

**UNCOVERING GENDERED ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE
TRAUMATISED MALE BOG–BODY: SEAMUS HEANEY’S
‘GRAUBALLE MAN’ AND ‘PUNISHMENT’ IN THEIR
CULTURAL CONTEXT**

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We should by no means allow the force of archaeological metaphor to make us overlook, or to leave at some unstated level, the crux of Heaney’s sensuousness. He does not simply describe the unearthing of bodies from the bog. He re-enacts the mysterious unearthing of the sensuous body from the language of the book: that is the mystery of writing itself. (Brown 154)

i.

The traumatised male body unsettles its present-day observer’s conventional assumptions about men. Instead of being impassive and vigorous, a wounded man is unexpectedly vulnerable: his injury encourages one to imagine how and why he suffered this painful intrusion and consequently to create a story of his internal life; in addition, his frankly-presented physique offers one an opportunity to contemplate it aesthetically, perhaps even to experience what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has called a ‘shock of’ homoerotic ‘possibility’ about its attractiveness (140). His wounded body is viscerally compelling; however, it is often surprisingly difficult to understand what pain he feels. Elaine Scarry has persuasively argued that physical pain ‘has no referential content’; because pain is intangible and difficult to signify—it is not easily ‘sharable’—some accessible, analogous linguistic trope is required to communicate it effectively (5). Metaphor and simile consequently bear much of the burden of conveying pain. Furthermore, Scarry contends that ‘the fact that the very word “pain” has its etymological home in “*poena*” or “punishment” reminds us that even the elementary act of naming this most interior of events entails an immediate mental somersault out of the body into the external social circumstances that can be pictured as causing the hurt’ (16). Understanding trauma involves grappling with it figuratively and

contextually; documenting what pain was felt, how it was experienced psychosomatically, and why.

Examining bog bodies, those well-preserved Iron–Age corpses discovered in Northern–European peat marshes, involves a similar process of grappling and documenting. The unexpected vulnerability of the male body in pain, its frankly–presented physique, and its allusive articulation are consistent with the bog body’s uncanny presence, its compelling tactility, and its mystery. In *Bodies in the Bog and the Archaeological Imagination*, Karin Sanders has convincingly argued that the bog bodies’ ‘familiar unfamiliarity...is...tied to a particular aspect of the uncanny: the precarious and often treacherous vacillation between being human and becoming an inanimate object’ (9). In other words they exhibit a recognisable, vulnerable humanity, but they are unconventional embodiments of that humanity. Moreover, Sanders notes how important both the exploratory and the erotic characteristics of touch are when encountering bog bodies: ‘First, touch can be seen as part of a process: the activity and gratification of excavating and digging. Second, touching and the sensual experience it brings (still including touching by proxy of the gaze) gives primacy to the “skin” of archaeological artifacts, to the pleasure of beauty, or the displeasure in lack of beauty’ (58–59). The uncovering and the discovering of Sedgwick’s ‘shock of’ homoerotic ‘possibility’ lies latent in male bog–body analysis. What these bodies manifest, however, teases the observer’s imagination. Sanders argues that ‘the stubborn *thereness* of archaeological objects as material testimony seems to leave an element of something both unavoidable and mysterious, something that begs for imaginary fill–ins and fill–outs’ (15). Just as impartially gauging male–body pain proves inadequate, objectively documenting bog–body somatic experience too seems unsatisfactory; the bog body urges analogical explanation, some information relative to our experience, to supplement its mysterious silence. Scarry observes that the procedure of investigating pain ‘is laden with practical and ethical consequences’, a correlation also evident in the process of bog–body examination (6). Provisional and objective research necessarily informs male–trauma and bog–body analysis; these methods present practical problems and ethical consequences for those who encounter traumatised male bog–bodies.

The culture of bog–body analysis consists of various discourses engaged in by archaeologists, artists, critics, poets, and scientists who share, according to Sanders, ‘a common denominator: they all in one way or another negotiate the pressure of the bog bodies’ material presence’ (xv). Recent publications on traumatised bog bodies have dealt with this presence by offering both social commentary that

contextualises these bodies for present-day readers and scientific inquiry into their respective histories. Dianne Meredith notes that observations on Northern-European bog-body discoveries date back as far as 1450, when their presence was usually attributed to supernatural foul-play (130). In the twentieth century, scientific investigation replaced superstitious conjecture as the appropriate method for studying these bodies; in addition, the ethics governing their treatment and their display became an important consideration. Charlotte Fabech and Mike Boehm, for example, criticise institutions that study and show bog bodies for mistreating them. Fabech disapproves of their scientific and commercial objectification, expressing her reservations about ‘very clinical descriptions of a person once alive of flesh and blood’ and asserting that ‘[the] “respect” for the deceased is lost in the long run to the wish of the public department to promote the exhibition effectively’ (113, 112). Boehm objects to poorly-researched exhibitions of these bodies that project a ‘bogus bog fantasy’ onto the ‘star quality presence of the ancient, horribly dispatched dead’ (56). As Fabech’s and Boehm’s arguments suggest, current discourses concerning traumatised bog bodies insist on their decent treatment and their commemoration.

Because the ethical treatment of bog bodies is an important consideration in their examination and because both male and female bodies have been recovered, studying the critical reception of traumatised male bog bodies offers fruitful opportunities for uncovering current gendered assumptions about the dignity of the men and their bodies, originating in those ‘imaginary fill-ins and fill-outs’ concerning men’s culturally-provisional masculine identities (their masculinities) and their biological maleness. In the culture of bog-body analysis these assumptions are discernible in those ‘[attitudes] professionals took when a bog body suddenly appeared at their desk, how they reasoned and what choices they made’ that interest Fabech (111). Whether occasioned by an encounter at a desk in a medical laboratory or one in a writer’s study, commentary on these wounded corpses inevitably resorts to descriptive figurative language, analogy, and speculation about the obscure social circumstances that occasioned their injuries. What should be said of these men, and their maleness, once death has stilled their vigour? Commentators from popular and academic discourses often sympathetically discuss these bodies’ humanity; however, in stark contrast to their sensitive treatment of women, most ignore masculinities and maleness, and when men’s gender and sex are addressed, the commentaries are often surprisingly dismissive or evasive: ridicule, elusive abstraction, or disregard of the traumatised male body—concerning both its physical pain and the pleasure potential its maleness

offers—are clearly evident. The following examples from one popular and one scholarly work exemplify some strikingly different choices, attitudes, and reasoning informing their treatment of male and female bog bodies.

In her review article, ‘A New Literary Hero: The Limp, Silent Type’, Sarah Boxer discusses gendered differences in bog bodies’ treatment. The flippant tone of the article—she refers to bog bodies as ‘these deflated balloons of flesh, these sad sacks’—changes noticeably, however, when she discusses bog women: ‘for some reason’, she observes, ‘the bog woman has been all but ignored’ and when examined, ‘is just another passive sex object’. She also sympathetically discusses the plight of ‘the poor Bog Queen [Gunhild]’ who seems to represent an exceptional challenge to this unfair treatment. Boxer describes bog men, on the other hand, as ‘monumentally ugly...dirty, soggy, tanned, redheaded, nearly naked and, above all, dead’. Ignoring their painful histories, she facetiously dismisses these men in this misandrous anti-blazon. Boxer surprisingly ridicules male bog-bodies for being sex objects: she asserts that Seamus Heaney’s poem ‘The Tollund Man’ is ‘possibly the sexiest tribute to a man strangled and dumped in a bog’—but rather than explore the interesting homoerotic implications of this assertion (one might argue that the sexiness is in the eye of the poet or the poem’s speaker), she evasively assumes an unquestioningly heteronormative gaze when objectifying his body; she concludes that because of Heaney’s poetic treatment, ‘one of nature’s true monsters came to be a man women could want, a man a man could envy, a sex symbol stuck into the mud’. Understanding bog men’s trauma, *pace* Boxer, seems secondary to acknowledging inattention paid to bog women; moreover, when not objects of derision, bog men’s bodies are there to satisfy heterosexual women’s desire and, inexplicably, to invite men’s envy but not their desire. Although her commentary on the traumatised male bog-body dismissively adds insult to their injury, Boxer correctly observes, and demonstrates, that male and female bog bodies are subject to different kinds of scrutiny.

This observation is borne out in Karin Sanders’ above-mentioned book. Although she does not ridicule the male bog-bodies, when Sanders discusses Tollund Man and the Haraldskjaer Bog Body, ‘the poor Bog Queen’ Gunhild mentioned by Boxer, she keeps her critical distance from, and seems sceptical about, the male bog-body’s trauma; however, Sanders suspends her disbelief when discussing the female bog body. Attending to some of the complications inherent in photographic representations of his body, Sanders views Tollund Man from a critical distance. Attention is drawn away from his face and towards the

photographic medium's influence on his affect; a close-up photograph of his face is described as potentially 'tak[ing] on emotive and ethical signification and as a result reach[ing] far beyond the body's physical reality' (36–37). Sanders seems more interested in the possibility that how Tollund Man is represented might '[press] our empathy' (anticipating her discussion of 'The Danger of Projection') than in the photographic testimony of embodied male trauma; the embodied pain seems beside the point.

Rather than examining the sign (and its potential to accommodate projected meaning), which is the method informing her treatment of Tollund Man, when Sanders examines the Haraldskjaer Bog Body she glosses over problems of representation and projects her own reading of Queen Gunhild's mythology on to this body. No attempt is made at investigating the photographic image's signifying scrutiny. Sanders describes rather than investigates the reception of this body. Her bog-body examination is compromised by her uncritically reading on to the perceived and received myth of this queen, in Steen Steensen Blicher's poem 'Queen Gunnild'; Sanders reads into the poem a narrative of a 'femme fatal' who is 'feared as a woman'—both characteristics not evident in the corresponding excerpts from the translation she quotes (95). Similar gendered assumptions about traumatised bog bodies—informing attitudes, choices, and reasoning concerning them—are evident in other literary and scientific discussions of bog bodies.

ii.

An examination of some prominent literature discussing two well-known, apparently executed Iron–Age bog bodies, Grauballe Man and Windeby One (both uncovered in 1952), also evinces different, gender-based assumptions about these bodies' traumatic circumstances and the reader's appropriate erotic interest in them. In his influential book, *The Bog People: Iron Age Man Preserved*, P.V. Glob humanely describes both bodies. He notes that Grauballe Man's head

lay to the north and his legs to the south. It could be seen already that he lay on his chest, with the left leg extended and the right arm bent.... The peat cutters had completely exposed the head...it serves, like the head of the Tollund man, to give an impression of how this man looked on the threshold of death many years ago.... The effect is not one of tranquility but of pain

and terror. The puckered forehead, the eyes, the mouth, and the twisted posture all express it. (39)

Likewise Windeby One

lay on her back, her head twisted to one side, the left arm outstretched.... The right arm was bent in against the chest, as if defensively, while the legs were lightly drawn up, the left over the right. The head, with its delicate face, and the hands, were preserved best: the chest had completely disintegrated and the ribs were visible. The lower abdomen had also gone. The hair, reddish from the effects of the bog acids but originally light blond, was of exceptional fineness but had been shaved off with a razor on the left side of the head. (112)

Both descriptions use effective figurative language to convey these bodies' psychosomatic trauma: Grauballe Man's 'puckered forehead' and 'twisted posture' suggest anxiety and discomfort; Windeby One's 'bent in' arm, 'lightly drawn up' legs and 'shaved off' hair of 'exceptional fineness' connote a violated somatic fragility. The assumptions informing Glob's inspection of each body, however, are different. Grauballe Man's body is regarded as vividly offering physical testimony to his traumatic ending; however, Glob views him from a critical distance: his head 'gives an impression' rather than impresses Glob; his face 'expresses' an 'effect' of his trauma instead of directly communicating it to Glob. The language evades sympathetic identification. Attention is drawn away from his body to his abstract or figurative affect; he signifies but does not seem to embody trauma; his head (not his face) communicates 'like the head of the Tollund Man'. The overall effect is of forensic record-keeping; again, the embodied pain is at best a side-issue. This examination assumes that when the male body is traumatised, it awkwardly signifies its suffering, evoking objective scrutiny instead of empathy. Whilst Glob regards Tollund Man's body with an almost-scientific objectivity, he views Windeby One's body more sensuously. He describes its physical appearance, from the fine hair and the fragile face down to the chest with its exposed ribs, the missing lower abdomen and dainty legs crossed. The overall impression is of violated feminine beauty and helplessness (he speculates that the right arm is 'bent in against the chest as if defensively'). His description of this body seems to draw the spectator towards its

vulnerability (in striking contrast to the clinically–reported inventory of the Grauballe Man) and to assume this is an acquiescent female body. Glob automatically enacts a heteronormative male gaze on these bodies: he views Grauballe Man as an indicator of pain rather than embodying pain and ignores his maleness; he assumes that Windeby One’s body is an appropriate object of physical, even sensual, appraisal.

Since describing a character’s internal life is often integral to literature, works on traumatised bog bodies could offer vivid accounts of their pain and its circumstances. Seamus Heaney’s lyrical poems, ‘The Grauballe Man’ and ‘Punishment’ (published in his 1975 collection, *North*) are arguably the two best–known literary works on the two above–mentioned bodies examined by Glob. In them Heaney apparently reinscribes the conventional male impassivity and the male heteronormative male gaze evident in Glob’s assessment; however, informed by his diffident treatment of beauty’s relationship with desire and his acute sensitivity to historical influence, these poems also express an ambivalent sensual interest in the bog as a transgressive place. In each poem the speaker—whose frame of reference resembles the poet’s—sensuously describes the bog body, but his relationship with each body is explored differently because of his assumptions about them. The speaker of ‘The Grauballe Man’ challenges the reader to reconcile the humane expressivity of language about this male bog body’s experience of pain to its static physical presence:

Who will say ‘corpse’
 To his vivid cast?
 Who will say ‘body’
 To his opaque repose? (25–28).

He acknowledges an ethical choice facing the spectator evident in the tension between aesthetic effect and empathetic affect in the poem: to what extent should one acknowledge this body’s humanity and to what extent should one examine it as an aesthetic object? The figurative language in ‘The Grauballe Man’ offers vivid testimony of this man’s trauma, but the narrator, like Glob, maintains a critical distance from the body—creating what Anthony Purdy calls, ‘a context of aesthetically distanced anatomical display’—and notes its impassivity (suggested by ‘cast’ and ‘repose’) (97). The maleness of the body is abstracted; the poem’s aesthetic effects rely heavily on the extra–contextual vehicle of the comparisons rather than the obvious, embodied tenor, exemplified most vividly by the lines, ‘the chin is a visor/ raised above the vent/ of his slashed throat’ whose ‘cured wound opens to a dark elderberry

place' (18–20, 22–24). The comparisons cure the wound of its painful affect. This method continues throughout the poem: Grauballe Man's body is compared to a 'foetus', to 'a forceps baby', to 'the Dying Gaul'—it is 'Perfected in [the speaker's] memory' but does not move him (31, 35, 41, 37). When the speaker takes up the challenge to integrate the body's aesthetic affect and its traumatic testimony—acutely situating Grauballe Man as '[lying]...hung in the scales/ with beauty and atrocity'—he offers only a distant, historical acknowledgment of this man's physical beauty; there is the cold marble sculpture of the Gaul on his shield from the third century BCE but no embodied male beauty among the 'hooded victims' of the twentieth century (36, 39–40, 47). The aesthetic assessment of the male bog body belongs in the past, replaced by a present-day heteronormative male gaze that looks, occasionally feels, but never touches. Heaney's method is exacting, aesthetically effective, and evasive. In directing the reader's attention away from the physical site of the trauma—and even when suggesting a correlation between this man's suffering and those 'of each [Irish] hooded victim,/ slashed and dumped'—Heaney minimises any possible consideration of Grauballe Man as a once-embodied man with a psychosomatic internal life enriched by needs and desires of his own (45–46). This evasion amounts to more than a denial of the linguistic and contextual protocols of naming pain suggested by Scarry. The poet seems reluctant to explore the physical implications of Grauballe man's putative 'weep[ing] / the black river of himself'; to ponder his emotional, visceral relation to the flesh—and-blood suffering embodied here; in short, to be touched by this two-thousand-year-old man (4–5).

The speaker of Heaney's poem about Windeby One takes a long, hard look at the body of this 'little adulteress': he lovingly inventorises 'her naked front', 'her nipples' blown 'to amber beads', and her 'frail...ribs', imagining her once-'flaxen' hair and 'beautiful face' (23, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 25, 27). Although his assumptions about this body are similar to Glob's, the speaker's encounter with this body is more personal. Their heteronormative male gaze permits both men an erotic appraisal of Windeby One; however, Heaney's speaker not only dignifies this body with an internal life (her desire, for example, can be inferred from her alleged adultery), but also commits himself to a personal meditation on its desirability and fate. His frequent use of *I* unquestionably situates him in the subject position and unambiguously situates this body as the object of his desire; his claim 'almost [to] love' Windeby One reinforces his role as the 'artful voyeur', the clever desiring subject (29, 32). Exploring his speaker's desire for this punished body in the context of perceived sexual betrayal in Ireland during the

Troubles involves Heaney directly in the ethics of its punishment. Although *Windeby One's* trauma is not as physically apparent as *Grauballe Man's*, it is more immediate: because the speaker 'can feel the tug/ of the halter at the nape/ of her neck' and 'the wind/ on her naked front', he imagines himself witnessing, perhaps acting as an accessory to, this public exposure and punishment. The poem addresses neither the ethical implications of his intimate inspection of this body nor his candid sympathy with this execution. His beliefs about the female body seem unquestioningly to entitle his voyeuristic gaze on it. Male and female bog bodies in these poems, therefore, seem subject to different kinds of scrutiny and levels of sympathy based on gendered assumptions. Critics have commented on the ethics informing Heaney's attitude to voyeurism and pain in 'Punishment'; however, they have not sufficiently explored why 'The Grauballe Man' was killed.

iii.

In their essays on Heaney's bog-body poems in their cultural context, David Lloyd, John Stallworthy, and Richard Brown insightfully examine some of the ethical questions arising from the treatment of these traumatised bodies in an aesthetically-oriented medium. Lloyd rightly criticises the 'aestheticization of violence', past and present, evident in the bog poems; he astutely asserts that, '[the] unpleasantness of such poetry lies in the manner in which the contradictions between the ethical and aesthetic elements in the writing are easily resolved by subjugating the former into the latter in order to produce the "well-made poem"' (131). His reading of 'Punishment' pointedly questions the appropriateness of the relationship between Heaney's scopophilic narrator and the traumatised female bodies he examines. For Lloyd, the poem's voyeuristic gaze and glibly self-conscious attempt at introspection are ethically problematic because '[voyeurism] is criticized merely as a pose, never for its function in purveying the intimate knowledge of violence by which it is judged' (132). The poet never asks whether his use of literary conventions should automatically license the pleasing aesthetic, or erotic, treatment of a traumatised bog body. Jon Stallworthy similarly notes Heaney's beautiful 'lyrical description' of these bog bodies; however, Stallworthy argues that complicity in the traumatic execution of *Windeby One* and the Irish adulteresses are clearly addressed and represented as the speaker's (and, Heaney's). He asserts that Heaney's 'indictment is directed...against the onlooker—himself—who would connive with those who inflict this punishment,

whilst admitting to contradictory feelings of *civilized* outrage and *tribal* satisfaction' (181). For Stallworthy the tone of the speaker's self-examination is earnestly accusatory rather than inanely rhetorical. Both critics examine Heaney's evasive treatment of beauty and desire in the context of Windeby One's trauma although neither seems interested in the heteronormative assumptions informing them. Moreover, neither seems interested in investigating why Grauballe Man's was killed and what psychosomatic pain he experienced. Grauballe Man's story can be pieced together by further investigating two of the themes that Richard Brown explores in his essay on Heaney's bog poems.

Brown investigates how place and written testimony influence Heaney's description of bog-bodies. Citing Heaney's correlation in 'The Digging Skeleton' of excavating the ground and reading 'books yellowed like mummies' [(3)] for evidence of the past, Brown argues that 'The "Book People" [those discovered in written accounts read by "the literary browser"]...are themselves Heaneyan diggers and bodies to be exhumed no less than bog-browned corpses. They provide another key to the elaborate configurations of analogy and association in the poems' (154). Sanders' work on bog bodies has effectively elucidated how the primacy of touch frames the relationship between digging and sexuality in bog-body encounters (58–59). For Brown, Heaney's digging in the bog also involves uncovering connotations about it informed by the poet's autobiography and classical written accounts. Heaney has acknowledged the sexual associations of digging in his work: referencing an influential schoolchild rhyme from his past ("Are your praties [potatoes]...fit for digging?"/ "Put in your spade and try"), the poet remarks that, 'digging becomes a sexual metaphor, an emblem of initiation...one of the various natural analogies for uncovering and touching the hidden thing' (*Preoccupations* 42).

Sanders argues that bogs exemplify an archaeological uncanny that is often sexualised (47). She bases her argument on Sigmund Freud's notion that the uncanny 'is often experienced in connection with "something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light"' and 'intimately linked to the ultimate "home", the womb, and more specifically to the experience of the "unhomely" entrance to this home, the female genitals' (qtd. in Sanders 48, 47). Unearthing what the bog hides for Heaney involves digging into his story and his reading of history. Whilst he overtly codes the bog as feminine—she is the 'insatiable bride', 'who opened her fen'—Heaney's describes his 'betrothal' to this kind of place autoerotically, perhaps even homoerotically ('Kinship' 41; 'The Tollund Man' 14; *Preoccupations* 19). He describes this significant boyhood experience in

a Mossbawn bog—one shared with a male friend—in unusually sensuous terms:

Another boy and myself stripped to the white country skin and bathed in a moss-hole, treading the liver-thick mud, unsettling a smoky muck off the bottom and coming out smeared and weedy and darkened. We dressed again and went home in our wet clothes, smelling of the ground and the standing pool, somehow initiated. (*Preoccupations* 19)

The physical receptiveness latent in his description of this initiation, which he enjoys alongside another male, acknowledges the sensuous shock of possible passive physical enjoyment, the luxury of giving one's naked body to those soiling, fleshy pleasures (of the 'liver-thick mud') that leave one wet, smeared, darkened, and initiated. When he was a child, Heaney was prohibited from approaching a nearby bog because such places were 'rushy [covered in rushes] and treacherous, no place for children'; Heaney subsequently 'used to imagine [his] helpless body whistling down a black shaft forever and ever', an act of giving himself physically to experiencing his forbidden insertion into that enveloping darkness (qtd. in Meredith 131). Bogs are similarly 'Ruminant ground' for physical encounters in 'Kinship'; on the surface they are 'unstopped mouth[s]'; they are intestinal and fundamental (33, 21). They offer Heaney pleasurable, shared initiation, augmented with connotations of prohibition and powerlessness; the bog men embody for the poet fellow participants in sensuous transgression, a shared experience of surrendering to this fundamental desire. In contrast to Sanders' (and Freud's) understanding of the sexualised uncanny as female and vaginal, Heaney's sexualised uncanny is male-oriented and anal.

David Clark argues that there is 'ample evidence that a consistent connection is made in Classical ethnography between Germanic and Celtic tribes and [male] same-sex activity' (47). This surprisingly indiscriminate historical association is borne out by first-century-CE accounts of the very different attitudes taken by some of these tribes to transgressive male sexual activity, accounts written by Diodorus Siculus and Tacitus at the same time as the putative execution of Grauballe Man and Windeby One. Heaney mentions both historians in his bog poems. Siculus, whose 'gradual ease' (10) among transgressors Heaney references in 'Strange Fruit', expresses 'astonish[ment]' that the men he describes 'prostitute to others without a qualm the flower of their bodies' (qtd. in Clark 42). Although the poet does not mention men who had sex

with men among his list of transgressors, he might have recalled Siculus' description of them. Heaney's reading of Glob and Tacitus probably illuminated this sexual association. The speaker in 'Kinship' mentions Tacitus when describing 'an old crannog/ piled by the fearful dead' (VI. 3–4). The poet's reading of Glob would also have reminded him of Tacitus' observation in *Germania* that

the nature of the death penalty differs according to the offence: traitors and deserters are hung [sic] from trees; cowards and poor fighters and sexual perverts [*corpora infames*] are plunged in the mud of marshes with a hurdle on their heads: the difference of punishment has regard to the principle that crime should be blazoned abroad by its retribution, but abomination hidden. (149–50)

According to J. B. Rives, 'The Latin phrase *corpora infames* means literally "with a bad reputation because of (or with respect to) one's body".... [T]he phrase served as a euphemism for...an effeminate man who enjoyed taking the passive sexual role with other men' (qtd. in Clark 50). (The translation quoted by Glob gives 'notorious evil-livers' for *corpora infames*, making Heaney's 'liver-thick mud' a serendipitous punning description of their remains piled in the bog, one that Brown would appreciate [153]). The act of uncovering this history of the traumatised male bog body in 'The Grauballe Man' restores to him an internal life; doing so also undermines the heteronormative gaze because his wounds offer possible testimony to a narrative involving his physical transgression of those traditional assumptions informing that gaze; in addition, articulating the pain suffered by bog men like him rescues them from having been dispatched as an effeminate abomination (a characterisation disturbingly evident Boxer's phrase, 'Limp, Silent Type'). Uncovering and commemorating male bog-body trauma in its cultural context dignifies men's diverse masculinities and makes one attentive to instances of male trauma that are consistently obscured or ignored in bog-body analysis.

iv.

Recent research on Windeby One continues an entrenched resistance to acknowledging the suffering experienced by traumatised male bog bodies. Five years before Heaney published these poems, scientists

conceded that they were unable to say with certainty whether Windeby One was male or female: as James Deem succinctly put it, ‘Windeby Girl could actually be Windeby Boy’. Once Heather Gill–Robinson published her research on Windeby One that definitively proved that this bog body was indeed Windeby Boy, a different attitude informed subsequent writing on his trauma: both Karen E. Lange’s 2007 article in *National Geographic* and a report in *Science Daily* in the same year now conjecture that Windeby Boy ‘may have’ lost his hair when archaeologists were digging out the body; that he ‘might’ ‘simply’ ‘have died of natural causes’ owing to malnutrition and sickness. The modals used here concede that this is speculation; they also indicate that a new set of assumptions came into play once this bog body was known to be male. Karin Sanders’ above–mentioned book, published in 2009, acknowledges that Windeby One is, indeed, male; however, she willfully ignores how this fact challenges assumptions made about his body. Although she notes that ‘recent DNA results have suggested that Windeby Girl is in fact male, a gender that has cast erotic projections in a new light’, she resolves to ‘stay here with the faulty gendering’ in her study of texts that describe Windeby Boy as female (115). Moreover, while Sanders discusses Lori Anderson Moseman’s 2003 ‘stag[ing] Heaney’s “little adulterer” Windeby Girl as an unpretentious yet self–confident Bad Bog Babe’, in the main text of the book, she relegates her recognition of Windeby One’s male sex to a footnote in which she remarks: ‘After learning about the DNA results of the Bog Girl, Anderson Moseman has recently produced new poems in which the gender change has been addressed’ (262 n.76). However, just how these poems address Windeby One as Windeby Boy is not discussed in the book—his masculinity is indeed marginal to the gynocentric argument being made. Windeby Boy’s suffering seems subject to the kind of dismissive treatment that pervades much commentary on the male bog boy in pain; this treatment troubles both the ethics and the attitudes that inform the many discourses of bog–body analysis.

v.

Commentary on these male bog bodies evinces troubling value judgments about the traumatised male body and men in general. Whilst the aesthetic corporal exploration of the homoerotic potential of the male body has received much critical attention by researchers interested in homosociality, most examinations of the traumatised male body still deny it a proper his–story: the compassionate, sympathetic, and just

testimony it deserves. An attentive contextual look at these male bog bodies, occasioned in this instance by Seamus Heaney's sensuous treatment of two of them in 'The Grauballe Man' and 'Punishment', shows how the wounded male bog body might offer spectators an opportunity to dignify men and male suffering; moreover, his injuries offer possible testimony to an historical narrative that documents the misandric treatment of men whose masculinities and maleness did not conform to pervasive cultural norms.

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