Chapter Six

The Legacy of Seamus Heaney's *North*

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In memory of Seamus Heaney

"What is history? What is love? What is justice? Sanity? Reason? Do the gods really exist, and does it matter?" Professor of law Yxta Maya Murray (2015, 137) certainly asks the grand questions in "Punishment and the Costs of Knowledge," many of which will be recognized in Shakespeare's drama, in French philosophy, and by people who appreciate the "good literature" that "summons powerful emotions" and that "disconcerts and puzzles," as Martha Nussbaum does in *Poetic Justice* (1995, 5, 6). "Inevitably," Murray continues, "we find that the lawyer and the artist come to antipodal conclusions, which then gives us occasion to ask: Who is right? The poet, or the judge?" She answers her own judicial scrutiny: "In my class we study 'Punishment'" (2015, 137). Murray's discerning questions develop emotionally and logically from Heaney's poem "Punishment," and from his controversial collection *North* (1975). The persona in "Punishment" hovers between compassion and cynicism, and holds up Diogenes' lantern to himself as much as to others: we are all implicated.

"Poetry represents the need for an ultimate court of appeal," Heaney states in his interviews with Dennis O'Driscoll in *Stepping Stones* (2008, 470). "Punishment," together with such poems as "The Road to Derry," "Casualty," "After a Killing," "The Strand at Loch Beg," and "From the Republic of Conscience" in other volumes, meditates on individual responsibility and the demands for justice, on the recourse to higher courts of appeal, and on the urge for

closure. Furthermore, "Punishment" indicates in its very title a range of retribution from corporeal disciplining and capital punishment to vindictive revenge and religious sanction. The term for abuse, beating, and retaliation incorporates a scale of justice from street legality and kangaroo courts to legal jurisprudence and metaphysical imperatives. Yet the constitution of any jurisdiction or legal system is extremely unclear in the poem. The terminology and reference in "Punishment" range from "exact and tribal, intimate revenge" to such biblical allusions as "scapegoat," "little adulteress," and "stones of silence" (Heaney 1975, 30-1). The persona's catch 22 of personal empathy, communal allegiance, and principles of justice appears in his attraction to the victim – "I almost love you" – and his complicity with the perpetrators' dastardly act of violence – "who would connive in the civilized outrage" (Heaney 1975, 30-1). In the turmoil of emotions, social commotion, and judicial debacle, the persona empathizes with the primary victim in the circles of injustice. Heaney (2010, 13) himself points to an ethical perspective in conflicts of justice when he approvingly cites Albert Camus' 1957 Nobel speech in his own pamphlet for the Irish Human Rights Commission, "Writer and Righter:" "By definition the writer could not put himself at the service of those who make history; he is at the service of those who suffer it." In "Punishment" an unusual, disruptive poetic form reflects the poem's theme of ethical dilemma. Several cut-back stanzas suggest brutal violence, just as the flow and stoppage of verses capture a sense of disruption more than continuity in history. Nevertheless, the most powerful aspect of the poem is its coupling of the "betraying sisters" of the contemporary violence of the Troubles to the fate of historical victims in pre-Christian countries of the north, the bog people.

Heaney first came across this striking metaphor of the bog people in *The Bog People: Iron Age Man Preserved*, P.V. Glob's archeological study of bog bodies in Northern Europe

from 1965. The fate of sacrificial victims during religious fertility rites in the primitive stages of the iron age raises similar questions of religion, violence, scapegoating, and martyrdom relevant to the Northern Irish Troubles. Their fate also presents horrifically the sectarian murders and complex tragedy of Northern Ireland. The torture and execution of the bog people strike raw nerves in the violent 1970-80s, e.g. the indiscriminate murders of the loyalist Shankill Butchers and the horror of the Republican paramilitaries. There is little doubt that "Punishment" and the other bog poems in *North*, for example "Bog Queen," "The Graubelle Man," and "Strange Fruit," still retain a crucial position as vocables, images, and symbols adequate to the predicaments of living in Northern Ireland in the 1970s, and in the transition from a war-ridden society into the peace process. Thus, "Punishment" expresses a spectral moment of justice, a moment that raises the ghost of past injustice, questions the future of the victim and the violators. The verses also implicate the bystander in and the reader of the poem in the moral evaluations and the social fear of a splintered community policed by paramilitaries. The Bog People represented with horrible actuality the perplexed position of religion, the ultimate questions of jurisdiction, the contemptible violence and murder, in short: the tragedy of Northern Ireland. *North* hit a raw nerve during the Troubles and maintains a special position within the legacy of the 1995 Nobel Laureate. "Punishment" presents itself as one of the most brutal and justice-scrutinizing poems in probably the Northern Irish poet's most controversial volume of poetry.

The importance of Heaney's poetry hit the public eye and global scene of poetry yet again with his passing away on Friday 30 August 2013. In the wake of his death, a huge circle of critics and writers acknowledges the legacy of Heaney's art, in particular the impact of *North*. Trent Morris (2014, 127) deems *North* Heaney's "*magnus opus*." Roy Foster (2014, 96-7) recalls "the authentic lifting of hairs on the back of the neck that I still remember when I opened *North*"

and "its exploration of the archeology of atrocity" in his obituary "A Luminous Absence." Helen Vendler (1998, 3; 2014, 14) states that *North* is "one of the crucial poetic interventions of the twentieth century," and that the volume "became (and remains) a site of controversy." Dillon Johnston (2003, 118) concurs: "*North* quickly became, and has remained, Heaney's most celebrated and controversial volume." Patricia Craig (2013) comments in her commemorative article that: "His fourth collection, *North* (1975), was a stepping stone on the way to his ultimate status as the "greatest living poet" – the most widely read poet in English, possessor of incomparable gifts and impeccable instincts, and all the other superlatives heaped on him." Similar ideas of *North* had already been summarized by Bernard O'Donoghue (2009, 4) in his *Cambridge Companion to Heaney* when he stated that *North* is "at once his most admired and most controversial single volume." Numerous critics and scholars draw attention to *North* in their confirmation of Heaney's unique and Nobel position on the global arena of contemporary poetry.

The Nobel Organization (1995) awarded Heaney the Nobel prize in 1995 "for works of lyrical beauty and ethical depth, which exalt everyday miracles and the living past." Their justification for awarding the laurels to Heaney pertains in particular to Heaney's *North*, however much the prize is based upon his entire authorship up to 1995. In crude generalizations "Sunlight" and "The Seed Cutters," the two opening poems in dedication of Mary Heaney, his aunt, are notable for their lyrical beauty that exalts everyday miracles. In similar terms, the many Viking and bog poems in the first part of the volume reveal ethical depth and the living past. Heaney's attraction to the bog bodies also discloses pulchritude for their aesthetic qualities.[1] These human remnants from a distant past are also uncannily mindful of a future: these ghosted and apprehensive *mento mori* embody a longevity that most living mortals will never experience

after their death. Many of the more immediate poems in the second part of *North* tend to gravitate more towards the local idiom of life during the Troubles in the 1960s and early -70s. Such categorization, however, does not eclipse the fact that the Nobel laudation crosses such simplistic division of styles and concerns in *North.* The binary justification of "lyrical beauty" and "ethical depth" also captured the main critical camps on Heaney's poetic achievement on its publication.

"He's fucking eminent … The cause of alternative voices is not damaged, it is destroyed." Robert McLiam Wilson's (1995, 23-5) scathing judgement in *Fortnight* in the wake of Heaney's Nobel Prize offers a concise purview of some of the critical controversy surrounding Heaney and *North*. Desmond Fennel (1991) also articulates his antipathy, basically with no regards whatsoever to Heaney's poetry, in "'Whatever You Say, Say Nothing:' Why Heaney is No. 1." Dennis O'Driscoll (2009, 67-8), while dissenting from Wilson and Fennel's scathing critique of Heaney, observes a distinctive division in the reception of *North*: "Although widely (and, in my opinion, rightly) regarded as Heaney's finest and most original collection, *North* was greeted with a virtually unanimous vote of no confidence in his native Ulster." He lists Professor Edna Longley and Heaney's fellow poets Ciaran Carson, Paul Muldoon, and James Simmons as the fiercest critics. Although Heaney has been labelled a male chauvinist by Patricia Coughlan (1991), a laureate of violence and a mythmaker by Ciaran Carson (1975), a traditionalist by Robert McLiam Wilson (1995), a Girardian structuralist by Jonathan Hufstader (1999), a modernist by Stephen Matthews (1997), and a postmodernist by Thomas Docherty (1999), central parts of the critical reception have focused on the political implications of his poetry, particularly along the axis of political bifurcation in Northern Ireland. Conor Cruise O'Brien (1975) and Enda Longley (1986a) find Heaney's poetry too political, whereas David Lloyd

(1993) deems his verses not political enough. Heaney has generally been regarded as the nationalist voice of the silenced, suppressed, and socially disadvantaged Catholic minority – almost the poetic wing of Republicanism. Seamus Deane (1985, 175) states: "He is characteristic of his Northern Irish Catholic community." Neil Corcoran (1999b, 115), in "Examples of Heaney," agrees: "It is clear … which side of the cultural and political divide Heaney is on." Heaney admits to episodes of political pressure from both sides of the divide during the 1970-80s in his interviews with Dennis O'Driscoll (2008, 257-62). Today, however, the power of the lyrical poetry and ethical depth in *North* has transcended the most immediate geo-political constrictions. Yet the life and aftermath of *North* testify to an indisciplinary volume of "good literature" that "summons powerful emotions," and that "disconcerts and puzzles," as Nussbaum (1995, 5, 6) appreciates in *Poetic Justice*, and that provokes all the existential questions that Murray raises in her reading of "Punishment."

"To me, he [Heaney] was like Lady Gaga or Mick Jagger or Jesus," Murray (2015, 136) confesses after the news of Heaney's death. Her euphoric acclamation adds an interesting dimension of popularity and academic interdisciplinarity to Heaney's much disputed and indisciplinary poetics. She continues to interpret the poem and to account for how vividly "Punishment" provokes discussions on central issues of justice and legislation in her classes. Heaney's poem tends to implicate law students as much as professors of literature and politicians of authority. "Punishment" and Heaney's poetry caused a revelation to Murray's life and research. Murray (2015, 140) writes: "Punishment proved my favorite of Heaney's meditations on time, death, and the haphazard workings of Nemesis." After having read Heaney, she immersed herself in a wide range of cultural interests, and "went most feverishly for the novels of Toni Morrison, Virginia Woolf and Vladimir Nabokov" (Murray 2015, 141). Clearly, Heaney

inspires readers to investigate further how deep ethical concerns are explored in a variety of aesthetic commitment. In Murray's classes the American students continuously interpret Heaney's poem in the contexts of American (racial) injustice. This jubilant celebration of Heaney's poetry and academic testimony to its importance by a female American law professor in a secularized world, "Punishment and the Costs of Knowledge," indicate some of the inquisitorial power of Heaney's poetry.

Murray's essay on Heaney's "Punishment" demonstrates the importance of his poetry to the discipline of justice, to younger generations, and to audiences detached from any Northern Irish context. Heaney, in his bog poems, transforms the ancient and the distant to the close and contemporary. Murray intersects the hermeneutics of Heaney's poetry with the intricacies of law and interpretation, with capital punishment, with several court rulings, and with the humanizing of law studies. Her entertaining and edifying exposition also reveals the impact of Heaney's poetry upon individual life, and the poem's power to incite new hermeneutic possibilities beyond its first immediate contexts. These transitions and migrations of poetic power derive from the poem itself; from Heaney's translations of the fate of the bog people in ancient Jutland to his own situation in the Troubles in Northern Ireland in the early 1970s. Murray's essay can also be regarded as a specimen of all those who see *North* and Heaney's poetry in general as important way beyond the remits of literature and aesthetics.

"I used to carry that book of poems [*North*] around with me as though it were a cultural road map", Olivia O'Leary (2015, 64) declares in "Seamus Heaney: Part of What We Are," and, like Murray, celebrates Heaney's poetry from circles way beyond the districts of literature. Her essay reveals the importance of Heaney's poetry and *North* to journalists and intellectuals. Her

meditations also imply how well Heaney understood the fraught politics at the time, and how his poetry supplements journalistic idiom and public rhetoric with aesthetic dimension. She states:

> My job as a journalist has been to cover politics, not poetry. However, Seamus Heaney's work has addressed so many of the issues underlying political debate – our torn loyalties, our new brashness – that he is a vital part of any commentary on what it is to be Irish. His work is forged from our shared experience. He has written the music of our time. (O' Leary 2015, 62)

Murray and O'Leary demonstrate the impact of Heaney's *North* in a variety of departments. Heaney's death, however, affected most people in Ireland, and many in the wider world. "You must be devastated," the customs officer responded to Heaney's fellow poet Paul Muldoon when he arrived in Ireland for the funeral (Vendler 2014, 19). The American law professor, Yxta Maya Murray; the Northern Irish journalist, Olivia O'Leary; the Irish customs officer; and three of the authors in this book contribute to the testimony of Heaney's unique status across class and country.

The community of artists, politicians, intellectuals, and writers that acknowledges the legacy of Heaney's poetry further highlights his popularity. U2 rock star Bono (2013) described Heaney as "a great, great poet" who "changed my life." President Michael D. Higgins (2013) paid tribute to a man whose "contribution to the republics of letters, conscience, and humanity was immense." Possibly, former President of the United States, Bill Clinton, articulates most succinctly the wide-ranging qualities of Heaney's legacy:

> Both his stunning work and his life were a gift to the world. His mind, heart, and his uniquely Irish gift for language made him our finest poet of the rhythms of ordinary lives and a powerful voice for peace...His wonderful work, like that of his fellow Irish Nobel Prize winners Shaw, Yeats, and Beckett, will be a lasting gift for all the world. (Clinton 2013)

People from many walks of life, from pop stars to presidents, bear witness to the way in which Heaney's lines and life changed us and contributed to changing the world in which we live.

Other critics tend to restrict the legacy of Heaney to centers of literature: "Not the politics, not the moral stances, but that half-forgotten, unforgettable smudge of fruit in a jamjar," the poet Harry Clifton (2015, 61) concludes his summary on Heaney's reputation. He, thus, stakes out in his essay one stronghold in the evolving discourses of Heaney's durability: "the lyrical beauty" that the Nobel committee highlights. However, Clifton's conclusion could be seen to question the Nobel committee's emphasis on Heaney's "ethical depth," "living past," and "miracles." Clifton's essay can also be read against Manus Charleton's (2014, 61) "Ethical Depth", which meditates upon the phenomena of the Nobel criterion: "There is an ethical note, one which readers (and listeners) pick up, and to cite ethical depth as a prominent characteristic feels right." Clifton's analysis, naturally, pays great tribute to "lyrical beauty", but less, if any, to ethics and the ways in which events of the past bear upon our contemporary world. His essay confirms the established approaches to Heaney's early poetry, what Hobsbaum (1985, 37) termed "Heaneyspeak," and Harold Bloom (1980, 37) praised as the "countryman's veracity and vividness of soil-sense." Clifton choses the lyrical masterpiece "Sunlight" form *North*, in contrast to Dan Chiasson's (2014, 114) assertion that "his [Heaney's] poems about peat bogs and

what they preserve are probably the most important English-language poems written in the past 50 years about violence." In examples and arguments Clifton evinces a distinct tendency to favour Heaney's lyricism of rural life and personal bliss over other aspects of the Nobel Laureate's artistic plenitude. Clifton's conclusive denial of politics and ethics also echoes old claims, such as Edna Longley's (1986b, 185) in *Poetry in the Wars* that "poetry and politics, like church and state, should be separated." Clifton's gravitation towards the lyrical beauty would certainly exclude from attention most of the verses in Heaney's *North*. However, physicality and lyrical beauty remain formidable forces in Heaney's poetry. A vast range of poets and critics, for example Vona Groarke's (2015) "Between the Lines: The Writer's Heaney", Angela Leighton's (2014/15) "Heaney and the Music," and Jahan Ramazani's (2015) "Seamus Heaney's Globe," focuses predominantly on the intertextual and canonical merits of Heaney's poetry. In general terms, most of the academic essays on Heaney's legacy in the wake of his death focus on his lyrical beauty, whereas artists and politicians tend to acknowledge his ethical depth, his ability to make history vibrate in our contemporary world, and his impact on living lives as much as vital verse.

The canonical status and Bloomian anxiety *North* exercises upon contemporary poets, for example Harry Clifton and Vona Groarke, reach wide and far. First and foremost, this legacy lives on in Heaney's own lines. His lyrical beauty remains an admirable facet of his poetry throughout his career. The ethical depth and the living past of the bog people run most directly in the lines and verses from "The Tollund Man" in *Wintering Out* (1972) to "Tollund" in *The Spirit Level* (1996) and "The Tollund Man in Springtime" in *District and Circle* (2006). "Casualty" in *Field Work* (1979), like "Punishment" in *North*, meditates upon the complexity of justice. "Anything Can Happen" in *District and Circle* responds directly to 9/11. Heaney's capacity for

finding poetic templates that strike the raw nerves of conflictual communities recurs in the "Mycenae Lookout" sequence in *The Spirit Level* (1996) at a time of ceasefire and internecine combat within the divisions of Northern Ireland. This talent is also salient in his two plays: *The Cure of Troy* (1990) and *The Burial at Thebes* (2004), Heaney's versions of Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and *Antigone* that Charles I. Armstrong attends to in chapter eight of this book. *North*'s medieval spirit, Norse culture, bellicose menace, and inclement temperament of a mythical pre-Christian realm also appear in his translation of *Beowulf* (1999). A sense of escape from the battle and self-questioning moral scrutiny in the wake of the ferocious critical debates on *North*, characterize parts of *Field Work* (1979) and *Station Island* (1982). Heaney's legacies, however, reach far beyond his own intratextual continuities and transformations.

"There is no poet in Ireland who has not been influenced by his example, and is in his debt; but so is everyone who has been touched by his poetry, and they are innumerable," Heaney's life-long compatriot and fellow poet Michael Longley (2013) declares. Heaney has ranged as a spirit of rivalrous solidarity at least since Robert Lowell extolled his poetry as "a new kind of political poetry by the best Irish poet since W. B. Yeats" in the Books of the Year column in *The Observer* in the wake of *North* in 1975, since Morrison and Motion (1982) awarded Heaney the pride of place in their *Penguin Book of Contemporary Poetry* (1982), and since Neil Corcoran (1986, 9) lauded him "the most significant poet now writing in English." The Nobel prize in 1995 confirmed and elevated further his status on the global arena of literature. Perhaps Heaney's influence was felt the most intensely in the Belfast Group. Allan Gillis (2014/15) is one of the newer generation of poets who has "fought with Heaney's work for a long time." His considerations in "Heaney's Legacy" appear relevant far beyond the remits of

Northern Ireland. His own poetry suggests one specific location for tracing the complex inheritance of Heaney's art.

Some other brief indications reveal some of the inspiration of *North* upon other poets and writers. Siobhan O'Dowd's novel *Bog Child* (2008) presents one text that interacts with Heaney's "Punishment" and bog poems, as Erik Mustad elucidates in chapter seven. The work of Heaney's fellow poet and friend Paul Muldoon offers another example. The interpoeticality between the two of them constitutes a separate strand in the poetry of both. Muldoon's volume *Quoof* (1980) responds specifically to Heaney's *North*, but their artistic intertwining remains continuous and intriguing throughout their careers.[2] Sinéad Morrisey asserts (2014/15, 138): "Muldoon's work is so obviously linked to Heaney's in subject matter and so deliberately different in execution, remaining connected by antithesis, it's incontestable that Muldoon's achievement would have been impossible without Heaney's achievement first." The relations between Morrisey's and Heaney's poetics invite further critical work. A final and third much more specific example is the rejection of the male-chauvinist, violent, and guilt-ridden implications of "Punishment" and the bog poems in *North* by in Mary O'Donnell's poem, "In Search of the Woman of Allen" (1993, 45-9).

The power of Heaney's "Punishment" still lives on, as Yxta Maya Murray, critics, presidents, and poets make evident. Three other incidents, one historical, one scientific, and one cultural, have also resurrected the bog poems in *North*. First, many of the victims of the Troubles were "disappeared." Some of them have over the recent years after the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 been exhumed from the earth and have inflamed the questions of punishment, justice, amnesty, truth commissions, and political representation at Stormont by previous paramilitary leaders. Secondly, the Canadian anthropologist and pathologist Heather Gill-Robinson (2005)

claims in 2006 that the Windeby girl, the inspiration for "Punishment", was actually a boy. Her proof is based on new types of DNA-testing. New theories also indicate that the boy may have died from natural causes of hunger, fatigue, and winter attrition. Gill-Robison's detection adds some unexpected weight to Patricia Coughlan's critique that "Punishment" and the bog poems are created by a male chauvinist mind, and to Ciaran Carson's (1975) critique of the Heaney of *North* as "the laureate of violence – a mythmaker, an anthropologist of ritual killing, an apologist for "the situation," in the last resort, a mystifier." It seems, perhaps, in retrospect, that Heaney imposed his troubled mind upon the bog people as much as he translated their fate into contemporary Northern Ireland. Such a possibility adds to the infernal intensity of ethical dilemmas in a war-ridden Northern Ireland. Thirdly, *North* offers an opportunity to supplement the artic turn of academic discourses in the Nordic countries over the last couple of decades with artistic reflections from a different geo-temporal viewpoint (Barber, Hansson, and McQuaid 2018; Pellicer 2017; Ryall, Schimanski, Wærp 2017).

The legacies of Heaney's *North* are multiple. As Clifton, Groarke, Ramazani, Leighton and several others point out, its lyrical beauty remains memorable and apprehends most readers. Heaney, however, indicates that many of these poems owe their durability to their aesthetic uncouthness: "A lot of the poems I have a fondness for came smartly through. On the other hand, the poems in *North* were grimly executed, and I really like them because they are odd and hard and contrary," he tells Dennis O'Driscoll (2009, 446-8). Many others – intellectuals such as Yxta Maya Murray and Olivia O'Leary, poet and critic Allan Gillis, and presidents Michael D. Higgins and Bill Clinton – esteem the much-debated volume for its ethical depth and profound humanity. "In such famous poems as "Bog Queen" and "Punishment," Heaney indicts both himself and his culture," Helen Vendler (2014, 14) argues. Such self-reflexive and cultural

indictment belongs to the personal and judicial significance Yxta Maya Murray testifies to, but obviously also to an ethical responsibility of the individual and the place in which she or he lives, and to the overarching questions of the position of metaphysical imperatives in a secular world. Heaney's approach in *North* to a poet's "relationship to his own voice, his own place, his literary heritage and his contemporary world" (Heaney 1980, 13) adds ethical debt and humanist imperatives beyond its lyrical beauty.

The self-indictment that Vendler points out reappears in the "Station Island" sequence in 1982, which can also be read as self-accusatory meditations upon *North*. This inward look became paired with an increasing outlook. "The world has turned into a big Ulster," Heaney comments towards the end of his life in a letter to fellow poet John Montague (2014, 113). Heaney's discovery manifests itself in his later work. *The Haw Lantern* (1987) keeps up his search for humanity and justice, not least in the poem "The Republic of Conscience," which was commissioned by Amnesty International. Olivia O'Leary (2015, 74) testifies to the broadcasting of ethical responsibility in this poem: "'From the Republic of Conscience' on its Amnesty poster, reminding me and every other person who has a chance to bear witness, that we are dual citizens both of our own world and of the republic of conscience." "Anything Can Happen" (2004) responds to 9/11. Heaney scrutinizes questions of ethics and morals throughout his poetry, also long time after he left the North. The same impulse towards the ethical also characterizes his four books of reflection upon literature and its status: *Crediting Poetry* (1995a), *The Redress of Poetry* (1995b), *The Government of the Tongue* (1988), and *Preoccupations* (1980).

"Seamus was blessed, not only with a huge poetic gift, but also with a deep humanity and maturity," Karl Kirchwey (2014, 123) argues appropriately. Heaney's artistic engagement with questions of justice, with aesthetic autonomy, and the wider circles of poetry would lose a

significant dimension of its tribute to the humanist tradition if his poetry was read merely for its impact on the institutions of literature. Perhaps his long-standing interlocutor in the creative and critical idiom, Paul Muldoon, presents the most memorable accolade:

> The truth is that he developed into a much more complex poet than anyone might have imagined, one who was increasingly recognized as having insights into not only plows, horses, and frogs, but international politics, human rights, and the attack on the World Trade Center. He was the only poet I can think of who was recognized worldwide as having moral as well as literary authority and, as such, may be the last major poet to even entertain such a possibility. (Muldoon 2013)

"Punishment" and *North* still retains remarkable powers of inquiry into ethics and government that stirred Yxta Maya Murray (2015, 137) to pose those incumbent questions of history, love, justice, sanity, and reason to herself and to her law class, and to stir conscience and individual responsibility far beyond the literary circles. Muldoon's and the Nobel committee's judicious recognition of Heaney's manifold achievement serves justice to his poetry and *North* remains the apogee of a poetic achievement lauded for its "lyrical beauty and ethical depth, which exalt everyday miracles and the living past," but which also engages profoundly with the incumbent questions of justice in morally fraught times and places.

Notes

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1 Danish archeologist P.V. Glob's book *The Bog People* (1965) incited Heaney's imagination. Today the awe and beaty of such bog people as the Windeby girl, the Tollund man, the Graubelle man, and many others are readily available online.

2 Coded references to Heaney constitute one fascinating aspect of Muldoon's poetry, and vice versa in parts of Heaney's later work. Heaney and Muldoon also praise and punish each other in reviews and critical prose. See Heaney's "The Mixed Marriage" (1980) and "The Prenatal Mountain: Vision and Irony in Recent Irish Poetry (1989). For Muldoon on Heaney, see "Sweaney Peregraine" (1984) and "Poet Seamus Heaney Wins Nobel Prize" (1995). Critics are also aware of their strong connection, see for example Ruben Moi: "Transtextual Conceptualizations of Northern Ireland" (2007) and "'The Testament of Cresseid' by Seamus Heaney and 'Medley for Morin Kuhr' by Paul Muldoon" (2005); Elmer Kennedy Andrews, "Heaney and Muldoon: Omphalos and Diaspora" (2006); Neil Corcoran "A Languorous Cutting Edge: Muldoon Versus Heaney?" (1999a). Fran Brearton (2003) splits this dyad and points to the connections between Paul Muldoon and Michael Longley. The obvious sources for such individual negotiations with canonicity and the frissons of psychoanalytical textualities are T. S. Eliot's "Tradition and Individual Talent" (1919) and Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973).