself is driven by an intellectual desire to probe the interstices of epistemology, politics, ethics, and the aesthetic' (O'Brien 2016, p.12). Similarly, his interviews with Dennis O'Driscoll, in *Stepping Stones*, will be consulted in order to garner a deeper understanding of the background behind the poems, and reference will also be made to a variety of other interviews. The prose and interview material give a further insight into the mind behind the poetry, as well as a sense of where it comes from, and offers another, more personal, layer to the context of the composition of that poetry.

In the opening paragraph of 'The Redress of Poetry', Heaney outlines his definition of what poetry accomplishes:

> Plato's world of ideal forms also provides the court of appeal through which poetic imagination seeks to redress whatever is wrong or exacerbating in the prevailing

conditions. Moreover, 'useful' or 'practical' responses to those same conditions are derived from imagined standards too: poetic fictions, the dream of alternative worlds, enable governments and revolutionaries as well. It's just that governments and revolutionaries would compel society to take on the shape of their imagining, whereas poets are typically more concerned to conjure with their own and their readers' sense of what is possible or desirable or, indeed, imaginable. The nobility of poetry, says Wallace Stevens, 'is a violence from within that protects us from a violence without'. It is the imagination pressing back against the pressure of reality. (Heaney 1995, p.1)

Heaney's work engages with poetic imagination in an attempt to define and locate his own sense of self, while at the same time attempting to understand the violence and bigotry prevalent throughout Northern Ireland during his lifetime: he will press back against the pressures of reality while at the same time trying to come to terms with himself. His poetry constantly seeks to understand society and identity as Heaney revisits and circles around prevalent issues throughout his collections of poetry.

From his earliest collection, *Death of a Naturalist*, Heaney has sought to define his bearings and identity. He notes that 'I like to feel that the line I am writing is being paid out from some old inner voice-reel, that it is coming up from the place I re-enter every time I go back to where I grew up' (Heaney & Miller 2000, p.29). The artesian imagination that exudes from the aforementioned collection constantly plays a part in the poetry; whether it is the metaphorical act of unearthing the bog bodies, or the metaphorical, mythical journey downwards into the underworld of both Dante's *Inferno* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. Heaney is constantly probing deeper levels of meaning in order to understand his present. The past constantly finds a place in the present within his poetics, with Thomas Docherty suggesting

that Heaney's work 'is not about the pastness of the past, but its presence' (Docherty 1997, p.212).

There will be a discussion of two words that will form the theoretical basis of this thesis, namely 'ontology' and 'hauntology'. 'Hauntology' was coined by Derrida out of 'ontology, as in French phonology, the words '*ontologie*' and 'hauntologie' which has a silent initial 'h', sound strikingly similar; thus because of this phonetic similarity at the level of the signifier, each word is also haunted by the other in terms of both meaning and existence at the level of the signified. 'Ontology', which refers to the subject of Being or existence in philosophy, is fundamental to Heaney's work, which attempts to express notions of being. However, when one applies Derrida's idea of 'hauntology' to a text, then notions of a simplistic or concrete meaning are blown open, with Derrida suggesting of deconstruction that 'what gives deconstruction its movement, that is, constantly to suspect, to criticize the given determinations of culture, of institutions, of legal systems, not in order to destroy them or simply to cancel them, but to be just with justice, to respect this relation to the other as justice' (Derrida 2000, p.18). In practical terms, hauntology as a theoretical approach to literature acts as a form of deconstruction. It locates the spectres present within a given text and seeks to understand that text in line with the spectres that reside within it, and intertextually around it. The imbrication of Derrida and Heaney widens the spectrum of meaning, and enables one to realise that the poet's work is a formation of: past colonial hauntings in the form of language and culture; past mythical influences of classical and Nordic origin; unconscious influences from his personal and cultural past; as well as historical influences in general. All these spectres haunt and influence Heaney's work to shape the present and future of his writing. A thorough investigation of the Heaney canon

is thus enabled by this theoretical approach, and it will be shown that his works are a mixture of traces that have been left upon the poet throughout his life, both literary and personal.

The presence of ghosts in literature is both important and necessary because it enables both the writer and reader to engage with the past, but also to learn from it. Heaney's poetry is littered with such transcendental figures who offer advice in poems such as 'Station Island' as Maria Cristina Fumagalli and Rane Ramón Arroyo discuss. Fumagalli discusses the presence and influence of Dante in the 'Station Island' sequence. She notes that the poem is a kaleidoscope of spectral hauntings of victims of violence, mythic figures from the past, personal friends and literary figures such as Dante and Joyce. Although they are not physically present, they influence and haunt Heaney's present state of writing through their absent presence:

> Behind Sweeney's ghost then, there is also Dante, or, better, Heaney's obsession with Dante, both as a character and as a poet capable of writing what he himself describes as 'an epic with the secret beauty of a lyric'. From this point of view, Sweeney/Dante's words 'stay clear of all processions!' have to be interpreted as a recommendation both towards lyricism and the creation of what Steiner calls 'original repetition'. (Fumagalli 2001, p.148)

Heaney's pilgrimage can be linked to both a spiritual and poetic awakening, influenced by the ghosts he encounters in the poem. The notion of original repetition within Heaney's poetry is also important; the many hauntings that inhabit the works see the poet put his own Irish twist on many mythical, ghostly, spectral presences. These spectral hauntings enable

the poet to personalise and make realistic, drastic and also necessary, representations of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, as well as allowing him to trace the influence the past has upon his identity.

Absent presences range from the manifestation of ghosts of victims of violence in 'Station Island VII', where Heaney is visited by the ghost of William Strathearn, to the poem 'Casualty', which deals with the murder of Louis O'Neill. Similarly, 'Punishment', which entwines victims of sacrificial violence in the Iron Age with that of contemporary victims of violence in Northern Ireland, offers comparable instances of tribal violence and sacrifice which Heaney explores in order to more fully understand the present. Hauntings are not only limited to Irish culture within the poetry, but are cross cultural, with Derrida noting of the spectres that 'ghosts also speak different languages, national languages' (Derrida 2006, p.129). These spectres allow the poet to interrogate and question the present through the lens of the past, through spectral hauntings that repeat themselves in the present to shape and mould his world. Sigmund Freud's notion of *Nachträglichkeit* is another dimension of this idea, with Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis suggesting that *Nachträglichkeit* can be translated as meaning 'deferred action' (Laplanche & Pontalis 1973, p.111), which in terms of writing, is exactly what Heaney accomplishes. The spectre that haunts Heaney's Northern Ireland is itself deferred, as it takes a period of time before it resurfaces again to haunt the present.

Heaney's incorporation of classical mythology, through the works of Virgil and Dante, finds an analogous representation within the present to an Irish context. Regarding victims of violence, Heaney never elegises members of paramilitary organisations, but instead, elegises the innocent victims, who he refers to in 'Route 110' as 'bodies /

Unglorified, accounted for and bagged / Behind the grief cordon' (Heaney 2010, p.56). Those who were murdered because of their religious, political, or cultural beliefs are individually remembered, with Henry Hart suggesting that Heaney's poetry 'scrutinizes the mortuary of the past, he also interrogates the myths that motivate or sanction those acts which fill its halls with corpses' (Hart 1989, p.388). Heaney's interrogation of the past resurrects physical ghosts of violence, as well as conjuring a more spectral, phantasmagorical element of the situation. The poetry is not only haunted by the violence that exists historically within both an Irish and Northern Irish context, but also by postcolonial signifiers of identity, such as language and culture.

In 'Terminus', for example, Heaney delves into the realm of the past where he can locate a similarity in the stand-off between Hugh O'Neill, the Earl of Tyrone, and the English Earl of Essex in pre-planation Ireland, and the possibility of both sides of the contemporary divide finding moments of acceptance of each other. Both parties are civil and speak English, yet will ultimately fight each other. Little separates them except notions of self and identity and this is also true for contemporary society, with Helen Sword suggesting that 'ghosts are not just dead people transported through space and time into the quotidian realm of the here and now. They are symbolic entities, objects of admiration and dread, emblems of literatures capacity to haunt our imagination and disturb the status quo' (Sword 2002, p.53).

Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx* examines these issues from a theoretical standpoint. The text itself is based upon the ideas of a lecture given in April 1993 at the University of California, Riverside, where Derrida himself discussed the topic 'Whither Marxism? Global Crises in International Perspective'. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida

conjures up notions that Marxism is alive and well in modern society, not because of its political usage, but because it exists to a certain extent in the back of people's minds, in their unconscious. Tom Lewis acknowledges that 'Derrida views Marxism not as constituting a living tradition but rather as belonging, quite precisely, to the realm of the undead. Marxism today, in Derrida's terms, is at once "spirit" and "specter"; and insofar as it is specter, "one does not know if it is living or if it is dead"' (Lewis 2008, p.137). Democratic and capitalist societies unconsciously fear the resurrection of Marxism and it is this repressed fear that Derrida sees as the mode of Marxism's existence. It haunts modern society: it hovers between the conscious and unconscious of political leaders locating this political ideology as being neither dead nor alive and at the same time both dead and alive. From this, Derrida draws his idea of 'hauntology'. It deals with kinds of non-being that are still operative. It is the space between Being and non-being wherein lies that which influences, shapes and creates the individual. These influences manifest themselves as ghosts and spectres according to Derrida, though not in the form of translucent beings hovering between the land of the living and the dead, but rather as past, present and future influences and ideas. Derrida states that these ghosts, or influences, are:

> neither living nor dead, present nor absent: it spectralizes. It does not belong to ontology, to the discourse on the Being of beings, or to the essence of life or death. It requires, then, what we call, to save time and space rather than just make up a word, hauntology. We will take this category to be irreducible, and first of all to everything it makes possible: ontology, theology, positive or negative onto-theology. (Derrida 2006, p.63)

The use of Derrida's ideas in *Specters of Marx*, and specifically the notion of hauntology,

will enable a nuanced, theoretical and unique reading of the Heaney canon. Eugene O'Brien states that 'Derrida's spectrality involves acknowledging the other that haunts the self' (O'Brien 2003, p.151), and this reading of Heaney's work will probe such hauntings.

In order to provide a broader context, I will be making reference to other forms of spectral research. On the matter of conversing with ghosts and spectres, there are many differing opinions to those of Derrida. Although he is not alone in his views that one converses with ghosts, his notion of a haunting spectre guiding one through the ages, past and future, is radically different in many respects from the perspectives of other studies. He focuses upon entities and ideas rather than dead individuals. Philosophical thinkers such as Paul de Man and Jean-Paul Sartre also acknowledge the presence of ghosts but from an alternative viewpoint. Paul de Man's texts *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* and *The Resistance to Theory*, both published in the mid-nineteen eighties before Derrida's text, will be consulted in discussing the idea and presence of *prosopopoeia* in Heaney's poetry. *Prosopopoeia* is the act of giving a voice to the dead and, to a certain extent, it reflects Derrida's acknowledgement of the need to converse with spectres in order to understand them. Likewise, Maurice Blanchot recognizes the impartiality and importance of the ghost. They haunt and influence, and nobody is free from the process. His thoughts on *prosopopoeia*, as well as on the relationship between the living and the dead, and the space inhabited in between, will be referenced through a discussion of his texts *The Infinite Conversation* and *The Step Not Beyond*.

A discussion of both Blanchot and de Man in relation to Derrida enables one to introduce Jean-Paul Sartre to the conversation. Sartre deals with the individual as being haunted, in a literal sense, through the dead individual's actions in the past, and through

how these can affect the future. The formulation of his thoughts stem from the Freudian death drive, which suggests that one courses towards self-annihilation because of the realisation that one can never truly realise one's desires. Like Derrida, Sartre recognises that the individual is haunted by notions of Self and Other, but where he differs is in the ending, finding meaning:

> I am haunted by this being which I fear to encounter someday at the turn of a path, this being which is so strange to me and which is yet my being and which I know that I shall never encounter in spite of all my efforts to do so. (Sartre 1977, p.369)

Sartre's beliefs are close to Derrida's, but none are closer than the studies carried out by the psychoanalysts Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok.

Derrida was familiar with their work and even went as far as writing an article on them entitled '*Fors*: *Les Mots anglés de Nicolas Abraham et Maria Torok*'. Abraham and Derrida also shared a preoccupation with the ghost in *Hamlet*, with the former composing his own sixth Act to the play in order to argue that the play simply ends because there is nobody left to kill, and not in a moment of catharsis as in the original Shakespearean text. Abraham and Torok's most radical finding in their studies is the perceived presence of trauma in the psyche of an individual, from an event that they personally have not experienced. They put forward the notion that this trauma had in fact been passed on by a dead ancestor who now exists in the individual's Ego. From this, they determine that 'the patient may be a *cryptopore*, the repository of a crypt constructed to preserve loved ones from being radically lost in death. The crypt which contains the dead forms a "sort of artificial Unconscious, lodged at the very heart of the Ego"' (Davis 2007, p.77). Their ideas

of the 'phantom' and the 'crypt' relate to Derrida's studies to a certain degree, but both ideas differ in the purpose of engaging with and conjuring this ghostly presence. Derrida believes that one must exorcise the spectre in order to attain knowledge from the Other within, while Abraham and Torok's beliefs are the antithesis of this. Colin Davis notes that 'in Abraham and Torok's conception, the ghost is precisely the problem rather than the indicator or a solution. It is the source of discord and not the means of settling it' (Davis 2007, p.80). The discussion and exploration of alternative theories on ghostly presences is essential to understanding the context of Derrida's ideas in *Specters of Marx*. These texts have influenced Derrida's writing and will be the focus of Chapter One

The work of Michael Parker and Neil Corcoran on Heaney's poetry will be central in developing my research into the poetry. Corcoran's text, *The Poetry of Seamus Heaney*, will be referenced throughout this thesis, as will Parker's *Seamus Heaney*: *The Making of the Poet*. Parker is in tune with Heaney's preoccupation with the past and future when he states, talking of 'Bogland', which concludes *Door into the Dark*, that it is 'a poem which embodies what had gone before and anticipates the future direction of his poetry, looking forward to the place-name and bog poems of *Wintering Out* and *North*' (Parker 1993, p.61). Not only did Parker trace this in Heaney's earlier poetry, he also commented on its apotheosis in 'Route 110' from his final collection. He contends that the 'sequence is animated by continuing feelings of deep affection for people and places who comprised of his first world, and a consciousness of his own mortality' (Parker 2013, p.382). Parker traces similarities in both practice and thematic choice from the earlier works up until *Human Chain*, and I will be attempting to do the same. Corcoran notes the poet's need to define the self. He comments on Heaney's prose work *Preoccupations* that 'Heaney is

constructing a bolstering imaginative system of self-instruction, self-declaration, self-evaluation, and self-rebuke' (Corcoran 1999, p.97).

Likewise, Henry Hart's critical writings will be of intrinsic value to my exploration of hauntology and Heaney. His book, *Seamus Heaney*: *Poet of Contrary Progressions*, will be consulted throughout this thesis. He has written on the topic of ghosts in Heaney's work, and notes that the ghosts present in his writings post *Field Work* 'supplicate old ghosts but speak for them in a more conversational tone. If the early poems open "a door into the dark", then the later ones open a door into the light' (Hart 1988, p.233). His opinion on Heaney's position during the Troubles is also of value to my research. He professes Heaney to be a poet who did not condone the actions of his tribe nor support them, but rather interrogated and questioned the actions being carried out upon the innocent victims of violence. Heaney is not a political poet, *per se*, but instead seeks to understand his society through poetry without ever supporting either side of the political divide. Hart states that 'although Heaney wrestles with the call to become politically engaged, he ultimately resists it for the safer, more private orders of poetry' (Hart 1989, p.389). It is through the 'private orders of poetry' that Heaney delves into the spectral world, and tackles issues that are intrinsically linked through his public and private personae. Through poetry, he finds connections with older, wider European versions of the violence that is occurring in Northern Ireland, which suggests that history is circular and repetitive. He uses poetry to enter the domain of the unknown, repressed, banal issues of the psyche and reveals them to be universal to humanity.

Eugene O'Brien notes that Heaney is 'attempting to define Irish culture in a manner which is against the grain in terms of hegemonic, linguistic, cultural and gender practices'

(O'Brien 2005, p.21). Heaney does this through the application of classical mythology by adverting to the works of Dante, Virgil and Homer. He situates mythic figures of the past in contemporary Ireland, and allows them to speak for the present. O'Brien's major texts on Heaney, *Seamus Heaney and the Place of Writing*, and *Seamus Heaney*: *Creating Irelands of the Mind*, will be consulted, as will '*The Soul Exceeds its Circumstances*': *The Later Poetry of Seamus Heaney*. O'Brien has written specifically on the topic of hauntology and sees Heaney as attempting 'to achieve a broader perspective through his notion of being an "inner emigré", who is open to different strands of identity' (O'Brien 2009, p.102). It is through a hauntological nature that these forces of spectral influences define and create the poet's identity and as an 'inner emigré'.

Chapter One seeks to outline and define the workings of Derrida's hauntology. Firstly, I will discuss Jacques Derrida himself and his background. A selection of his writings prior to *Specters of Marx* will be briefly explored, especially in connection with his development of ideas of *différance* and deconstruction. I will then talk about hauntology's origins, as well as what influenced Derrida to invoke such theories and concepts in more detail. In a sense, a hauntologlical approach will initially be taken in discussing *Specters of Marx*'*s* origins. The fact that there are differing philosophical and theoretical views on the issue of ghosts and their functions, as has been previously mentioned in this introduction, is important. It shows that many of the arguments made by Derrida in *Specters of Marx* regarding ontology, hauntology and phenomenology, are not unique, but are themselves haunted by what has been written before him: ironically, the text that declares existence to be haunted, is itself haunted by other texts:

The spectre appears to be present itself during a visitation. One represents it to oneself, but it is not present, itself, in flesh and blood. This non-presence of the spectre demands that one take its times and history into consideration . . . I was initially thinking of proposing a title such as 'the spectres of Marx'. Where I was tempted to name thereby the persistence of a present past, the return of the dead which the worldwide work of mourning cannot get rid of, whose return it runs away from, which it chases (excludes, banishes, and at the same time pursues). (Derrida 2006, p.126)

He has undoubtedly been influenced by the writings of Sartre, de Man, Blanchot, Freud and by Abraham and Torok who have gone before him, much like Heaney has been influenced by spectres of the past, in terms of memory and literature.

Terry Eagleton seems to play down the impact of *Specters of Marx* upon philosophical thinking. He claims that the text is 'a political discourse of an averagely-intelligent-layperson kind, and a philosophical rhetoric, of spectrality and the messianic, which is at once considerably more subtle and a good deal less convincing' (Eagleton 1999, p.85). To say so, I would contend, is an injustice to the text in its commitment to deconstructing and unearthing spectral presences. The term coined by Derrida, hauntology, is an essential tool in understanding how new meanings can be generated in literary texts. The notion that being does not necessarily involve only presence enables one to search and find hidden meanings in the context of literature and its past. It becomes one of the methodological tools needed to question the origins and existence of any given literature, culture, language, history and societal value. The process of the spectrality of a text is never-ending in both time and meaning. Colin Davis describes *Specters of Marx*, and the views in it, as 'entirely bound up with the work of mourning, conceived here not as a

process delimited in time but as interminable and impossible, already began and never to be ended' (Davis 2007, p.129). This stems from Derrida's interpretation of Hamlet saying that 'The time is out of joint' (Shakespeare 2007, p. 50), which is from where the issue of time and hauntology originate in Derrida's thinking. The ghost in the play haunts in between the space of time. Like Derrida's spectre, it is between both the worlds of the living and of the dead:

> Here is – or rather there is, over there, an unnameable or almost unnameable thing: something, between something and someone, anyone or anything, some thing, 'this thing,' but this thing and not any other, this thing that looks at us, that concerns us [*qui nous regarde*], comes to defy semantics as much as ontology, psychoanalysis as much as philosophy ('Marcellus: What ha's this thing appear'd againe tonight? Bernardo: I haue seen nothing'). The Thing is still invisable, ('I haue seene nothing') at the moment one speaks of it and in order to ask oneself if it has reappeared. It is still nothing that can be seen when one speaks of it. (Derrida 2006, p.5)

Chapter One of this study seeks to outline the origins and fundamentals of hauntology. A discussion of all notions of spectrality will be undertaken, which will predicate a theoretical analysis of Heaney's poetry throughout the rest of the thesis.

Chapter Two will deal with the influence of colonization upon Ireland, as seen through the hauntological lens of Heaney's poetry. The chapter will initially make reference to Edward Said's notion of Otherness as explored in *Orientalism*, and to Homi K. Bhabha's idea of cultural hybridity, referring specifically to *Nation and Narration* and *The Location of Culture*. There will then be a discussion of the poetry from a spectral,

postcolonial viewpoint wherein the theories of Otherness, hybridity and hauntology will be fused together to unearth and understand the postcolonial contexts of Heaney's work. The discussion of the poetry will be divided into two sections: one that deals with Norse invasions and their impacts upon Ireland, and the final section of the chapter that deals with British colonisation and influences upon Heaney's world and identity. Heaney does not take sides on the political front in Northern Ireland, but instead realises that he has been shaped and influenced by Scandinavian, British, Irish and Italian spectres: 'Irish utterance, Irish literary tradition, in so far as it exists as a single entity, has always been constituted out of a disturbingly rich plurality' (Vance 1990, p.15). This chapter will outline the degree to which the colonization of Ireland still influences the present of the poet's world, psyche and identity.

The chapter will be divided into two major poetical sections. The Norse section of this chapter will discuss the poems 'Belderg', 'North' and 'Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces', while the section that outlines British colonial hauntings will discuss 'Oceans Love to Ireland', 'Bog Oak' and 'Terminus'. These six poems outline how the spectres of Ireland's colonial past haunt the present of Heaney's poetry. They also reinforce the notion that the actions and ideas of these invaders, while long deceased, live on in a spectral manner in the present. Derrida states that 'one must, magically, chase away a spectre, exorcise the possible return of a power held to be baleful in itself and whose demonic threat continues to haunt the century' (Derrida 2006, p.120). However, within the poetry, the spectre constantly returns, albeit in a different form and in a different time. Heaney regards himself as Irish, but acknowledges the impact and impression that the British literary tradition has had upon him:

I speak and write in English, but do not altogether share the preoccupations and perspectives of an Englishman. I teach English literature, I publish in London, but the English tradition is not ultimately home. (Heaney 1980, p.34)

I would argue that Heaney exists in between both cultures as he pertinently observes in *The Haw Lantern*:

Two buckets were easier carried than one

I grew up in between. (Heaney 1987, p.5)

Hauntology is essential to understanding Heaney's identity, and his idea of self in a post-colonial world. Derrida states that 'haunting belongs to the structure of every hegemony' (Derrida 2006, p.46), while Terence Brown comments that 'the emotions I detect underground through Heaney's work, emotions that have surfaced only once or twice as the subjects of poems, are feelings of revulsion and attraction to violence, pain and death' (Brown 1986, p.35). This statement is a little too simple to apply to Heaney. It is true to say that he deals with death and violence, but only because it is what he is surrounded by and what his country, Northern Ireland, was founded upon and has experienced over a long period of time. Every process of colonization throughout the world revolves around the dismantling of the culture of natives through various forms of violence, and Eugene O'Brien has argued that violence 'is a necessary part of the imperial and colonial process' (O'Brien 2001, p.43) as a matter of control. Since these spectral hauntings of colonialism are suspended over society, and Heaney, then his poetry is going to unconsciously reflect that state of continued suspension:

> One would have to say: it haunts, it ghosts, it specters, there is some phantom there, it
>
> has the feel of the living-dead – manor house, spiritualism, occult science, gothic novel,
>
> obscurantism, atmosphere of anonymous threat of imminence. The subject that haunts
>
> is not identifiable, we cannot see, localize, fix any form, one cannot decide between
>
> hallucination and perception, there are only displacements, one feels oneself looked at
>
> by what one cannot see. (Derrida 2006, p.170)

The bringing of British culture to Ireland is expressed mostly by the use of language. Many academics do not see Ireland as a postcolonial nation, given its racial and first world similarity to Britain; however, when one's language is changed and one thinks like the colonizer, the colonization has been a success. This is not a negative thing as Heaney, along with many other Irish writers such as Wilde, Yeats, Joyce, Kavanagh and Beckett have thrived in the use of the English language:

> It is not necessary for a nation to speak a tongue of its own in order to have a language
>
> of its own in that truest of all senses. The Americans have a language of their own in
>
> English, the Mexicans in Spanish, the German-speaking Swiss in German, not because
>
> each of these peoples speaks a tongue peculiar to itself – which it doesn't – but because
>
> each of them has a world – image peculiar to itself, formed by thinking and talking about
>
> its experiences and circumstances, while regarding these as representatively human. By
>
> the same token, it is possible for us Irish to have a language of our own in English.
>
> Consequently, the issue which the Gaelic League raised, and placed on our national
>
> agenda, is still a living issue, not a dead one. (Fennell 1984, p.123)

Chapter Three aims to show that the postcolonial spectres of the previous chapter

haunt contemporary Northern Ireland with the actions of the past influencing the present and future political divisions within Heaney's society. This chapter will be divided into two major sections: the first will focus on the bog poems with a particular emphasis on 'Bogland', 'The Tollund Man' and 'Punishment'. Stephen Regan notes of 'Bogland' that it anticipates 'an archaeological poetry of recovery and retrieval' (Regan 2014, p.322) from which Heaney draws the predominant metaphor of unearthing the past in the following bog poems. The second section concentrates on more contemporary explorations of violence within Northern Irish society, with 'Casualty', 'Station Island VII' and 'The Wood Road' undergoing a sustained hauntological analysis. Heaney is constantly seeking to understand the violence being enacted during the Troubles, and uses historical examples of violence enacted in Iron Age Scandinavia in an effort to locate possible reasons for the sectarian violence in the present.

In this sense, I would suggest that violence is not strictly unique to certain places and contexts, but is instead cultural and a part of the human condition historically. The preserving nature of the bog, both literally and metaphorically, keeps the victims of ancient times preserved so as they return in the present to be symbolic of continued notions of violence of which Northern Ireland is just a contemporary and specific instance. Starting with his poem 'Bogland', I will investigate how the bogs were 'instructive and benevolent' (Vendler 1999, p.38), as well as how Heaney locates in a past, foreign subject a place to locate the present. It is worth mentioning that Heaney's conversations with the dead are indebted to Thomas Hardy's example in his 'Poems 1912-13'. Tim Armstrong discusses this element of Hardy's work in *Haunted Hardy: Poetry, History, Memory* which is also inspired by Derrida. The bog victims in *North* are victims of sacrificial violence but can,

in the myth Heaney creates around the bog, be looked upon as symbolically signifying victims of Northern Ireland's Troubles. The ghosts of both cultures unite to haunt both the past and present of Heaney's world. Eugene O'Brien demonstrates, in *Seamus Heaney*: *Creating Irelands of the Mind*, that 'the Iron-Age bog victims are seen as imaginative parallels to the victims of contemporary Northern Ireland. At another level, the "goddess" of the land, to whom these votive offerings were made, is seen as analogous to the personified Ireland that is part of Irish cultural nationalism' (O'Brien 2002, p.30). The bog victims haunt the contemporary images of Northern Ireland, about which Heaney writes; thereby showing that being does not necessarily have to mean physical presence. Heaney seeks to depict the reality of the situation regarding paramilitary actions, with a focus on the individual as opposed to the tribe, and does not support one side or the other.

Interestingly, Conor Cruise O'Brien claims that Heaney did support his tribe's actions in *North*. I do not agree with his suggestion that 'his upbringing and experience have given him some cogent reasons to feel that one side is worse than the other, and his poems have to reflect this' (Cruise O'Brien 1997, p.27). However, Heaney himself has noted in 'Whatever You Say, Say Nothing' that '"One sides as bad as the other", never worse' (Heaney 1975, p.59). Heaney further compounds his position as in-between or liminal, and as not being implicated in progressing division, as he notes his attempt through poetry to resolve issues of division:

> I believe any of us
>
> Could draw the line through bigotry and sham,
>
> Given the right line, *aere perennius*. (Heaney 1975, p.59)

His poetry carries out a questioning of both sides' actions during the Troubles with the names of individual victims and places haunting the poetry. Their bodies have been, like 'Casualty's' Louis O' Neill, 'blown to bits' (Heaney 1979, p.22), but their spectral influence carries on. Despite becoming statistics of a futile, so-called war, they have a spectral presence in both Heaney's mind and poetry. They are dead and physically gone but now belong to the realm of Derrida's undead, constantly in flux, coming back, and then leaving, but only to return again, with Derrida noting of the spectre that 'one cannot control its comings and goings because it begins by coming back' (Derrida 2006, p.11). Individuals such as Louis O'Neill, Colum McCartney, Seán Browne and William Strathearn have a non-present presence in the present through Heaney's poetry. They leave and come back just as Derrida suggests, as Louis O'Neill and John F. Lavery revisit Heaney in 'Route 110' in *Human Chain*. O'Brien states that 'poetry allows for the voicing of the dead, and for the presence of the past, it also, in ethical terms, upholds notions of goodness that are at a higher level than those of the underworld' (O'Brien 2002, p.109). The poems are as much a protest at the violence as they are a haunting by it, and this chapter offers a sustained exploration of this argument.

Chapter Four will focus upon Heaney's use of classical mythology in his poetry. This chapter outlines the cultural and societal hauntings present in Heaney's world, and those within classical mythology, with the discussion further analysing Heaney's ongoing imperative to view Northern Ireland from within the context of a wider, older European cultural perspective. A discussion of the classical poets Virgil and Dante will initially take place as well as an exploration of their own societal, cultural and political contexts. Similarly, Heaney's connections to the spectres of both Italian poets will be interrogated,

with parallels being drawn between aspects of the worlds of all three. Finally, the chapter will engage in a discussion of two different strands of Heaney's poetry: one that focuses upon the spectre of Virgil in his work, and another that examines the spectral presence of Dante. The Virgilian section in the chapter will primarily focus on Heaney's later poetry, with an analysis of 'Bann Valley Eclogue', 'Virgil: Eclogue IX', and 'The Golden Bough'. The final section of the chapter will trace Dantean hauntings through much of the middle poetry, with a discussion of 'Ugolino', 'Station Island VIII' and 'The Crossing'.

Both Italian poets haunt the psyche of Heaney, because of the relatability and applicability of their worlds to the situation in Northern Ireland. Heaney notes this specifically when talking about 'Ugolino' with Rand Brandes:

> In relation to the Ugolino section I did from the Dante. It was a very famous purple passage, but it also happened to have an oblique applicability (in its ferocity of emotion and in its narrative about a divided city) to the Northern Irish situation. (Heaney & Brandes 1988, p.12)

The spectres of the past are never-ending in their return to the present. Heaney notes in his essay, 'The Sense of Place', that the myth of place, used by poets such as Muldoon, Kavanagh, Mahon and Longley, exists 'to serve the poet and not vice versa. None of these poets surrenders himself to the mythology of his place but instead each subdues the place to become an element in his own private mythology' (Heaney 1980, p.148). Heaney's exposure to classical myth allows him to blend and draw parallels between his world and the classical world. It is the constant search for an identity that is to the fore of Heaney's work; he probes deeper levels of meaning and unearths older strains of sectarian violence

that when viewed in the present are identifiable as hauntings. The events that happened in

Virgil and Dante's times still occur and repeat themselves in the present:

> Ghosts have a history. They are not what they used to be. Ghosts, in a sense, are history. They do not, after all, come from nowhere, even if they appear to do just that. They are always inscribed in a context: they at once belong to and haunt the idea of a place (hence 'spirit of place' or *genius loci*), and belong to and haunt the idea of a time (what we could call 'spirit of time') or rather differently what is called the 'spirit of the age' or *Zeitgeist*. (Bennett & Royle 2016, p.182)

The chapter seeks to unearth the mythical context and hauntings that see both Italian poets proleptically mirror Heaney in certain instances. The discussions that takes place in the previous chapters find a resonance within Chapter Four, where issues of identity, sectarian violence and colonialism resurrect themselves through the hauntological, spectral presence of Virgil and Dante's influence on Heaney's poetry.

The final chapter of this thesis will focus on Heaney's 'Route 110' sequence, from his final collection of poetry, *Human Chain*. The sequence can be looked upon as Heaney, in old age, revisiting his past, while simultaneously looking towards the future. He seems to re-visit all that he has written previously, and revisits any outstanding issues such as the murder of Louis O'Neill. The text as a whole can be looked upon as Heaney getting his affairs in order before he passes on. This chapter aims to locate some of the major ideas discussed in previous chapters within this sequence. In this sense, the nature of hauntings within the Heaney canon can be traced through the entirety of the works. The spectres of Dante and Virgil find a place within the sequence in Heaney's journey home by 'Route

110, Cookstown via Toome and Magherafelt' (Heaney 2010, p.50). Heaney's journey through his past and memory mirrors that of Aeneas in book six of Virgil's *Aeneid*. The form of the poet is also haunted by classical mythology as Heaney returns to using his own twist on Dantean terza rima. The violence that plagued Northern Ireland during the late sixties until the mid-eighties is revisited by Heaney in sections VIII and IX, where 'pre-troubles Northern Ireland' of VIII (Heaney 2010, p.55) leads into 'bodies / Unglorified, accounted for and bagged / Behind grief cordons' (Heaney 2010, p.56) in IX. While the sequence is poignant and remembers the innocence of youth in the early stages, the final three sections signal the poet's realisation that he is now much older than his father was when he died and that death is not too far away. This is signalled by the 'final whistle' of Section X. The birth of his first grand daughter, in the final section, gives rise to notions of circularity, but also to notions of birth and rebirth, which adds to the sense of Virgilian hauntings within the sequence. Ultimately, the sequence charts Heaney's procession through his life, and unearths spectral presences through memory.

Overall, this thesis will enact a theoretical reading of Seamus Heaney's poetry through the deconstructive lens of Jacques Derrida's ideas on spectrality and hauntology. In reading the poetry from this perspective, a number of new meanings are liberated from the poetry. Issues around circularity and the constant return of the past enable a commonality between the past and the present to be traced and delineated through the haunting influence of Derridean spectres. The decision to offer a series of close readings of poems in each chapter makes each poem more accessible, but also demonstrates that poems as a whole are haunted by the past and that the thematic structures of the earlier poems carry through to the middle and later poetry. Not only is Heaney haunted by spectres

of culture, language and identity; he is also haunted by his own past works.

Chapter One: *Specters of Marx*, Derrida and Hauntology

'A ghost never dies, it remains always to come and to come-back' (Derrida 2006, p.123)

Jacques Derrida has been to the fore of western philosophical thinking since the mid nineteen sixties, when he first published his three seminal texts: *Writing and Difference*, *Speech and Phenomena*, and *Of Grammatology*. In these texts, Derrida first introduced his thoughts on what has become widely accepted and understood as 'deconstruction'. In her translator's preface to *Of Grammatology*, Gayatri Spivak states that 'deconstruction is a perpetually self-deconstructing movement that is inhabited by difference. No text is ever fully deconstructing or deconstructed' (Derrida & Spivak 2016, p.ci). By tracing the thinking in Derrida's formative years, it is possible to understand how and why he adopted and created this line of philosophical inquiry. Culturally, he was immersed in a society of difference. Derrida himself was ethnically of Arab, French and Jewish heritage, while his family worked in the coalbunkers. He was born in Algeria in the nineteen thirties, during a period that saw his native land ruled by colonial French laws. Jason Powell gives an invigorating account of Derrida's view on his multi-cultural upbringing that reveals the inner turmoil he faced in terms of identity, as well as the deep rooted and conscious effort he made to become more French. Powell notes that Derrida 'grew up with an Algerian French idiom and intonation, but was to change his accent to the purest correct French.

Occasionally his old *pieds-noirs* Maghreb accent surfaced when in states of emotion, but even then only in private, with family' (Powell 2006, p.13). The reconstruction of his original speech segues with deconstruction, which suggests that nothing can be completely hidden or obliterated; rather he proposes that the true identity of a person or an institution lingers beneath the surface. He has since sought to deconstruct the structures of forms of hegemony, whether it be in linguistic, institutional or political discourses.

Derrida moved to Paris in the nineteen fifties to study at the prestigious *École Normale Supérieure*. His line of thinking was moulded during a period when phenomenology was to the fore in French philosophy, and this trace is recognizable in his theory of deconstruction. While phenomenology relates to the interpretation of the first person consciousness regarding interaction with objects of direct experience, deconstruction aims to take this a step further, and examine that which is inside given structures of human existence and experience. Nothing is to be taken at face value. It sets about dislocating and decentring what Ferdinand de Saussure terms a system, a mode or method made of signs, which one uses to understand and interpret the world. Deconstruction attacks the centre of power of a given system in order to create and enable a new outlook or perspective. Every structure has a centre, and once a questioning of that centre takes place, it alters and changes to create a new centre with Derrida noting that:

> It would be easy enough to show that the concept of structure and even the word 'structure' itself are as old as the episteme – that is to say, as old as Western science and Western philosophy – and that their roots thrust deep into the soil of ordinary language, into whose deepest recesses the episteme plunges in order to gather them up and to make them part of itself in a metaphorical displacement. (Derrida 2001, p.351)

Structures are limitless and never ending, because as soon as one is broken down, a new centre is formed to create a new version of the previous structure. Saussure acknowledges that change is inevitable given that 'it is not that one system has produced another but that an element of the first has been changed, and that has sufficed to bring into existence another system' (Culler 1986, p.52). Taking from Saussure's line of thought, one can draw a comparison with Derrida's own deconstructive apparatus. It is a natural exercise of sorts that aims to displace and break down societal structures rooted in consciousness. Derrida notes that 'deconstruction is not a method or some tool that you apply to something from the outside. Deconstruction is something which happens and which happens inside' (Derrida & Caputo 1997, p.9). In this sense, every hegemony or structure, be it societal or cultural, can be understood differently on a deeper level when one breaks down the barriers surrounding the given structure to reveal the inside, the true nature of the structure itself. Only when this action takes place can a new structure be formed.

Growing up Algerian, but speaking and thinking in French, determines Derrida as the Other in relation to those who grew up in France and spoke their own native tongue. Ironically, he would come to symbolise French philosophy for nearly sixty years, and be seen as a central figure in this discipline. One could see his relationship to the French language and to French culture as simultaneously *Heimlich* and *Unheimlich* – it is a home for him, but at the same time, he is not fully at home. Similarly, Derrida's Jewish beliefs in a time when Hitler was in power, and Vichy France was established, further ostracized him and this may have contributed to his relinquishing Judaism and turning to Christian modes of belief, with Powell noting that:

> As a youth he rebelled against Judaism because it was practised as an outward ritual but had been disavowed inwardly. Thus he had a Christian critical viewpoint, even though it was the Christian French culture which ruined his Algerian Judaism to begin with. (Powell 2006, p.13)

In many ways, Derrida accepts the Other within the self, and argues for a hybrid identity. Deconstruction enables one to give a certain power back to the Other. It allows one to reveal an alterity at the core of the self. The Other is the true locus of deconstruction. Derrida comments, when talking of his background, that being immersed in different cultures enabled him to become a more rounded person:

> I want to speak here, today, as an Algerian, as an Algerian who became French at a given moment, lost his French citizenship, then recovered it. Of all the cultural wealth I have received, that I have inherited, my Algerian culture has sustained me the most. (Derrida & Nass 2012, p.37)

Therefore, despite all his efforts to disentangle himself from the web of culture, he ultimately accepts in later years that his Algerian past has influenced him significantly. This sense of the return of his early past has an extremely haunting nature to it. The past repeats itself in many ways throughout history. The past has a constant presence in the present and future, given that it is the past that has helped to shape those periods.

This chapter will provide an insight into the workings of Jacques Derrida's writings. A brief summary will be undertaken of Derrida's earlier works in order to locate a context from whence to view *Specters of Marx*. A variety of Derrida's texts will be used to show the impact that past ideas have over the trope of hauntology. It will be shown that *Specters*

of Marx has been born out of what has existed before it, and what is to come after it. In hindsight, since the creation of deconstruction and the fusion of deconstruction with the ideas of Karl Marx, along with the thoughts of philosophical thinkers such as Blanchot, Sartre, Hegel, de Man and Freud, one can recognize that hauntology was always-already 'to come'. The ghosts of the past have influenced the present and future of the text. Derrida refers to this ghost as a spectre, and suggests that 'it is always to come, it presents itself only as that which could come or come back' (Derrida 2006, p.48).

In this sense, the politics of the ghost is interesting, as it endlessly complicates the seemingly simple present and the attendant epistemological issue of presence. In ways, it allows for a much more nuanced and plural study of issues of presence and belonging, and also offers a critique of the notion of aesthetic ideology, that aesthetic fusion of a people and a place, which is so central to the politics of Heaney's Northern Ireland. Paul de Man has provided a searching critique of these notions of aesthetic ideology, and his argument is worthy of some exposition. He has focused on rhetoric as that aspect of language that resists the efforts of language to fuse mind and matter. In his essay 'The Resistance to Theory', de Man makes the point that in the 'most familiar and general of all linguistic models, the classical *trivium*' the science of language is seen 'as consisting of grammar, rhetoric and logic' (de Man 1986, p.13). De Man sees this set of relationships as 'a set of unresolved tensions' (de Man 1986, p.13), which have generated both prolonged discourse and numerous difficulties:

> The difficulties extend to the internal articulations between the constituent parts as well as the articulation of the field of language with the knowledge of the world in general, the link between the *trivium* and the *quadrivium* which covers the non-verbal sciences

of number (arithmetic), of space (geometry), of motion (astronomy), and of time (music). In the history of philosophy, this link is traditionally, as well as substantially, accomplished by way of logic, the area where the rigor of the linguistic discourse about itself matches up with the rigor of the mathematical discourse about the world. (de Man 1986, p.13)

De Man goes on to develop this telling point by noting that there is a homology between the 'articulation of the sciences of language with the mathematical sciences', and the notion of a 'continuity between a theory of language, as logic, and the knowledge of the phenomenal world to which mathematics gives access' (de Man 1986, p.13): in other words, between word and world. The relationship between word and world is essential to the hauntological discussion that is to take place, because language itself is the carrier of the past and a shaping influencer of both the world and the future of that world.

Theoretical Influences

Specters of Marx is not only shaped and haunted by Derrida's previous work, but also by the works of others such as Maurice Blanchot, Paul de Man and Jean Paul Sartre. Many similarities can be drawn between each of these thinkers and Derrida, which brings to mind Plato's notion that all writing is repetitive by nature. Plato 'uses writing as repetition in which the repetition attempts not to repeat what it imitates but to overthrow and negate it' (Neel 2016, p.25). Essentially, this is what Derrida is doing in *Specters of Marx*. Similarly, in *Writing and Difference*, Derrida notes that writing is merely an act of repetition, and that the present is merely an altered reflection of history:

For there could be no history without the gravity and labor of literality. The painful folding of itself which permits history to reflect itself as it ciphers itself. This reflection is its beginning. The only thing that begins by reflecting itself is history. (Derrida 2001, p.78)

Derrida takes what has gone before him in the line of thinking, and supplements it to create a new line of thought. In essence, his work on hauntology is itself haunted by the past from which it originated.

A discussion of *Specters of Marx* from a political perspective will also be undertaken in order to set out a comprehensive critique that acknowledges both the brilliance of the text as well as its weaknesses. Marx's ghost permeates *Specters of Marx*, and the Marxist political analysis of sorts that was undertaken by Derrida was not received well by some in the field, most notably, Terry Eagleton. Colin Davis, on the other hand, hails the text as a success mainly due to the initiation of 'hauntology' to academic discourse as does David Wood, who is of the opinion that 'Derrida is elaborating a new space of reading' (Wood 1992, p.3). Eagleton, on the other hand, describes the text as 'a political discourse of an averagely-intelligent layperson kind' (Eagleton 1999, p.85), but this is very reductive. Instead, I would agree with Alex Callinicos's belief that the text is an attempt to 'dismantle the "dominant discourse", the neo-liberal ideology unanimously embraced by elites around the world in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union' (Callinicos 2008, p.84). The primary notion that surrounds the text, however, is not one that acknowledges Derrida's 'New International'; rather it is that Marxism has returned as if almost from the dead to influence the present.

The notion of 'hauntology' introduced a new theoretical framework from which to approach literature, society and institutions as a whole, and for this reason the text must be considered as one of Derrida's most important pieces of writing. It provides one with an alternative way to interpret and understand phenomenological ontology, specifically the notion of Being as located in the present. Elisabeth Loevile notes that 'hauntology questions (or haunts!) its homophone concept ontology as it attempts to indicate that which moves insistently in-between being and non-being, existence and death. Hauntology therefore performs and releases what I shall describe as an ontological quivering' (Loevile 2013, p.337).

This 'ontological quivering', as Loevile terms it, is an essential term in understanding what hauntology accomplishes. Hauntology disrupts and makes one uneasy with the present, while at the same time opening up that present to the possibility of multiple traces and spectral influences that find a non-present presence within the given moment. The notion of an absolute present is both certain and uncertain at the same time, in that the multiple spectres that make up the present constitute the unconscious at any given moment. The haunting spectre must be trusted only as far as that it is the only way through which one can embrace and accept the otherness of others, and the otherness within the self. It is Derrida's belief that one must 'learn to live by learning not how to make conversation with the ghost but how to talk with him, with her, how to let them speak or how to give them back speech, even if it is in oneself, in the other, in the other in oneself' (Derrida 2006, p.221). This is the closing injunction of the text, and as Derrida has spoken throughout in a ghostly fashion to the reader, the voice one hears is at the same time the voice of the self, but also the voice of Derrida, and the voices of the spectres that permeate

the unconscious of the individual readers themselves. One must embrace this otherness that the spectre both presents and represents in order to discover a deeper, truer interpretation of not only the present but any given text, institution or structure. Davis looks upon the closing injunction as an example of Derrida almost giving permission to the Other within to speak, both for him, and to him, suggesting that the purpose of this line is 'to allow past and future ghosts to roam, to speak to them in the hope that they may respond' (Davis 2007, p.128).

This brings one to Derrida's idea of the trace. This complex but essential issue within the realm of hauntological thinking penetrates and infuses the past with the present and future. It relates in certain ways to the idea of *différance*. Eugene O'Brien argues that:

> in *Limited Inc*. Derrida has noted that 'nothing exists outside context' and that, consequently, the 'outside penetrates and thus determines the inside'. Derrida has made a related point in *Positions* where he writes of how each seemingly simple term is marked by the trace of other terms, so that the 'presumed interiority of meaning' is 'worked on by its own exteriority. It is always already carried outside itself'. (O'Brien 2016, p.102)

The roaming nature of the spectral figure who carries meaning segues with Derrida's idea of the trace. The trace can be interpreted as a residue of unconscious meaning or experience that underlies all meaning and signification. Gayatri Spivak in the 'Translator's Preface' to Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, describes the trace – itself another of Derrida's polysemic paleonyms – in terms of the post-Saussurean insight that the sign, phonic as well as graphic, is a structure of difference as 'the never-annulled difference from "the completely other"'

(Spivak 1976, p. xvii). The act of writing is itself a trace of the self, and of what has been written previously in the subject area. Thomas Baldwin is of the opinion that Derrida's trace 'is the existence of networks of traces that provide the meaningful contents of thoughts and feelings. Just what Derrida means by "traces" is obscure; he thinks of them as phenomena that are antecedent to the mind / body distinction' (Baldwin 2008, p.110). It is interesting that Baldwin chooses to use the word 'networks' to describe the notion of the trace. Like all ideas, Derrida's trace is not totally original. In *Positions*, Derrida discusses what he determines to be the trace:

> This concept can be called gram or *différance* . . . no element can function as a sign without referring to another element which itself is not simply present. This interweaving results in each 'element' – phoneme or grapheme – being constituted on the basis of the trace within it of the other elements of the chain or system. This interweaving, this textile, is the text produced only in the transformation of another text. Nothing, neither among the elements nor within the system, is anywhere ever simply present or absent. There are only, everywhere, differences and traces of traces. (Derrida 1981, p.26)

One can find a correlation between Derrida's trace and that of Emmanuel Levinas. The notion of the trace put forward by Levinas suggests that it has been deeply influential upon Derrida. Levinas describes the trace in his text *Meaning and Sense*, from 1964, as 'the presence of that which properly speaking has never been there, of what is always past' (Levinas 1996, p.63). This has resonances with the transient nature of Derrida's spectral

trace in *Specters of Marx*. Deconstruction grants Derrida the permission to create a new line of thought, a new trace, concerning a questioning of Levinas' work:

> It is totally false to suggest that deconstruction is a suspension of reference. Deconstruction is always deeply concerned with the 'other' of language. I never cease to be surprised by critics who see my work as a declaration that there is nothing beyond language, that we are imprisoned in language; it is, in fact, saying the exact opposite. The critique of logocentrism is above all else the search for the 'other' and the 'other of language'. (Kearney & Derrida 2004, p. 154)

The trace entwines the spectre, who has been shown in this chapter to be a deconstructive figure, with the Other. The world of the Other is brought to the centre, and to the fore of psychological interpretation, and is entwined with notions of the self. Both infuse together and mould into a singular entity, which is alive and ever-evolving. The trace of ghosts through history towards the present and future, and back again, in an almost circular fashion, accomplishes this. The trace is continued through language into a world of transcendence. Gert-Jan Van der Heiden ingeniously amplifies this idea when he points out the argument that Derrida promulgated against Levinas's trace in order to create his own:

> Since a pure experience of transcendence is impossible, the trace is the only chance of relating to a transcendence. However, by the same movement, it runs the risk of effacing the beyond of the world and the beyond of language. This contamination, as Derrida keeps on pointing out, affects the very goal of Levinas' thinking and the very nature of Levinas' texts since the passage beyond language requires language' (Van der Heiden 2015, p.276).

The notions of hauntology and the trace also have connections with Sigmund Freud's essay 'A Note Upon the "Mystic Writing Pad"', published in nineteen twenty-five. In this essay, Freud discovered that the supposed conscious self, of which one believes oneself to be fully in control, is in fact already being unconsciously influenced by traces of previous experiences and knowledge. Freud presents the workings of this writing pad as a metaphor for the operation within the human psyche, predominantly the conscious and unconscious:

> At the points which the stylus touches, it presses the lower surface of the waxed paper on to the wax slab, and the grooves are visible as dark writing upon the otherwise smooth whitish-grey surface of the celluloid. If one wishes to destroy what has been written, all that is necessary is to raise the double covering-sheet from the wax slab by a light pull, starting from the free lower end. The close contact between the waxed paper and the wax slab at the places which have been scratched (upon which the visibility of the writing depended) is thus brought to an end and it does not recur when the two surfaces come together once more. The Mystic Pad is now clear of writing and ready to receive fresh notes. (Freud 2008, p.214)

Derrida noticed in Freud's idea a similarity to the act of writing. The erasing of the imprint upon the wax slab, and its readiness to be reused, and for more information to be inscribed and soaked up by the wax at the same time, is an important force in Derrida's own thinking. In this image, he locates some aspects of his notion of the trace and hauntology, in that despite the removal of the inscription, a trace remains. Nothing is present only the tracings of traces. Christopher Johnson notes that for Derrida 'the model of the Mystic Pad accounts

directly for the action of the inscription, the production of the trace, the institution of a writing' (Johnson 1993, p.95). It is within the framework of deconstruction that Derrida acknowledges this. The understanding of ideas, beliefs and language is made possible through a tracing of their origins and projections, which is where hauntology becomes important.

In *Writing and Difference*, Derrida speaks of writing as an 'inaugural' act. He notes, in 'Force and Signification', that 'because writing is inaugural, in the fresh sense of the word, that it is dangerous and anguishing. It does not know where it is going, no knowledge can keep it from the essential precipitation toward the meaning that it constitutes and that is, primarily, its future' (Derrida 2001, p.11). In certain terms, this can be interpreted as a prelude of sorts to the operations and function of the spectre of *Specters of Marx*. The spectre, a bodiless figure, is similar to the 'trace' which Derrida adopted from Freud and Levinas, and is a haunting in itself, given that their ideas have been altered and tailored through a network of spectral traces to arrive at the ideas presented by Derrida in *Writing and Difference* and *Specters of Marx*. Derrida presents the notion of '*différance*' to explain this deferral / difference, with Christopher Norris observing that:

> Its sense remains suspended between the two French verbs 'to differ' and 'to defer', both of which contribute to its textual force but neither of which can fully capture its meaning. Language depends on 'difference' since, as Saussure showed once and for all, it consists in the structure of distinctive oppositions which make up its basic economy. (Norris 1991, p. 32)

Derrida breaks new ground in the sliding (or shading) of the signified under the neologistic signifier '*différance*', which oscillates between 'defer' and 'differ'. Norris further notes that 'this involves the idea that meaning is always deferred, perhaps to the point of an endless supplementarity, by the play of signification' (Norris 1991, p.32). The 'shading' referred to above is operative firstly at the level of the signifier, and this is symptomatic of the way in which the materiality of poetic language is foregrounded by theorists such as Derrida, who goes on to make the further point that all subjects are imbricated in this play of signification:

> Nothing – no present and in-*different* being – thus precedes *différance* and spacing. There is no subject who is agent, author, and master of *différance*, who eventually and empirically would be overtaken by *différance*. Subjectivity – like objectivity is an effect of *différance*, an effect inscribed in a system of *différance*. (Derrida 1981, p.28)

For Derrida, the subject is constituted in language by this 'economy of traces' (Derrida 1981, p.29), and he goes on to say that the economic aspect of *différance* confirms that:

> the conscious and speaking subject, depends upon the system of differences and the movement of *différance*, that the subject is constituted only in being divided from itself, in becoming space, in temporizing, in deferral; and it confirms that, as Saussure said, 'language [which consists only of differences] is not a function of the speaking subject.' (Derrida 1981, p. 29)

In his view of language as being to a large extent outside the agency of the speaking subject, Derrida is in accord with the psychoanalytic theory of Jacques Lacan. Discussing

the play of signification, Lacan observes that 'we are forced, then, to accept the notion of an incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier' (Lacan 1977, p. 154). As a mode of deconstruction, the spectre moves between the past, present and future in order to garner and deliver meaning and to shape the present situation. However, the question of a distinct present must be raised. Can there ever be a precise moment that is determined as the present? Every action, literary, textual or institutional which is to be discussed or analysed in a hauntological manner must first succumb to the reality that time is constantly in flux, and that a precise here and now is impossible to pin down. To discuss a predetermined present, a now, to situate oneself here in a discussion, means that the locking of a time frame as 'now' means that it can only ever be discussed as part of the past or the future in a grammatical sense. Derrida discusses the historical imperative of the ghost in this regard:

> The question is indeed 'whither?' Not only whence comes the ghost but first of all is it going to come back? Is it not already beginning to arrive and where is it going? What of the future? The future can only be for ghosts. And the past. (Derrida 2006, p.45)

Derrida discusses this idea using the spectral figure of the ghost in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as a guide to Marxism in order to bring the reader to the ontological present. Like the ghost in *Hamlet*, the spectre leaves and returns, bearing information from the past which influences the present and future. The spectre is not a physical being. It has a non-present presence. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida describes the spectre as a 'non-object, this non present present, this being-there of an absent or departed one no longer belongs to knowledge. At least no longer that which one knows by the name of knowledge. One does not know if it is living or if it is dead' (Derrida 2006, p.5). The foundation of the text seems

to spring from Shakespeare's play, as well as from Karl Marx's sceptical critique of the norms of capitalist societies. The spectre carries meaning and offers a way in which to find otherness. In essence, the haunting nature of this ghost allows for a deconstruction of given structures that may be in place. Davis acknowledges that Derrida's spectre is a 'deconstructive figure' (Davis 2007, p.11), and that it exists between the realm of the living and the dead.

The Spectre

Thus far, the notion of the trace and its origins, as well as the reception of *Specters of Marx* have been discussed. I will now focus solely upon an examination of the spectre as Derrida determines it. The spectre has many guises and forms. It is not a physical entity that manifests itself as a floating, translucent, haunting figure of sorts. Instead, Derrida's spectre is a bodiless figure, one of the mind, of the imagination and one of textual and cognitive influence. It hovers between being and non-being. It has presence without being present, and it is this quality that disrupts the ontological order of things. Ontological existence is thrown into disrepute by the spectre. It does not dwell within a given world but between worlds. Time does not concern the spectre as it drifts between the past, present and future. Derrida notes that 'a spectre is both visible and invisible, both phenomenal and nonphenomenal: a trace that marks the present with its absence in advance' (Lippit 2008, p.242). Here we can see the multi-dimensional range through which the spectre exercises its existence. It is not a simple figure that has one function; instead, it disrupts and alters the past, present and future of Being through its unhindered access and influence over the individual. The individual plays the role of the host to these spectral figures. They are

neither living nor dead, but to a certain extent are alive because they inhabit us, as living beings. The ideas that the spectre harbours are fused with the thinking of the individual who is being haunted, of the host. The fact that one plays host to these spectres or ghosts links back to Plato's ideas earlier in this chapter that all writing, and by extension, that all thinking, is repetitious by nature. The presence of a ghost in the psyche annuls 'the very possibility of invention, event and decision, but also friendship, hospitality and gift' (Wortham 2010, p.12). History is circular and is open to repeat itself through the haunting influence that the spectre brings to bear over the present, hence the present constantly inherits from the past and is shaped by it.

Because of the nature of the spectre, nothing is original. It haunts every possibility of meaning and understanding within the world and consciousness. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the word 'host' inhabits, or haunts, the word 'ghost'. Phonetically they haunt each other, but syntactically they operate side by side to deliver meaning, whether it is true or untrue. Both are interlinked in function, meaning and understanding in a Derridean sense within the framework of ontology, and the workings of hauntology. Although this spectre is present, it is a strange figure. Not all ghosts mean well; ideas stem from limitless places within and outside human experience, and it is here where the dangers of the spectre remain hovering. Derrida recognizes this early in *Specters of Marx*. The ghost 'can always lie, he can disguise himself as a ghost, another ghost may also be passing himself off for this one' (Derrida 2006, p.7). What one discovers from this statement early in the text is that the spectre must not be trusted, but invited cautiously and carefully. In addition, although I speak of the spectre as a singular entity, it is far from it. The number is endless. Derrida adopts the idea of a multitude of spectral figures from Karl Marx. In his

text, Derrida quotes Marx. "'One hears," Marx quotes, "millions of spirits speak through the mouths of people"' (Derrida 2006, p.169), and in Derrida's thinking, Marx is one of those voices.

In post-structuralist theory, the poet is seen not as in control of language, but rather as being implicated in the socio-linguistic contract that pre-dates, and is a seminal factor in, the subjectivity of the same poet. Richard Harland draws the following conclusions:

> The individual absorbs language before he (*sic*) can think for himself: indeed, the absorption of language is the very condition of being able to think for himself . . . . Words and meanings have been deposited in the individual's brain below the level of conscious ownership and mastery. They lie within him like an undigested piece of society. (Harland 1987, p. 12-13)

This view of the poet as being situated within a linguistic and social matrix has important implications for textual study, implications that have been summarised by Roland Barthes:

> We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. (Barthes 1988, p. 170)

Memory, for Derrida, is intrinsic to the trope of hauntology. Whether it is memory that stems from experience, or from language, it is easily influenced. One cannot banish the spectre from memory. Again, it drifts, negates and alters perspectives that one believes to be their own. Nothing can be taken at face value on its own, as past memories can haunt the present, and that the future is merely haunted by ideas that came before it. This idea

was first put forward by Sigmund Freud in his 'Dora' case study, where the displacement of emotions and ideas in the psyche cause actions or reactions from the body, similar to the operations of Derrida's spectre.

Ida Bauer, known by the pseudonym Dora to protect her identity, presented herself to Freud with problems of articulation and anxiety. This manifested itself in the form of repetitive dream sequences that were out of the ordinary. Freud maintained that the disturbance within her dreams stemmed from sexual agitation, specifically from a repression of sexual attraction to her father, Herr. K. Freud concluded that the best way to cure her of her anxiety was through a discussion of these issues. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud discusses the apparent unconscious selection of 'dream-material'. He points out that in dreams, which is influenced by the unconscious, that:

> appearances are deceptive; if interpretation of such dreams is continued it will be found
> that all these things are dream-material, not the representation of intellectual activity in
> the dream. The content of the dream-thoughts is reproduced by the apparent thinking in
> our dreams, but not the relations of the dream-thoughts to one another, in the
> determination of which relations thinking consists. (Freud 1997, p.197)

The key phrase in this quote is that dreams are 'not the representation of intellectual activity'. One is not in control of one's dreams, and to a certain extent, of one's thoughts. This is reminiscent of Derrida's spectre in that although it operates in order to bring meaning and understanding, in fact what we think, learn and believe is to a certain extent not an intellectual action in a purely rational form, but rather an unconscious one. Derrida's assumption that the spectre operates within the unconscious is evident from the fact that he

acknowledges the writings of Freud. In his earlier text, *Writing and Difference*, Derrida acknowledges the relationship between memory and the trace. From a reading of *Specters of Marx*, one can assume that this relationship can be widened to incorporate the haunting spectral figures within the text. In his chapter 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', Derrida notes that memory 'is not a physical property among others; it is the very essence of the psyche: resistance, and precisely, thereby, an opening to the effraction of the trace' (Derrida 2001, p.252). Memory serves to preserve the past, and whether the past is replicated authentically, or through the floating guise of a spectre, it can manifest itself in strange ways in the present, and begs the question as to whether the past is to be trusted at all? Further adding to this questioning is the ability of the spectre to transcend borders and time, therefore becoming limitless and multicultural:

> Marx had his ghosts, we have ours, but memories no longer recognize such borders; by definition, they pass through walls, these *revenants*, day and night, they trick consciousness and skip generations. (Derrida 2006, p.36)

Memory serves as a place where the dead, as well as past ideas, can co-exist to influence and shape the present and future. The structure of haunting is not linear but staggered and intermittent. The absent presences appear at intervals throughout time and consciousness.

Inheritance also plays a major role in the concept of hauntology. Humans are constantly inheriting from the past in order to re-shape and alter both the present and future. The major carrier of inheritance is language. Language forms the basis of understanding the world, and thus epistemologically shapes ontology, and by extension hauntology. From a phenomenological standpoint, inheritance also plays a role. It allows people to interpret

the world around them through knowledge acquired and delivered from the past. The spectre has a constant absent present in this regard, as it is the messenger of inheritance. Derrida notes, in *Margins of Philosophy*:

> that 'language [which only consists of differences] is not a function of the speaking subject.' This implies that the subject (in its identity with itself, or eventually in its consciousness of its identity with itself, its self-consciousness) is inscribed in language, is a 'function' of language, becomes a speaking subject only by making its speech conform . . . to the system of the rules of language as a system of differences. (Derrida 1982, p. 15)

Language delivers ghostly, historical meaning and forever has a presence. Language is the carrier and creator of culture, ideology and traditions within society, and thus has an influencing place in the haunting chain of existence. The heterogeneity of the spectre allows for traditions and legacies to seep through history into the present and future, with Derrida noting that:

> an inheritance is never gathered together, it is never one with itself. Its presumed unity, if there is one, can consist only in the injunction to reaffirm by choosing. 'One must' means one must filter, sift, criticize, one must sort out several different possibles that inhabit the same injunction. And inhabit it in a contradictory fashion around a secret. If the readability of a legacy were given, natural, transparent, univocal, if it did not call for and at the same time defy interpretation, we would never have anything to inherit from it. (Derrida 2006, p.18)

Inheritance easily merges with the condition of hauntology. Beings inherit unconscious knowledge from the dead, both in the form of ideas and language. The visible trickling down of inherited beliefs from the past is recognizable in *Specters of Marx*. Derrida traces Marxist concepts throughout the text, and adapts these impressions to arrange his 'New International', essentially a new form of communism. Derrida notes that the New International 'is a link of affinity, suffering, and hope, a still discreet, almost secret link, as it was around 1848, but more and more visible, we have more than one sign of it' (Derrida 2006, p.106).

This sort of transcendental conjuring of the past is visible in both speech and actions. In appearance, this inheritance of which Derrida speaks has striking similarities to his idea of *différance*. To a certain extent, a deferral of meaning has occurred, since the spectre of the past brings meaning to the inheritor in the present, which is the future of the aforementioned past. Nicole Anderson also acknowledges the link between the ghost, Derrida's concept of hauntology and appearance:

> Derrida defines the condition of inheritance as a mode of haunting exemplary of the spectre (ghost), which he in turn explains can be understood as that which exceeds (in a similar quasi-transcendental logic to *différance*, the trace, the aporia, and so forth) the dialectical / binary logic that constitutes the discourses on visibility and appearance, ideality and 'being'. (Anderson 2012, p.87)

To define the ghost or spectre is an impossible task, since it takes so many forms and has so many alternating identities. However, what can be certain is the relationship between Derrida's spectre as an ideological conjuring of aspects of his previous works as well as

the works of others. The ghosts, or spectres, of which Derrida speaks are not easily identifiable, given the nature of its existence. It is but a trace of traces that are infinite and can forever come, depart and return.

Intertextual Hauntings

It is rather ironic that the text, *Specters of Marx*, which announces the haunting nature of writing and thinking, is itself entirely haunted. It is not an original text in the sense that it is largely constructed of viewpoints similar to Derrida's that have been mingled together to form the ideas of hauntology and the spectre. Firstly, Paul de Man must be discussed in relation to Derrida's line of thought. Despite the fact that many of de Man's writings do not relate directly to hauntology as a deconstructive mode, he does nevertheless play a vital part in influencing the concept of absence and lending a voice to the dead, or to ghostly figures that reside within the unconscious. De Man's discussion of *prosopopoeia* is essential to understanding Derrida's spectre. *Prosopopoeia* lends a voice or face to a dead individual or ghost, and allows them to communicate and convey some kinds of meaning upon the unconscious present. It is in the form of language that *prosopopoeia* operates, because language is the vehicle by which meaning and influence is delivered. Language allows one to form an identity and a sense of self. This is where *prosopopoeia* garners the notion of a 'face' formed through the 'voice' or language. Through the lending of a voice to a deceased individual, a ghost or the Derridean spectre, one automatically creates an identity, text or structure. De Man gifts the dead with the power of speech, and this is a notion which Derrida adopts and confers upon the spectre. In *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, de Man details *prosopopoeia* as:

> The fiction of an apostrophe to an absent, deceased, or voiceless entity, which posits the possibility of the latter's reply and confers upon it the power of speech. Voice assumes mouth, eye and finally face, a chain that is manifest in the etymology of the tropes name, *prosopon poien*, to confer a mask or a face (*prospon*). *Prosopopoeia* is the trope of autobiography, by which one's names, as in the Milton poem, is made intelligible and memorable as a face. (de Man 1984, p.76)

The trope of *prosopopoeia* claims that discourse is made up of voiceless figures which when are given a voice can influence the individual and create a sense of self. This 'voiceless entity' is ever changing, and like the spectre it is not a single entity, but one that manifests itself in varying forms and contexts. Christopher Norris notes in a discussion of both Derrida and de Man that 'meaning cannot be fixed for all time' (Norris 2010, p.133). Both are obsessed to a certain extent with a hermeneutic approach to life and death. An understanding must be attained in order to find peace, and this again relates back to language, in that language is a mode through which one can attempt to interpret and understand the world. Language has developed through the ages, and has encountered many ghostly presences that in turn have influenced and manipulated language.

Language, as the true method of creation, and of the understanding of human consciousness and existence, is constantly fluctuating. Martin McQuillan states that 'language is the means by which we construct our own masks of self-hood in the world' (McQuillan 2001, p.78), with de Man putting this idea forward in his text *The Resistance to Theory*, when he asserts that 'consciousness is linguistic because it is deictic' (de Man 2002, p.42). To understand existence means that language must be involved, and since language is involved, and is the method by which the Derridean spectre influences the past,

present and future, the conscious or unconscious of the individual has been breached by this outside, ever-present yet also absent, discourse. In ways, language is spectral in that it is present in every utterance in the words spoken; however, it is also absent as all of the words in the *langue*, or in the language system, cannot be present in each sentence, so it is hauntological in the sense that the presence is always constructed by the absence. The spectre has misled and placed possible fantasies within the individual. This again relates to Derrida's idea of deconstruction and further enshrines Colin Davis's idea of the spectre as a deconstructive figure:

> Henceforth, it was necessary to begin thinking that there was no center, that the center could not be thought in the form of a present-being, that the center had no natural site, that it was not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of non-locus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions came into play. This was the moment when language invaded the universal problematic, the moment when, in the absence of a center or origin, everything became discourse . . . that is to say, a system in which the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. (Derrida 2001, p.353)

Derrida discusses the misleading and dangerous nature of the spectre in *Spectres of Marx*, while de Man also does the same when speaking of the voice gifted to the dead. De Man, like Derrida, adopts the thinking of Hegel in a discussion of the present. In *The Resistance to Theory*, de Man deliberates between the writing of Riffaterre and Hegel. Hegel, it is noted by de Man, 'has no difficulty showing that here and now become false and misleading at the moment we write them down' (de Man 2002, p.41). Hegel applies

this to life in a philosophical sense, though he does not apply it directly to literary texts. Like Derrida's thoughts on the spectre, Riffaterre uses the thoughts of Hegel and alters them to serve and influence his own thoughts on the here and now in a literary sense. In a further alteration and a mingling of both Hegel and Riffaterre's ideas, de Man imposes his own assumptions on the topic:

> In the *Phenomenology* Hegel is not speaking of language at all, let alone of writing something down, but of consciousness in general as certainty in its relation to the phenomenal categories of time, space and selfhood. The point is that this certainty vanishes as soon as any phenomenal determination, temporal or other, is involved, as it always has to be. Consciousness ('here' and 'now') is not 'false and misleading' because of language; consciousness is language, and nothing else, because it is false and misleading. (de Man 2002, p.42)

Hegel is an integral component to both de Man's mode of thinking and modern philosophy as a whole. Much of his studies focus upon the linking of direct human experience with the world and with history. His text, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, is intrinsic to the understanding of consciousness. De Man adopts much of his line of thought from this text; however, he alters it to create a new interpretation of what consciousness and Being is. Hegel is almost Kantian in his assumption that the individual does not solely interpret the world through the imaginative constructs operating within the psyche, but instead, from the ideas that have been adopted from others which form the sense of self.

Language, tradition and societal norms mould the Hegelian conscious through what he terms the Spirit. Paul Hamilton notes that:

> Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) accounts for knowledge as the progressive
>
> self-recognition of 'mind'. The mind which rationalizes nature in the course of scientific
>
> improvement comes to see in nature only its own self-image reflected back to it. Nature
>
> is now intelligible, but at the cost of its own distinctive otherness. (Hamilton 2006, p.47)

The Spirit, in a Hegelian sense, does not fully relate to the workings of Derrida's spectre, but instead to the notion of a collective consciousness of a society, something that is suggestive of the Freudian notion of the Super-Ego. However, where the links between both Derrida and Hegel develop is that it is the spectre's non-present presence within the present that influences and creates the notion of a collective consciousness within any given society. For Hegel, this society is then shaped and controlled by the Spirit of the era, which is disseminated into the consciousness of every individual in that society. When speaking of the Spirit in his text, Hegel refers to it in his German language as *Geist*. It is interesting to note that when translated to English, that *Geist* can mean both 'spirit' and 'mind', depending on the subject or context in which it is used. For Hegel, Spirit is open to change and alterations and can then be unfolded over time to enhance itself to adapt, adopt and deliver new societal norms. The ideas of Spirit and consciousness are almost scientific and logical for Hegel instead of a non-entity or otherworldly figure as it is presented by Derrida, Blanchot and to a certain extent, de Man. In *The Philosophy of History*, Hegel defines the Spirit. It is like Derrida's spectre, open to both internal and external influences. This is what consciousness means for Hegel, while Derrida and de Man see consciousness as being shaped by the Spiritual non-entity that is the spectre or the ghost:

Spirit, on the contrary, may be defined as that which has its centre as itself. It has not its essence out of itself, but has its essence out of itself; it exists *in* and *with itself*. Matter has its essence out of itself; Spirit is *self-contained existence* (*Bei-sich-selbst-seyn*). Now this is Freedom, exactly. For if I am dependent, my being is referred to something else which I am not; I cannot exist independently of something external. I am free, on the contrary, when my existence depends upon myself. This self-contained existence of spirit is none other than self-consciousness – consciousness of one's own being. (Hegel 1956, p.17)

While Derrida puts forward the idea of a haunting spirit hovering through the ages, and delivering meaning and interpretive qualities to the individual, Hegel's Spirit is more involved with the consciousness and Being of the individual in terms of the wider society. It forms and notifies the self through a hermeneutical approach to societal constructs. Derrida's spectre is more deconstructive, as has been previously noted, in that through a hauntological examination of the spectres absent presence, one can break down and deconstruct the true nature of any given structure within ontological existence.

Prosopopoeia, in de Man's reading of the trope, can be fused with both Hegel and Derrida's thoughts through the notions of mindfulness, freedom and language. Hegel's notion of consciousness is more personal when compared with the Derridean spectre that permeates the unconscious, and with de Man's notion of *prosopopoeia*, which places a voice upon a dead individual or entity. Images of society, the world and of knowledge exist in a temporal state of stasis only to be reborn when humanity has advanced enough to progress it further according to Hegel:

> The image exists in a time and place, but when this intrusion exists as an image, it is taken [abstractly] out of the space and time in which it was, and now exists in my space and my time. The intelligence is at home with itself in the intuition. The content belongs to intelligence, posited in its own space and time. I can represent this image in any time. It is past, but I can represent it as now. The content occurred in a place, but now it exists in my space. The intelligence makes the perishable | imperishable, it makes a mummy out of the past and preserves it. This event is, in the intelligence, imperishable, preserved in the time of the intelligence. The content that was posited in universal time becomes enduring thereby; what Mnemosyne does not record is lost. The image, torn from its space and time, is made abstract; its space and time are its content and connection with other things. (Hegel 2007, p.216)

Temporality plays a part in Hegel's idealistic notions, and this cannot be disregarded in relation to hauntology. By the time Derrida discusses his notion of hauntology, and the questioning of ontology in *Specters of Marx*, the topic of a here and now has been discussed and altered at least three times within a single text by de Man.

Drawing on these ideas, Derrida's functioning spectre has been moulded by the thoughts of Hegel, Riffaterre, Blanchot and de Man in its ability to mislead and misguide the individual through an invasion of both the conscious and unconscious. This borrowing brings about the notion that a definitive moment of presentness and if it can ever truly exist, given that all states of presence are in fact haunted by, and influenced by, what has come before them. In *Writing and Difference*, Derrida discusses the issue of repetition throughout history, and probes how each epoch within ontological existence subverts and alters that which has come before it to create a new version of the past within the present: 'pure

repetition, were it to change neither thing nor sign, carries with it an unlimited power of perversion and subversion' (Derrida 2001, p.373). The concept of a 'here' and 'now' has been added to, and transformed by, each of the individual writers, thus showing that the ghostly presence of each writer's work exists within the framework of hauntology and the spectre. To revert to the importance of language is necessary in this discussion as it is the method by which the idea of temporality has been shaped from Hegel through Riffaterre and de Man, to Derrida. Christopher Norris claims that 'there is no language so vigilant or self-aware that it can effectively escape the conditions placed upon thought by its own prehistory and ruling metaphysic' (Norris 2000, p.33). This idea encapsulates the founding basis of this chapter in that language, history, temporality and thought are intermittently linked and fused together by the spectre of that which has gone before, is present now and which is yet to come.

The synchronic nature of the Saussurean notion of the sign has also interested textualist critics in this regard. It is from the Saussurean formula that 'in the language itself, there are only differences . . . and no positive terms' (Saussure 1983, p. 118) that this idea originates. Saussure puts forward this notion in his text *Course in General Linguistics*:

> The moment we consider the sign as a whole, we encounter something which is positive in its own domain. A linguistic system is a series of phonetic differences matched with a series of conceptual differences. But this matching of a certain number of auditory signals and a similar number of items carved out from the mass of thought gives rise to a system of values. It is this system which provides the operative bond between phonic and mental elements within each sign. Although signification and signal are each, in

isolation, purely differential and negative, their combination is a fact of a positive nature. (Saussure 1983, p 118)

Thus, the system of language is itself haunted and influenced by the absent presences that make up the system itself. Derrida progresses this idea in *Writing and Difference*:

One cannot determine the center and exhaust totalization because the sign which replaces the center, which supplements it, taking the center's place in its absence—this sign is added, occurs as a surplus, as a *supplement*. The movement of signification adds something, which results in the fact that there is always more. (Derrida 2001, p.365.)

In practical terms, this mean that language is haunted by the very system by which it is controlled, but also the absent signifiers that permeate within, and through, the words of a sentence.

Similar to the line of thought that both de Man and Derrida exercise in relation to temporality and presence, Maurice Blanchot exerts a unique intellectual sway upon the notion of *prosopopoeia*, as well as on a definition of a here and now. Blanchot's influence is easily recognizable in the work of Derrida's hauntology, not on the immediate surface but beneath the layers that make it up. Blanchot presents the idea that death is not the end of life or existence but is instead the beginning of it. Blanchot looks upon death as something that is to be welcomed. He comments that 'death works with us in the world; it is a power that humanizes nature, that raises existence to being, and it is within each of us as our most human quality' (Blanchot 1995, p.337). Death is not something to be feared because in death one attains a sense of self, a voice, an influence which has a presence in the absence of the human body: it is like the spectre of Derrida's *Specters of Marx* or the

ghost in *Hamlet*. The dead individual comes back to haunt the present. For Blanchot, only in death can true understanding be attained; everything else is simply a misunderstanding, a misrepresentation provided by the unconscious, or the imagination. Simon Critchley comments that 'we cannot draw a likeness of death, a portrait, a still life, or whatever. Thus, representations of death are misrepresentations, or rather they are representations of an absence' (Critchley 1996, p.108). In addition, like language, our life is actually constructed by the fact of death which is absent in life, but which we know will be present eventually. According to Jonathan Strauss, Blanchot argues that 'at bottom it is the finality of death alone that gives structure and meaning to lived experience' (Strauss 2000, p.8), and this connects with the semiotic structure of language itself, that of binary oppositions, and in this case, of a beginning and end. Where life ends, a new death begins.

In *The Infinite Conversation*, Blanchot speaks of existence after life as a 'possibility' (Blanchot 1993, p.47). He also states, in *The Space of Literature*, that:

> Death, in the human perspective, is not a given, it must be achieved. It is a task, one which we take up actively. One which becomes the source of our activity and mastery. Man dies, that is nothing. But man is, starting from his death. He ties himself tight to his death with a tie of which he is the judge. He makes his death; he makes himself mortal and in this way gives himself the power of a marker and gives to what he makes its meaning and its truth. (Blanchot 1989, p.96)

It is interesting to note that Blanchot gives the power of identity and belief to the dead. They are in control, to some degree, of their ghostly, haunting presence much like Derrida's spectre. Each is unique in that it carries its own personal stories and information, and like

the living person in life, or in death, he or she has the ability to lie. Strauss notes that 'when the dead speak, language becomes different, or at least reveals itself in new lights' (Strauss 2000, p.8). For Blanchot, death is something over which one has control. Whether one dies or continues to live on in death is up to the individual. Existence carries on regardless of which world the ghost or dead individual inhabits, and regardless of the individual's presence or absence.

This brings to mind the notion of a determined centre, but through the application of deconstruction, and the role of the spectre concerning centres, new possibilities and centres are created. Centres are constantly in flux and ever changing. Derrida is similar to Blanchot in this regard. That a different centre or concept of existence can exist elsewhere at the same point and time as its coexistent other:

> Thus, it has always been thought that the center, which is by definition unique, constituted that very thing within a structure which, while governing the structure, escapes structurality . . . the center is at the center of the totality, and yet, since the center does not belong to the totality (is not part of the totality), the totality *has its center elsewhere* . . . . The concept of centered structure is in fact the concept of a play based on a fundamental ground, a play constituted on the basis of a fundamental immobility and a reassuring certitude, which itself is beyond the reach of play. (Derrida 2001, p.352)

This is reminiscent of the spectre as Derrida conceives it. There is no specific life span for the spectre. It maintains a presence through a voice, a deliverance of information or ideologies through the ages in the psyche of an individual or system. It is an overseeing figure who, to a certain extent, is only ever given a face or a sense of self through the

limitlessness of the language it speaks, and the information it brings. Language is the bearer of its identity. Blanchot, like de Man, believes in the notion of *prosopopoeia*. The dead can speak for themselves because they have experienced death in Blanchot's view.

Gerald L. Bruns extrapolates this point well when he discusses the notion of a cadaver, for Blanchot, as being 'a shadow more real than the reality of what it is' (Bruns 2005, p.66). The dead figure of Blanchot's imaginative thought is given a place within the parallels of existence since we, the living, have an overwhelming obsession with understanding and death. The death process itself forms an imaginative thought process in the living in surmising the aftermath of dying. This is why the spectre, ghost, or haunting bodiless figures of de Man's, Blanchot's and Derrida's writings are capable of invading the imaginative process, because the living are so easily led in their attempt to seek understanding of death, even if that means being corrupted by falsehoods. Speaking of Blanchot, Bruns has this to say regarding the cadaver or corpse:

> Death produces a form of the imaginary more fascinating than any original because it haunts the original, haunts the world of the original, which is the world left behind . . . We can't take our eyes off of a corpse, neither can we grasp it, because it is both there and not there in a neutral zone outside of being: existence without Being. (Bruns 2005, p.66)

The original world of living existence and the other worldly presence of the spectre is brought about by the notion of a shared existence. In Derrida's use of the phrase 'to come', and the repetitive use of 'return' in *Specters of Marx*, one can locate a common trait and purpose surrounding Blanchot's cadaver and Derrida's spectre.

In *The Space of Literature*, Blanchot notes that 'whenever thought is caught in a circle, this is because it has touched upon something original, its point of departure, beyond which it cannot move except to return' (Blanchot 1989, p.93). This idea seems to have been adopted by Derrida in that the spectre brings new, original meaning to an individual, but this meaning has already previously existed. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida mirrors Blanchot's thoughts on the cadaver. Derrida states that 'the cadaver is perhaps not as dead, as simply dead as the conjuration tries to delude us into believing. The one who has disappeared appears still to be there, and his apparition is not nothing. It does not do nothing. Assuming that the remains can be identified, we know better than ever today that the dead must be able to work' (Derrida 2006, p.120). This process is constantly repeated by the coming and returning of many different spectres throughout the works themselves. Again, Derrida superimposes his own ideas and alterities upon this assumption, but in essence, Blanchot's idea of the cadaver or dead individual preside and haunt the very being of the spectre in Derrida's overarching theory of a defined hauntology.

Jean-Paul Sartre is also essential to any discussion of hauntology. Since hauntology is infused with, and moulded by, ontology, notions of Being and existence must be explored. The influence of Sartre's work upon *Specters of Marx* is not easily recognizable as opposed to those of Blanchot and de Man. Instead, there are subtle elements of the philosophy of *Being and Nothingness* and the ideas of temporality, Being and consciousness that are contained within Derrida's text, and which are proleptic of the spectral figure of hauntology. The point can be made that the title *Spectres of Marx* echoes Sartre's nineteen sixty-nine text *The Spectre of Stalin*, published some thirty years earlier, which discusses communism and its basis in the world, while Derrida discusses his notion

of a new communism, his 'New International', in *Spectres of Marx*. Where the texts differ is when notions of Being and existence come to the fore. Being, presence, absent presences and existence are arguably the dominant points of discourse running through Derrida's text. The haunting nature of existence is also a topic of discussion focused on by Sartre. He claims that the 'dead will remain with us' (Davis 2005, p.222), and that they exist because the living are conscious of the dead. Existence is formed based on being conscious, not just of the self, but also of the world, and in this sense can be looked upon as being an imaginative construct that is influenced by that which has an absent presence within the unconscious. Unity between what Sartre terms 'being-for-itself' and 'being-in-itself' is what informs consciousness, and what relates to existence, which then formulates Being.

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre notes that 'presence to a being implies that one is bound to that being by an internal bond; otherwise no connection between present and being would be possible' (Sartre 1977, p.122). It is this 'bond' or connection between the present and another being of sorts that Derrida adopts as a link between this world and the world of the spectre. Essentially, where Derrida places the spectre as the figure who influences and guides the knowledge and actions of the individual to form an identity or sense of self, Sartre places consciousness at the centre of defining the self. His focus is on what the individual consciously acknowledges of itself and the world in-itself. Joseph Catalano notes that for Sartre 'the original presence of self is an awareness of oneself as a subject without making this self-as-a-subject into an object of study' (Catalano 1985, p.97). The foundations of consciousness are influenced by both the material world and by the imaginative world for Sartre. That which exists around an individual, physically or imaginatively, instigates a process whereby understanding and meaning is achieved.

Reality is nothing except for the absent presence of that past, of language or of memory. Like the notion of Derrida's spectre, for Sartre, meaning has been constructed from the past to influence actions in the present and future, and this further draws on the cycle of haunting that exists within the trope of hauntology.

In her introduction to *Being and Nothingness*, Mary Warnock notes that 'consciousness is born supported by a being which is not itself' (Sartre 1977, p.lxi). The mentioning of 'a being' is strikingly similar to the notion of Derrida's spectre. In many respects, what Sartre is arguing within the text is that a pre-determined consciousness is not possible, and therefore influence outside of the conscious must shape it. In her translator's introduction to Derrida's *Dissemination*, Barbara Johnson states that:

> even in the seemingly nonliguistic areas of the structures of consciousness and the unconscious, Derrida analyses the underlying necessity that induces Freud to compare the psychic apparatus to a structure of scriptural *différance*, a 'mystic writing-pad'. The illusion of the self-presence of meaning or of consciousness is thus produced by the repression of the differential structures from which they spring. (Derrida 2004, p.ix)

The Sartrean being is also similar to Derrida's spectre in that it has a non-present presence within the unconscious of the individual. These absent presences that form and influence the present can be located in the philosophical works discussed throughout this chapter. Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* propagates a discussion whereby consciousness is influenced from outside the self. Meaning and understanding are inherited from a being outside the self, and this point in Sartre's discussion has strong resonances with hauntology.

Again, Derrida has adopted and altered a previous idea in order to create and inform his own argument or idea. Hauntology has produced a repetition of ideas, and this cycle of repetition reinforces the notion that the past is constantly influencing and creating new versions of itself within the present and future. Hence, I would agree with Christine Daigle's assumptions on the topic of consciousness, and on the influence of an outside being, in relation to Sartre, when she states:

> That reality has its foundation in consciousness, as idealism holds; rather, he says that the first thing we encounter is consciousness, but it is not consciousness that creates and sustains the world. Consciousness depends on the necessary pre-existence of the world in order to exist. Because it exists as conscious of something, this something must already be there for consciousness to be conscious of it. (Daigle 2009, p.21)

In simple terms, the present cannot be understood without taking into account the absent presence of the past: what Sartre terms a being or what Derrida terms a spectre. Where Derrida and Sartre both seem to be closest in comparative terms is in relation to notions of temporality. Temporality plays a vital role in hauntology, as the spectre moves between the past, present and future. The spectre of Derrida's text has the ability to influence the present and future, and places the possibility of a defined, pre-determined future somewhat out of reach for the conscious individual. One is guided and led to the future by the spectre, rather than ending up there on one's own accord.

Sartre also terms the future as being non-determined. He looks upon it as a temporal landscape that is made up of chance or limitless possibilities:

> The future thus defined does not correspond to a homogenous and chronologically ordered succession of moments to come. To be sure, there is a hierarchy of my possibles. But this hierarchy does not correspond to the order of universal Temporality. I am an infinity of possibilities. (Sartre 1977, p.129)

Temporality, then, is key to both Derrida's and Sartre's notion of presence and Being. Hazel E. Barnes makes the astute observation that 'all consciousness involves temporality for Sartre, for it is always directed toward a future and posited against the background of a past' (Barnes 2009, p.71). The similarities between both are striking, with Colin Davis calling Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (*L'Etre et le néant*) an 'unacknowledged precursor' (Davis 2005, p.223) to hauntology. Sartre's idea of temporality as being made up of a past, present and future is from where Davis may draw this idea. For Sartre the past is unchangeable, but yet, it shapes and influences the present and future similar to the function of the spectre for Derrida:

> The past, on the contrary, is that which is without possibility of any sort; it is that which has consumed its possibilities. I have to be that which no longer depends on my being-able-to-be, that which is already in itself all which it can be. The past which I am, I have to be with no possibility of not being it. I assume the total responsibility for it as if I could change it, and yet I cannot be anything other than it. (Sartre 1977, p.116)

Derrida follows a similar pattern of temporality, of disjoint, when he utilises Shakespeare's phrase 'the time is out of joint' (Derrida 2006, p.96). The ability of the spectre to operate between ages in order to influence the present state of society, culture, consciousness or any given structure is through the limitlessness of the time in which it exists. Derrida notes

that 'what is happening is happening to age itself, it strikes a blow at the teleological order of history. What is coming, in which the untimely appears, is happening to time but it does not happen in time' (Derrida 2006, p.96). Since the past repeats itself in different guises throughout history, the very presence of the past within the present is heterogeneous given that consciousness is unique to each individual. The workings of the psyche in forming a sense of self are complex.

Derrida and Sartre both make valid and thought-provoking arguments in this context, with one being of no lesser importance than the other. Derrida's spectre invades the Sartrean idea of consciousness and temporality. The Derridean notion of *différance* can easily be adequated with Sartre's consciousness of Being, especially when he adopts Sartre's ideas of deferral, and of arriving at the meaning of Being through conscious and unconscious elements. Derrida's discussion of *différance* and Being as related is also interesting. He notes that:

> No doubt life protects itself by repetition, trace, *différance* (deferral). But we must be wary of this formulation: there is no life present at first which would then come to protect, postpone, or reserve itself in *différance*. The latter constitutes the essence of life. Or rather: as *différance* is not an essence, as it is not anything, it is not life, if Being is determined as *ousia*, presence, essence / existence, sub-stance or subject. Life must be thought of as trace before Being may be determined as presence. (Derrida 2001, p.254)

While the points made by Derrida are extremely valuable in terms of the study of ontology and phenomenology, it seems as if they are merely a re-wording and a repetition of Sartre's assumptions.

It is the paradoxical nature of Derrida's argument that is most linked to Sartre's Being-in-itself. The passage from the beginning of *Being and Nothingness* that announces and defines Being-in-itself, is similar to the above passage quoted from Derrida, except that consciousness is more to the fore. The ideas are the same but the wording different:

> Consciousness is the revealed-revelation of existents, and existents appear before consciousness on the foundation of their being. Nevertheless the primary characteristic of the being of an existent is never to reveal itself completely to consciousness. An existent can not be stripped of its being; being is the ever present foundation of the existent; it is everywhere in it and nowhere. (Sartre 1977, p.xxxviii)

The spectre of *Specters of Marx* is also similar to the line of thought that Sartre puts forward here. Christina Howells recognizes that Sartre and Derrida are quite similar in this respect when she states that 'it would surely be possible to argue that Derrida's notion of *différance*, whilst being radically impersonal and intended as a means of deconstructing consciousness – that cornerstone of humanism – is in fact clearly related to consciousness in the Sartrean sense' (Howells 1987, p.150). Derrida has again taken from a philosopher predating him the ideas that would garner a new and innovative way of viewing ontology. Despite borrowing many of the ideas relating to the spectre from Sartre, Being and consciousness, this does not undermine the authenticity and importance of his work regarding hauntology. By announcing the arrival of the spectre, Derrida not only opened up a plateau from where to view literature and the world in a different light and to reveal its true origins, but also did the same for his own work. Hauntology is haunted by the very spectres that it exposes.

Chapter Two: Dual Hauntings: Heaney and Postcolonialism

> But my quest for definition, while it may lead backward, is conducted in the living speech of the landscape I was born into. If you like, I began as a poet when my roots were crossed with my reading. I think of the personal and Irish pieties as vowels, and the literary awareness nourished on English as consonants. My hope is that the poems will be vocables adequate to my whole experience. (Heaney 1980, p.36)

The above quote from Heaney's collection of prose, *Preoccupations*, is one which encompasses the complex nature of postcolonial dilemmas in relation to the self-definition one undergoes, not only in a literary sense, but also on a personal level. Language, as has been established in Chapter One of this thesis, is the driver of such a quest for attaining a defined sense of self. Growing up in Northern Ireland brings with it many badges and indicators of identity. Lines are drawn between both communities on religious and political grounds. It is a place where communities, towns, villages and estates become synonymous with both the physical and metaphorical flags that they fly. The Irish tricolour is symbolic of the Nationalist, Catholic community who wish to be viewed as Irish and as being partly defined by their Irish heritage and folklore. The opposing community, and I use the word 'opposing' in all sense of the term, represent themselves under the Union Jack and are known as Loyalists who practice the Protestant faith. Despite this definition of both sides of the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland being rather simplistic, it is necessary to my

argument in this chapter to demonstrate that contemporary views, beliefs and actions, be they political, literary or religious, have been predicated upon and influenced by the spectre of colonisation and British imperialism dating back as far as the early fifteen hundreds. Ireland was also invaded by the Vikings before this period, with the spectral presence and influence of these Scandinavian hauntings finding a place within Irish place names, such as 'Waterford'. Derrida notes in *Spectres of Marx* that 'one can never distinguish between the future-to-come and the coming-back of a specter' (Derrida 2006, p.46), and in an Irish context, this is apposite, with the spectre of colonialism constantly returning to haunt Ireland. In practical terms, the cultural forms, that have been oppositionally defined hundreds of years ago, are still present in contemporary society, and the spectre reveals them in the present and in the undetermined future. Luke Gibbon suggests that 'Ireland is a first world country but with a third world memory' (Gibbon 2006, p.1) with the remnants of colonisation being evident in contemporary Ireland through language, laws, practices and culture. The spectre of colonisation hovers between the past planters and settlers of Ireland, the present problems that still exist between both sides of the divide, and the future which will be formed by the current power sharing executive in Stormont today. The inheritance of the past is intrinsic, and fundamental to the creation of a societal identity and culture. Inheritance is one of the main features of hauntings that Northern Ireland undergoes, though the inheritance needs to be problematised and interrogated.

Derrida offers a key insight into inheritance in *Specters of Marx*, one that is applicable to the divisions and mindsets that are present in Northern Ireland. The spectre haunts the psyche of the nation and 'since such a conjuration today insists, in such a deafening consensus, that what is, it says, indeed dead, remain dead indeed, it arouses a

suspicion. It awakens us where it would like to put us to sleep' (Derrida 2006, p.120). Culture and identity are passed down through inheritance by the spectre of the past. The Derridean spectre has the ability to access and deposit information and ideologies from the past in the unconscious mind of the individual. The inheritance of such information demands a reaction from the individual, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, with regards to how they deal with and interpret the spectre's influential leadership. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida notes that:

> Reaction, reactionary, or reactive are but interpretations of the structure of inheritance. That we *are* heirs does not mean that we *have* or that we *receive* this or that, some inheritance that enriches us one day with this or that, but that the *being* of what we are is first of all inheritance, whether we like it or know it or not. (Derrida 2006, p.68)

Many remnants of the past still exist today in the forms of language, culture and traditions that have been passed on and inherited from the past. Despite the majority of these colonial influences harbouring spectres of British imperialism, one cannot occlude from the debate the part that the Norman and Viking invaders also played in the creation of the nation; indeed, to deny the importance of their impression upon the foundation of the nation would be to do an injustice to the discussion of Ireland as a true postcolonial nation.

This chapter will aim to show that colonial ghosts of the past have an absent presence within contemporary societal models, and within the unconscious of individuals, and are reflected in the poetry of Seamus Heaney. The heterogeneity of cultures within the Irish model of identity will be shown to be reflected in different verse forms, and these forms complement the thematic output of the poetry. This chapter will be divided into four

sections. The writings of Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha will be referred to in the first two sections regarding the issue of colonial identity, but also in terms of the spectre that creates and transforms these identities through referencing some of Derrida's ideas. Each theorist's ideas will be discussed in detail and then applied to the poetry to enable a hauntological reading of Heaney's work. Although much of the dominant discourse on the colonization of Ireland relates to and discusses Britain's role, I will initially be making reference to, and making an argument for, the Vikings as earlier colonizers of Ireland who had as much influence over the land and culture as the British. Norse hauntings will be discussed in section three, while British colonial hauntings will be interrogated in section four of this chapter. I will be analysing 'Belderg', 'North' and 'Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces' as the poems that discuss and interrogate the Vikings. As a whole, these three poems situate within an Irish context the recurrence of violence within the nation throughout its history. Similarly, in the final section of the chapter that deals with British colonial hauntings in the present of Northern Ireland, I will be focusing on 'Ocean's Love to Ireland', 'Bog Oak' and 'Terminus'.

History and nationalism have over time either forgotten or failed to mention the exploits of the Vikings in Ireland in favour of politically charged antipathy towards Britain. Heaney's text *North* is interesting in that it ostensibly deals with issues connected with Northern Ireland but is specifically referencing ancient murders and violence within Ireland and Scandinavia. It is a text that openly deals with violence and death without overtly referring to the Troubles in Northern Ireland, especially in the first section. Throughout the text, all incidents are equally dealt with in a non-prejudicial manner. Henry Hart notes that in *North* 'Heaney descends into history's mine to offer up the dead to be judged for their

deeds and the deeds done against them' (Hart 1993, p.74). In essence, Heaney conjures up the ghosts of the past in order to help make sense of the present. The poetic sensibility through which he relates figures of murderous Vikings and Danish sacrifices to the situation in nineteen seventies Ireland is original and ground breaking. It forces one to question, rather than to judge, the actions which unfolded in the North. Although many of the images presented in his collections are predominantly Catholic and Irish that is not to say that he is prejudiced. Unconsciously, these are the spectres which haunt the mind of the poet. In the words of Derrida, 'what seems to be out front, the future, comes back in advance: from the past, from the back' (Derrida 2006, p.10). The Viking raids in Ireland, and their ultimate settlement is the topic of the first few poems of part one of *North*. Michael Parker states that the early poems in *North* 'centre upon the Viking presence in Ireland and Northern Europe as a whole' (Parker 1994, p.129). This reinforces the notion that Heaney is seeking to understand Ireland through the lens of a broader, older European mythical history.

Eoin Flannery suggests that 'postcolonial theory as a battery of discursive resources, explicates the teleologies and ideologies of postcolonial nation-state' (Flannery 2003, p.359). Colonization is an act that aims to seek control of a nation and its people through the subjugation and arresting of the mind of the colonized population. Imperialism seeks to infiltrate and alter the perspective which the inhabitants of the land have of themselves. Colin Graham states that:

> Postcolonialism makes the crucial identification of who is the colonizer and who is the
> colonized – it also morally evaluates this colonial relationship as or of fundamental

inequality, in which a wrong is done to the colonized, whose integrity, space and identity

is taken over and controlled against his / her will. (Graham 2001, p.82)

The imperial tendency to demean, victimise and portray the natives as animalistic or as barbarians is evident from the early writings of colonization in Ireland. Many documents support the argument that the Irish were victimized and abused by the British imperial process, such as the Annals of Ulster, or the writings of Edmund Spenser and Sir Walter Raleigh. Edward Said is most widely acknowledged for his text *Orientalism*, which discusses and reveals Western societies' views of the Orient, which he sees as embodying scepticism, denial and violence, both physical and mental. Despite *Orientalism* revealing the self-interested approach through which the Western world invaded and represented the Middle East, the ideas held within the text are universal, as texts are always open to alternate meanings and to the voice of alterity. Said's idea of 'the Other', which will be discussed at length later in this chapter, is a major trope that runs through the Heaney canon.

Heaney does not use the idea of othering to reflect a racist or prejudicial tendency on his own part, but instead to reflect the reality of his upbringing in rural county Derry. In his prose piece 'Something to Write Home About', in *Finders Keepers*, Heaney documents some of the small, distinct yet major issues and signifiers of otherness. He describes Northern Ireland as a place that has 'two sides divided by the way they pray, for example, and in the subtle but real ways . . . by the way they speak' (Heaney 2002, p.57). Given that Heaney openly discusses the subject of identity and incorporates both sides of the divide into his poetry, this would seem to contradict the arguments that Conor Cruise O'Brien and Edna Longley have made, namely that he is a nationalistic poet at heart and openly supports his tribe. Heaney embraces the hybrid nation that Ireland has become through the

incorporation of wider, older European identities such as Scandinavian, Italian and Greek into his poetry. He incorporates the Irish heritage of his upbringing with that of his literary reading from the English tradition. Regan notes of Heaney that 'one of the characteristic features of his work has been its compulsive need to revisit its own distinctive Irelands of the mind, returning to these places both as historical and geographical actualities and as intensely subjective and imaginative locations' (Regan 2008a, p.10).

In revisiting, interrogating and exploring what Regan terms 'Irelands of the mind', Heaney acknowledges that he is a product of both Irish and British identities, and fuses both together in order to locate a middle space between them. In his poetry, and in life, Heaney embraces and accepts the hybridity of his culture. In 'An Open Letter', Heaney outlines that he regards himself as being Irish and not British with regards to nationality; however, even as he does this, he does not disregard the impact and influence that British literary tradition has had upon his identity and profession:

> Yet doubts, admittedly, arise
>
> When somebody who publishes
>
> In LRB and TLS,
>
> The Listener—
>
> In other words, whose audience is,
>
> Via Faber,
>
> A British one, is characterized
>
> As British. But don't be surprised
>
> If I demur, for, be advised

> My passport's green. (Heaney 1983, p.9)

Heaney acknowledges that he is influenced by, and indeed can be seen to be a hybrid of, both cultures and traditions in many ways. In *Stepping Stones*, Heaney discusses the twelfth of July marches, noting that:

> I remember going out to the end of the lane at Mossbawn to watch an Orange band march and to wave at people we knew – including Alan and George Evans dressed up in their sashes. There was no problem at that personal level: if you were friends with the people you conceded their right to their affiliations. (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.133)

Heaney does not neglect his roots, but at the same time does not attack the other side of the divide either. All societal issues are dealt with in a non-biased manner. In this regard, Homi K. Bhabha's theory of 'hybridity' will be applied to the poetry. In his essay 'DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation', Bhabha discusses hybridity and its origins:

> The frontiers of cultural difference are always belated or secondary in the sense that their hybridity is never simply a question of the admixture of pre-given identities or excesses. Hybridity is the perplexity of the living as it interrupts the representation of the fullness of life; it is an instance of iteration, in the minority discourse, of the time of arbitrary sign – 'the minus in the origin' – through which all forms of cultural meaning are open to translation because their enunciation resists totalization. (Bhabha 2000, p.314)

Heaney is the ultimate hybrid in that he is Irish, yet speaks, writes and publishes in the

English language but maintains a firm affirmation with his native, Irish heritage.

Desmond Fennell offers the argument suggesting that Ireland is a nation that wrestles with its self-image:

> the image of ourselves, which we present, willy-nilly, to the world and ourselves, might cease to have that distinctiveness from neighbouring nations which is proper to a nation, and show us, rather as an extension of Britain or a *Sasca eile darb ainm Éire* – as the poet foretold in the seventeenth century. But clearly, even 'another England called Ireland' would still be an identity, and indeed a unique one. (Fennell 1983, p.25)

Despite the strong affiliation and necessity on Heaney's part to signal his identity through his poetry, he does not support the violence of his 'tribe'. His poems are political insofar as they depict the realities of life. He writes of his upbringing, his world, his visions, his desires and his personal experiences. In an interview with John Haffenden, Heaney says that 'whatever poetic success I've had has come from my staying within the realm of my own imaginative country and my own voice, which is not an abstract thinking voice at all' (Haffenden 1981, p.69). Memory, both physical and mental, sends Heaney backwards in a literary and historical sense to certain times and instances in his youth and more broadly, in Ireland's past. Catholicism or nationalism never play an overt part in his poetry; he is haunted by them but does not solely focus upon them as being the totality of his identity: they exist, like Marxism in the body politic, at an unconscious and spectral level.

Declan Kiberd discusses the importance of artists in a culture, particularly in terms of their ability to unearth the realities of society, and in this case, of the nation. He notes that 'the artist is in fact the ultimate citizen, who can evoke the ways in which deeper, truer

life somehow continues beneath the extreme surface of things' (Kiberd 2010, p.3). This is essentially what Heaney achieves throughout his prose and poetry. He depicts the realities of his time by discussing ordinary, yet controversial, issues such as identity and his place in a society that demands that one makes a binary and oppositional choice of political positions and ideologies. Heaney, in his writing, refuses this binarist position, and provides the reader with enough information and images for them to question their own inherent perspectives and ideological positions on such issues as racism, murder, violence and identity.

Edward Said: Locating Otherness

Edward Said is synonymous with postcolonial theory. In an Irish context, Said has himself written a piece on W. B. Yeats entitled 'Yeats and Decolonisation'. In this text, Said encapsulates Ireland in its rightful place in the postcolonial web. Said notes, in his afterword to *Ireland and Postcolonial Theory*, that 'for its British settlers and rulers, Ireland was not only a geographical entity dominated by an off-shore power, but also a history, geography, culture, and population written and represented by what the British and many of their European and American counterparts said about them' (Said 2003, p.178). Said discusses the idea of the Other, defining it as a symbol of what one is not. In his text *Orientalism*, he explores the estrangement and racial prejudice that exists between the Western world, known as the 'Occident', and eastern societies, known as the 'Orient'. He contends that identity is formed through the semiotic lens of binary oppositions. In common discourse, the West portrays itself as civilized, technologically advanced and noble, whereas the Middle East, the Orient, is portrayed as the opposite. This is a concept

created by colonial nations throughout history, who commonly represent themselves as saviours of the land which they invade. Through the polarisation of the Other, most often the natives, the colonial forces attempt to justify their actions morally, legally and ethically. Said notes that the ideas presented in *Orientalism* amount to a realistic vison of the world:

> For Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, 'us') and the strange (the Orient, the East, 'them'). This vison in a sense created and then served the two worlds thus conceived. Orientals lived in their world, 'we' lived in ours. (Said 2003, p.43)

In practical terms, the Other can be defined as the opposite of what an individual, a group or society perceive themselves to be, and in Irish terms Said acknowledges that he was drawn to Ireland as a postcolonial nation through the similarities he saw between *Orientalism* and Ireland: 'since what drew me to Irish culture and history in the first place were the underlying connections to be drawn between knowledge and power that I had first studied in the context of Orientalism' (Said 2003, p.177).

In *Orientalism*, Said analyses the implications of language, knowledge and perceived superiority over the Other. In a colonial sense, knowledge means power, and through the power of language in the imperial process the colonial power wreaks havoc upon the colonized nation's culture. Bill Ashcroft and Pol Ahluwalia note in their book on *Edward Said*, in the *Routledge Critical Thinkers Series*, that his argument has always been that 'European knowledge, by relentlessly constructing its subject within the discourse of Orientalism, was able to maintain hegemonic power over it' (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia 2001, p.53). Power is retained in the colonial process through the construction of a new nation

for the invader that is created by the out-casting of the natives. The spectre of European colonial practices in the Orient haunts contemporary society in current times, with Derrida noting that 'all national rootedness, for example, is rooted first of all in the memory or the anxiety of a displaced – or displaceable – population. It is not only time that is "out of joint", but space in time, spacing' (Derrida 2006, p.103). Hence, it could be argued that Islamic extremism exists today because of the West's subjugation of people and their religion, and also their imperial tendencies towards the East since Britain's invasion of India. Terrorist organisations such as ISIS and Al'Queda, and the IRA in Ireland, can be seen to be a result of the imperial and colonial process. In a sense, it is the natives, the Other, who are fighting back against the invader.

The so-called 'War on Terror', for example, can be seen, in large measure, as merely a guise through which the colonial process operates. The Media proposes that civilians must be saved from the barbaric nature of the Eastern world's indigenous religions and practices because they do not fit in with western societies' version of the world. Through invading the Eastern countries and reporting on the savagery of the colonized nation, the natives of such countries are dehumanized and depicted as being the binary opposite of the supposed knowledgeable, controlling and modern imperial power. The colonial power seeks to educate and make the natives, the Other, more similar to themselves in order to gain control of the nation. If the natives do not conform to the West's way of life, as Said suggests, then they are exiled to the realm of the Other where they are mistrusted, questioned and discriminated against by the colonial power. On the surface, the aim of imperialism is to educate the natives to be 'civilized'; however, historically, it has been financially and empirically beneficial to those who engage in these practices with all

acts of colonialism being inherently neo-colonial. Said notes, in *Culture and Imperialism*, that 'imperialism after all was a cooperative venture, and a salient trait of its modern form is that it was (or claimed to be) an educational movement; it set out quite consciously to modernize, develop, instruct and civilize' (Said 1994, p.223). The mode that Said determines as the driver of this imperial process is language, because it enables the colonizer to invade not only the land, but also the mind of the native.

Since language is necessary to the colonial process, by extension so is literature. Language enables the colonizer to avert and distract the native from their common practices and culture by substituting what seems to be a more sophisticated and complex cultural range of reference. Language allows for the imaginative creation of identities to be formed, but also to create a deeper version of a 'them' and 'us' divide. When the native language of the nation becomes a symbol of the Other, colonialism has succeeded in its ideological aim. The spectre that resides in the colonial power's language invades and alters the native's unconscious, which then subverts the *status quo* of the psyche. Language creates the mythos of culture and identity with Said noting that 'too often literature and culture are presumed to be politically, even historically innocent; it has regularly seemed otherwise to me, and certainly my study of Orientalism has convinced me . . . that society and literary culture can only be understood and studied together' (Said 2003, p.27). Literature often places the natives in the hegemonic control of the Other. I agree with Said in his view that language is the main player in the colonial process that creates a new version of the nation. The alienation of a certain group in any given society allows for a new culture to be born out of the colonial process, as the Other responds to the colonial practice. Revolution and violence against the invader often ensue. Nationalism, Republicanism and an extreme sense

of patriotism are usually founded in the postcolonial world, and this has of course also been the case in Ireland, as part of a society's revolt. Benedict Anderson notes that a nation:

> is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings. (Anderson 2006, p.7)

It is the construction of a united, imagined community against the colonizer that allows for extreme nationalism to grow in a postcolonial nation. The crux of Said's argument in *Culture and Imperialism* is summed up by Conor McCarthy, when he notes that:

> For Said, *culture* refers firstly to the arts and practices of representation, description, and communication that are relatively autonomous from the economic and practical world, and that often take aesthetic form. But secondly, *culture* can also refer to a hierarchal, refined tendency, which results in a kind of self-definition and aggrandisement. (McCarthy 2010, p.108)

Culture creates the Other through a lack of conformity. The imaginative terrain of identity and culture are signifiers of what a society represents, or presents, itself to be, and by not adhering to these structures, one can become othered. The Other will be intrinsic to my discussion of Heaney's poetry as it is central to revealing through language, the haunting manner in which history, memory and colonialism influence the present of his poetry.

     Orientalism is not just a theory that can be applied to the world or to the nation's

history but it also applies to texts. Harry Harootunian notes that literature is the bearer of many societal truths; it reflects the personal life of the writer but also their own views on the world:

> Said's *Orientalism* . . . was committed to revealing how representational strategies were implicated in figuring colonial otherness, from teasing out the political unconscious of novels to showing involvement of scholarly research in constructing images of the colonized that would serve the interests of policy and domination. (Harootunian 2005, p.73)

The ideological power of English literature can be seen as central to the success of Britain's colonial efforts in India. When one looks upon the systems of education in Ireland, their construction is not too different from their British counterparts. Violence enables the colonizer to invade the landscape of the people, but language and literature allow for colonization of the mind and it is this that is the most important apparatus of the colonial procedure.

Homi K. Bhabha and the Hybridity of Identity

This section of the chapter will focus on the second postcolonial theorist, Homi K. Bhabha, with his notion of cultural hybridity and his specific view of the concept of a nation being the main focal points. Aspects of hybridity have already been briefly explored in this chapter, but I wish to expand upon these in terms of how they might illuminate readings of Heaney's work. Firstly, Bhabha propounds the view that the nation is merely a construct of the mind, and that it is wholly imaginative. Throughout time, the concept of a nation

changes, rendering the true definition of a nation impossible. To define a nation is to attempt to occlude an array of possible haunting tracings. To define is to lock into place a mythologized notion of how a society represents itself to the world. This is impossible given that each individual is exposed to a variety of different influences, hauntings and spectres and by extension, this adds to the degree of the limitlessness and liminality of identity. National identity is an ever-changing and idealistic construct that is unique to each individual. Bhabha states, in *Nation and Narration*, that 'nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye' (Bhabha 2000, p.1). For Bhabha, the fact that these origins exist in the mind's eye further implicates the unconscious in the formation of identities. The most interesting aspect of this statement is that Bhabha compares the idea of a nation to a narrative. Narratives tend to be constructed through language, and this reverts back to the spectre operating within the web of discourse, but also to Said's notion that language creates the Other at the same time, so that there is a dialectical and complex process of self and other at work in all linguistic and literary discourse. What one determines as their identity may well differ from that of someone else within any given society, but both will share some common markers of identity, thus making them, to some extent, a hybrid. In certain terms, many different cultures mix together in order to form a new culture, one that is more often a hybrid form of the invaders' culture and the natives.

In his essay, 'DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation', Bhabha discusses the idea that language, cultural differences and Nationalism are a haunting by the past of the present when he notes that 'the language of culture and community is poised on the fissures of the present becoming the rhetorical figures of a

national past' (Bhabha 2000, p.292). What often happens after the initial colonial invasion has been cemented in the nation's psyche is the creation of a new version of the existing nation. Essentially a nation or country is merely a piece of land around which an imaginative border has been placed. Humans have the ability to create the myth of nation through the imbrication of language and the need for a sense of self. Identity is woven through unconscious absent presences becoming conscious through the linguistic structures of language with Freud noting that:

> The term 'conscious' is, to start with, a purely descriptive one, resting on the perception of the most direct and certain character. Experience shows, next, that a mental element (for instance, an idea) is not as a rule permanently conscious. On the contrary, a state of consciousness is characteristically very transitory; an idea that is conscious now is no longer so a moment later, although it can become so again under certain conditions that are easily brought about. What the idea was in the interval we do not know. We can say that it was *latent*, and by this we mean that it was *capable of becoming conscious* at any time. Or, if we say that it was *conscious*, we are giving an equally correct description. (Freud 2018, p.2)

Freud's idea can be linked with Derrida's notion of the spectre who operates within the unconscious but also evokes conscious awakenings that influence the present and future. In this regard, identity, inherited from multiple spectral presences of the past, unconsciously creates the imagined, hybrid identity. Postcolonial nations are an extension of an imagined community where one is exposed to otherness, but also to hybridity, after the activity of colonization has ceased:

> The nation fills the void left in the uprooting of communities and kin, and turns that loss into the language of metaphor. Metaphor, as the etymology of the word suggests, transfers the meaning of home and belonging, across the 'middle passage', or the central European steppes, across those distances, and cultural differences, that span the imagined community of the nation-people. (Bhabha 2000, p.292)

The spectrality of history and memory creates this hybrid native. The hybrid adopts the practices, culture and language of the colonizer, while also maintaining a certain element of their own identity. It is a hyper-identity that allows for a more informed, more rounded, sense of self to be created. The hybridity of the individual is ultimately created through the notion of cultural difference, as Eleanor Byrne discusses. She notes that Bhabha's hybridity is related to culture and not to race. Byrne puts forward the notion that, for Bhabha, 'hybridity is understood as cultural, not biological or racial. Cultural hybridity is theorised as the result of the continual process of translation which is internal to any culture, which in turn stems from an apprehension of cultural difference' (Byrne 2009, p.34). Since the hybridity of the colonized individual is cultural and not biological, one can assert that this hybridity is a choice of sorts. The individual inherits from the colonial spectres since existence means to be haunted by the past, or as Derrida aptly puts it: '*to be* . . . means, for the same reason, to inherit' (Derrida 2006, p.67). One is moulded by these spectres of the past and their non-present presence in the present.

While Said portrays the notion of otherness as a prejudicial, racial boundary that seeks to divide; Bhabha, on the other hand, sees the fruits of colonial achievements, or lack of them, as a positive enterprise in that it creates the hybrid identity. Cultural difference, as Bhabha terms it, does not have to be a negative thing, but is rather a flag of cultural

identification. In *The Location of Culture*, he asserts that 'cultures are never unitary in themselves, nor simply dualistic in the relation of Self to Other' (Bhabha 1994, p.35). Racial prejudices and bigotry are results of both sides' attempt to gain the upper hand. Bhabha notes that 'hegemony requires iteration and alterity to be effective' (Bhabha 1994, p.29), while I do agree with this, I think that mimicry and ultimately hybridity are more important components within a colonized nation. These concepts enable a new nation to be formed from the ashes of an old one through the ghosts of the past haunting and influencing the present and future of that nation with Bhabha indicating that The Third Space is where the concept of a nation is constantly renewed and read anew. The Third Space 'makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process' and destroys the 'mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code. Such an intervention quite properly challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenising, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People' (Bhabha 1994, p.37). A crossover between two interlocking cultures gives birth to a new culture, one that is tinted with aspects from both sides.

Mimicry is vital to the creation of the hybrid. The language, culture, practices and customs of the Other are seen as imperatives to which the subject must conform, while also maintaining and adhering to a connection with the self:

> Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as *subject of difference that is almost the same*, *but not quite*. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. (Bhabha 1984, p.126)

The hybrid colonized people attempt to embrace the colonizers' version of what culture should be. Since culture is in fact an imaginary entity, which is created by choices of a hegemonic grouping in society, and is unique to each individual, then technically the perceived betrayal of culture and identity on the native's part only exists because of the collective.

Clare Carroll discusses this idea regarding Ireland as a postcolonial nation:

> it is important to distinguish between nation and nation-state and, in turn, the differences among disparate types of nationalism. If by nation we mean a self-conscious community with a common sense of history and a literature of its own, as well as claims to political identity and territorial sovereignty, then Ireland, like many other postcolonial nations, existed for most of its history as a nation without a nation-state. (Carroll 2003, p.6)

In this sense, identity is not linked to land, but instead is an ideology created imaginatively. Since identity is a living organism, constantly being altered, eradicated and open to individual perception, then it cannot be seen as limited. Identity can be constantly re-imagined within global, European and Irish contexts. David Huddart notes that 'the homelands we create are, for Bhabha, like Rushdie and Smith, imaginary, which does not mean that they are unreal. This unreality implies that we can re-imagine them, in principle endlessly, although of course practical constraints often make the re-imagination difficult to achieve' (Huddart 2006, p.48). This unreality, as Huddart terms it, is in fact exactly what culture is. It exists only as far as it exists within the unconscious of the individual. Mimicry on the other hand is a conscious effort within the realm of identity, which predisposes future bearers of this identity or cultural practice to the conscious efforts made by their

ancestors to engage with, and conform to, particular social and cultural indicators, most commonly language.

Norse Spectres and Heaney

Much of the poetry within *North* deals with Heaney's struggle with his identity as well as seeking to understand the current violence within Northern Irish society. History is looked upon as repetitive and cyclical, with the acts of violence committed in the past being in some way operative in, and influential on, Heaney's world. Nothing has changed except those who fight, and in this sense, Heaney seeks to locate and understand the violence that is occurring in Northern Ireland through the haunting lens of an older, wider, European spectrum of violence. 'Belderg' is an interesting choice of poem to commence the Viking / Norse element of *North*. The opening of the poem addresses the simplicity and nonchalance which characterises the modern interpretation of the medieval period in Ireland. The poem is set in Belderg, County Mayo, where an old settlement was found. In the poem, the poet recounts a chat with a local who had found many of the artefacts: '"They just kept turning up / And were thought of as foreign"' (Heaney 1975, p.13). The foreignness of the quernstones that were found is important to Heaney, as is the fact that their uses and purpose were unknown. They are treated like the history that surrounds them in the social sphere of understanding because 'they lie about his house' (Heaney 1975, p.13), discarded and forgotten. The objects have not been recognized or acknowledged in terms of their intrusion into the modern world. They have remained fossilized in the bog that safeguarded them throughout history.

  Much like the bog poems, which will be discussed in the next chapter, the bog in

'Belderg' acts as a place where history is preserved in order to bring a form of living meaning to the present. This sets Heaney off on his journey throughout the history of the era and the place. He muses just like the child in the classroom, not about 'Neolithic wheat', but of the circular motion of history. Derrida notes that 'we inherit the very thing that allows us to bear witness to it' (Derrida 2006, p.68), and 'Belderg' is more than just a poem about the artefacts that have been preserved in the bog: it is about history coming back, much like the Derridean spectre, to haunt the present and dwell within the realms of contemporary society where it offers parallel modes of meaning. The past cannot be escaped; it always comes back. The poem is littered with images of circular objects, such as the quernstone, and is relatable to the circularity of both identity and history. Circularity finds a place throughout much of the Heaney canon, and will be discussed in 'Punishment', 'Bann Valley Eclogue', 'Ugolino' and 'Route 110', later in this thesis. Circularity hints at the continuation of life in the later poems, but also at the notion that history is circular and constantly repeats itself.

Eugene O Brien notes, in *Seamus Heaney and The Place of Writing*, that in *North* 'the Norse theme serves the purpose of complicating and pluralizing notions of identity, it imbricates the foreign and the familiar' (O Brien 2003, p.77). Edward Said has noted of identities and cultures that 'far from being unitary or monolithic or autonomous things, cultures actually assume more "foreign" elements, alterities, differences, than they consciously exclude' (Said 1994, p.15). 'Belderg' incorporates three cultures within it: Norse, Irish and British, and the bog is seen as a repository of all historical elements and cultures that have a place in Ireland. Each layer of the bog that is removed reveals an older, yet paradoxically newer, interpretation of history. The hidden history of the Norse

invasions is almost criminalised because of the violence associated with it.

The 'glib' that Heaney references in the text brings about a strong Irish element to the overarching Nordic theme within 'Belderg'. The glib was used by many criminals in Ireland to hide their face, and their identity, by using their long, matted hair. Henry Hart acknowledges this also, but goes a step further in his interpretation. Hart foregrounds the English or British element to the poem. He states that Heaney is probably remembering Edmund Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland* 'where he reveals how Irish criminals wore glibs – thick masses of matted hair thrown over their faces – so that they could go about their business in disguise' (Hart 1993, p.83). In one word, 'glib', Heaney manages to tie three identities and cultures together, that of Irish, British and Norse, in the one place, Mayo. 'Glib' is an inherently Irish word, but when 'The soft-piled centuries / Fell open like a glib' (Heaney 1975, p.13), it reveals a deeper, rooted identity that deconstructs and broadens a contemporary understanding of Irishness that both haunts and enhances that sense of identity:

> There were the first plough-marks,
>
> The stone-age fields, the tomb
>
> Corbelled, turfed and chambered,
>
> Floored with dry turf-coomb.
>
> A landscape fossilized . . . (Heaney 1975, p.13)

The Derridean trace is present within the text, just as the markings on the land by Norse settlers in Mayo are still present in the 'first plough-marks', but also in the sense that these tracings carry through history to haunt contemporary society. In peeling back the glib, a

more complex sense of Irishness is revealed which hints at the hybridity of an Irish identity that has Norse tracings within it, as well as being present in Spenser's aforementioned British text.

The poem, then, is not as simple as it appears, as it is more than an investigation of an archaeological finding; it is instead a digging into the history of culture and identity, and into himself. The structure and construction of the poem is layered just like the bog. Each stanza reveals a different, deeper layer of identity and understanding, with Heaney himself noting that:

> The shortness of a line constricts, in a sense, the breadth of your movement. Of course, a formal decision is never strictly formal, I mean it's to do with some impulsive thing, some instinctive sense of the pitch you want to make. And with *North* and *Wintering Out* I was burrowing inwards, and those thin small quatrain poems, they're kind of drills or augers for turning in and they are narrow and long and deep. (Heaney & Randall 1979)

The format of the poem allows for engagement with deeper hauntings. The act of digging, for Heaney, is both a physical act that his father and grandfather did before him on the bog, but also an imaginative one that digs deeper into history, the unconscious and the self:

> Nicking and slicing neatly, heavy sods
>
> Over his shoulder, going down and down
>
> For the good turf. Digging. (Heaney 1966, p.14)

Although his ancestors' acts are physical, and carried out on the farm, Heaney's is much

different. His act of digging relates to burrowing deeper into the mind, and into the imaginative world of poetry, literature and identity. Just as his father and grandfather dug deeper to foot the good turf, so the deeper Heaney digs into his metaphorical bogs the more the past reveals itself. The further 'Belderg' progresses, the deeper Heaney strays into the openings of historical revelations. The spectres of the past are revealed unconsciously to Heaney through the act of digging as 'to lift the lid of the peat' (Heaney 1975, p.13) unearths a world far different from the one created in contemporary society. O'Brien notes that 'digging becomes a metaphor for the unconscious, unspoken aspects of his nationalist psyche throughout the early works' (O'Brien 2002, p.28). Overall, I would agree with this, as parts of history that nationalist and republican agendas have elided, have remained within the bog at Belderg in 'a landscape fossilized' (Heaney 1975, p.13). The trace of historical meanings and apparitions is harboured within the ground and repeated constantly throughout the course of history.

Bhabha would determine this as a certain form of hybridity whereby the remnants of historical colonialism, through the Norse raiders, still exist within the lives of those in Mayo and Ireland as a whole:

> The scraps, patches, and rags of daily life must be repeatedly turned into the signs of a national culture, while the very act of the narrative performance interpolates a growing circle of national subjects. (Bhabha 2000, p.297)

In this sense, Heaney's bogs hoard the true markers of Irish identity and of Irish history. By unearthing the bog and delving deeper into the unconscious of not only his own psyche, but that of the nations, a truer sense of identity is unearthed. Derrida would determine this

return in *Specters of Marx* as relating to inheritance when he notes that 'inheritance from the "spirits of the past" consists, as always, in borrowing. Figures of borrowing, borrowed figures, figurality as the figure of the borrowing. And the borrowing speaks: borrowed language, borrowed names, says Marx' (Derrida 2006, p.136). The hybridity of Irish identity and inheritance is what Heaney is addressing in 'Belderg', along with the resurrection of the past in the present.

The final stanzas of the poem dwell upon the past haunting the present and the congruence of history:

> A landscape fossilized,
>
> Its stone-wall patterings
>
> 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. (Heaney 1975, p.13 & 14)

In these lines, Heaney locates the haunting nature of history and is imaginatively moving through time. All peoples within the island stem from the same place historically, and this is reflected within the word 'congruence'. The presence of growth rings, related to

dendrochronology, is interesting. One assumes that history is never dead, but can come back at any time; however, trees are living organisms and as such can physically die out, but also fertilise and rejuvenate the ground in which they decompose. That being said, the more rings a tree has, the stronger and older it becomes, and this adds to the notion that the more identities to which it is exposed, the stronger it becomes. This image is significant, as it sets in motion the etymological standpoint from which Heaney grounds his idea. 'Iron, flint, and bronze' all reflect growth over time, and the fact that one idea gave birth to another idea which then supplanted the older version. This can be looked upon in terms of identity also. The more strains of heritage one possesses, and the more cultures to which the individual's unconscious is exposed, the better and stronger it grows. The colonial influences never leave, *per se*, but exist hauntologically beneath the surface of things.

The growth and progression of history leads Heaney to the growth of his own birthplace, Mossbawn. Heaney connects his home place with Belderg through the recurring image of the bog. Just as the bog in Mayo unearthed and revealed the Old Norse artefacts, while also metaphorically maintaining a spectral presence over the psyche of both speakers within the poem, so Mossbawn does the same. Heaney reveals that it is 'A bogland name' (Heaney 1975, p.14), and it is the universality of the bog that binds the worlds of past, present and future together. For Heaney, the bog seems to act like Derrida's spectre. It holds history together long enough for it to be revealed at the right moment in time, which links with the operations of the spectre:

> Once ideas or thoughts (*Gedanke*) are detached from their substratum, one engenders
> some ghosts by *giving them a body*. Not by returning to the living body from which
> ideas and thoughts have been torn loose, but by incarnating the latter in *another*

> *artefactual body*, *a prosthetic body*, a ghost of spirit, one might say a ghost of the ghost
>
> if, as Marx sometimes leads one to think, the first spiritualization also, and already,
>
> produces some spectre. (Derrida 2006, p. 158)

The poet undertakes an etymological extrapolation of 'Mossbawn' within the poem, where it becomes such a 'ghost of spirit'. He acknowledges that the place he calls home is made up of a mixture of Norse and English languages, but he looks upon it as being Irish. Mossbawn is the poet's centre: it is Irish but haunted by the ghosts of British and Scandinavian inheritances.

Eugene O'Brien notes that the etymological probing the poet undergoes in 'Belderg' allows for 'the unveiling of the presence of other traditions, other invasions, other colonisations, in the encultured name of the home of the poet' (O'Brien 2002, p.76). The poem allows for a wider scope of Irishness to be revealed:

> 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 its foundation
>
> Was mutable as sound
>
> And how I could derive
>
> A forked root from the ground
>
> And make *bawn* an English fort,

A planters walled-in mound, (Heaney 1975, p.14)

Much discussion has surrounded the word 'moss' in critical analysis of the poem. Henry Hart, Michael Parker and Neil Corcoran all believe 'moss' to be of Norse origin. Parker states that the Viking 'imprints persists in language and landscape – place names such as Mossbawn and Wicklow both have Norse elements – and, despite the passing of a thousand years, a congruence exists between their lives of tribal violence and ours' (Parker 1994, p.129). O'Brien differs in opinion from Parker, Corcoran and Hart, however, as does Heather O'Donoghue. O'Brien traces the etymology of 'moss' and comes to this conclusion:

> Old English *mos*, bog; Old English *mos* bog, moss from the Germaine; Dutch, Old German and Danish *mos*, Swedish *mossa*, Icelandic *mosi*, Anglo-Saxon *meós*, German *moss*, moss, a bog. Cognate Latin *muscus*, moss; German *moschos*, a sprout or tender shoot. (O'Brien 2003, p.78)

O'Brien's extrapolation of the word 'moss' offers a plural etymology, from a range of other cultures, which again adds to the heterogeneity of Mossbawn as both a place and idea. Bhabha notes that 'the "other" is never outside or beyond us; it emerges forcefully, within cultural discourse, when we *think* we speak most intimately and indigenously "between ourselves"' (Bhabha 2000, p.4).

Heather O'Donoghue notes that '*mose* or *mos* means "bog" in both Danish and Icelandic, and came into Ulster English via Scots' (O'Donoghue 2011, p.193). The word usage and the word itself is intrinsically Irish within the poem, but from an etymological standpoint it opens up a world of supposed otherness. That which is thought to be Irish,

beneath the surface is something other, but at the same time, operates within the hybridity of Irish identity. The wide array of etymological standpoints that exist regarding the term adds to Heaney's overarching point in 'Belderg' that essentially, culture and identity are not all that they appear to be. When one peels back the layers of the metaphorical bog, in this instance, a new world of meaning is opened up. Rita Zoutenbier articulates that 'the discussion about the word "Mossbawn" (the name of Heaney's birthplace), which is seen to contain Irish, Norse and English roots and therefore presents the mixed cultural heritage of Ireland, is resolved by the poet, who passes "through the eye of the quern", in a test of the imagination' (Zoutenbier 1986, p.61). The variety of spectres haunting the modern era come at the cost of violent imperialism and colonisation, as the final lines of the poem suggests:

> A world-tree of balanced stones
>
> Querns piled like vertebrae
>
> The marrow crushed to grounds. (Heaney 1972, p.14)

The closing of the poem acknowledges the violence that often accompanies the colonial process, and a multiplicity of identities within a nation. Heaney does not comment on the violence that occurs in this poem, but instead uses 'Belderg' to show that violence has been a part of history since the beginning of the birth of the nation. Caleb Caldwell maintains that 'poetry can never be finished or concluded; instead, it creates a space for meaning, mourning, and paradoxical communication between self and other' (Caldwell 2013, p.111) and this is precisely what Heaney accomplishes in 'Belderg'.

The violent image that ends 'Belderg' seems to further manifest itself in 'North',

the title poem of the collection. The poem discusses the overarching theme of the collection, namely that of Norse colonial impacts and intentions, and how they have fertilized the Irish psyche. 'North' opens with the image of the violent, unrelenting and savage power of the Atlantic Ocean against the Irish coastline. The 'I' of the poem is gifted with the vision of the past. Heaney is haunted by those who came from Iceland and Greenland. The 'I' here is not only of the past, but also the present. The speaker, presumably Heaney, has a non-present presence within the poem. Caldwell concludes that the 'I' of the poem watches and observes, and this can be seen to reflect Heaney's political stance during the period in which *North* was composed. Imaginatively the poet has:

> Faced the unmagical
>
> Invitations of Iceland,
>
> the pathetic colonies
>
> Of Greenland. (Heaney 1975, p.19)

The places where the Norse raiders hail from are acknowledged, they are both 'unmagical' and 'pathetic'. The lack of interaction with place may be to divert from the political or racial indicators of colonialism, as Heaney instead acknowledges them for their actions and materials. The raiders are 'fabulous', unlike their place of origin which Heaney casts aside.

The language of the poem after the raider's introduction is one that explicates violence and terror. The language is harsh and rough like the ocean they travelled to get to Ireland. However, despite the presence of dangerous weapons and a sense of hazard implied in the language, the poet embraces this Nordic, Irish spectre. Speaking of the raiders, the poet states:

Those lying in Orkney and Dublin

measured against

their long swords rusting,

those in the solid

belly of stone ships,

those hacked and glinting

in the gravel of thawed streams. (Heaney 1975, p.19)

This imagery and language are in stark contrast to the rest of the poem. In the opening four stanzas, Heaney locates a place in which to combine the Irish situation with that of the Vikings' presence in Ireland. He locates the invasion within the realm of a wider European circle of violence in an attempt to understand the present. The spectre of the past has returned in the present to show that history is just like the quern in 'Belderg', circular and repetitive but with the capability to destroy a society and its people. Caldwell acknowledges the haunting presence of the Vikings, and the voices they lend to contemporary society, as well as their impact on Heaney:

The poet is silent and the voices of the dead speak to him; the tongue of the longship evokes the stone ships that hold the 'hacked and glinting' bones of the dead Vikings – also, the various ships, with their tongues and bellies, are more corporal than the dead raiders, who are left with only their 'ocean deafened voices'. (Caldwell 2013, p.112)

The poem hinges on the cusp of realisation when Heaney begins to fuse together both worlds. Those who would have been otherwise determined as the Other during the period have now been reimagined differently by Heaney. He places the raiders as being intrinsic

to the role of forming his own identity, and that of the nations. However, he is 'lifted again in violence and epiphany' (Heaney 1975, p.19) and it is this haunting trace that he examines.

Derrida's discussion of history as being open to multiple strands of interpretations and not just a singular, general version resonates with Irish, nationalist's version of history as being implicated in solely British occupation and influence, whereas Viking and Norse elements have as much influence and presence within the present. Derrida notes in *Positions* that:

> I very *often* use the word 'history' in order to reinscribe its force and in order to produce another concept or conceptual chain of 'history': in effect a 'monumental, stratified, contradictory' history; a history that also implies a new logic of *repetition* and the *trace*, for it is difficult to see how there could be history without it . . . . Althusser's entire, and necessary, critique of the 'Hegelian' concept of history and of the notion of an expressive totality, etc., aims at showing that there is not one single history, a general history, but rather histories *different* in their type, rhythm, mode of inscription – intervallic, differentiated histories. I have always subscribed to this, as to the concept of history that Sollers calls 'monumental'. (Derrida 1981, p.57-58)

The violence that the Norse invaders brought with them reignites itself, albeit in a different form, in Northern Ireland during the Troubles through the workings of the Derridean spectre.

Michael Parker has similar views on 'North' as a poem, and also on the thematic structure that underlies the Norse poems at the beginning of the whole collection. He

comments that Heaney's 'endeavour to establish that a congruence exists between the tribal violence of a thousand years and that of the contemporary North, […] should perhaps also be seen within the context of Heaney's expanding vision of what constituted his poetic terrain' (Parker 2007, p.238). The 'epiphany' within the poem can be looked upon as the bridge that binds the worlds of past and present. Heaney's later poetry is similarly haunted by these Norse spectres in 'Out of Shot', from *District and Circle*:

> Catching gleams of the distant Viking *vik*
>
> Of Wicklow Bay; thinking *scriptorium*,
>
> Norse raids, night-dreads and that 'fierce raiders'
>
> poem
>
> About storm on the Irish Sea – so no attack
>
> In the small hours or next morning; (Heaney 2006, p.15)

District and Circle delves into memory and recollections as Heaney does the 'rounds of the district' (Heaney 2006, p.64) thereby acknowledging that the Norse raiders who haunt *North* have a continuous absent presence within Heaney's local area, unconscious and identity. Stephen Regan comments that 'if the title *District and Circle* brings to mind the London Underground and the hellish circumstances of the terrorist bombings in July 2005, it also suggests Heaney's continuing preoccupation with his own district and his relentless circling back on his own poetic achievements' (Regan 2008b, p.217). Indeed, this circling around his own district is symbolic of a probing of that district to unearth spectral presences, and 'intervallic histories' (Derrida 1981, p.58) of that district and place. In 'Out of Shot', the form of the poem suggests a freedom that does not exist within the tightly

framed, short lines of 'North'. The lines in 'North' are constricted and enjambed, and parallel the nature and impact of colonialism, but they also have a certain narrative quality to them. Heaney deepens the connection between Irishness and these Norse raiders in the structure and form of the poem through the haunting presence of *Táin Bó Cúailinge*, with Richard Rankin Russell noting that 'Heaney's onrushing style that drives the catalogs of atrocities in many of the enjambed lines from poems like "North" echoes the breathless narration of the *Táin*' (Rankin Russell 2014, p.157).

The tribal violence of 'North' resonates with the poet's awareness of the world around him, but also with the socio-political operations of the Nordic past and the Northern Irish present. Despite being determined as the Other in Irish history, the Viking ghosts are accepted by Heaney as influencing his hybrid identity. Said notes that:

> Real intellectual analysis forbids calling one side innocent, the other evil. Indeed the notion of a side is, where cultures are at issue, highly problematic, since most cultures aren't watertight little packages, all homogenous, and all either good or evil. But if your eye is on your patron, you cannot think as an intellectual, but only as a disciple of acolyte. In the back of your mind there is the thought that you must please and not displease. (Said 1996, p.119)

Said's idea is highly applicable to Heaney's work in that he does not choose a side but instead remains in between both. He acknowledges the variety of cultures that make up his world and identity. In 'North', Heaney accepts the voice of the Norsemen, and also finds a place to locate similarities where there are presumed differences between cultures:

> To geography and trade,
>
> Thick-witted couplings and revenges,
>
> The hatreds and behindbacks
>
> Of the althing, lies and women,
>
> Exhaustions nominated peace,
>
> Memory incubating the soiled blood. (Heaney 1975, p.20)

The voices that inform Heaney of these similarities are entirely spectral, and plural, they are voices from 'differentiated histories' (Derrida 1981, p.58). One can also locate Paul de Man's discussion of *prosopopoeia* in these stanzas; the dead have been given a voice, spectrally, to deliver meaning to Heaney's unconscious in the present. The lines also draw a lineage between the colonial goal of 'geography and trade' (Heaney 1975, p.20), and the resulting quarrels that exist afterwards, politically and between people. The Althing, the ancient Icelandic parliament's absent presence in the text, provides an insight that the modern-day political problems in Northern Ireland do not stand alone, but are a common feature throughout history: 'a history that also implies a new logic of *repetition*' (Derrida 1981, p.57).

Heaney's later poem 'Mycenae Lookout' in *The Spirit Level* describes Northern Irish politicians as 'mouth athletes' (Heaney 1996, p.33) which links the worlds of the Greeks, Northern Irish and Vikings together on the political front. The realm of political activism in Greek mythology is not too unlike that of the Althing, Stormont or Dáil Éireann, and places the Irish situation in an even wider scope of hauntings. Robert Welch discusses the unconscious element of the collection, which is also applicable to 'North' as a poem, and notes that 'the ambition in *North* is to bring the self and the collective unconscious into

the same kind of harmonious relation, and at the same time and the same breath translate past and hidden memory out of absence into the immediacy of linguistic play in the verse itself' (Welch 2005, p.202). The haunting aspects of history locate themselves in Heaney's poetic voice.

The final three stanzas give Heaney the permission to write and continue on his journey downwards into the unconscious. Through the spectres of Norse invasions, Heaney finds a solace, a kind of encouragement to carry on with what he is doing, specifically the activity of writing. Regan notes that:

> The image of 'aurora borealis', better known as 'the northern lights', brilliantly conveys the northern geography of the book while also fixing the image of the poet as a late watcher of the skies intent on discovering beauty in the shifting, uncertain lights drifting through winter darkness. (Regan 2016b, p.324)

In 'Digging', he questioned the act of writing he was undertaking, and seemed to be wondering if it was acceptable to dig into his mind rather than into the bog or land as his ancestors did, and in the end comes to a resolution that will transform and conflate the activities of writing and digging:

> But I've no spade to follow men like them.
>
> Between my finger and my thumb
>
> The squat pen rests.
>
> I'll dig with it. (Heaney 1966, p.14)

Similarly, later in this thesis, it will be shown that Heaney encounters this sense of

questioning again in 'Bann Valley Eclogue' and 'Station Island'. In 'Follower', he recounts

how he wished to grow up and carry on the tradition within his family of rural, farming

life:

> I wanted to grow up and plough,
>
> To close one eye, stiffen my arm. (Heaney 1966, p. 24)

In 'North', the Norse ghosts encourage Heaney to carry on his duty as a poet, to question

and use words to dig into history and the unconscious. The Atlantic wind that carries the

voices of the dead Vikings grants him the permission to continue on his own literary

journey:

> It said, 'Lie down
>
> In the word-hoard, burrow
>
> The coil and gleam
>
> Of your furrowed brain.
>
> Compose in darkness.

> Keep your eye clear
>
> as the bleb of the icicle,
>
> trust the feel of what nubbed treasure
>
> your hands have known'. (Heaney 1975, p.20)

In this sense, Heaney is not only attempting to locate a place from where to understand Irish identity

and contemporary violence in his own time but is allowing these spectres of the past to speak to and

for him at the end of the poem. James Joyce also finds a hauntological place within 'North'. The words 'strand, 'epiphany, 'word hoard', and 'treasure' all allude to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. This pluralises identities within the poem but also the directives offered to the poet clearly anticipate those offered by the shade of Joyce in 'Station Island'. The presumed Other within Irish history, or rather Ireland's differentiated histories, the Norse raiders, give him the confidence to carry on with his literary probing and are accepted as being a part of his own identity in a positive way.

The third and final poem to be discussed in this section is 'Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces'. Spectral presences of past Viking invasions find a strong place within the lines of the six-sequence poem. Since the Vikings who invaded Ireland were initially chronicled as religious invaders, Heaney is enabled to view the violence that went with Norse invasions in line with the sectarian violence being enacted in contemporary times. The poem has an almost ambiguous sense to it. The trial pieces of the poem can be viewed as Heaney locating in the present the lineage of past practice efforts of the Norse invaders, or the trial may also relate to the process of adjudication or judgement of the invaders' actions. The Vikings' impact upon the nation of Ireland is as influential as the British. The first section of the sequence charts the items that were found in the Wood Quay settlement in Dublin:

> It could be a jaw-bone
>
> or a rib or a portion cut
>
> from something sturdier:
>
> anyhow, a small outline
>
> was incised, a cage
>
> or trellis to conjure in. (Heaney 1975, p.21)

Like the function of the bog in Heaney's poetry as a repository of the past, and agent of the spectre, these pieces of Viking equipment were hoarded by the Irish landscape. Derrida writes of phantom-States within *Specters of Marx*, and I would argue that this idea is applicable to the Vikings' impact upon present day Ireland: 'these phantom-States have infiltrated and banalized themselves everywhere, to the point that they can no longer be strictly identified. Nor even sometimes clearly dissociated from the processes of democratization' (Derrida 2006, p.103). The hybridity and haunting nature of Heaney's identity is spectrally influenced by the ghosts of the Viking invaders, with Floyd Collins noting that 'Heaney posits a source of cultural identity in these Dark Age incursions by sea-brigands who soon became colonists and were eventually absorbed by the conquered territories' (Collins 2003, p.79). The 'calligraphy' on the objects found in Wood Quay symbolically produce a sense of the unknown which also hints at the Otherness of the objects themselves.

The sequence structure of the poem flits airily from scene to scene. Heaney does not seem to delve into the history of the Vikings, as he does in 'North', but instead offers moments and instances that sway and drift as opposed to focus. The structure complements the spectrality of the invasion, and the multitude of voices that speak through the text, with Ruth Niel suggesting that Dublin 'is a conglomeration of many things. It is a mixture of past and present, of Viking remains and new streets, of violence from ancient as well as modern times' (Niel 1986, p.44). The notion that on the surface things physically changed, but that in reality, the past still haunts the present, is caught in *Human Chain*'s 'The Wood Road' in the lines 'resurfaced, never widened' (Heaney 2010, p.22). In this sense, the influence of the Vikings has only disappeared from vision, not memory; it is an absent

presence that exists within the present and future, which Derrida would suggest is time being off its hinges:

> To be sure, it says 'without equivocation' (*eindeutig*) that the present (*das Anwesende*), as present, is in *adikia*, that is, as Heidegger translates, deranged, off its hinges, out of joint (*aus der Fuge*). The present is what passes, the present comes to pass *[se passe]*, it lingers in this transitory passage (*Weile*), in the coming and- going, between what *goes* and what comes, in the middle of what leaves and what arrives, at the articulation between what absents itself and what presents itself. This in-between articulates conjointly the double articulation (*die Fuge*) according to which the two movements are adjoined (*gefügt*). Presence (*Anwesen*) is enjoined (*verfugt*), ordered, distributed in the two directions of absence, at the articulation of what is no longer and what is not yet. To join and enjoin. This thinking of the jointure is also a thinking of injunction. (Derrida 2006, p.29)

Both worlds are linked through the spectre but also the living, absent presence of these artefacts in the present. Heaney constantly looks backwards into the past in order to understand the present with Said suggesting that 'appeals to the past are among the commonest of strategies in interpretations of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty about whether the past really is past, over and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms, perhaps' (Said 1994, p.3).

The short, constricted lines allow the form of the poem to engage with, and respond to, the level of constriction that goes with colonialism and invasion. However, Heaney

acknowledges the trial pieces as being important to trade and identity:

> These are trial pieces,
>
> the craft's mystery
>
> improvised on bone:
>
> foliage, bestiaries,
>
> interlacings elaborate
>
> as the netted routes
>
> of ancestry and trade. (Heaney 1975, p.22)

The object hoard of 'coins, weights, scale-pans' (Heaney 1975, p.22) reinforces this notion of trade and expansion by the Viking settlers, and compounds the colonial aspect to their arrival. However, Heaney does not disregard the reality of the situation, as seen in section three of the sequence where the fleeting structure conjures the absent presence of violence within a Scandinavian context through linking the long boat found in Wood Quay to a 'long sword / sheathed in its moisting / burial clays' (Heaney 1975, p.22). Niel notes that 'the poet's train of thought is guided only by the associations conjured up by the mysterious designs on the trial pieces. This leads to the interweaving of the different layers and levels in the poem, as the pattern becomes more and more intricate' (Niel 1986, p.45). The trial piece that is unearthed in section three was 'incised by a child' (Heaney 1975, p.23), and this suggests the idea of settlement and comingling with the natives in 'a buoyant / migrant line' (Heaney 1975, p.23). The Viking invaders are not looked upon by Heaney within the first three sections of the sequence as being invasive, violent or malevolent, but instead as

enriching the culture and the landscape. This is in line with Bhabha's assertion that:

> What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narrative of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. Those 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovate sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. (Bhabha 1994, p.1)

In practical terms, the influence of other cultures is beneficial to a society. Culture is never solidified; it is alive, fluid and shapeshifting as it incorporates other voices and practices to create a new version of an older culture. Heaney would seem to agree with this, as the main focus of the poem until Section IV is on art, and not the violence of the Northern European invaders.

Where the first three sections of the sequence introduce the objects of the invaders in an almost innocent manner, the reality of how they became part of the Irish landscape comes to the surface within the final three sections. Here, Heaney starts to dig downwards and unearths the violent spectres of the period:

> a worm of thought
>
> I follow into the mud.
>
> I am Hamlet the Dane,
>
> skull-handler, parablist,
>
> smeller of rot
>
> in the state, (Heaney 1975, p.23)

The unearthing of these spectres, primarily in the image of Hamlet as Dane, is interesting, as Hamlet symbolises both the Scandinavian culture but also the English literary canon. Even more interesting is Heaney's identification with this polysemic cultural image of hybridity through the use of the personal pronoun 'I'. Heaney is forced to think of Northern Ireland as a state 'pinioned by ghosts' (Heaney 1975, p.23) and look upon the present violence during the Troubles as haunted by the murderous ghosts of invasions. This allows for 'Heaney to choose the Viking Legacy as a vast analogue to the Contemporary Troubles in Northern Ireland' (Collins 2003, p.80), a process in line with Derrida's suggestion that history's 'origin may always be reawakened or whose end may always be anticipated in the form of presence' (Derrida 2001, p.353). In this sense, the colonial invasions of the past haunt contemporary society, which is 'infused / with its poisons' (Heaney 1975, p.23).

The past repeats itself in the present within a different context, and Section V further deepens the connection between the Vikings and the Troubles. Regan notes of this connectedness when he discusses Heaney's poetry of the 1970s as a response to crisis:

> What prompts and generates many of the poems of the 1970s is an immediate and potentially overwhelming sense of crisis. Breaking out of the long historical perspectives engendered by contact with the Iron Age and Viking cultures creates a powerful momentum and a dramatic sense of immediate political actualities, a structure which is implicit in the two-part arrangement of *North*.

The fleeting, floating structure of the poem continues, and is reinforced by the opening lines of Section V:

> Come fly with me,

come sniff the wind

with the expertise

of the Vikings--- (Heaney 1975, p.23)

The sense of flight and movement through the structure of this stanza, can be linked with the movements of the Derridean spectre through time. The spectre leaves and returns bearing information from the past to haunt the present and future, with Derrida noting that 'haunting is historical, to be sure, but it is not *dated*, it is never docilely given a date in the chain of presents' (Derrida 2006, p.3). The idea of flight enables Heaney to metaphorically shift time back to Viking invasions, and to locate a link with nineteen seventies Northern Ireland:

neighbourly, scoretaking

killers, haggers

and hagglers, gombeen-men,

hoarders of grudges and gain. (Heaney 1975, pp. 23-24)

The neighbourly killings on the streets of Northern Ireland link both eras together. The phonetic language used by the poet also mingles the different hauntings together within the lines of the poem. Specifically making reference to the Vikings as 'hagglers, gombeen-men' locates within the poem a strong sense of Irishness.

The uniquely Irish descriptions that are placed upon the Viking invaders within the section allow for a sense of cohesion to be drawn between both cultures. Heaney's excavation unearths commonalities and hauntings between both time periods and acknowledges their impact upon his hybrid identity when he asks them to 'be with us'

(Heaney 1975, p.24). The final section of the sequence reinforces this infusion of Scandinavian and Irish inheritances. The Irish landscape operates as hoarder of the past, and therefore as a receptacle of Scandinavian spectres. Within the sequence, Heaney is 'fully engaged in seeking identity with his northern origins' (Reece 1992, p.97). The first five sections evoke the multiple strands of identities of Viking colonialism within Ireland: trade, settlement, integration and violence. These all imply a sense of Otherness and foreignness; however, within the final section of the sequence Heaney acknowledges the influence of Scandinavian culture upon his identity and that of the nations. The skulls that haunt the final section acknowledge the physical manifestation and haunting of the Vikings in the present, but the 'compounded history' (Heaney 1975, p.24) is what adds to the poet's own hybrid identity. The Scandinavian invaders of the past now haunt the Irish landscape as well as the Irish psyche:

> My words lick around
>
> cobbled quays, go hunting
>
> lightly as pampooties
>
> over the skull-capped ground. (Heaney 1975, p.24)

The infusion and comingling of two cultures and traditions comes to the fore in the final two lines through the Irish shoes, 'pampooties', and the 'skull capped ground' of Dublin. Both complement and touch each other through the act of walking and deem Scandinavian hauntings to have a presence and be constantly in touch with present day Ireland.

The three poems that have been discussed in this section assert the notion that Irishness is open to a variety of hauntings and interpretations. It is a melody of different

languages and a melding of opposing identities that are combined to create a culture that is ever changing and impossible to define; it embodies Bhabha's hybridity. The Norse impact has been to the fore of the discussion thus far, and it would be impossible to discuss Heaney's postcolonial identity without referring to poems that articulate a certain sense of ambiguity regarding the British imperialist impact upon Ireland. However, the remainder of this chapter will seek to outline the role that British imperialism in Ireland has played in the shaping of not only Heaney's poetry, but his unconscious. Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote that 'what finds its reflection in language, language cannot represent. What expresses *itself* in language, *we* cannot express by means of language' (Wittgenstein 2001, p.31). This is the duality and difficulty which Heaney endures. He attempts to reflect in his poetry that life, identity and culture are not indeed givens, but instead are a heterogeneous living organism that shifts in shape and is influenced by the past. In his essay 'On Poetry and Professing', Heaney accounts for the arts as a tool to unearth and decipher identity:

> But it is precisely this masquerade of fictions and ironies and fantastic scenarios that can draw us out and bring us close to ourselves. The paradox of the arts is that they are all made up and yet they allow us to get at truths about who and what we are or might be. (Heaney 2002, p.69)

Heaney seeks out the truths of his own personal identity through a recognition of his hybridity and his engagement with those who are determined as the Other within Irish and Northern Irish society.

'I grew up in between': Heaney and British Colonial Hauntings

British imperial might has been exerted not only in Ireland, but on nearly every continent in the world, with Clare Carroll, in her introduction to *Ireland and Postcolonial Theory*, noting that:

> Ireland, because part of the West, both geographically and culturally in Europe, is seen by some as a transgressive site for postcolonial theory that has been generated from Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Asia. But by the same token Ireland was the first of England's colonies, the training ground for the colonists to North America, and the context of the first English discourse on why and how to conquer and colonize. (Carroll 2003, p.3)

'Ocean's Love to Ireland' and 'Bog Oak' will be read to explore the often violent and oppressive measures used during the process of colonization, while 'Terminus' will demonstrate a more nuanced colonial encounter. Through the postcolonial hauntings that run beneath each of the selected poems, it will be easily recognizable that Heaney does not take sides in the argument, but instead embraces both sides in order to probe and better understand himself. He sees the accepting of the Other as a positive, not only to himself or his identity, but also to society as a whole.

In 'Ocean's Love to Ireland', Heaney conjures the spectres of Walter Raleigh, Elizabeth I and the voices of 'six hundred dead papists' (Heaney 1975, p.47). The poem is haunted by the postcolonial issues of language, culture and religion. Irish Gaelic heritage and culture is essentially raped by the overarching, powerful figure of Raleigh, who embodies British imperialism during the sixteenth century in the poem. 'Ocean's Love to Ireland' can be looked upon as Heaney's response to Raleigh's poem 'Ocean's Love to

Cynthia', where he praises Queen Elizabeth I. The critical response to the poem is interesting. Karen Marguerite Moloney's response sees the poem as deeply political, nationalist and supportive of Irish sovereignty, whereas Eileen Cahill seems to focus upon the presence of rape that pervades much of the text. Michael Parker sees the poem for what it is: a demystifying of the colonial cloud that blocks the truth behind imperialism. He presents his case that the poem 'debunks the myth of English "civility" in its treatment of what is euphemistically termed Anglo-Irish "relations" between the late sixteenth and early eighteenth centuries' (Parker 1994, p.142). Heaney's poem offers a realistic interpretation of an early phase of colonialism in Ireland, but that does not mean he is anti-British, but rather that he is acknowledging historical facts in terms of the violence of the colonising process, even if it is ideologically attenuated by poetry and literature such as that of Raleigh.

The first section of the poem describes the rape scene. It depicts Britain through Walter Raleigh's actions forcefully, violently and sexually exploiting Ireland, the woman of the poem:

> Speaking broad Devonshire,
>
> Raleigh has backed the maid to a tree
>
> As Ireland is backed to England
>
> And drives inland
>
> Till all her strands are breathless. (Heaney 1975, p.46)

These five lines underscore the dominance Britain has over Ireland on the world map, but also over language. Raleigh speaks while the woman of the poem is raped and left

'breathless': he is voiced, she is silent. Moloney suggests that 'rape reduces another person to sexual object; colonization discounts another nation as conquest. In doing so, both acts forego a relationship of reciprocity between equals; both relish the assertion of power over someone or something else' (Moloney 2007, p.73).

The rape is symbolic, not only of the cruelness itself or the subjugation of the colonized, but also of the penetration of English language, culture and practices into Ireland involuntarily. Language, for the woman, has been taken from her by Raleigh: 'Sweesir, Swatter! Sweesir, Swatter!' (Heaney 1975, p.46). The aural effect that this line brings can be interpreted in three ways. It may relate to the Ocean waves, or it may represent the gargling, strangled voice of the rape victim during the act, or it may represent the blurring of linguistic boundaries in the violent act of colonization. The presence of the Ocean is reminiscent of the Vikings' arrival in 'North' and 'Belderg', and this connection can be looked upon as the continuity of violence throughout Ireland's history. The British arrival has been the same as that of the Vikings, by ocean, and has also been accompanied by extreme violence. This again raises the question of perspective and the nationalist agenda of disregarding certain historical information. Samuel Taylor Coleridge once said that 'language is the armory of the human mind; and at once contains the trophies of its past and the weapons of its future conquests' (Coleridge 1817, p.157). The inability of the dominated woman to express herself in the poem is used to symbolise the poet's struggle at not being able to comprehend fully his own situation (Cahill 1987, p.63).

The physical, brute acts of colonising a nation, and taking away agency and control are laid bare by Heaney in the first section, and are again represented and repeated in 'Punishment', discussed in the next chapter. The action of British colonialism during

Raleigh's time influences the events of Northern Ireland during the seventies, while the agency of women is once again removed by the overarching, patriarchal perpetrators of violence. For Derrida, this repetition of history suggests the circular nature of history but also the haunting, ever returning nature of the spectre:

> There are several times of the spectre. It is a proper characteristic of the spectre, if there is any, that no one can be sure if by returning it testifies to a living past or to a living future, for the *revenant* may already mark the promised return of the spectre of living being. Once again, untimeliness and disadjustment of the contemporary. (Derrida 2006, p.123)

The second section of the poem depicts the hypocrisy of Raleigh himself. In a juxtaposition with the first section, it shows the mentality of the colonizer. He would rape a woman of Ireland but would 'Lay his cape' (Heaney 1975, p.47) before Elizabeth I. The colonial spectres of the past haunt this section, as the Munster plantation is referenced by the presence of the rivers 'Lee and Blackwater' (Heaney 1975, p.47), places in Cork where Raleigh got lands as a reward for his exploits in Ireland. Said notes, in *Culture and Imperialism*, that:

> Imperialism after all is an act of geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted, and finally brought under control. For the native, the history of colonial servitude is inaugurated by loss of the locality to the outsider; its geographical identity must thereafter be searched for and somehow restored. Because of the presence of the colonizing outsider, the land is recoverable at first only through the imagination. (Said 1994, p.225)

The violence Raleigh inflicted, and the massacres of which he was a part, are also revealed within the poem. The killing 'of six hundred papists' is one of the actions for which he was rewarded. This line refers to the killing of Spanish sailors who came to Ireland to help the natives during the plantations. While Moloney has overtly stated that the colonial process, according to Heaney, was a wrongdoing upon the land, I would argue otherwise. She states that 'Ireland has been cursed through imperialism – but not destroyed' (Moloney 2007, p.88). The spectres that haunt the text show that the actions of an individual in the past can have a profound effect on the present, and Heaney is attempting to uncover just this aspect of colonialism. The poem is historically accurate, and not divisive or supportive of any one side. I am in agreement with Richard Tillinghast's assumption that Heaney 'seems to have gleaned from his own reading and from his education at Queens University in Belfast a sense that the English literary tradition was his to do with what he chose' (Tillinghast 2009, p.170), again harking back to Derrida's notion of different histories. Taking this notion a step further, it is also Heaney's right to provide a poem that acknowledges the history of Ireland.

Edward Said accounts for the link between historical occlusion and inaccuracy in the subject of colonial discourse: 'this process uses narrative to dispel contradictory memories and occlude violence – the exotic replaces the impress of power with the blandishments of curiosity – with the imperial presence so dominating as to make impossible any effort to separate it from historical necessity' (Said 1994, p.131). Nationalist agendas do not denounce the Viking exploits in Ireland, and Heaney raises this in the final line of the poem through 'the ground possessed and repossessed' (Heaney 1975, p.47). This line portrays the haunting nature of colonialism, but also the issue that many

invasions and changes within the forging of the nation have occurred, and that all have been similarly violent, but that some have been occluded in a nationalist narrative.

'Bog Oak' is not a condemnation of the imperial process on the surface, but like many ghostly hauntings within Heaney's collections, the spectres of Ireland are fused with hauntings from different cultures. In 'Bog Oak', the arrival of Edmund Spenser in Ireland, and his exploits, are explored in a postcolonial context. The colonial acts of the past live on in the present through the haunting nature of the spectre with Derrida noting that 'the future is its memory' (Derrida 2006, p.45). Heaney himself notes that 'each person in Ulster lives first in the Ulster of the actual present, and then in one or other Ulster of the mind' (Heaney 1985, p.4). 'Bog Oak' poetically enacts this idea, as it introduces a rural world, the world of the poet, but ends with the words of the colonial invader. Two past worlds are presented alongside each other with the fusion of both occurring in contemporary times. Conor McCarthy suggests that 'the study of Orientalism is in part, for Said, the making of a personal inventory of the traces left in him by history. He feels himself intensely to be an "Oriental", but one born in a British Mandate territory and educated in predominantly Western institutions of learning' (McCarthy 2010, p.76) and I would extend this idea to Seamus Heaney also. Through his writing, Heaney is constantly evaluating his identity and the traces of history that formulate not only his sense of self, but also that of his nation. In this way, Heaney is intertwining both cultures together in the poem, but also acknowledging that Irishness came first, and that some aspects of this culture ended with a British colonizer.

The loss of language, or certain aspects of culture, have been elegised in Irish poetry, with Stephen Regan noting that:

> From the time of Spenser onwards, the Irish elegy is associated not just with the loss of a particular individual (a Gaelic chieftain, for instance), but with the steady erosion and destruction of Gaelic culture in its entirety. Within this history of colonial oppression and national liberation, the redemptive rhetoric of the elegy is given a much more public and more overtly political emphasis than it receives elsewhere. (Regan 2007, p.10)

Interestingly, the poem is from the collection *Wintering Out*, and Michael Parker's examination of the title of the collection finds that 'in Ulster, the verb "to winter out" means to see through and survive a crisis, and is derived from a farming custom which involved taking cattle to a sheltered area, feeding them on a minimum diet throughout the winter, before fattening them in the Spring and Summer' (Parker 1994, p.89). *Wintering Out* In this sense, 'Bog Oak' symbolises the ability of Irish language, culture and identity to exist beneath the surface, and to be renewed in the present with renewability being a key feature of the elegy and this ties with Regan's aforementioned point. Bog oak grows under the bog and resides within it much like the spectre of Heaney's poetry during the Troubles.

The bog oak transports Heaney's unconscious back to a time in history where he can justify and acknowledge his postcolonial identity. The world of the Gaelic Irish who built their houses and forged their identity through the land, in this case the bog oak, is in complete contrast to the presence of Spenser's thoughts on the natives. Their existence is rather primitive, but it is this which Heaney admires:

> A carter's trophy
>
> Split for rafters,
>
> a cobwebbed, black,

long-seasoned rib

under the first thatch. (Heaney 1972, p. 14)

The poet's ability to settle with, and relate to, the natives of Ireland can be looked upon as him choosing a possible side in the colonial issue. He has technically chosen a Gaelic historical spectre, which would ultimately determine him as choosing the side of Irishness. However, this is too simplistic a view to take on the poem. The line 'the moustached dead' is again reminiscent of Yeats's dead in 'Easter 1916', who have been 'Enchanted to a stone / To trouble the living stream' (Yeats 2000, p.120). Said's notion of the Other is present in this regard, as indeed it is with all notions of identity. Here, Otherness is implied by Heaney quoting lines from Spenser's text, which, to a certain extent, incorporates the other side of his identity into his writing. However, it is the mingling of Spenser's lines, from his text *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, with his own verse that offers a haunting aura of hybridity to the poem. Spenser attains a non-present presence in this regard with Derrida noting that 'to haunt does not mean to be present' (Derrida 2006, p.202).

Neil Corcoran sees 'Bog Oak' as a poem that offers sympathy to the plight of the native Irish in Elizabethan times. The natives' existence is shown to be a struggle by Heaney:

hopeless wisdom

as a blow-down of smoke

struggles over the half-door

and mizzling rain

blurs the far end

of the cart track. (Heaney 1972, p.14)

Corcoran also takes up this point of hybridity within the text, and suggests that Heaney has purposely placed Spenser in the poem to accentuate this idea. He notes that Heaney is a poet writing in the English language and is a part of its poetic tradition, which ultimately contains *The Faerie Queen*. He also notes that 'Bog Oak' is related to this poetic tradition, and 'it reminds us that such great literary perfections as that great renaissance poem . . . – were the flower of a culture whose roots lay in the brutal political realities described in the *State of Ireland*' (Corcoran 1998, p.32), a point noted by Heaney referring to what he termed 'the voices of my education' (Heaney 1980, p.34). Henry Hart notes that by including Spenser he is not denouncing the British element to his identity:

> By choosing art over political engagement Heaney may be allowing the old Plantation mentality, which Spenser directly fostered as secretary to Lord Grey, a right-of-way. But his art advocates unity and reconciliation on Irish soil at every turn, and speaks eloquently against bloodshed to all who listen. (Hart 1989, p.209)

This is why Spenser has been included in the poem, not to outcast or make an Other of him, but to both depict the reality of history, and also to accept that he is of the same poetic tradition as Heaney himself. As with much of Heaney's poetry within *Wintering Out*, *North* and *Field Work*, he does not land on one side of the divide, but rather in the middle. His poetry presents the reality of current issues through the appearance of spectral hauntings, with Elmer Kennedy-Andrews noting that 'he is not a republican activist nor a traitor to the republican cause; he is like one of the Gaelic outlaws of Elizabethan times with whom he sought kinship' (Kennedy-Andrews 2008, p.86). Spenser's spectre not only overlooks

Heaney's unconscious, but also the formation of a new anglicised Ireland in the poem:

> Perhaps I just make out
>
> Edmund Spenser,
>
> dreaming sunlight,
>
> encroached upon by
>
> geniuses who creep
>
> 'out of every corner
>
> of the woodes and glennes'
>
> towards watercress and carrion. (Heaney 1972, p.15)

The image of Spenser overlooking this scene, 'dreaming sunlight', in his Planter's home in Munster is interesting. It is as if he is above the Gaelic natives, both figuratively and metaphorically. He is the overseer of a colonial takeover. His observations fuel the colonial *modus operandi* of defining the natives as animalistic, while he is represented as being sophisticated and just in his empirical approach. This is what Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia see, in their study of Edward Said, as:

> what distinguishes the modern European empires from the Roman or the Spanish or the Arab . . . is that they are systematic enterprises, constantly reinvested. What keeps them there is not simple greed, but massively reinforced notions of the civilising mission. This is the notion that imperial nations have not only the right but the obligation to rule these nations "lost to barbarism". (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia 2001, p.86)

Maria Cristina Fumagalli has a rather staunch approach to Spenser's place within

the Heaney canon citing that 'Edmund Spenser is to Heaney and Ireland what Hawkins,

Drake and Raleigh are to Walcott and the West Indies – an ancestral murderer and poet'

(Fumagalli 2001, p.xix). To a certain extent, this may be true, as Spenser himself did

oversee a brutal campaign of imperialism in Ireland. However, Heaney is rather respectful

in his approach to men such as Raleigh and Spenser:

> I read them first as textbook poetry; they were part of my learning process: finding where
>
> I was in the world of culture . . . But you can live with so many truths at once. You can
>
> take pleasure in their verse yet understand that they were racist theorists, contributors to
>
> a nascent English imperialism. Edmund Spenser writes a treatise for the elimination of
>
> the native Irish: either they can be made English or they can be done away with.
>
> Incidentally, when I was teaching in Harvard, I'd say, 'This Spenserian attitude towards
>
> the native population worked better in new England' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009,
>
> p.455).

The sentiments expressed earlier in this chapter, noting that the imperial process is not

merely limited to Ireland, and that it is a worldwide issue, rings through in this quotation.

Heaney goes on to say that 'You wouldn't have to accuse Spenser of writing bad poetry,

but you'd have to understand him historically, in the full and present realization that

civilized people can do wrong things' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.455). This is the crux

of Heaney's argument in 'Bog Oak'. He may 'tarry' with the natives and recognize more

of himself in their identity and practices, but he does not disregard the actions, be they

misguided and deeply troubling, of Spenser in Ireland as being equally influential over his

identity despite these actions taking place in the distant past. In this sense, Derrida's notion

that the spectre 'is still invisible, it is *nothing* visible . . . It is still nothing that can be seen when one speaks of it' (Derrida 2006, p.5). For Heaney, this means that the spectres of the Elizabethan past can be looked upon as being as applicable to the present of Heaney's writing in *Wintering Out* as were the civil rights issues in Northern Ireland. He propagates a message within this poem that overcoming the past is necessary for a progression of peace throughout Ireland: acceptance of the Other and the acknowledgment of cultural hybridity is intrinsic to this process.

Like 'Bog Oak', 'Terminus' is an ideal point from where one can accurately communicate the multidimensional aspects of Heaney's work. The poem delivers a complex, yet paradoxically simple exploration of what Heaney sees as being representative of his own position within society, both as a Catholic from Bellaghy, County Derry and as a poet. The poet considers himself to be Irish, but also acknowledges that English has granted him access to a world of literature and financial support through poetry, but also a way of finding and expressing himself: 'I speak and write in English, but do not altogether share the preoccupations and perspectives of an Englishman. I teach English literature, I publish in London, but the English tradition is not ultimately home. I live off another hump as well' (Heaney 1980, p.34). Poetry offers him a place from which to transcend issues within his life. John Dennison suggests that 'Heaney has repeatedly credited the desire to transcend the given limits of existence, even death, placing corresponding emphasis on poetry's transcendent sufficiency in the face of such limits' (Dennison 2015, p.196). 'Terminus' is a poem of both limits and boundaries. The title of the poem itself is derived from the name given to the Roman god of boundaries. The poem seems to be a balancing act of sorts. It opens with the first stanza containing three separate binary oppositions. The

differences in the subjects and images can be looked upon as the line that Heaney is drawing between the old world and the modern world; between his rural world and that of the more technical, industrial world of the cities. However, one can look further into these differing worlds and compare the common, ordinary, rural images of Ireland's agriculture such as the 'acorn', 'mountain' and 'horse', and determine them as being representative of Ireland, whereas, the 'rusted bolt', 'factory chimney' and the 'engine' present in the poem can be viewed as the industrial British influence imparting its presence over Northern Ireland.

The poet himself has forever been between both worlds, the pastoral and the industrial, given that he was raised on a farm, but was educated at Saint Columb's College and Queens University Belfast. He has also been in-between and existed amongst the two traditions in the North: Nationalist and Loyalist. The final couplet of the first stanza sums up Heaney's feeling on the matter:

> Is it any wonder when I thought
>
> I would have second thoughts? (Heaney 1987, p.4)

The rhyming of the singular and plural 'thought' and 'thoughts' at the end of the lines is a poetic enactment of the pluralisation of the process of thinking about identity that derives from his poetic thinking and questioning. This idea of having 'second thoughts' relates to his identity. Dennison offers a theory that in 'Terminus' Heaney locates a 'middle space' (Dennison 2015, p.196), while John Wilson Foster is of the opinion that 'being in between is an opportunity for active meditation' (Wilson Foster 2011, p.218). This middle space could be viewed as being similar to Bhabha's notion of the 'Third Space'. There is a

mixture of many cultures and identities that mingle and create the 'Third Space of enunciation' (Bhabha 1995, p.209). This 'Third Space' is where the hybrid exists. It is a mixture of opposing Others, with Heaney noting that:

> One half of one's sensibility is in a cast of mind that comes from belonging to a place, an ancestry, a history, a culture, whatever one wants to call it. But consciousness and quarrels with the self are the result of what Lawrence called 'the voices of my education' (Heaney 1980, p.35).

It is also a conjuring of past identities, practices, cultures and languages that haunt the modern poet and ultimately shape him in his postcolonial world. Heaney is a product of, and haunted by, his natural, spiritual and educational background. Both Wilson Foster and Dennison are also accurate in the sense that Heaney is attempting to locate a middle ground between both sides of the division but also a middle ground within his identity.

In his interview with Dennis O'Driscoll, when questioned whether or not he thought he was pushing out old boundaries that had been present in his work, Heaney comments that 'it didn't feel so much like pushing boundaries, more like sliding open partitions, or Japanese screen doors. Like trespassing in strange rooms, in a new light' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.286). 'Terminus' as a poem articulates the poet's fervour for remaining in between with Bhabha suggesting that 'by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves' (Bhabha 1994, p.39). The balancing act of identity and culture is one that is not simple. Commonly, the image of the march drain would indicate a dividing factor, a setting apart of two fields, two localities. This is not the case for Heaney:

> I was the march drains and the march drain's banks
>
> Suffering the limit of each claim. (Heaney 1987, p.4)

The 'I was' of the final couplet of the second stanza suggests that again, he is in between, just as structurally these lines are placed in the second, middle section of the three section poem. He not only sees himself as the march drain, but also as the banks which touch both sides of the divide. This ties with his hybrid identity or what Homi K. Bhabha would determine as 'colonial mimicry' (Bhabha 1994, p.89). Bhabha goes on to say that 'colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a *subject of difference that is almost the same*, *but not quite*' (Bhabha 1994, p.86).

Heaney's borders within 'Terminus' are representative of both this difference and of the sense of sameness. He knows that he is a hybrid of culture, language, and a multitude of identities which bounce off each other, but must be balanced at the same time:

> Two buckets were easier carried than one.
>
> I grew up in between. (Heaney 1987, p.5)

For Derrida, this mixture of cultural heritage would suggest that 'humanity is but a collection of ghosts' (Derrida 2006, p.172), and that Heaney's present is influenced by the comingling of spectres of these cultures. The final stanza of the poem depicts memories of the past. Memories are indeed a haunting, considering they are of the past, but can shape and influence the present and future. Heaney's mingling of his own personal heritage, growing up in Bellaghy between a Catholic and Protestant area, with the image of Hugh O'Neill and the Earl of Essex on horseback is interesting. It conjures up an almost circular spectral haunting of history. The middle ground he has physically occupied his whole life

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is also reflected in the poet's imaginative unconscious and for Heaney in 'Terminus':
'Baronies, parishes met where I was born' (Heaney 1987, p.5). Similarly, it is also
interesting to note that the English word 'Earl' can be etymologically traced back to the
Scandinavian 'Jarl', meaning 'chieftain'. In this sense, three strains of identity can be
traced throughout the poem and the baronies and parishes where Heaney grew up.

Despite many of the identity issues that exist within the poem, Heaney is
consciously aware of his position. He discusses the element of being between societies and
identities throughout his life in his essay 'Something to Write Home About'. The poet is
haunted by his primordial surroundings:

> I grew up between the Protestant and loyalist village of Castledawson and the generally
>
> Catholic and nationalist district of Bellaghy. In a house situated between a railway and
>
> a road. Between the old sounds of a trotting horse and the newer sounds of a shunting
>
> engine. On a border between townlands and languages, between accents at the one end
>
> of the parish that reminded you of Antrim and Ayrshire and the Scottish speech I used
>
> to hear on the Fair Hill in Ballymena, and accents at the other end of the parish that
>
> reminded you of the different speech of Donegal, speech with the direct clear ring of the
>
> Northern Irish I studied when I went to the Gaeltacht in Rannafast. (Heaney 2002, p.50)

The many binary oppositions within the paragraph quoted above set the context for
'Terminus', as well as for the hybridity of the many identities that exist within Northern
Ireland itself. Religious, national and linguistic markers of identity are present within the
passage, which culminate in a kaleidoscope of identities. The presence of many identities
automatically means, given human nature, that borders and divisions will exist. Derrida

attempts to neglect and rid the world of borders and instead sees them as markers of passages rather than blockades:

> Let us call it the border (*frontiere*], in what appears to be the strictest sense, that is, the sense that is statistically most common. In a way that is almost strict, if not proper, this border designates the spacing edge that, in history, and in a way that is not natural, but artificial and conventional, nomic, separates two national, state-controlled, linguistic, and cultural spaces. If we say that this border – in the strict or common sense – is an anthropological border, it is a concession to the dominant dogma according to which only man has such borders, and animals do not. One usually thinks that even if animals have territories, their territorialization (in predatory, sexual, or regular migratory drives), could not be encompassed by what man calls borders. There is nothing fortuitous about this way of thinking; this gesture denies the animal what it gives to man: death, speech, the world as such, the law, and the border. (Derrida 2012, p.40)

O'Brien draws a similarity between both Heaney and Derrida in relation to their dealings with borders, in that they see 'borders as limits but not necessarily as barriers, they both see them as points of contacts that have to be traversed but not destroyed' (O'Brien 2016, p.82).

The final image of the poem depicts Hugh O'Neill and the Earl of Essex discussing a potential agreement between both factions. However, the presence of a river within the poem conjures a certain Yeatsian spectre of the stream in 'Easter 1916'. Heaney sees himself as the embodiment of the earl in the final couplet:

> I was the last earl on horseback in midstream

Still parleying, in earshot of his peers. (Heaney 1987, p.5)

The running river beneath both men can easily be interpreted as the movement of time and by extension of that, the Derridean spectre. Both men are physically locked in history, in the past, but their ghosts have imprinted themselves upon the poetry and consciousness of Heaney, with Derrida noting that 'the most familiar becomes the most disquieting' (Derrida 2006, p.181). Heaney's hybrid identity is inherited from the actions of these two men, but also from the Otherness embodied by Raleigh, Spenser and the Viking raiders of the previous section. The same river within 'Terminus' still flows and touches both sides of the banks, just like the march drains of the previous stanza. The measure of success, which both men had in disregarding their loyalties to their respective sides, is a positive for Heaney. O' Brien sees this final image as 'one that is mimetic of Heaney's own position' (O'Brien 2016, p.83). 'Terminus' is not only a poem of borderlines; it is a deeply haunting poem with many postcolonial elements. It suggests that there is an Other within society, and also recognizes the necessity to traverse borders to seek a united community where both sides can co-exist in peace.

Chapter Three: Repeating Violence of the Past in the Present

We are earthworms of the earth, and all that

Has gone through us is what will be our trace. (Heaney 1984, p.66)

It is interesting that both Heaney and Derrida make use of the term 'trace'. The notion of the trace for Heaney can be linked to the history of the land, but also to his identity. Much of the previous chapter dealt with an attempt to situate and locate a place that can determine not only the poet's identity within his poetics, but also that of Ireland. For Derrida, the trace allows for a limitless space in time where the past can be acknowledged as timeless, but that also sees the past as having an influence on the present and future in some form of spectral fashion. It is similar to the Derridean notion of a spectre in this regard:

If the trace sends back to an absolute past, it is because it obliges us to think a past that can no longer be understood in the form of a modified presence, as a present-past. Since past has always signified present-past, the absolute past that is retained in the trace no longer rigorously merits the name 'past'. Another name to erase, all the more because the strange movement of the trace announces as much as it recalls: difference defers-differs [*différe*]. With the same precaution and under the same erasure, it may be said that its passivity is also its relationship with the 'future'. The concepts of *present*, *past*, and *future*, everything in the concepts of time and history which implies classical

> evidence for them – the metaphysical concept of time in general – cannot adequately
>
> describe the structure of the trace. (Derrida 2016, p.72)

The trace of history is essential to the themes to be discussed in this chapter. A focus will be placed upon the congruent nature of history and its circularity in repeating itself, albeit in a different manner. Violence and murder will be shown as not unique to contemporary Northern Ireland, but a part of the haunting strains of culture that influence the present.

The quote that begins this chapter is taken from the 'Station Island' sequence where the poet is visited by the ghosts of many of his poetic influences, ranging from his murdered cousin Colum McCartney, to James Joyce and to a young priest, Terry Keenan. These traces can be interpreted as Heaney's invocation of the spectres of the past operating within the realms of de Man's notion of *prosopopoeia*, where 'the text is therefore not the mimesis of a signifier but of a specific figure, *prosopopoeia*. And since mimesis is itself a figure, it is the figure of a figure (the *prosopopoeia* of a *prosopopoeia*) and not in any respect, neither in appearance nor in reality, a description' (de Man 1986 p.48). A voice is given to the past, and the dead who reside within it, which allows for a space in Heaney's poetry where these voices can be heard.

Figures from history and contemporary society haunt much of Heaney's poetry that deals with the Troubles. The decision to begin the chapter with a quote that both relates to Derrida's idea of the trace, but also to the earth, is thematic and germane to the argument of this thesis. The 'earthworms' of which Heaney speaks can be viewed in the same manner as Derrida's spectres in *Specters of Marx*. They burrow into the land, which retains much of the history of Ireland, and announce themselves when it suits, to mould and shape the past, present and future: they are often more visible by the trails they leave than by

themselves as living entities. Elmer Andrews comments upon the 'earthworms', suggesting that Heaney has discovered an 'assertion of a level beneath the surface at which mind and milieu are one, at which the energies of the dialect are released and an inner freedom is realized' (Andrews 1988, p.160). I would be in agreement with this point, but would also incorporate the element of Derrida's spectre as a guiding force that also influences Heaney as a form of hauntological presence and absence. It is understood that 'ghosts, as liminal figures of repetition . . . break open the old structures that wish to reproduce themselves, disturb the traditional epistemological and pedagogical order of the university' (Kochar-Lindgren 2011, p.39). In this sense, the order of society is constantly in flux as a result of the diverse nature and range of spectres attempts to break through the unconscious of individuals.

This chapter will develop some of the arguments set out in the previous one. Whereas Chapter Two dealt with the historical implications upon the poet's psyche and identity, this chapter will articulate an approach that probes just how the effects of colonization still hinder and influence the present of Heaney's unconscious, and by extension, that of Northern Ireland. An examination of 'Bogland', 'The Tollund Man' and 'Punishment', will reveal that violence has occurred throughout history, and that the bog acts in a ghostly fashion by making the past haunt the present of the poet's unconscious. It also reflects the notion that Heaney locates the violence of contemporary society within the haunting framework of a wider historical trace of Northern European violence with O'Brien noting that:

> His developing writing, encompassing, as it does, influences from different cultures,
> languages and texts, enacts a movement from 'prying into roots' and 'fingering slime'

to an embrace of different aspects of European and world culture which has strong parallels with the development of Ireland itself. (O'Brien 2002, p.12)

The second section of this chapter will discuss contemporary victims of violence in poems such as 'Casualty', 'Station Island VII' and 'The Wood Road'. These poems will again show the circularity of violence in that it constantly repeats itself throughout history. The poems selected condemn the violence that occurred during the Troubles, but at the same time recognize that these acts are not altogether unique and new and have been occurring for generations throughout history.

Memory plays a unique part in the psyche of the Irish population. History and memory operate as navigation systems by which citizens arrive at presupposed destinations of identity. In an Irish sense, this can be viewed as a sort of colonial hangover from the implications discussed in the previous chapter relating to various British and Viking invasions through acts of colonisation:

> Memory is not a passive repetition of the stabilized has been, but is rather a generative force that shapes the events it re-counts. Memory is a projective narrative, and narrative, in its turning, necessarily depends on memory, not just in the personal sense that moves forward our 'I am,' but in the sense of Derridean iterability that marks the possibility of repetition in any of its forms, whether 'mere' form or some other sort. (Kochar-Lindgren 2011, p.82)

Alternative memories are enabled by spectres, and have caused a significant part of the divide which existed between Irish natives and settlers during the period of colonization and remain, albeit in a different guise, in contemporary Northern Irish society with Derrida

noting that the spectre 'is always a sworn conspirator' (Derrida 2006, p.34). This came to a head during what would become known as the Troubles during the early nineteen seventies. Memory serves as a place where the past is transformed into untrustworthy spectral hauntings; a place where the Freudian idea of the Ego manifests itself to determine an identity for the self. Freud states that it is possible 'to suppose that the character of the ego is a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes and that it contains the history of those object-choices' (Freud 1996, p.36). This is the precise locus where issues of identity and culture permeate through the unconscious of Northern Irish society. The spectre of the colonial past came to the fore of Ulster politics to guide both sides down a road of violence, mistrust and division. Heaney explains, in 'Frontiers of Writing', that this division has been caused by the imaginative border-line that exists between the North and South of Ireland, a result of colonialism:

> The Irish political leader operating between two systems of loyalty, the Irish writer responsive to two cultural *milieux*, the Irish place invoked under two different systems of naming — we can recognize the syndrome in all its different manifestations from Hugh O'Neill to Mr Hume, from Oliver Goldsmith to Edna O'Brien, from Londonderry to Derry Colmcille. The problem is familiar and one of its unignorable causes is the border in Ireland, a frontier which has entered the imagination definitively, north and south, and which continues to divide Britain's Ireland from Ireland's Ireland. (Heaney 1996, p.188)

To view Heaney in the light of being purely a political poet would be wrong. The haunting element, which has run throughout this thesis thus far, has shown that inclusivity, in-

betweenness, a Third Space, and a sort of middling position taken throughout the poet's personal and poetic life are innate to his sense of self. His poetry tackles issues of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland and does not sway from presenting the reality and seemingly mundane manner in which violence occurs.

Heaney does not glorify acts committed by the paramilitaries, he is not a voice of his tribe; instead he seeks to present these acts as atrocities which must be accounted for in some way with Mary P. Brown noting that:

> By going down into the bog and backwards in time, Heaney has found an identity for Ireland, one which includes North and South, past and present. It relates Ireland not to England but to the North European peoples as a whole, and it enables Heaney to propose a continuity between the man-killing parishes of the past and those of the present. (Brown 1981, p.293)

Much of his poetry deals with these issues, such as 'Punishment' and 'Casualty', and focuses upon the individual devastation and destruction that violence causes; his attention is generally on the individual as opposed to the ideology, with Regan suggesting that 'Heaney's poetry is vitally attuned to the urgent rhythms of crises' (Regan 2011, p.99). In *The Government of the Tongue*, Heaney presents the paradox that exists in regards to his profession:

> Here is the great paradox of poetry and of the imaginative arts in general. Faced with the brutality of the historical onslaught, they are practically useless. Yet they verify our singularity, they strike and stake out the ore of self which lies at the base of every individuated life. In one sense the efficacy of poetry is nil — no lyric has ever stopped a

tank. In another sense, it is unlimited. It is like the writing in the sand in the face of which accusers and accused are left speechless and renewed. (Heaney 1988, p.107)

His primary subjects stem from a certain realm of haunting in that they are all dead due to sectarian violence, yet were not connected except through imaginative constructs such as tribal allegiances or religious beliefs. He avoids the outwardly political and aims instead for a more subtle approach that depicts the fates of what Kieran Quinlan terms the 'passive victims' (Quinlan 1983, p.365).

The thought process about constructing poetry to match the predicament is evident in Heaney's essay 'Feelings into Words':

> From that moment the problems of poetry moved from being simply a matter of achieving the satisfactory verbal icon to being a search for images and symbols adequate to our predicament. I do not mean liberal lamentation that citizens should feel compelled to murder one another or deploy their different military arms over the matter of nomenclatures such as British or Irish. I do not mean public celebrations or execrations of resistance or atrocity—although there is nothing necessarily unpoetic about such celebration, if one thinks of Yeats's 'Easter 1916'. I mean that I felt it imperative to discover a field of force in which, without abandoning fidelity to the processes and experience of poetry as I have outlined them, it would be possible to encompass the perspectives of a humane reason and at the same time to grant the religious intensity of the violence its deplorable authenticity and complexity. And when I say religious, I am not thinking simply of the sectarian division. (Heaney 1980 p.57)

Heaney's poetry is a way of wading through the countless murders and bombings and

presenting them in a manner that questions the motivations behind such vicious actions. In typical Heaney fashion, the meaning behind such poems is not always completely clear; it is complicated with myth and images that layer the poem. Patrick Kavanagh and Ted Hughes can be looked upon as the major influencers of this sort of writing in many respects. They, to a certain extent, granted Heaney the permission to write about that which surrounded him: the local, ordinary and everyday events and images. Thomas C. Foster notes that both poets 'valorized the use of local, personal, rural, natural subjects for poetry and sanctioned the young poet's use of his own background as material for his verse' (Foster 1989, p.14). The permission granted by Kavanagh and Hughes extends not only to rural or agricultural subjects seen in *Death of a Naturalist*, but also to the issue of the everyday violence within Heaney's community.

Terence Brown notes that during the seventies, there were 'suggestions of guilty fear that he has betrayed his art to the gross conditions of a squalid conflict, and, conversely, that he has stood idly by as others have suffered' (Brown 2010 p.192). On the other hand, Hart claims that 'although Heaney wrestles with the call to become more politically engaged, he ultimately resists it for the safer, more private orders of poetry' (Hart 1989, p.389). The poetry of *North* mainly deals with Nordic violence and with notions of sacrifice, but, when the layers of meaning around the poems are peeled back, they can be viewed as Heaney's way of attempting to discuss the violence that was unfolding around him without necessarily taking up any distinct or ideologically motivated position. The poems are personal lamentations, not aimed at, nor overtly supportive of, any one side of the divide, but instead they attempt to locate, symbolically and mythically, the violence within a much broader cultural and mythic context, which in no way attempts

to attenuate the magnitude of violence inflicted upon innocent parties. Heaney notes that he has not aligned himself with any one side of the divide stating that: 'if I were to say that I wrote consciously as a Catholic, it would imply that I saw myself as a representative, with some sort of agenda, yet there was no such thought and no such agenda' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.66).

Similarly, in his interview with George Morgan, Heaney explains that his poem 'From the Frontier of Writing' was initially meant to be included in the 'Station Island' sequence, but he then thought that the image of a roadblock and of British soldiers was one which would not suffice in the sequence because, he explains, 'this isn't very interesting, it's another sociological report, it's a bit heavy, drop it. At the same time, I did like the actual documentary recording of the encounter at the roadblock' (Heaney and Morgan, p.3). It is the documentary style of much of his poetry that enables the poet to speak on such issues as sectarianism without landing on one side or the other of the argument. It is interesting that one of his main aims is to avoid the genre of sociological reportage; he is keenly aware that the material of his poetry is strongly political, and yet the genre of poetry must be different to a political commentary or the enunciation of a political position: in other words, a documentary poetry is not the same as a political or media documentary.

The poet is in constant conflict with the spectres of the colonial past. He is conflicted in the sense that he somehow, on a deeply unconscious level, supports the nationalist drive for equality, but also realises that the manner in which hard-line republicans attempt to achieve this is both inhumane and destructive, with O'Brien noting that:

three of the greatest Irish writers, for example, Joyce, Yeats and Heaney, all were born British citizens, thereby deconstructing any *echt*-nationalist attempts to incorporate them as key Irish figures in a cultural-nationalistic pantheon. Yet all three are, demonstrably, Irish as opposed to British, writers, as all three have enunciated this form of identity. The fact that they wrote in the English, as opposed to the Irish language, was certainly problematic for nationalists, especially in the case of Yeats, writing at the time of the revival. (O'Brien 2005, p.102)

There are a multitude of probabilities regarding identity that run throughout Heaney's poetry. Elmer Kennedy-Andrews comments upon Heaney's works, noting that 'essentialist notions of self and Other give way to a view of identity and otherness as constructs which, as Edward Said has shown in a postcolonial context, always serve ideological interests' (Kennedy-Andrews 2003, p.18). Heaney acknowledges in his prose piece from *Preoccupations*, 'Belfast', that he is in a constant quarrel with himself regarding the issue and the importance of poetry as an act of revealing and coming to consciousness:

> On the one hand, poetry is secret and natural, on the other hand it must make its way in a world that is public and brutal. Here the explosions literally rattle your window day and night, lives are shattered blandly or terribly, innocent men have been officially beaten and humiliated in internment camps—destructive elements of all kinds, which are even perhaps deeply exhilarating, are in the air. At one minute you are drawn towards the old vortex of racial and religious instinct, at another time you seek the mean of humane love and reason. Yet is your *raison d'être* not involved with marks on paper?

As Patrick Kavanagh said, a man dabbles in verses and finds they are his life. (Heaney 1980, p.34)

The poetry remains true to the time in which it was composed, though of course it engenders a range of meanings that transcend that present and that individual response. Good poetry resonates with its readers, whether these be contemporary or far in the future: it is personal opinion and perspective written in a language that can chime with other individuals' understandings of life. It becomes aligned with the Derridean notion of 'living together', in which Derrida comments that 'everywhere, there is the theatrical process of a return to the most proximate or to the most distant past, often with repentance and forgiveness asked for, a process of reparation, indemnification, or reconciliation' (Derrida 2013, p.19). The undercurrents of the psyche are, to a certain extent, off limits to total understanding.

Memory and the spectre formulate an ideal notion of the past in the present as inherited by the unconscious. The poetic actions of Heaney may be conscious, but deep down he is influenced by his environment and the spectres that haunt him; the unconscious is made of such hauntings and such subliminal environmental, political and emotional factors that ghostly figures make:

us speak regularly from the place where we want to say nothing, where we know clearly what we do not want to say but do not know what we would like to say, as if *this* were no longer either of the order of knowledge or will – to –say, well, *this* comes back, *this* returns, *this* insists in urgency, and *this* gives one to think, but *this* which is each time irresistible enough, singular enough to engender as much anguish as do the future and

death, *this* stems less from a 'repetition automatism' (of the automatons that have been

turning before us for such a long time) than it gives us to think all *this*, *altogether other*,

every other, from which the repetition compulsion arises: that every other is altogether

other. (Derrida 2006, p.217)

In essence, spectres of the past force the present to repeat elements of the past thereby

constituting an infinite redoubling and circularity between past and present, past and future.

Charles L. O'Neill observes that 'by bringing the violence of the past in touch with that of

the present, the poems of *North* draw Iron Age, Viking, and modern Irish societies together

in a lyric sequence that aspires to mythic resonance' (O'Neill 2003, p.31). This sums up

what I am attempting to argue in this chapter. The intangible links between the colonial

past of Ireland and the contemporary issues therein, are intrinsic to the practice of the poet.

The inclusion of Viking, Iron Age and British conquests in Chapter Two, for example,

resonates and haunts my discussion of Heaney's perspective on sectarian violence in

Chapter Three.

Much of Heaney's writing has been branded as being deeply political, with critics

such as Ciaran Carson branding him the 'laureate of violence – a mythmaker, an

anthropologist of ritual killing, an apologist for "the situation", in the last resort, a

mystifier' (Tobin 2015, p.105). Conor Cruise O'Brien and Edna Longley have also placed

Heaney in a similar bracket, with Cruise O'Brien branding him as an IRA apologist for his

use of the words 'understood' and 'exact' in 'Punishment'. He notes that 'it is the word

"exact" that hurts most: Seamus Heaney has so greatly earned the right to use this word

that to see him use it as he does here opens up a sort of chasm' (Cruise O'Brien 1992, p.26).

I would suggest, however, that his writing on the situation in the north of Ireland is only

political in that it addresses the violence that societal and historical divisions caused. His poetry attempts to reveal the problems with the acts of violence, and how violence has come to be accepted by society, rather than being supportive of sectarian violence. Eileen Cahill adds to this argument when she accounts that 'language reveals rather than resolves political differences' (Cahill 1987, p.64).

Similarly, Quinlan notes that Heaney's poetry deals with a 'passive reflection on the inhumanity of man's existence' (Quinlan 1983, p.366), with Regan noting of Heaney's work in *North* that they – the bog poems – 'gaze obsessively at mutilated victims of the ancient past, other poems in *North* show in the rawness and starkness of their loss why some meditative, mythological structure might be deemed a psychological and emotional necessity' (Regan 2007, p.15) Heaney presents images of savagery and murdered bodies to enable his readership to question these acts by experiencing them in image, trope and symbol in the lines of poetry. The form of lyric poetry is essentially revelatory and non-narrative, though of course, there are narrative strands to be found in all poems, or at least these can be constructed as we attempt to analyse the poems. This means that images and symbols are all the more overt by being juxtaposed, and constructed through the rhythm, rhyme and various rhetorical devices of poetry, which add to the meaning of these images. This means that depictions of violence seem more immediate and more 'real' in lyric poetry. Helen Vendler discusses Heaney's use of lyric poetry when she comments that 'lyric poetry neither stands nor falls on its themes; it stands or falls on the accuracy of language with which it reports the author's emotional responses to the life around him' (Vendler 1999, p.6). Heaney places these images of violence amongst historical images such as P. V Glob's bog bodies, and the Viking images of 'North', to show that these

actions are a repeated pattern across history and geography, and are not specific to, or unique to, Northern Ireland; he suggests that they should be spoken about, and questioned, and not accepted and hidden. This will also be seen in Chapter Four, where Heaney's attempt to understand the present is shaped by even older European hauntings such as the literary works of Virgil and Dante. Seamus Deane discusses the haunting element to the issues of political and sectarian violence in Northern Ireland during the period, and also addresses the futility of such violence:

> We are not witnessing in Northern Ireland some outmoded battle between religious sects that properly belong in the seventeenth century. We are witnessing rather the effects of a contemporary colonialism that has retained and developed an ideology of dominance and subservience within the readily available idiom of religious division. (Deane 1990, p.8)

Like Heaney, he sees the violence in Northern Ireland as not specific to the place or to the Irish socio-political sphere: rather is it another venue for the struggle between colonising and colonised forces, but played out in a local setting, and with local signifiers. For Deane, the religious signifiers of difference are an Irish expression of what elsewhere is signified by tribal, racial or linguistic markers of difference.

We are, in short, part of the decolonising process of contemporary history, with all of the violence and struggles that this entails. The inheritance and retention of political allegiances has caused havoc in Northern Ireland. As Derrida states regarding inheritance in *Spectres of Marx*:

Let us consider first of all, the radical and necessary heterogeneity of an inheritance, the difference without opposition that has to mark it, a 'disparate' and a quasi-juxtaposition without dialectic (the very plural of what we will later call Marx's spirits). An inheritance is never gathered together, it is never one with itself. Its presumed unity, if there is one, can consist only in the injunction to reaffirm by choosing. 'One must' means one must filter, Sift, criticize, one must sort out several different possibles that inhabit the same injunction. And inhabit it in a contradictory fashion around a secret. If the readability of a legacy were given, natural, transparent, univocal, if it did not call for and at the same time defy interpretation, we would never have anything to inherit from it. We would be affected by it as by a cause-natural or genetic. One always inherits from a secret-which says 'read me, will you ever be able to do so?' The critical choice called for by any reaffirmation of the inheritance is also, like memory itself, the condition of finitude. The infinite does not inherit, it does not inherit (from) itself. The injunction itself (it always says 'choose and decide from among what you inherit') can only be one by dividing itself, tearing itself apart, differing / deferring itself, by speaking at the same time several times-and in several voices. (Derrida 2006, p.19)

Inheritance is a major factor in shaping the present. Each aspect of Irish identity, and tradition, is haunted by the aspects that we do not choose, as has been discussed in Chapter One. Repression of memories as well as negative factors hidden within the self, or the unconscious, hover as the spectre does beneath the surface: it lingers and persists rather than disappears. Eventually, the repressed, or spectre, will return as it did in Northern Ireland, bringing with it the colonial divisiveness and violence which pervades much of Ireland's history. Inheritance is as much a spectre as the ghosts of which it is made up. The

haunting and timeless nature of inheritance can be located in the poetry to be discussed hereafter. The poetry is made up primarily of historical images, given that the images are either bog bodies or victims of sectarian violence, imaginatively chosen by Heaney, or as Derrida would have it, inherited by Heaney. He discusses the current acts of violence of his time in comparison with those of the past. He incorporates society within a domain of togetherness through images which would, when viewed individually, suggest a gulf between both communities.

Derrida discusses this notion of a togetherness in his idea of living together:

> Well, today—I do say today—for those one calls contemporaries, for those who, one thinks, in a supposed synchrony, live together [*pour ceux qui vivent ensemble*] the historical now of a given time, today, therefore, in the same world, facing responsibilities (be they ethical, juridical, religious, and beyond) named by what we call, in so obscure a fashion, in our language, 'living together [*vivre ensemble*],' well then, a certain avowal would announce itself as the first commandment. (Derrida 2013, p.18)

Derrida propagates that there is a connection between people and an affirmation that we are linked by some form of truth. This truth is heavily influenced by the spectre that resonates throughout all thinking and timeframes. A starting point is not predetermined, given that the ideas that make up and begin this point have already happened in the past. We 'live together' because everyone is open to the possibility of encountering the same spectre. Heaney discusses with Dennis O'Driscoll the importance of just such a revelation in his life and also of the poem 'Bogland', which can be looked upon as the point of origin of the bog poems to follow, when fused with P. V. Glob's work:

> A line was crossed with 'The Tollund Man'. The minute I wrote 'Some day I will go to
>
> Aarhus' I was in a new field of force. It had to do with the aura surrounding that head –
>
> even in a photograph. It was uncanny, in the full technical sense. Opening P. V. Glob's
>
> book *The Bog People* was like opening a gate, the same as when I wrote 'Bogland'.
>
> (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.157)

However, the poetry also contains a certain element of the future within it, in that it offers an alternative thorough discussion and mediation between both sides, an attempt to locate a middle ground. O'Brien notes that 'Heaney gradually came to terms with the necessity for a complexity of response which would not allow itself to be predetermined by the social and political situation but that at the same time would not evade that level of reality either' (O'Brien 2002, p.110). The poet accomplishes this. The level at which he responds to the crises involves remaining in between, but also involves striking a poetic chord that launches an attack, not only at history, but at present-day society for the seeming almost unquestioning acceptance of such barbaric acts. He notes in 'Station Island' that 'I have no mettle for the angry role' (Heaney 1984, p.65), and it is this which shines through in his writings on the issue of sectarian violence: his imperative is based on 'living together' and his writing attempts to provide poetic fodder for this process.

Unearthing Spectres: The Bog Poems

The first of the 'bog poems' within the Heaney canon to be discussed will be 'Bogland', from *Door into the Dark*. The poem is the first point in Heaney's poetic career where he situates a setting where the history of Ireland can be encompassed, and resurrected, through the metaphor of the bog. 'Bogland' is an entirely Derridean poem in nature when one looks

at the Heaney canon as a whole. The spectre of the bog theme that runs concurrently throughout the next two major collections, *Wintering Out* and *North*, is initially manifested within this poem: it sets in motion what is to come. Regan notes of *Wintering Out* and *North* that they are collections 'in which Heaney establishes a parallel between the sectarian killings going on in his own north and the ritual sacrifices of Mother Earth in the early Iron Age culture across northern Europe' (Regan 2008, p.214). Within the poem, the acknowledgement of history as being universal and repetitive is put forward. Elmer Andrews suggests that 'there is a congruence between bogland viewed as a repository of the past and the internal world of the poet's preserving, shaping imagination and, beyond that, the national consciousness' (Andrews 1988, p.34.) This prefigures the poetry that will later be presented by Heaney, especially in *North*, where the bog takes on a more extreme mythical presence. In *North*, he interrogates sectarian violence and Northern Irish society through the absent presence of a wider European myth; however, in 'Bogland', Heaney presents the peat bogs as areas that hoard objects and history itself. The bog functions as a receptacle of the past in that it inherits objects of all that has fallen into it, with only a minority of these objects being unearthed in the present. In this sense, it is symbolic of the selective and motivated nature of what we choose to see as tradition, history or the past.

Alice A. Jones notes that 'in Sigmund Freud's work, topography became a metaphor for how the unconscious and conscious relate to each other' (Jones 2015, p.385), and Heaney's use of the bog embodies this connectedness. As a type of topography that is soft, and liquid, and which has amazing properties of preservation and near mummification of objects, it is an eloquent and resonant symbol of the group consciousness of which Heaney is speaking. Just as the bog hoards bodies of humans and animals and then

regurgitates them, so the unconsciousness of the differing traditions in Northern Ireland have hoarded sectarian and tribal hate, under the façade of reasonably calm civil society, until these repressed hatreds lurched to the surface in 1968. The language used by Heaney, paralleling the digging or unearthing of peat, suggests that what is being unearthed is the unconscious part of history that is sometimes hidden from the individual.

The act of using the bog as a metaphor for holding and reviving the past is a symbolic trope that can be located as early on as in 'Digging', where the correlation between time and unearthing is similar to the motifs in the bog poems:

> My father, digging. I look down
>
> Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds
>
> Bends low, comes up twenty years away
>
> Stooping in rhythm through potato drills
>
> Where he was digging. (Heaney 1966, p.13)

The temporal shift within 'Digging', which can be seen as the *ur*-bog poem, and the attempted joining of worlds between Heaney as a writer, and his ancestors as farmers and gardeners, carries through in 'Bogland', albeit in a different and more developed manner.

The opening lines of 'Bogland' see Heaney imaginatively projecting himself back to the time America was founded. The vast prairies, where a new life was to be set out by those who ventured to the edges of what was then the known world of the American continent, find themselves cast as a symbol, as Heaney places himself outside Ireland in the poem. However, almost immediately, this image is cast aside, and the reader is brought back to Heaney's local landscape. A juxtaposition unfolds between the world of the prairies

and 'our unfenced country' (Heaney 1969, p.55), where, just as American prairies were given over to those who landed and could set up their own fortifications, or boundaries, a similar process was established through the process of colonisation. Andrew Carpenter notes of Anglo-Irish writing that the works of such writers within the field 'spring often from the view of life that is continually probing the different values which exist in Ireland and testing them one against the other' (Carpenter 1977, p.174). The worlds of early America and Ireland are conjoined through the imagery of invasion and foundation: an integral part in the formation of a new nation. The violence that exists within the poem is not on the surface, but beneath it, through the silent invasion of the prairies. Just as the prairies were made home to the invaders of America with the seeming limitlessness of their boundaries, so too has Ireland been invaded throughout history:

> Everywhere the eye conceded to
>
> Encroaching horizon,
>
> Is wooed into the cyclops' eye
>
> Of a tarn. Our unfenced country
>
> Is a bog that keeps crusting
>
> Between the sights of the sun. (Heaney 1969, p.55)

The universality of history is presented by Heaney in 'Bogland'. The inclusion of the sun in the opening passage of the poem, to both open and close the comparison between the American and Irish beginnings, connects with the notion that differences do not entirely exist in relation to the formation of identities. Jones again relates the bog to the unconscious, when she notes that 'just as the boghole connects to the larger ocean, a single

poem must tap into both the vast unconscious and into the history of poetry, land that "seems camped on before". One has to pass a surface barrier to enter the territory of the unconscious, the wellspring of poetry' (Jones 2015, p.386).

The repetition of history plays a distinct part in creating the myth of the bog for Heaney, with events of the past finding a similar episode in the present. In Derrida's discussion of Husserl's notion of ideality, he concludes that Being and existence means to be repetitious:

> But this ideality, which is but another name for the permanence of the same and the possibility of its repetition, *does not exist* in the world, and it does not come from another world; it depends entirely on the possibility of acts of repetition. It is constituted by this possibility. Its "being" is proportionate to the power of repetition; absolute ideality is the correlate of a possibility of indefinite repetition. It could therefore be said that being is determined by Husserl as ideality, that is, as repetition. (Derrida 2011, p.45)

One could see the case of the presumed extinct 'Great Irish Elk' that has been bounded in peat for centuries and been preserved as an example of such indefinite repetition. It has again entered the conscious of contemporary society after having been exhumed from the bog. It has returned when it has been presumed forgotten, and this is the precise location of hauntology within the workings of both the poem, and of the metaphor of the bog with Derrida's thinking, as Derrida has noted that the repressed always exists outside speech:

> Repression, not forgetting; repression, not exclusion. Repression, as Freud says, neither repels, nor flees, nor excludes an exterior force; it contains an interior representation,

laying out within itself a space of repression. Here, that which represents a force in the form of the writing interior to speech and essential to it has been contained outside speech. (Derrida 1978 p.196).

In a practical sense, this means that despite the inability to present in language that which is repressed, this does not mean that it does not exist, as it exists deeper than conscious expression. There is also the sense that the elk is the chosen aspect of the buried inheritance of the past that becomes operative in the present: by definition, this chosen object is haunted by the thousands of other animals, people and objects that remain buried in the bogs, and have not been unearthed. This idea can also be extended to link with the notion of a collective memory that is itself haunted by the spectres of the past that create the myth of national or communal identity. Individual memories will come to the surface, the chosen histories and inheritances spoken of by Derrida, and these will then enter into a circle of repetition: it has happened in the past, therefore it will happen again, is the assumption within the poem, and this is laid out and expanded upon later on in the poetry of *Wintering Out* and *North*. Similarly, this motif continues in the later poetry, from *Seeing Things* onwards, when Heaney addresses these issues through Virgilian hauntings that will be discussed in Chapter Four. This theme resonates throughout the 'bog poems', and the placement of 'Bogland' as the concluding poem of the collection enables these ideas to haunt the next collection.

Edna Longley's interpretation of the 'bog poems' is rather scathing. On the matter of 'Bogland', she is not too far off the mark in some regards, but does miss the point when she states that in the poem 'he opens his proper door into "the matter of Ireland", by imagining history as an experience rather than as chain of events' (Longley 1982, p.68).

Helen Vendler has a differing view on the poem, noting that it 'does not envisage horrors' (Vendler 1982, p.39) to be found within the bog, but instead 'seeks either domestic ordinariness (butter) or evolutionary astonishment (the giant elk)' (Vendler 1982, p.39). I would argue *contra* Longley's perspective, given that the bog acts as an agent of the spectre. Heaney moves away from autobiographical poems in *Death of a Naturalist* towards a poetry that deals with wider social, cultural and public issues. Heaney notes of 'Bogland' that 'it opened into the matter of Ireland. Not the matter of Northern Ireland, particularly, but still, I was getting out of autobiographical data, and into a subject which was, in one sense, public' (Heaney & Miller 2000 p.19). The bog hoards objects in a timeless state until they are unearthed. A link in the chain of time is made thorough the image of the butter within the text and further deepens the connection between the past and present:

> Butter sunk under
>
> More than a hundred years
>
> Was recovered salty and white. (Heaney 1969, p.55)

This simple, rural imagery can be related back to the images presented by Heaney in *Death of a Naturalist*, which will later change to match the predicaments of the sectarian violence in Northern Ireland. History and time have altered the butter, just as the spectre does the unconscious. The poem sets in motion the images which will announce themselves in poems such as 'The Tollund Man' in *Wintering Out*. 'Bogland' announces the function of the bog rather than its usage within the sectarian element of society.

The ideas within the poem solidify to form the peat-ridden bodies of 'The Tollund

Man' and 'Punishment'. Bernard Sharratt also acknowledges the haunting nature that the

bog plays in Heaney's work. He notes that the themes that run throughout *Door into the*

Dark 'suggest an underlying congruence, a resonance that chimes the wet holes of the bog

with the sexual plunge into a dark that touches a desired but alien knowledge. That

connection, linking back to the fear of slime and walls in *Death of a Naturalist*, is later to

yield strange fruit' (Sharratt 1976, p.321), while Vendler terms 'Bogland' a 'prophetic

poem' (Vendler 1982, p.38). Structurally, forms of linking are characteristics which filter

through much of the text. The manner of the linking between place, heritage and first

principles shines through in Heaney's interview with James Randall. He acknowledges the

link between dealing with the northern situation, himself and the future of his writing:

> I wanted to find a way of registering refusal and resentment and obstinacy against the
>
> 'Ulster is British' mentality, but at the same time I wanted my obstinacy to leave the
>
> door open for repentant Unionists. But apart from the politics of the thing, I was
>
> incapable, artistically, of breaking with my first ground and my first images . . . And I
>
> think when you get to 'The Tollund Man' in *Wintering* Out, you can see a similar
>
> development of the possibilities of 'Bogland' which was the last poem in *Door into the*
>
> *Dark*. There was a definite attempt to widen the scope of the thing. But you know, I
>
> want to pull back from all that because I have begun to feel a danger in that responsible,
>
> adjudicating stance towards communal experience. I just feel an early warning system
>
> telling me to get back inside my own head. (Heaney & Randall 1979)

The conscious wariness of the situation which was to unfold over the next two collections

after *Door into the Dark* has its beginnings unconsciously in 'Digging', but consciously in

'Bogland'. Here Heaney granted himself the paraphernalia to enable him to 'keep striking / Inwards and downwards' (Heaney 1969, p.56). It adds an openness and a licence to the poet, by encountering P. V. Glob's text *The Bog People*, to further develop and expand on what has been set out in 'Bogland'. Heaney acknowledges the openness of the poem as a welcomed change:

> Now for me, 'bogland' is an important word in that script and the first poem I ever wrote that seemed to me to have elements of the symbolic about it was 'Bogland.' It was the first one that opened out for me, that seemed to keep going once the words stopped, not really like the other poems that were usually pulled tight at the end with little drawstrings. (Heaney & Randall 1979).

This would enable the motif of the bog as a symbol of the land's beauty and danger to manifest itself in the bog poems to be discussed throughout this chapter.

The 'bottomless' bog that is presented in 'Bogland' finds a new life in 'The Tollund Man' from *Wintering Out*. The poem is a progression of sorts that attempts to encapsulate and deal with the sectarian violence being enacted by the IRA and UVF during the nineteen seventies. Glob's account of the sacrificial bog bodies in Denmark offered the poet a mythical anchor to support his atavistic mode of writing. Writing of the preserved body of the man found in Tollund, Glob notes that 'it was as though the dead man's soul had for a moment returned from another world, through the gate in the western sky' (Glob 1969, p.18). A broader social and cultural world is juxtaposed with contemporary Northern Ireland's predicament. Heaney notes that 'opening P. V. Glob's book *The Bog People* was like opening a gate, the same as when I wrote "Bogland"' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009,

p.157). The spectres that reside within the Danish bogs are fused with those of Ireland that exist in the unconscious of the poet, and are brought to the fore in 'The Tollund Man'. Bernard O'Donoghue states that 'this is an Irish poem, full of echoes' (O'Donoghue 1994, p.65), where the subject in the poem may be of Danish origin, but the 'I' within the poem redirects the topic to Heaney's contemporary world. Indeed the speaking subject, the 'I' of the poem, is Janus-faced and polysemic, encompassing past and present in the continuous present of the poem itself. The echoes that rebound throughout the poem look towards the future and rebound back to the past at the same time.

The opening line of the poem, 'Some day I will go to Aarhus', suggests that the poet has not yet done so, and that his thoughts are purely imaginative from this point onwards. He is suggesting that Aarhus, for him, is an imagined place, and by implication, is suggesting that all places are, to some degree imagined, and that this imagination is permeated by spectral memories, atavisms and prejudices which have an agency over some parts of our behaviour, even though we are often unaware of this. The spectres of *The Bog People* act as agents which influence Heaney's thoughts on the preserving, haunting nature of the bog. The man who was found in Tollund was left perfectly preserved, as if returning from the dead to haunt the present:

> In the flat country nearby
>
> Where they dug him out,
>
> His last gruel of winter seeds
>
> Caked in his stomach. (Heaney 1972, p.36)

The language of violence that follows allows the poet to provide a discourse which

encapsulates and harnesses the images that have arisen from photographs of victims of violence in Northern Ireland, but also one that voices those who were offered up to the goddess Nerthus in the Danish 'man-killing parishes' (Heaney 1972, p.37) of Scandinavia.

The language of the first section attempts to both outline and reimagine the land as nurturing and good. The juxtaposition of the words 'goddess' with the more earthy 'dark juices', 'fen' and 'stained' seems to be aporetic. One would associate a goddess with kindness, beauty and reverence, but instead Nerthus is a murderer who claims her sacrificial victims through explicitly sexual and violent means:

> Bridegroom to the goddess,
>
> She tightened her torc on him
>
> And opened her fen,
>
> Those dark juices working
>
> Him to a saint's kept body. (Heaney 1972, p.36)

Here the violent and murderous potential of religion is made overt.

Similarly, in 'Feelings into Words', the poet accounts for the underlying connections and connotations of the religious and cultural parallels that exist within the domain of violence between both countries. Nerthus is compared with Kathleen Ní Houlihan, a comparison which joins both societies and cultures in a web of repetitious violence:

> Taken in relation to the tradition of Irish political martyrdom for that cause whose icon is Kathleen Ni Houlihan, this 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. (Heaney 1980, p.58)

Jonathan Hufstader presents the case that 'The Tollund Man' 'enacts a process of acquiring

awareness' (Hufstader 2015 p.64) for the poet. One can presume that the poet's musings

on the possibility of the bog in Denmark being fused with the spectres of Irish bogs, allows

for conscious reflections on the violence that both spaces occupy. The poet notes that:

> In Ireland in this century it has involved for Yeats and many others an attempt to define

> and interpret the present by bringing it into significant relationship with the past, and I

> believe that effort in our present circumstances has to be urgently renewed. (Heaney

> 1980, p.60)

He mingles the religion of the Iron Age with that of present day society through the

religious connotations of the words 'blasphemy', 'consecrate', 'holy ground', 'pray' and

'flesh' (Heaney 1972, p.37).

The poem is Derridean in the sense that it harks back to an earlier time, and allows

for those spectres to influence the present, but in doing so, Heaney threads a fine line of

conflict between the past and the present. In an interview in *The Paris Review*, he discusses

the importance of the religious language and the connection of this with the Tollund Man's

beliefs of the time:

> in the understanding of his Iron Age contemporaries, the sacrificed body of Tollund

> Man germinated into spring, so the poem wants a similar flowering to come from the

violence in the present. Of course it recognizes that this probably won't happen, but the middle section of the poem is still a prayer that it should. (Heaney & Cole 1997, p.115)

It arouses a sense that Heaney may, in fact, be in part suggesting that, from within the context of the period in question, human sacrifice in the past allowed for peace. Heaney himself ponders it as he 'will stand a long time' (Heaney 1972, p.36) contemplating the actions of those during the Iron Age, in both awe and terror. He notes that when the poem was constructed 'I had a completely new sensation, one of fear' (Heaney 1980, p.58).

O'Donoghue acknowledges that 'Heaney's work is never to be taken in isolation from its social context. It is obvious that the tendency of this multi-stranded language (English, Scottish and Irish) is to create an inextricable whole' (O'Donoghue 1994, p.64). Language is carried by the spectre of history in the poem. The haunting nature of language itself is captured by Derrida in *Writing and Difference*:

> Space being the wound and finitude of birth (of the birth) without which one could not even open language, one would not even have a true or false exteriority to speak of. Therefore, one can, by using them, *use up* tradition's words, rub them like a rusty and devalued old coin, one can say that true exteriority is nonexteriority without being exteriority, and one can write by crossing out, by crossing out what already has been crossed out: for crossing out writes, still draws in space. (Derrida 2001, p.140)

By offering up a Christian basis of communication in 'our holy ground', Heaney allows for the victims of Irish violence during the nineteen twenties to be placed in connection with those of Jutland through the trope of religious sacrifice: he is using some of his traditions most potent tropes and terms in this discussion of sacrifice, which plays so central

a part in Irish nationalistic discourse.

Michael Parker contends that in *Wintering Out*, Heaney turned to 'other cultures and histories in a search for analogues to confront what he and other poets believed were the historical, cultural, and linguistic origins of the province's divisions and sectarian hostilities' (Parker 2007, p.131). He does exactly this when he conjures the image of 'four young brothers' (Heaney 1972, p.37) being dragged along a track by a train and murdered by the Black and Tans:

> The scattered, ambushed
>
> Flesh of labourers,
>
> Stockinged corpses
>
> Laid out in the farmyards,
>
> Tell-tale skin and teeth
>
> Flecking the sleepers
>
> Of four young brothers, trailed
>
> For miles along the lines. (Heaney 1972, p.37)

Interestingly, the poet does not seem to pray to a god or goddess, but to the Tollund Man himself: he will 'pray Him make germinate' (Heaney 1972, p.37) the bodies of the four young men. The 'sad freedom' that the Tollund Man feels is something to which Heaney can relate. The nationalist sentiment of blood sacrifice that dominates the poem conjures Irish ghosts of the past in the face of colonialism. Historically speaking, these notions were presented by Padraig Pearse and the IRA, and would locate Heaney in a realm of supporting

these ideological positions, as many critics have suggested. This could be the case if he were not using the bog as an encompassing agent that ties history, cultures and societies together: it is a polysemic image encompassing all positions and traditions, and not just a signifier of one ideology or tradition. Robert Welch notes that 'somehow a continuum of human suffering is established; an atmosphere of pity is engaged; and the sombre event of the poem is alive both to the past and present' (Welch 2005, p.251).

Heaney universalises the position in which contemporary Northern Ireland finds itself during the nineteen seventies. His identification with the bog, and its victims, 'facilitates the depiction of a descent into the underlying origins of the unconscious where he can examine the deepest layers of the collective memory and deconstruct the foundations of tribal beliefs and images that inform the ego and collective behaviour' (Gharbanian 2016, p.119). The most striking of all words chosen within the text is 'parishes'. It has a multitude of meanings as Shelley C. Reece has pointed out. In an Irish context, a 'parish' is a church territorial unit constituting a division within a diocese. A parish is under the pastoral care and clerical jurisdiction of a parish priest, who might be assisted by one or more curates, and who operates from a parish church. Reece, however, notes that 'the word comes from the Greek *paroikia*, which means a sojourning in a foreign land, as well as *paroikos*, which means stranger' (Reece 1992, p.96). The paradoxical meaning of 'parishes' adds to the multiplicity and the heterogeneous nature of the bog within the context of Heaney's poetry. In Jutland, the parish of the stranger, the poet notes:

I will feel lost,

Unhappy and at home. (Heaney 1972, p.37)

So, just as the bog can signify a territorial ownership that is valorised by the past, as espoused in Republican ideology, while at the same time signifying a broader connection with European religious and mythic values, so too does the word 'parish' suggest an Irish religious context of familiarity, but in etymological terms, it also signifies something much broader and more heterogeneous. The confusion with which the poem began follows through to the end, after Heaney has traced the mythos of the bog through the many spectral hauntings, with Regan noting that the last lines of the poem 'recognises the paradox of internal exile, of being an inner émigré' (Regan 2008, p.214). The poet's sense of loss stems from the fact that he has realised that the goddess he hoped could offer an alternative to the violence in Northern Ireland is in reality just as brutal, malevolent and violent as those who commit murderous acts upon the streets of his country.

Regan notes of 'The Tollund Man' that 'Heaney "is prepared to risk blasphemy" in praying to the Tollund Man to "germinate" the dead bodies of those killed in Irish political and religious struggles. It might be a desperate wager, but it points to a wish for something better, for a peaceful settlement beyond the current wave of violence and death' (Regan 2007, p.14). Heaney is quoted as saying that the poem was 'not quite an equivalent for what was happening, more an attempt to rhyme the contemporary with the archaic' (Heaney & Cole 1997, p.115). He has attained an awareness that violence is repetitious throughout history, and has been committed, pointlessly, in an attempt to rid society of certain fields of force whether they be mythical, colonial or natural. However, Heaney revisits this idea in 'The Tollund Man in Springtime' in *District and Circle*, and allows the Tollund man himself his own voice. In the later poem the Tollund man transcends his position and is able to claim some agency; however, he does not escape history:

'The soul exceeds its circumstances.' Yes.

History not to be granted the last word

Or the first claim . . . In the end I gathered

From the display-case peat my staying powers,

Told my webbed wrists to be like silver birches,

My old uncallused hands to be young sward,

The spade-cut skin to heal, and got restored

By telling myself this. (Heaney 2006, p.56)

The third and final of the bog poems to be discussed in this chapter is 'Punishment'. It is the most brutal and vivid of the bog poems. The poem has suffered from extremely negative criticism from Conor Cruise O'Brien's and Edna Longley's assumptions that Heaney openly supported the IRA's actions during the period, specifically the tarring and feathering of the women within the poem. Although the poem is littered with savage, violent imagery and torture, it is not supportive of the IRA's cause in the north. The 'little adulteress' of the poem is an Iron Age victim of violence who was murdered as a sacrifice, whereas the contemporary women have had relationships with members of the British Army:

her shaved head

like a stubble of black corn,

her blindfold a soiled bandage,

her noose a ring. (Heaney 1975, p.37)

Heaney locates this victim in an Irish, local event which saw contemporary women being

tarred and feathered for engaging in sexual acts with the other side. The poem promulgates a comparative exercise between two societies that are culturally the antithesis of each other temporally, spatially and ethically. Ireland is supposed to be modern, educated and sophisticated, whereas the acts of violence and murder during the Iron Age, to a certain extent, can be understood in their own context, given that the people were uneducated and rather primitive. These acts were part of a system of Iron Age beliefs during the time, yet they still cannot be excused. What Heaney accomplishes here is the bringing of cultures that are totally different together in a mythical and spectral juxtapositional haunting of each other. In a discussion of the poem, he notes that:

> Its concerns are immediate and contemporary, but for some reason I couldn't bring army barracks or police barracks or Bogside street life into the language and topography of the poem. I found it more convincing to write about the bodies in the bog and the vision of Iron Age punishment. Pressure seemed to drain away from the writing if I shifted my focus from those images. (Heaney & Cole 1997, p.116)

Through the linking of the Iron Age bog bodies with the Bogside area of Derry city Heaney further deepens the connection between victims of historical and present acts of violence.

The Bogside area of Derry is associated with a uniform Catholic, Nationalist population. Its non-present presence within 'Punishment' allows for events such as Bloody Sunday and the Battle of the Bogside to haunt the poem, and collection. This haunting also further strengthens the relationship between both cultures in that both were societies of constant violence, with Derrida suggesting that 'the spectre *appears* to present itself during a visitation. One represents it to oneself, but it is not present, itself, in flesh and blood. The

non-presence of the spectre demands that one take its times and its history into consideration, the singularity of its temporality or of its historicity' (Derrida 2006, p.126). The correlation between both worlds allows the poet to address societal problems and the acts of violence by determining contemporary, sectarian violence to be as futile as that enacted upon individuals during the Iron Age. The poem is not overtly political, but is a nod in the direction of a universal history of violence in a European sense. In an interview with Mike Murphy, Heaney discusses this point noting that 'the actual bodies and the background of violence or sacrifice in the Iron Age had some relevance for the contemporary moment. Just by being written in Ireland at that time they were linking to what was going on. But they aren't quite political poems' (Murphy 2000, p.86). The focus of the poem is on the violence that is perpetrated upon the individual as a result of the sectarian context. It is the ordinary individual who is constantly caught up in this violence, and suffers at the hands of the terrorist organisations that carried out brutal revenge and punishments among the community they were supposedly protecting. Kieran Quinlan notes that Heaney's poetry deals with a 'passive reflection on the inhumanity of man's existence' (Quinlan 1983, p.366), as he states when writing about 'The Tollund Man' and it is this which is also deeply reflected within 'Punishment'.

The poem sets out to question acts of violence in both the past and the present. The dead girl who resides within the bog is a hauntological figure; not just in a savage sense, but also in a poetic manner. The bog has preserved her body as well as the horrible ideas that have been buried with her, and this poem will further preserve her, and in Derrida's terms, her being is now 'proportionate to the power of repetition' (Derrida 2011, p.45). Nature has run its course when it has almost transformed her into tree bark, reminiscent of

that which was exhumed in 'Bogland':

> Under which at first
>
> she was a barked sapling
>
> that is dug up
>
> oak-bone, brain-firkin. (Heaney 1975, p.37)

It is interesting that once she has been exhumed by man, the image that follows is grotesque and showered in violence. It is as if the earth in which she was buried comforted the body, but the spectres of Iron Age brutality have reappeared above the surface. Nature has kept her safe until she has once again been touched by mankind:

> her shaved head
>
> like a stubble of black corn,
>
> her blindfold a soiled bandage,
>
> her noose a ring
>
> to store
>
> the memories of love. (Heaney 1975, p.37)

The ghost of the woman is then transported to a contemporary time, where the acts that were committed against her are verbally repeated in a cruel and vicious manner. Henry Hart notes of Heaney that 'the gist of his apocalypse is simply the imaginative act of revealing the dead in poems which judge them, and which also judge the artist and his culture for allowing the deaths to continue' (Hart 1989, p.390). However, the circular ring

of the deathly noose harbours past memories of better times in the past.

Similarly, circular imagery appears in chapters four and five in poems such as 'Bann Valley Eclogue' and 'Route 110', where circularity is predominantly present to show that history is repetitive, and that these actions in the past find corresponding contemporary situations with which to be compared. The lines 'they punished you' and 'my poor scapegoat' in the poem, written at such close quarters, allow Heaney to disassociate himself from the violence by using 'they', but at the same time, ever the self-aware poet, he accuses himself of being guilty by association because he has used her. The poem has a deep 'element of self-accusation, which makes the poem personal in a fairly acute way' (Heaney & Cole 1997, p.116). He is not violent, nor does he support the violent tendencies of his tribe, but does seem to lament the fact that he has used the Iron Age woman as a poetic pawn, a 'poor scapegoat', to nourish his thematic approach. Just as she was used to ferment the land through sacrifice in the Iron Age, so now she nourishes Heaney's poetics to deal with contemporary violence in the present with Derrida noting that the repressed always returns:

> The *symptomatic* form of the return of the repressed: the metaphor of writing which haunts European discourse, and the systematic contradictions of the ontotheological exclusion of the trace. The repression of writing as the repression of that which threatens presence and the mastering of absence. The enigma of presence 'pure and simple': as duplication, original repetition, auto-affection, and *différance*. The distinction between the mastering of absence as speech and the mastering of absence as writing. The writing within speech. Hallucination as speech and hallucination as writing. (Derrida 2001, p.247)

In this sense, Heaney's poetry enacts a process of the spectral as the absent presence of the Iron Age woman within 'Punishment' is an original repetition or deferral of the past upon the present of Northern Ireland.

Despite the presence of the pronoun 'I' throughout the poem, I would argue that this is not used in a personal, singular sense but instead, functions in a far more universal way in order to encompass the guilt and blame of civilisation for allowing these brutal actions to exist within a civilized society. It is a collective guilt that springs from 'Punishment'. In an interview with Hyung W. Kim, the poet was questioned on how the conflict within Northern Ireland shaped and influenced his writing and himself:

> I'm part of the culture, and I'm part of the problem . . . . Everybody in Northern Ireland is infected—well, you're either one tribe or the other, one guy or the other guy. Your calling as a humanist, as an intelligent creature, is to outstrip the conditions which you are landed with, to get some vision of a cultivated, tolerant, civic society. No matter how well-disposed you are, no matter how personally irreproachable your political or religious attitudes, you dwell in a place which is troubled. You're answerable to that, especially when violence erupts, and lives are being lost, and lives are being taken. (Heaney and Kim 2008)

The 'I' is that of the nation's psyche, not the poet's. The images of a 'drowned body in a bog', or of 'brain's exposed and darkened combs', are used to shock the readership and force a questioning of these barbaric acts in the past as well as the present. The point where the poem switches from the Danish bog body to an Irish context, allows for 'a closer identification of poet and victim' (Sirr 2009, p.18). The poem seems to be an attack on the

spectre that haunts both countries and influences the repetitious savagery. The acts are as much cultural and ideological as they are sectarian, given that they are repetitious. An array of spectres influence the present state of Northern Ireland, as Derrida notes that 'a heritage is never natural; one may inherit more than once, in different places and at different times' (Derrida 2006, p.211). It is nationalist and tribal ideologies that are to blame, and not the victims of contemporary society or history. Vendler shares this view and proposes that *North* accounts 'for the survival of savage tribal conflict, which fundamentally was neither colonial nor sectarian, neither economic nor class-caused, but rather deeply cultural' (Vendler 1999, p.50), and I would particularly apply this analysis to 'Punishment'.

Heaney takes the inhumanity of man-made, futile violence a step further when he writes of the women who have been tarred and feathered and tied to railings in Northern Ireland. Poetically, he watches from afar, but ultimately does nothing to help:

> I who have stood dumb
>
> When your betraying sisters,
>
> Covered in tar,
>
> Wept by the railings. (Heaney 1975, p.38)

The use of 'your' again ties the two cultures together in the context of the brutality. The past haunts the present through the over-arching figure of the dark female body. However, it is not only he the poet who has 'stood dumb', but society that has allowed and accepted the crimes and actions of the paramilitaries to be perpetrated. The 'I' of the poem forces the readership to engage with, and question, their own stance and lack of action in the situation.

The final lines of the poem are undoubtedly the most controversial, and also the most ambiguous:

> Yet understand the exact
>
> And tribal, intimate revenge. (Heaney 1975, p.38)

Conor Cruise O'Brien here assumes the poet's position is that he understands and supports the acts of his tribe. He states that 'the poet here appears as part of his people's assumption that, since the girl has been punished by the IRA, she must indeed be guilty; a double assumption that she did, in fact, inform on the IRA' (Cruise O'Brien 1997, p.26). The crux of his argument is seemingly valid when one takes the interpretation of these lines on their own, out of the context of the poem, and out of the broader context of the book. However, to do so would be to neglect the theme which resonates throughout the poem as a whole, namely that of a questioning of cultural violence throughout history. 'Punishment' questions rather than supports the acts. It acknowledges the linearity of violence, but does not accept or support it. Heaney himself states in the poem that he is against these acts; he is also one who 'would connive in civilized outrage' (Heaney 1998, p.118). He is against these acts, yet like the rest of society, he will not outwardly reject them for fear of reprisal from paramilitary groups. Society follows the tribe out of fear rather than from any real desire to support the actions of that tribe, is what Heaney seems to be saying. It is the silence in the poem that does the most damage, as this silence enables the terrorists to continue with their acts of barbarity.

Heaney recounts that 'Punishment' was a difficult poem to complete, not in a political sense, but in a manner which would do justice to both Danish and Irish victims:

The difficulty in getting 'Punishment' finished was expressive, as much a matter of sound and syntax as a matter of self-examination, as much to do with shaping the thing as telling about me. It involved discovering how to be true to my ear and true to the elements I was working with. How to take a stand between the tar-black face of the peat-bog girl and the tarred and feathered women in the news reports. (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.159)

The very fact that Heaney brings these images and questions to the surface cements the notion that he does not support the acts, but understands that like the rest of Northern Irish society, he has remained silent and therefore, to some extent, has contributed to the repetition of violence not just in his land, but throughout history. He is questioning the cultural need for the scapegoat, and also the misogynistic need to exert dominance over women, but at the same time, is also questioning the role of the poet, and by extension that of the intellectual and the journalist, who record the violence but remain ethically aloof from it. It cannot be said that he supports violence, given that through Philoctetes in *The Cure at Troy*, he notes that pity and empathy should be extended to everyone:

Life is shaky. Never, son forget

How risky and slippy things are in this world.

Walk easy when the jug's full, and don't ever

Take your luck for granted. Count your blessings

And always be ready to pity other people. (Heaney 1991a, p.27)

In the poem, his reaction is 'civilized' just like the empathetic and humane approach taken in *The Cure at Troy*. He does not react with violent measures or intimidation, but with

words. Such a realistic view of the workings of society is the reason why the poet feels 'lost, unhappy and at home' (Heaney 1972, p.37). The poem is a questioning of societal realities and values, and not, I would contend, in any way a support of violence.

The bog poems discussed here have predominantly focused upon the bog operating as an agent of the spectre. The repetition of cultural violence in history has found itself on the streets of Northern Ireland through the guise and influence of spectral traces: 'everything begins before it begins' (Derrida 2006, p.202). The spectres that have resided in the bogs in Denmark, as well as in Northern Ireland, have enabled the poet to create a mythical grounding whereby he can examine and produce a piece of working art that engages with the ghosts of the past that commonly influence and reside within the psyche of modern society. 'Bogland', 'The Tollund Man' and 'Punishment' display the progression that Heaney's poetry underwent over the course of three collections. It is also evident that the myth of the bog expanded due to an invasion of spectres into the reading and psyche of the poet. The next part of this chapter will move away from Heaney's association with the bogs as the domain of the spectre, towards a discussion that focuses upon the individual victims of violence which stem from postcolonial hauntings. The first section of this chapter dealt with the historical implications outside of Ireland that hindered the present day, along with the repetitiveness of cultural violence. The second section will discuss how the colonial actions discussed in the previous chapter have manifested themselves in nineteen seventies and nineteen eighties Northern Ireland. The spectres of sectarian fatalities haunt the next three texts through the poet's focus upon the individual dead, as opposed to the collective, and the granting of a voice to these casualties through his poetics. The inheritance of such violence will be discussed through an engagement with

the poetry written during this period.

Spectres of Violence: Heaney and Victims of the Troubles

While Heaney has located a mythical and broad cultural grounding to display and locate the violence in earlier collections, in *Field Work*, he moves towards personal elegies and responses to contemporary violence with Stephen Regan suggesting that '*Wintering Out* and *North* have a strongly elegiac change, but their grief and loss are generalized and pervasive . . . In *Field Work*, Heaney adopts the more usual formal mode of elegy in mourning the deaths of fellow artists, relatives . . . there are also elegies for victims of sectarian violence' (Regan 2007, p.16). The collection follows on from part two of *North* in many respects, and progresses along the thematic line of 'Whatever you say, say Nothing'. After the publication of *North*, Heaney was cast with the badge of being the 'laureate of violence' (Quinlan 1983, p.368). As has been noted, Heaney's work does not support violence, but sets out to question it, and this motif is carried into *Field Work* which can be regarded as political only in the sense that it deals with political issues: there is no overt political or ideological agenda at work here, with Karen Marguerite Moloney declaring that Heaney installs 'political subtext in ostensibly non-political poems' (Moloney 2007, p.2). 'Casualty' can be looked upon as the predominant and most forceful of the elegies present within *Field Work*. The IRA or Protestant political organisations are not mentioned within the poem, just the events that surrounded the bomb attack. The reader is left to read beneath the surface and allow for the spectres of the period to inform and influence the subtext of the poem. It has political undertones given that it discusses the result of not adhering to specific orders from the terrorist organizations that ran riot during

the seventies. In 'Place and Displacement: Recent Poetry from Northern Ireland', Heaney outlines the approach taken by many writers, including himself, during this period:

> The fact that a literary action was afoot was in itself a new political condition and the writers did not feel the need to address themselves to the specific questions of politics because they assumed that the subtleties and tolerances of their art were precisely what they had to contribute to the coarseness and intolerances of the public life. (Heaney 2002, p.116)

The poem discusses and laments the death of Louis O'Neill who was 'blown to bits' (Heaney 1979, p.22) by an IRA bomb after disobeying a curfew set by the paramilitaries. However, it is unknown until now whether or not it was a UVF or IRA bomb, and this unknowing further develops the core of Heaney's argument: namely, that anyone can be a victim. The innocent, non-violent fisherman falls victim to murderous acts for failing to obey his tribe's orders.

Although the poem is not political in the sense of attacking O'Neill for his individualism, or the paramilitaries for their actions, it is political in the sense that it deals with the individual victims of futile violence. Heaney notes of 'Casualty' that he:

> did have one big uncertainty to explore, a dilemma that many people in the North were then experiencing very acutely, stretched as they often were between the impulse to maintain political solidarity and their experience of a spiritual condition of complete solitude. I saw in Louis O'Neill's transgression of the curfew – which was basically a call for solidarity – an image of the Joycean *non serviam*. (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.215)

Heaney questions the validity and utter stupidity of the killing of a man for wanting to engage in his evening ritual of drinking, with Floyd Collins proposing that the poem 'celebrates the untrammelled spirit of the individual, the subversive yet life-affirming potential of the lyric moment' (Collins 2003, p.118). In the first section, Heaney presents the ordinary nature of O'Neill and his quiet, harmless demeanour:

> He would drink by himself
>
> And raise a weathered thumb
>
> Towards the high shelf,
>
> Calling another rum
>
> And blackcurrant, without
>
> Having to raise his voice. (Heaney 1979, p.21)

Throughout history it has often been the innocent who have fallen victim to the violence. The spectres of the colonial past invade the present of contemporary society and beckon a continuance of the violent measures repeated throughout history whether they be Viking and British colonial spectres, or from the bogs in Denmark and Northern Europe. Similarly, in Chapter Four I will discuss classical hauntings that incorporate notions of continual violence throughout history.

George Cusack presents the case that 'Casualty' shows 'the political consequences of every action run so deep that no stance, artistic or political, is so natural or so innocent that it cannot have deadly repercussions' (Cusack 2002, p.62), while Derrida would propose that the physical acts of terror in the present are the manifestations of spectral ideas materialising themselves through a physical being or entity:

> Once ideas or thoughts (*Gedanke*) are detached from their substratum, one engenders some ghost by *giving them a body*. Not by returning to the living body from which ideas and thoughts have been torn loose, but by incarcerating the latter in *another artifactual body*, *a prosthetic body*, a ghost of spirit, one might say a ghost of the ghost if, as Marx sometimes leads one to think, the first spiritualization also, and already, produces some spectre. (Derrida 2006, p.158)

The repercussions of which Cusack speaks are perpetrated on the innocent. These outcomes are ultimately a result of the spectre's influence. What the poet is exploring in his poetry is that there is no cause important enough to deem necessary the killing of innocent citizens.

The closing lines of the first section fuse the ordinary life of O'Neill with the overarching spectres of the past. The language presented in this section paints O'Neill as a wise man and not the kind to be involved in sectarianism. He is 'sure footed', 'sly', and has a 'fisherman's quick eye / And turned observant back' (Heaney 1979, p.21). In *Stepping Stones*, Heaney describes him as 'the kind of low-headed, low-key, humorous countryman I always feel at home with' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.214). Blake Morrison observes that the imagery of the poem serves 'to exculpate the man' (Morrison 1982, p.78). He is a normal, calculating man: however, the events of Bloody Sunday revitalise the cultural violence that has haunted Ireland throughout its existence:

> He was blown to bits
> Out drinking in a curfew
> Others obeyed, three nights
> After they shot dead

The thirteen men in Derry.

PARAS THIRTEEN, the walls said,

BOGSIDE NIL. (Heaney 1979, p.22)

This is the sole poem in which Heaney makes an open reference to Bloody Sunday. It is even more important to note that it is the individual dead man, O'Neill, who is valorised above this event with the structure of the poem supporting its elegiac qualities. Elegy often operates on the basis of revisiting death, while not forgetting life. Structurally, 'Casualty' shifts between life and death, with O'Neill's life being celebrated while at the same time being entwined with the moments before his death. Vendler notes that 'the Heaney style – earlier so apt in conveying the immemorial and the immobile – is now called on to sketch the living as they were before their annihilation, and to do justice to the moment of extinction' (Vendler 1999, p.60). Each section of the poem shifts between a memorial to the murdered man that lays out his innocent, almost mundane character and juxtaposes this with his violent and unnecessary death with the poet lamenting the death.

I share Corcoran's view that 'in concentrating on the individual death, Heaney is honouring, first of all, a personal rather than a political obligation: the poem seems initiated by the commemorative and preservative desire to give a character back to this man who would otherwise be only an anonymous statistic' (Corcoran 2009, p.172). O'Neill's name is not mentioned in the poem, which conjures up the thought that Heaney wishes to portray the authenticity of the situation in the north, and that he wants the poem to speak for and represent the multitude of victims of such violence; possibly, this ghost of a ghost also stands in synecdoche for the many other nameless casualties of the violence. Heaney's response is sometimes regarded as inadequate given that it does not outwardly condemn

nor support a side of the argument. However, he outlines, in 'Faith, Hope and Poetry', that the poet must resist through his art: 'each poet must raise his voice like a pretender's flag. Whether the world falls into the hands of the security forces or the fat-necked speculators, he must get in under his phalanx of words and start resisting' (Heaney 1980, p.217). This is the sort of resistance that is shot through in the poem.

A middle ground has always been where Heaney has placed himself regarding his identity and as a poet, as has been discussed in detail in the previous chapter and carries throughout this thesis. Terry Eagleton puts forward the argument that Heaney is merely a minor poet because he recounts experiences rather than solves problems in his poetry. Eagleton states that Heaney's prowess has been gained 'by a criticism which invests deeply in "experience" and little in "ideas"' (Eagleton 1997, p.105). Such is not the case. 'Casualty' offers a questioning of the society of the time through the event of O'Neill's death. Through this murder, Heaney explores many ideas, albeit subtly, of identity, of the consequences of not adhering to the orders of one's tribe and also, of the questioning of the violence. Heaney does not give the answers, but asks the question of the reader:

> how culpable was he
>
> That last night when he broke
>
> Our tribe's complicity? (Heaney 1979, p.23)

Questions are posed both literally like the one above, or through imagery. Heaney's question is not answered by O'Neill, but responded to with another question:

> 'Now you're supposed to be
>
> An educated man,'

> I hear him say. 'Puzzle me
>
> The right answer to that one.' (Heaney 1979, p.23)

The ghost of O'Neill is used to question society, and to question Heaney. O'Neill still has a presence while being non-present: he is the ghost of a ghost. Derrida would determine this as the influence of the spectre, or of hauntology, while de Man would invoke the trope of *prosopopoeia*. Blanchot notes that death is not the end, it is only the beginning of dying, or a state in between existence and non-existence, and this notion strikes a chord with 'Casualty':

> The fact that we cannot experience the reality of death to the end makes death unreal, and this irreality condemns us to fear dying only unreally, not really to die, to remain as if we are held, forever, between life and death, in a state of non-existence and non-death, from which our whole life perhaps takes its meaning and its reality. (Blanchot 1995 p.252)

O'Neill's spirit lives on to haunt contemporary society. Foster notes that 'the issue of the victim's culpability clouds the question of blame' (Foster 1989, p.92). Blame is not directed at any person or group in the poem, but instead questions are posed to the reader in a manner that recalls 'Punishment'. The words 'tribe' and 'complicity' would seem to pose the question of a collective. However, I would argue that these lines provide an outlet for emancipation from guilt and blame for O'Neill. The nationalist community is headed by a paramilitary force that only represents a small minority in theory, but in practice, holds the collective in fear. 'Complicity' has proven to be a *modus operandi* of ambivalence and ignoring deaths, but Heaney critiques this complicity within the text to pose the question

about the death of O'Neill, and about the culpability of those who killed him, but at a broader range, of those who were complicit in keeping the curfew imposed by paramilitaries and thereby giving it some form of societal warrant.

Michael Parker notes that the word curfew 'shifts the focus away from O'Neill's perceived failure towards the idea of a collective guilt within the nationalist community, which had tolerated unjustifiable murderous acts carried out by the Provisional IRA over the past three years' (Parker 2012, p.19). The presentation of the realities of the Troubles, for example funeral processions of innocent individuals, are depicted in order for the reader to form their own opinions on the happenings in society. Heaney notes that 'Casualty' 'is a public poem of the sort that I'd aspire to' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.386). The funerals in the poem are not those of IRA members, or of those involved in the political process, but of ordinary individuals in society. The lyric qualities of the poem allow for Heaney to not only be judged on the thematic context of the poem, but more importantly on the accuracy of the language employed which strengthens the level of emotional response to O'Neill's death and wider society. Colonial spectres of identity and division have dragged these victims into the quagmire of carnage. In 'Christmas 1971', Heaney writes of the world he inhabits, one of terror and violence:

> I am fatigued by a continuous adjudication between agony and injustice, swung at one moment by the long tail of race and resentment, at another by the more acceptable feelings of pity and terror. We live in the sickly light of TV screens, with a pane of selfishness between ourselves and the suffering. We survive explosions and funerals and live on among the families of the victims, those blown apart and those in cells apart. (Heaney 2002, p.41)

The victims Heaney speaks of are only remembered by the 'purring of the hearse' or by mourning 'quiet walkers' (Heaney 1979, p.23). The language of the procession is restrictive and binding, just like the IRA's actions. 'They move in equal pace' with 'hand / Over fist' suggesting the conformity and rigor of funerals, and of being a part of the nationalist community. Despite the victim of the poem disobeying his tribe, Heaney still grants him funeral rites in the poem. This reinforces the notion that Heaney does not support violent activities, but rather expresses grief through literary terms. The man is not judged by Heaney for the actions that broke his tribe's 'complicity' in favour of his individualism:

> He had gone miles away
>
> For he drank like a fish
>
> Nightly, naturally
>
> Swimming towards the lure
>
> Of warm lit-up places. (Heaney 1979, p.23)

George Cusack notes that 'this is not a political act on the part of the fisherman, nor is it a matter of ignorance, rather, it is simply an attempt to do what came naturally to him without concern for the political implication' (Cusack 2002, p.61). O'Neill remained apolitical in life and suffered the consequences for it.

This brings to light the question as to whether there is a link between the death of O'Neill in the poem, and Heaney's writing. Heaney may be suggesting that he too has remained apolitical but has suffered in a literary sense from critics attempting to drag him into the political sphere such as Eagleton, Longley and Cruise O'Brien, and later the Sinn

Féin representative Danny Morrison, in an encounter recounted in 'The Flight Path'. He does not hide his heritage as a Catholic nationalist, but on the other hand, he does not condone brutality in any way. Heaney begs O'Neill to question him again later in life:

> Dawn-sniffing revenant,
>
> Plodder through midnight rain,
>
> Question me again. (Heaney 1979, p.24)

The use of the word 'revenant' here resonates with Derrida's use of that word throughout *Specters of Marx*, but also strengthens that sense of repetition and return which is intrinsic to Heaney's poetry and Derrida's hauntology. O'Neill's ghost returns in a haunting act of *prosopopoeia* in 'Route 110' in *Human Chain*. Heaney later acknowledges he was 'In the wrong place the Wednesday they buried / Thirteen who'd been shot in Derry?' (Heaney 2010, p.56), and this will be further discussed in the final chapter of this thesis. This revisiting of O'Neill's death takes place in light of new information on the murder which suggests that O'Neill's death was not caused by an IRA bombing, but a Loyalist bomb planted in the Imperial Bar in Stewardstown, County Tyrone:

> In the beginning, incidentally, we thought that the bomb might have been placed by the Provisional IRA as a reprisal for the publican's defiance of the curfew, but that's not the opinion of the journalists who compiled *Lost Lives*, a book that reports the facts surrounding every death resulting from the Troubles. They believe it could have been a UVF operation. (Heaney and O'Driscoll 2009, p. 214)

The question still remains unanswered over thirty years later after Heaney first published

'Casualty'.

'Station Island VII' again focuses upon a single victim of sectarian violence. The poem is both a reflection on Heaney's part, and a questioning of the commonality of violence within his community. Barbara Hardy notes that the 'Station Island' sequence sees the poet enter the 'limbo of reflection' (Hardy 2003, p.83), and this is finely displayed in Section VII. In an exploration of the self, Heaney acknowledges that 'I needed to butt my way through a blockage, a pile-up of hampering stuff, everything that had gathered up inside me because of the way I was both in and out of the Northern Ireland situation. I wasn't actively involved, yet I felt dragged upon and put upon by it' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.236). He used the 'Station Island' sequence as way of doing so. The poem is extremely haunting in that it engages with a variety of spectres. The intertextuality of the poem bears witness to Dantean influences on an Irish context, with the employment of the *terza rima* form overarching and informing each stanza within the poem, as well as harking back to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, which features many significant spectral engagements. The terza rima structure that Heaney uses in VII does not lose the flow of Dante's usage as the poet incorporates Irish speech and vernacular within the section. It also adds another layer to the haunting nature of Heaney's poetry.

Where the start of this chapter engaged with, and addressed, Scandinavian hauntings that placed Heaney's world alongside a wider European framework, the presence of Dante in the 'Station Island' sequence further reinforces the sense that Heaney attempts to understand his world through past cultures and literary works. Graham Allen discusses the function of intertextuality as broadly relating to repetition:

> Intertextuality is an important term for describing the radically plural text, and is a crucial technique in the work of those writers who eschew notions of the unified work, yet it is also potentially what creates a sense of repetition, cultural saturation, a dominance of cultural stereotypes and thus of *doxa* over that which would resist and disturb the beliefs and forms and codes of that culture, the *para-doxa*. (Allen 2011, p.87)

Just as the ghosts of Joyce and Kavanagh present themselves in the sequence to fortify and offer guidance to the poet on his pilgrimage back and forth through his unconscious, so too does William Strathearn, the subject of the section. He was murdered in nineteen seventy-seven by two off duty RUC officers after being wrongly suspected of being a member of the IRA. The inclusion of RUC officers into the discussion allows for the discussion of violence to encompass all of Northern Irish society. However, Heaney was wary of doing so in that he 'didn't want the thing to turn into a general '*j'accuse*' of the RUC. I wasn't out to provide ammunition in the propaganda war' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.248).

The reflective opening of the poem sees the poet looking inwards to his self, his unconscious, when the ghost of Strathearn arrives as uncannily into the unconscious as the Derridean spectre:

> but I sensed a presence
>
> entering into my concentration
>
> on not being concentrated as he spoke
>
> my name. And though I was reluctant
>
> I turned to meet his face and the shock

is still in me at what I saw. (Heaney 1984, p.77)

The image of Heaney turning suggests a looking back to the past. The spectre inhabits the past and future of Heaney's thinking, with the impact of colonial violence still existing in Northern Ireland. Derrida notes that the spectre is 'among other things, what one imagines, what one thinks one sees and which one projects on an imaginary screen where there is nothing to see' (Derrida 2006, p.125). The past haunts Heaney's psyche as he witnesses the effects of murder first hand through an imaginative conjuring of reports that he had heard locally about the killing.

The language in the poem is rather violent and horrid. It is eerily accurate about the plight of the innocent. Words such as 'shock' and 'blown open' account for the impact of a gunshot wound to the head, but also reawaken the language used in 'Casualty'. Parker calls the sequence 'Heaney's most sustained attempt at achieving absolution and permission as a writer' (Parker 1994, p.192). This questioning once again finds a place in 'Virgil: Eclogue IX', discussed in Chapter Four, and again in 'Route 110', where Heaney questions his role as a poet. Once questioned for not engaging with the violence in Northern Ireland head on, the poet now relinquishes any repression that such arbitrariness brings. The viciousness and callousness of the situation, and the final moments of Strathearn's life, are evoked through the voice of the dead within the poem. The revenant, like the majority of those killed in the Troubles, is 'the perfect, clean, unthinkable victim' (Heaney 1984, p.80). Neil Roberts notes that the ghost is 'one more in a series of the wasted male youth of the century killed in wars which they had no part in starting, and little sense of how to prevent' (Roberts 2008, p.73). However, it is the broken trust, and the familial tragedy, evoked through his interactions with his wife, and the lack of humanity of his killers, that

strikes a chord within the poem. Strathearn is presented in the poem as a decent citizen who played football with Heaney during their youth and operated a pharmacy in later years. The fact that he is not mentioned by name in the poem allows his voice to be 'anonymous and representative' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.248) of the totality of the sectarian violence just like O'Neill in 'Casualty' and Colum McCartney in 'The Strand at Lough Beg': like them he is a ghost of a ghost and a representative of the unremembered victims of a conflict that they did not cause. This adds a certain element of universality to the poem.

On the night of his murder, he answered the calls from outside by two people he recognized. The language within the poem drums up a sense of fear, unease and dread. It also portrays the strong possibility that the man knew he was heading to his death like many before him in Northern Ireland and also those ancient victims in the Danish, Iron-Age bogs. The language used in the description of the assassins is loud: 'knocking' and 'shouting', whereas the victim and his wife are presented as being timid and loving: 'her whinging and half-screeching'; 'she started to cry and then roll around the bed' (Heaney 1984, p.78). Where many of Heaney's previous poems focus upon the immediate effect and the actual event of the murders, this poem is deeply evocative in that it primarily focuses upon the emotions associated with facing murder and sectarian violence. The murder is not described; we are just presented with the after effect of the wound upon his head. The description of his wound is again intertextual:

> Through life and death he had hardly aged.
>
> There always was an athlete's cleanliness
>
> shining off him and except for the ravaged

> forehead and the blood, he was still that same
>
> rangy midfielder in a blue jersey
>
> and starched pants, the one stylist on the team. (Heaney 1984, p.79)

The 'ravaged forehead and the blood' is extremely Dantean in description. It can be linked with *Inferno xxxii* and *xxxiii*, and with Heaney's version in 'Ugolino', where he describes the revenge that Count Ugolino enacts upon Archbishop Roger:

> That sinner eased his mouth up off his meal
>
> To answer me, and wiped it with the hair
>
> Left growing on his victim's ravaged skull. (Heaney 1979 p.61)

Henry Hart notes that Heaney echoes 'Dante, whose descent into hell and encounters with old ghosts also commenced in April in *imitation Christi*' (Hart 1988, p.234), while Conor McCarthy claims that 'Station Island' 'is a procedure of composite illusion, where a single line or passage can evoke multiple intertextual echoes' (McCarthy 2008, p.82). There are multiple hauntologies at work within the section. The strands of Dantean poetics that run through the poem offer a deeper understanding of what Heaney is attempting to achieve. The inclusion of Dante conjures spectres of hell and purgatory.

The poem shows Heaney depicting his own version of hell from the perspective of victims of violence. In Dantean terms, his place of writing is a form of *Purgatorio*, a liminal place where he exists 'in between', or in a Third space, as he continually adjudicates on his role as a poet. The ghosts of the past enable him to question his actions, while O'Brien comments that 'these different figures allow him to question aspects of unconscious filiation to the religious, the cultural and the domestic that have lain dormant and

unquestioned until this point of his adult life' (O'Brien 2002, p.65). The Derridean spectres haunt the text in a mix of mythical and inherently Irish hauntings, where the 'non-presence of the spectre demands that one take its times and history into consideration, the singularity of its temporality or of its historicity' (Derrida 2006, p.126). The poet condemns the two RUC officers through the voice of the dead man. Interestingly, it is not the poet who passes judgement here, but the victim: 'shites thinking they were the be all and end all' (Heaney 1984, p.79). This may be why Heaney undergoes a questioning of his role in the violence. His poetry up until this point was spent questioning acts of violence, but not using his profile as a Northern Irish poet to give a voice to its innocent victims. This is what he addresses within the poem:

> Forgive the way I have lived indifferent —
>
> forgive my timid circumspect involvement. (Heaney 1984, p.80)

Michael Parker notes that the language of the poem is 'charged with double meanings' (Parker 1994, p.199). The above lines reflect both the poet's public perspective on the killings but also his own unconscious need as a poet to avoid choosing a side within the sectarian divide. The poem is a way of Heaney voicing the atrocities of his time, while also questioning, not only the killings, but his place within the discourse of Ulster poetics and politics.

Contemporary hauntings come to the fore in Heaney's final collection, *Human Chain*. While this chapter has traced the continuous impact of past spectres on the present of Northern Irish society, and shown that the past repeats itself in the present, albeit in a

different manner, 'The Wood Road' compounds this idea, and allows for the discussion to be traced through the Heaney canon. The spectres that haunt Heaney's earlier works have an absent presence within this poem from the final collection published before his death. 'The Wood Road' locates Heaney's local area in the same realm of repetitive violence and death throughout the ages. The violence is not always operative, or sectarian, but the poem hints at the bloodshed and mayhem that the road itself has witnessed throughout history. The road has been 'resurfaced, never widened' (Heaney 2010, p.22) which itself hints at an element of layering and lack of change throughout recent history. This element of layering resonates with the layers found in Heaney's bog poems that unearth the spectres of the past. A similar mode of haunting is present within 'The Wood Road' as Heaney remembers certain events that have occurred on the road and resurface to haunt the present.

The image of Bill Pickering, a member of the B-specials, hiding in a hedge with his rifle during a roadblock, opens up spectral presences of sectarian violence during the nineteen fifties within the poem:

> Bill Pickering lay with his gun
>
> Under the summer hedge
>
> Nightwatching, in uniform —
>
> Special militiaman.
>
> Moonlight on rifle barrels,
>
> On the windscreen of a van
>
> Roadblocking the road. (Heaney 2010, p.22)

The imagery of roadblocks is reminiscent of the roadblock in 'The Strand at Lough Beg', but also more deeply spectral in an ideological sense. The implications of colonialism, discussed in the previous chapter, not only haunt the imaginative scene from 'The Wood Road', but still have a haunting resonance with the Heaney canon in the later poetry. Derrida suggests that 'The Thing [*Chose*] haunts, for example, it causes, it inhabits without residing, without ever confining itself to the numerous versions of this passage, "The time is out of joint"' (Derrida 2006, p.21). This idea of inhabiting without residing enables for a certain element of ambiguity within the mind set of some of the locals who Heaney calls in 'The Nod', from *District and Circle*, 'local B-men' and 'neighbours with guns' (Heaney 2006, p.33):

> Neighbours with guns, parading up and down,
>
> Some nodding at my father almost past him
>
> As if deliberately they'd aimed and missed him
>
> Or couldn't seem to place him, not just then. (Heaney 2006, p.33)

Heaney hints at the sense that although they may salute Heaney's father on a daily basis, once they consciously don the B-special uniform they are inhabited by spectral bigotry and engaging in acts of division. 'The Wood Road' suggests, and successfully attempts, to not only condemn these actions but also show their triviality.

Bill Pickering and his men are portrayed as acting like toy soldiers who think they are guarding a special military place but in reality are merely patrolling the small village of Mullhollandstown:

> The rest of his staunch patrol
>
> In profile, sentry-loyal,
>
> Harassing Mulhollandstown. (Heaney 2010, p.22)

This triviality is then linked with the mundane in the poem, as the time frame shifts to another haunting presence on 'The Wood Road'. The poet transports the reader from sectarian issues to the common man who carries on with the farm work in the midst of ongoing sectarian violence. This trope of repetition and continuance is also seen in 'Bann Valley Eclogue' through the discussion that takes place between Lycidas and Moeris, and will be discussed in the next chapter. Within 'The Wood Road' Heaney's memory transports him back to his adolescence when he engaged in farm work:

> Or me in broad daylight
>
> On top of a cartload
>
> Of turf built trig and tight,
>
> Looked up to, looking down,
>
> Allowed the reins like an adult
>
> As the old cart rocked and rollicked. (Heaney 2010, p.22)

These lines suggest the sense of growth Heaney underwent, as well as being allowed to hold the reins, a symbol of control but also self-direction down the road that is haunted by much violence. Structurally, the placement of these lines between the B-special's roadblock and an IRA 'hunger striker's wake' (Heaney 2010, p.23) adds to the sense of Heaney's in-between nature. It also heightens the sense of Heaney having to tread carefully down the road and remain close to his own roots and beliefs amongst calls for propagandist

support for his tribe. It is the land and turf that sustains him within the poem just as it did his thematic approach to poetry.

The uneasiness of the road that is haunted by much death is mirrored by the cart as it 'rocked and rollicked' (Heaney 2010, p.22). It is also symbolic of the journey Heaney underwent regarding the threading a fine line between both Protestant and Catholic identities; he was accused by both sides of being either too outspoken in support of his own tribe or as being negative about the Ulster Unionist tradition. Ian Paisley accused Heaney of being a propagandist poet after having recited an anti B-special poem on BBC:

> The paragraph in Paisley's paper appeared after we had left Ashley Avenue and gone to Wicklow. It called me a well-known Papist propagandist and implied that I was corrupting the minds of the Ulster's Unionist youth and that I was a good riddance, having gone to my spiritual home in the Popish Republic. You could hardly quarrel with that. (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.149)

I would argue that neither is true as Heaney has always foregrounded a general level of hybridity within his writing. His poetry is not supportive of either side of the divide but instead maintains a level that condemns violence of all sorts while engaging with those who may be perceived as Other. His poetry focuses upon the individual rather than the collective.

While the absent presence of Bill Pickering and the dead IRA hunger striker conjure notions of sectarian violence, 'The Wood Road' progresses to a state that acknowledges that death in Northern Ireland is not always enacted by those behind the gun, but also on an accidental level. The child who was knocked down 'by a speed-merchant' (Heaney

2010, p.23) suggests that the road itself has physically changed over time, but remains haunted by bloodshed and death: 'Or the stain at the end of the land / Where the child on her bike was hit' (Heaney 2010, p.23), and this harks back to the opening line of 'Resurfaced, never widened' (Heaney 2010, p.22). The road cosmetically changes, but the spectres that dwell within the past continue to haunt the present of Northern Irish society. By presenting many instances of death in the past on the Wood Road, Heaney multiplies the hauntings within the poem, enacting Derrida's contention that 'heterogeneity opens things up, it lets itself be opened up by the very effraction of that which unfurls, comes, and remains to come' (Derrida 2006, p.40). Circular imagery supports the notion also that the deaths of the innocent in contemporary society were always in the past but also to come: 'Hard rounding the corner, / A back wheel spinning in sunshine' (Heaney 2010, p.23). This circular imagery within the text supports the thematic context of the poem, namely that the violence present in the past is carried through to present times by spectres.

The final words of the poem compound this haunting notion of circularity, 'bus-stop overgrown' (Heaney 2010, p.23). This is a reference to the death of the poet's younger brother, Christopher, who was knocked down when he was three and a half. This event was first mentioned in 'Mid-Term Break' in Heaney's first collection, and also finds a place within what was to be his final collection. In this sense, the death itself haunts the psyche of Heaney and adds to the multiple circular hauntologies at work within 'The Wood Road'.

Chapter Four: Mythical Hauntings in the Poetry

For a significant part of Heaney's poetics, myth has played an intrinsic role in enabling the poet to come to terms with his own identity. In this chapter, I will locate and extrapolate a mythical point of origin and continuity within the poetry. Heaney espouses a clear understanding of the links between history and the present as has been shown through the implementation of Derridean ideas in the previous chapters. In this chapter, I will continue to employ hauntology as a mode of understanding Heaney's poetry; however, I will be focusing upon how through classical mythology Heaney found a place to situate his own personal experiences and also those of the nation. The focus will primarily be on the influence that the works of Dante and Virgil hold over both the poet's conscious and unconscious mind. Richard Kearney notes that Heaney is similar to Kinsella, Montague and Durcan in that all have 'succeeded in rediscovering home away from home, in rereading their native myths and memories from an alternative place – foreign, uncharted, unhomely, *Unheimlich*' (Kearney 1992, p.43). This shows that the use of myth is not only of value to Heaney but also to Irish writers in general. The spectre of the colonial past of Ireland, discussed in Chapter Two, resonates within the framework of the discussion at hand. Virgil and Dante both published in Latin (though most of Dante's work was written in Italian) and it is this language that assimilates itself within an Irish context. Latin, the language of the Roman Catholic religion brought to Ireland through religious colonisation set in motion for the language to flourish throughout the country in a pious manner. At the

beginning of the twelfth century, according to Kiberd, 'the first Irish language translation of Virgil, *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, made its appearance: and therefore texts abounded with comparisons between local heroes and Aeneas, local beauties and Helen, local scholars and Ennius' (Kiberd 2002, p.vii). Heaney, and his fellow poets, have inherited the practice from these early Bards who compared Virgil's journey and plight to that of their own. Therefore, the decision by Heaney to engage with European myth is not totally original but is deeply open, personal, universal and haunting.

This chapter will be divided into two major sections. The first of these will comprise a discussion of Virgil and his place within the haunting paradigm of Heaney's poetry. The second section will primarily deal with Dante's influence over Heaney. Both Virgil and Dante lived in a time when sectarianism and civil war were significant political factors. Daniela Panzera notes that 'Virgil, like Dante, lived in times of social war and chaos, and in his poetry he sought to find a field of force that would contrast the bloodshed of his time' (Panzera 2016, p.206). The three different worlds inhabited by each of the poets allows for both differences and parallels to be drawn between each. The uncanny, *Unheimlich* wanderings through Dante's fiery hell, as well as Aeneas's encounters with different shadows and shades, allow for an assimilation of both place and practice in Heaney's own writing. Heaney uses these myths in a manner that strikes a chord with the present, but that also engages with these works from the cradle of European culture. Despite existing in different historical spaces, cultures of violence, sectarianism and political strife are dealt with by all three poets in a broadly similar manner. In order to unveil and realise the true impact and influence that the spectres of Virgil and Dante hold over Heaney's work, Derrida's notion of hauntology must be used to understand '*spirits* in the plural and in the

sense of specters, of untimely specters that one must not chase away but sort out, critique, keep close by, and allow to come back' (Derrida 2006, p.109). The Italian spectres of the past invaded the unconscious of Heaney's writing in Northern Ireland and allowed for the past mythical experiences of old to speak for and to the present.

Virgil: Life and Poetic Background

In order to sustain a detailed analysis of Heaney's Virgilian poetry, a discussion of Virgil's background will prove to be of value. Many similarities can be drawn between the personal and private lives of both Heaney and Virgil, but these connections also hold true in the public order of poetry. Virgil was born on October 15, seventy BC, into a peasant family in the countryside. The Andes area near Mantua, where he lived for much of his childhood, revolved around the pastoral and the mundane. His early poetry reflects his childhood memories and has deep agricultural images within it. In a *modus operandi* that would be echoed in Heaney's early works, Virgil wrote about what surrounded him in the countryside. The musicality and the images that open the beginning of 'Eclogue I', set the tone for the rest of his poetry:

> Tityrus, you lie beneath the spreading beech
>
> And practice country songs upon a slender pipe.
>
> I leave my father's fields and my sweet ploughlands,
>
> An exile from my native soil. You sprawl in the shade
>
> And school the woods to sound with Amaryllis's charms. (Virgil 2000, p.1)

The opening lines spoken by Meliboeus resonate with and haunt the poetry of Heaney. The

connections that can be drawn between both poets linger within the realm of the spectre. The line 'an exile from my native soil' could easily be identifiable as Heaney's in *North*, while the 'ploughlands' can be connected with his own father's fields in *Death of a Naturalist*.

Like Virgil, Heaney's own personal exile from Northern Ireland to Glanmore, County Wicklow, and later Sandymount, County Dublin, mirror the exile exhumed in 'Eclogue I' as well as the 'inner émigré' (Heaney 1975, p.73) that Heaney becomes in 'Exposure'. In *Preoccupations*, Heaney discusses the definition of the 'pastoral' noting that:

> 'Pastoral' is a term that has been extended by usage until its original meaning has been largely eroded. For example, I have occasionally talked of the countryside where we live in Wicklow as being pastoral rather than rural, trying to impose notions of a beautified landscape on the word, in order to keep 'rural' for the unselfconscious face of raggle-taggle farmland . . . Originally, of course, the word means 'of or pertaining to shepherds or their occupation' and hence 'a poem, play, etc., in which the life of shepherds is portrayed, often in conventional manner: also extended to works dealing with country life generally. (Heaney 1980, p.173)

What is interesting about the chapter 'In the Country of Convention', from which I have quoted above, is that Heaney makes an argument that Theocritus, Virgil, Horace, Mantuan and Marot should have been included in the anthology *The Penguin Book of English Pastoral Verse*. However, the most interesting part is that he calls these writers 'informing, influencing voices' (Heaney 1980, p.175), something which resonates with the discussions

of Derrida, de Man and Blanchot on the voicing of the dead or the haunting figure of the spectre.

From both a pastoral and political perspective, the unconscious of Heaney has been influenced by these spectres. Virgil, like Heaney, lived in a period of civil unrest, and in a time where sectarian violence was predominant throughout much of Italy. In terms of political engagement, Virgil's *Aeneid* succeeds in working within the framework of its time. It replicates and borrows from Homer's epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, to present a strand of poetry of the epic kind. Philip Hardie notes that the text itself is 'a place where the laws of time in the historical world are suspended, and where the epic allows the hero and reader to range into the past and future' (Hardie 2014, p.21). In this sense, it is a rather hauntological text. It is haunted by the civil unrest that occurred in Italy between Marius and Sulla, which was soon followed by the wars between Pompey and Julius Caesar for ultimate control and power over Rome. Not only is the text haunted by the contemporary events of its time, but it is also haunted by the previous writings of Homer. The violence that occurred in both societies unites both poets together in a web that engages with Sartre's notion of temporality, which 'can be grasped as a unitary "metamorphosis" of being' (Gardner 2009, p.113). Where both Heaney and Virgil differ is in their presentations of political allegiances. While Heaney remains true to his identity, formed by cultural hybridity, Virgil uses the *Aeneid* to propagate propagandist ideologies of nation, state and Empire.

Virgil's text was 'conceived and shaped as a national and patriotic epic for the Romans of his day' (Williams 1983, p.37), while Heaney merely attempts to locate a space where an understanding of the violence that has unfolded can be found. What Heaney sees

in Virgil's work is not the trappings of Imperial power, but rather the pastoral elements within the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, and the journey Aeneas undergoes in book six of the *Aeneid*. The undecidability on Heaney's behalf to dwell in the world of public outcry or to support his own tribe is a fundamental idea within the realm of deconstruction. Derrida terms this a 'ghost' of undecidability, which 'is never set aside, never over and done with. It hovers over a situation before, during, and after the decision, like a specter of justice, disturbing it from within, divesting it of absolute self-assurance' (Derrida & Caputo 1997, p.138). The repetition of history plays a key role in Heaney being attracted to Virgil as a poetic spectre and allows for a thematic continuity to be traced through the poetry of these two very different writers.

Dante: Life and Poetic Background

Dante Alighieri was born in May of the year 1265. His family history is complicated given that, over the course of time, they went from being deeply involved on the political front in Florence, and being quite wealthy, to being less prosperous during the period of Dante's birth. Despite this, he received a good education at the prestigious University of Bologna. His education obviously had a deep impact upon him because, just as Heaney remembers Master Murphy in 'Station Island', Dante too is haunted by the impact his teacher had, and still has, upon him in the *Inferno*. Ser Brunetto Latini's shade appears in Canto XV of the text, and guides Dante along the path just as he acted as a guiding force in life:

> 'O son,' said he, 'whoever of this throng
>
> One instant stops, lies then a hundred years,
>
> No fan to ventilate him, when the fire

Smites sorest. Pass thou therefore on. I close

Will at thy garments walk, and then rejoin

My troop, who go mourning to their endless doom.' (Dante 1998, p.64)

The guiding spectre of those who offered education to both poets is a haunting similarity between the two writers. In the year 1289, Dante fought in a battle at Campadino which would offer him social prestige upon his return to Florence. By 1295, he was elected to the City Council. During this period, deep sectarian divisions existed in Florence and throughout Italy as a whole. The country was divided into different regions during the period of the fourteenth century and would not be united as one until 1861.

Two political parties controlled the country, the Guelfs and the Ghibellines. The Guelfs supported the Pope, while the Ghibellines supported the Emperor and the aristocratic families. Guiseppe Mazzotta notes that in Florence:

> public life was a persistent danger zone punctuated by the almost daily battles between the Guelfs and the Ghibellines. At the same time, the implacable, bitter resentments of the popular social classes against the entrenched interests of the magnates added a new and generalized turbulence, beyond the rivalries and feuds of the nobility (the Danoti versus the Cerchi), to the city's political tensions. (Mazzotta 1993, p.5)

By the 1290s, the country had seen an era of bitter conflicts between both sides come to an end, with the Guelfs coming out as victors. Dante had been raised a Guelf, but the end of the conflict with the Ghibellines saw a quasi-civil war break out between what would become known as the White and Black Guelfs. The Whites were aligned with the old Ghibelline party, and saw their members being made up mostly of the poorer classes, while

the Blacks were comprised of the upper classes, such as the banking families. Dante associated himself with the Whites, and in the year 1300 saw himself become a 'prior', a leading figure of the Florentine political scene. In the same year, Dante and the five other priors of Florence opposed Pope Boniface VIII's plans to rule the economies of Florence and Tuscany. Boniface had sided with the Blacks, and the banking interests associated with that chosen side would lead to false accusations being made against Dante. In fear of his life he fled Florence and was exiled when he failed to turn up to his hearing. George Andrew Trone documents this part of Dante's life in *The Dante Encyclopaedia*:

> On January 27, 1302, the Black Guelf government of Florence issued a judgement finding Dante and fourteen others guilty of barratry, extortion, and resistance to the pope. For each of the convicts, the court ordered a future exclusion from politics, payment of a fine, and exile for two years. On March 10, 1302, apparently because of their disregard or defiance of the first court order, Dante and the others were condemned and were permanently banned from entering Florence under penalty of Death. (Trone 2010, p.362)

While in exile, Dante began to write the *Divine Comedy*, which would represent the three tiers of Christian afterlife: purgatory, heaven and hell. Dante's work is extremely haunting in that it captures many of the contemporary societal and political issues at the time.

Like Virgil and Heaney, he is deeply influenced by the spectres of the past and present. Robin Kirkpatrick makes the point that 'Dante himself, in the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, informs the very extremis of his cultural inheritance with a rhythm that evokes in the reader an awareness of the earth and air, and change and immobility' (Kirkpatrick

1978, p.13). This observation on Dante's poetics could easily be applied to the works of both Virgil and Heaney, in that all three inherit from the world around them and before them. Similarly, the notion of earth and air also resonates with Heaney's poetry as 'Digging', the first poem of his first collection deals primarily with the earth, while 'A Kite for Aibhín', the final poem of *Human Chain*, deals with air and flight; indeed, a path can be traced through Heaney's poetry which has a trajectory from the ground to the air. The spectres of all three poets operate within a liminal space, and thus can easily converse with each other through unconscious inheritances. Pamela McCallum discusses the trace of the present throughout history in her discussion of Derrida's hauntology:

> The instability of the present – what haunts it – implies a responsibility for those whose existence is entailed in the present, that is, for those who have produced it (the past) and for those who will live out its consequences (the future). (McCallum 2007, p.240)

In this sense, Heaney finds in Dante's *Inferno* a place where he can imaginatively situate the Troubles. Not only that, but Heaney can also find in Dante a reflection of himself.

The poet identifies with the situation in which Dante found himself while living in Florence. The civil war between the Guelfs and the Ghibellines was taking over society, just as the violence between Catholics and Protestants was doing during Heaney's own time. Dante was born a Guelf but admired the Ghibellines. He wished to see a united, peaceful community just as Heaney did, and Dante also represents the idea that cultural hybridity and acceptance of the other within society is something to be embraced. Just as the three-headed Lucifer in *Inferno* can be read as a tormentor of the dead, it can also be interpreted as an inverted figure of the holy trinity. Guy P. Raffa notes that 'in the place –

both textual and geographical – where Christ cannot be called by name, his presence is marked *in malo* through a series of guardians and tormentors whose hybridity mocks the incarnational union of humanity and the divine' (Raffa 2000, p.38). Despite being the Devil, he is referred to as the 'Maker' (Dante 1998, p.145) within the text, which brings about notions of beginning that one would associate with God:

> As he is hideous now, and yet did dare
>
> To scowl upon his Maker, well from him
>
> May our misery flow. Oh what a sight!
>
> How passing strange it seemed, when I did spy
>
> Upon his head three faces: one in front
>
> Of hue vermilion, the other two with this
>
> Midway each shoulder joined at the crest;
>
> The right 'twixt wan and yellow seemed; the left
>
> To look on, such as come from whence old Nile
>
> Stoops to the lowlands. (Dante 1998, p.145)

The hybridity that permeates Dante's work and his life resonates deeply with Heaney. Richard Rankin Russell notes that Heaney 'who was rooted in local, Catholic Gaelic culture like the Guelf-born Dante but who also drew on British liberalism and the English literary tradition, found a powerful exemplar of artistic autonomy in the exiled Dante' (Rankin Russell 2014, p.254). It is the similarities between both writer's predicaments and thoughts which drew Heaney towards Dante.

Heaney and the Classics

In a Northern Irish sense, Heaney has always confounded and magnified the presence that the past, and its mythologies, have on the present. During the Troubles, he chose Nordic and Viking mythologies as a lens through which to understand the violence that was happening in a contemporary context, with Regan noting that 'Heaney has always tried to balance the place of writing in terms of a particular national location with the place of writing in terms of where it exists, theoretically, in relation to other cultural activities and events' (Regan 2008b, p.218) This section will follow on from the discussion undertaken in Chapter Three, but will situate what Heaney sees happening around him in a broader European historical and mythical sense. In the later poetry Heaney seems to look back on the past from a mature, thoughtful and new perspective.

Heaney's first engagement with Virgil came at an early age in school:

> I was lucky too in the teacher I had during my senior years: Father Michael McGlinchey, who loved the language and had a feel for the literary qualities of the texts especially Virgil. One of our set books was Book Nine of the *Aeneid*, but I always remember him repeating at different times, 'Och, boys, I wish it were Book Six' – which gave me an interest in that book long before I ever read it. (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.295)

Just as Ser Brunetto Latini played a seminal role in Dante's literary providence, so too did Father Michael McGlinchey in handing over the spectre of Virgil to the absorbent mind of the young Heaney. Although he did not immediately engage with Virgil's works, the spectre of this idea resided within the unconscious until such time that it was needed. Derrida notes that 'the subject that haunts is not identifiable, one cannot see, localize, fix

any form, one cannot decide between hallucination and perception, there are only displacements; one feels oneself looked at by what one cannot see' (Derrida 2006, p.169), and this describes the manner in which Virgil lodged in Heaney's mind: Virgil had been looking at him for a long time.

Heaney discussed the influence of the classics in an interview with Lorna Hardwick, where he states that 'the classics are like the longitude and latitude of consciousness in the West, they establish the first lines of thought and feelings' (Heaney and Hardwick 2016, p.1). The unknown mythical spectres of the past have traced pathways through history and they are allowed to ruminate in the poetry. Heaney openly admits a conscious leaning towards a Virgilian element within the dynamics of his poetry in *Stepping Stones*, when he notes:

> Here was a young poet coming back with an almost vindictive artistry against the actual conditions of the times. There was something recognizable at work, a kind of Muldoonish resistance. Virgil's eclogues proved an effective way for a poet to answer whatever the world was hurling at him, so I had a go at writing a couple of my own. (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.389)

Translations or an altering of the classics has never been an issue for Heaney. Through these literary processes he offers a reterritorialization of Irish politics and culture that encapsulates worldly cultural and societal issues within the one dynamic. He uses a language that is uniquely Irish and layers it with mythical elements that redefine the nature of that Irishness through a much broader context. David Lloyd makes allusions to this when he discusses Heaney's use of language, observing that:

language is seen primarily as naming, and because naming performs a cultural

reterritorialization by replacing the contingent continuities of a historical community

with an ideal register of continuity in which the name (of place or of object) operates

symbolically as the commonplace communicating between actual and ideal continua.

(Lloyd 1993, p.24).

In his earlier poems of 'Broagh' and 'Anahorish' many critics have alluded to the resistance

of language within these poems, with O'Brien stating that they 'have been largely read as

statements of linguistic and cultural resistance to the encroachment of the British presence

in Ireland' (O'Brien 2003, p.93).

Heaney discusses the historical reasoning for creating such poems and the

etymology behind the place names:

Mossbawn was bordered by the townlands of Broagh and Anahorish, townlands that

are forgotten Gaelic music in the throat, *bruach* and *anach fhíor uisce*, the riverbank and

the place of clear water. The names lead past the literary mists of a Celtic twilight into

that civilization whose demise was effected by administrators like Spenser and Davies,

whose lifeline was bitten through when the squared-off walls of bawn and demesne

dropped on the country like the jaws of a man-trap. (Heaney 1980, p.36)

From this discussion, many people assumed that Heaney was adopting the mythos of

Nationalism and his tribe, but in fact the opposite is true. Heaney is merely locating his

place of birth in a state of hybridity, while acknowledging historical facts:

My 'place of clear water',

the first hill in the world

where springs washed into

the shiny grass

and darkened cobbles

in the bed of the lane. (Heaney 1972, p.16)

The poem extrapolates the etymology of the title word, and also explores what the place itself means to Heaney through the use of English that has been permeated by the hauntological trace of the original Irish. It is a poem that describes the poet's first world, that of the rural, hilly landscape of Derry. The actions of Spenser and Davies in Ireland are documented as historical fact, and Heaney addresses the implications of their actions in his poetry, as noted in the previous two chapters. Linguistically '*anach fhíor uisce*' haunts the transliteration of 'Anahorish' just as the complex historical, political and cultural histories, embodied by Spenser and Davies haunt the present day in Northern Ireland.

Similarly, in 'The Riverbank Field', from *Human Chain*, he essentially combines three traditions, or spectres: those of English, Irish and Classical, when he compares his local Moyola River to the river Lethe in Hades:

Ask me to translate what Loeb gives as

'in a retired vale . . . a sequestered grove'

and I'll confound the Lethe in Moyola. (Heaney 2010, p.46)

The English language is combined with the Irish landscape and classical myth in the opening lines of the poem to encompass all of the poet's influences and inheritances. These

lines should not be taken to be anti-colonial because they deal with classical myth in an Irish sense. There is little difference between what Heaney does in 'Anahorish' and what he does in 'The Riverbank Field', other than that 'Anahorish' resurrects ghosts of a British and Irish nature, while 'The Riverbank Field' conjures Grecian and Virgilian spectres. Each, in a sense, can be seen as invasive, given that both have infiltrated the unconscious and conscious of the Northern Irish poet. Heaney uses myth to escape such connotations as being loyal to, or supportive of, his tribe and hence anti-British, while also embodying the notion that issues that are prevalent throughout Irish society are universal, as they were also prevalent to the societies of both Virgil and Dante. Similar to what he accomplished in *North*, Heaney progresses the discussion of Irish issues as not being wholly unique, but as universal to humankind.

When questioned on whether Dante led him to a more 'colloquial poetry' (Heaney & Miller 2000, p.34), his response acknowledges exactly his reasoning for choosing to use classical myth in his poetry:

> That is fair to say, yes. I was exhilarated to read Dante in translation in the seventies, because I recognized some of the conditions of Medieval Florence – the intensities, the factions, the personalities – as analogous to the Belfast situation . . . . The combination of personality, political fury, psychological realism. All the voices speaking, and the accusations flying, the rage and the intimacy of The Inferno. (Heaney & Miller 2000, p.34)

This is applicable to Virgil also, in that a certain element of connectedness with the plight of both poets allowed for a universality to build between ancient and contemporary worlds.

Pamela McCallum notes that in *Specters of Marx*, Derrida 'evokes a widespread anxiety that precipitates decades of violence in wars and civil conflict' (McCallum 2007, p.237). 'Precipitates' is an apt word to describe the role of the spectre and history in a discussion of Heaney's relationship with the classics. Myth precipitates only through the guise of the spectre; it threads slowly through the poetry in an almost non-linear trace. An attempt to comprehend the repetitious violence, and an imaginative location within which to situate Northern Ireland within a wider framework is the main goal of his mythical allusions. Just as a civil war broke out during Virgil and Dante's times, so too does a localized war between Catholics and Protestants, Nationalists and Unionists, break out in Northern Ireland during the late sixties.

Lines from 'Known World' seem to sum up the constant repetition of patterns and actions in life and society. The poem also recapitulates the influencing spectre's hold over the unconscious of the poet:

> That old sense of a tragedy going on
>
> Uncomprehended, at the very edge
>
> Of the usual, it never left me once . . . (Heaney 2001, p.21)

Heaney draws connections not only with the mythical world, but also with the differences between countries that exist in the same period. He makes reference in *Stepping Stones* to the parallels that can be drawn between Ireland and the Soviet countries:

> But it was enough to make me familiar with the Soviet way, the ideological lock on the media, for example, and the glum weight of the Party people in charge. I have to admit that something in me responded positively to the frugality of the fare, the absence of

marketing, the bare reality of loaves and lard and apples on the counter top. At the same

time, I remember how glad I was when I landed back in Shannon for the mere fact of

colour, the flim-flam of display in airport shops. (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.299)

Parallels and differences exist in the here and now as much as they do in the past, and it is

this temporal haunting which Heaney evokes in his poetry. Repetition and inheritance are

to the fore of my argument, as Dante's and Virgil's spectral influences on Heaney's

writings become clearer. A discussion of Virgil's influence will mainly relate to the later

poetry of Heaney, while Dante's shaping of the haunting thematic structures began

sometime in the mid-seventies and it is from there where the examination of Dante's

influence will begin.

Virgilian Hauntings in the Later Poetry

This section of the chapter will provide a substantial discussion of the intertextuality that

exists between both Heaney's and Virgil's works. While much of Virgil's work stems from

the pastoral, and deals with issues of civil war and upheaval in the *Eclogues*, his work

developed more politically, almost becoming Imperial propaganda upon the publication of

the *Aeneid*. Philip Hardie notes that 'the *Aeneid* plays a major part in the invention of the

European myth of Empire' (Hardie 2014, p.93), which is an interesting juxtaposition when

compared with Heaney's poetry. This begs the question as to why Heaney might have been

drawn to such writing given that he himself does not relent in his stance of not conforming

to tribal pressures. At the beginning of his translation of Virgil's *Aeneid VI* Heaney pays

homage, not to Virgil himself but to Father Michael McGlinchey, as he did in *Stepping*

Stones. The death of his own father drew parallels between his own emotions and Aeneas's

desire to seek the shade of his father. Heaney notes that the translation 'is neither a "version" nor a crib: it is more like classics homework, the result of a lifelong desire to honour the memory of my Latin teacher at St Columb's College, Father Michael McGlinchey' (Heaney 2017, p.xi). The haunting influence of his teacher is what has made him gravitate so intensely towards Virgil's *Aeneid*, and his earlier *Eclogues* and *Georgics*:

> Michael McGlinchey created an inner literalist who still hunts for the main verb of a sentence and still, to the best of his ability, disentangles the subordinate clauses, although usually nowadays with the help of a crib from the Loeb Library or the old Penguin Classics. (Heaney 2017, p.xiii)

What cannot be ignored is the spectre of McGlinchey in the formation of Heaney's ultimate obsession with Virgil; what this has allowed Heaney to do is situate himself among the literary giants of the past by using their work in translation, thereby harvesting the seed planted by McGlinchey.

These translations often take the form of being moulded and influenced by the Irish spectre of Heaney's unconscious. Robert Brazeau notes that in translating, 'Heaney picks up on themes that are latent in the original, and explores them in the context of contemporary aesthetic and political debate in Ireland' (Brazeau 2001, p.84). Like he did with the Nordic myths in *North*, Heaney, from *Seeing Things* onwards, engages in a sustained and conscious invocation of Virgil's spectre into his poetry, with Parker noting that he 'combs the underworld of memory' (Parker 1994, p.217). The poems that will be discussed in this section deal with the haunting imprint of memory upon the poet. 'The Golden Bough' will be used to show how Heaney uses Virgil's spectre to manage internal,

personal issues in order to depict them as both universal and shared. Likewise, the use of Virgil's Eclogues in *Electric Light* deals with wider social issues of identity, civil war and colonialism. Through the literary shades of Virgil, Lycidas, Moeris and Myles, Heaney infuses the Derridean spectre with de Man's *prosopopoeia* in order to voice the struggles of the past and present and show them to be both repetitive and collective to the human experience. Davis asserts that:

> De Man's position certainly does not endorse the possibility of actually dialoguing with the dead, as it is entirely clear that their words are imposed by the living. At the same time, the fiction of an exchange with the dead and of a possible harmony and mutual intelligibility between separate worlds is a mystification inherent in language. (Davis 2004, p.79)

In this sense, the poetry is haunted by the literary prowess of Virgil's works. I will begin this discussion with 'The Golden Bough', and then move towards a discussion of two Eclogues, 'Bann Valley Eclogue' and 'Virgil: Eclogue IX'.

Heaney's father has always been a guiding figure over his work, and this can be seen from the early influences of 'Digging' and 'Fodder', where the poet recounts his father's work on the farm, or the process of aging in 'The Strand'. Memory has always been key to Heaney's poetry with him noting that:

> Generally speaking, my poems come from things remembered, quite often from away back, or things I see that remind me of something else. Sometimes the thing has an aura and an invitation and some kind of blocked significance hanging around it. (Heaney and O'Driscoll 2009, p.445)

He is constantly haunted by the ghosts of the past in his writing, and these ghosts appear in a performative absent presence, which recalls Jacques Lacan's notion that 'nothing exists except against a supposed background of absence. Nothing exists except insofar as it does not exist' (Lacan 2006, p.327). 'The Golden Bough' allows the poet to mythically and imaginatively bring the memory of his father back to life. It had existed beneath the surface of his consciousness for some time, but did not find a place on paper until later years:

> But there's one Virgilian journey that has indeed been a constant presence and that is
> Aeneas's venture into the underworld. The motifs of Book VI have been in my head for
> years – the golden bough, Charon's barge, the quest to meet the shade of the father.
> (Heaney and O'Driscoll 2009, p.389)

In art, and language, Heaney and his father have become immortal, just as Yeats imaginatively sought immortality in 'Sailing to Byzantium'. Heaney's journey to the netherworld in search of his father, following in the paradigm of Aeneas, uses the mythical Golden Bough as his passport to defy the workings of time. He is enabled to do so through the Virgilian spectre that dwells within the text and within his unconscious in the production of the poem, hereby enacting Derrida's suggestion that the spectre 'recalls us to anachrony' (Derrida 2006, p.6):

> No one is ever permitted
> To go down to earth's hidden places unless he has first
> Plucked this golden-fledged growth out of its tree
> And handed it over to fair Proserpina. (Heaney 1991b, p.3)

Heaney's Golden Bough is his way of rekindling old memories of his father. The bough itself is renewable and eternal, just like the familial connection. It grows back once it has been taken, which is a symbol within the poem that death and memories recur constantly throughout history and that a longing to see a dead relative is not unusual, but common across time, space and culture:

> A second one always grows in its place, golden again,
>
> And the foliage growing on it has the same metal
>
> sheen. (Heaney 1991b, p.3)

Yeats uses the Golden Bough in a different way to enter a mythical realm. His spirit will haunt forever as a piece of art in a manner that engages with the Derridean spectre in that he will consciously have access to the past, present and future:

> Once out of nature I shall never take
>
> My bodily form from any natural thing,
>
> But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
>
> Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
>
> To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
>
> Or set upon a golden bough to sing
>
> To lords and ladies of Byzantium
>
> Of what is past, or passing, or to come. (Yeats 2012, p.4)

Through the reimagining of Virgil's *Aeneid*, Heaney openly universalises the personal in a mythical sense. Floyd Collins notes that the poem allows for Heaney to see his father again,

in a manner that is not unlike Aeneas's encounter, but 'with imaginative powers that heighten and transform memory' (Collins 2003, p.169). While not as overt an aestheticisation as that of Yeats, Heaney's use of the golden bough trope serves a similar function, namely the spectral preservation of memory through *prosopopoeia*.

As has been discussed throughout this thesis, memory plays a vital role in the order of inheritance from the spectre: 'being-with specters would also be, not only but also, a politics of memory, of inheritance, and of generations' (Derrida 2006, p.xviii). The intertextual basis that surrounds 'The Golden Bough' enables the poet, not only to universalise his feelings towards his deceased father, but also to create an identity through Virgil's works that bind Aeneas's journey with the memory of his own father. Derrida notes that memory plays an important role in the formation of the self and that this can only be influenced by the past and future:

> Only the actual unity of my living present permits other presents (other absolute origins) from appearing as such, in what is called memory or anticipation (for example, but in truth in the constant movement of temporalization). But only the alterity of past and future presents permits the absolute identity of the living present as the self-identity of non-self identity. (Derrida 2001, p.165)

'Unity' and 'origin' are key words within the above quote, but also within the dynamics of translation. Heaney finds a point of origin in Virgil's original text that anchors his thought process and unifies it with his own contemporary Northern Irish twist. Conor McCarthy is on point when he acknowledges that 'Heaney writes other peoples poetry into his own, just as, through his translation practice, he writes his own poetry into that of others' (McCarthy

2008 p.3). This is exactly was Heaney does in 'The Golden Bough': it is an Irish text haunted by Roman spectres, and once again sees the poet attempt to understand his world differently through the lens of an older, wider European myth.

The language of the poem is initially striking. It differs greatly from the original version and is wholly Irish in its appearance while remaining true to its thematic origin. The language within both poems differs, however; Heaney's is rather conversational and Irish while Virgil's seems regimented and resembles that of the *Iliad*. Derrida notes that 'when one can read a book in the book, an origin in the origin, a center in the center, it is the abyss, is [*sic*] the bottomless of infinite redoubling' (Derrida 2001, p.374). The outcomes are infinite and can be shaped immeasurably depending on what spectre the original text comes to haunt. One must only place the same passages side by side to recognize this. A segment of Virgil's text reads as follows when the Sibyl tells Aeneas that he must take her advice:

> Deep forests and impenetrable night
>
> Possess the middle space: th' infernal bounds
>
> Cocytus, with his sable waves, surrounds.
>
> But if so dire a love your soul invades,
>
> As twice below to view the trembling shades;
>
> If so hard a toil will undertake,
>
> As twice to pass th' innavigable lake;
>
> Receive my counsel. (Virgil 2013 p.168)

However, within Heaney's poem the segment is uniquely Irish:

Forests spread midway

down,

And Cocytus winds through the dark, licking its

banks.

Still, if love torments you so much and you so much

need

To sail the Stygian lake twice and twice to inspect

The murk of Tartarus, if you will go beyond the limit,

Understand what you must do beforehand. (Heaney 1991b, pp.2-3)

When one compares 'receive my counsel' to 'Understand what you must do beforehand', the differences are uncanny and maintain the haunting thematic spectres which dwell within the text. Similarly, the rhyming couplets that appear in Virgil's text are not present in Heaney's; Virgil's is regimented and constricted by rhyme, whereas Heaney's flows in the vernacular manner of Northern Irish speech. The difference in style signals that although Heaney's work is haunted by Virgil, it is not a complete translation of the Roman poet's work but rather a borrowing that fuses both Irish and Italian hauntings together through language. Virgil has an absent presence that influences the Irish poet just like the Norse and British spectres of Chapter Two influence Heaney's hybrid identity. It is an act of desperation and mourning which has driven both Heaney and Aeneas to search for the shades and shadows of their fathers in the mythical underworld, and in the underworld of the imagination. Ruben Moi notes that the poem 'combines the panorama of the modernist mythic method with Heaney's personal tribute to his father who had just died' (Moi 2007, p.186). This again ties in with the intertextuality at play within the text, but also brings to

mind the writings of such modernists as T.S. Eliot who employed Virgil throughout much of his work as the crux of the poem lands within the line 'I pray for one look, one face-to-face meeting with my dear father' (Heaney 1991b, p.1). These emotions have been repeated throughout history, and by Heaney using Virgil's text to deal with his personal emotions, he connects the past with the present and proves them to be akin to each other.

'The Golden Bough' is haunted by the Virgilian journey, but it also proleptically refers to Heaney's last collection, where once again, the shade of his father is a significant absent presence. The frailty of his father is referred to in the text but is revisited in *Human Chain* in section four of 'Album':

> And he was at my side then through all my sea-
>
> journeys,
>
> A man in old age, worn out yet holding out always. (Heaney 1991b, p.1)

This was the man who influenced and guided the poet in life, a constant companion, who worked hard, endured and fought to the end. However, the true frailty of the man is shown in 'Album', when Heaney:

> Was on the landing during his last week,
>
> Helping him to the bathroom, my right arm
>
> Taking the webby weight of his underarm. (Heaney 2010, p.7)

Heaney not only places himself among the European literary giants such as Dante and Virgil in the poem, but also alludes to the mythical figures of Pollux, Theseus and Hercules who went back and forth to the land of the dead:

> If Pollux could redeem a brother by going in turns
>
> Backwards and forwards so often to the land of the
>
> dead,
>
> And if Theseus too, and great Hercules . . . But why
>
> speak of them?
>
> I myself am of highest birth, a descendant of Jove. (Heaney 1991b, p.2)

Pollux was the son of Leda and Zeus, while Theseus was the son of Aegeus the King of Athens. All are prominent figures in Greek mythology and their influence haunts the text. By mentioning and inhabiting the same imaginative space as these Gods, Heaney is imaginatively conjuring the notion that he too, in a poetic and imaginative sense, has the power to visit the shade of his father in the underworld. They are examples of those who have travelled to the underworld and resurfaced once more. The imaginative journey Heaney undertakes is not free from the same dangers that they faced, though he realises that his situation is different in that it is purely imaginative. He must grieve and long to see his father, but also carry on with his life and craft. He must not forget the past, but also must not forget to dwell in the present and future either:

> Day and night black Pluto's door stands open.
>
> But to retrace your steps and get back to upper air,
>
> This is the real task and the real undertaking. (Heaney 1991b, p.2)

The struggle to come back from such a loss is magnified in the sense that the golden bough is renewable. Because it is eternal, Heaney is enabled to venture into this imaginative state of repetition and memory whenever he desires.

Hence, through the workings of the spectre and hauntology he has been enabled to rekindle the spirit of his father through the guise of Virgil's Aeneas. The final lines of the poem can be seen as relating to the spectre. One must boldly allow the spectre to enter the unconscious 'of its own accord':

> Take hold of it boldly and duly. If fate has called you,
>
> The bough will come away easily, of its own accord.
>
> Otherwise, no matter how much strength you muster,
>
> you never will
>
> Manage to quell it or cut it down with the toughest of
>
> blades. (Heaney 1991b, p.3)

These lines also leave the poem open ended and questioning; one is unsure whether Heaney has managed, or will manage, to see his father again. However, the Virgilian spectre that resides within the text enables the reader to understand that since Heaney has followed the trace of Aeneas, he will indeed succeed in being reunited with his father in this imaginative journey through the underworld.

Heaney's later full translation of *Aeneid Book VI* would later deem his journey to be fulfilled when Aeneas finally meets his father Anchises:

> And he gave a cry: 'At last! Are you here at last?
>
> I always trusted that your sense of right
>
> Would prevail and keep you going to the end.
>
> And am I now allowed to see your face,
>
> My son, and hear you talk, and talk to you myself?' (Heaney 2017, p.37).

The meeting is full of emotion, but the poem is purely imaginative and enunciates a process of the spectral. Both 'The Golden Bough' and Heaney's *Aeneid Book VI* are acts of *prosopopoeia*, since it is merely shades and shadows that make up the text. It is not physical or real, and this is suggested in the poem when Aeneas is unable to hug or embrace his father:

> Three times he tried to reach arms round that neck.
>
> Three times the form, reached for in vain, escaped
>
> Like a breeze between his hands, a dream on wings. (Heaney 2017, p.38)

The journey has merely been a multitude of voices from the past creating a false present for Heaney and Aeneas, yet, just because it is imaginative does not mean it is not valuable or in some way real.

Heaney immediately invokes the spirit of Virgil in 'Bann Valley Eclogue' in *Electric Light* by using the original Latin of Virgil's text as an epigraph, '*Sicelides Musae, paulo maiora canamus*' ('Sicilian Muses, let us sing a somewhat loftier strain') (Heaney 2001, p.11). Michael C. J Putman notes that 'this serves to bring into the poem the great Latin master himself' (Putman 2010, p12). However, after this reference, the reader is transported to contemporary times by Heaney appealing to his own, local 'Bann Valley Muses', to 'give us a song worth singing' (Heaney 2001, p.11). One presumes that the 'Poet' of the text is Heaney, and this immediately conjures thoughts of his own personal, Irish past. The poem follows the form of the classical Eclogue, but Heaney subverts Virgil's 'Eclogue IV' in favour of his own version. Virgil's original features only one voice, whereas Heaney pluralises this in 'Bann Valley Eclogue' to a discussion between

the 'Poet' and 'Virgil'. In this sense, the thematic output of the poem mirrors that of Virgil's text, but the structure offers a variation of style that inputs a personal, Irish strain to the Eclogue. The religious connotations such as '*And it came to pass*', and '*In the beginning*' (Heaney 2001, p.11) add to the Virgilian undertones within the text and hark back to the past. These signs of the past signal the inheritance at play, because 'as soon as a sign emerges, it begins by repeating itself' (Derrida 2001, p.374). The instant use of possessive language in 'help me' and 'my hedge-schoolmaster Virgil' (Heaney 2001, p.11), suggests that Heaney's mythical musings began not in Sicily, but in the local classroom of Northern Ireland where he was first exposed to such literary fortitude where he was exposed to the writings of Virgil by Father Michael McGlinchey:

> What keeps a literary kind viable is its ability to measure up to the challenges offered by new historical circumstances, and pastoral has been confronted with this challenge from very early on. Virgil himself, for example, in his first eclogue, is actually testing the genre he inherited from Theocritus and proving that it is fit for life in his own deadly Roman times. (Heaney 2003, p.2)

Just as Virgil inherited the form from Theocritus and made the pastoral his own, so too does Heaney. The child of the first stanza can be looked upon in both a literal and metaphorical manner. One can assimilate it to the real child who was to come into the world, a grandniece, or it could be interpreted as the personal, almost familial attachment that the poet feels to his work.

The poem is the offspring of his imagination, and by extension, of the spectre. In this sense, when Meg Tyler discusses the poetry of both Heaney and Longley, she cleverly

asserts that by utilising classical myth it 'has the effect of extending their literary domains' (Tyler 2013, p.17), while at the same time making the otherworldly home. Similarly, Tyler extends this idea when she notes that 'by appointing "Virgil" as companion to the "Poet", an echo of Dante sounds out. Here, not for the first time, Heaney positions himself within a community of literary figures. Any form of translation is, after all, a carrying across and amplification of a message' (Tyler 2013, p.51). The final line of the first stanza brings about the old spectre of colonialism and civil war, when Heaney notes that 'Maybe, heavens, sing Better times for her and her generation' (Heaney 2001, p.11). The first section ultimately sets up what is to be engaged with in the rest of the poem.

While the pastoral element espoused in 'Bann Valley Eclogue' allows the poet to negotiate freely around rural and wider societal issues, Iain Twiddy contends that, more broadly, the pastoral within Heaney's poetry amounts to a way of dealing with the continuous passing of time:

> The eclogue in particular is concerned with things passing, whether lost love, the changing seasons, or dispossession and the loss or alteration of nature itself. In addition, the eclogue, and especially one of its forms, the pastoral elegy, show that things can be given up and that it is possible to be reconciled to substitutes. (Twiddy 2006, p.51)

I would argue that this is true. Heaney deals with the passing of time by making it repeat itself. The mythical spectres of the *Aeneid* are transitional figures in the poem. They dwell within both realms and bring with them the struggles of that time. Putman notes that the poem 'is in dialogue with all past poetry, as are most great poems, and especially with the "Messianic" eclogue' (Putman 2010, p.12) in which language plays a major role. Virgil, in

an act of *prosopopoeia*, is in dialogue with Heaney and almost lays out commands for the poet: 'Carmen, ordo, nascitur, saeculum, gens' (Heaney 2001, p.11). The translation of these lines, '*carmen* (song), *ordo* (order), *nascitur* (is born), *saeculum* (age) in the sense of a set period or epoch, *gens* (race)' (Putman 2010, p.13), adds to the unification and fellowship that both poets are hopeful for in the future. Similarly, the near rhyme of both 'nascitur' and 'nation' is stylistically significant. Heaney's style here suggests that Latin and English cognates can haunt each other linguistically, but also that a nation is indeed born, and hints at the notion of birth and rebirth through the new child that is to come.

In the poem, Heaney himself delivers his own translation of these commands as part of the poetic process. In translating the Latin to English, Heaney is unifying both worlds through the limitlessness of language with Stephen Harrison terming the poem as 'a transposition' (Harrison 2011, p.122):

> Their gist in your tongue and province should be clear
>
> Even at this stage. Poetry, order, the times,
>
> The nation, wrong and renewal, then an infant birth
>
> And a flooding away of all the old miasma. (Heaney 2001, p.11)

Justin Quinn discusses Heaney's use of these foreign cognates when he notes that:

> He frequently carries out this imaginative work by introducing foreign phonemes, as they seem to promise even stronger geographies, cultures and mindsets, that challenge his own considerable powers of domestication. (Quinn 2016, p.48)

The use of Latin and allusions to links between Roman and contemporary times enables

Heaney to trace a commonality between both worlds, with Geoffrey Bennington noting that 'the trace is the origin of the origin' (Bennington 2010, p.21). Similarly, Corcoran suggests that Heaney would have immediately noticed similarities between his world and Virgil's:

> Heaney's Virgil is the Virgil not of *imperium*, but of the local and the regional, and the poet of the shadowy underground, of the only vaguely perceived, the hinted-at, the twilight. He is a Virgil who comes in from the edge and stands at the margins: on the riverbank field, in the second-hand market, in the queue at the bus stop, in the country kitchens and wake-houses and sports fields of country people. This is an intensification, almost a setting into a different dimension, of the Virgil of 'Bann Valley Eclogue' in *Electric Light*, where he is called 'my hedge-schoolmaster Virgil' (*EL*, 11); and so not just a countryman, but a countryman of Seamus Heaney's, since the hedge-schoolmasters were those who ran clandestine schools for Irish Catholic children during penal times. (Corcoran 2016, p.123)

This implies a continuous binding of the past and present, in this case through literary texts. The Troubles are compared in the poem to the fratricide of Roman times, when Romulus killed his brother Remus. Such acts of barbarity have repeated themselves throughout history, with Heaney's poetry referring to Nordic, Roman, Greek and Irish instances of such violence. In the poem, Heaney's request to 'give us a song worth singing' (Heaney 1001, p.11) suggests a hope that the future will be a new dawn of peace and unity:

> But when the waters break
>
> Bann's stream will overflow, the old markings

Will avail no more to keep east bank from west.

The valley will be washed like the new baby. (Heaney 2001, p.11)

Like the Heaney of 'Station Island', he asks for advice on the new world that is to come. The new peace that is hoped for rests in the hands of the new child, which is almost Christ-like in its metaphorical sense.

In 'Station Island V', Heaney asked the ghost of his teacher for advice:

As I stood among their whispers and bare feet

the mist of all the mornings I set out

for Latin classes with him, face to face,

refreshed me. *Mensa*, *mensa*, *mensam*

sang in the air like a busy whetstone. (Heaney 1984, p.73)

This passage, although highly spectral in its own right, is deeply connected with 'Bann Valley Eclogue'. The image of the teacher, presumably Terry Keenan, is extremely haunting given that Heaney already refers to Virgil as his teacher in the opening stanza of the poem. Both teachers, for Heaney, speak Latin which connects both Ireland and Italy together. Just as Heaney asked his teacher for advice, so he now asks Virgil for advice. The spectre has gone full circle in this regard:

Pacatum orbem: your words are too much nearly.

Even 'orb' by itself. What on earth could match it? (Heaney 2001, p.12)

The thoughts of both poets are linked by the spectre, with Heaney inheriting the same line

of thought as Virgil in the dialogue. '*Pactum orbem*' translates to meaning '*a world made peaceful*' (Heaney 2001, p.12). This links with the line of thought produced by Virgil in the poem; 'Let her never hear close gunfire or explosions' (Heaney 2001, p.12), presumably a reference to the contemporary violence that unfolded during the Troubles, and became rather sporadic after the Northern Ireland Arms Decommissioning Act 1997 was agreed.

Bernard O'Donoghue notes that 'Heaney feels in his most serious writing that responsibility to public events still requires the classics of tragedy and epic' (O'Donoghue 2009, p.110). While the repetitive thoughts and actions of both worlds collide in the poem, the new life and hope embodied in the child is to be welcomed. The child not only brings hope, but also acts as a symbol of the circularity of history that has been played out throughout much of Heaney's poetry. The final stanza of the poem is littered with images of roundness and circularity:

> Child on the way, it won't be long until
>
> You land among us. Your mother's showing signs,
>
> Out for her sunset walk among big round bales.
>
> Planet earth like a teething ring suspended
>
> Hangs by its world-chain. Your pram waits in the corner.
>
> Cows are let out. They're sluicing the milk-house floor. (Heaney 2001, p.12)

The 'sunset', 'bales', 'planet earth', 'teething ring', 'world-chain' and 'pregnant belly' all imply the circularity of life. The round sun of the past and present will set to bring a new day and age of hope. The rural, pastoral element of life is connected with the round bales

of the section, but it is also interesting to note that it is the pregnant woman who walks among the bales, suggesting that nature, the local, is what will hold strong amongst the wider world of planet earth. However, that being said, all are linked in the 'world-chain' of life and community, just as the poet is linked with the classical world of literature through the operations of the spectre. What 'Bann Valley Eclogue' accomplishes is to suggest that the continuing passage of time is not linear, but circular and repetitive. Time essentially has no bounds given that the spectre transcends time and dooms history and human nature to repeat itself regardless of culture or traditions.

Electric Light is a collection that pays homage to the master poet Virgil. The translation of Virgil's ninth eclogue, 'Virgil: Eclogue IX', demands a literal reading of the discussion that takes place between the two farmers, Lycidas and Moeris, and for this discussion to be placed in an ostensibly Irish context. The poem is deeply intertextual, and as such, is effectively controlled by a variety of spectres, some Roman, some colonial, but the majority Irish. Sung-Hee Yoon states when discussing intertextuality that 'any text is the absorption and transformation of another' (Yoon 2014, p.69). 'Virgil: Eclogue IX' conjures spectres of colonialism and voices the predicament more loudly than 'Bann Valley Eclogue'. The latter deals with community and fellowship in post-Troubles Northern Ireland, whereas the former harks back to the eternal colonial spectre that haunts Heaney's psyche and that of Europe. In 'Dialangues', the process of writing and its influences are discussed by Derrida with him claiming that writing is in itself a voicing of the ghost that haunts:

> When the voice trembles, when one hears that voice, one hears a non-localizable voice;
> it makes itself heard *because* its place of emission is not fixed. In an elliptical manner, I

would say that, when a voice has its localizable place in a social field, it is no longer heard; when one does hear it, it is the voice of a ghost. (Derrida 1999, p.135)

Like the works that were discussed in Chapter Two, Heaney again maintains a middle ground, but does not retract from the implications that colonialism had upon the common man or woman, in this case the farmer. His writing is clear and precise because he has now attained a plateau from where to discuss the issue and a commonality between the classical world and his own.

Donna L. Potts sees the poem as 'a translation of rather than a tribute to Virgil' (Potts 2012, p.71). A wider spectrum of colonial hauntings are embraced by the poet, with O'Brien noting this in *Seamus Heaney and the Place of Writing*:

> The presence of these figures symbolises the increasing breadth of Heaney's intellectual development, and also stresses that sense of kinship which he feels with voices from the classical past. (O'Brien 2003, p.100)

These voices from the classical past, as O'Brien terms them, are haunting and intertextual. Virgil's world of civil war is linked with issues that surround contemporary Northern Ireland as well as its past:

> The last thing
> You could've imagined happening has happened.
> An outsider lands and says he has the rights
> To our bit of ground. (Heaney 2001, p.31)

This statement by Moeris in the poem reflects the imperial reward that was given to soldiers at the time. Land was removed from the possession of the local, ordinary people, and given to these soldiers as a payment for their efforts during Virgil's time. The same happened in Ireland during the Plantations, and this sense of change permeates the text through the spectre of W. B. Yeats in the two words, 'All's changed' (Heaney 2001, p.31) which intertextually references Yeats's 'Easter 1916'. In *Points*, Derrida notes that 'I love repetition, as if the future were entrusted to us, as if it were waiting for us in the cipher of a very ancient speech – one which has not yet been allowed to speak' (Derrida 1999, p.130). This is the very locus of the function of hauntology played out on a field of constant inheritance. While we are accustomed to imagery in the poetry that reflects the rural, hearty landscape of the Ireland of turf, flowing rivers and wild mountains, the reference to 'old scraggy beech trees' (Heaney 2001, p.31) reflects the withering nature of Empire. Iain Twiddy attains a true sense of the poem when he notes that:

> In *Electric Light*, Heaney's translation of Virgil's ninth eclogue concerns the difficulty of healing the wounds inflicted by civil war. It concentrates on the use of the eclogue as the site of political complaint, and reflects the tradition of pastoral lament in Ireland. (Twiddy 2012, p.126)

Menalcas seems to be the one that holds out amongst the forces of violence and imperialism that surround him. Song, an element of pastoral poetry, is his way of dealing with, and addressing, the violence of his time. He is the mythical figure that represents both Virgil and Heaney's thoughts on how to deal with the violence. However, the truism that no song or poem has ever stopped a tank rings true within the text, and is voiced by the

mythical man on the frontline, Moeris:

> But songs and tunes
>
> Can no more hold out against brute force than doves
>
> When eagles swoop. (Heaney 2001, p.31)

The eagle within the poem is a symbol of the Roman Empire, which spread Latin, Roman culture and Christianity throughout Europe. Countries and peoples were invaded in the time of Virgil's writings, just as Ireland was by the Vikings and later by the British, with Regan suggesting of the later poetry that 'the changing political circumstances of the early 1990s encourage Heaney to look again at the familiar places associated with his earlier works and see them in a new light' (Regan 2016, p.270). The music and song that litter the poem can be expressed in Irish terms as the loss of language, Gaelic, and is similar to 'Bog Oak' in this regard:

> Shocking times. Our very music, our one consolation,
>
> Confiscated, all but. And Menalcas himself
>
> Nearly one of the missing. (Heaney 2001, p.32)

Again, language is to the fore of the postcolonial discussion in the poetry and unsurprisingly Heaney, as he always has done, locates a middle ground from which to speak in that 'non-localizable voice that makes itself heard *because* its place of emission is not fixed' (Derrida 1999, p.135), as Derrida has noted. In 'Terminus', he comments on the in between nature of his identity:

> Two buckets were easier carried than one,
>
> I grew up in between (Heaney 1987, p.5)

In the later poetry, through the employment of classical mythology, Heaney exhumes a commonality between the past and present that places him between cultures yet again. He is not forceful in his approach but instead points to the subtle, yet major, cohesions between his world and that of Virgil.

The poet himself notes the unity between both worlds in his article 'Eclogues "In Extremis": On the Staying Power of the Pastoral', albeit subtly and in a manner that allows the reader to invoke their own interpretations of historical instances:

> The muses of Sicily who inspired the earlier poet's idylls are always at the back of the Latin poet's mind. Virgil, to put it another way, is himself very much the learned poets' poet; he may have come from a country background but he has an eye on an audience very different from the shepherds and goatherds he would have known in his boyhood, on the farm from which his father was eventually expelled. (Heaney 2003, p.3)

This is precisely the experience of Heaney's poetics. The farmer's son who came to speak and write for and to the Irish nation, along with the wider world, now has a very different audience to that of his early years. This is where the personal side of Heaney comes to the fore in this eclogue, just as it did in 'Bann Valley Eclogue' before it. The uncertainty of writing and finding his way in the poetic world still exists for a man who has honed his craft to perfection over a period of forty years and can be linked back to his earlier pen name 'Incertus', the Latin for 'uncertain', when he first started writing:

The Pierian muses

Made me a poet too, I too have songs,

And people in the country call me bard,

But I'm not sure: I have done nothing yet

That Varius or Cinna would take note of.

I'm a squawking goose among sweet-throated swans. (Heaney 2001, p.32)

The uncertainty of Lycidas mirrors the uncertainty of Heaney with regards to his own writing; he was 'Uncertain. A shy soul fretting and all that' (Heaney1998, p.91) at the beginning of his poetic career. Similarly, to trace the etymology of the word 'Eclogue' further widens the hauntological parameters of the poem. O'Brien notes that 'the term derives from the Greek "*eklegein*" meaning "to select"' (O'Brien 2002, p.144). This sense of selection haunts both eclogues discussed, but also 'The Crossing', which will be discussed later in the chapter. Selection and a questioning of his own poetic powers constantly resurfaces throughout Heaney's works especially in other poems such as 'Digging', 'Station Island' and 'Route 110'.

While the personal laments of the poet ring through in the poem, the predominant discourse revolves around the colonial. An inherently Irish spectre resounds throughout the text. One cannot help but place the poem in an Irish context. Roland Barthes discusses the function of the author, or lack of function, when the text is taken in its entirety in 'Death of the Author', when he states that:

> The *explanation* of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as if it were always in the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a single person, the *author* 'confiding' in us. (Barthes 2000, p.146)

In the circumstances of Heaney's poetry, it is all but impossible to remove the spectres that haunt the text. Singularly, the spectre does not create a context, but the limitlessness of the position it holds demands that all spectres unite to influence and create such an environment:

> Improperly without proper place, the spectre is absolutely dispossessed of site, an unfixed point definitely in the world. A strange birth: the possibility of the spectre exudes from the interstices of phenomenology itself. The apparition of the apparition is the *sine qua non* of the transcendental reduction. (Appelbaum 2009, p.30)

The overpowering nature of colonialism collides with the world of resistance in the poem. Menalcas 'will keep singing and keep the songs' (Heaney 2001, p.34), but he is merely one of the very few concerned with song, and who is strong enough to carry it. He is like Virgil and Heaney in this regard. Washizuka comments that 'the image of Menalcas devoted to a state of peaceful existence and agreement as his primary poetic vocation is a reflection of Virgil himself' (Washizuka 2011, p.111). In terms of Virgil's eclogue, I would accept this comment in its entirety. However, Heaney must also be placed within this dynamic given that it is the spectre of Virgil that guides him in the creation of the poem.

Heaney sees his role in society and the Troubles as paralleling that of Menalcas. Lycidas and Moeris represent the common men who seek to use what they have in the world and carry on regardless of the circumstances. Despite the terrible grievances that

have befallen the men at the beginning of the poem, they are willing to carry on and move forward with their lives:

> That's enough of that, young fellow. We've a job to do
>
> When the real singer comes, we'll sing in earnest. (Heaney 2001, p.34)

This willingness to carry on and deal with the situation at hand together, and through fellowship, is what Heaney seems to most admire. It appears that he wants Northern Irish society to follow in the same line as Lycidas and Moeris in moving on from and overcoming the past.

Voicing the Past in the Present: Heaney and Dante

Dante has been a haunting figure in the work of Heaney throughout his poetic career. From as early on as *Field Work*, Heaney makes conscious references to the Italian poet's works with a specific focus upon *Inferno*. He has also done a number of translations of Dante's work. Heaney undoubtedly sees a reflection of himself in Dante, given that both grew up in a society riven with civil war. However, it is the shared sense of in-betweenness that existed in both poets' lives that truly strikes a chord with the Irish poet. It is the attachment to both sides of the divides in both worlds that joins them in a hauntological relationship. Osip Mandelstam notes that Dante is a 'master of the instruments of poetry; he is not a manufacturer of tropes. He is a strategist of transmutation and hybridity' (Mandelstam 2001, p.40-41). This quote could easily be applied to the poetry and to Heaney himself, in that he amalgamates past myths with the experiences of his time in order to create a myriad of identities in his work. Dante's journey through hell unveils a sense that violence was

just as common in his time, and that being identified by the ghosts of the underworld through his accent and use of language announces language as a core signifier of identity within the poetry. As well as being a signifier of the tribe, language is also central to culture; just as there are nationalist inheritances and influences, so too are there poetic ones, with Heaney noting that 'Virgil comes to Dante, in fact, as Dante comes to Eliot, a master, a guide and authority, offering release from the toils and snares of the self, from the *diserta*, the waste land' (Heaney 2002, p.172), and both classical poets haunt Heaney's works.

The commonalities of human experience are reflected in the poetry when Heaney uses place names, Irish colloquialisms and inherently Irish symbolism in a hybrid form of writing. This creates a sense of universalism within the paradigm of cultural experience as Heaney observes in 'The Sense of Place':

> However, we have to understand also that this nourishment which springs from knowing and belonging to a certain place and a certain mode of life is not just an Irish obsession, nor is the relationship between a literature and a locale with its common language a particularly Irish phenomenon . . . But I like to remember that Dante was very much a man of a particular place, that his great poem is full of intimate placings and place-names, and that as he moves round the murky circles of hell, often heard rather than seen by his damned friends and enemies, he is recognized by his local speech or so recognizes them. (Heaney 1980, p.136)

In this section, I will locate a trace of Irish heritage that has been mingled with Dantean myth and enunciated through the English language in Heaney's poetics. The discussion will begin with *Field Work* and track Dantean inheritances up to 'The Crossing'.

As was discussed earlier, Dante has been a guiding influence in Heaney's life, and Heaney also uses Dante to consider wider societal and cultural issues. 'Ugolino' and 'The Strand at Lough Beg' will be shown to reveal the inheritance and similarities that exist between Dante's world and that of the Irish poets. Again, similar to the *Eclogues* discussed earlier in the chapter, Heaney uses the classics to find an imagined place from which to situate the concerns of Northern Ireland. In this case, he discusses the violence that unfolds at the hands of terrorist paramilitaries who operate as supposed freedom fighters in his country. In *North*, Heaney deals with issues of violence from a wider Northern European and Scandinavian perspective. In *Field Work*, he further deepens this haunting of wider European inheritances by using Dante's works as a prism through which to discuss violence in 1970s Northern Ireland. This may stem from the fact that Heaney placed himself in exile, to a certain extent, by moving to Wicklow, and in another parallel with Dante, began to write more freely during his self-imposed exile.

Heaney is of two worlds and two cultures, as he notes in 'The Flight Path', when questioned by the border guard about where he is headed: 'both where I have been living / And where I left' (Heaney 1996, p.25). Dominic Manganiello notes that 'Heaney transports images of violence from the *Inferno* into the present in order to establish a parallel with the situation in Ulster' (Manganiello 2000, p.104), while the haunting nature of translation brings with it the historical spectres which percolate throughout the unconscious. Derrida discusses what a relevant translation accomplishes in his essay, 'What is a "Relevant" Translation', when he states that:

> A relevant translation would therefore be, quite simply, a 'good' translation, a translation that does what one expects of it, in short, a version that performs its mission, honors its

debt and does its job or its duty while inscribing in the receiving language the most

relevant equivalent for an original, the language that is the most right, appropriate,

pertinent, adequate, opportune, pointed, univocal, idiomatic, and so on. The most

possible, and this superlative puts us on the trail of an 'economy' with which we shall

have to reckon. (Derrida 2001, p.177)

The translation process that Heaney undertakes in 'Ugolino' demands that certain words and phrases be present to enable the haunting of the translated text by the original text, namely the *Inferno*. It is a relevant translation, as Derrida terms it, as it locates within the Irish situation a commonality between different worlds and societies, similar to what Heaney accomplished with the bog poems in *North*.

In essence, Heaney's 'Ugolino' captures the sectarian issues in Northern Ireland from the polemical standpoint of one who questions the acts yet does not offer judgement on the victims. The poem questions the repetitive nature of violence through the guise of Dante's canto XXXII, and canto XXXIII, where the inhabitants of the frozen, ninth circle of hell are doomed to repeat their actions on earth for eternity. Peggy O'Brien's discussion of the 'Station Island' sequence is applicable to 'Ugolino' when she notes that 'the poet Dante provides Heaney with the central conceit and convention of the poem, an underworld narrative that is structured by a series of encounters with significant ghosts' (O'Brien 1992, p.125). The spectres that come from the underworld of literature in Heaney's text are those who perpetrate acts of violence and savagery:

I walked the ice

And saw two soldered in a frozen hole

> On top of other, one's skull capping the other's,
>
> Gnawing at him where the neck and head
>
> Are grafted to the sweet fruit of the brain,
>
> Like a famine victim at a loaf of bread. (Heaney 1979, p.61)

The instant violence that opens the poem garners spectres of Greek, Italian and Irish heritage. Tydeus's biting of the decapitated Menalippis's head in life is conjured by Dante in the original text with Heaney following suit. Henry Hart discusses Heaney's use of myth in relation to Dante's guiding influence when he notes that:

> His 'Ugolino' and other Dantesque poems again demonstrate his responsible willingness to be the beneficiary of a 'trust', to accept the riches of tradition and pass them on, but also his freedom from tradition, his legitimate insistence on altering the past to fit his needs and beliefs. (Hart 1989, p.91)

The progression of the poem duly notes that those who are involved in the violence are in fact Count Ugolino and Archbishop Roger, while the image of the famine victim raises the Irish element within the poem. Interestingly, in Dante's text, the figures are referred to as 'two spirits by the ice' (Dante 1998, p.138). The spirits of the underworld relate to Derrida's notion of the spectre, because they exist in Dante's original text, but also find a haunting presence within Heaney's poetics with Derrida suggesting that:

> persons are personified by letting themselves be haunted by the very effect of objective haunting, so to speak, that they produce by inhabiting the thing. Persons (guardians or possessors of the thing) are haunted in return, and constituitively, by the haunting they

produce in the thing by lodging there their speech and their will like inhabitants. (Derrida

2006, p.198)

It is this which rings through regarding the presence of Count Ugolino and Archbishop

Roger in Heaney's 'Ugolino'. In a progression of hauntings, Greek myth haunts Dante's

text, while both Greek and Italian mythology haunts Heaney's contemporary society, as do

images of spectral famine figures from Irish history.

Shelley C. Reece puts forward the notion that 'Heaney's identity has come to be

more a place in the imagination' (Reece 1992, p.100), and it is his dwelling within the

realm of the imaginative that sparks conjurations of Dantean poetics. Heaney himself

would term this as being a 'creative act [that] is witnessed by history, and the writer writes

to be read' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.425). Systematic revenge is to the fore of the

text. The tit for tat killings that took place on the streets of Northern Ireland are reminiscent

of Ugolino constantly repeating the act of revenge on his victim. This repetition is also

gesturing towards the Freudian repetition complex, which suggests that those who fail to

understand the reasons for their actions are doomed to repeat them. Freud notes, in *Beyond

the Pleasure Principle*, that 'the re-experiencing of something identical, is clearly in itself

a source of pleasure' (Freud 2015, p.30), and for Ugolino this strange sense of pleasure is

what rings through. His attempt at justification for his actions is comparable to that of the

paramilitary organisations' attempts to control and murder anybody who may dare to step

out of line in Heaney's society:

And why I act the jockey to his mount

Is surely common knowledge; how my good faith

Was easy prey to his malignancy,

How I was taken, held, and put to death. (Heaney 1979, p.62)

The injustice that Ugolino feels compounds the emotions of those involved in the sectarian activities. The lack of forgiveness and the futility of violence is deeply striking within the poem.

This theme also haunts 'The Flight Path', in that Heaney questions the reasons for political violence, and refuses to engage in the violence carried out by a minority of his tribe, whether that be by the planting of a bomb at a roadblock or the writing of poetry in support of their cause. Heaney himself admits in *Stepping Stones* that 'Ugolino' was meant to be read in line with the hunger strikers in the H blocks: 'the creative act is witnessed by history, and the writer writes to be read. In that sense, I translated "Ugolino" in order for it to be read in the context of the "dirty protests" in the Maze prison' (Heaney and O'Driscoll 2009, p.425). Although 'Ugolino' is metaphorical in its approach to the hunger strikes, Heaney would later be haunted by this political context, and would openly correlate Ugolino's and Dante's experiences in the underworld with the issues in Northern Ireland in 'The Flight Path':

The gaol walls all those months were smeared with shite.

Out of Long Kesh after his dirty protest

The red eyes were the eyes of Ciaran Nugent

Like something out of Dante's scurfy hell,

Drilling their way through the rhymes and images

Where I too walked behind the righteous Virgil,

As safe as houses and translating freely:

When he had said all this, his eyes rolled

And his teeth, like a dog's teeth clamping round a bone,

Bit into the skull and again took hold. (Heaney 1996, p.25)

This shows the consistency of the repetition of history, myth and ideas through the overarching influence of the spectre in the poetry. Just as Heaney revisits Louis O'Neill's murder in *Human Chain*, so he also revisits certain aspects of his dealings with the Troubles in his later poetry.

The suffering caused by imprisonment is magnified when Ugolino's children are themselves tied in with the violence. This critiques the actions and outcomes of the needless violence in both Dante's Florence and Heaney's Northern Ireland where everybody is a target. While Tony Curtis remarks that the poem is 'a sort of elegy for the whole situation in Northern Ireland' (Curtis 1982, p.103), Joseph Heininger notes of the repetitiveness of the violence in both worlds that 'in appropriating the figure of Ugolino Heaney articulates a moral and political critique of contemporary acts of violence and the repetitive cycles of hatred and revenge that spawn them' (Heininger 2005, p.53). The repetition of these acts is the scourge of both contemporary Northern Ireland and Medieval Florence. Heaney reimagines the Biblical proverb of what you sow, so shall you reap, which adds an air of intertextuality to the religious undertones that encompass the *Inferno*:

'Yet while I weep to say them, I would sow

My words like curses'. (Heaney 1979, p.61)

However, it is the purgatorial silence within the poem that is strikingly relevant to society.

It is the silence of the normal, everyday, innocent victims of violence that seems to haunt the poem. The silence that had been part of the societal response to the many victims of paramilitary violence in contemporary Northern Ireland is mirrored in the poem by Ugolino himself:

> I stared in my sons' faces and spoke no word.
>
> My eyes were dry and my heart was stony.
>
> They cried and my little Anselm said,
>
> 'What's wrong? Why are you staring, daddy?'
>
> But I shed no tears, I made no reply
>
> All through that day, all through the night that followed. (Heaney 1979, p.62).

Politicians would also be engrained in this form of silence, and although Heaney does not openly reference them in *Field Work*, he does refer to them as useless 'mouth athletes' in 'Mycenae Lookout' who merely babble (Heaney 1996, p.33). It is the common people who do acts of good and attempt to bring some sort of humanity to the fore of Ulster politics that become victims.

Although the events of Dante's text are purely mythical, they resonate on a deep psychological level with the actions that unfold in the North. Heaney is quoted as saying that 'in relation to the Ugolino section I did from the Dante. It was a very famous purple passage, but it also happened to have an oblique applicability (in its ferocity of emotion and in its narrative about a divided city) to the Northern Irish situation' (Heaney & Brandes 1988, p.12). The children of the poem personify the very nature of the futile violence. They are as innocent as Louis O'Neill from 'Casualty' or Seán Browne in 'The Augean Stables'

in that just like both men, they were murdered merely for being associated with an identity. The blame is placed upon those who are destined to contribute to the unnecessary violence in the past, present and future with Derrida suggesting that nationalism breeds more hatred and continues the repetition of violence: 'like those of the blood, nationalisms of native soil not only sow hatred, not only commit crimes, they have no future, they promise nothing if, like stupidity or the unconscious, they hold fast to life' (Derrida 2006, p.213). Ugolino's children dying of hunger symbolises the lack of growth as a nation as a result of the violence as well as the loss of a new future because the spectre of the past constantly returns to haunt and repeat the past in the present:

> For four days we let the silence gather.
>
> Then, throwing himself flat in front of me,
>
> Gaddo said, 'Why don't you help me, father?'
>
> He died like that, and surely as you see
>
> Me here, one by one I saw my three
>
> Drop dead during the fifth day and the sixth day
>
> Until I saw no more (Heaney 1979, p.63)

The silence within the nation, and the deaths of the innocent, have occurred throughout history. The bog victims in Scandinavia, the inhabitants of the city of Troy, the citizens of Florence, the victims of the Roman Empire and Northern Ireland show that 'everything begins before it begins' (Derrida 2006, p.202). This is what Heaney is expressing in the poem: the lived experiences of the past are now awakening and reinventing themselves in the present. Violence does not cease because it is culturally and politically sustained and is

ingrained in the unconscious of every nation. After telling Dante of his misery instead of doing something to help the situation Ugolino completes the circular trajectory of history and begins the cycle again:

> When he had said all this, his eyes rolled
>
> And his teeth, like a dog's teeth clamping round a bone,
>
> Bit into the skull and again took hold. (Heaney 1979, p.63)

The bile of nationalism, racism and vengeance has taken hold here, and the image of eye-rolling madness symbolises how those in thrall to this ideology 'have no future, they promise nothing' (Derrida 2006, p.213) except unremitting pain.

Heaney's associations with Dante in *Field Work* are not confined to this poem. While the poet accompanied Dante and Virgil into the domain of the underworld in 'Ugolino', he once again enters Purgatory with them in 'The Strand at Lough Beg'. Like the *Eclogues*, the epigraph that begins the poem immediately reimagines and welcomes the spectre of the mythical past:

> All round this little island, on the strand
>
> Far down below there, where the breakers strive,
>
> Grow the tall rushes from the oozy sand. (Heaney 1979, p.17)

The lines taken from Dante's *Purgatorio* conjure the symbolism of an island that is surrounded and haunted by spectres which are Dantean in appearance, and which is metaphorically representative of Ireland. Nick Havely notes that the poem 'draws obliquely on the *Commedia*' (Havley 2008, p.248), because it is not a direct translation of Dante's

work, but instead partially mimics the rituals of the *Commedia*. Stephen Regan notes that

the poem's epigraph taken 'form Dante's *Purgatorio* gives an appropriate solemnity to the

poem, but it also felicitously connects one "strand" with another and conveniently provides

the rushes for the mourning ritual at the close of Heaney's elegy' (Regan 2007, p.16). The

poem discusses the murder of the poet's cousin Colum McCartney at a fake roadblock

while on the way back from a football match:

> 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? (Heaney 1979, p.17)

The paramilitaries who carried out the murder are not mentioned in the poem, which adds

to the notion that anyone can be a victim, and that these acts are perpetrated by both sides

of the divide; he later mentions that it was a group of 'Loyalist paramilitaries rigged out in

Ulster Defence Regiment uniforms' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.222) who committed

the murder. George Cusack notes that Heaney 'cannot even successfully control his own

involvement in the situation around him' (Cusack 2002, p.57), and that in the poem the

speaker's 'motivation is, at its core, a sectarian one' (Cusack 2002, p.57).

      I would argue that Heaney does not place blame on either side, but instead invokes

the mad wanderings of Sweeney in *Buile Suibhne* to show that the violence is culturally

sanctioned, and has occurred throughout history, with Regan commenting that 'the

grotesque imagery of the "demon pack" he [Sweeney] met on his travels prepares us for

the violent murder of McCartney without in any way mitigating or diminishing the real,

contemporary force of that sectarian killing' (Regan 2007, p.17). Heaney's attempt in the

poem is not to support his tribe, but rather to question the acts that place young, innocent men in funeral homes. Similarly, the haunting presence of the *Purgatorio* over the poem further ingrains the in-between nature of Heaney regarding identity, as well as sectarian violence and murder. In *Stepping Stones*, Heaney puts forward his feelings on the murder: 'still, the circumstances of his death were so brutal you couldn't not feel that your presence was called for, in protest as much as in sympathy' (Heaney and O'Driscoll 2009, p.220). The key word here is 'protest', it supports the notion that the poem is as much a protest and questioning of the senseless violence as opposed to a poem that is motivated by sectarian tendencies as it blends 'private grief with public notice' (Regan 2007, p.19). However, he failed to attend the funeral of his cousin or to condemn it openly at the time.

The ghost of Colum McCartney also appears in 'Station Island' section VIII, where his cousin openly accuses him of evading the situation, to an extent, and assuaging his death in the myth of Dante's *Purgatorio*:

> '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.' (Heaney 1984, p.83)

The revisiting of 'The Strand at Lough Beg' in 'Station Island' heightens the haunting

nature of the issue and continues Heaney's process of re-evaluating past poetry in later collections. Myth universalises the predicament, but it can also deflect from the reality of the contemporary violence. His poetry is 'very much a poetry of the self' (Nordin 2000, p.174) which engages with the hybrid nature of his identity, and literary background, and enables Heaney to remain altruistic. The immediate summoning of the Medieval Irish spectre ties Dante's, Sweeney's and Heaney's worlds together once again in the same repetitive cycle of cultural bloodshed, with Regan noting that near the end of the poem 'we find ourselves in the haunted present' (Regan 2007, p.20):

> 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. (Heaney 1979, p.17)

While the poem does depict, at least on the surface, the reality of the situation in Northern Ireland during the Troubles, it also illustrates the inheritance that has helped to shape modern Ireland. The nation was founded upon the 'cold-nosed gun' (Heaney 1979, p.17) during the various uprisings, and ultimately in the War of Independence during the early 1920s, as Heaney implies in 'The Tollund Man'. The cold nose of the gun is also a trace object in the linking of modern society to the nose of the wild dogs that chased Sweeney in Medieval times:

> The heads were pursuing him,
>
> lolling and baying,
>
> snapping and yelping,

whining and squealing.

They nosed at his calves and his thighs,

they breathed on his shoulder,

they nuzzled the back of his neck. (Heaney 1983, pp.69 -70)

Seamus Deane is of the opinion that the poem reminds us 'of the importance of the Gaelic Tradition and its peculiar weight of reference in many poems' (Deane 1997, p.75), yet another reference to haunting as central to Heaney's poetic imperative. 'The Strand at Lough Beg' succeeds in its attempt to link the past with the present. The wider societal issues of murder and mayhem have now been internalized by the poet and made personal, yet at the same time universal, in the sense that they are framed within the realm of classical mythology. Collins notes that it 'marks Heaney's first effort to internalize the current Troubles within an elegiac frame, to deal with sectarian death on a personal level' (Collins 2003, p.114), while Irene Gilsenan Nordin also comments upon the style of the poem in that it is 'written in the classical elegy style, with a conversation between a living witness and a speaking ghost' (Nordin 2000, p.177).

However, the voice of the ghost is not just that of Colum McCartney, it is also the voices of history and the spectre. Derrida advocates that 'the subject that haunts is not identifiable, one cannot see, localize, fix any form, one cannot decide between hallucination and perception, there are only displacements' (Derrida 2006, p.170) and it is this that allows a multitude of spectres to haunt the poem. The ending of the 'The Strand at Lough Beg' situates Heaney and his dead cousin in a scene from the *Purgatorio* where Virgil wipes the face of Dante clean:

In the thick grass aside, my master plunged

Both his hands softly: and I understood

And leaned toward him my face worn with tears.

And here he washed away from me the hue

Of the sad place, and brought me back my colour. (Dante 1914 p.132)

Heaney's scene is made Irish once again. The imagined location in the poem remains under the influence of the mythical spectre, but is layered with Irishness. Heaney uses the land, as in his previous collections, to locate identity and culture. Heaney's 'thick grass' is the 'moss' of Northern Ireland, and his cousin is imagined as having 'blood and roadside muck in your hair and eyes' (Heaney 1979, p.18):

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 the arms and lay you flat.

With rushes that shoot green again, I plait

Green scapulars to wear over your shroud. (Heaney 1979, p.18)

The scene is haunted by mythical works but maintains its Irishness especially through the presence of 'Green scapulars' which are culturally an Irish item. Regan comments that

'Heaney's elegy closes with a specifically Irish Catholic and Nationalist iconography. The green vestment in Catholic liturgy signifies renewal' (Regan 2007, p.20). This element of renewal ties in with the elegiac qualities of the poem as well as the haunting, absent presence of Heaney's cousin. Similar instances of renewal will be traced later in this thesis in 'Route 110'. This is not imagery one would associate with Dantean poetics, but this is, after all, Heaney being guided by the spectre of Dante, just as Virgil led the Italian poet through the underworld. Circularity also finds a place within the structure and style of the poem. The end of the poem links to the roundness of the epigraph at the beginning of the poem. Iain Twiddy comments upon Heaney's use of style in 'The Strand at Lough Beg' noting that:

> The *abba* scheme of the last four lines wraps up the body: the *b* couplet stitches the middle two lines together, while the *a* rhyme is plaited around them, sewing up the four lines in this way. Furthermore, the long vowel sound of the final enclosing word 'shroud', together with the repeated /r/ sounds of the last line, extend to wrap around the poem, referring back to and uniting the initial 'All round' of the epigraph. (Twiddy 2012, p.134)

In this case, the structural and stylistic features of the text complement the thematic context of the poem. Stephen Regan ties the strong elegiac qualities of the poem together when he comments on the ending of the poem that:

> Heaney's elegy closes with a specifically Irish Catholic and Nationalist iconography. The green vestment in Catholic liturgy signifies renewal, but it also recalls the old United Ireland ballad, 'The Wearing of the Green', and its memorable evocation in Yeats's

'Easter 1916'. There is no dogmatic assertion of belief, either political or religious, but rather a subdued and tender search for comfort in the stark realization of human loss: 'With rushes that shoot green again, I plait / Green scapulars to wear over your shroud.' (Regan 2007, p.20)

So far, the discussion of Dante has been predominantly focused upon his influence over, and correlation with, the sectarian violence in Northern Ireland. 'The Crossing', in *Seeing Things*, seems to steer away from Heaney's engagement with the Troubles and moves instead into the realm of his personal struggle to accept his public position as poet. The poem is his attempt to be freed from the shackles that bind him with addressing sectarian violence. *Seeing Things* as a collection focuses upon the marvellous and the world around him, as opposed to societal issues, with many 'readers who had admired Heaney's unflinching representation of public realities sometimes expressed disappointment with this turn toward the visionary or ethereal' (O'Donoghue 2016, p.205). While many of the collections up to *Seeing Things* looked back to the past, Heaney now uses Dante's *Inferno* to signal his move towards the future. At the beginning of *Seeing Things*, the poet crossed the River Styx with the spectre of Virgil in 'The Golden Bough' to find the shade of his father which he calls 'the final "unroofing" of the world' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.322). Now, Heaney uses the same setting, influenced by the spectre of Dante, to escape the past and enter a new world that shapes a new sense of self. Daniel Tobin notes that *Station Island* was Heaney's 'pilgrimage to a redefined and renewed sense of self' (Tobin 2015, p.249), while the same can be said for 'The Crossing', as he descends 'into the realm of death as elaborated through myth' (Tobin 2015, p.249). While the descent into the netherworld is nothing new for Heaney, in this sense, it is a wholly new experience. The

Dantean spectre that has been a predominant feature throughout his poetry finds a way of influencing, not just the political circumstances of the nation or the poet's identity, but his own personal journey.

This translation, like all the others, addresses the Irish poet's musings and fuses them with those of his Italian counterpart. O'Brien notes that 'translation allows him to wipe the slate of fixation clean, and to dislocate and revision Irishness through the crossing over (in one of the etymological senses of translation) into other cultures and languages' (O'Brien 2005, p.288). Charon holds an inherently Irish image of an elder man in the poem but speaks the language of *Inferno*:

> And there in a boat that came heading towards us
>
> Was an old man, his hair snow-white with age,
>
> Raging and bawling, 'Woe to you, wicked spirits!' (Heaney 1991b, p.111)

The opening description of the poem locates a centre upon which Heaney can ground his position in society. He is proven to be different from those who surround him in the underworld. This metaphorical crossing over may be an example of Heaney finally accepting that his poetry does in fact hold some power and force. His earlier writings were filled with much anxiety and unsteadiness, and he discusses this with Frank Kinahan:

> The first three books, I would say, are the trace element of a hopeful learning experience, and all my anxiety was that I might be able to write poetry and do it well in the first place. Another part of the anxiety was that the material that was my imaginative possession - the rural outback, Irish history – my anxiety was that that might be

insignificant. Some kind of surge of confidence came with the ending of *Wintering Out*

and the beginning of *North*. (Heaney and Kinahan 1982, p.410)

As Heaney progressed towards *Station Island* he would again begin a re-questioning of his

previous works through his engagement with spectral revenants, and again undergo the

same process in *Human Chain*. Despite these subtle questionings and revisiting of previous

works, 'The Crossing' 'reinforces the sense of being chosen' (Collins 2003, p.180):

> And you there, you, the living soul, separate
>
> Yourself from these others who are dead. (Heaney 1991b, p.111)

Charon's admittance of Heaney is a striking image of the poem. It awards the poet a status

that is above that of even the ferryman himself, as Charon is a vehicle of crossing but never

actually crosses himself. Granted such power in a poetical sense enables the poet to carry

on with his work and to progress to the other side of the river of his metaphorical and literal

journey in life:

> And my guide said, 'Quiet your anger, Charon.
>
> There where all can be done that has been willed
>
> This has been willed; so there can be no question.'

> Then straightaway he shut his grizzled jaws,
>
> The ferryman of that livid marsh,
>
> Who had wheels of fire flaming round his eyes. (Heaney 1991b, p.111)

It is as if Heaney's poetry has been bestowed upon him 'by a higher authority' (O'Donoghue 2016, p.205). This gives the poet permission to move away from that which he felt compelled to write about during the earlier years in the Troubles, and move towards a more definite locus of imaginative spirituality that follows on from Eliot who was in Heaney's words 'recreating Dante in his own image' (Heaney 2002, p.173).

The spirituality comes to fruition in his next collection *The Spirit Level*, where he strikes 'a delicate balance between the historical and the mythical, the narrative and the symbolic, the textual and the intertextual' (Osterwalder 1997, p.35). While 'The Crossing' is deeply intertextual, it also manages to portray a world where actions and words have consequences in the netherworld. It coincides with the careful approach that Heaney has taken when dealing with the sectarian violence in his poetry. He has not spoken in support of tribal violence, but instead has embraced and used the English language to portray and enhance his own sense of identity. Again, in his interview with Kinahan, he notes that:

> At the same time, the melodies of poetry which most people in my part of Ireland, the Northern part, picked up in their education were the melodies of the English line; and insofar as one speaks English that melody is part of the inheritance. It seems to me a mistaken approach toward being an Irish poet to dismantle the melodies that are already in English. I mean, our own natural way of speaking English in Ireland is what we should be true to; we should refine our ear to pick up that key which we are tuned to. (Heaney and Kinahan 1982, p.405)

Similarly, Derrida would suggest that inheritance is a multitude of voices that must be deconstructed in order to be fully understood. He notes that 'an inheritance is never

gathered together, it is never one with itself. Its presumed unity, if there is one, can consist only in the *injunction* to *reaffirm by choosing*. "One must" means *one must* filter, sift, criticize, one must sort out several different possibles that inhabit the same injunction' (Derrida 2006, p.18). In the poem, those who have not been careful enough to embrace culture, or who have betrayed it, suffer in the afterlife. This may also be interpreted as those who were not true to themselves and their own thoughts in life suffer in the underworld. This is why Heaney has been chosen, because he is consciously probing, filtering, sifting and criticizing the current inheritance of the Troubles, and attempting to move away from and resist the urge to write about the Troubles:

> They blasphemed God and their parents on the earth,
>
> The human race, the place and date and seedbed
>
> Of their own begetting and of their birth,
>
> Then all together, bitterly weeping, made
>
> Their way towards the accursed shore that waits
>
> For every man who does not fear his God. (Heaney 1991b, p.112)

The spirits who inhabit the underworld are destined to wander the fiery and icy hell for eternity. However, Heaney's difference from those who must suffer and repeat their actions in death is juxtaposed with the inner freedom the poet has now granted himself by making this metaphorical crossing in life. Collins notes that the presence adds a 'powerful sense of continuity' (Collins 2003, p.180) to the poetry. The mythical hauntings throughout this chapter, and Heaney's poetry in general, continue to establish the link between the classical

world and contemporary times, a link that reinforces Derrida's view that 'it is not absence instead of presence, but a trace which replaces a presence which has never been present, an origin by means of which nothing has begun' (Derrida 2001, p.372). Collins goes on to note that by the end of the collection Heaney has perhaps made 'a crossing over to poetic immortality' (Collins 2003, p.180). I would argue that although Heaney does attempt to reach a new space within his poetry through making this crossing, it is not a Yeatsian immortality that is achieved in terms of certainty or self-assuredness.

By the end of the poem, it is a rather permissive tone that haunts the closing lines:

> No good spirits ever pass this way
>
> And therefore, if Charon objects to you,
>
> You should understand well what his words imply. (Heaney 1991b, p.113)

In this sense, Heaney does not achieve immortality, but instead grants himself permission to venture into a new type of poetics that deals with the marvellous, and is not consumed by a deep need to address the political landscape of Northern Ireland. He broadens the discussion of cultural violence in *District and Circle* when he attempts to understand the 9/11 attack in 'Anything Can Happen', again through mythical hauntings from Horace's *Odes*:

> Well, just now
>
> He galloped his thunder cart and his horses
>
> Across a clear blue sky. It shook the earth
>
> And the clogged underearth, the River Styx,

> The winding streams, the Atlantic shore itself.
>
> Anything can happen, the tallest towers
>
>
> Be overturned, those in high places daunted,
>
> Those overlooked regarded. (Heaney 2006, p.13)

Regan speaks of Heaney's reflectiveness and his circling back to previous ideas in the poetry after the ceasefire of 1994, when he notes that:

> Since 1994, Heaney's poetry has taken on a more reflective, retrospective disposition; it has steadily, if continuously, opened itself to the possibilities of reconciliation and peaceful settlement, while remaining alert to the other possibility that the ceasefire might be no more that a brief, illusory resolution of crisis. Most recently, in *District and Circle*, (2006), the crisis has itself been redefined, so that the political urgencies that had once seemed peculiar to a province have come to be regarded within the context of global terrorism and counter-terrorism. (Regan 2011, p.112)

However, that being said, escaping the past is never possible and Heaney ultimately revisits these topics from *Electric Light* onwards though not in the same obsessive manner.

Chapter Five: Looking Backwards into the Future – 'Route 110'

The final chapter of this thesis will focus upon the poetic sequence, 'Route 110', from Heaney's final collection *Human Chain*. This poem has not been fully referenced until the final chapter because it completes the circle of the thematic hauntings that have been discussed up until this point. The poem is haunted by the entire Heaney canon, and as such, works that have not been discussed thus far will be drawn into the discussion. The poems examined in Chapter Two will be referenced to suggest that history is a guiding influence over, not only the poetry as a whole, but also 'Route 110'. Chapter Three's extrapolation of contemporary violence in Northern Ireland will underwrite the analysis of sections VIII and IX in this poem. The previous chapter dealing with the spectres of Virgil and Dante will find points of reference throughout. Overall, my reading of 'Route 110', and the works that influence it, will be influenced by the findings of Chapter One and its outlining of the trope of hauntology. The proliferation of ghosts as one delves deeper into the Heaney canon accounts for the multiple themes that haunt this central poem of his final collection. The poem is almost like a capstone which clocks a lot of Heaney's earlier ideas into a solid structure. This enunciation of memory is 'not a psychical property among others; it is the very essence of the psyche: resistance, and precisely, thereby, an opening to the effraction of the trace' (Derrida 2001, p.252). The sequence traces Heaney's memory, and life, from his time as a young man in the first section, to his position as a grandfather in Section XII.

Human Chain, and 'Route 110', are based primarily on memory and the trace of

history as the past springs forth to haunt the collection. The variety of themes that preside over 'Route 110' finds its locus in the innumerable amount of spectres that haunt the unconscious of Heaney: 'one can neither classify nor count the ghosts, it is number itself, it is numerous, innumerable as number, one can neither count on it nor with it. There is but one of them and already there are too many' (Derrida 2006, p.173). In essence, 'Route 110' is the poet's way of combining all his influences and spectres in a singular comprehensive text, with allusions being made throughout that are recognizable in previous works. Heaney himself cites Joyce's way of writing as an influence on his own, in that he 'established conditions where his writing could more easily restore a sense of novelty and freshness to old and familiar objects. From the viewing deck of Europe ordinary Irish things were presented and represented to the mind in an unusual way' (Heaney 2012, p.20). This is what 'Route 110' accomplishes; it places European myth alongside its Irish counterparts, and fuses both worlds in a spectral synthesis to create a poem that is guided, but not controlled, by myth. It is similar to Heaney's incorporation of Norse, Italian and classical myth throughout his poetry up until this point. The poet is conscious, in 'Route 110', of his undertakings; he welcomes the ghosts of the past and redistributes them in a different manner than he did before: it is as if his early work has become almost a mythic source that now haunts the later poems.

This chapter will be underpinned by references that see this sequence as analeptically referencing much of the rest of the Heaney canon. Ghosts make up the poem in that they reside within the body of the text. The spectres that have haunted Heaney's unconscious become, to a degree, conscious in 'Route 110'. The poem reassembles past spectres and re-engages with issues such as the poet's views on the murder of Louis

O'Neill. Dennis O'Driscoll put the question to Heaney 'have you ever felt you had failed poetry in some way?' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.467), and Heaney's response adduces notions of Derrida's influencing spectres. His response is open, and honest: 'yes, because there were times when I should have disregarded Milosz's injunction and my own censor and let bad spirits rather than good spirits choose me, as he says, "for their instrument"' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.467). This brings about the idea that Heaney's earlier writing attains a level of unconscious spectral inheritances, but in later years, he becomes more fully aware of these spirits and that his writing is in turn powered by these ghosts. His earlier work 'is primed as much by poetry as by other people' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.62), which gives strength to the idea that spectral inheritance is at play in the formation of much of his work. Memory also plays a major part in the dynamics of the poem; the sequence recounts experiences of Heaney's life, and this process exemplifies the thoughts of Henry Rousso on the topic of memory, as he suggests that:

> to speak of memory is necessarily to bring into play the unconscious, which belongs not just to the register of the individual but also to that of social and collective phenomena. The words and images of our own past and present permeate us as individuals just as they do the group or groups to which we belong. (Rousso 2002, p.5)

'Route 110' delves into the poet's unconscious and locates his sense of place and that of the world around him. The remainder of this chapter will deal with each section of 'Route 110' individually. Structurally, my examination of the poem will reveal how the last line of each section links with the first line of the next. There are multiple hauntologies at work here, as each section haunts the next with the sequence itself being haunted by the entirety

of Heaney's collections.

Parallels will be drawn with previous poems and with how they are unconsciously manifested within the final collection. This will again link with the unconscious repetition of history in the psyche but will also explain how the Derridean spectre operates to haunt the present and future. In essence, through engaging with the spectres that dwell within the poetry this reading will act as a way of deconstructing the poem itself with Derrida noting:

> The paradox in the instituting moment of an institution is that, at the same time that it starts something new, it also continues something, is true to the memory of the past, to a heritage, to something we receive from the past, from our predecessors, from the culture. If an institution is to be an institution, it must to some extent break with the past, keep the memory of the past, while inaugurating something absolutely new. (Derrida & Caputo 1997, p.6)

This poem embodies this *aporia*, as it is both new, but at the same time, an expression of aspects of Heaney's life and poetic development that have been seen in glimpses throughout his writing.

First Steps

'Route 110' begins with a young Heaney venturing around a second hand book store in Belfast, presumably during the time when he was in college in Queens University. The section automatically conjures spectral presences. One should look upon 'Route 110' as a text in itself placed at the heart of *Human Chain*, with Neil Corcoran's extrapolation of the word 'text' reinforcing this idea: '"text" deriving from the Latin *textus* (a web or something

woven) emphasises the way the literary work is woven into the fabric of its relations with language itself and all those historical, political and cultural forces operating within language' (Corcoran 1999, p.77). The poem is a link between the past, present and future in its ordinary, everyday images, but the Virgilian and Dantesque spectres that permeate the poem offer an otherworldly viewpoint on Irishness, and on Heaney's own experiences. Here the classical world offers a transcendental perspective from which Heaney's own contemporary experiences are seen in a different and almost anamorphic manner. The opening stanza mentions the 'Classics bay' (Heaney 2010, p.48), where the ghosts of Virgil, Dante and Greek mythology reside. Section I is representative of the young poet traversing the precipice of youth to reach a more intense, wider, older, European version of identity.

In an interview with Mike Murphy, Heaney notes that 'being admitted to learning and going to secondary school and university revealed something to me and detached me from my beginnings' (Murphy 2000, p.82). The poem is Heaney's way of coming to terms with this detachment by using memories to relieve any feelings of guilt he might feel in old age. The setting does not conjure imagery of an opulent or elevated nature, but one of simplicity and ordinariness that is redolent of his humble beginnings on a farm in County Derry. The importance of the moment is recognized by Heaney only in hindsight, but at the time the event and setting are played down:

> She emerges, absorbed in her coin-count,
>
> Eyes front, right hand at work
>
> In the slack marsupial vent
>
> Of her change-pocket, thinking what to charge

For a used copy of *Aeneid VI*. (Heaney 2010, p.48)

Despite the copy of Virgil's text being second hand, it is still monumental in shaping the poetry of Heaney's later works. One can look upon this copy of *Aeneid VI* as being comparable to the function of the Golden Bough for Virgil. It has allowed Heaney access to a new world of not only literature but of imaginative space to parallel his own personal life.

The second hand book similarly allows the motif of new beginnings to be set out in the opening section of the poem, just as the sequence ends with a different new beginning, as symbolised by the birth of Anna Rose. It is another example of the repetition of history and of the circularity that has been traced as a significant trope in Heaney's writing. The fact that the book is second hand is a further example of this haunting process, as it has influenced others just as it will influence him. The acts of translation that Heaney undertakes, and the mingling of Virgilian myth with his own world, allows the shades present in *Aeneid VI* to speak to and for the world of contemporary Ireland, though from a different perspective. By paralleling his journey with that of Aeneas, he allows the past to repeat itself, and once again is linking with Derrida's notion of repetition in literature which suggests that 'pure repetition, were it to change neither thing nor sign, carries with it an unlimited power of perversion and subversion' (Derrida 2001 p.373). The renewability of Virgil's Golden Bough corresponds to Heaney's use of *Aeneid VI* because it has allowed the poet access to his unconscious on multiple occasions as can be seen in his full translation of Book VI:

No one is ever allowed

> Down to earth's hidden places unless he has first
>
> Plucked this sprout of fledged gold from its tree
>
> And handed it over to fair Proserpina
>
> To whom it belongs, by decree, her own special gift.
>
> And when it is plucked, a second one grows every time
>
> In its place, golden again, emanating
>
> That same sheen and shimmer. (Heaney 2017, p.10)

The introduction of the text to Heaney in school by Father McGlinchey was his initial induction to the mythical underworld of Virgil's writing. Now, in 'Route 110', he uses this text as a window through which to view his own life by intentionally making allusions to Aeneas's journey. It is a constant imaginative companion to him. Molino also notes this, but goes a step further, and likens Heaney to Joyce in that 'Heaney recognized that beyond his translation to a classical antecedent he could use Aeneas's journey as a counterpart to his own story' (Molino 2016, p.101).

Likewise, one can draw a comparison between Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and 'Route 110'. Each text conveys the events in life that have deeply impacted on both writers, and to some degree the haunting nature of these memories allows them to create a text that is extremely spectral, with Joyce noting in the text that 'the past is consumed in the present and the present is living only because it brings forth the future' (Joyce 2000, p.273). Neither technically immerses themselves in the text; Joyce's memories are played out through the guise of Stephen Daedalus, while Heaney's journey mirrors that of Aeneas. It is also interesting that Dedalus is mentioned in Aeneas's journey through the underworld when he arrives at the cave of the Sibyl that has been fashioned by

Daedalus himself:

> And enter now, the temple roof'd with gold.
>
> When Daedalus, to fly the Cretan shore,
>
> His heavy limbs on jointed pinions bore,
>
> (the first who sail'd in air,) 'tis sung by Fame,
>
> To the Cumaean coast at length he came,
>
> And here alighting, built this costly frame.
>
> Inscrib'd to Phoebus, here he hung on high
>
> The steerage of his wings,
>
> That cut the sky:
>
> The o'ver the lofty gate his art emboss'd
>
> Androgeos' death, and off'rings to his ghost;
>
> Sev'n youths from Athens yearly sent, to meet
>
> The fate appointed by revengeful Crete. (Virgil 2013, p.162)

Not only does Daedalus appear in Virgil's *Aeneid* and Joyce's text by name, the mythical figure haunts the structure and writing of Heaney's 'Route 110'. Daedalus's inscriptions upon the Sibyl's temple depict mythical scenes just like Heaney's text. Both select specific representations and instances of myth to coincide with their own art form. Just as Aeneas ventured downwards into the underworld, so Heaney journeys downwards into the unconscious. He attempts to make the unconscious, conscious. The universality of myth is juxtaposed with the seemingly banal, ordinary Irish setting.

On the surface, this is what occurs, but on a deeper level, Heaney is comparing the

past with the present and deeming each to be of equal value. One can draw upon Heaney's

first use of myth in *Death of a Naturalist*, 'Personal Helicon', when he notes that 'I rhyme

/ To see myself, to set the darkness echoing' (Heaney 1966, p.59), as being the beginning

of his flirtations with myth. His first mythical poem is proleptic of what he does in 'Route

110'. Heaney has constantly used myth to understand himself, and his world, in relation to

other historical societies. In his interview with George Morgan he poses a question to

himself and answers it; 'what are we? Are we the centre where the ripple begins or are we

the circumference to which the ripple extends? I think we are the negotiation between that

first stirring of infant consciousness and the ultimate reach of our own recognitions'

(Heaney & Morgan 1998 p.3). Myth allows the poet to see himself in a light outside of that

of his own consciousness; he sees himself from a higher plateau. Heaney looks upon his

time in Belfast at Queens as a time when '"life and "literature" were beginning to connect'

(Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.39), and it is easy to apply this perception to Section I of

the poem, given the influence that Virgil has had over his work. His writing has been about

connection: both to place and identity. The purchase of the book is almost a sexual

connection in his early life:

> Dustbreath bestirred in the cubicle mouth
>
> I inhaled as she slid my purchase
>
> Into a deckle-edged brown paper bag. (Heaney 2010, p.48)

The purchase gives birth to a new Virgilian spectre that haunts the later poetry. It is

interesting to note that it is the almost accidental and serendipitous acquisition of two texts,

Virgil's *Aeneid VI* and P. V. Glob's *The Bog People*, which have formed the basis of the

poet's strongest mythical work.

Despite Section I focusing solely upon the purchase of Virgil's text, one cannot help but locate the spectre of the bog poems absent presence haunting the text with Heaney noting that 'one way of describing the function of myth is to say that it puts us in touch with the eternal' (Heaney 2008, p.19). Just as the shopkeeper disregards the importance and eternal nature of Virgil's text in section I, so too are the quernstones in 'Belderg' from *North* initially seen as both commonplace and aleatory:

> 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. (Heaney 1975, p.13)

The mythical text has existed in Ireland and has lain dormant in the shop until the poet purchased it and mixed it with the spectres of his Irish unconscious. Similarly, the ancient quernstones resided within the land for a lengthy period, and were merely strewn about the house, until Heaney interpreted them as the past breathing life into the present. The Norse myth referred to in Chapter Two becomes eternal through the function of the voice of language, as Derrida states 'when a voice has its localizable place in a social field, it is no longer heard; when one does hear it, it is the voice of a ghost' (Derrida 1999, p.135). In true ghostly fashion, each section haunts both itself and the one following. It is the 'brown paper bag' one would associate with shopping that links Heaney to the 'Smithfield Market' of Section II. In Section I, he acquired his passport to the underworld of the psyche, while

from Section II onwards, he will continue to mirror certain aspects of Aeneas's journey by encountering different shades of his past and his unconscious.

Journeys Home

Section II transports us to a market scene where the young poet rushes through the crowds on his way to the bus home. The mythical allusions grow stronger in this section. While the previous section is subtly haunted by Virgilian undertones, and by an introduction to what is following, Section II enforces a more comparative scene. Irishness is once again infused with the world of myth through the images of the pet shop at Smithfield Market and Lake Avernus. It is worth noting that Smithfield Market in Belfast is all the more relevant as the initial setting for Heaney's haunted Virgilian poem, given that it was bombed and reduced to ashes in 1974. The pet shop is usually an earthy place, full of life and noise and strong smells, but is now silent as the poet ventures through it on his personal journey downwards:

> Smithfield Market Saturdays. The pet shop
>
> Fetid with droppings in the rabbit cages,
>
> Melodious with canaries, green and gold,
>
> But silent now as birdless Lake Avernus. (Heaney 2010, p.49)

Lake Avernus, the entrance to the underworld, is the first literal and open reference in 'Route 110' to the journey of Aeneas. Like he has done in *Death of a Naturalist* and the bog poems, Heaney once again ventures downwards, almost reengaging with the motif of digging that is prevalent throughout his early works such as 'Viking Dublin: Trial Pieces',

where he goes downwards into the imaginative, unconscious and mythical realm of the Vikings:

> a worm of thought
>
> I follow into the mud. (Heaney 1975, p.23)

This downward progression transforms in a lineage of mythical engagements. In *Preoccupations*, he suggests that his early poetry had been an attempt to probe the unconscious, but the most important part is the bottomlessness that the digging and bog metaphor proposes. It is reminiscent of the bottomless centre that Heaney proposes at the end of 'Bogland', and its progression to a degree of the limitlessness of language and myth:

> Again, as in the case of 'Digging', the seminal impulse had been unconscious. What generated the poem about memory was something lying beneath the very floor of memory, something I only connected with the poem months after it was written, which was a warning that older people would give us about going into the bog. They were afraid we might fall into the pools in the old workings so they put it about (and we believed them) that *there was no bottom* in the bog-holes. Little did they – or I – know that I would filch it for the last line of a book. (Heaney 1980, p.56)

The predominant myths dealt with in this thesis allow for a consistency of hauntings to be traced throughout the poetry. Norse myth is Heaney's first and earliest sustained attempt at seeking to understand his own society through the older lens of European myth. This is then followed by his flirtations with Dante during the middle period of his poetry, and finally in the later poetry, he aligned himself with Virgil who wrote around fifty BC. It is

as if the older Heaney got, the deeper he probed downwards into the unconscious and needed to connect with broader and more elemental classical myths and legends. 'Route 110' inherits all three of these mythical hauntings. It is as if his movement towards mythic connection travels further back in time, and further back in terms of the development of culture and civilisation, as he becomes more self-aware.

These spectral hauntings bring this to the fore, and through intertextuality, Heaney has openly aligned himself with Aeneas's journey in his final collection. Parker notes that he 'has repeatedly displaced himself geographically and imaginatively as a means of renewing himself, enriching and extending the reach of his own composition' (Parker 2013, p.374). This extension gravitates towards a mode that allows for an immortality of text to be attained through affiliations with classical myth. The circularity of history and the spectre determine that Heaney's work mirrors that of Virgil, and also the imaginative journey he undertakes. Blanchot's thoughts on repetition within literature are reflected in what Heaney is doing in the poem, when he notes that 'whenever thought is caught in a circle, this is because it has touched upon something original, its point of departure, beyond which it cannot move except to return' (Blanchot 1989, p.93). This is why the shades and ghosts, what Derrida terms the spectres, constantly come to the surface of Heaney's writing. His original memories form the basis of the poem and circulate through the transformed perspective of Virgil. The ordinary world is presented to the reader who is transported to the marketplace of Belfast in the 1960s:

> Past booths and the jambs of booths with their displays
>
> Of canvas schoolbags, maps, prints, plaster plaques,
>
> Feather dusters, artificial flowers, (Heaney 2010, p.49)

Both worlds are mashed together in an organised array of imagery and haunting. Perhaps the most haunting, intertextual reference at play in this section is that of the poet once again being guided by Virgil, 'parrying the crush with my bagged Virgil' (Heaney 2010, p.49), just as he was by 'my hedge-schoolmaster Virgil' (Heaney 2001, p.11) in 'Bann Valley Eclogue'.

The spectre of Dante is also conjured at this moment, given that it was Virgil who also guided Dante downwards into the fiery depths of hell in *Inferno*. Dante also finds a hauntological, structural place through the *terza rima* structure of the poem. Similar to Virgil and Dante's texts, Heaney encounters shades. At the level of the form of poetry, the three writers also interpenetrate each other as Heaney has very often used the three-line stanza in his middle and late poetry. He has explained how strongly he has been influenced by Dante's metrical scheme in this, with Richard Rankin Russell noting that:

> By 1978, Heaney was arguing Terza Rima was the form for last things, for meditating on death and its ghosts, a remark that anticipates his own use of a modified version of this form, as we have seen, in many lyrics in which he meets shades from his past in 'Station Island' and in the poems from 'Sweeney Redividus', where the speaker flits airily, buoyed by the tercet stanzas forming the architecture of those poems. (Rankin Russell 2014, p.363)

These shades are not those of the kind one would find in classical myth, and are voiced in terms that are quite modern and amenable to rational interpretation:

> Then racks of suits and overcoats that swayed
>
> When one was tugged from its overcrowded frame

Like their owners' shades close-packed on Charon's barge. (Heaney 2010, p.49)

The section jumps from an Irish setting in stanzas one and three, to stanzas that evoke conjurations of myth in two and four. This mixture adds to Heaney's envisioning of a link between his primary world and that of the classical nature, and also, to his mentioning in 'The Riverbank Field' that he would 'confound' (Heaney 2010, p.46) both cultures together. The etymology of 'confound' can be traced to mean 'to pour together or mix up', and it is this which finds its hauntological existence within the domain of the text. The river is often the key trope in the fusion of contemporary society and the mythical realm in Heaney's poetry. In this sense, because it is a fluid structure and once the two liquids mix, they form a fluid and malleable type of new organism. This organism, for Heaney, often takes the form of a hybrid mixture of both worlds and identities and allows for each to haunt the other which references Bhabha's ideas, discussed in Chapter Two, that the incorporation of other cultures and identities is a positive aspect of existence. Similarly, the presence of water is also found in 'Terminus', where Heaney openly acknowledges the impact of both British and Irish culture upon his identity. Once again, it is the last line of the section that links on to the next. Charon and his barge take on an Irish form in Section III when they are connected with the bus driver and the bus that will bring Heaney home.

In Section III, the intertextuality of the poem develops more fully. Charon has appeared in many poems, with the most notable being in *Seeing Things*, where he emerges in an almost demonic, evil sense. He has the power to decide the destinations of those who appear at the shoreline just as the bus driver directs those who await the bus in Section III:

The demon Charon's eyes are like hot coals fanned.

> He beckons them and herds all of them in
>
> And beats with his oar whoever drops behind. (Heaney 1991b, p.112)

However, the presentation of the bus driver is more civil and benign when juxtaposed with Charon. He conducts his work professionally and is an agent of life as opposed to the afterlife:

> Once the driver wound a little handle
>
> The destination names began to roll
>
> Fast-forward in their panel, and everything
>
> Came to life. (Heaney 2010, p.50)

The four stanzas are littered with haunting references to Virgil's descent into the underworld. The image of the passengers resembling 'agitated rooks / Around a rookery' (Heaney 2010, p.50), links with the notion of going downwards with Ward W. Briggs noting that in *The Aeneid* the bird 'similes stress descent' (Briggs 1980, p.24). In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida writes of translations that:

> In their plurality, the words of translation organize themselves, they are not dispersed at random. They disorganize themselves as well through the very effect of the specter, because of the Cause that is called the original and that, like all ghosts, addresses same-ly disparate demands, which are more than contradictory. (Derrida 2006, p.21)

This connects with the notion that the very nature of translation automatically brings with it the spectres of the original text, as well as the disparate demands to remain faithful to it

while at the same time, to transform it into something different. Heaney's Section III of 'Route 110', as with the poem itself, is not a literal translation but rather a borrowing from classical myth. The text is haunted by numerous spectres, so a literal translation is near impossible to propose. Instead, what Heaney completes is a section that is haunted by both classical and Irish ghosts. Heaney's adoption of the rooks foregrounds a connection with the metaphor of descent in Virgil's text, while the adaption of the bus driver to Charon's role furthers the descent into both classical hauntings within the poetry, and also the poet's personal descent into his unconscious through memory in response to these 'disparate demands' (Derrida 2006, p.21). Heaney continues his journey under the direction of the Irish Charon, and is guided by him:

> At which point the inspector
>
> Who ruled the roost in bus station and bus
>
> Separated and directed everybody
>
> By calling not the names but the route numbers. (Heaney 2010, p.50)

The poet is being guided not only by Irish spectres, represented by the bus driver, but by past myths as well. Both worlds, the past and present, collide in these lines. They conjure the spectral image of the ferryman himself calling the names of those who are allowed to cross the river Styx, whereas his Irish counterpart calls the bus routes in numbers: it is the disparate but 'same-ly', in a Derridean sense, fused together, without either losing its distinctness. When compared with Dante's account of meeting with Charon, Heaney's text has a friendlier tone:

> To the cursed strand, that everyman must pass

> Who fears not God. Charon, demoniac form,
>
> With eyes of burning coal, collects them all,
>
> Beckoning, and each that lingers with his oar
>
> Strikes. (Dante 1998, p.14)

Heaney is guided by the bus driver on his prospective journey, whereas Charon's passengers are punished and forced. The constant juxtapositions between both worlds allow for a different scope or viewpoint to be unearthed. Although Heaney's focus does draw on the similarities between the classical world and his own world, he does not see them, in *Human Chain*, as being directly correlated. He merely draws upon certain aspects that can be seen to share similarities and is selective with the images that he draws from classical myth.

Myth, in 'Route 110', is a lens through which he can view his current world in a slanted manner. He is not unwelcoming to, or rejecting, the Derridean spectres of the past, but is instead choosing which ones are applicable to his retrospective view. It is also similar to the notion of anamorphosis whereby moving or observing an image from a different vantage point reveals more information while distorting the original image. Daniel Collins notes that 'it is only when an observer moves out of this singular vantage point that a distortion of the image occurs . . . there are vantage points from which images come into view and then dissolve as an observer moves through space' (Collins 1992, p.181). By viewing his own world through the mythical past Heaney is observing Irishness from a different angle by placing Irish identity in a wider spectrum of European hauntings. Florence Impens notes that '"Route 110" represents a climax in the Europeanisation of Heaney's poetry by means of the classics during his lifetime, and of his efforts to recast

Irish literature in a new post-postcolonial framework' (Impens 2018, p.77). Similarly, the poet notes, in 'Mossbawn via Mantua', that classical myth allows him to view his world in a different light. This is why he can draw similarities between certain aspects of both worlds in his work. Heaney writes of classical myth that 'these planes of regard allow us to get a closer view of that ground by standing back from it and help to establish a different focus, a more revealing angle of vision' (Heaney 2012, p.20). In this sense his journey through Northern Ireland, 'Route 110, Cookstown via Toome and Magherafelt' (Heaney 2010, p.50) mirrors that of the classical journey through the underworld. This idea links with the opening stanza of the next section. The journeys through Hell in both *The Aeneid* and *Inferno* are perilous and painful. The shades that exist in Hell for eternity live a painful existence, as do Dante and Aeneas in their escapades. This pain mirrors the pain Heaney's jacket punishes him with in Section IV of 'Route 110' and is yet another link in the haunting poem.

The place names of Section III, and the localness they epitomise, casts the poet into a world of binary oppositions in Section IV. The binary oppositions that unfold are repetitive throughout the 'Route 110' sequence: local / mythical and Irish / Italian. The first two stanzas of the poem evoke a sense of fear and punishment. Given that one can look upon this poem as a series of progressions through the poet's life, one may find that he has now revisited the time of pre-Troubles Northern Ireland. The coat he wears is the link to the previous section, and the mythical undertakings it signifies, but also a link to the collective pain felt by society in the lead up to the Troubles:

> Tarpaulin-stiff, coal-black, sharp-cuffed as slate,
>
> The standard-issue railway guard's long coat

I bought once second-hand. (Heaney 2010, p.51)

The coat itself is unyielding, like those in the civil rights marches and those opposed to paramilitary operations of violence. By 2010, when the collection was published, a power-sharing executive in Northern Ireland had been established and Heaney seems to be using the coat as a way of harking back to the pain and suffering of the past as opposed to the relative peace of the present. The unyielding nature of the coat, and its metaphorical connections to classical myth and the present, manifests itself in Heaney 'suffering its scourge / At the neck and wrists' (Heaney 2010, p.51). It mirrors the suffering of those in the underworld undergo in the *Aeneid*. The fact that it is 'second hand', like his copy of Virgil's *Aeneid*, adds to the sense of historical continuity in the text and the notion of the past coming to life and finding a place in the present, as well as the notion that the present of people and objects is haunted by their past. The second hand nature of the jacket links with the predominant theme that runs through chapters two, three and four of the repetition of history and the resurfacing and renewability of the past and its usage in the present:

> And loathing anxious life, suborn'd their fate.
>
> With late repentance now they would retrieve
>
> The bodies they forsook, and wish to live:
>
> Their pains and poverty desire to bear,
>
> To view the light of heav'n, and breath the vital air:
>
> But fate forbids; the Stygian floods oppose,
>
> And with circling streams the captive souls inclose. (Virgil 2013, p.179)

These souls are ensnared and trapped in the underworld, and have to suffer its scourges and

torments, while Heaney and his fellow peaceful citizens suffer the scourge of paramilitary operations in Northern Ireland where people are left in fear of a knock at the door during the night.

This element of historical violence and sense of fear, outlined in the previous chapters, once again haunts Heaney's final collection, and further deepens the spectral connection between the past and present. For the poet, the punishment of the coat was worth it for the fear it placed on those he visited and it is this which adds a sense of humaneness to the situation. For him it:

> was worth it even so
>
> For the dismay I caused by doorstep night arrivals,
>
> A creature of cold blasts and flap-winged rain. (Heaney 2010, p.51)

The final two stanzas cannot but help being read in an Irish context, and as pertaining in some way to Heaney himself. Derrida notes that the first book, in this case Virgil's, is 'the eve prior to all repetition' (Derrida 2001, p.374). Heaney venturing to Italy in Section IV for a wedding begins by repeating that which has come before him; the past. Neil Corcoran notes that 'the classical poet becomes in the sequence an almost half-conscious reverie of restoration and return, a rhyme of origin and end, the textual place long meditated to which present poetic consciousness is liable to lapse and relapse' (Corcoran 2016, p.122). Heaney transports the poem to Italy, Virgil's land, to once again connect the past with the present in the text. It conjures the old self-questioning that has haunted the poet throughout his life. In 'Station Island', he is visited by shades of the past as he is in 'Route 110', and these shades offer the poet advice:

As if the prisms of the kaleidoscope

I plunged once in a butt of muddied water

surfaced like a marvellous lightship

and out of its silted crystals a monk's face

that had spoken years ago from behind a grille

spoke again about the need and chance

to salvage everything, to re-envisage

the zenith and glimpsed jewels of any gift

mistakenly abased. (Heaney 1984, p.89)

Similar to his conversations with the ghosts of William Strathearn and James Joyce in 'Station Island', he is encouraged by these ghosts to continue on his own literary journey. The shade of Joyce visits him the Section XII of the 'Station Island' sequence, and tells Heaney to carry on with his writing:

Your obligation

is not discharged by any common rite.

What you must do must be done on your own

so get back in harness. The main thing is to write

for the joy of it. Cultivate a work-lust

that imagines its haven like your hands at night

dreaming the sun in the sunspot of a breast.

You are fasted now, light-headed, dangerous.

Take off from here. And don't be so earnest,

let others wear the sackcloth and the ashes.

Let go, let fly, forget.

You've listened long enough. Now strike your note.' (Heaney 1984, p.92-93)

His first poem 'Digging' sets out Heaney's intentions to make a career in writing and it questioned if he was doing the right thing in abandoning the inheritance of his ancestors on the farm.

Having revisited these questions in 'Station Island', Heaney returns to this issue in the final stanza of IV in 'Route 110'. This time, however, it is not an Irish spectre that encourages him, but a Virgilian Dove. These Doves reassure Aeneas that his journey is worthwhile and their presence also reassures Heaney of his own personal journey:

And then, come finer weather, up and away

To Italy, in a wedding guest's bargain suit

Of finest weave, loose-fitting, summery, grey

As Venus' doves, hotfooting it with the tanned expats

Up their Etruscan slopes to a small brick chapel

To find myself the one there most at home. (Heaney 2010, p.51)

It is interesting that the final stanza connects certain givens of haunting that exist in the poetry. Myth is encapsulated through the Doves, with religious spectres coming to the surface through Heaney's visiting of a chapel. It is in Italy, among these ghosts that Heaney feels most at 'home'. This opens up the universality between both worlds and also in terms of the nature of existence. Molino notes that the poem 'is about Heaney's experience that,

in his own retrospection, gravitates toward a partial reading / telling that parallels Aeneas's journey' (Molino 2016, p.101). This retrospection and inheritance ultimately links the poet to multiple worlds. The final word of Section IV, 'home', sends the poet back to Northern Ireland in Section V. This single word enables Heaney to once again link each section together, but to also make every section of his life haunt itself.

Mossbawn Revisited

In Section V, Heaney is transported back to his younger years in Mossbawn, County Derry. It is an extremely hauntological part of the sequence in that it is haunted by the spectres of Virgil, Dante and the ghosts of Roman and Irish customs. Given that in this section, Heaney is at 'home', one can understand that these spectres contribute to the homeliness that Heaney feels. They have been as much an influence in his life as the memories that he depicts in Section V. In *The Space of Literature*, Blanchot puts forward the notion that the resurrection of memories lends itself to experience which is a vital part of existence in the human condition:

> Memories are necessary, but only that they may be forgotten: in order that in this forgetfulness – in the silence of a profound metamorphosis – there might at last be born a word, the first word of a poem. 'Experience' here means contact with being, renewal of oneself in this contact – an experiment, but one that remains undetermined. (Blanchot 1989, p.87)

In this sense, the poet is in constant touch with presence through the absent presence of memories. The classical references he makes in the sequence allow him to engage with

Blanchot's idea of the renewal of oneself through engagement with memories and experience, be they literary or personal. The classical hauntings allow Heaney to do just this, to renew himself through the disparate same-lyness of which Derrida speaks. These ideas extend to the form and structure of the poem. Heaney's renewal and use of Dante's tercet form 'suggests his commitment to exploring a wider spirit world beyond the bounds of the actual and imagined province of Northern Ireland, signified by his own transformation of Dantean terza rima' (Rankin Russell 2014, p.368). The transformation of the tercet form engages with that sense of renewability, but also with the disparateness of which Derrida speaks. The poet once again continues the motif of placing myth and Irishness side by side in Section IV.

However, in Section V, Heaney goes a step further and questions whether Irishness, on a personal level, is more important than myth:

> Venus' doves? Why not McNicholls' pigeons
>
> Out of their pigeon holes but homing still? (Heaney 2010, p.52)

By replacing doves with pigeons in the first line, it automatically places emphasis on the Irishness of the section. The McNicholls were the poet's neighbours during his childhood and he recounts walking to school with them in 'The Lagans Road' in *District and Circle*:

> For a minute or two every day, therefore, you were in the
>
> wilderness, but on the first morning I went to school it
>
> was as if the queen of elfland was leading me away. The
>
> McNicholls were neighbours and Philomena McNicholl
>
> had been put in charge of me during those first days.

> Ginger hair, freckled face, green gymfrock – a fey, if ever
>
> there was one. (Heaney 2006, p.36)

Even in his description of the girl, he relates her to the Irish myth of elves and fairies. Pigeons also appear in the early poetry of *Wintering Out*. Although Section V particularly relates specifically to the McNicholls' pigeons, pigeons appear earlier in his writing in 'Dawn':

> When we stopped for lights
>
> In the centre, pigeons were down
>
> On the street, a scatter
>
> Of cobbles, clucking and settling. (Heaney 1972, p.77)

Although this is not a direct haunting of 'Route 110', is it important to recognize that the imagery that was important in the early poetry still finds a significant place in the final collection. It speaks to an overall sense of coherence in Heaney's writing, as he tends to circle around themes and images, moving ever-deeper into them as he develops and matures.

The constant mingling and switching between contemporary and past imagery, allows for the spectre to be present through memories. The McNicholls' kitchen, for Heaney, bears a haunting element to it. Despite pots of jam residing on the windowsill being a predominant practice in many Irish countryside houses, for Heaney's synthetic imagination, these pots exemplify a Roman practice. An Irish scene borrows from past Roman examples, which indicates that the Italian spectres of both Virgil and Dante still reside within Section V, and that these are reinforced by a Catholic hauntology of ritual

and devotion to deities both local and universal. Likewise, Heaney's poem 'Blackberry Picking' can find an intertextual, hauntological place through the presence of these jam pots:

> Then red ones inked up, and that hunger
>
> Sent us out with milk-cans, pea-tins, jam-pots
>
> Where briars scratched and wet grass bleached our boots. (Heaney 1966, p.20)

The past constantly finds a place in the present for the poet, with Parker noting that through this process Heaney is 'disinterring the past so that it may speak to and for the present' (Parker 2013, p.375). Religious practices once again find themselves a place in the poetry with the oats being covered in tin foil 'to give the wee altar a bit of shine' (Heaney 2010, p.52). These connotations take from the tradition of Catholicism in Ireland, but also the colonizing nature of the Roman Empire and its effect on the minds of those outside that empire. Once again, Roman influences of the past haunt the present of the poetry. In the true tradition of the haunting dead, the image of Catholicism is followed by the name of his neighbour, Mrs Nick. Despite being dead by the time the poem was written, her presence in Heaney's mind grants her eternal life through an act of spectrality.

Julian Wolfreys notes that 'memory is both invisible and blind: it does not see and cannot be seen' (Wolfreys 1998, p.33), which lends power to the point that the inclusion of the McNicholls, and Mrs Nick, is another instance of the spectral influence on the poet's memory. One cannot control these influences, but merely work with and for them, with Derrida noting that 'a heritage is never natural, one may inherit more than once, in different places and at different times' (Derrida 2006, p.211). Mrs Nick acts as a guiding figure who

enabled Heaney to see his way home by handing him the tin foiled stalks:

> The night old Mrs Nick, as she was to us,
>
> Handed me one it as good as lit me home. (Heaney 2010, p.52)

The final line of the section once again links to the first line of the next. The past is again linked to the present. Heaney's childhood stalks, that 'as good as lit me home', now morph into the later, more mature 'hand-held flashlamp' (Heaney 2010, p.53) of Section VI, and also strengthen the congruence of myth guiding the poet.

The next two sections of the sequence, Section VI and Section VII, continue the memorial hauntings that Heaney undergoes. Memories of death in the community, through non-violent means, come to the surface of Heaney's psyche, with Tom Gunning commenting upon the haunting nature of the dead that:

> to forget the dead we must first remember them: traditionally, hauntings are the result of
>
> an inability to forget, due to an incomplete process of memorialization. As harbingers
>
> of the future, ghosts show what we are to become in minatory mode: as they are now,
>
> so we shall be. (Gunning 2013, p.232)

The poet's recollections of this period in his life show that these events are seminal to his journey of becoming a man, and also to finding a place where he can situate his early dealings with death. The opening sentence of the section, 'It was the age of ghosts' (Heaney 2010, p.53), sets in motion the haunting nature of the next two sections. The ghosts of the dead, and the past, exist in the present of Heaney's unconscious as well as in the minds of

the readers of 'Route 110'. In 'Whatever you say, say Nothing', Heaney notes that 'the times are out of joint' (Heaney 1975, p.57), which mirrors Derrida's use of the phrase in the creation of hauntology, and which, of course, is itself haunted by the original quotation from *Hamlet*. Heaney's use of this phrase from *Hamlet*, allows his poetry to be viewed in line with the spectral presences that are absent on the surface. It also evokes the sense that while the funeral of Michael Mulholland was his first as a participant, it is not his last, and that many ghosts are present within the poetry:

> In that direction — Michael Mulholland's the first
>
> I attended as a full participant,
>
> Sitting up until the family rose
>
> Like strangers to themselves and us. (Heaney 2010, p.53).

Not only does the poem allude to his first funeral as a participant, but it also connects with the sense of hybridity and togetherness within his local community. Heaney shadows those who are older than he is; those who are more experienced in the practice of mourning. He himself is like a shade or shadow in that he copies the traditions and practices of the funeral. It sparks the notion of haunting once again, in that the scene in 'Route 110' is similar to that of 'Mid-Term Break', where tradition is upheld:

> When I came in, and I was embarrassed
>
> By old men standing up to shake my hand
>
> And tell me they were 'sorry for my trouble'.
>
> Whispers informed strangers I was the eldest,
>
> Away at school, as my mother held my hand

In hers and coughed out angry tearless sighs. (Heaney 1966, p.28)

Heaney still remains on the outside of the funeral procedure in 'Route 110', a sort of non-active participant in the process. The hauntological notion of identity is accounted for in the scene from 'Route 110', because Michael Mulholland was a Protestant neighbour of Heaney's, and his placement within the poem conjures the spectral ghosts of the sectarian divide that existed in Northern Ireland. However, as has been discussed in Chapter Two, Heaney has constantly remained 'in between' with regards to his identity and is civil and accepting of those who wish to practice their religion.

In *Stepping Stones*, he notes that 'the Steeles and Junkins and McIntyres and Mulhollands – who were both beside us and on the other side – these were well-disposed and capable people. They had more than enough inner freedom and confidence to retain friendships and dignity no matter what kind of overall tension and hurt everybody had to endure' (Heaney and O'Driscoll 2009, p.132). This again harks back to 'Terminus', from Chapter Two, where Heaney acknowledges the in between nature of his upbringings and identity:

Two buckets were easier carried than one.

I grew up in between. (Heaney 1987, p.5)

Similarly, the poetic form of the sequence reinforces this sense of being in-between. Heaney's departure from the 'full rhymes of Dantean *terza rima* leave the consoling sonic rhymes of the couplet behind while also achieving an airiness' (Rankin Russell 2014, p.367). Rankin Russell goes on to call this Heaney form an 'in-between form' (Rankin Russell 2014, p.367), which enables the thematic output of the sequence to be

complimented by the form in order to show the haunting nature of the earlier poetry in the later works. For Heaney, this sense of being between identities helps his neighbours in the time of mourning, with the memory itself locating a place within the realm of the mythical. The poet's own memories of death, and those that have died around him, are once again placed in equal stature with the heroes of classical mythology. The events in Section VI mirror the untimely death of Aeneas's friend Palinunas in the *Aeneid*, but also the adherence to past traditions relating to death:

> For three nights we kept conversation going
>
> Around the waiting trestles. By the fourth
>
> His coffin, with the lid on, was in place. (Heaney 2010, p.53)

While the poem recounts the death of Mulholland, who was lost at sea during an attempt to swim across the Bristol Channel, the recurrence of Heaney refusing to place blame on those that have died continues from all previous collections. He does not blame the dead man for his attempt, and making his family 'strangers to themselves and us' (Heaney 2010, p.53), but instead states that the man was 'ill-advised' (Heaney 2010, p.53) therefore granting him immunity from any blame.

This gestures towards the ideas presented by the poet in collections such as *North* and *Field Work* where the poet relinquishes the dead victims of violence from any personal responsibility regarding their deaths. 'Funeral Rites' in *North* also recalls the first early occasions where Heaney actively took part in the death process:

> I shouldered a kind of manhood,
>
> stepping in to lift the coffins

of dead relations. (Heaney 1975, p.15)

Both events in his memory haunt his present mindset, with John Banville, in his review of *Human Chain*, noting that 'ghosts abound in this volume, not only the ghosts of family and friends, but of previous work, too' (Banville 2010). Heaney knows that death is not far away, and that it is merely a process of life. One may look upon 'Home Help' in *District and Circle* in relation to Sections VI and VII, in that in later life, and after suffering a stroke, the poet knew that his time to be helped and to pass on was nearing:

> Heavy, helpless, carefully manhandled
>
> Upstairs every night in a wooden chair. (Heaney 2006, p.67)

Illness is part of the process of life, just as death is the culmination of that process. In 'In the Attic', Heaney acknowledges that old age now affects him, just as it did his father in 'Album':

> As I age and blank on names,
>
> As my uncertainty on stairs
>
> Is more and more the lightheadedness
>
>
> of a cabin boy's first time on the rigging,
>
> As the memorable bottoms out
>
> into the irretrievable. (Heaney 2010, p.84)

Just as he had to once help his aunts and father up the stairs as they entered the last years

of their lives, so the haunting nature and finality of death seems to be to the fore of the poet's mind from this section onwards, as he recalls significant stages in that process. He has been exposed to death throughout his life, and it is interesting that an entire two sections of the sequence are given to the funeral rituals and processes. In Irish tradition, the inclusion of a young man in the funeral process is like a rite of passage into manhood and this is why these events are important to Heaney. The poem is a journey through his life, and his unconscious, and it is these events that conflate his physical journey as a young man on the bus home from Belfast, with his remembered, psychic journey through the events that influenced him as a writer. This is especially clear in Section XII. Although these memories are purely spectral and haunting, they are nevertheless of high importance given that Heaney deemed them significant enough to include at the heart of *Human Chain*. Once again, the sequence is haunted by the next vision or memory. The final line of the section, 'His coffin, with the lid on, was in place' (Heaney 2010, p.53), links to the scene of Section VII. The word 'place' transports the reader to the place of the dead in the next section and carries on with the traditions of the period of mourning.

Rituals of Death and Sex

Section VII deals with the more intimate rituals of death in Irish society. Where Section VI charts the feelings and emotions Heaney felt in being accepted into the funeral process and his feelings on Mulholland's death, this section remembers the night of the wake itself, once the dead man's body had been recovered. Transported from the previous section through the world 'place', Heaney finds himself in the place of the dead: 'The corpse house then a house of hospitalities' (Heaney 2010, p.54). The memories that are conjured in this

section align themselves with the poet's first world, the Ireland of the past. It is a shaping, defining moment in his development as a man, again seen as a rite of passage into manhood. The scene in the poem remains Irish with a touch of the mythical in the Dantean *terza rima* form with Rankin Russell noting that 'Heaney perceives *terza rima* (and variations on it) as the formal container capable of carrying and expressing insight into the spirit world' (Rankin Russell 2014, p.367). While Dante's spectre haunts the text on the surface, and at the level of rhythm and formm, the underlying and overpowering Irish imagery dominates the opening two stanzas:

> The corpse house then a house of hospitalities
>
> Right through the small hours, the ongoing card game
>
> Interrupted constantly by rounds
>
>
> Of cigarettes on plates, biscuits, cups of tea,
>
> The antiphonal recital of known events
>
> And others rare, clandestine, undertoned. (Heaney 2010, p.54)

Images of circularity also find a place within this section in the 'plates', and the 'rounds of cigarettes', which adds to the sense of a never-ending repetition of the act: both in regards to the rituals themselves, and also to the process of death. Circularity is also intrinsic to the structure of the sections. The sections are a series of endings, but through linking the end of each section with the beginning of the next, Heaney hints at a never-ending cycle of new beginnings that makes endings redundant. The universality of the scene adds to the haunting nature of Heaney's work. His poetry is constantly indebted to the past, with

memories of death being a constant feature throughout. In 'Clearances', Heaney presents the memory of his dying mother in section three of that sequence:

> So while the parish priest at her bedside
>
> Went hammer and tongs at the prayers for the dying
>
> And some were responding and some crying
>
> I remembered her head bent towards my head,
>
> Her breath in mine, our fluent dipping knives -
>
> Never closer the whole rest of our lives. (Heaney 1987, p.27)

While both scenes in *The Haw Lantern* and *Human Chain* deal with a deeply personal loss and the loss of a neighbour, it is the death ritual that is present in both poems that links them together.

Memory in Sections VI and VII plays an integral part in the unearthing of the unconscious. Heaney preserves his past experiences in his writing, especially in 'Route 110', which is similar to Derrida's views on the function of writing:

> The suffering at the origin of writing for me is the suffering from the loss of memory, not only forgetting or amnesia, but the effacement of traces. I would not need to write otherwise; my writing is not in the first place a philosophical writing or that of an artist, even if, in certain cases, it might look like that or take over from these other kinds of writing. My first desire is not to produce a philosophical work or a work of art: it is to preserve memory. (Derrida 1999, p.143)

These events haunt the present of the poet and are seminal in his journey downwards into

his unconscious but also integral to his life knowledge. He has been an 'apt pupil in their night school' (Heaney 2010, p.54) where he has undergone the experience associated with death.

By the third stanza, the fusion of Irishness and classical mythology reaches its strongest point in the section. While the poem is constrained by the Dantean tercet form throughout, it is also haunted by the Virgilian undertone that exists beneath the smoke-filled references in the stanza:

> I walked home
>
> On the last morning, my clothes as smoke-imbued
>
> As if I'd fed a pyre . . . (Heaney 2010, p.54)

The link between death in the mythical world and in current times is woven together in the Irish cigarette smoke that lingers in Heaney's clothes, paralleling the pyre in which Misenus's body was cremated in Virgil's text. Deeply ghostly and spectral references can be seen between Heaney's and Virgil's text in this instance. The absent presence of Misenus in the poem conjures a link between, not only the smoke on Heaney's clothes, but also with the dead man of the poem, Michael Mulholland, specifically in terms of the manner of their deaths. Misenus was drowned by Triton, son of Poseidon, in Virgil's text:

> He serv'd great Hector, and was ever near,
>
> Not with his trumpet only, but his spear.
>
> But by Pelides' arms when Hector fell,
>
> He chose Aeneas; and he chose as well.
>
> Swoln with applause, and aiming still at more,

> He now provokes the sea gods from the shore;
>
> With envy Triton heard the martial sound,
>
> And the bold champion, for his challenge, drown'd;
>
> Then cast his mangled carcass on the strand. (Virgil 2013, p.169)

Virgil's account and Heaney's differ to some extent. In Heaney's version of *Aeneid Book VI*, he notes that Misenus was 'unfairly, peremptorily called to his death' (Heaney 2017, p.11), and it is this which links Mulholland with Misenus. Misenus himself was placed on a pyre by Aeneas and his comrades, at the order of the Sibyl, in order to ensure a proper burial, and therefore be allowed passage to the underworld:

> Then, still in tears, they set to at once, eager
>
> To follow the Sibyl's instruction, piling up logs,
>
> Building an altar-pyre that rose toward the heavens. (Heaney 2017, p.12)

The repetition of history manifests itself within this section through the links that can be drawn between both worlds with the function of translation adding new beginnings to the original text. Walter Benjamin notes that 'a translation comes later than the original, and since the important works of world literature never find their chosen translators at the time of their origin, their translation marks their stage of continued life' (Benjamin 2002, p.254). Contemporary Irish society is linked to the past mythical world through the comparisons that concurrently exist, and that breathe new life into the original text from which Heaney borrows, namely *Aeneid VI*. This notion gathers strength from the fact that history has constantly repeated itself in the context of Irish society, whether it was the ritual killings of the Vikings in *North*, or the constant spectre of British colonialism that imparts itself

upon the poet's unconscious.

Section VIII progresses the metaphorical journey that Heaney undergoes in his unconscious, as well as his development as a person. Both sections VII and VIII are linked through the women to whom he is exposed in the final stanza of Section VII, and the first stanza of Section VIII. Mulholland's mother absolves Heaney of his trespassing upon their land on his way home:

> accompanied to the gable
>
> By the mother, to point out a right of way
>
> Across their fields, into our own back lane,
>
> And absolve me thus formally of trespass. (Heaney 2010, p.54)

However, his memory of breaking up with a past girlfriend haunts him in Section VIII, because she refuses to forgive him for the action he took which echoes the relationship between Dido and Aeneas in the *Aeneid*, and which further deepens the hauntological and intertextual examination at work within this chapter.

The progression through life continues within the next two sections of the sequence. Sections VIII and IX both deal with feelings of guilt on a personal and national level. The poems feature the shades and spectres of Heaney's past, and of Northern Ireland's violent past, during the period of the Troubles. In older age, the poet once again revisits the hauntings that have influenced and guided his poetry throughout his life. The innermost feelings of the poet's personal relationships come to the surface in Section VIII, while in Section IX, he reassesses not only his own attitude towards the victims of sectarian violence, but also the nation's attitude towards the dead. In myth, he once again infuses

both worlds together. By stepping outside the realm of the ordinary, mundane world that surrounds him and choosing to view his world and life through the looking glass of classical mythology Heaney strengthens the power his first world holds.

In 'The Disappearing Island', in *The Haw Lantern*, he notes that:

> The land sustaining us seemed to hold firm
>
> Only when we embraced it *in extremis*. (Heaney 1987, p.50)

By choosing to situate Ireland amongst the mythical classics, he strengthens the idea that his native land, history and surroundings can be understood more fully through the lens of the past, especially as there are strong patterns of repetition and haunting to be discerned by looking at the present through the lenses of that past and through myth. Derrida notes that 'it is not absence instead of presence, but a trace which replaces a presence which has never been present, an origin by means of which nothing has begun' (Derrida 2001, p.372). In a Derridean sense, the trace of history is revealed in the present of Heaney's 'Route 110' with Sections VIII and IX underscoring a phenomenological narrative of the past.

The haunting element that exists throughout the sequence lends to Heaney's blending of myth with his own memories. Pierre Nora notes that 'memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past' (Nora 1989, p.8), and with the poet choosing what memories and events haunt the poem, it lends to Derrida's idea that memory is guided by the spectres in the unconscious and also by different demands and imperatives. The poem opens with a direct quotation from Virgil's text and continues what Stephen Heiny refers to as Heaney looking 'through the lens of the Aeneid's underworld to view his own personal past' (Heiny 2013, p.310).

The ghost of Aeneas's encounter with Dido is brought to the fore of the imaginative, mythical allusions that take place in the sequence. The line, '*As one when the month is young sees a new moon*' (Heaney 2010, p.55), conjures the sense of betrayal Aeneas felt about leaving Dido. Upon the encounter with the shade of his former lover, Aeneas attempts to apologise and release the sense of guilt he feels for abandoning her. His attempt is unsuccessful and she refuses to meet his gaze or acknowledge his voice:

> In vain he thus attempts her mind to move
>
> With tears, and pray'rs, and late-repenting love.
>
> Disdainfully she look'd; then turning round,
>
> But fix'd her eyes unmov'd upon the ground,
>
> And what he says and swears, regards no ore
>
> Than the deaf rocks, when the loud bollows roar;
>
> But whirl'd away, to shun his hateful sight,
>
> Hid in the forest and the shades of night; (Virgil 2013, p.181)

In Heaney's full translation of *Aeneid VI*, the encounter is sorrowful and laced with guilt. He places upon Aeneas a sense that he was at fault for Dido entering the underworld, because she stabs and kills herself with a sword once given to her by Aeneas:

> So the news I got was true,
>
> That you had left the world, had taken a sword
>
> And bade your last farewell. Was I, O was I to blame
>
> For your death? I swear by the stars, by the powers
>
> Above and by any truth there may be under earth,

> I embarked from your shore, my queen, unwillingly. (Heaney 2017, p.26)

The link between the past and present in this section is quite extreme and exaggerated. Although there are similarities between the plight of Aeneas and Heaney, the two events are connected by the Derridean spectre.

Heaney has noticed a correlation between the guilt he feels, and he connects this to the scene where Aeneas meets Dido. Heaney's Irish version of this guilt, relating to a former girlfriend, is similar but not on par with the outcome in Virgil's text. This woman haunts the present of Heaney's writing because of the guilt that is still felt at cutting ties with her:

> Again it is her face
>
> At the dormer window, her hurt still new. (Heaney 2010, p.55)

The 'again' in the above quote raises the notion that it is a recurring and haunting image in the poet's psyche. One finds this shade of Heaney's memory in an earlier poem, 'Twice Shy', when the poet recounts a warning to himself not to move too quickly in a new relationship:

> Mushroom loves already
>
> Had puffed and burst in hate. (Heaney 1966, p.31)

The feeling of guilt seems to be a continuous motif that runs throughout the poetry, whether it relates to personal relationships, or with how a certain sectarian issue was handled. In *Stepping Stones*, the reasoning behind the break up is revealed and it is acceptable, yet,

Heaney still feels guilty for hurting another person, which shows the measure of the man himself even at an early age:

> When I was at Queen's I didn't have any very serious girlfriend until my final year, but once she arrived the relationship was very intense. I sat beside her in the library, I drove to dances in her home place during the holidays. But all along I felt I was more involved than she was – except, of course, when it came to the end. I met Marie and began the ever-painful business of disentangling: at that stage, the need shifted from me to her, so it would have been more to the point to say the 'mushroom love' ended in a certain amount of guilt rather than hate. (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.45)

Section VIII does encompass a sense of guilt; however, it also represents the willingness of Heaney to move forward and see the spectral encounter for what it is: a past memory. Michael Parker notes that Heaney, like Aeneas, 'is conscious of the continuing suffering his abandonment causes, whereas Aeneas is transfixed at the sight of Dido and succumbs to tears . . . . Heaney's character expresses his guilt through a hurried backward glance and precipitate departure' (Parker 2016, p.159). This backward glance also appeared in 'Station Island VII', when the shade of William Strathearn appears to Heaney in the sequence discussed in Chapter Three. In 'Route 110', there is a hurriedness away from the situation at hand:

> My look behind me hurried as I unlock,
>
> Switch on, rev up, pull out and drive away
>
> In the car she'll not have taken her eyes off. (Heaney 2010, p.55)

Although the pain of rejection that the poet has caused is placed alongside the more serious outcome of Virgil's text, the sense that the future holds matters that are more serious in store haunts the section. By counterpointing the break-up of a relationship with 'pre-Troubles' (Heaney 2010, p.55) Northern Ireland in the third stanza, the personal seems trivial with Heiny noting that 'Heaney will forgive himself, but not forget what he did' (Heiny 2013, p.312).

The section attempts to put life in perspective, and that the hurt he caused was insignificant compared to the devastation and violence that would unfold in the coming decades. The brakelights are haunting in that they parallel those that appeared in 'The Strand at Lough Beg', where Colum McCartney was murdered at a faked roadblock:

> The brakelights flicker-flushing at the corner
>
> Like red lamps swung by RUC patrols (Heaney 2010, p.55)

The scene is exactly the same as in 'The Strand at Lough Beg':

> 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? (Heaney 1979, p.17)

Despite both events taking place during different times, the scenes are similar and an air of fear and mistrust is conjured within Section VIII. What was to come concerning sectarian violence and campaigns of terrorism by paramilitary groups on both sides of the divide, outweighs personal relationship issues. It is only in hindsight, and from a mature perspective, that Heaney is able to realise this, with Parker stating that the section depicts

'a culture taut with frustrations and divisions' (Parker 2016, p.160). These divisions are not limited to political or religious grounds, but to the control of religious ideologies over the minds and bodies of the youth. These teachings and inhabitations of the mind parallel the colonisation that took place throughout the centuries in Ireland, as has been discussed in Chapter Two. Both hegemonic structures sought to control the natives and limit freedom of thought:

> After dances, after our holdings on
>
> And holdings back, the necking
>
> And nay-saying age of impurity. (Heaney 2010, p.55)

Living in the 'age of impurity', as Heaney puts it, conjures the spectre of Joyce's Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, where sexual activity is regarded as a sin that will ensnare him in a downward spiral of lust and sinfulness:

> He had sinned mortally not once but many times and he knew that, while he stood in danger of eternal damnation for the first sin alone, by every succeeding sin he multiplied his guilt and his punishment. (Joyce 2000 p.110)

Given the fear that the youth of Heaney's era felt towards expressing and acting upon their sexual desires further ensnares them in what in *North* he termed the 'ministry of fear' (Heaney 1975, p.65). The section allows the poet to look back on the past, and probe the relationship between his own actions during his earlier life, and the guilt that Ireland as a nation inflicted on the minds of its people with thoughts of guilt and fear of their actions. Heiny is in line with this viewpoint when he notes that:

In fact it is this temporal perspective that helps Heaney see the weight to be assigned to his guilt. Viewed from afar, seen over the span of a lifetime and in the context of Ireland's own guilt, the poet understands himself with greater clarity. If his predicament requires that he see his own moral life with candor and clarity, Virgil has helped him recognize a moral failing and respond to it in a frank and mature way. (Heiny 2013, p.312)

In a retrospective way, Virgil offers an answering myth to the religious, Catholic one that pervaded society during Heaney's youth, as does Dante's terza rima. Dante's tercet form allows Heaney to transcend the earthy world in favour of a new visionary, spirit world, with Rankin Russell noting that 'in his continued embrace and development of the tercet form, Heaney's medium essentially became his message as that form repeatedly opened the "visionary" spirit region that increasingly preoccupied his later poetry' (Rankin Russell 2014, p.357). The blending of myth and the temporal switching allows for spectres to influence the past, present and future of Heaney's worlds.

Politics and Poetry

The ghosts of the past haunt Heaney's psyche during the construction of the poem, something that is also pertinent to Derrida, who notes that 'the Thing meanwhile looks at us and sees us not see it even when it is there. A spectral asymmetry interrupts here all specularity. It de-synchronizes, it recalls us to anachrony. We call this the *visor effect*: we do not see who looks at us' (Derrida 2006, p.6). By addressing the guilt he feels in Section VIII through the three different flashbacks, Heaney's memories connect with the next section of the sequence. The sense of guilt multiplies as Heaney readdresses his stance on

the Troubles in Section IX. The RUC patrols of Section VIII link to a more violent,

dangerous society in Section IX, and also to the progression of Heaney's journey

downwards into the past and his unconscious.

The journey downwards into the psyche and backwards into the past finds Heaney

revisiting the era of the Troubles in Section IX. The self-reproach the poet feels in Section

VIII finds a place within this section also, but the issues are more serious. Many called

upon Heaney during the seventies and eighties to support his tribe, and to use his place as

a poet to voice propagandist ideas of the IRA, as has been noted in Chapter Three with the

encounter with Danny Morrison. Similarly, in an interview with Karl Miller, Heaney

recounts the interpretation of *North* by some critics:

> What they objected to, so they said, was what they saw to be the book's aestheticization
>
> of violence. The claim was that I had somehow bought into the notion that the violence
>
> that was happening in the North was a cyclic, fated, on-going, predestined thing. I was
>
> simplifying and mythologizing and aestheticizing the violence, they felt. So there was a
>
> deep resistance. (Heaney & Miller 2000, p.21)

In his response to this accusation, Heaney discusses the function of political poetry; he

suggests that it should depict realities rather than a propagandist agenda:

> So called political poetry, protest poetry, gets on my nerves. Political poetry in Northern
>
> Ireland should not be spectator sport. It should have some purchase on the actual realities
>
> of the place. There's a poem of mine called 'The Other Side', which is a benign view of
>
> Protestants and Catholics living together, but it's also about division — it acknowledges

separation. It's not a protest poem. It's simply a poem which tells another bit of the truth.

(Heaney & Miller 2000, p.23)

Heaney's poetry that deals with the violent nature of sectarianism in Northern Ireland constantly strives to depict the realities of the situation as opposed to being a discourse wherein the poet chooses a side.

In *Stepping Stones*, Heaney says concerning pressure to support his tribe that 'the poet in you has to resist being told what to do' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.313). The argument refers back to Bhabha's discussion of hybridity in Chapter Two, where Heaney acknowledges his own identity as a Northern Irish Catholic, but also his sense of being part of the English literary tradition that has helped shape his identity and career. O'Brien notes that 'he is a poet: his role is to inhabit the aesthetic' (O'Brien 2016, p.363), and this is what Heaney achieves when tackling issues of a political nature. Hence, many of the poems in *North* that allude to the situation in Northern Ireland are shrouded in Norse myth, whereas in the later poetry, Heaney sways towards Virgil and Dante in his attempt to understand his past dealings with the political. Section IX continues the haunting nature of the sequence. Violence and death have been a part of Northern Ireland since Heaney's childhood in the rural countryside of Derry:

> I was six when I first saw kittens drown.
>
> Dan Taggart pitched them, 'the scraggy wee shits',
>
> Into a bucket; a frail metal sound,
>
> Soft paws scraping like mad. But their tiny din
>
> Was soon soused. They were slung on the snout

> Of the pump and the water pumped in. (Heaney 1966, p.23)

This is not an attempt to normalise the violence that is depicted during the middle poetry in Dantean poems such as 'Ugolino' or 'The Strand at Lough Beg', but rather to locate a viewpoint from where to analyse the cycle of death throughout the collections. In rural Ireland, there has always been a level of violence.

Section IX readmits John F. Lavery and Louis O'Neill to the discussion of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland. Both innocent men were murdered by terrorist paramilitaries during the Troubles, Lavery by an IRA bomb, and O'Neill by a Loyalist bomb. Heiny acknowledges that the section 'addresses the stark tragedy of the Troubles' (Heiny 2013, p.312), with the victims being elegized and granted freedom from any blame that has been previously placed upon them for their deaths. Lavery, a neighbour of Heaney's when he lived in Belfast, was killed when trying to remove a bomb from his pub. In *Stepping Stones*, he talks about the difference between Glanmore and Belfast noting that it was 'a far cry from Ashley Avenue and the Ashley Arms at the corner where the landlord, Mr Lavery, had been blown up as he tried to carry a parcel bomb out of the lounge bar' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.199). In Section IX, the murder is revisited wrapped in Virgilian myth: Lavery can be looked upon as corresponding to the shade of Deiphobus in the underworld who was also savagely killed:

> And what in the end was there left to bury
>
> Of Mr Lavery, blown up in his own pub
>
> As he bore the primed device and bears it still
>
> Mid-morning towards the sun-admitting door

Of Ashley House? (Heaney 2010, p.56)

In Heaney's poem, the language is crude and violent, matching the gravity of the event.

Likewise, the depiction of Deiphobus is harsh and violent:

Here Priam's son, Deiphobus, he found,

Whose face and limbs were one continued wound:

Dishonest, with lopp'd arms, the youth appears,

Spoil'd of his nose, and shorten'd of his ears. (Virgil 2013, p.182)

The separation of Deiphobus's body parts is reminiscent of the injuries Lavery would have

sustained during the explosion. The 'dark undercurrents of Virgil's masterpiece fully

surface' (Auge 2016, p.4) in this section and haunt the psyche of the poet. Through the

aesthetic, Lavery has now been brought into the poetic present like Deiphobus, as his name

is now located in the present of reading across a huge number of people.

Contemporary violence is fused with the past, and with mythical events, with

classical myth constantly finding an Irish corresponding action whether it be Norse, Greek

or Roman. Greek myth also haunts this section as the murder of Sean Browne, depicted in

'The Augean Stables', lends further depth to the history of violence and its haunting of

contemporary society:

And it was there in Olympia, down among green willows,

The lustral wash and run of river shallows,

That we heard of Sean Brown's murder in the grounds

Of Bellaghy GAA Club. And imagined

> Hose-water smashing hard back off the asphalt
>
> In the car park where his athlete's blood ran cold. (Heaney 2001, p.41)

The world of myth and contemporary violence is tied together in this poem, just as Louis O'Neill's death is revisited by the mature Heaney in 'Route 110', especially the core question posed in *Field Work*:

> How culpable was he
>
> That last night when he broke
>
> Our tribe's complicity? (Heaney 1979, p.23)

The possible guilt that the poet felt for placing minor blame upon an innocent victim haunts him in later life, and post ceasefire. Regan comments that Heaney's work responds to the time from which it is created:

> Both before and after the ceasefire, Heaney has credited poetry with the responsibility of being a witness to its times, as well as an impulse for change. To respond imaginatively and sensitively to crises without yielding to it has been the challenge and achievement of much of Heaney's own work as both poet and critic. (Regan 2011, p.112)

In 'Route 110', Heaney fully relinquishes any interpretations that O'Neill could be partly to blame. Instead, he was 'in the wrong place' (Heaney 2010, p.56), which forces one to blame those who committed the barbaric act as opposed to the victim. Both men are memorialized in writing and the record has been set straight. O'Brien notes that 'in the dis-

place of writing, these bodies have a memorial – a grave of sorts, a place of memory, a space where they are honoured and where their humanity and their human being are remembered' (O'Brien 2016, p.364). The totality of innocent victims haunts the text:

> Or of bodies
>
> Unglorified, accounted for and bagged
>
> Behind the grief cordons. (Heaney 2010, p.56)

These bodies have been 'connected in a web of loss and lamentation' (O'Brien 2016, p.363). To take this a step further, one could see these bodies as relating to those in the underworld of Dante's or Virgil's texts, or to those murdered during the colonial period by the British or to those killed by Norse invaders. All are tied in a web of history, or as Derrida notes in *Specters of Marx*:

> The response of Marx himself for whom the ghost must be nothing, nothing period (non-being. non-effectivity, non-life) or nothing imaginary, even if this nothing takes on a body, a certain body, that we will approach later. But also the response of his 'Marxist' successors wherever they have drawn, practically, concretely, in a terribly effective, massive, and immediate fashion, its political consequences (at the cost of millions and millions of supplementary ghosts who will keep on protesting in us; Marx had his ghosts, we have ours, but memories no longer recognize such borders; by definition, they pass through walls, these revenants, day and night, they trick consciousness and skip generations). (Derrida 2006, p.36)

In just such a manner, Heaney gives a new body of understanding to Lavery and O'Neill.

The haunting nature of these men's deaths allows for the first representations of the events to be detached from original interpretations, to a newer version that deconstructs the discourse that only one side of the divide committed the violent acts. By mentioning both victims by name, Heaney is again individualising the victims of violence, but also removing blame from them, and giving them an afterlife because despite the men being dead they have a spectral, ghostly, absent presence within the body of the text. Both men were murdered by nationalist and loyalist paramilitaries which finds a place in Heaney's argument that '"one side's as bad as the other", never worse' (Heaney 1975, p.59).

By acknowledging the 'bodies unglorified', and the named men, Heaney is counteracting the nationalist rituals of mythologizing those who carry out murder on behalf of paramilitary organizations. These innocent 'ghosts of ghosts' are 'bagged behind grief cordons', whereas the dead killers are given full funeral rites and burial:

> In war graves with full honours, nor in a separate plot
>
> Fired over on anniversaries
>
> By units drilled and spruce and unreconciled. (Heaney 2010, p.56)

In a mythical sense, the spectre of Virgil's *Aeneid* haunts this argument. The unburied were punished in the underworld by existing in Limbo; they were not granted access to Elysium until their earthly bodies had been given proper funeral rites. Auge notes that the dead paramilitaries of Northern Ireland parallel the Trojan war heroes 'who occupy a prominent position in the underworld, those whose bodies were so decimated by bombs that they . . . cannot rest in peace but remain restive, like the unburied dead of Virgil's Limbo, until their loss in truly acknowledged' (Auge 2016, p.41). The mature Heaney addresses the faults of

discourse and culture by mentioning the innocent victims; he grants them an immortality in his writing, but also an allowance to pass freely into the next world by relinquishing any blame that may have been placed upon them. The individual is truly acknowledged as opposed to the tribe, thereby putting to rest the hauntings of Lavery and O'Neill, to an extent. The blame solely lies upon the paramilitaries for the violence and murders that occurred. It is as if his poetry grants them the funeral rites in question, and this, in turn, allows them a form of afterlife in the aesthetic.

The Past is Another Country

Section X of the sequence offers a lighter tone compared with Section IX. The 'unreconciled' deaths that occurred during the Troubles, and that haunt Heaney in later life, are now juxtaposed with 'Virgil's happy shades' (Heaney 2010, p.57). This section imaginatively fuses the contests of Elysium with the sports days of Bellaghy in a web of intertextuality and haunting. Heaney's memories, once again, recount a moment of his personal past and fuse it with Virgil's text. Corcoran notes that 'Route 110' 'offers mediations on the moments, details, episodes of a life that have now become, in memory, forms of epiphany' (Corcoran 2016, p.120). These epiphanies allow the poet to engage with the mythical presences in his life, along with the spectral, haunting nature of memory and history. The memories that find a place in the sequence are important events and episodes in the poet's life, and this section offers a positive version of Northern Irish society as opposed to the usual predominant discourse of violence and politics. The section progresses the storyline of *Aeneid VI*, but looks backwards to the happy, fun times of the poet's youth. Orpheus, the first bard in classical myth, finds a place in the opening two

stanzas.

Those who inhabit the Elysian Fields do not suffer like the shades in the Fields of Mourning, whose 'griefs do not relent, not even in death' (Heaney 2017, p.25), and who link back to the victims in Section IX and the dead throughout Heaney's poetry. Scenes of hurt and suffering no longer dwell within this section, where Virgil's shades:

> Contend on their green meadows, while Orpheus
>
> Weaves among them, sweeping strings, aswerve
>
> To the pulse of his own playing and to avoid
>
> The wrestlers, dancers, runners on the grass' (Heaney 2010, p.57)

In this sense, the master bard's music is heard among those who take part in the physical contest, and this places the poet in line with those of whom he writes: it gives him a sense of place as well as a sense of his own place in the community. In terms of Heaney, this reignites the issue of self-doubt and questioning that has pervaded much of his poetry. By placing the master bard amongst the happy shades, Heaney, in old age, finally accepts that his work has a rightful place.

The musicality of Orpheus also sparks the spectre of Heaney and Virgil's pastoral *Eclogues* as absent presences within the text. One can locate this shadow of pastoral poetry within Section X, as it connects to the Eclogues' manner of addressing and dealing with reality. Heaney addresses this in his prose work on Virgil and notes that:

> What these poems prove is that literariness as such is not an abdication from the truth. The literary is one of the methods human beings have devised for getting at reality: if it is concerned with its own appearance that is only because it wants to show up or to get

behind other appearances. Its diversions are not to be taken as deceptions but as roads less travelled by where the country we thought we knew is seen again in a new and revealing light. A simpler light, maybe, but still a true one. (Heaney 2003, p.4)

Virgil's work opened up a door into reality during his time, and Heaney mirrors this quest for truth and reality. Poetry, for Heaney, is a way of revealing societal truths and not hiding from them behind the guise of language. Song has haunted Heaney's eclogues, and he has also found a place for music in Section X. The haunting nature of the scene of the first two stanzas finds its representative counterpart in Northern Irish society: it is 'not unlike a sports day in Bellaghy' (Heaney 2010, p.57). In Virgil's text, the scene is one of strength and power fused with the musings of Orpheus:

> The verdant fields with those of heav'n may vie,
>
> With ether vested, and a purple sky;
>
> The blissful seats of happy souls below.
>
> Stars of their own, and their own suns, they know;
>
> Their airy limbs in sports and exercise,
>
> And on the green contend the wrestler's prize.
>
> Some in heroic verse divinely sing;
>
> Others in artful measures led the ring.
>
> The Thracian bard, surrounded by the rest,
>
> There stands conspicuous in his flowing vest;
>
> His flying fingers, and harmonious quill,
>
> Strikes sev'n distinguish'd notes, and sev'n at once

They fill. (Virgil 2013, p.188)

Both the mythical and present world are far apart in their supposed connectedness to each other. The double negative of 'not unlike' does conjure up notions of difference between both worlds, but since it is in fact a double negative, it also feeds the congruent impression that both mythical and contemporary worlds are in fact more similar than many care to think. This is owed to the presence of spectral figures that haunt both worlds, with Derrida noting that:

> even when it is there, that is, when it is there without being there, you feel that the specter is looking, although through a helmet; it is watching, observing, staring at the spectators and the blind seers, but you do not see it seeing, it remains invulnerable beneath its visored armor. (Derrida 2006, p.124)

The spectre of the past has constant influence over the present, with Corcoran supposing that this double negative alerts the reader 'to all the ways in which the fields of Bellaghy sports day might be thought in fact to differ from the Elysian Fields' (Corcoran 2016, p.122). The two worlds differ in that one is mythical, while the other is a contemporary portrayal of, or an allusion to, this mythical past. It also lends to the fact that Heaney is not directly translating from Virgil, but is instead writing himself into certain, carefully chosen aspects of *Aeneid VI*: one could say that he is also haunting Virgil's texts, as many readers, unfamiliar with the classics, will come to Virgil anachronistically through Heaney's work.

Stanzas three and four of the section open up the world of Northern Ireland during Heaney's childhood, with the word 'Bellaghy' transferring his memory back to this time. The allusions multiply in these stanzas, with Slim Whitman taking the place of Orpheus

and the 'parked cars in the twilight' (Heaney 2017, p.57) suggesting an intertextual connection to the *Aeneid's* phantom chariots. Auge notes that the 'sports day is comically elevated into the athletic contests of Elysium' (Auge 2016, p.41), and through this air of elevation, both worlds mirror and haunt each other. However, the gaze of an excited child at the 'sparking dodgems, flying chair-o-plains' (Heaney 2017, p.57) is one that also finds a corresponding scene in Virgil's text. Heaney's translation of *Aeneid VI* sees Aeneas look upon the chariots' glorious armour in amazement:

<blockquote>

Aeneas gazed

In wonder at their armour and the chariots beside them

Standing idle, their spears struck tall in the ground

And their horses loosed out, free to graze the plain

Anywhere they liked. The pride they took when alive

In armour and chariots, the care they gave

To their glossy well-groomed teams, it is still the same

Now they have gone away under the earth. (Heaney 2017, p.35)

</blockquote>

The links and haunting connections between the young Heaney and Aeneas, both gazing in amazement at their surroundings, further reveal the similarities between the two men. The differences that exist between them can also be seen in the worlds and times that they inhabit. The circularity of history and the haunting nature of the spectre brings both men together in a web of commonalities. Nathan Rotenstreich acknowledges that 'history is a sphere, not a particular content' (Rotenstreich 2012, p.92), and the depiction of the sporting events in Bellaghy ultimately combines the two worlds together in the final stanza, but also

opens up a new experience for the poet, namely impending death:

> And teams of grown men stripped for action
>
> Going hell for leather until the final whistle,
>
> Leaving stud-scrapes on the pitch and on each other. (Heaney 2010, p.57)

While the sports teams of Ireland mirror the 'well-groomed teams' of the underworld, it is the 'final whistle' that bears the most symbolic weight in the final stanza. This may represent the impending death that Heaney now faces in old age, particularly after having suffered a stroke. The happy shades at the beginning of the poem, along with the joyous carnival events in Bellaghy, find their ending in the melancholy atmosphere that surrounds the notion of an ending.

For Parker, the final whistle 'is suggestive of other endings, and, in relation to both the *Aeneid's* religious mythology and the Christian concept of the Last Judgement, anticipates that liminal moment when the long-dead may be reborn' (Parker 2016, p.57). This notion of an ending that is a new beginning of sorts, transfers over to, and links with, the idea of birth in the final two sections of 'Route 110'. These new beginnings also signal a moving forwards, just like the sequence itself, and a movement away from the past of violence. It also signals a reference to T. S. Eliot's 'Little Gidding':

> What we call the beginning is often the end
>
> And to make an end is to make a beginning. (Eliot 2014, p.58)

The focus is upon the future from Section X onwards. The continuation and repetitive nature of life, existence, and events, finds its place in the final image of the section: that of

the players 'leaving stud-scrapes on the pitch and on each other' (Heaney 2010, p.57). These scrapes upon the land can be looked upon as the haunting nature of societal actions, but also as an example of Derrida's trace. In 'The Strand', we see Heaney's father's walking stick leaving a trace upon the strand that links Heaney's memories of his father to his present state:

> The dotted line my father's ashplant made
>
> On Sandymount Strand
>
> Is something else the tide won't wash away. (Heaney 1996, p.62)

These tracings, for Heaney, are something that time will not be able to eradicate from the land or from his psyche, and this thought process is also applicable to the final line of Section X of 'Route 110'. Freud's idea of the 'Mystic Writing Pad', which was discussed in Chapter One, also connects with what Heaney is hinting towards at the end of section: that the past will not be forgotten through the tracing of the present upon the unconscious:

> The Mystic Pad is a slab of dark brown resin or wax with a paper edging; over the slab is laid a thin transparent sheet, the top end of which is firmly secured to the slab while its bottom end rests on it without being fixed to it. This transparent sheet is the more interesting part of the little device. It itself consists of two layers, which can be detached from each other except at their two ends. The upper layer is a transparent piece of celluloid, the lower layer is made of thin translucent waxed paper. When the apparatus is not in use, the lower surface of the waxed paper adheres lightly to the upper surface of the wax slab. (Freud 1961, p.229)

When the pad is written upon, the wax slab beneath contains the imprint of what has been written, and when the layers of celluloid are removed this is erased, though never fully because a mark has been left upon the wax. The Mystic pad, for Freud, relates to the workings of the psyche in that everything with which it comes into contact leaves an imprint of sorts. It also here relates to the process of writing and memory for Heaney. In this sense, Being is eternal given the workings of the spectre and the trace.

The ontological questionings that arise at the end of the previous section, combined with the memories of a young Heaney, link Sections X and XI. Where Section X acknowledges a progression towards a future and new beginnings, Section XI engages with the unknown nature of that future and the unsureness of life in general. In *Preoccupations*, Heaney accounts for the role that memory played in the creation of the bog poems, and this realisation about his early poetry remains true for the later work. He notes that 'memory was the faculty that supplied me with the first quickening of my own poetry' (Heaney 1980, p.54), and one can look upon 'Route 110', and *Human Chain*, as being totally founded in memory. Section XI sees the older Heaney musing upon an evening out fishing with his father, although his father is not mentioned by name, one can assume that his presence is haunting the section: 'Those evenings when we'd just wait and watch / And fish' (Heaney 2010, p.58). In his childhood, Heaney would fish in the Moyola with his father and friends. The manner in which he describes the experience, and its relationship to his present state embodies the spectral imperative that has been at the core of this thesis: 'but inside my sixty-eight year-old arm there's a totally enlivened twelve-year-old one, feeling the bite. And that's enough for a lifetime of poems' (Heaney & O'Driscoll 2009, p.95). The notion of the physical present, fused with the internal memory of the past, adds to the essence of

the poetry. In a sense, the land and his surroundings during his youth, the subjects of his early poetry, still find a place in his final collection. It is a literal surfacing of an Otter in the section that captures the poet's imagination:

> Then the evening the otter's head
>
> Appeared in the flow, or was it only
>
> A surface-ruck and gleam we took for
>
> An otter's head? No doubting, all the same,
>
> The gleam, a turnover warp in the black
>
> Quick water. (Heaney 2010, p.58)

The unsure nature of the possible otter's head that broke the surface adds to the questioning of life and the future within the section.

Interestingly, the presence of an otter can also be found in his poems 'The Otter' and 'Sweeney Astray'. In the former, the otter can be looked upon as a symbol of the unconscious, or memory:

> You are my palpable, lithe
>
> Otter of memory
>
> In the pool of the moment,
>
> Turning to swim on your back,
>
> Each silent, thigh-shaking kick
>
> Re-tilting the light,

> Heaving the cool at your neck.
>
>
> And suddenly you're out,
>
> Back again, intent as ever. (Heaney 1979, p.47)

However, in 'Route 110', Auge notes that in the section 'the border between life and death blurs without entirely disappearing' (Auge 2016, p.42), just as the otter and spectres shift in and out of focus. The re-tilting of the light in the above quote links the light of the earlier poetry with the later works and hints at new vantage points, with Regan noting that 'in the later poems, especially those in *Seeing Things* and *Electric Light*, light provides a host of theological and eschatological possibilities, a powerful metaphorical medium for dwelling on final things' (Regan 2016, p.262). The lack of clarity about what occurred gives rise to the notion that the past does not always make the present clearer, and that the unknown always exists within life. For Heaney, the unknown that haunts him in Section XI is death.

This is why he has included the spectre of his father within the text; the poet knows that he has entered old age, and that he is now around the same age as his parents when they died, which is a very concrete index of mortality. The imaginative meeting at a riverbank mirrors Aeneas being reunited with the shade of his father, Anchises, in *Aeneid VI*. Heaney presents the idea of meeting his father near running water in 'Squarings xxxii' in *Seeing Things*. It is as if the earlier sequence lays the schematics of renewal and haunting for the later 'Route 110' sequence:

> Running water never disappointed.
>
> Crossing water always furthered something.

Stepping stones were stations of the soul.

A kesh could mean the track some called a *causey*

Raised above the wetness of the bog,

Or the causey where it bridged old drains and streams.

It steadies me to tell these things. Also

I cannot mention keshes or the ford

Without my father's shade appearing to me

On a path towards sunset, eyeing spades and clothes

That turf cutters stowed perhaps or souls cast off

Before they crossed the log that spans the burn. (Heaney 1991, p.83)

In 'Route 110', through Heaney's allusion to this moment, the meeting of father and son once again in mythology, the local Moyola is transformed into the Lethe. It symbolises, not only the meeting place of sons with the shades of their fathers, but also the predominant idea that the past must be overcome, and that the unknown future must be dealt with now:

In Lethe's lake they long oblivion taste,

Of future life secure, forgetful of the past. (Virgil 2013, p.191)

The Moyola, in Section XI, transcends the function of the meeting place of Heaney and his father, through memory, with the poet granting it the powers of the mythical river Lethe. Parker notes that the poem's 'penultimate offering exemplifies once more how intimations

of the future are integral to Heaney's reimaginings of the past' (Parker 2016, p.163). These re-workings find Heaney in the mythical realm of Northern Ireland, and not in Virgil's underworld, but he is still full of doubt:

> Or doubting the solid ground
>
> Of the riverbank field, twilit and a-hover
>
> With midge-drifts, as if we had commingled
>
> Among shades and shadows stirring on the brink (Heaney 2010, p.58)

The translation of his life into Virgilian episodes and moments finds Heaney on the precipice of death and a new life.

The mentioning of the riverbank field allows the previous poem in the collection, 'The Riverbank Field', to become part of the discourse surrounding Heaney's journey. It is almost as if in the previous poem, he lays out the schematics of how he will 'confound the Lethe in Moyola' (Heaney 2010, p.46), while attempting to seek renewal:

> All these presences
>
> Once they have rolled time's wheel a thousand years
>
> Are summoned here to drink the river water
>
> So that memories of this underworld are shed
>
> And soul is longing to dwell in flesh and blood
>
> Under the dome of the sky. (Heaney 2010, pp. 46-47)

By placing himself 'on the brink' (Heaney 2010, p.58), Heaney openly multiplies the

possibility of meanings once again. In a literal reading of the section, one may interpret that the brink suggests an ending, death. However, one must embrace the spectral presence of Virgil's text in this regard. Those who stood on the bank of the river Lethe would wait for new bodies so they could return to the world above again:

> Those happy spirits, which, ordain'd by fate,
>
> For future beings and new bodies wait. (Virgil 2013, p.189)

The second body that will come for Heaney will be in the form of his grandchild in Section XII, but also the body of work that he has produced with Heaney announcing water as a signifier of renewal as early as 'Squarings' where he notes 'Let rebirth come through water' (Heaney 1991, p.83). Through literature, he has immortalized his name and identity, while remaining 'needy and ever needier for translation' (Heaney 2010, p.58). Heaney has engaged with Norse, Greek and Italian mythology in his works, and has therefore translated himself into these eternal myths. By translating these works into his poetry, he succeeds in looking back, but also forward at the same time, with the act of translation itself giving new life and perspectives to the past. Parker discusses this hunger for translation as Heaney:

> referring to himself critically then and now, […] has hungered after new experiences and stepping-off points, perhaps in compensation for or as a distraction from an aching lack. Against that must be set his recognition that for any human being seeking individuation – not least a poet and critic – a constant receptivity to 'translation' is an absolute necessity. (Parker 2016, p.164).

Similarly, in life itself, Heaney has had many different experiences of place and culture,

having spent time, in Belfast during his college years, teaching at Harvard, and at Oxford, and living in Glanmore in Wicklow before ultimately settling in Dublin. The changes in location convey, in a literal sense, what Parker describes as Heaney hungering 'after new experiences and stepping-off points' (Parker 2016, p.164). The link between life and death, birth and rebirth connects Sections XI and XII. Heaney, standing amongst the shades on the riverbank with his father unsure of what the future holds, finds himself in XII in 'the age of births' (Heaney 2010, p.59).

In my Beginning is my End

The link between life and death in the final two sections of 'Route 110' sees Heaney undergo a fusion between his current world, and his first memory poem, 'Digging'. The new child of Section XII symbolises new beginnings, just like the child in 'Bann Valley Eclogue', with the final section of the sequence allowing history to once again repeat itself. Heaney's 'Digging' sees the young poet located imaginatively with his father and grandfather, while the final poem of the sequence sees Heaney transition from the young man in Section I to the elderly grandfather in Section XII, and being located imaginatively with his granddaughter. Life has come full circle in that it is now Anna Rose who takes the place of the young Heaney in this poetic lineage. It is now Anna Rose who is looking at her father and grandfather, just as Heaney during his childhood looked at his. Through the birth of a new baby, the history and ancestry of the Heaney name will be continued. It is a new beginning, which again finds a resonance with Virgil's *Aeneid*, where some of those who had spent one thousand years in purgatory were granted second bodies and new lives. Heaney's transition to old age, and to the role of the grandfather, further emphasises his

own impending death. Parker notes that 'Aeneas's sense of privilege at glimpsing his and

his father's heirs . . . would clearly be deeply affecting for Heaney, conscious of how he

very nearly might have missed his beloved grandchildren's birth' (Parker 2016, p.164).

The sense of occasion and tradition haunts the poem once again:

> At dawn from the foot of our back garden
>
> The last to leave came with fresh-plucked flowers
>
> To quell whatever smells of drink and smoke
>
> Would linger on where mother and child were due
>
> Later that morning from the nursing home. (Heaney 2010, p.59)

Where the older Heaney now celebrates a new life in Section XII, the presence of drink

and smoke conjures notions of death. The presence of smoke in the section links with the

'smoke-imbued' (Heaney 2010, p.54) clothes in Section VII, and renews the memory of

Michael Mulholland's death. The spectral presence of smoke also links the young

inexperienced Heaney with his elder counterpart in Section XII, but most importantly, it

also links the binary op*positions* of life and death together.

Similarly, the presence of 'fresh-plucked flowers' symbolises the air of life and

vitality within the section, and also the fact that all natural things must wither and die.

Virgil's spectral presence throughout the sequence haunts the motifs of life and death that

have pervaded it. The act of Heaney translating and borrowing from Virgil's *Aeneid* offers

a new life to classical mythology within the realm of Heaney's first world and Ireland. The

final Virgilian reference sees the poet put his final affairs in order, as he prepares to cross

over to the other riverbank:

> So now, as a thank-offering for one
>
> Whose long wait on the shaded bank has ended,
>
> I arrive with my bunch of stalks and silvered head. (Heaney 2010, p.59)

The crossing over to the other side allows the poet to regain and carry on a new life, just as the act of translation allows his poetry to be reformed by what has went before it. Heiny notes '"translation" must therefore also include being carried back from the other side of the river from this side as well. Birth, which means rebirth according to Virgil's view, suggests a balance' (Heiny 2013, p.313). The image of an old Heaney carrying these stalks to the other side of the lake can be looked upon as similar to the scene depicted during his youth in Section V. The stalk that Mrs Nick gave him 'as good as lit me home' (Heaney 2010, p.52); however, in this sense it is not home where Heaney's journey takes him but rather to the next life. Where Heaney was 'Lost, unhappy and at home' (Heaney 1972, p.48) in Jutland in 'The Tollund Man', he is now prepared and happy in the Virgilian realm of myth. The poem is a mixture of a realistic outpouring of emotion at impending death, and also a celebration of a new life.

The fact that the final image of the sequence is that of his grandchild entering the world puts in motion the thought that this event is a more important and significant event for Heaney than that of his own life. It is the 'earthlight' that she possesses and exudes that binds Heaney's world of soil and mud with the new light that has entered the family, and that also encompasses the poetic terrains of Heaney's poetry; the early poetry revolves around the earth and soil in the bog, whereas from *Seeing Things* onwards, air and light are

predominant themes. Regan would similarly look upon earth and light in the poetry in the same manner, when he notes that 'images and ideas are recovered from the dark earth of memory and subjected to the light of creation' (Regan 2016, p.275). It is Anna Rose, the new life and next generation, that is important and the point of focus as 'we gather round / Talking baby talk' (Heaney 2010, p.59). Heaney disregards his own dilemma at the end, to a certain extent, with the focus being on the future.

However it is once again the presence of language, despite it being broken 'baby talk', that connect and 'confound' the past, present and future together, with Parker observing that this 'manages to suggest both the way one happy event triggers memories of others, and the tendency among adults to revert to second childishness on glimpsing a baby in a cot or pram' (Parker 2016, p.165). In this sense, the final image of the poem captures the entirety of Heaney's life, in that through speech and language, he reverts to his first words of baby talk while being an accomplished poet in the present of the event taking place. His life is encompassed in this image and 'reminds us that the specters of the dead are reanimated not by a controlling medium that coerces them into speaking but rather by the mere act of loving acknowledgment' (Auge 2016, p.43).

Conclusion

This thesis set out to demonstrate a hauntological examination of the poetry of Seamus Heaney through the theoretical lens of Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx*. Each chapter in the thesis attempted to deal with a different thematic haunting within the poetry, but at the same time, to show that all these hauntings are intrinsically linked with each other. Similarly, the poetry is also haunted by itself in that many of the works discussed in this thesis find corresponding themes, structures and forms repeated throughout the Heaney canon; the earlier works haunt the middle poetry as much as both haunt the later poetry. Through a strict, in-depth and focused reading of single poems from the Heaney canon, a framework of hauntings can be traced throughout the works.

Chapter One sought to interrogate and detail Derrida's understanding of the function of hauntology. In a general sense, the chapter outlines the trope of hauntology from the perspective of Derrida's argument in *Specters of Marx* whereby the spectre operates in a liminal space between being and non-being. The spectre of the past also influences and guides the present and future in many regards, and it is this, which enables the past to never die, or completely disappear, but instead to return and repeat itself in a different guise and different place, at any point in the future. Derrida notes that 'a ghost never dies, it remains always to come and to come-back' (Derrida 2006, p.123). These ghostly hauntings enabled a link between his work on deconstruction, the trace and

différance to be incorporated into the chapter as a way of understanding where hauntology, as a trope, originated in the Derridean canon. Similarly, a selection from a wider field of thinkers was examined such as Freud, de Man, Blanchot, Sartre and Hegel in order to garner an understanding of the influences on Derrida's concept of hauntology. In essence, a hauntological approach was taken to hauntology in order to locate its place and usage within this thesis.

Chapter Two sought to analyse postcolonial hauntings in the poetry of Seamus Heaney. Two viewpoints were examined through the lenses of hauntology and the ideas of postcolonial theorists Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha. Said's idea of otherness, and Bhabha's ideas of hybridity, were imbricated and intersected with Derrida's spectral thinking in order to view Irish history, and Heaney's poetry, from the perspectives of Otherness and the cultural hybridity that Heaney's identity encompasses. By dividing the chapter into two major sections to deal with the poetry, Norse hauntings and British hauntings, it was possible to explore the lasting influences of both cultures on present day Ireland and its future. The poet's language, culture and identity are heavily influenced by the spectres of Norse and British settlers.

Chapter Three discusses the impact of violence on Ireland, especially the period of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, and Heaney's response to that situation. By dividing the chapter into two predominant sections to examine the poetry, one that dealt with the bog poems and the other with a broader stream of poetry, the tracing of violence as being culturally sanctioned and repetitive dominates the discussion. By choosing the bog poems as the starting point of the chapter, it allowed for a discussion of the Troubles from a wider, older, European perspective. Through engaging with older strains of European violence

Heaney's Northern Ireland can be viewed as repeating the age-old violent actions suffered by those who reside in the bog. While 'Bogland' outlines the function and usage of the bog as a metaphor of interring the past within the landscape of Ireland, 'The Tollund Man' and 'Punishment' suggest a correlation between the past and the present. All that is unearthed in the bog, physically and metaphorically, is the poet's way of seeking to understand the violence and futility of the tribal violence of both the past and the present.

The second section of this chapter continued the same line of argument as the first section. However, section two does not engage with the haunting, historical image of the bog bodies, but instead with more contemporary instances of violence. Through dealing with individual victims of violence, Louis O' Neill in 'Casualty' and William Strathearn in 'Station Island VII', a more realistic and emotive element is traced through the poetry. It also examines how Heaney's focus on the individual, as opposed to the collective, did not sway or change over the course of his dealings with instances of violence during the Troubles. The violence that encompasses and dwells within much of the middle poetry finds a corresponding image of death in 'The Wood Road', from *Human Chain*, as Heaney envisages the road as being haunted by all the different instances of death that is has witnessed. Overall, this chapter located a common spectral haunting of violence through in-depth readings of the works.

Chapter Four outlined the extent to which classical mythology haunts Heaney's work. The absent presences of both Virgil and Dante find a haunting place within much of the middle and later poetry. The chapter initially outlined and discussed the poetic backgrounds of both classical poets in order to show, and trace, certain commonalities between their worlds and Heaney's Northern Ireland. Instances of colonialism, civil war

and exile are common features between Heaney, Virgil and Dante, but most importantly it is all three poets' attempts to understand their own worlds through poetry that resonates most deeply. In turning to the classics, as he turned to the bog bodies, Heaney once again seeks to understand his own world from an even wider, older, broader European perspective. The spectral hauntings of both Virgil and Dante in the poetry allow Heaney to correlate and envisage his own world by 'confounding' it with those of the past.

Through translations of Virgil's *Eclogues*, Heaney once again turned inwards to his own Northern Ireland and shrouded his vision in mythology in order to show the repetitiveness and circularity of history and violence. Similarly, Heaney uses Dantean mythology to trace similarities between his own world and that of the classical world. In choosing 'Ugolino', 'The Strand at Lough Beg' and 'The Crossing' as points of discussion within the chapter, a trace of hauntings, both violent and correlative to Northern Ireland, was explored. Chapter Four sees many of the works in chapters two and three find points of comparison and repetitiveness with the poems and issues explored through classical mythology in the poetry. This further engrains the haunting presence of the past upon the present, or what Derrida terms hauntology, within both the works and world of Heaney.

The final chapter of this thesis approached the 'Route 110' sequence from Heaney's final collection *Human Chain* in a new and original manner, again through the lens of Derrida's hauntology. In approaching the poem from this theoretical perspective, a series of spectres that dominated previous chapters of this thesis were found to haunt and reside within 'Route 110'. Similarly, previous poems from the Heaney canon were found to have a thematic resonance within the sequence, and this further engrains the sense throughout this thesis that Heaney's poetry is not only haunted by spectres from other cultures and

texts, but is also haunted by, and linked with, poems previously written by the poet. The sequence is similarly haunted by the classical poets, Virgil and Dante, in both form and content, as the poem initiates a haunting of Virgil's *Aeneid* thematically, and Dante's *The Divine Comedy* structurally. Overall, the circularity of history bears fruit within the sequence, as the poet charts the journey of his own life from being a young man to being a grandfather. By the end of the sequence, he is looking at the next generation that will carry on his name with notions of rebirth coming to the fore. Heaney's poetry is in a constant circle of haunting and repetition with itself as well as wider cultures and texts.

In conclusion, the exploration of the haunting influence of the Derridean spectre upon the poetry of Seamus Heaney in this study creates a discourse around historical and literary absent presences within his canon. It locates instances of repetition within the poetry, and fuses notions of culture, identity and existence together in a web of hauntings that cannot be escaped, but only repeated. The past finds a constant presence within the present and future of Heaney's works through the workings of the spectre. Such a reading offers a unified reading of the poetry, not in a singular sense, but in a manner that sees each collection and indeed many of the poems, haunted by others within the Heaney canon.

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