

9/11 and Transnational Memory: Seamus Heaney's 'Anything Can Happen'

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IN THIS ESSAY I EXAMINE THE ROLE OF POETRY IN THE PRODUCTION OF A TRANSNATIONAL memory of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre. Although 9/11 was a transnational event, the commemorative culture has largely been shaped within a nationalist frame, which remembers the traumatic event in terms of national identity. The attack on the World Trade Centre in Manhattan had a global reach, however, and the collective memory of the event cannot be contained within national borders. As Michael Rothberg observes: 'In its preconditions, in its mass media unfolding, and in its deadly repercussions, September 11 was a global event. It demands a literature that takes risks, speaks in multiple tongues, and dares to move beyond nearsightedness' ('Seeing Terror, Feeling Art' ch. 6). Irish poet Seamus Heaney's contribution to the literature of 9/11, 'Anything Can Happen', foregrounds the intersecting transnational and transhistorical dimensions of 9/11 memory. Drawing on concepts and approaches from transnational memory studies, I aim to identify the poem's contribution to a transnational memory culture of 9/11. This analysis supports my broader argument that poetry opens up new perspectives on an event that has most often been commemorated within a national frame.

As one of the earliest literary commemorative forms, poetry is a transcultural form particularly well suited to transnational circulation. Generations of poets have borrowed and adapted poetic forms, structures, figures and preoccupations

from earlier cultures and traditions. For instance, in 'Anything Can Happen', first published as 'Horace and the Thunder' in *The Irish Times* on 17 November 2001, Heaney translates and adapts a Horatian ode. This literary translation by an internationally recognised poet has been further translated and adapted. It has been republished in a range of periodicals, translated into 23 languages for an Amnesty International publication, and adapted as a piece of choral music by Arab-American composer Mohammed Fairouz. The translation of a Latin ode and the later appropriations of the text, the Amnesty translations in 2004 and the musical adaptation, disrupt the national memory frame that has circumscribed 9/11. Moreover, in each of the above instances, multiple social scales have shaped the remediation and reframing of 'Anything Can Happen', making its remediation an apposite example of how poetry oscillates between shifting scales of memory. Through analysis of such examples, I aim to show that literary translations can be an important mnemonic device for remediating memory.

A number of recent approaches to memory studies have examined the complex relationship between national and transnational frames of memory. Chiara de Cesari and Ann Rigney's idea of 'scales of memory' presents memory as 'a dynamic operating at multiple, interlocking scales and involving conduits, intersections, circuits and articulations' (6). This approach recognises the significance of national frames of memory, but also that different types of memory production can both 'reinforce and transcend them' (4). 'Anything Can Happen' illustrates the 'interlocking scales' of memory by travelling across national, temporal and linguistic boundaries. Moreover, the reception of the poem has occurred on multiple scales: the immediate repercussions of this poem were evident in its local and national reception, while the long term reverberations have had global implications. De Cesari and Rigney observe that the past can be understood 'within shifting social frames operating at different scales and across different territories' (6). Informed by this analysis of interlocking scales of memory, I argue that 'Anything Can Happen' provides new possibilities for interpreting the memory of 9/11. To that end, I consider the adaptation and circulation of the text in a transnational literary sphere. But first, it is worth considering the political and rhetorical context that shaped the national memory of 9/11.

The Poetry of 9/11

The national collective memory of 9/11 has been shaped by political speech and mass media representation, and tended to shut out non-nationalistic perspectives. From the beginning, the military actions that followed were framed in terms of oppositions between good and evil, Christianity and Islam. For example, in his address to the nation on 20 September 2001, George W. Bush set the agenda for public discourse: 'They hate our freedoms' ('President Bush

Addresses the Nation'). In *9/11: The Culture of Commemoration*, David Simpson outlines the ways in which the commemoration of this event was used to serve a political agenda:

... the forms of commemoration have been correspondingly urgent and perhaps untimely, hurried along and even hijacked by the tide of secondary events whose connections with 9/11 are to say the least open to dispute. In less than two years we went from the fall of the Twin Towers and the attack on the Pentagon to the invasion of Iraq, a process marked by propagandist compression and manufactured consent so audacious as to seem unbelievable, except that it happened. (4)

Simpson's discussion of the link between public discourse and military retaliation highlights the 'nearsightedness' that Rothberg warns we must move beyond. Identifying the compressed nature of political rhetoric helps to clarify the danger in oversimplifying complex issues in public discourse. The connection between the commemoration of 9/11 and the subsequent military action shows how political discourse serves a national agenda, but also how this form of memory production contributes little to an understanding of the global repercussions of retaliation.

While poetry is also a compressed form of response, it is one that invites a broader range of engagements than political speech and mainstream journalism. Poems are not confined by national borders and can become what Ann Rigney describes as a 'portable monuments'. As 'artifacts', she observes, literary texts have a durability that makes them appropriate for memory, but as such they are not anchored to a particular site and can be 'recycled' in different places and times (Rigney 383). The brevity of the form lends itself to circulation. In the days after 9/11 in New York poetry became a popular medium for the expression of grief. On 1 October 2001 Dinitia Smith wrote in *The New York Times*:

In the weeks since the terrorist attacks, people have been consoling themselves—and one another—with poetry in an almost unprecedented way. Almost immediately after the event, improvised memorials often conceived around poems sprang up all over the city, in store windows, at bus stops, in Washington Square Park, Brooklyn Heights and elsewhere. ('In Shelley or Auden')

Smith notes that poetry was being widely circulated through email networks. She identifies particular poems as having a resonance for the moment: Shelley's 'Ozymandias', Auden's 'September 1, 1939' and Seamus Heaney's choral ode from *The Cure at Troy*. The popularity of these poems highlights the transcultural

nature of poetry, a genre that has always borrowed from other cultural traditions. In *A Transnational Poetics* Jahan Ramazani explains that ‘because poetry is such a long-remembered form, it is enmeshed—even when stridently nationalist in ideology—by a complexly cross-national weave in its rhythms and tropes, stanza patterns and generic adaptations’ (13). This ‘enmeshment’ can be seen in Shelley’s use of the sonnet form and the symbolism of an Ancient Egyptian relic to reflect on the transience of human power, and in Heaney’s use of the choral mode from Greek tragedy to represent the challenges of working toward reconciliation after violent conflict. The appropriation of these texts by grieving New Yorkers further highlights the ease with which poetry can travel across time and space, a process Ramazani describes as ‘geopoetic oscillation’ (58).

Immediately after 9/11, there was a demand for well-known American poets to produce new work in response to the attack. The resulting poetry represents a different form of poetic transnationalism. American poets tended to take a broader view of the geopolitical and historical context than was evident in mainstream media. Commenting on the three anthologies of 9/11 poetry by American poets that were published in 2002, Laurence Goldstein observes that the immediate challenge for poets was to ‘recover a form’ that would ‘refresh the reader’s understanding of the radically reconfigured (dis)continuity of past and present’, a form that he argues was ‘most often found in literary and religious traditions’ (54). Jeffrey Gray reports that in a wide range of works by American poets the ‘overwhelming response ... was guilt’, something he felt counter-balanced the outrage being expressed in the media (ch. 14). The 9/11 works of Galway Kinnell and Amiri Baraka represent this pattern. In ‘When the Towers Fell’, Kinnell draws upon the violent history of the twentieth century to find ‘not a comparison but a corollary’ (line 76) for the 9/11 attacks: the lynching of African Americans in the South, the holocaust, ‘atomic blasts wiping cities off the earth, firebombings the same, / death marches, starvations, assassinations, disappearances, / entire countries turned into rubble, minefields, mass graves’ (86-8). Likewise, Amiri Baraka’s ‘Somebody Blew Up America’ draws on a range of atrocities, encompassing the ‘trail of tears’, British colonisation, the Armenian genocide, apartheid and the assassinations of Dr King and the Kennedys. As Gray observes, Baraka presents September 11 as ‘part of a much greater, many layered continuum’ rather than as a singular event (ch. 14). What is common to some of this poetry, then, is the tendency to understand a ‘national’ tragedy by placing it in the broader context of global atrocities.

While the above examples look to past atrocities, by contrast Suheir Hammad’s ‘first writing since’ moves across and beyond and looks forward in time rather than backward. As an American of Palestinian descent she worried about how 9/11 would impact on Muslims, recalling that her first response was ‘please god,

after the second plane, please don't let it be anyone / who looks like my brothers' (15-16). As she states: 'if there are any people on earth who understand how new york is / feeling right now, they are in the west bank and the gaza strip' (93-9). Hammad originally emailed the poem to 50 friends, who then circulated it through their email networks (Hopkinson). Michael Rothberg first encountered the text on the listserv Professors for Peace, but notes that within months of the attack it could be found on over 150 websites. He describes Hammad's poem as 'a multi-layered work of mourning and an ethico-political call for justice' ("There is No Poetry in This" sec. 5). As these cases demonstrate, the 9/11 work of American poets was not confined by national borders or boundaries as it circulated through traditional literary and evolving digital networks.

The demand for 9/11 poetry was not confined to the United States; there was a corresponding demand for prominent international writers to commemorate the 9/11 attack. Seamus Heaney's response can be seen, in part, as the articulation of his responsibility as a Nobel Laureate, a role that elevates and consecrates the recipient and ensures a global audience. The Nobel Prize in Literature is often awarded to writers who represent local or national literary communities, but the conferral of the prize grants a global prestige. The Nobel has long been understood as a quasi-humanitarian award, and its criteria specify works that have 'conferred the greatest good upon mankind' and point in an 'ideal direction' (English ch. 3). Rebecca Braun explains that 'the recipient experiences an overnight transformation in both their public standing and personal circumstances' (321). This transformation brings with it the expectation to speak on matters of global significance. Having received the Prize in 1995, Heaney was now culturally authorised to speak about 9/11.

After 9/11 Heaney's fellow Nobel Laureates Wislawa Szymborska and Toni Morrison published new poems that grapple with the challenges of representing atrocity. As Nobel Laureates, they were endowed with the authority to write for a global audience and to shape the collective transnational memory of 9/11. Toni Morrison's poetic response, 'The Dead of September 11', dated September 13, 2001, identifies the victims as 'those children of ancestors born in every continent / on the planet: Asia, Europe, Africa, the Americas...;' (4-5). The last half of the poem is addressed directly to these victims:

To speak to you, the dead of September 11, I must not claim false intimacy or summon an overheated heart glazed just in time for a camera. I must be steady and I must be clear, knowing all the time that I have nothing to say—no words stronger than the steel that pressed you into itself; no scripture older or more elegant than the ancient atoms you have become. (23-9)

Morrison's poem conveys wariness that her public profile might be used to stake a claim on the event, knowing all the while that there are 'no words / stronger than the steel that pressed you into itself'. The unwillingness to 'claim false intimacy' or 'summon an overheated heart glazed / just in time for camera' reveals the difficulty of being in a position where some form of public response is expected. This reticence is echoed in Szymborska's 'Photograph from September 11', which describes the press photographs of bodies falling from the Twin Towers: 'The photograph halted them in life, / and now keeps them / above the earth toward the earth' (3-6). In the final stanza she concludes:

I can do only two things for them—
describe this flight
and not add a last line (16-18).

The poem seeks to freeze the victims in time 'still within the air's reach' and the refusal to add a last line amounts to a refusal to represent the atrocity of inevitable outcome.

'Anything Can Happen': Heaney's Transcultural Adaptation of Ode 1.34

Heaney avoids 'false intimacy' by mediating the events of 9/11 through a Horatian ode. The adaptation of a canonical text draws out the transnational by foregrounding the usually invisible process of translation and giving a text from a 'dead' language a new transcultural and transnational life. By 2001, when 'Horace and the Thunder' was first published, adaptation and translation had become central to Heaney's work. His use of Horace in 'Anything Can Happen' has parallels to the way that Horace had raided the metres and forms and themes of earlier Greek poets to represent Augustan Rome. In an introduction to a new translation of the odes, Kaimowitz writes of Horace 'making his connection with earlier literary traditions at the same time as he is staking out new literary territory for himself' (xxiii). The adaptation of work from another literary tradition exemplifies the process Astrid Erll describes in her analysis of the 'literary afterlives' of texts: over decades and centuries they are 'received, discussed, used, canonized, forgotten, censored, and re-used' ('Traumatic Pasts' 3).

'Anything Can Happen' is a representation of the violence of the planes striking the Twin Towers. The poem registers the shock of a sudden attack 'across a clear blue sky' and represents the power imbalance in global politics. Heaney shifts the focus of the original text by deleting the first stanza of Horace's ode, one that is generally agreed to describe a religious conversion (Zumwalt 436). The second stanza of Horace 1.34 becomes the first stanza of Heaney's translation. It opens

with the metaphor of Jupiter's 'thunder cart' shaking the earth, the underworld and the 'Atlantic shore itself' ('Anything Can Happen' 4-7). The enjambment of the lines across the second and third stanzas suggests a causal chain:

Anything can happen, the tallest towers

Be overturned, those in high places daunted,
Those overlooked regarded (8-10).

The implication is that toppling 'the tallest towers' can 'daunt' those in high places and cause them to 'regard' the 'overlooked', perhaps for the first time. In this context 'those overlooked' refers to the perpetrators of the attack. The third stanza foreshadows the cycle of revenge and retaliation that was to follow through the graphic imagery of fortune as a bird of prey that can tear the crest from the 'daunted' and give it—'bleeding'—to another:

... Stropped-beak Fortune
Swoops, making the air gasp, tearing the crest off one
Setting it down bleeding on the next. (10-12)

The personification of the natural elements, 'making the air gasp', reinforces the shock of the sudden attack. The metaphor of fortune as a bird of prey conveys the brutality of historical change, but also allows for the swift reversal of fortunes. In 'Horace and the Thunder' the lines were rendered: 'tearing off / Crests for sport, letting them drop wherever'. The minor change in 'Anything Can Happen' transforms the way the violence is represented. Instead of arbitrary killing for 'sport', with no regard for the aftermath, Fortune deliberately places the 'bleeding' crest on the next bird of prey. Zumwalt observes that in Horace's poetry Fortuna is often associated with uncertainty in political events and that in Horace's ode the final statement is 'an observation that high political power is subject to the whims of Fortune' (464).

In his adaptation Heaney took 'the liberty' of adding a final stanza that modifies the view of Fortune presented in the third stanza (*Anything Can Happen* 19). The stanza describes an event that has shaken the earth to its very foundations, using the geological impact as a metaphor for the political consequences. The imagery in the final stanza shows that repercussions of 9/11 are ongoing:

Ground gives. The heavens' weight
Lifts up off Atlas like a kettle lid,
Capstones shift, nothing resettles right.
Telluric ash and fire-spores boil away (13-16).

This rendering of heaven and earth has resulted in everything resettling slightly off kilter. In the earlier version of the poem the final line is 'Smoke furl and boiling ashes darken day', a metaphorical description of the ash cloud that blanketed New York in the days and weeks following the attack on the Twin Towers ('Horace and the Thunder'). In later versions Heaney made the decision to change this to 'Telluric ash and fire spores boil away'. This change shows that even after the 'smoke furl' has cleared there is still anger boiling beneath the surface. While Horace's ode ends with the image of rapacious fortune, Heaney's poem ends with the long-term consequences of these shifts of fortune.

A Horatian ode is an apt choice for a 'public' poem as it highlights the intersection of the deep past and the present. Temporality can be understood as another type of scale, one that is dynamic and non-linear. Simpson argues that decisions about public commemorative monuments are 'often and ideally the products of slow time' (2). He describes how the attacks have been presented as 'an interruption of the deep rhythms of cultural time, a cataclysm simply erasing what was there rather than evolving from anything already in place' (4). Heaney disrupts this narrative of exceptionality by adapting an ode by Horace, who himself lived through a period of transition. Paul Allen Miller describes Horace's odes as 'poems of transition. Caught between the worlds of the republic and the empire, they negotiate a middle path between public engagement and private withdrawal' (365). This identification of the unpredictability of historical change makes Horace an apposite choice for Heaney, writing at another moment of transition. Gray argues that 'much of poetry's power resides precisely in its atemporal slippage' and that it is most powerful 'when it least imitates the reportorial illusion of access to prior realities' (ch. 14). The adaptation of a Horatian ode effects this type of slippage by placing the reader at a distance from the incendiary rhetoric of retaliation.

Remediating the Memory of 9/11: The Circulation of 'Anything Can Happen'

Heaney has made 'Anything Can Happen' available to a broader readership by extending the life of what began as an occasional poem. The publication history demonstrates how the poem was able to 'travel' across national boundaries by reappearing in British and American publications with global readerships. After its first appearance in *The Irish Times* in 2001, 'Anything Can Happen' was revised and reprinted in the *Times Literary Supplement*, *Harpers Magazine* and *Irish Pages* in 2002 and collected in *District and Circle* (2006). In *Irish Pages* it was accompanied by 'Reality and Justice', an essay describing Heaney's response to the 9/11 attacks. In 2004 Amnesty International published a series of translations of 'Anything Can Happen' with an introductory essay by Heaney. Because he has chosen to commemorate 9/11 with an adaptation of a classical ode, Heaney is writing for an implied reader who understands the cultural

references, and these essays serve to 'translate' the translation for the reader who does not. In *Adaptation and Appropriation*, Julie Sanders observes that making the relationship with the source text explicit 'depend[s] upon a complex invocation of ideas of similarity and difference' and 'can only be mobilized by a reader or spectator alert to the intertextual relationship' (21). For the reader who may not be alert to these intertextual links, Heaney's essays on the adaptation provide a framework for reading the poem.

The explanatory essays have been used to shape the readers' response not just to the poem, but also to the 9/11 attacks. Heaney makes specific reference to the international military campaign that was the outcome of the war on terror and warns of the folly of entering a cycle of retaliation. In 'Reality and Justice: On Translating Horace Odes, 1, 34', he focuses on early theories that the Al Qaeda attacks were based on justice for Palestinians:

Obviously there was an eerie correspondence between words 'valet ima summis mutare ... deus' (the god has power to change the highest things to / for the lowest) and the dreamy, deadly images of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre being struck and then crumbling out of sight; and there was an equally unnerving fit between the conventional wisdom of the Latin 'obscura promens' (bringing the disregarded to notice) and the *realpolitik* of the terrorist assault, in that the irruption of death into the Manhattan morning produced not only world darkening grief for the multitudes of victim's families and friends, but it also had the effect of bringing to new prominence the plight of the Palestinians and much else in and about the Arab world.
(52)

Heaney's identification of Palestinians as 'the disregarded' provides an interesting example of how the memory of 9/11 evolved in the years that followed. In 2002, when 'Reality and Justice' was written, Heaney's identification of the 'plight of the Palestinians' reflects the view that achieving justice for Palestinians was an essential factor in addressing the threat of terrorism. Instead, the US government shaped public opinion by focusing on a more generalised threat and used this to legitimise military action in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Anything Can Happen: A Poem and Essay by Seamus Heaney with Translations in Support of Art for Amnesty was published in 2004, at a time when the United States had invaded Iraq ostensibly because they believed that Saddam Hussain had supported Al Queda and was stockpiling weapons of mass destruction. Heaney's introduction to this collection of translations reframes the poem in terms of the invasion of Iraq and reshapes the memory to incorporate a change

in circumstances. He reprises the sentence he had used in 'Reality and Justice', modifying the final clause:

... the irruption of death into the Manhattan morning produced not only world darkening grief for the multitudes of victim's families and friends, but it also had the effect of darkening the future with the prospect of deadly retaliations. Stealth bombers pummelling the fastnesses of Afghanistan, shock and awe loosed from the night skies over Iraq, they all seem part of the deadly fallout from the thunder cart in Horace's clear blue afternoon. (18)

This modification acknowledges the developments in US foreign policy in the intervening years. The essay encompasses the military response to 9/11 and alludes to the widespread global disapproval of the war on Iraq, which was contemporaneous with the preparation of this publication. Heaney does not position himself as a disinterested observer; rather, his description of the 'pummelling' of Afghanistan and 'deadly fallout' of the attacks emphasises the scale of the violent response. He speaks about the many incarnations of 'Anything Can Happen' as 'ongoing civic service', an expectation that arises because of his public profile (O'Driscoll 424). These essays about 'Anything Can Happen' stand as a public statement of his opposition to the 'war on terror' as he adds his voice to the chorus urging restraint in response to 9/11.

Heaney has received some criticism for his position. For instance, David-Antoine Williams regards *Anything Can Happen* as an affront to the victims of 9/11 attacks. He argues that 'it allies Heaney more to the victims of retaliatory violence than those who died in the Twin Towers' and is 'uncouth' in the 'alliances it makes and the lessons it imparts, or imposes' (151). This criticism highlights an impasse within the United States, where discussion of the implications of 9/11 has been circumscribed. Too often, consideration of the historical and political context is seen to devalue the suffering of those directly affected and the preferred narrative, within the national context of the United States, is the 'clash of civilizations' between East and West. It is worth recalling here Rothberg's challenge to the idea that memories are 'owned by groups' (*Multidirectional Memory* 5). He argues that 'memory's anachronistic quality—its bringing together of now and then, here and there—is actually the source of its powerful creativity, its ability to build new worlds out of the materials of other ones' (5). In 'Anything Can Happen' Heaney borrows the 'property' of another culture and, in doing so, he might be said to be attempting to build 'a new world' out of the ruins of the old.

The Amnesty publication deflects attention from the 'war on terror' as the primary source of global conflict. The process of translation allows the poem to

move across national borders and to cross linguistic boundaries. Although the attacks happened in New York, the reverberations have been felt across the world. By presenting translations of a translation, the Amnesty publication foregrounds the ways in which collective memory is always mediated and remediated. It invites readers to reconsider their own understanding of the war on terror and to interrogate the idea that the 9/11 attacks belong to one nation or language. In the Amnesty collection translations of 'Anything Can Happen' have been paired on facing pages in 'languages of conflict' (19). These pairings represent many of the major global conflicts of the twentieth century: the first two translations are English and Irish, followed by Xhosa and Afrikaans, Hebrew and Arabic, Serbian and Bosnian, Chinese and Tibetan, Spanish and Basque, Hindi and Urdu, Turkish and Greek. The arrangement of the collection highlights ancient conflicts and rejects the idea that they are intractable. This global connectivity was emphasised at the book launch, which took place in November of 2004 at the Irish Centre for Human Rights, located at the National University of Ireland, Galway. At the launch Heaney presented the centre with a copy of the text signed by Nelson Mandela (NUI Galway). The endorsement from Mandela underlined the message of the publication: that political violence is transient and reconciliation is possible.

Multi-scalarity in *District and Circle*

The ways that memories travel and circulate is evident in *District and Circle*, Heaney's collection published in 2006. 'Anything Can Happen' is the first in a sequence of poems that present a range of perspectives on the 9/11 attacks and engage with the event through different language traditions. This series highlights shifting scales of memory by moving across territories, folding together images from different time periods, and foregrounding the process of translation. While 'Anything Can Happen' places the reader at a distance from the event, in 'Helmet', the poem that immediately follows it, he imagines the scene inside the towers as they collapse. In this poem, Heaney appropriates the language and imagery of his own translation of *Beowulf* in order to honour the bravery of the 9/11 firefighters. Gallantry is symbolised by the fireman's helmet, a gift to the poet twenty years previously, 'as if I were up to it, as if I had / Served time under it' (line 17). The final stanzas describe the 'shoulder-awning' of a trapped firefighter forming a protective barrier against the 'rubble-bolts' that rain down from the roof ('Helmet' 18-19). The metaphor of the 'fire-thane's shield,' evokes images of the feudal warfare described in *Beowulf*, which is reinforced in the final line as the 'hard-reared shield wall' breaks (21). This close focus on the firefighters' actions moves across and beyond the national frame of 9/11 memory. The representation of the intimate, specific and sited deaths inside the World Trade Centre intersects with the fealty and honour of a medieval warrior through an old English epic poem.

The ways that memories travel and circulate can be seen in the following poems in the sequence, which also adapt and appropriate texts from other language traditions. In these poems the local intersects with the global, and the deep past meets the present. In 'Out Of Shot', for instance, Heaney brings together the worlds of a serene Irish farmyard and a mortar attack in a bazaar in Iraq, linking them with an allusion to a medieval Irish poem about a Viking raid. 'Rilke: *After the Fire*' is a translation which deals explicitly with the witnessing of atrocity, describing a boy who tries to make the bystanders understand what has been destroyed:

For now that it was gone, it all seemed
Far stranger: more fantastical than Pharoah.
And he was changed: a foreigner among them (14-16).

This strangeness is carried through to 'District and Circle'. In this poem Heaney appropriates aspects of the Virgilian underworld to return to the present, to the 'age of anxiety' that has resulted from the global 'war on terror' (Robert Lowell Memorial Lecture). Although the title alludes to the 7/7 attack on the London Underground, the poem does not address this event directly. De Cesari and Rigney contend that a transnational perspective allows us to understand the 'multi-scalarity of socio-cultural processes' and the interdependence of the local, national and global (5). In this sequence of poems the oscillation between past and present, local and global allows us to rethink 'imagined topographies of verticality' (5).

The World in Counterpoint: Musical Adaptation

One of the more recent adaptations of 'Anything Can Happen' is a piece of choral music by Mohammed Fairouz, which brings two different cultural traditions into counterpoint. While this is not the first musical adaptation of the poem, Fairouz's oratorio is the first that involves collaboration with Heaney. Fairouz, an Arab-American composer, has also written a symphony based on Art Spiegelman's 9/11 graphic novel, *In the Shadow of No Towers* and another, *Poems and Prayers*, which brings together the poetry of the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish and Israeli poet Yehudi Amichai. Fairouz believes that 'the world has to exist in counterpoint ... instead of each individual melody losing anything by being combined as a whole, it becomes like a wonderful tapestry, a tapestry where each of these individual threads doesn't lose its meaning, doesn't lose its identity, doesn't lose its own *raison d'etre*, its own reason for being, but contributes to the whole tapestry of counterpoint' (Tippet). This counterpoint exists in 'Anything Can Happen' through the interweaving of poetry by Heaney and verses from the Arabic *Injeel*.

Heaney's collaboration with Fairouz demonstrates a willingness to translate his work in myriad ways and also to use a range of genres to frame a response to the poem itself. The grouping of Heaney poems with the composer's own translation of the Arabic *Injeel* shows the interdependence of East and West. In a letter to Fairouz, Heaney proposed that the poem could be used as the final part of a triptych with two other poems from *District and Circle*: 'the first two being ominous, the third catastrophic—the omen fulfilled, as it were' (Fairouz). The first poem, 'In Iowa', describes a blizzard and signals the dangers posed by climate change. This impression is reinforced in the following poem, 'Hofn', which portrays a melting glacier. Heaney's suggestion that the three poems could make a triptych implies a world in danger of self-destruction. Fairouz decided that there were parallels to the Arabic *Injeel* in the three poems, and in the oratorio Heaney's three poems are separated by the composer's own translation of the first and second *suras* of the *Injeel*. The final poem, 'Anything Can Happen', is preceded by the second *sura*, in which 'the dragon, banished from Heaven attempts to drown the mother of humanity by drowning her and her children in a flood which it unleashes. In failing the dragon vows revenge on the woman and future generations' (Fairouz). The juxtaposition of the dragon's vow of revenge and Heaney's 'Anything Can Happen' underlines the misgivings about retaliation and revenge Heaney has expressed in his own prose essays about the translation.

Fairouz's adaptation of Heaney's 'Anything Can Happen' highlights the ongoing consequences of the attack that came 'across a clear blue sky'. The 'travels' of 'Anything Can Happen'—its transnational and transtemporal movements—serve as a reminder that the memory of 9/11 is not fixed, and that the future can be re-imagined. The premiere of Fairouz's 'Anything Can Happen', performed by the Back Bay Choral Singers, took place at Harvard in the week of the tenth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq and, as one reviewer noted, 'seemed to match a baleful mood in this country as it reflects on loss of life and of innocence during the past decade' (Wright). David Simpson writes that 'the event we call 9/11 has a past that we can discover, a present that we must monitor, and a future we can project' (13). This discoverable past was buried in the political rhetoric and media coverage that followed the destruction of the World Trade Centre, leading to a present in which the consequences of the 'war on terror' are playing out on the global stage.

Conclusion

Heaney's adaptation of an ode raises questions about the implications of bringing the deep past of the classical world into the present. Does Heaney, as David-Antoine Williams argues, 'speak through the old masters, as if they could never be wrong about suffering' and rely upon 'the ageless, universal wisdom of the

ancient, culturally authorized artwork' (151)? Or does he concede, as Richard Rankin Russell fears, 'the inevitability of violence' (285)? What is the reader to make of this translation? To some extent, Heaney certainly defers to the wisdom of the 'old masters'. On the other hand, like many other contemporary writers, he uses the classical text as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. By translating 'Anything Can Happen' Heaney does not suggest that Horace can solve the problems of the modern world, but that the past can reveal something about the present. By placing the events of 9/11 within a historical continuum, Heaney significantly disrupts the narrative of American exceptionalism.

In its many iterations 'Anything Can Happen' is a poem that 'speaks in multiple tongues' (Rothberg, 'Seeing Terror' ch. 6). Through translation, adaptation and appropriation the many versions of the text expand the transnational memory of 9/11. While registering the scale of the attack and the ongoing tremors—'nothing resettles right' ('Anything Can Happen' 17)—Heaney does not present the 9/11 attacks as a historical rupture. Rather, by drawing on a classical ode he has identified continuities across time. Furthermore, his translation is not constrained by national boundaries of remembrance. He has allowed further adaptations and translations of his work to draw attention to the 'overlooked', highlighting the asymmetry of memory discourses. As I have argued, Heaney's contribution to the cultural memory of 9/11, an event for which there is a proliferation of commemoration, richly illustrates and conveys the 'multiple, interlocking' scales of memory.

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