

Language and Landscape—*Dinnshenchas* in Seamus Heaney's Poetry

Yaorong He

School of International Studies, Southwest University, Chongqing, China

Email: heyaorong1004@163.com, 318624028@qq.com

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Abstract

Place-names and *Dinnshenchas* have appeared throughout Heaney's writing career, reflecting his creative trajectory as well as writing process with continuous evolution. Meanwhile, *Dinnshenchas* by Seamus Heaney have employed vocabularies with Gaelic characteristics and spoken Irish, representing landscape of Ireland. Based on the creation of *Dinnshenchas* which combines language, rhythm and landscape, Seamus Heaney has inherited the tradition and culture of ancient Ireland, expressing his Irish identity. Moreover, he has created a diversified and open field of force which integrates varied cultures as well as ideologies, and transcends the binary opposition of nationalities and religions, fulfilling the independence as well as aesthetics of artistic creation.

Keywords

Seamus Heaney, *Dinnshenchas*, Language, Landscape

1. Introduction

*Dinnshenchas*¹ is the manifestation of topographical and knowledge in Irish writing of the early and middle periods that usually forms the basis for claims regarding the special relationship between place and identity in Gaelic life. It tells the story of myth and historical legend related to a certain place, reflecting an understanding in which place and identity are inseparable and representing its landscape. As Robinson (1996: p. 155) points out: "Place-names are the interlock of landscape and language". Actually scholars have noticed the relationship among local place-names, language (or rhythm) and landscape, but there is few research about it, which leaves some room for my research. Place-names (*Dinnseanchans*) are throughout Seamus Heaney's poetic career, and

¹*Dinnshenchas*, also spelled as *Dinnseanchans*, developed from onomastic (place-name traditions) and aetiological (origin legends) discourses derived from early Celtic culture, it enjoys the same meaning with place-names, and both of them can spontaneously refer to the name of place as well as the poetry of place-name (see Gerry Smyth. *Space and the Irish Cultural Imagination*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001, p. 33-34).

the shift of places reflects his writing trajectory and continuously evolving creative process. Starting from his hometown—*Mossbawn*, and taking the growth of chestnut which are planted in front of the house at his birth as metaphor, Seamus Heaney has presented Irish places and landscape with distinct Irish characteristics such as *Anahorish*, *Broagh*, *Toome*, *Derrygarve* and so on in his poetry. Meanwhile, Heaney expresses a deep concern with landscape as well as language in his collections, and regards art as a way of expressing Irishness as well as a metaphor of identity. Moreover, Heaney has illustrated and focused on the relationship among places, landscape and identity, combining the land-division (such as fields, townships), place-names (*Broagh*, *Toome*), landscape and cultural cognition in the same ideological mapping.

2. Landscape and Language

“It is well known that in Europe that concept of landscape and words for it in both Romance and Germanic languages emerged around the turn of the sixteenth century to denote a painting whose primary subject matter was natural scenery” (Olwig, 2002: p. 10). “Land is inherent in the word, and space suggests a view or picture, the aspects of what the eye sees when looking in any direction: and the word is redolent of the open air” (Praeger, 1953: p. 1). In fact, landscape is not only confined to what can be seen by eyes, it includes all the human senses impressed by outer natural world. Although landscape is objective in its existence, as a cultural imagination which is constructed, it is with strong subjective color. Therefore, landscape can be viewed a kind of cultural image as well as constructed human passions. Landscape as natural scenes also provides ways of taking an image of country as the place of community and space of emerging nation-state. As a cultural image, landscape is related to cultural politics, geopolitical memory and emotional experience, and plays an important role in constructing “imagined community”. As landscape’s role in constructing “imagined community”, language of a certain nation is of great importance in ideology, politics and constructing “imagined community”. Anderson (1991: pp. 145-147) thinks the “imagined nation” can summon a strong sense of historical destiny in people’s hearts. Meanwhile because of the characteristics of promordialness and privacy, language is the vital medium of “imagined nation”. Its vogue origin and difficulty in textual research attribute to language’s primitive and natural power. Therefore, language carries political motive, and has a close relationship with the emergence of nation-state and national identity construction. “What the eye is to the lover—that particular, ordinary eye he or she is born with—language—whatever language history has made his or her mother-tongue—is to the patriot. Through that language, encountered at mother’s knee and parted with only at the grave, pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures dreamed” (Anderson, 1991: p. 154). Both landscape and language play vital role in constructing “imagined communities”. Nation-state is not only the outcome of political struggle, it is but also closely related to landscape, language and culture in which people can find the roots of national identity.

Geographical features of land where people live are closely related to the emergence and development of the language which people speak. That is to say, “language and landscape are consistent” (Mianowski, 2012: p. 28). On one hand, landscape can be interpreted into language. Without geographical conditions which create and sustain lives, human being cannot establish communities and nation-states, thus there is no language. During the process of constructing Gaelic language, Irish medieval poets have understood the “rhythm” of geographical environment, and poured ideas, emotions and inspirations into landscape, then transformed them into language, which has an influence on spoken Irish of common people. The natural “rhythm” in poetry has created the relationship between landscape and language, which promotes the spread of language transformed from landscape. On the other hand, landscape can be presented by language description. Spoken Irish, with its distinct characteristics, has evoked endless homesickness, and a simple pronunciation can constitute a beautiful landscape painting. “Spoken language expresses the form of a common life to which the signifier of family, natural scenery and religion refer” (Du, 2013: p. 26). In Seamus Heaney’s poetry, the language with distinct Irish characteristics represents landscape, showing the Irish local world, echoing the claims of Irish cultural nationalism, resisting the colonial rule of Great Britain. Moreover, the imaginative construction between language and landscape sublimates its philosophical connotation.

Place-name is an effective way to show the combination of language and landscape, and also a construction to present its cultural connotation. Miller (1995: p. 1) remarks that: “topographical considerations, the contours of places, cannot be separated from toponymical considerations, the naming of places”. Relph (1976: p. 12) expresses the similar idea: “place-naming represents the humanizing of the landscape, space is claimed for man by naming it”. It is only when the places are named that landscape takes on its cultural connotation. Therefore, the process of naming becomes the process of constructing. Meanwhile, the naming subject has possessed its ideol-

ogy to a certain place through the process of naming so as to make landscape present subjects' will and "make voice" for the subject. Foster (1997: p. 43) has illustrated the relationship among place-names, language and landscape: "Named places, sometimes defined and identified by a natural feature (a mountain, a bog, a strand, a river, a natural well, etc.), did not generate simply local lore, but also a topography intimately bound up with families, ownership, genealogy... Places, place lore, place-names: the landscape of Ireland was seen and read by the Irish through powerful cultural lenses". Landscape presented in place-names becomes the carrier of ritual, legend, mythology and memory, which becomes the important way to present poet's identity. Ireland is under long-run control and oppression of Great Britain, so place-names with distinct Irish characteristics has become the "text evidence" of resisting colonial oppression and exploitation, at the same time it helps to save the local culture.

3. *Mossbawn*

Seamus Heaney's hometown *Mossbawn* is located in the townland of Tamniarn near Bellaghy, Co. Derry, Northern Ireland. *Mossbawn* is "sandwiched between Moyola Park, a large estate belonging to James Chichester-Clark, the former Unionist Prime Minister, and *Toome*, a village surrounded by bogland on the banks of the Bann, where Roddy McCorley, a young patriot, was hung for his role in the 1798 rebellion" (Parker, 1993: p. 7). Corcoran (1986: p. 14) thinks "(*Mossbawn* is) symbolically for a Northern Catholic, between the marks of a nationalist local sentiment and the marks of colonial and British presence, between the 'bog' and the 'demesne'". In his prose, Heaney has illustrated *Mossbawn* in this way: "*Moss*, a Scots word probably carried to Ulster by the Planters, and *bawn*, the name the English colonists gave to their fortified farmhouses... Yet in spite of the Ordnance Survey spelling, we pronounced it *Moss bann*, and *bán* is the Gaelic word for white. So might not the thing mean the white moss, the moss of bog-cotton?" (Heaney, 1980a: p. 35). The Gaelic origin of *Mossbawn* presents its landscape, "moss" and "bog" constitute the countryside landscape with Irish characteristics. The Scottish and English origin shows Scottish planters and English colonists' occupation and control over *Mossbawn*. While its Gaelic origin as well as the images of "moss", "bog", "bog-cotton" carry the Irish characteristics, which erases the colonial traces of this land. Moreover, its Gaelic origin and Irish landscape presented are the methods to rebel 400-year colonial control and claim its right over *Mossbawn* from the perspective of culture. However, with the combination of Gaelic, Scottish and English origin, *Mossbawn* is the outcome of various cultural exchange and integration in the aspects of etymology and landscape.

In addition, Seamus Heaney has mapped Omphalos and pump in his yard as centers of the world in the prose entitled "*Mossbawn*": "It is Co. Derry in the early 1940s. The American bombers groan towards the aerodrome at *Toomebridge*, the American troops manoeuvre in the fields along the road, but all of that great historical action does not disturb the rhythms of the yard. There the pump stands, a slender, iron idol, snouted, helmeted, dressed down with a sweeping handle, painted a dark green and set on a concrete plinth, making the centre of another world" (Heaney, 1980a: p. 17). Omphalos is a Greek word, and Heaney sets it as the centre of world. It shows the complicated elements and connections in Irish culture, which constitutes the field of force including varied nations and cultures. Heaney's sense of place reminds readers of the field of force: there are two centers of world in his understanding: first, Omphalos indicates the centre, it is originally a stone locating the centre of world; second, the pump, standing in the yard, "sets on a concrete plinth, marking the center of another world." (Heaney, 1980a: p. 17). The connection between the image of pump in Irish countryside and the image of stone in Delphi of Greece widens the connotation and implication of Irish culture.

In his early poetry, Heaney (2002: p. 6) combines the fields and townlands into "the histories of its owners. Broagh, The Long Rigs, Bell's Hill; Brian's Field, the Round Meadow, the Demesne; each name was a kind of love made to each acre. And saying the names like this distances the places, turns them into what Wordsworth once called a prospect of mind. They lie deep, like some script indelibly written into the nervous system." In the field of Ireland where culture and ideology undergo great split, geographical landscape not only reflects nature, but also mirrors the culture and history of Northern Ireland, which presents the exchange as well as integration among varied cultures.

4. *Anahorish*

Anahorish, with its Gaelic "*anach fhiar uisce*", means "place of clear water". It is a small town in Co. Derry, Northern Ireland, which is close to Heaney's hometown *Mossbawn*, and Heaney attended *Anahorish* School for his primary education. Although *Anahorish* belongs to Great Britain in regional division and political affiliation,

it is with distinct Irish characteristics, and it carries on Irish tradition. At the beginning of the poetry, it is explained the English meaning “place of clear water” of *Anahorish*, which presents a beautiful landscape literally. Then the landscapes of nature and farm practices are presented in *Anahorish* with the combination of visual and auditory description. *Anahorish* is “the first hill in the world/where springs washed into/the shiny grass/and darkened cobbles/in the bed of the lane.” (Heaney, 1998: p. 47). With hills, clear water and grassland, it constitutes a beautiful natural landscape painting. The green grass lying near springs and darkened cobbles in the lane show the color contrast, which brings visual impact. Next, it comes into the auditory description of *Anahorish* in language. “*Anahorish*, soft gradient of consonant, vowel-meadow” (Heaney, 1998: p. 47). There are four Vowels in the word “*Anahorish*”, which is full of Irish passions.² The last pronunciation of “sh[ɹ]” makes an image of flowing water in the river, winding to the distance. It helps to form a landscape of countryside in Ireland, with being ancient, tranquil and peaceful. Meanwhile, the “vowel-meadow” nurtures the Irish “mound-dwellers”, they “go waist-deep in mist/to break the light ice/at wells and dunghills/with pails and barrows” (Heaney, 1998: p. 47). During the farm practices, the tools for “mound-dwellers” are barrels and carts, which shows the non-violence of Irish tradition. The action of “break[ing] the light ice” not only presents the scene of farm practices, but also brings auditory imagination. As Heaney (1980a: p. 37) has illustrated in the prose *Belfast*: “I think of the personal and Irish pieties as vowels, and the literary awareness nourished on English as consonants”. The Gaelic of *Anahorish* is the “vowel-meadow” as well as the “soft gradient of consonant”. “*Mossbawn* was bordered by the townlands of Broagh and *Anahorish*, townlands that are forgotten Gaelic music in the throat, *bruach* and *anach fhior uisce*, the riverbank and the place of clear water. The names lead past the literary mists of a Celtic twilight into that civilization... Lifeline was bitten through when the squared-off walls of bawn and demesne dropped on the country like the jaws of a man-trap” (Heaney, 1980a: p. 36). In the poetry of place-names, Heaney has inherited Celtic civilization which is cut by British colonists and fortresses by the language and landscape. In the last part of poem, Heaney presents a bucolic landscape of farm practices without violence and conflict. The beautiful natural landscape, Gaelic rhythm and “mound-dwellers” constitutes a harmonious painting and landscape. The poem *Anahorish*, with its distinct Irish characteristics, revives Irish tradition and history. Moreover, the combination of Gaelic rhythm and harmonious landscape in the poem is an expression to memorize ancient Irish tradition, to create a new space for identity, which finds a new way of poetry-creation in the context of national and religious conflicts in Northern Ireland.

The place-names itself has the ability to embody the cultural sovereignty. Burris (1990: p. 12) considers deeper implication in *Anahorish*: “Heaney imagines that the name itself possess ineffable powers of cultural sovereignty. Irish place-names in the United Kingdom become for Heaney subversive incantations that both glorify his Celtic lineage and establish its integrity in British Northern Ireland. The poem dexterously appropriates a landscape politically British in its legal demarcation but linguistically Irish in its nomenclature”. In Heaney’s lecture “*Place and Displacement: Recent Poetry of Northern Ireland*”, it expresses the clearest statement about the direction of his poetry. Referring to the political situation in Northern Ireland, Heaney suggests that in the face of such an intolerable reality, “the poet’s artistic drive... is to move to a higher level of consciousness and resolve the conflict symbolically in art... The contemporary poet in Ireland is compelled to ‘outstrip’ the unbearable political reality of Ulster, to transcend it in highly formal lyrics, to enter the linguistic mode of play that momentarily intensifies him and detaches him from his predatory circumstances” (Schuchard, 1989: p. 6). For Heaney, “the poetic transcendence is not an evasion of sympathy with national conditions but rather a transposition of that sympathy into symbol” (Schuchard, 1989: p. 6). In his essay on lyric poetry, Adorno (1991: p. 157) discusses the poet’s role in transcending material reality: “protesting against these conditions, the poem proclaims the dream of a world in which things would be different”. Heaney’s own way of landscape description, represents the wish that not only resists to the order that has been but an imaginative establishment of a new order that transcends the dichotomies of the old ones.

5. Broagh

In the poem *Broagh* Heaney has presented a landscape and meanwhile explored the inner construction and origin of language. The Gaelic origin of “*Broagh*” is “*bruach*”, meaning “riverbank”. In the first stanza of the poem, it presents the central image of riverbank with lushy and thriving plants: “Riverbank, the long rigs/ending in broad docken/and a canopied pad/down to the ford” (Heaney, 1998: p. 55). Then there is the landscape of in-

²Vowels are usually related with Irish, while consonant related to English.

teraction between man and nature: “The garden mould/bruised easily, the shower/gathering in your heelmark/was the black O/in Broagh” (Heaney, 1998: p. 55). “Among the windy boortrees and rhubarb-blades”, pronouncing the word Broagh has become a special experience, and the ending syllable *gh*[g] makes non-Irish people difficult to manage. In the poem, the vocabularies of “*rig*”, “*docken*”, “*boortrees*” belong to varied languages. “*Rig*”, which is originally from Scottish, indicates the “field near river, or shore”, and is usually used by planters when borrowed to Gaelic language. “*Docken*” originates from Old English, which is used as the plural form of a kind of weeds with broad leaves. “*Boortree*” is Irish Gaelic, so is “*Broagh*”. The vocabularies with varied origins in the poem indicate the complexity and variety of Irish language during the long process of development. In Heaney’s view, though the word “*Broagh*” corresponds to “riverbank” in English, they cannot be equal totally because of the varied pronunciation and Irish people’s unique understanding and experience for the word “*Broagh*”. In the interview with Wu (2003: pp. 439-440), Heaney has explained that Italicizing the word “*Broagh*” suggests there is difference between it and its English meaning “riverbank”. The poetry of place-names were written at the beginning of 70s when it began the unrest of Irish civil rights. The more fierce the debate about the autonomy of Northern Ireland was, the more powerful military oppression against civil rights movement was. The place-name poetry is an indication that British colonists are excluded from Irish tradition despite they live in Ireland. Though Northern Ireland belongs to Great Britain in political division, it is closely related to ancient Irish people. Therefore, “*Broagh*” is very different from “riverbank” in origin and experience. Irish people can pronounce “*Broagh*”, but English people cannot. The place-names are related to language, but not confine to pronunciation of words only. Instead, they are about a kind of unique culture, and an special intimacy for languages, which is inherent. British colonist’s failure in pronouncing *gh*[g] suggests that identity recognition between British and Irish can completed via language and pronunciation. Therefore, the word “*Broagh*” with the Gaelic pronunciation trait has become a kind of Irish identity, arousing Irish national consciousness. Seamus Heaney regards the Irish dialect which is not standard and regular as a way to carry on unique life experience of Irish people, to embody the national sentiment and to express the existence of a national entity. When these wonderful tones of Irish are again in their ears, Irish landscape, tradition and life will be on their minds, which is a way of emotional resonance among Irish people. However, the component English word “riverbank” of “*Broagh*” won’t come out such feeling and effect.

6. Toome

Toome is a small town lying in Antrim, Northern Ireland. It is adjacent to Lough Neagh and River Bann flows across it. During the uprising of 1798, patriot Roddy McCorley has been arrest by British colonist and been sentence to death in *Toome*. The word “*Toome*” (also spelled as “*Toombridge*”) is from Irish “*Tuaim*”, and it is a homophone of the English “tomb”, which shows its function as an interment as well as a space for storing Irish history. At the beginning of the poem, it presents the unique pronunciation of the word “*Toome*”: “My mouth holds round/the soft blastings/*Toome, Toome*/as under the dislodged/slab of the tongue” (Heaney, 1998: p. 54). Then Heaney relates *Toome* to his favorite metaphor digging, and regards *Toome* as a bog which stores Irish history and culture. The images of “loam”, “flints”, “musket-balls”, “fragmented ware”, “torcs”, “fish-bones” stored in *Toome* almost can represent all aspects of Irish culture and tradition, which forms a painting of ancient Irish landscape. Taking the town *Toome* as the description of his place-name, Heaney not only inherits Irish tradition, but also pays tribute to martyrs sacrificed for Irish nation and people by the representation of the combination of language and landscape. Such combination in place-name “leads people past the literary mists of a Celtic twilight into that civilization whose demise was effected by soldiers and administrators like Spenser and Davies, whose lifeline was bitten through when the squared-off walls of bawn and demesne dropped on the country like the jaws of a man-trap” (Heaney, 1980a: p. 36).

In the poem of place-name *Toome*, Seamus Heaney has analyzed the different histories and geographies involved in the word “*Toome*”, and its etymological traits. The word “*Toome*” corresponds with “*Tuaim*” in Gaelic language, which means dyke, hillock, burial mound or tomb. “Joyce refers to this particular place as “*Toome*”, but explains that “[there] must have been formerly at this place both a sandbank ford across the river, and a sepulchral mound near it, for in the Tripartite Life it is called Fearsat Tuama, the ford of the tumulus; but in the annals it is generally called *Tuaim*”” (Smith, 2001: p. 67). Therefore, there are more resonant and mysterious elements across centuries of usage of the word. However, “*Toome*” carries the English meaning of “Tomb”, which indicates the anglicizing of Irish place-names and the exchange between Gaelic and Anglo-Saxon culture

in the development of history. It signals the common experience of British and Irish people—death. Thus, Heaney has inherited Gaelic tradition without abandoning Anglo-Saxon tradition absolutely. Moreover, “*Toome*” is also related to bog which is used as the representation of storing Irish history as well as culture, and is frequently used in Heaney’s poems as the metaphor of national spirit. “‘*Toome*’ exemplifies many of the technical features with which Heaney was engaged at the time: a complex rhyming structure, a deceptively simple verse schema and a delicate economy of vowels and consonants” (Smith, 2001: pp. 68-69). In the poem there are 16 lines forming one sentence. “The word ‘*Toome*’ (differentiated from the surrounding language by italics) booms out at the beginning of the poem and continues to sound through each verse (tongue, prospecting, fragmented, torc, till, tail), like an echo resonating through a large underground chamber. The language of the poem thus supports the concept of an ordinary utterance—“some ur-speech” perhaps the ‘Word’ itself—which persists into the present, and which may still be accessed” (Smith, 2001: p. 69). Corcoran (1998: p. 46) has also pointed out that “[this poem] establishes a condition of primeval intimacy between poet and terrain, a sense that the existence of this ‘I’ [as with ‘I am sleeved in’] is coterminous with its knowledge of this place”. Seamus Heaney “digs” the connotation of the dynamic space of “*Toome*”, exploring its poetic value. In Heaney’s early poetry, the description about Irish landscape is mysterious, peaceful, and Edenic, full of “a feeling, assenting, equable marriage between the geographical country and the country of the mind” (Heaney, 1997: p. 205).

7. Derrygarve

Derrygarve, with its Gaelic etymology “*Doire Garbh*” and English meaning “rough oakwood”³, is a small town in Heaney’s hometown Co. Derry, Northern Ireland. In the poem of place-name *A New Song*, it centers on Derrygarve from the aspects of language, landscape and Gaelic music. At the beginning of the poem, “a girl from Derrygarve I met” reminds the speaker of the place-name Derrygarve, then its landscape and Gaelic music. The speaker calls “the name” as “a lost potent musk”, which shows speaker’s pleasure even ecstasy when “meeting” Derrygarve. Moreover, there are a lot of vowels in the words (song, river, girl, Irish) of the poem, which highlights its Irish trait. It is called for restoring Irish tradition and history by re-naming the place in Irish and Gaelic in the places of British colony: “now our river tongues must rise/from licking deep in native haunts/to flood, with vowelling embrace/Demesnes staked out in consonants” (Heaney, 1998: p. 58). In addition, the idea of recovering the British occupation and resisting its cultural colony by Gaelic and ancient Irish tradition has been emphasized at the end of the poetry: “and Castledawson we’ll enlist/and Upperlands, each planted bawn—like bleaching—greens resumed by grass—a vocable, as rath and bullaun” (Heaney, 1998: p. 58). In the poem, it recalls the peaceful Irish countryside landscape before British occupation: the long swerve river Moyola with the shifty glaze of the whirlpool flows away across alder trees. At dusk, a blue kingfisher is flying then stops on a stepping stone for rest “like black molars sunk in the ford” (Heaney, 1998: p. 58). Meanwhile the landscape occupied by British colony is contrast with the ancient Irish landscape: Castledawson and Upperlands are occupied by British colonist, with fence surrounded, bleaching the grass. What’s more, the place-name Derrygarve comes out the musical effect and aesthetics, which corresponds with the title of the poem “*A New Song*”. However, when the poet speaks of the Derrygarve in the poem, it becomes “vanished music”, which indicates the extinction of Gaelic music.

With the combination of language, landscape and music, the poem has inherited ancient Irish tradition and history. During the interview with Bei (2001: pp. 87-95), Seamus Heaney thinks the poem difficult to understand and regards it as a Civil Rights poem. When comes to the vowels and consonants, he takes the consonants as the British presence in Ireland, while vowels stands for Irish native existence. Thus, vowels resist the control of consonants in the poem. Native Irish people should be aware of the vanishing Gaelic, and takes in English for localizing, just like British colonists have taken in Irish words such as “Rath”, “Bullaun” and combined them into English. Therefore, Heaney advocates to recover the Irishness of Language and art in Ireland, which reflects his Irish identity.

In Northern Ireland, British colonists have imposed English on Irish people via government, schools and churches. The spread and generalization of English in Northern Ireland have deprived the Irish people of the right to express life experience by native language, made Irish extinct, which poses influence on cultural diversity. As Heaney (1980b: p. 19) has described in the poem *Tradition*: “Our guttural muse/was bulled long ago/by the alliterative tradition/her uvula grows/vestigial, forgotten/like the coccyx”. In the language system used by Irish people, English has occupied the dominant position, while Gaelic is marginalized, even on the verge of ex-

³See more details on https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_townlands_in_County_Londonderry.

tion. Facing such situation, instead of exaggerating the superiority of Gaelic and unilateral culture system, Seamus Heaney has created place-names to explore the connotation of the language, to present landscape, forming an open and diverse space. As he has remarked: "In any movement towards liberation, it will be necessary to deny the normative authority of the dominant language or literary tradition... Neither MacDonagh nor Joyce considered it necessary to proscribe within his reader's memory the riches of the Anglophone culture whose authority each was, in his own way, compelled to challenge. Neither denied his susceptibility to the totally persuasive word in order to prove the purity of his resistance to an imperial hegemony. Which is why both these figures are instructive when we come to consider the scope and function of poetry in the world. They remind us that its integrity is not to be impugned just because at any given moment it happens to be a refraction of some discredited cultural or political system. Poetry, let us say, whether it belongs to an old political dispensation or aspires to express a new one, has to be a working model of inclusive consciousness. It should not simplify. Its projections and inventions should be a match for the complex reality which surrounds it and out of which it is generated" (Heaney, 1995: p. 8). Openness and diversity can conform to the cultural context of Northern Ireland. With the coexistence of many ethnics, diverse religions as well as varied religious groups in Northern Ireland, the fierce conflicts have been accompanied by the combination of different cultures. Despite Irish culture has remained its tradition and traits, it is not isolated and confined to itself. It has become a part of ancient European culture under the influence of Anglo-Saxon culture and the integration of cultures. Therefore, the language and landscape presented in Heaney's place-name poetry are the true portrayal of Irish people's language condition and life experience. In the poetry, Heaney has presented broad and diverse understanding of Irish identity by exploring the spirit of language as well as the landscape outside.

8. Conclusion

The relationship between landscape and language has been presented in *Dinnshenchas* of Heaney's poetry which reflects Heaney's inheritance of Irish tradition and culture so as to highlight his Irish identity by using spoken Irish, unique Irish vocabulary and present landscape with distinct Irish characteristics. Meanwhile, through the language and landscape in the place-names, instead of the difficult choices of politics, history, religion and nationality, Heaney has "dugged" the inner elements of poetry to recover the initial meaning and state of language signals, and has been faithful to artistic creation to get rational self-awareness, then has kept a rational understanding of the sufferings of Irish people and conflicts, even kept a proper balance between them. Based on the interaction and combination of language and landscape, Seamus Heaney has solved binary opposition in poetry, and has created a mobile and complicated a field of force including different factors, which provides an imagined space for solving the dilemmas of identity, religious choice and political conflict. It helps to fulfill the independence and value of artistic creation, meanwhile to promote the cultural exchange among Ireland and other countries.

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