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Redress and Adaptation: A Study of Seamus Heaney's Translation from Dante's Divine Comedy

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Article Info	Extended ABSTRACT
<p>Article type: Research Article</p> <p>Article history: Received: 15 February 2023 Received in revised form: 10 October 2024 Accepted: 23 October 2024 Published online: Spring2025</p> <p>Keywords: Redress of poetry, Adaptation/ Translation, Divine Comedy, Heaney, Hutcheon, Ireland, Intertext.</p>	<p>This paper delves into Seamus Heaney's notion of the "redress of poetry," examining it as a deeply personal response to the socio-political conflicts that have historically plagued Northern Ireland. By situating Heaney's work within the frameworks of Linda Hutcheon's idea of adaptation in postcolonial and postmodern contexts, this study sheds light the intricate relationship between Heaney's poetic choices and transformations and Hutcheon's theories. A focal point of this analysis is Heaney's adaptation of Dante's "Ugolino," which is a part of his masterpiece, the <i>Commedia</i>. Dante's narrative resonates with themes of suffering, betrayal, and the quest for justice. These elements find their echo, as well, in the tumultuous history of Heaney's own cultural / private landscape. Through a close reading of Heaney's rendition / translation of "Ugolino," the current study highlights Heaney's engagement in a tripartite process of indigenization / localization, which Hutcheon identifies as a critical aspect of adaptation. This process involves not only a retelling of Dante's original story but also a re-contextualization that speaks to contemporary issues in Northern Ireland, thereby bridging historical-temporal and geographical-cultural divides. The significance of "Ugolino" is examined in relation to Heaney's earlier works, revealing a continuity in his exploration of themes such as memory, identity, and the burdens of socio-political history. Moreover, this paper contextualizes Heaney's adaptations within the broader historical framework that informs his poetic voice. It considers how the institutional mechanisms, including political conflict and cultural heritage, shape Heaney's artistic vision and influence his re-interpretation of classical texts. By addressing these dynamics, the study underscores the dual role of poetry as both a personal and collective endeavor which endows the poet with the capacity to deal with pain while simultaneously providing him with a capacity to seek catharsis and understanding. Finally, this exploration reveals both the strengths and weaknesses inherent in Heaney's poetics. While his adaptations serve as powerful vehicles for navigating the complexities of art and life, they also raise questions about the limitations of translation and interpretation in the face of historical trauma and national predicaments. This paper concludes by asserting that Heaney's work exemplifies the redemptive potential of poetry, illustrating how adaptation can function as a form of redress, providing solace and insight amidst chaos. Through this lens, Heaney's poetry emerges as a vital commentary on the enduring impact of history on individual and collective identities in Northern Ireland.</p>

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