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**“Names portable as alter stones”:  
Nomadic Movement and Recollection in Seamus Heaney’s Poetry**

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“Names portable as alter stones”:

### Nomadic Movement and Recollection in Seamus Heaney’s Poetry

“The Stations of the West,” a poem by Seamus Heaney, opens with the speaker recalling time spent as a child at a *Gaeltacht*, a village or town whose residents only speak Irish. The speaker recalls the attempts of others to teach him Irish so he could in turn “extirpate” his use of the English language (*Opened Ground* 88). The narrative use of tense in the poem provides a meditation on how recollection affects a place’s rooted meaning. The narrator’s memory begins in the past tense, “On the first night in Gaeltacht the old woman spoke to me in English,” but by the end of the poem, the narrator changes from the past tense to the conditional, “But still I would recall the stations of the west, white sand, hard rock, light ascending like its definition over Rannafast and Errigal, Annaghry and Kincasslagh” (88). In between these two moments in the poem, the speaker expresses his need to breathe “absolute weather” and his unsuccessful attempts to speak Irish to those around him (88). The speaker attributes past meaning to the location not only through the use of the Irish term *Gaeltacht*, but by also emphasizing his struggle to understand and speak the Irish language. The change in tense, and the specific use of the conditional tense by the end of the poem, is one representation of the movement or the shifting nature of recollection in Heaney’s poetry.

The critical body of work dedicated to the study and assessment of Heaney’s poetry is deeply invested in Heaney’s connection between the landscape of Ireland and Irish politics. Born in 1939 in County Londonderry in Northern Ireland, Heaney witnessed the political turmoil and violence of the Troubles firsthand, not only as a child, but as a student and instructor in Belfast (O’Donoghue xiii-xv). Although Heaney permanently relocated to the Republic of Ireland, his poetry continually revisits Northern Ireland, as he did throughout the rest of his life. From 1972

until his death Heaney had a permanent residence in the Republic of Ireland, although he traveled quite a bit, especially to the United States and England, in order to take teaching positions at Harvard University and Oxford University (O'Donoghue xv-xvii). Despite moving from Northern Ireland and taking up residence in County Wicklow and County Dublin, Heaney's poetry revisits and recalls the landscape of all of Ireland and many specific places in Northern Ireland. Heaney's use of recollection serves as a critical lens, illuminating his poetry's ability to magnify the instability of meaning through the specific naming of places in Ireland.

While the recitation of "Rannafast," "Errigal," "Annaghry," and "Kincasslagh" seems to establish concrete meaning to these specific locations, the use of the conditional tense communicates that the narrator "would recall" the landscape in a specific way, if only he was able to speak Irish as the people that inhabit the *Gaeltacht* "seemed to prophesy" (88). The recitation of these past places, tense aside, also demonstrates the shifting nature of memory. In "The Stations of the West" Heaney confronts the deterritorializing nature of memory. In naming these places, Heaney affirms the past "meaning" of them, while also demonstrating the way in which memory shifts the nature of places. The light ascends "like its definition" over the *Gaeltachts* (88); the light neither confirms nor denies the remembered meanings of these places, rather its movements mimic definition. In Heaney's poetry, recollections incite movement that deterritorializes one distinct or concrete meaning attributed to a certain location. By reciting the names of specific places in Ireland, Heaney's poetry confronts the relationship between place and meaning. As seen in "The Stations of the West," the narrator's movement through one specific memory serves as an indication that the connection between place and meaning is always temporary.

As the meaning of the places named in “The Stations of the West” shifts, the work demonstrates nomadic movement, as defined by Gillian Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Rather than reaffirming the meaning of the *Gaeltachts* through the act of naming, the recollections in the poem illuminate the shifting nature of memory. The movement of memory aligns itself with the concept of *nomos*, as defined by Deleuze and Guattari. The nomadic trajectory, used originally to describe the movements of nomadic people and movements in war, is defined as distributing people, or for the sake of my argument, the attributed meanings of places, into an “indefinite and noncommunicating” space (Deleuze and Guattari 380-1). The *nomos* of Heaney’s poetry produces deterritorialized spaces in its wake through the act of naming and remembering. Heaney dismisses the concept of static meaning, like connotations that are tied to specific locations, and introduces the new way of discussing historic meaning in a “smooth space.”

Deleuze and Guattari categorize two different types of space in *A Thousand Plateaus*. The first is sedentary space, which is defined as “space...striated, by walls, enclosures, and roads between enclosures” (380-1). The walls and barriers that define this type of space are aligned closely with governmental rule and authority for Deleuze and Guattari. A named city, therefore, defined by its state and its state laws, would be considered a sedentary or “striated space.” The name of the space then denotes the territory and the rules and regulations adhered to by the territory’s occupants. Along with “striated space” there is also the sedentary road, which is a connection between “striated spaces.” The road connecting these spaces is not outside the boundaries of their authority. Therefore, the road serves as an expansion of authority, not an escape from it. While describing a road as sedentary may seem counterintuitive, Deleuze and Guattari define the purpose of a sedentary road or trajectory as serving “to *parcel out a closed*

*space to people*, assigning each person a share in regulating the communication between shares” (380-1). The movement from space to space in the “striated” sense is therefore a communication of closures and the definitive authorities that determine the closures. The communication suggests that movement, or trajectory, can be sedentary, that is, defined and “parceled out;” “striated space” becomes not just one area, but a network of connected places and people that operate through the regulation and affirmation of boundaries and barriers according to spatial authorities.

Sedentary or “striated space” is juxtaposed with “smooth space” (Deleuze and Guattari 380). While a “striated space” encompasses two points that intersect on one line, that line being the sedentary road or trajectory, the smooth space may have a point between two different lines, which allows for movement away from any given point without the necessity of approaching another (Deleuze and Guattari 480). In this sense, striated spaces work to “close off a surface and ‘allocates’ accordingly,” while in a smooth space, a point, or a nomad, “‘distributes’ oneself in an open space...of the *nomos* – nondelimited, unpartitioned” land (Deleuze and Guattari 480-1). Nomads, and the nomadic trajectory, are linked with smooth space in that the nomad seeks not to travel from point to point with an agenda, but instead travels in continual motion, unconcerned with a certain destination. Importantly, both “smooth” and “striated” spaces have points, each considered a territory of some sort. The smooth space, however, is the place inhabited by the nomad, seeking not to move from one destination to the other, but to move away from each point in order to enlarge the smooth, deterritorialized space that lies in his or her wake.

As the nomad seeks to travel through spaces, extending the trajectory, rather than reaching a destination, he or she deterritorializes meaning. In fact, the nomadic trajectory indicates the instability of meaning and association because a “point is reached only in order to

be left behind” and therefore the “life of a nomad is the intermezzo” (380). While the nomad may enjoy territory, the same type of boundaries do not define the territory as in “striated space” because the nomad does not seek to close off space; he or she seeks to widen space through the trajectory (Deleuze and Guattari 380). Deleuze and Guattari describe that:

Movement designates the relative character of a body considered as ‘one,’ and which goes from point to point; *speech, on the contrary, constitutes the absolute character of a body whose irreducible parts (atoms) occupy or fill a smooth space in the manner of a vortex, with the possibility of springing up at any point...only nomads have absolute movement, in other words, speech; vertical or swirling movement.* (380-1)

The nomad, then, does not move in order to reach a new destination. Instead, the vertical or swirling movement of the nomadic trajectory complies with the deterritorialization of the landscape. The nomad does not intend to reach one specific destination; instead the nomadic trajectory continues to circle or spiral around a territory in order to widen or enlarge it, making “smooth space” and nomadic movement products of each other (Deleuze and Guattari 382).

“The nomads inhabit these places; they remain in them, and they themselves make them grow, for it has been established that nomads made the desert no less than they are made by it. They are vectors of deterritorialization. They add desert to desert” (Deleuze and Guattari 382). The presence of the nomad, or nomadic movement, alters the term “inhabitation,” as space is enlarged by their presence, rather than solidified by authoritative rule.

The deterritorialization of space and meaning are integrally connected with Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of the rhizome, a way of understanding the world outside of the confines of the definite and the binary, an organism that “ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social

struggles” (7). The rhizomorphic state challenges “the classical image of thought, the striating of mental space,” which operates on “two universals,” subject and being, in order to reach some point of finality, or as Deleuze and Guattari call it, some sort of universality of meaning (379). Nomadic movement, and the “smooth space” that nomads inhabit, adhere to the world of the rhizome because “it does not ground itself in an all-encompassing totality but is on the contrary deployed in a horizonless milieu” (Deleuze and Guattari 379). The specific movement of the nomad works within the concept of a rhizome because the nomad, like the rhizome, does not adhere to concrete or universal authorities or meanings. The creation of “smooth space” by the nomadic trajectory, therefore, adds to the rhizomorphic understanding of the world. Nomadic movement can therefore be connected to the act of recalling a certain place, in that the recollection does not provide concrete, universal understanding; it demonstrates the shifting nature of meaning. Through the lens of deterritorialization, the act of recalling through the recitation of a specific place name mirrors nomadic movement, in that while the point, the name of the place, is identified, the movement of a recollection is not to a specific destination; rather, a recollection spirals or moves away from a point in order to expand or change the attributed meaning of a location. Memory and recollections in Heaney’s poetry, therefore, confirm and confront the “striated space” of *A Thousand Plateaus*.

As seen in “The Stations of the West,” Heaney’s memory, the act of recalling the names of certain places, produces a deterritorialization of any permanent, finalized understanding of a place, and creates an environment which fosters multiple meanings from one point. Heaney’s poetry has the ability to visualize nomadic thought, or nomadic movement, because his emphasis on one point or place is vastly overshadowed by the multiple meanings that his recollections call into question. Heaney’s poetry is demonstrative of what Deleuze and Guattari define as a smooth

space not only because of his attention to specific places in Ireland, but because while the points map out a certain trajectory of thought, the emphasis of the poem is not the place, nor is it to confirm any one authority that guides the meaning of the place, but the multiple meanings or lines of flight that are created by naming the place. Movement, or speed, is emphasized in terms of grappling with a memory, rather than recalling specifics about the place itself. Recollection, for Heaney, becomes nomadic, and therefore, has the ability to create and enlarge “smooth space” from the so-called “striated space” that is evoked when a place is named. Heaney’s use of named locations diverges from Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of “smooth space” because naming a place does adhere to some type of authority, to varying degrees. That being said, Heaney’s poetry does not seek to dismiss or destroy past meanings; rather the poems explored in this paper equalize different meanings in order to create a multiplicity. Heaney’s poetry dismantles the concept of “striated space” in Irish history and flings different meanings of the same location into one level, “smooth space.”

David Lloyd, Mark Molino, Richard Rankin Russell, and Andrew Auge have all analyzed Heaney’s poetry through the lens of deterritorialization. These critics conclude that through Heaney’s language, often defined as the juxtaposition of his past with the language of colonization, his work deconstructs the system that the colonizers of Ireland sought to keep in place. Lloyd first contends in “‘Pap for the Dispossessed’: Seamus Heaney and the Poetics of Identity,” that Heaney’s language has the ability to confront and relocate “an individual and racial identity through the reterritorialization of language and culture” (325). According to Lloyd, Heaney’s contemplation of his identity through the naming of places enables a division between the name of a place and its relationship to colonized culture (328). Lloyd’s study, then, focuses on the differentiation between place and meaning, in terms of the colonized and the

indigenous Irish, which serves as a catalyst for the deconstruction of meaning. Russell adds to this conversation in “Seamus Heaney’s Regionalism,” suggesting that Heaney draws both on poetic tradition and identity in order to “offer an imagined Northern Ireland where disparate regions and cultural groups might meet and engage in productive encounters” (65). The scholarship of Lloyd and Russell indicates that Heaney’s poetry attempts to differentiate and divide language and meaning in order to identify and dismiss the colonized culture of Ireland. Russell’s conclusion, that Heaney’s poetry reconstructs Northern Ireland, differs from Lloyd’s, but both critics value the deconstructive nature of Heaney’s poetry.

Most recently, Auge and Molino have employed another theoretical term from Deleuze and Guattari by discussing the rhizomatic nature of Heaney’s poetry along with the nomadic nature of his language and memory. Molino comments in “Charting An Uncertain Flight Path: Irish Writers and the Question of Nation, Identity, and Literature” that Heaney’s nomadic qualities create “a new deterritorialized world. Rather than immersing himself exclusively in the local, regional, or traditional, Heaney has discovered that liberation and peregrination go hand in hand” (“Charting Uncertain Path”47). Likewise, in *Questioning Tradition, Language, and Myth: The Poetry of Seamus Heaney*, Molino proposes that Heaney’s early work “comprehends the complexity of his cultural heritage and avoids or subverts attempts to create a sequential or unified perspective” (50). Molino’s scholarship argues that Heaney’s subversion of binary systems of identification seeks to create a new system of meaning by dismissing the old.

Auge, similarly to Molino, concludes that Heaney’s poetry confronts the multiplicity of the Irish identity through its continual rhizomorphic encounters with the forces of colonization. In his article entitled, “‘A Buoyant Migrant Line’: Seamus Heaney’s Deterritorialized Poetics,” Auge concludes that Heaney’s poetry moves to “unsettle and disrupt English by infusing it with

traces of Gaelic and Hiberno-English,” rather than “reterritorialize himself and his culture back onto his native idiom” (275). Auge identifies Heaney’s use of memory as nomadic because of “its capacity to disrupt rather than reaffirm established identities” (274). Memory, therefore, serves not as an anchor, but as a motivator for chaos and becomes “an agent of arborescence by establishing continuous lines of filiation between past and present, [as] it engages in disjunctive acts of bricolage” (Auge 281). Heaney’s use of specific types of landscapes, like a bog, demonstrates his acknowledgement of “smooth space” for Auge (281), and he concludes that “deterritorialization becomes here less a matter of pure freedom (as Deleuze and Guattari would have it), less a matter of surrendering oneself to the void or the open road, and more a matter of responsibility, of having one’s entire being put into question by a claim of the other that is infinite” (286). In other words, Auge’s identification of nomadic memory in Heaney’s body of work serves to demonstrate Heaney’s acknowledgement of the infinite world of meaning, by demonstrating the chaotic nature of language.

Auge’s exploration of nomadic memory in Heaney’s work may be applied beyond notions of identity to an understanding of Heaney’s mapping of territories. The nomadic nature of memory in Heaney’s poetry, according to Auge, is demonstrated through interrupting “striated space” (281), and the eventual juxtaposition of the two spaces embedded in the landscape (i.e., the bog/ demesnes). However, this study will prove that by recalling the names of specific places, Heaney dismantles “striated spaces” and transforms them into “smooth spaces,” uninhibited by authoritative discourses, in this case the historical, colonial, and mythic. Rather than juxtaposing “smooth” and “striated space,” as Auge’s article identifies, the named places in Heaney’s poetry become points for nomadic trajectory, in this case the act of recalling, which departs, moves around, or moves through. The act of naming places in Heaney’s poetry

diminishes the authority of the space, by making specific places points on a nomadic trajectory, rather than static destinations. The nomadic trajectory of recollections in Heaney's poetry, therefore, removes the power of authority, ironically, through the act of naming.

Although not a specific named place, "The Peninsula," focuses on the act of traveling through land, rather than journeying to a specific destination as a means of understanding or reconciling with meaning and memory. The poem does not begin as a recollection, but the act of recalling meaning is mentioned and deeply embedded in the poem. The opening lines of the poem begin "When you have nothing more to say, just drive / For a day all round the Peninsula" (*Opened Ground* 22). The enjambment of the command, "just drive," and the timing of the journey, "For a day," places a special emphasis on the action rather than the timing of the action, demonstrating that the drive should not be curtailed by reaching a destination; rather, that movement itself provides meaning. Actually the hope of arrival is dashed by the suggestion that while there are a specific set of points that allow for a certain road or trajectory to be traversed, there are no distinguished features or assigned meanings because of the nature of the road. The trajectory is described as, "The land without marks, so you will not arrive / But pass through, though always skirting landfall" (22). The inciting incident of the poem, having "nothing more to say," is corrected by moving through "the land without marks" and deferring any arrival, instead just "pass[ing] through."

The second command of "The Peninsula," is "Now recall / the glazed foreshore and the silhouetted log" (22). The command is emphasized by the stanzaic break between the two verses and the enjambment of the two lines, but the second command is coupled with the concept of time, as the command asks for the recollection to happen "now." The stanzaic break places special emphasis on the act of recalling rather than the specific memory being recalled, which is

revealed after the stanza break. The first vision that the speaker urges the driver to recall is the “glazed foreshore” (22). Note the temporality of the vision, as a foreshore refers to the ground between the water’s edge and the landscape. While not always visible, the specific placement and presentation of the foreshore is subject to change according to the tides, seemingly never the same in a single tidal cycle. Heaney’s combination of the act of recalling something with a space that constantly varies, embedded in a “land without marks,” demonstrates the connection between landscape, memory, and deterritorialization. Commanding the subject to remember an ever-shifting space calls into question that ability to attribute one meaning to a space or place. The close of the poem connects the movement through the landscape with its deterritorialization: “And then drive back home, still with nothing to say / Except that now you will uncode all landscapes” (22). The urging of travel, or movement, through the land provides the driver with the ability to uncode *all* landscapes, and demonstrates the nomadic movement of the recollection that the driver will eventually have. For to un-code there must a code in place. Although Molino argues that the un-coding of the landscape emphasizes the speaker’s acknowledgement that the landscape is always “textual,” the un-coding should be understood as both an acknowledgement and a dismissal of the said codes (*Questioning Tradition* 37). “The Peninsula” establishes that the only way to remove assigned meaning from a specific place is to move through it, not dwell in it. As Susan Vendler indicates, “The Peninsula” is “chiefly a mediation on the purifying power, for human beings, of the primary senses and of memory founded in senses” (23). Although Vendler focuses on the imagery of the poem, her identification of memory as a purifying mechanism adds to the argument of deterritorialization in the poem. The speaker demands the driver move and recall in order to “uncode” the landscape. Through the drive, not solely through the senses (as Vendler would have it), the driver’s recollection changes the

meaning and interpretation of the landscape, demolishing any code's authority over the Peninsula's landscape and future encountered landscapes.

In a similar fashion, "Postscript," commands "some time make the time to drive out west / Into County Clare, along the Flaggy Shore." The call for movement echoes "The Peninsula," as the subject travels out west, once again inhabiting the foreshore, "the ocean on one side wild / With foam and glitter, and inland among stones / The surface of the slate grey lake it lit" (*Opened Ground* 411). As the subject occupies the shoreline, he experiences the inability to appreciate and understand it while being still. The title becomes an ironic comment on the subject's inability to communicate meaning while standing still, "Useless to think you'll park and capture it / more thoroughly. You are neither here nor there" (411). Comparing the status of the subject to "neither here nor there" emphasizes the temporality of meaning, echoing the metaphoric meaning of the "foreshore" in "The Peninsula." However, unlike the "Peninsula," "Postscript" challenges the subject to ascribe meaning to the "striated space" of the west, which is a task that will certainly end in failure. The subject's attempt is underscored by the poem's allusion to W.B. Yeats' "The Wild Swans at Coole" (Vendler 26). The speaker describes,

the earthed lightning of a flock of swans,  
 Their feathers roughed and ruffling,  
 white on white, Their fully grown headstrong-looking heads,  
 Tucked or cresting or busy underwater (411)

Baiting the subject to capture the image in a letter, the swans sit in the lake, occupying the "striated space" of Yeats' mythic west. The lack of specificity in "Postscript," "Some time make the time" in "September or October" to drive through the land, challenges the specificity of Yeats' west in "The Wild Swans at Coole," as Yeats recalls for an October night, at twilight,

observing fifty-nine swans. Yeats' confirmation of place becomes a point of contention in Heaney's "Postscript," as the speaker communicates that is useless to think "you'll sit and capture it" (411). Being "neither here nor there," the subject's attempt to capture the west, as Yeats once did, becomes a "hurry through which known and strange things pass," widening assumed "striated space" of Yeats' post at Coole to a land through which things "known and strange" pass (411). The closing lines of the poem, "As big soft buffetings come at the car sideways / And catch the heart off guard and blow it open," alludes to the destruction of singular meaning proposed at the beginning of the poem. Instead, the "soft buffetings," or turbulence brought about by motion, incites destruction (411). Note in both of these poems, there is no proposal that a new meaning is ascribed to these specific places; rather Heaney chooses to emphasize the destruction of meaning, "blow the heart open," (411) and "uncode" (22), leaving "smooth" spaces in each poem's wake. In tandem, "The Peninsula" and "Postscript" unite travel and deterritorialization by establishing the landscape's refusal to be constructed by code or myth.

To a certain extent, Heaney adheres to the authoritative definition of "striated space" by using named locations in his poetry, often using the named locations in the titles of the poems. The affirmation of authority is short-lived within the poems, each work destabilizes attributed meaning through named locations. Although "smooth space" is "nondelimited and unpartitioned," the nomadic trajectory does establish a type of territory that is constantly growing because of nomadic movement (Deleuze and Guattari 480-1). The return to the places of Toome and Anahorish in Heaney's works is demonstrative of the "absolute" and "swirling movement" that defines the nomadic trajectory, which expands "smooth space" and deterritorializes "striated space" (Deleuze and Guattari 380-1). The nomadic trajectory therefore permits the nomad to inhabit a space through movement, allowing the space in turn to continually grow. While

standing alone, the poems are demonstrative of deterritorialization, but by grouping them together by the presence of each location in the titles of the poems, a comparative study reveals that the poems also deterritorialize each other, and in doing so, either transform the “striated space” each presents, or expand the “smooth space” each poem creates. Literally points on a map of Ireland, the places of Toome and Anahorish are subject to the spiraling, encircling movement of the nomadic trajectory as Heaney revisits each place in his poetry. On the surface of these poems, Heaney is unintentionally creating sedentary roads or connections between spaces that are “striated” by meaning through his titles, but the connections these poems have do not operate on the communication of one specific interpretation or understanding of a place; rather the poems seek to communicate many different meanings, eliminating the possibility of sustaining a static meaning for Anahorish or Toome. While there have been critical studies on the individual Toome poems (“Toome,” “The Toome Road,” and “At Toomebridge) and the Anahorish poems (“Anahorish,” “Anahorish 1945”), grouping the poems together illuminates the deterritorialization of place in Ireland.

“Anahorish” has received a great amount of attention from critics in the past because of Heaney’s problematic use of Anahorish as a *dinnseancha*, an Irish term for a word that communicates the lure and history of location. By using the Irish poetic tradition of the *dinnseanchas*, Heaney’s poetry plots a “linguistic and cultural map” of the place (Murphy 142). A *dinnseancha* used in Heaney’s poetry maps the space his identity, and many Irish identities, inhabit. From the beginning of “Anahorish,” the duality, or multiplicity of the *dinnseancha* is exposed because the name Anahorish has been Anglicized from its original Irish name (Collins 63). As Eugene O’Brien points out, “the title of the poem has no direct signification in either language: it denies any centrality or originary presence, to either linguistic or cultural discourse

and also negates any posited fusion between land and language” (54). Through the poem’s aesthetic adherence to this specific Irish poetic tradition, much like “Postscript” and “The Peninsula,” Heaney’s poetry challenges the stability of traditions that dictate or create “striated space.” By using a faulty *dinnseancha*, Heaney dismantles the meaning of the place and tradition through his, now metaphoric, movement through a named location. As O’Brien points out, the linguistic origin of the title is clouded by its translation, making Heaney’s use of the *dinnseancha* an inversion of the power of tradition, rather than a confirmation of it.

“Anahorish 1944” complicates the already purposefully problematized “Anahorish.” The mysticism of “Anahorish” is pronounced in the natural images that the poem communicates with the “clear water” and “shiny grass,” creating an idyllic space of the past for the “mound-dwellers” at their “wells and dunghills” (*Opened Ground* 47). Aside from the negation of tradition’s authority in the creation of a *dinnseancha*, the place of Anahorish is static, paralyzed in the past. The speaker’s perspective does not shift from associating Anahorish with the past, nor do those who inhabit Anahorish seek any sort of change outside of their daily lives “breaking the light ice” (47). The naturalness of “Anahorish” is interrupted by the “gutter blood,” “slaughter house,” and “armoured cars and tanks and open jeeps” of 1944 (*Selected Poems* 147). The once sacred “first hill of the world” (*Opened Ground* 47) is now merely a hill, a place of transit for workers coming back from the abbatoir, “In our gloves and aprons coming down the hill” (*Selected Poems* 147). Once considered a point of mythic paralysis, “Anahorish 1944” recreates the space as a place of slaughter and as a road to destruction, as American soldiers “Unknown, unnamed, / Hosting for Normandy” march down the hill of Anahorish (*Selected Poems* 147). Yet, the hill is still a presence, leaving a sketch of the original *dinnseancha* intact. Spanning thirty-two years, the hill of Anahorish stands, echoing the *dinnseancha* much like the

titles of the two poems. Revisiting the space of Anahorish, Heaney seeks not to reconstruct the space; rather he seeks to expand it, spiraling around the location through the recurrence of the hill, diminishing the already problematic authority that constructed the *dinnseancha* in the first place. Mirroring the cyclical nature of the nomadic trajectory, the poems deterritorialize each other, presenting shifting perspectives of the same location.

The establishment of the faulty *dinnseancha* hinges on the perspective through which “Anahorish” is communicated. The use of “My” (“My place of clear water”) “valorises the mystification of the word and world” (O’Brien 51), noting that “Anahorish” is a space that is established and understood through one meaning, the meaning that the speaker constructs throughout the poem. Standing alone, the ways in which “Anahorish” challenges authority have already been identified by O’Brien’s explorations of the poetic tradition of the *dinnseancha*. The point of view present in “Anahorish” is singular, implying that the construction of the place is a singular practice, while “Anahorish 1944” problematizes the authority of “Anahorish,” with the layered perspective of the memory that is being recalled, and therefore the treatment of the so-called mythic place. The perspectives are layered by memory, as the entire poem is enclosed in quotation marks, and the speaker is speaking in the past tense. The speaker not only recounts the movement and action of those working in the abattoir and the soldiers, but also knowingly foreshadows the impending battle of Normandy, where Americans will become slaughtered victims, much like the pigs slaughtered at the beginning of the poem. This specific foreshadowing indicates a reconstruction of a recollection, placing meaning on actions that were not perhaps meaningful at the time, again shifting the connotations of the Anahorish as a place. For instance, the speaker remembers the Americans throwing “gum and tubes of coloured sweets” to the native Irish population “standing there like youngsters” (147). The speaker reflects

on this ignorance, celebrating the candy being thrown at the onlookers, and emphasizes the importance of the reconstruction of the memory by commenting, “Not that we knew then / Where they were headed” (147). The “unknown and unnamed” soldier’s presence in the mythic *dinnseancha* expands the “first hill of the world” to a place of transit rather than supposed stability, as the point of view expands from the speaker’s historic vantage in “Anahorish” to the industry of slaughter and the road to death for the Americans. Notably, the *dinnseancha* of “Anahorish” is not diminished in “Anahorish 1944,” rather it is expanded beyond the confines of its once “static” meaning. Although “Anahorish” could be considered as an already “smooth space,” because of the Anglicized *dinnseancha* it proposes, “Anahorish 1944” both confirms the space as smooth and widens it through the association of the landscape outside of the mythic representation of the first poem. Together, the poems demonstrate the multiplicity of Anahorish as created through memory by both confirming and challenging each other’s construction of meaning.

Like the Anahorish poems, when read comparatively, the Toome poems deterritorialize each other as each challenges the other’s narrative presentation of the location. By analyzing the Toome poems together, the group demonstrates the expansion of “smooth space” through the nomadic trajectory. The Toome poems, “Toome,” “The Toome Road,” and “At Toomebridge,” are demonstrative of the vortex the nomadic movement creates. Revisiting the location in different publications, Heaney expands Toome’s meaning, furthering it from an attributed “striated space” the titles would insinuate. Historically, the place of Toome differs from Anahorish in that it is the site of the 1798 Rebellion and an archeological site (*Questioning Tradition* 75). Toome becomes deterritorialized as each poem revisits the space and remembers different meanings attributed to it. Remarking on the place of Toome in an interview, Heaney

observes “For me, the aura at Toome was phenomenological rather than political. On the bridge, I was more conscious of the strong bright lumen and numen of the Bann River, the big life of light of Lough Neagh, the wind, the strangeness of crossing wide water” (O’Driscoll 135). The duality of Toome that Heaney discusses in this interview is present in all three poems. A place of rebellion, a natural landscape, and loosely linked with the path of St. Patrick, Toome serves as a point of departure rather than any concrete destination in Heaney’s poetry.

The earliest of the entitled Toome poems is “Toome,” published in 1972 as part of the *Wintering Out* collection. In this poem, Heaney contemplates the pronunciation of the word Toome while also attempting to settle its meaning in some sort of historical context, if only to demonstrate that the place cannot be connected to just one meaning. The poem begins, “My mouth holds round / the soft blasting, / *Toome, Toome*” (*Opened Ground* 54). The act of speaking is linked to the understanding of both the word and the location of Toome. In his attempt to say the word, the speaker of the poem is removed from the present and explores the historic meanings attributed to the word and to the place of Toome. Like Anahorish, Toome is an Anglicized version of the Irish word “Tuaim.” Unable to properly pronounce the word, the speaker confronts his own difficulty by connecting it not only to the translation of the Irish original, but also by exploring the complicated history of its place of origin: the landscape of Toome. The speaker metaphorically enters “a souterrain,” or an underground space or chamber, digging down in “a hundred centuries’ loam” (54) in order to sort through the history of the word that is difficult to pronounce because it is Anglicized. Collins proposes,

Embedded flints glitter in dark soil: some lit Neolithic bonfires; others ignited the powder of trains of eighteenth-century muzzle loaders. In the tomblike hand-hewn cave, fish-bones mingle like delicate filigree with Viking torcs hammered out of

Bulgar gold. An underground chamber first constructed in Ireland during the late Bronze age (1000-500 BC), Heaney's souterrain has been a cache for the plunder...By speaking the word *Toome*, Heaney takes soundings that yield artifacts from the long and diverse history of Ireland (64)

Collins, and others, identify Heaney's downward exploration of Toome and remark that he demonstrates the diversity of the cultures attributed to the place of Toome throughout the poem in order to reach some original name or meaning of the place. Likewise, Gerry Smyth contends that Heaney's exploration of the word strives to restore a definition long ago lost (70). Smyth's exploration of the deconstruction of the place of Toome, rooted his larger project of cultural reclamation and reconstruction of Irish post-colonial maps, concludes that Heaney's work attempts "to name something that is categorically unnamable" (71). The conclusions of Smyth and Collins do not fully explore the ending of the poem. as the exploration of Toome expands beyond showcasing the "diversity" of Ireland's history and pushes past the singularity of meaning. Piling the "loam, flints, musket-balls, / fragmented ware, / torcs and fishbones" together, the speaker negates the importance of each, demonstrating that at multiple times during Toome's existence, inhabitants have attempted to produce a static meaning that has been and will be overtaken continually by a subsequent, future connotation (54). The speaker's specific dismissal of Toome's hierarchal history establishes it as a point of departure on the nomadic trajectory, rather than a destination delineated by the authoritative nature of a "striated space." The different objects associated with Toome in the poem, along with the varying historical significance that each carries, represent a subsequent line of flight, away from the point of Toome, rather than a sedentary road or trajectory that reaffirms the closure or parceling out of the locus.

While it is important to note the historic connotations of the speaker's exploration of the word Toome, the quick-paced, nomadic movement of the poem must be addressed in order to illuminate Heaney's identification of the place only in order to move past it. Moving through Toome's history, rather than dwelling in one specific archeological find, is emphasized by the speaker's exploration of the meanings and origins of the word and place and his refusal to settle for one specific explanation for the origin of Toome. Rather than solely an excavation of Toome, the poem's process diminishes any linear understanding of the place, and therefore demonstrates its "smooth" characteristics. The poem dismisses the hierarchal power of origin, instead piling the different historical finds on top of each other. The motion of Heaney's poem, the act of excavating the archeological ramifications of the place of Toome, is a demonstration of the unstable nature of place and meaning, rather than an affirmation of origin. The conclusion of the poem is not quite a conclusion or ending to the excavation. The speaker describes his journey:

Till I am sleeved in  
alluvial mud that shelves  
suddenly under  
bogwater and tributaries,  
and elvers tail my hair (54)

Although the motion of the poem is literally and metaphorically downward, as the speaker digs through the earth and history, there is no specific point of origin that the speaker is attempting to reach. Rather, the speaker spirals around the word and location of Toome to illuminate its instability.

The last layer of Toome that we are exposed to is "bogwater and tributaries / and elvers," all of which represent a different type of movement, not one that is completely downward, but

one that is lateral, as a tributary flows into a lake or a larger body of water (54). Elvers, the young eels, tailing the subject's hair, add to the movement, as they are in the beginning stages of their lives. At the end of the poem, the speaker reveals no concrete, original meaning of the landscape or of the word Toome. Instead the poem's ending provides further motion or movement, through the allusion of death, the elements of the place of "Toome," the "mud," "the bogwater," and the "elvers," merging with the speaker's body in order to create something new or otherworldly. Heaney's exploration of Toome never reaches an end; his search is still in transit, the rotation of life and death for which the river provides an environment. The emphasis is placed on moving past the so-called fixed meanings, remnants of the rebellion and archeological finds, and is likened to the act of recalling a place by exploring the historic and linguistic origins of the word Toome. The exploration of the meaning of Toome is propelled forward, and yet spirals back to the place of Toome in "The Toome Road" and "At Toomebridge." While the expansion of Toome is similar to the altering or shifting meaning of Anahorish, it should be noted that due to this history of Toome, by naming the space, Heaney is indicating a dismissal of the "striated space" from the first poem. The piling of different historic meanings of the place in "Toome," indicates that the stability of any assumed striated space is illusory. The expansion of the place of Toome in the subsequent poems enables the now deterritorialized space to expand upon itself.

In "The Toome Road," published in 1979, the speaker recalls seeing British soldiers move through the countryside, disturbing the idyllic and peaceful landscape. The speaker of the poem contrasts the "camouflaged" and "headphoned" convoy with "powerful tyres" with the "cattle," and "tractors hitched to buckrakes in open sheds, / Siloes, chill gates, wet slates, the greens and reds / Of outhouse roofs" (*Opened Ground* 143) of the indigenous countryside.

Because of this juxtaposition, two parallel understandings of the land are incited through the recollection of the speaker. “The Toome Road” represented in this poem is therefore layered, like exploration of the origins of the Anglicized Toome in the previous poem. The soldiers move through the roads “as if they own them,” (143) while the speaker of the poem refers to Toome as “The invisible, untoppled omphalos” of the land (143). As O’Brien observes, the word “omphalos” alludes to the “Telemachus” episode of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, while also carrying Greek mythic connotations (42-45). Similar to the treatment of Yeats’ swans in “Postscript,” the “omphalos” in “The Toome Road” honors Joyce’s work while also challenging its mythologizing of place.

The poem emphasizes the power of subjectivity when observing the landscape of Ireland. The speaker, asking, “Whom should I run to tell,” (143) is confronted with the shifting nature of meaning, and the oblivious nature of those in the community (“the whole country was sleeping”) (143). Commenting that Irish natives had land taken from them while they were unaware, the meaning of the land shifts from the mythic, through the use of “omphalos,” to the colonial, because of the presence of the British soldiers in a space that is deemed to be the navel of Ireland. Even though the allusion to Joyce temporarily stabilizes the place of Toome, it actually indicates further instability, beyond a native Irish person observing a British convoy. In the speaker’s attempt to justify, and therefore provide stationary meaning for Toome, outside forces (The British, Joyce) infringe upon the ascribed meaning of the place. The ending of the poem offers further movement, as the speaker concludes that the land is the center of the world, the navel of Ireland. The final line of the poem, “It stands here still, stands vibrant as you pass, / The invisible, untoppled omphalos” (143), contradicts the shifting meaning of Toome in that the speaker comments that the land is the center or navel of Ireland and that it stands against its

enemies. Unlike “Toome,” “The Toome Road” takes the striated space of Toome, as depicted by the speaker, and uses the act of recollection, noted by the use of the past tense in the first line of the poem, “I met armored cars” (143), in order to demonstrate not only the instability of the relationship between place and meaning, but also to the instability of memory. As the recollection moves throughout the poem, what is being invoked by the title of the poem is not a confirmation of the speaker’s attributed meaning of place; rather, Heaney demonstrates the shifting nature of meaning through the speaker’s recollected realizations. Toome is deterritorialized through the instability of memory and the varying perspectives communicated through the speaker’s recollections, but even his reconstruction is not impervious to outside forces as his perspective and attributed meaning to the landscape are thwarted by the subsequent presence of the British soldiers, creating various trajectories leading away from the supposed “omphalos” (143).

“At Toomebridge,” delves into the past of the place, much like “Toome,” but unlike the other poems, “At Toomebridge” emphasizes the presence of the speaker in the exact location that is being discussed through the use of the preposition in the title. The deterritorialization that follows this poem is achieved from the speaker’s visitation to the location being discussed, rather than simply his memory of it. Broken into two cinquain stanzas, “At Toomebridge” divides the natural attributes of the bridge from the past meanings of the location. Although Toome is only named in the title of the poem, the presence of the relative pronoun “where” within the poem denotes the multiple meanings of this specific place and how it incites memories of the varying meanings that have been attributed to it. The speaker offers various conditions of Toome, each serving as a separate recollection. The opening line of the poem, “Where the flat water / Came poring over the weir out of Lough Neagh” invokes the natural landscape of Toome, alluding to a

space not yet contaminated by the violence and politics of colonization and beyond (*Electric Light* 3). The “flat water” flows into the “Present of Bann,” a river that flows into Lough Neagh, inciting natural movement through ever shifting and changing water. The break between stanzas emphasizes the differentiation between the natural elements of Toome and the archeological and political connotations the place possesses. The speaker lists different events that have occurred at Toome: “Where the check point used to be,” “Where the rebel boy was hanged in ’98,” and “Where negative ions in the open air / Are poetry to me” (3). With recollections varying in terms of their connotations, the speaker places these connotations of Toome next to each other, and with each memory fires a new line of flight, a different trajectory away from the location. While “the check point” and execution allude to the Troubles and the 1798 rebellion, the final lines of the poem revert back to the natural world in order to describe how the negative ions, the particles left behind from the natural landscape and the political turmoil, act to create new and different meanings for the place of Toome. The evolving nature of the meaning of Toome is emphasized here, if only to suggest that the past meanings, which are unstable because of their lack of permanence, add to present and future unstable meanings. Although “At Toomebridge” appears to be a poem about a destination because of the preposition, the poem incites movement, just as “Toome” does, as it throws past meanings of the location in different directions, in order to deterritorialize the place itself. Through the varying past meanings of Toome and the presence of the present or future meanings of Toome, the poem demonstrates that meaning is constantly shifting. Much like the use of the preposition “at,” the use of the relative pronoun “where” in each line further diminishes the permanence of the past meanings of “Toome,” as the speaker emphasizes the sheer bulk of meaning that is recalled from standing at the Toomebridge.

“At Toomebridge” differs from the other poems about Toome and Anahorish because of the necessity of the location in order to recall varying meanings of the place. In “Anahorish,” “Anahorish 1944,” “Toome,” and “The Toome Road,” the speaker of each poem recalls the location, but does not specifically inhabit the named place. Within Heaney’s body of poetry there is a group of poems that denote a specific location that incites the nomadic movement or deterritorialization through their titles. “At Toomebridge,” “At The Water’s Edge,” and “At Ardboe Point” provide a variation of nomadic movement because the speaker of each is located at the named location of the poem, and when inhabiting the named place, he experiences a specific set of recollections. In this way, the “at” poems emphasize nomadic movement from a certain point, moving through meaning while already being placed in a specific location. The movement is through recollection, much like the other poems, but the spiraling nature of the movement is emphasized by the center or point, which is the location at which the speaker names and inhabits in each poem. As the Anahorish and the Toome poems do as a group, the representations of meanings as recalled by memory in the “at” poems work to deterritorialize each other, therefore taking the so-called “striated space” where the speaker appears to be and making it a “smooth space.”

“At the Water’s Edge,” part three of “Triptych,” explores a memorialized past by conflating it with the natural landscape of the present. Standing at Devenish, the speaker describes the “carved monastic heads” while hearing “the thick rotations / Of an army helicopter patrolling” (*Opened Ground* 142). Much like Anahorish and Toome, Devenish is a real location in Ireland, where the remnants of the past civilizations of Ireland are still visible (Tobin 148-9). The presence of the statues crumbling confirms the loss of the historical grandeur that Ireland once had (Tobin 148-9). Much like “At Toomebridge,” the poem uses a specific point, and the

presence of the speaker at this specific point, to create trajectories that move away from the point in order to deterritorialize its assumed meaning. While standing at the edge of the water, experiencing these two sensory details, the speaker of the poem recalls “the helicopter shadowing our march at Newry, / the scared irrevocable steps” (142). While the speaker may be literally standing still, the memory of the speaker is moving around a certain point because of the location he is in presently. The thought process of the speaker, as it is explicated throughout the poem, communicates the juxtaposition of the past and the present in the space of Devenish as a catalyst for the recollection, much like the speaker of “At Toomebridge” discovers as he wades through recollections of Toome.

“At Ardboe Point” similarly juxtaposes the speaker’s recollection of a night spent with a lover with the presence of the flies continually buzzing around the walls and the location of Ardboe Point. The flies are an “invisible veil / Weakening the moonlight still further,” (*Door in the Dark* 23) creating a boundary between the speaker’s observations and the natural space of Ardboe Point with their presence. In fact, the speaker notes that by morning “they will have infiltrated our clothes” (23). While “At Ardboe Point” carries the weight of historical importance because of the name of the space, this specific poem serves as a point of departure from the other poems above because of its use of the present and future tense. The speaker anticipates his memories of Ardboe Point as disrupted by the natural elements of the location (the flies). The speaker’s anticipation that his memories of Ardboe Point will be disrupted by elements beyond his control acknowledges that the place cannot and will not be remembered in one way. The “smoke of flies” will inevitably interrupt the speaker’s later recollection of the place with their “audible sirens.” Ardboe Point becomes not the place of romance, as the speaker wishes it would, but a place where memories and moments are disrupted by outside, natural elements. The

speaker's anticipation is therefore tied into the concept of memory's deterritorializing attributes. The future memory of Ardboe Point will be interrupted by the outside elements, eliminating the possibility of the consideration of a place in a static or singular way.

The named places in the "at" poems, therefore, become nomadic along with the memories that are connected or incited because of them. The specific recollections memorialized, or anticipated as memorialized, in the "at" poems align themselves with the "vectors of deterritorialization" that Deleuze and Guattari use to describe the nomad. "At Toomebridge Bridge," "At Water's Edge" and "At Ardboe Point" are ascribed by their locality, but their points of expansion are through specific memories or perspectives clashing within each poem, because of the speaker's presence "at" the specific location, not because there are other poems that revisit the same place. For instance, when discussed outside of the Toome poems, "At Toomebridge," parallels the recollection process of the speaker in "At Water's Edge" and in some ways the speaker of "At Ardboe Point." Incited by the sensory details of the location, the flat and shining water, the slime of the eels, the buzzing flies, the speaker's combines the past, present, and future, in order to move past any sort of static understanding of the location.

My study of Heaney's work is bookended by what would appear to be two conflicting representations of deterritorializing. On the one hand, the importance of movement, literally driving, in "The Peninsula" and "Postscript" incites the "un-coding" of place and meaning, blowing "the heart open," so that a multiplicity of meaning is accepted by the subject of each poem. On the other hand, this movement is challenged by the emphasis of place in the "at" poems. The speaker deconstructs a space by his presence, so that the "negative ions" of Toome create the poetic dismissal of singular authority (*Electric Light* 3). If we are to understand that moving through places in Ireland gives the ability to "uncode all landscapes," perhaps the "at"

poems serve as an answer to Heaney's final commands at the close of both "The Peninsula" and "Postscript." Having acknowledged the ability to un-code all landscapes, regardless of their given names, the readers are handed the authority to go forth and begin un-coding themselves. Metaphorically speaking, by reading through Heaney's body of poetry, we move through the landscapes of Ireland, and the act of reading these poems cements our power to diminish authoritative by reading and recalling, figuratively inhabiting and expanding the "smooth" space of the mind. If we accept Heaney's challenge, if we drive through peninsulas and make time to explore the real and mythological Ireland, we also accept the responsibility of revealing the myth of "striated" space.

Returning to the body of critical work dedicated to Heaney's poetry, his poetry's relationship with land and meaning can still be called a type of mapping. By naming the places in either the titles or within the actual poems, Heaney calls attention to the instability of meaning in order to dismiss the idea that a place truly has one original connotation. Molino points out Heaney's specific use of language leads to a dismissal of binaries in order to include all histories of the Irish people. Adding to this, Auge comments "Deterritorialization becomes here less a matter of pure freedom (as Deleuze and Guattari would have it), less a matter of surrendering oneself to the void or the open road, and more a matter of responsibility, of having one's entire being put into question by a claim of the other that is infinite" (286). In other words, Auge's identification of nomadic memory in Heaney's body of work serves to demonstrate the acknowledgement of the infinite world of meaning through the chaotic nature of language. Auge's observations indicate that Heaney's poetry creates an infinite web of meaning over Irish history, delineating the importance of one historical moment or meaning over the other. I would

argue, though, that the poems explored in this study and the use of landscape in Heaney's poetry serve a different purpose.

Heaney's acknowledgement of the names of the places in his poems serve as a map, but a map that demonstrates the deterritorializing nature of memory and therefore meaning itself. The places become points of departure, places of transit, motivators of unstable memories, and catalysts for changing perspectives. As observed in the last grouping of poems, the "at" poems, Heaney's use of location anticipates a future that is not bogged down by static meaning. The speakers in the poems from every group face their own memories clouded by history, politics, and myth. The grappling, though, does not offer any closure from the multiplicity of meaning that the naming or visiting of certain locations present. The poems serve not to solely dismantle "striated space," but to point out that no space can be, or will ever be, "striated" to a certain extent. By acknowledging the basic authority of naming, these specific location poems work to diminish the faulty, assumed power of a space that has been named. Heaney's poetry has the ability to change "striated space" to "smooth space," but his method sheds more light on the assumed power of named places. By exploring the instability of these so-called "striated," closed off spaces, Heaney's poetry moves beyond the deterritorialization process, the nomadic movement of Deleuze and Guattari, by demonstrating that space is never fully, or stably, "striated."

Rather than taking on a certain responsibility through his poetry, Heaney's milieu works to empower, equally, the perspectives of his readers. Through the act of writing, Heaney demonstrates that the power of authority does not lie within one force, but flows through various sources, all of which equally construct and deconstruct place and meaning in Ireland. Heaney's poetry does not seek to solely create a new system; rather it illuminates the faultiness of the static

system of meaning that is already in place. In a sense, there is no need to subvert what is already weak, to openly challenge authority that is not worthy of battle. By reading through Heaney's work, we expose the allusion that static, "striated" space is stable. Revealing the multiplicities of meaning present in Ireland, a new way to "un-code" is revealed. The only true way to consider land and meaning is to realize the impossibility of singular meaning, and by doing so, we, like the subject in "Postscript," can be "caught off guard," as our understanding of memory and meaning is blown open.

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