In his efforts to find and establish his voice, Heaney found it imperative to come to terms with a condition that is both a continuation of the past and a break from it. His first five volumes of poetry reveal his burrowing into the past – racial as well as personal – not to escape from the problematic present, but to confront the “ramification of roots and associations” that had shaped his hybrid-identity and had given him a feeling of being “neither here nor there.” His sixth volume, *Station Island*, the “book of changes”, shows him resolving the confronting issues regarding his cultural and literary heritage and there is a discernible change in his poetic consciousness. The change that is perceptible in “Sweeney Redivivus”, the third part of *Station Island* develops further in the following three books of Heaney. This upward and outward movement corresponds to the archetypal coming back of mythical hero whose identity is established after his return which is indeed a difficult task. The Sibyl of Cumae, informs Aeneus:

Trojan, son of Anchises, the way down to Avernus is easy.
Day and night black Pluto’s door stands open.
But to retrace your steps and get back to upper air,
This is the real task and the real undertaking.
A few have been able to do it, sons of gods
Favoured by Jupiter the Just, or exalted to heaven
In a blaze of heroic glory. ("The Golden Bough" ST)

This chapter is intended to reveal how the change is manifested in the later work of Heaney, the books that follow *Station Island: The Haw Lantern* (1987), *Seeing Things* (1991) and *The Spirit Level* (1996) which has been published after he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. Molino comments that these recent volumes "represent Heaney's most mature work in that he abandons the self-doubt and often dire demeanor found in his early poems in favor of a more confident, assertive and occasionally playful poetry that explores the very serious interrelationships of perception, thought, imagination and language" (26). There is a continuity in the sense that Heaney still looks to the past, his parents, the traditions and many a little thing that crowds his memory of boyhood in the farm, but his perception has changed and this change is an outcome of his introspective exploration which led him to master" new rungs of the air / to survey out of reach" ("The First Flight" SI). The change is also manifested in his attitude in the sense that resistance has been subdued and there is acceptance and a longing for co-existence.

In an interview conducted by Randy Brandes in 1988, Heaney is asked whether he is "at a pivotal point" in his work, having celebrated his 49th birthday and entering the MacNeician "middle stretch." He explains that first there was

the excitement of beginning. Secondly, the redefinition of that

– going on from the fundamentally narcissistic experience of
the first self-expression. Instead of repeating your first success, your first note, you try to get a second note that does more work. But then there is obviously a third moment, that has to do with the biological attenuations and dessications, a whole set of conditions that entail a rethink. And once a rethink is forced upon the creature, the art in some way has to be rethought or reformed. (4–5)

He goes on to say how at the end of Station Island and through out The Haw Lantern the motifs and images in his poetry changed.

In his essay “The Placeless Heaven: Another look at Kavanagh”, Heaney compares Kavanagh’s early and later poems. His early poems are “supplied with a strong physical presence and is full of the recognitions which existed between the poet and his place; it is symbolic of affections rooted in a community life and has behind it an imagination which is not yet weaned from its origin” (Government 4). The poems of his later period show a change:

When he writes about places now, they are luminous spaces within his mind. They have been evacuated of their status as background, as documentary geography, and exist instead as transfigured images, sites where the mind projects its own force. In this later poetry, place is included within the horizon of Kavanagh’s mind rather than the other way around. (Government 5)

These comments appear to be applicable to Heaney’s poems too and when
asked whether he sees an analogy between himself and Kavanagh, Heaney has replied that the essay is about the way "one would like to be able to do it oneself" (Brandes 9).

Heaney also has come to recognise the responsibility of poetry besides viewing poetry as an "experience of release." Poetry as a form of art must relate to the experience of the citizens of the society. Living in a society where the trauma of pain and death is a daily experience and where inhumanity and violence rock the minds of the people, Heaney wonders whether song and suffering could go together. His association with the writers of Eastern bloc countries, like Mandelstam, Herbert and Milosz whose formative experiences are similar to that of a Northern Irish poet, makes him ask "why should the joyful affirmation of music and poetry ever constitute an affront to life?" (Government xii). He finds a way in which poetry can offer life and healing and goes a step further in suggesting that it may even change the external conditions.

Heaney's way is to face suffering with song by counterweighing the forces. By placing an imagined reality in the scales, which is an activity of poetry, a balancing is wrought. Though the counter-reality is only imagined, it "has weight because it is imagined within the gravitational pull of the actual and can therefore hold its own and balance out against the historical situation (Heaney, Redress 3 - 4). He quotes Wallace Stevens to whom the nobility of poetry is "a violence from within that protects us from a violence without." The violence within is the
“imagination pressing back against the pressure of reality” (Heaney, *Redress* 1). Hence the reality of the invisible is more pronounced in the poems of Heaneys’s later period. The gap between reality and the imagined is narrowed and the poet transcends the ordinary.

Heaney also finds that poetry represented a principle of integration. In “Frontiers of Writing” he sketches the figure of the quincunx and tries to bring into alignment the frontiers of writing and thereby bring about an integrated literary tradition. In the centre he places the tower of “prior Irelandness” and on the south, Kilcolman castle to represent Edmund Spenser who tried to Anglicize Ireland. On its left is Ballylee symbolising Yeats’s effort to restore the spiritual value through a magical world-view. On the right is Joyce’s Martello tower representing the Hellenization of the island. In the north, he places Carrickfergus Castle to symbolise the vision of MacNeice who according to Heaney can be “regarded as an Irish Protestant writer with Anglocentric attitudes who managed to be faithful to his Ulster inheritance, his Irish affections and his English predilections” (*Redress* 199 – 200). This vision, he feels, would help the Irish imagination and the way of MacNeice offers a hope of the evolution of a political order that is tolerant of difference. Heaney’s poems in the three books mentioned earlier reveal pictures of reconciliation of two orders of knowledge and crossing the frontiers of sensation, perception, language and such.
Poetry is seen as potentially redemptive, "affirming the essential humanism" and hence a poet takes up the role of forging the conscience of his race. Even from his earlier days, Heaney stresses the vatic function of the poet and this is continued and becomes rather pronounced in his later poems. In the context of a totalitarian society, poetry could even pose a threat to the power: "when one thinks of the note of the soprano which cracks glass, one has yet another image of the way purely artistic utterance can put a crack into the officially moulded shape of truth in a totalitarian society" (Heaney, *Government* xx). Salvaging truth and justice becomes a major function of the poet. Obviously Heaney breaks new ground, and the way the territorial borderlines are widened is found in the form he uses. Allegory and parables are widely used and there is also a change in the metaphors. From digging and entry into the dark there is a transformation to sailing, flight and light.

This chapter takes up an analysis of Heaney's crossing the frontiers, and is divided into four sections. The first one deals with going beyond the range of the normal perception into the world of imagination or dreams and seeing the marvellous in the mundane objects. In the second section the shifting from the concrete to the abstract is illustrated. The poems that belong to this category are allegoric, less historic and more philosophical and are conceptual rather than narrative. The next section indicates a transition in the poet's reaction to the feeling of "in-betweenness" caused by bilocation and division. From conflict, there is a move to acceptance and co-existence. In the final section it is shown how the metaphors and images in these poems indicate a change from the poems of the previous books. The psychological
parallel which shows the state of individuation and the archetypal images denoting the emerging of the Hero are also discussed.

[1]

Memory and imagination are found to be the significant poetic stimuli in the later poems of Heaney. They are so real that they are often extremely vivid and linked to sensory perceptions. Memory has done a singular service in opening the vista of the traditional, topographical and the personal past in the early poems and yet the poet transcends the personal and clannish interests and sees things anew.

When asked by Randy Brandes why he still goes back to his rural childhood images, Heaney has replied that his return to that "enabling source is not simply nostalgic." It becomes an adult experience. He feels that there is "a bemused, abstracted distance intervening between the sweetening energy of the original place and the consciousness that's getting back to it, looking for sweetness" (20). "I see it as a process of continual going back in to what you have, changing it and coming out changed" (19). In his introduction to The Redress of Poetry Heaney writes, "Poems and parables about crossing from the domain of the matter-of-fact into the domain of the imagined had been among the work that appeared in The Haw Lantern in 1987" (xiii). Heaney agrees with Frost that one can truly understand human life by the imaginative transformation of it.
In many of the experiences represented in these later poems, the real and the imagined overlap. “Markings” (ST) shows an impromptu football field which is in real a “bumpy thistly ground.” They marked the pitch with “four jackets for four goalposts” and the rest of it is left unmarked or they are markings of the mind. The game goes on in all seriousness even after the light died. It is “a game that never need / Be played out” and the players “were playing in their heads.” The poem goes on to tell of other representations like the tight white strings that marked the outline of the foundation of a house and the imaginary line between the rods stuck in a field that needs to be ploughed open. Then the poet testifies, “All these things entered you / As if they were both the door and what came through it. / They marked the spot, marked time and held it open.” The experiences are not an end in themselves; they, like doors, usher in deeper recognitions. The changed consciousness leaves its mark in the language joining the practical and the poetic:

A mower parted the bronze sea of corn.

A Windlass hauled the centre out of water.

Two men with a cross-cut kept it swimming

Into a felled beech backwards and forwards

So that they seemed to row the steady earth.

(“Markings” ST)

The memory of a game played in his childhood days pretending a sofa to be a train illustrates the power of the make-believe. All the Heaney
children “eldest down to youngest” knelt on the straight-backed sofa behind each other and “shunted” and “whistled” with their “elbows going like pistons.” “Somebody collected the invisible / For tickets and very gravely punched it.” The poetic consciousness widens and the tone of the poem changes. He questions, “Ghost-train? Death-gondola?” It appeared “Potentially heavenbound, earthbound for sure, / Among things that might add up or let you down.” With a pun on the word “bound” Heaney beautifully shows the irony of the situation. Though stationary, there is the collected effort and appearance of progress. The seemingly casual comment is a candid appraisal of many individual and national efforts taken to achieve progress. After a short interlude about the wireless, the poem goes on about the train game in which “constancy was its own reward.” The four stanzas in between, describes listening to songs and the news through the wireless. Sitting in their own homes they cross the frontiers of their awareness:

We entered history and ignorance
Under the wireless shelf. Yippee - i - ay,
Sang 'The Riders of the Range'. HERE IS THE NEWS,
Said the absolute speaker. Between him and us
A great gulf was fixed where pronunciation
Reigned tyrannically. (“A Sofa in the Forties” SL)

The invisible speaker most probably of the BBC, assumes the position of the absolute and sounds become discriminatory.
"St. Kevin and the Black Bird" in the volume *The Spirit Level* is completely based on an imagined situation. St. Kevin was kneeling with his arms stretched out and because his cell was narrow his palm was sticking out. A black bird laid eggs on his palm and settled down to nest. St. Kevin was forced to hold his hands in the position till the young were hatched. The reader is then asked,

And since the whole thing's imagined anyhow,

Imagine being Kevin. Which is he?

Self-forgetful or in agony all the time

Or has the shut-eyed blank of underearth

Crept up through him? Is there distance in his head? (SL)

The poet uses imagination to create conscience. The poem asserts that "mirrored clear in love's deep river, / 'To labour and not to seek reward,' he prays," and "has forgotten self." Love seems to create a distancing within oneself and this happens when one finds "linked into the network of eternal life." The absence of this feeling when one is placed in a difficult situation, is "agony." Heaney believed that poetry is on the side of life. If so, spurring on to imagine makes it a reality.

The three sections of "Seeing Things" show different aspects of seeing things differently. The first section reports a boat ride in the sea at Inishbofin on a Sunday morning. All except the boatman were nervous and silent and the thought of what he should do if in danger kept Heaney "in agony." He says "It was as if I looked from another boat / Sailing
through the air, far up, and could see / How riskily we fared into the morning.” The second section describes a stone carving on the façade of a cathedral. It is the scene of the baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan. The fluidity of the river is so realistically represented in stone that “in that utter visibility / The stone’s alive with what’s invisible: / Waterweed, stirred sand-grains hurrying off.” The group that stands on the Cathedral steps is also included in the scene for “the air we stood up to our eyes in wavered / Like the zig-zag hieroglyph for life itself.” The third shows an encounter between the father and the son. The father had refused to take his son when he went to spray potatoes on the pretext that the father alone is adept at dealing with a fresh horse and so on. Soon he comes back, being thrown into the river and Heaney comments,

... he came to me
With his damp footprints out of the river,
And there was nothing between us there
That might not still be happily ever after.

(“Seeing Things” ST)

The second section hints at water being symbolic of life. In the first section the poet distances himself and looks at the little group, including himself, which riskily fares in the fragile bark in life. Though he is one with them, the poetic consciousness lifts him above and gives an over-all perception. In the second, imagination joins life and art; the people cross the frontiers of time, space and elements, and join Jesus and John the Baptist, in the baptism of life. In the third, the father’s perception of the son has changed
since his experience and the son reads it in the face of the father though no words are exchanged. In all these, the poet highlights the invisible and the imaginary.

The power of imagination is advocated in “The Settle Bed” also. The bed is “an inheritance”, heavy, dull and drab as “a funeral ship.” Yet it brings to him the panorama of bed time, “Anthems of Ulster”, “Protestant, Catholic, the Bible, the beads, / long talks at gables by moonlight”, and he says,

... whatever is given
Can always be reimagined, however four-square,
Plank-thick, hull-stupid and out of its time
It happens to be. (ST)

The many traditions that have been handed down from the past also can be thus “reimagined” rather than discarded.

Heaney writes about crossing the regions of visibility and speculation into an instinctual realization and a deeper understanding and a heightened consciousness of the past and the present in many of the poems in the sequence of poems called “Squarings” which is the second part of Seeing Things. The poems xlvii and xlviii of “Squarings” are about the “offing”, the visible sea that is beyond the anchoring grounds. When he scans the offing it is untrespassed but when he turns his back, he could sense a presence. When he turns again it is empty but as though “a lambent troop that exercised / On the borders of your vision had
withdrawn / Behind the skyline to manoeuvre and regroup” (xlvii). The word “troop”, and his earlier poems like “North” and “Shoreline”, in which he records how he is reminded of the “fabulous raiders” while standing at the shore, suggest invasions, not only of people. His sensing leads him further:

Strange how things in the offing, once they’re sensed,
Convert to things foreknown;
And how what’s come upon is manifest

Only in light of what has been gone through.
Seventh heaven may be
The whole truth of a sixth sense come to pass.

(“Squarings xlviii”)

In these poems Heaney balances the reality with that of a counter-reality that is not visible but imaginary. This helps the poet to come to terms with what is problematic, what he calls “cold memory-weights” “in the scale of things” in another poem (“Squarings x1” ST).

Poetry affirms humanity in the face of inhuman circumstances and hence it becomes essential that the poet must overcome “the mundane and ordinary subjugation of self from which he escapes when he enters the world of the lyric poem” (Foster 134). The phenomenon of defamiliarization or “making strange” is seen in these later poems and the poet is consciously at it. In “Making Strange” (SI), after being counselled by “a cunning middle voice” about his future course, Heaney says,
I found myself driving the stranger
through my own country, adept
at dialect, reciting my pride
in all that I knew, that began to make strange
at that same recitation.

In "Drifting Off" where poetic qualities are ascribed to the birds, seven stanzas describe what all he had done earlier. The last two stanzas declare,

But when goldfinch or kingfisher rent
the veil of the usual,
pinions whispered and braced
as I stooped unwieldy
and brimming,
my spurs at the ready.  

(SI)

Consequently poems of the next three books attempt to make the commonplace, rich and strange.

Spoonbait is a shell-fishing lure and Heaney finds a "new similitude" to it: "The soul may be compared / Unto a spoonbait that a child discovers / Beneath the sliding lid of a pencil case" ("The Spoonbait" HL). As the bait unravels into the great gulf and continues its journey invisibly, it is the only link between the rational and limited human being at one end and the vast unknown and incomprehensible depths at the other. It is compared to "the single drop that Dives implored / Falling and
falling into a great gulf’ that is hell. It is like the body of a hero “laid amidships” and left afloat “above scudding water.” A simple thing that has the most practical purpose assumes metaphysical proportions as it is compared to the soul that links the conscious and the unconscious, the particular and the unlimited, the creature and the creator. It is “Glimpsed once and imagined for a lifetime” (“The Spoonbait” HL).

The riddle and the pitchfork are two things that are commonly found in farms, but Heaney rends the “veil of the usual” and shows something marvellous. The riddle is used for sifting and the poet asks, “Which would be better, what sticks or what falls through? / Or does the choice itself create the value?” He concludes:

To sift the sense of things from what’s imagined
And work out what was happening in that story
Of the man who carried water in a riddle.

Was it culpable ignorance, or was it rather
A via negativa through drops and let-downs?

(“The Riddle” HL)

The poet finds a new way of learning. Is it the reality of things that matter or the imagined or is it in the separation of these two? Then he points out carrying water in a riddle in which of course water cannot be held back. But here there is an understanding of the riddle itself via negativa. So the poetic consciousness has come to understand through “drops and let-
downs”, the negative experiences of life, that the sense of things and what’s imagined go together. He has always thought that the pitchfork “came near to an imagined perfection” but the simple implement has a greater truth to teach him:

But has learned at last to follow that simple lead
Past its own aim, out to another side
Where perfections – or nearness to it – is imagined.
Not in the aiming but the opening hand.

(“The Pitchfork” ST)

Perfection seems to be more in the letting-go than in reaching the target.

For Heaney in the common plants like cactus and mint too there seem to be enough to marvel at. “Upend the rain stick and what happens next / Is a music that you never would have known / To listen for” (“The Rain Stick” SL). Even if the stick is turned over and over again a thousand times, the “diminuendo” music “runs through all its scales” undiminished. The poet feels “You are like a rich man entering heaven / Through the ear of a raindrop.” The mint that grows wild beyond where they dumped their refuse and old bottles, is like “the disregarded ones we turned against / Because we’d failed them by our disregard.” On Sundays the mint leaves were cut and used. In spite of the negligence, the plant thrived and contributed and this quality finds kinship in him:

But, to be fair, it also spelled promise
And newness in the backyard of our life
As if something callow yet tenacious
Sauntered in green alleys and grew rife. ("Mint" SL)

"The Swing" is another poem that takes the reader beyond the simple experience of going backward and forward. Heaney remembers how they had all learned "to go sky high" in the open shed "Toeing and rowing and jackknifing through air." He visualises how the swing hung there waiting for the figures. It was "A lure let down to tempt the soul to rise", yet they "favoured the earthbound." When "Hiroshima made light of human bones" and Concorde's neb migrated towards the future", they were not willing to hang back there and so they "all learned one by one to go sky high." Though the line is a repetition, the first time, at the beginning of the poem, it is said with the excitement of the child and then towards the end in a cynical tone resultant of having seen and experienced much. The poem ends positively in a typical Heanesque manner affirming life that comes out a policy of "give and take":

In spite of all, we sailed
Beyond ourselves and over and above
The rafters aching in our shoulderblades,
The give and take of branches in our arms.

("The Swing" SL)

There are many poems that show the reality of the invisible and bring out the marvellous in the ordinary. References to visions and dreams that border an imagined experience also abound. "A Daylight Art" (HL) tells of Socrates "putting Aesop's fables into verse" on the day he was
taken to prison because he believed in a dream that kept telling him, “Practise the art.” He had mistaken all along that the art was philosophy. Writing about his wife’s mother, Heaney says that she was like a wishing tree into whose wood and bark, coins, pins and nails have been driven. At her death he had a vision of the tree raising through damp “trailing a shower of all that had been driven” “like a comet-tail” and “turned-up faces where the tree had stood” (“The Wishing Tree” *HL*). “The Rescue” (*ST*), a short poem of four lines, is of a dream. “At the Wellhead” introduces Rosie Keenan who could “see” though not with the sight of her eyes. She was blind from birth and was a gifted musician. Her fingers and ears were very sensitive but “She’d say she ‘saw’ / Whoever or whatever.” When a poem about Keenan’s well was read to her she said, “I can see the sky at the bottom of it now” (*SL*).

In these poems the world of reality has been crossed and that which is invisible, imagined or unimportant is focused. According to Heaney this has a functional value in the sense that poetry is “being instrumental in adjusting and correcting imbalances in the world, ... What it is offering is a glimpsed alternative, a world to which ‘we turn incessantly and without knowing it’” (*Redress* 192). This is the way in which poetry redresses. In the poems discussed above, it can be noticed that the historical situation is rather strained and the glimpsed alternative is the “revelation of potential that is denied or constantly threatened by circumstances” (*Redress* 4). “A Sofa in the Forties” (*SL*) points out how the coloniser “reigned tyrannically” even through the language and how everything was
programmed to make the colonists feel that they are ignorant. The intrusive "aerial wire" that brought in the voice from BBC,

Swept from a treetop down in through a hole
Bored in the window frame. When it moved in the wind,
The sway of language and its furthering
Swept and swayed in us like nets in water.

In "St. Kevin and the Black Bird" the bird encroaches upon St. Kevin's palm for its propagation and forces the saint to endure. "The Settle Bed" shows an unwanted inheritance. "The Swing" laughs at the attempts of the present generation to go sky high in the name of progress which would end in a way no different from the fate of Hiroshima. There is also a temptation to be "earthbound." The word occurs also in "A Sofa in the Forties." Heaney himself in the early part of his career was lured by the contours of the earth. The counterweighting he does in "The Swing" is to visualise sailing beyond themselves. In "The Settle Bed" he suggests reimagining, so that the furniture is not a burden anymore. St. Kevin could link himself with the "network of eternal life" and so forget himself. In "A Sofa in the Forties", the poet reveals only the potential to be together, to be constant and occupy their seats "with all their might." This affirmation of life and hope in spite of the burdensome existence illustrates Heaney mastering another rung of the air.
The poems in *The Haw Lantern*, *Seeing Things* and *The Spirit Level* are markedly different from Heaney’s earlier poems in reaching an abstract level from a comparatively concrete base of his experience and the accompanying feelings. Helen Vendler writes,

the movement from mimetic, or historically specific writing to the writing of allegory is one of the most decisive a writer can make. That move represents the belief that poetry is, as Aristotle said, more philosophical than history – that personal history is merely illustrative, contingent and transient while the truth of the human condition is shared, recurrent, necessary” (67).

*The Haw Lantern* has six allegorical poems about places, of these “From the Frontier of Writing”, “From the Republic of Conscience,” “From the Land of the Unspoken” and “From the Canton of Expectation” are written as though from these imagined places.

The first half of the poem, “From the Frontier of Writing” recounts the experience of a driver at a check point. When the inspection takes place with rifles pointed at him, there is a “tightness” and “nilness round that space.” When let go, he moves on “a little spent / as always by that quiver in the self, / subjugated, yes, and obedient.” The second half supplies the parallel situation the writer faces: “So you drive on to the frontier of writing / where it happens again” (*HL*). When clearance is
given the driver crosses the frontier "arraigned yet freed." Though the situations are similar, the feeling seems to be different. At the road block the driver comes away "subjugated" while at the frontier of writing there is a sense of freedom and it is compared to passing "from behind a waterfall / on the black current of a tarmac road." It appears that for a fuller sense of freedom the check is necessary though it could be as painful as of the former. Heaney has said,

There's a poem called "From the Frontier of Writing" which uses an encounter at a roadblock, a kind of archetypal Ulster, Catholic situation. It turns it into a parable for the inquisition and escape and freedom implicit in a certain kind of lyric poem. You know, you cross the bar and you're free into that other region. (qtd. in Foster 132)

The poetic awareness of being scrutinized and checked is found in the title poem, "The Haw Lantern" (HL). It is a symbolic poem, the haw lantern representing poetry as "a small light for small people." Heaney calls it "a true middle-years vision of the function of poetry." He continues,

The function of poetry is to have a bigger blaze than that, but people should not expect more from themselves than adequacy. They should not confuse the action of poetry, which is at its highest, visionary action, with the actuality of our lives, which at their best are adequate to our smaller size. In "The Haw Lantern" poem there's a sense of being tested and earning the right to proceed. (Brandes 8)
Not only the lantern, but also its burning fruit and the blood-prick of the thorn denote the uncompromising nature of the hawthorn which does the inquisition. There is also a suggestion of self-evaluation:

But sometimes when your breath plumes in the frost
it takes the roaming shape of Diogenes
with his lantern, seeking one just man;
so you end up scrutinized from behind the haw
he holds up at eye-level on its twig.

("The Haw Lantern" HL)

Diogenes is a figure of ethical probity and an archetypal figure searching for one just man. Here the figure of Diogenes arises from his own breath.

Heaney has been scrutinizing his poetic career and has made changes and though he may not pass the extreme scrutiny of Diogenes, he earns the right to proceed.

"Parable Island" and "From the Canton of Expectation" are two poems from the volume The Haw Lantern dealing with the situation in Northern Ireland. "Parable Island" presents the picture of an "occupied nation" where live the "natives" and the "occupiers." Though originally unity and single-mindedness has been the directive force, now everything is divided. There was "one bell-tower" which struck "a single note" at noon to honour the "one-eyed" creator. Now the mountain that is supposed to contain the "ore of truth" has "shifting names." The "forked-tongued" natives repeat prophecies "they pretend not to believe." One school of archaeologists interpret everything symbolically while the other literally.
The poem, being a parable names no name and yet it is obvious that the island is the militant Ulster Protestants who dwell in the midst of a hostile nation and the militant Catholic minority which feels swamped by the colonising usurpers.

"From the Canton of Expectation" uses grammatical terms to contrast the conscience of two generations of Irish people. The older generation has chosen the "optative mood." They "learned by rote in the old language", "enumerated the humiliations" which were taken for granted and remained passive and resigned. The younger generation took the other extreme. They chose the rude "imperative", banishing the conditional for ever and to them the "winning by enduring" policy was "anathema." Heaney shows a third possibility in the third section of the poem. He proposes the calm "indicative" exemplified by Noah who built the ark to save a few from the cataclysm and replenish the world. Heaney says that he yearns,

\[
\text{to know there is one among us who never swerved} \\
\text{from all his instincts told him was right action,} \\
\text{who stood his ground in the indicative,} \\
\text{whose boat will lift when the cloudburst happens. (HL)}
\]

Earlier the poet says that he repeats the word "stricken" and stands under the "banked clouds" edged with thunderlight. Molino comments, "The speaker's repetition of the word "stricken" suggests the double edge of the conscience." As part of the older generation he is dominated by the "optative" mood but he is also troubled that he is held back by it. "The
speaker consequently longs for the indicative... as a sign of hope or a sense of direction” (184). These two poems allegorically present the condition of Northern Ireland, but it could refer to any occupied nation.

“From the Republic of Conscience” (HL) dwells more on the nature of conscience. The fact that conscience has no language to explain itself and is essentially quiet is imprinted on the poet as soon as he lands in the republic. The airport is “noiseless” and there are no interpreters. The clerk who was an old man gazed into his face and told that “that was official recognition” that he was “a dual citizen.” He requested Heaney to be their representative and to “speak on their behalf” in his own tongue. Conscience is private and cannot be enforced by external means. This is suggested in the way the republic is. There are no porters and no taxis. “You carried your burden and very soon / your symptoms of creeping privilege disappeared.” Their public leaders swear to uphold “unwritten law” and they wept at their inauguration “to atone for their presumption to hold office.” Those who prefer to listen to conscience may feel the prick of it and they could never escape from its hold. Following it alone could be its reward. In the Republic of Conscience, “fog is dreaded” because it has a hiding quality which is contrary to the nature of conscience. Lightning is supposed to be good and parents expose their children to thunderstorms. “Salt is their precious mineral.” Salt which is known for its pungency is the base of all inks. The clerk said that their embassies “operated” independently / and no ambassador would ever be relieved.” The customs woman said his “allowance” was himself.
Apart from the allegorical poems discussed in the previous pages and the ones like “The Disappearing Island” and “From the Land of the Unspoken”, there are a lot of small poems which are parables. In these the concrete that is well-known and clearly apprehended is used to present the abstract. Heaney compares memory to

... a building or a city,

Well lighted, well laid out, appointed with

*Tableaux vivants* and costumed effigies –

.................................

So that the mind's eye could haunt itself

With fixed associations and learn to read

Its own contents in meaningful order,

("Squarings xix" *ST*)

Going through one's memory is like going through a city and just as each point in the place could be associated with something it stands for, memory links cause with effect, people with experience, actions with reaction and thus shows “the portent in each setting.” The beneficial aspects of memory are explicitly brought out. “The Spoonbait” (*HL*), which has already been discussed, parallels the bait with the soul which links the known and the unknown. The swing is a spur to go beyond oneself. The train game in “A Sofa in the Forties” (*SL*) shows a combined effort that is only a pretension of progress. Other poems like “The Walk” (*SL*), Damson (*ST*) and “A Basket of Chestnuts” (*ST*) are in the form of parables, quite delightful and intriguing.
"A Shooting Script" (HL) and "The Strand" (SL) are two poems concrete in the subject they deal with and endowed with suggestive strength. "A Shooting Script" is a script for a documentary film on the Irish language complete with directions like "Pan and fade" "close-up", "freeze", and "let the credits run." The gradual degeneration of the heritage and language of Ireland is the main focus of the documentary. The fact that it is being documented itself is a proof that it is fading into the past. In a shot, teachers on bicycles are “riding away from whatever might have been / Towards what will never be.” They are “still pedaling out at the end of the lens, / Not getting anywhere and not getting away.” The shot shows movement without progress. This is remindful of the Heaney children riding the sofa. But while there was the noise of the engine there, here like the reticent Irish natives who are wary of speech, it is “A long soundless sequence.” Then voices are dubbed over “in different Irishes, / Discussing translation jobs and rates per line.” Language is reduced to business and so faces the danger of extinction. The close-up shot showing the “pulling back wide the cape of a soutane”, “the Adam’s apple” and the freeze of the blank face may imply a different shooting script that violently brings to end the native Irish language. The poem has a filmic end:

And just when it looks as if it is all over –

Tracking shots of a long wave up a strand
That breaks towards the point of a stick writing and writing’
Words in the old script in the running sand.

("A Shooting Script" HL)

Though it seems to predict the death of the old language and the heritage it represents, it also can be understood in another way. Just as the settle bed can be “reimagined” and the “utterly empty” space could become “utterly a source” ("Clearances 8" HL), the stick that keeps writing and writing can go on after the wave has cleared the old script away. Or, as waves always signify invasions in Heaney’s poetry, it could only be a threat and the language would survive in some form. The feelings of the poet do not find a place in the poem, as is most fitting for a documentarian to do and the readers are left to surmise the hereafter.

“The Strand”, a brief poem of three lines in the volume “The Spirit Level” also shows the strand and the tide:

The dotted line my father’s ashplant made

On Sandymount Strand

Is something else the tide won’t wash away.

The “something else” denotes that there are a few things that the tide or the invasions in the form of thought, fashions, language, commerce and politics cannot obliterate. They could be stored in memory and as the “mind’s eye” could “read its own contents in meaningful order” ("Squarings xix" ST), they do not die altogether. Even the old script which the wave was threatening to wash away in “A Shooting Script” could be preserved.
This is what Heaney yearned for when he was residing in the canton of Expectation. It is the “one just man” Noah who could save humanity from extinction. The flood did come but the world was stocked yet again because he “stood his ground” (“From the Canton of Expectation” HL).

“Alphabets” is supposed to be the poem that gave Heaney the greatest satisfaction in the collection The Haw Lantern. The poem was written to be spoken aloud at Harvard for the Phi Beta Kappa and Heaney says, “that poem is precisely about the distance that intervenes between the person standing up in Sanders’ Theatre, being the donnish orator, and the child, pre-reflective and in its pre-writing odd state” (Brandes 20). It shows the widening of understanding, the crossing of the borders from individual or local to universal, especially in the realm of language and the transition from simple awareness to a strong conscience.

The poem begins with the child’s education at home. As the father joins thumbs and fingers to cast a shadow on the wall, the child understands and learns to identify it. Then the child goes to school and starts to learn writing English. The alphabets and numbers are represented by pastoral images which are familiar to the child. He draws a “forked stick that they call Y.” The number two is “A swan’s neck and swan’s back.” But along with the learning of the language the child learns much more. The language is not his. The forked stick is what “they” call Y. So he learns to integrate and make the language his own. He also observes the differences: “Two rafters and a cross-tie on the slate / Are the letter
some call *ah*, some call *ay*." The polyphonic voice of Heaney seems to be part of the language itself. Instead of following his instinct he is taught to depend on the knowledge of right and wrong: "there is a right / Way to hold the pen and a wrong way" and what he writes is "Marked correct with a little leaning hoe."

Then comes the learning of Latin and then Irish with which he feels at home. Time passes by and he has mastered languages like Greek and becomes familiar with literature. Yet it is the "shape-note language" which "can still command him." The potato pits are "delta-faced" and the "omega that kept / Watch above each door," is "the good luck horse-shoe." The poem ends with alternative methods of representing. The child has become an adult and has mastered languages but once that frontier is crossed there are symbols that open wider vistas. The first illustration is that of Emperor Constantine. The vision of the flaming cross that he saw in the sky and the accompanying promise that by that sign he would conquer spoke volumes to the emperor. He believed in the sign and made his soldiers have it in their shields and won the battle. His conversion to Christianity changed the course of Western civilization. The second simile is that of the Renaissance magus who hung a globe "from the domed ceiling of his house" so that his conscience would work well and he would consider the planet and "not just single things." It is the "coloured O" that the child first saw in school. The astronaut through his "small window" could see another "O", the "magnified and buoyant ovum" which is his home. Whether it be looking up or looking down, all these people find
symbols speaking to them much more than a language can do and the comprehension is direct without the media of language. The closing stanza takes the reader back to the child:

or like my own wide pre-reflective stare
All agog at the plasterer on his ladder
Skimming our gable and writing our name there
With his trowel point, letter by strange letter.

("Alphabets" HL)

Here there is a merging of language and symbol. To the “pre-reflective stare” of the child, the writing is only a symbol of Heaney’s family name. He does not know the letters individually and cannot make out what sounds they represent. Yet it catches the child’s attention. The letters remain in the gable and in the mind of the child and when it grows, the child can make sense of those “strange” forms. The alphabets communicate to a specific group while the symbols cross the boundaries of time and space. Helen Vendler is of the opinion, “Alphabets” calls its readers to go beyond the provinciality with which they all began, to adopt the astronaut’s inclusive view, to bring to actuality the possibilities of that ‘magnificent and buoyant’ planet that exists only in hope” (70).

In his interview with Randy Brandes, Heaney quotes Auden and calls the abstractions, “a game of knowledge.” He gives the example of his poems, “The Riddle” and “The Milk Factory” in which the “process is one where childhood sensation gets abstracted into a sense of wonder.” About “Hailstones” (HL) he comments, “it’s the palpable, documentary,
remembered thing becoming a sensation of its own memory – and that to me is what abstraction is in art' (18–19). All these poems and many more scattered in the three later books of Heaney show his development as a mature poet. Helen Vendler comments, “The arcs and lanterns of these parables by Seamus Heaney decline by their conscious allegory, a specific political intent; but in their conscious modern pluralism, they contribute to the perpetually reinvented alphabet of twentieth-century culture” (70).

The pull of two directions and the dilemma of being in between has been explicit in the poetry of Heaney. He himself has asserted that “poetry is out of the quarrel with ourselves” and his poetry is the outcome of his roots crossing with his reading (Preoccupations 34; 37). There had been conflict without and no less within. Assessing a decade of Heaney’s poetry upto Station Island, John Hildebidle writes, “Whatever shifts in vantage point he may have undertaken, it is hard to imagine that Heaney has yet finished with the question of how to live, as individual and poet – how to live usefully, in a torn and contentious world of exposure, exile, murderously politicized speech and irreconcilable obligation” (409). In the latter part of his career this seems to be one of the concerns of Heaney and the poems in The Haw Lantern, Seeing Things and The Spirit Level show an effort to apprehend differently, substituting co-existence for conflict between two contrarily placed, and not contradictory entities. He has written widely about this in his prose works too.
A poem that Heaney himself gives as an illustration for the reconciling of the two orders is the Clonmacnoise poem found in the sequence called “Squarings” (ST). This is a story from the annals of a monastic community and believed to have happened in the middle ages. When the monks of Clonmacnoise were at prayers inside the oratory, a visionary ship appeared above them as though sailing in the air.

The anchor dragged along behind so deep
It hooked itself into the altar rails
And then, as the big hull rocked to a standstill,

A crewman shinned and grappled down the rope
And struggled to release it. But in vain.

“This man can’t bear our life here and will drown,”

The abbot said, ‘unless we help him’. So
They did, the freed ship sailed, and the man climbed back
Out of the marvellous as he had known it.

(“Squarings viii” ST)

There seems to be perfect co-ordination between the visionary crew and the monks who are real. To the monks, the ship that appeared above must have seemed heavenly and marvellous while to the crewman who climbed down to release the anchor, the real world was “marvellous.” There is an interweaving of the poetic and the practical. The hitch that needs disentangling is a practical problem and the help that was rendered was also quite practical. But the problem itself belongs to a realm beyond
the real – the poetic. The harmony is possible because the minds of the monks have been well-tuned to accept the other order, the order of the visionary. Heaney asserts in his “Frontiers of writing”,

\[\ldots\] whatever the possibilities of achieving political harmony at an institutional level, I wanted to affirm that within our individual selves we can reconcile two orders of knowledge which we might call the practical and the poetic; to affirm also that each form of knowledge redresses the other and that the frontier between them is there for the crossing. All of which is implicit in this short poem that formed part of a sequence called ‘Lightenings’ and appeared in my book Seeing Things in 1991. (Redress 203)

Another twelve-lined poem in the same section shows the blending of the practical and the poetic. The first stanza introduces the subject matter of the poem. The word ‘lightening’ means “alleviation”, “illumination” and beyond these it has another meaning too:

A phenomenal instant when the spirit flares
With pure exhilaration before death –
The good thief in us harking to the promise!

So paint him on Christ’s right hand, on a promontory
Scanning empty space, so body-racked he seems
Untranslatable into the bliss

Ached for at the moon-rim of his forehead.
By nail-craters on the dark side of his brain:

This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.

("Squarings xii" ST)

Harmony is possible in this situation because of the leap of faith which could hark to the promise, “This day Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.” Though the “good thief” seems body-racked and “untranslatable into the bliss” he could see beyond the “empty space.” This brings the “lightening”, “the pure exhilaration before death.” The experience of the thief shows the other two meanings of the word as well. There is an “illumination” that reveals the life after death, and there is “alleviation” too because while the body is racked with pain the spirit flares in joy. Heaney here achieves the reconciliation between song and suffering.

“Casting and Gathering” is an allegorical poem that illustrates the acceptance of contrariness without taking sides: It shows two fisherman choosing the opposite sides of the river to cast their net. They are introduced as sounds and later they have meaning as contrary as the sounds: “Years and Years ago, these sounds took sides.” The one on the left bank made only a whisper “saying hush and lush” but the one on the right was like a “speeded-up corncrake.” His “sharp racheting” cut across the stillness of the air. Each one was “proofed by the sounds he’s making” and had no chance of listening to the other and appreciating the different strategy. One sound said, “you are not worth tuppence, / But neither is anybody. Watch it! Be severe.” Contrary to this cynical and negative
outlook the other voice said, "Go with it! Give and swerve. / You are everything you feel beside the river." The poet had been watching them and his perception has taught him:

I love hushed air. I trust contrariness.

Years and years go past and I do not move

For I see that when one man casts, the other gathers

And then *vice versa*, without changing sides.

("Casting and Gathering" *ST*)

The poem shows that no change has come over the fishermen though years have gone by. Each one holds on to his nature and outlook. The poet also loves the hushed air but choosing the left and driving the other would be meaningless. Though the rational and practical way is that whoever casts the net should gather, here both are benefitted and there is no need to change the sides. The poet has come to "trust contrariness" and he accepts them as they are. In the Republic of Conscience Heaney learnt that he is a "dual citizen" ("From the Republic of Conscience" *HL*) and this acceptance of "two-mindedness" is prominent in Heaney's later poems and he advocates the dual loyalty to those in Northern Ireland.

Even from the beginning of his poetic career Heaney portrays his identity as amphibious and he has seen himself placed between the demesne and the bog. "Terminus" shows the conflict that this position had given rise to and how he resolves it. The first section informs that wherever he turned, he found two types of objects. The acorn, the dormant
mountain and the trotting horse represent the Irish pastoral tradition and they are objects which have life within. The other set, a rusted bolt, a factory chimney and a shunting engine, is man-made and would refer to industrial encroachment of the British. At the end of the section he asks, "Is it any wonder when I thought / I would have second thoughts?" The next section conveys the suffering and the confusion that was the result of the double claim: "I was the march drain and the march drain's banks / Suffering the limit of each claim."

In the final section of "Terminus" Heaney distances himself and looks back in a different way:

Two buckets were easier carried than one.

I grew up in between.

My left hand placed the standard iron weight.

My right tilted a last grain in the balance. (HL)

Balancing and counterweighing takes the place of clashing. He sees himself as "the last earl on horseback" "on the central stepping stone", "in midstream," parleying. It is obvious that Heaney has not taken sides and does not intend to do so. To be in the middle is his lot and he looks upon it with different eyes now, so that it does not trouble him anymore.

Interpreting the poem, Helen Vendler comments that the poem shows where Heaney finds himself "morally at this moment, poised between the 'iron weight of analysis and the 'last grain' of fertile feeling, between cutting satire and a hopeful vision of possibility" (Garrett 73).
Choosing a middle position is also found in his poem ‘From the Canton of Expectation” where the poet chooses a middle stand, in between passiveness of the older generation and the demanding younger generation. “Postscript” also shows being in an in-between position though it is not a voluntary choice that the poet makes. Nature and life very often place us in such positions. The poem suggests to take a “drive out west / Into County Clare, along the Flaggy shore, / In September or October.” On one side the wind and the light work off each other so that the ocean is “wild with foam and glitter.” On the other side is a picture of peace and calmness. A flock of swans have alighted on the surface of a slate-grey lake and they are seen ruffling their feathers, tucking their heads or busy under water. “White on white”, it is a sight worth preserving. But the poet marvels thus:

> Useless to think you’ll park and capture it
> More thoroughly. You are neither here nor there,
> A hurry through which known and strange things pass
> As big soft buffetings come at the car sideways
> And catch the heart off guard and blow it open.

(“Postscript” SL)

The poetic persona is not only caught between two contrary conditions, he is also not able to choose one. Both “known and strange” things seem to pass and capture his heart and he seems to be happily helpless at the way life goes.

Heaney in the later part of his career tries to reconcile the conflict between art and life or song and suffering. In the post-Holocaust and post-
nuclear conditions, offering art as peace is an insult. Art or poetry is neither an alibi nor a way of escape. To Heaney, "The greatest art confronts every destructiveness that experience offers it ... It gives true peace only if the horror is satisfactorily rendered. If the eyes are not averted from it" (Brandes 21). Writing in a condition in which the poet has "to be a source of truth" and at the same time a vehicle of harmony, can be an extremely taxing work. The poets of Northern Ireland are subjected to such a pressure:

Among poets of my own generation in the 1960s there was a general feeling of being socially called upon which grew as the polarization grew and the pressure mounted upon the writers not only to render images of the Ulster predicament, but also perhaps to show solidarity with one or other side of the quarrel. (Heaney, *Redress* 193)

In such conditions, whether Heaney’s social and redemptive messages are explicit or not, the poems themselves have the efficacy of their own to show that song and suffering can co-exist. But there are a few poems in which the poet tries to confront destructiveness, and thereby affirm life in the face of suffering.

"The Song of the Bullets" is a lyric in which the poet does not take any effort to hide the sting. At night when the stars burned bright, bullets began to stream across the sky. The poet was able to hear one bullet sing:
Our casings and our blunted parts
Are gathered up below
As justice stands aghast and stares
Like the sun on arctic snow.

It goes on to say its guilt is “accidental” and it does not take responsibility for its action. Then another fireball spoke:

'We are the iron will.
We hoop and cooper worlds beyond
The killer and the kill.

Mount Olivet's beatitudes,
The soul's cadenced desires
Cannot prevail against us who
Dwell in the marbled fires

Of every steady eye that ever
Narrowed, sighted, paused:
We fire and glaze the shape of things
Until the shape's imposed.'

("The Song of the Bullets" HL)

Obviously, the first bullet is from the side of the Ulster Catholics seeking justice. The other has the imperial tone of the rulers trying to “impose” the shape of things. The rhyme of the “will” and “kill” is obtrusive enough to show the destructive atmosphere that prevails. The poet offers no solution. He just exposes the horror of the situation.
A bomb blast that destroyed the bus station in Broad Street is recounted in “Two Lorries.” A peaceful and friendly climate is presented first as a foil to the latter part. It was raining and Agnew the coalman had half his load to deliver farther on. Yet he lingered and was “sweet talking” to Heaney’s mother, asking her whether she ever went to a film in Magherafelt. Heaney comments, “The tasty ways of a leather-aproned coal man!” The lorry moves on to Magherafelt and his mother returns to her stove but she has been obviously moved. Then comes the next event. “As time fastforwards and a different lorry / Groans into shot, up Broad Street, with a payload / That will blow the bus station to dust and ashes . . .” Then comes the vision of his mother sitting in the waiting-room in Magherafelt. The coal lorry and the coal man who had raised her spirits, whether it be Agnew or someone else, has become the symbol of death and destruction:

Her shopping bags full up with shovelled ashes.
Death walked out past her like a dust-faced coalman
Refolding body-bags plying his load
Empty upon empty, in a flurry
Of motes and engine-revs, but which lorry
Was it now? Young Agnew’s or that other

(“Two Lorries” SL)

Once again, there is neither condemnation nor justification. The poem throws open the danger and dismay prevalent in the quiet towns of Northern Ireland.
"The Song of the Bullets" and "Two Lorries" show bomb blasts that leave the town a pile of dust. "Keeping Going" narrates in detail the killing of a painter. The first four sections of the poem recall the image of the painter with his "big cheeks nearly bursting with laughter" and the walls becoming "whiter and whiter, all that worked like magic." Then like a portent, come scenes of filth, dread, caution and the nightmare of Macbeth. The fifth part narrates:

A car came slow down Castle Street, made the halt,
Crossed the Diamond, slowed again and stopped
Level with him, although it was not his lift.
And then he saw an ordinary face
For what it was and a gun in his own face.

.................
then fell past the tarred strip.
Feeding the gutter with his copious blood.

("Keeping Going" SL)

The slow moving lines and the crude details show the inhumanity that is "keeping going."

Not all poems end in a tragic note. "To a Dutch Potter in Ireland" celebrates the liberation that has come after destruction. After glorifying the "slabbery, clabbery" clay which reminds one of Heaney's earlier poems, Heaney turns his focus on to the potter who works with the clay: "Night after night instead, in the Netherlands, / You watched the bombers kill;
then, heaven-sent, / Came backlit from the fire through war and wartime."

After the liberation, at spring, life goes on and relief is expressed in the following lines:

   To have lived it through and now be free to give  
   Utterance, body and soul – to wake and know  
   Every time that it’s gone and gone for good, the thing  
   That nearly broke you –  
   Is worth it all, the five years on the rack.  
   The fighting back, the being resigned, and not  
   One of the unborn will appreciate  
   Freedom like this ever. (SL)

The poem ends with the scene of rye crop waving beside the ruins. The trauma that is undergone in both body and soul is clearly depicted in this poem that unites their lot with that of Netherlands.

Some poems in the later volumes give a hint as to how one reconciles the contrariness in such horrifying circumstances. The natural tendency is to resist and Heaney as he matures has overcome this feeling and adapts to a life of co-existence. “The Gravel Walks” (SL) and the tenth poem in “Squarings” sequence alone can be discussed to learn what Heaney proposes. “The Gravel Walks” gives a picture of rich river gravel and how it is collected and mixed with cement by men in dungarees and used to pave the walks. In the second part of the poem, the poetic sense dominates the practical and the subject becomes more abstract. The poet
praises the "verity of the gravel", "Its plain, champing song against the shovel / Soundtests and sandblasts words like 'honest worth'." Then he says "The kingdom of gravel was inside you too -." The gravel in its natural habitat with clear water running over is one type. Another is the "washed stuff" which is compared to the "absolution of the body, / The shriven life tired bones and marrow feel." Then comes Heaney's recommendation:

So walk on air against your better judgement
Establishing yourself somewhere in between
Those solid batches mixed with grey cement
And a tune called 'The Gravel walks' that conjures green.

("The Gravel Walks" SL)

Absolution being a religious term, it is possible that it indicates the division in religious pieties. The conjuring of green may refer to the political ideologies. In a country where religion and politics have become intertwined to cause division, Heaney's answer is to stand in between. As seen earlier, this is a position that he often takes or has learned to accept.

Poem x of "Squarings" pictures a quarry face overhung by grass and birch seedlings. On the quarry floor there are "deep and dangerous holes" filled with clear water. The poet questions and cautions:

... could you reconcile
What was diaphanous there with what was massive?
Were you equal to or were you opposite
To build-ups so promiscuous and weightless?
Shield your eyes, look up and face the music.

("Squarings x" ST)

Here the poet advocates shifting the object of attention and looking up at the “cargoed brightness travelling / Above and beyond.” The “diaphanous” and the “massive” could represent any two polarities which by nature are what they are. Hence instead of trying to find whether one could match with it or compete, it is better to shift one’s focus to commonalities like the bright clouds that cross the sky above and the water in the deep holes in the quarry floor. In “From the Republic of Conscience” (HL) Heaney implies that the working of one’s conscience also will help one recognise that he or she is a “dual citizen”, and thereby able to accept contrariness.

In 1993 Heaney could openly say thus:

There is nothing extraordinary about the challenge to be in two minds. If, for example there was something exacerbating, there was still nothing deleterious to my sense of Irishness in the fact that I grew up in the minority in Northern Ireland and was educated within the dominant British culture. My identity was emphasized rather than eroded by being maintained in such circumstances. (Redress 202)

This feeling reflects itself in the later poems of Heaney and by reconciling art and life and bringing together the practical and the poetic, he crosses
the frontier of conflict and resistance and enters the region of co-existence.

[4]

The change that comes over attitude and outlook reflects itself in the language one uses and this is noticed in Heaney's poems too. In "Frontiers of Writing" Heaney reports, "the idea of poetry's answer, its responsibility, being given in its own language rather than in the language of the world that provokes it, that too has been one of my constant themes" (Redress 191). Hence images and metaphors are different in the three later books of Heaney. Digging, Clearing slush, releasing water, entering the dark, disintering the bog victims and the gravitational pull of the ground, rather underground, are some of the recurrent images found in the first five books of Heaney. The sixth book Station Island, patterned in the form of the Divine Comedy, uses pilgrimage metaphors. The spirit of Joyce directs him to "swim out" on his own. The following volumes show a definite change.

Contrary to the image of digging or sending a shaft underground, there is a movement above ground or looking up to watch objects above. There is also a movement of going beyond the known or seen region into the abstract. The astronaut in the poem "Alphabets" (HL) is stationed above the earth in space while Constantine and Heaney look up to see the "shape-note language." Constantine's vision blazed in the sky and Heaney's wide stare was focused at their name being written on the gable. When the wishing tree was lifted "root and branch to heaven", ("Wishing Tree" HL)
the others, still alive, congregated where the tree stood, with “turned-up faces.” In “Seeing Things” (ST), the poetic persona lifts himself up into the air and looks down from above. The monks of Clonmacnoise saw the vision of the ship above them in the air (“Squarings viii” ST). The speaker in the poem xx of the same sequence, has a dream of flying “Above the old cart road, with all the air / Fanning off beneath my neck and breastbone.” The same poem refers to what Stalin called Pasternak, “Cloud-roamer.” Poem x encourages to “look up” at the bright clouds that travel “above and beyond” rather than looking at the quarry face (“Squarings”ST). The whole poem “The Flight Path”(SL) dwells on the feelings created at the real and symbolic rising up. In the first part, it is the little boy’s heart: “A dove rose in my breast / Every time my fathers’s hands came clean / With a paper boat between them.” The next section pictures a late jet flying out of Dublin airport into the “full-starred heavens.” Heaney stands under the flight path looking up. The following sections show Heaney’s travels to Glanmore and New York and so on, always being up and away.” In the closing section he relives the “sheer exaltation” he had while climbing the warm steps to the “hermit’s eyrie above Rocamadour” and closes the poem with these lines: “I made a note: / ’Rock-loner, sky-sentry, all hail!’ / And somewhere the dove rose. And kept on rising.” The image of flight which started with the “Sweeney Redivivus” poems continues in the following ones.

The idea of going beyond also was spelled out in “The First Gloss” (SI). The poet proposes there to take a step “from a justified line / into the margin.” This movement is found in various aspects in the three volumes
that follow *Station Island*. As the movement is from the individual to the universal, Heaney shows objects that defy the gravitational pull and, with the objects, the people who are linked with them also go beyond themselves and their limitations. In “Joy or Night” Heaney writes,

>We go to poetry, we go to literature in general to be forwarded within ourselves. . . . What is at work in this most original and illuminating poetry is the mind’s capacity to conceive a new plane of regard for itself, a new scope for its own activity. (Redress 159–60)

The spoonbait, once spooled out, “flees him and it burns him all at once.” It is “reeled through him upstream, snagging on nothing” (“The Spoonbait” *HL*). The spoonbait is compared to the soul and the poem indicates how when the soul is given its sway it frees its owner from the demands of parochialism. The swing is seen as a “lure let down to tempt the soul to rise” and against all odds the poet could give in and he exclaims, “we sailed beyond ourselves” (“The Swing” *SL*). “Booting a leather football” also gives the same experience:

>Was it you

or the ball that kept going

beyond you, amazingly

higher and higher

and ruefully free?

(“The Points: Three Drawings” *ST*)
Though eyesight can spot only material things, vision can go beyond. In “The Biretta” *(ST)*, the poet turns the biretta, the cap the Roman Catholic priests wear, upside down. It then looks like a boat. Soon “As poetry lifts its eyes and clears its throat”, it becomes the boat that “wafts into the first lines of the *Purgatorio*.” It also becomes the small boat out of the bronze age “Refined beyond the dross into sheer image.” The pitchfork has taught its user to see past its aim to the other side where perfection is only imagined. When looked from the other side the skill is not in the aiming but in the let go – “the opening hand” *(The Pitchfork”* *(ST)*). The old woman who sat in her wheelchair kept looking at the life beyond her big window, past the TV in the corner. To the others it looked as though she was looking at the “same calves”, “same acre of ragwort, the same mountain.” But she “never lamented” and “face to face with her was an education.” The poet soon learns that “the field behind the hedge / Grew more distinctly strange as you kept standing / Focused and drawn in by what barred the way” *(“Field of Vision”* *(ST)*). Obviously the vision widens when there is a need to compensate. “The Rain Stick” *(SL)* is a beautiful illustration as to how the vision can capture the marvellous in the quotidian. The dry seeds moving through the cactus stalk makes music and “You are like a rich man entering heaven / Through the ear of a raindrop.”

Images of crossing the boundaries from the land of the living into the beyond are also found in many of Heaney’s poems. “A Ship of Death” is a translation from “Beowulf” and shows the ritual sea burial of Scyld. The
“chief they revered” was laid out amidships and weapons and treasures were piled upon him.

... they set a gold standard up
high above his head and let him drift
to wind and tide, bewailing him
and mourning their loss. (HL)

This is how when his time came Scyld “crossed over into Our Lord’s keeping.” In the sonnet written on the death of his Harvard colleague, Robert Fitzgerald, Heaney uses the metaphor of archery to describe the soul leaving the body. The bow string sings a “a swallow’s note” and the arrow leaves. “The great test over, while the gut’s still humming, / This time it travels out of all knowing / Perfectly aimed towards the vacant centre” (“In Memoriam: Robert Fitzgerald”HL). “The Crossing” a translated passage from “Inferno”, shows Virgil and Dante meeting the infernal ferryman Charon. Charon objects to the living coming into his boat, and Virgil informs the divine purpose. The spirits board and Virgil explains to Dante,

All those who die under the wrath of God
Come together here from every country
And they are eager to go across the river
Because Divine Justice goads them with its spur
So that their fear is turned into desire. (ST)

The finality of death and the doubtfulness of soul’s destiny is captured in the poem, “A Dog was Crying Tonight in Wicklow Also”(SL)
which is a retelling of a myth. “When human beings found out about death/ They sent the dog to Chukwu with a message: / They wanted to be let back to the house of life.” They wanted death to be like spending a night in the woods. The dog that took the message was detracted by another dog and hence the toad which was overhearing the whole thing went to Chukwu first. It reported that the human beings wanted death to last forever.

Then Chukwu saw the people’s souls in birds
Coming towards him like black spots off the sunset
To a place where there would be neither roosts nor trees
Nor any way back to the house of life.
And his mind reddened and darkened all at once
And nothing that the dog would tell him later
Could change that vision. Great chiefs and great loves
In obliterated light, the toad in mud,
The dog crying out all night behind the corpse house.

Poem of “Squarings xii” is more optimistic about the after life. The “good thief” is to be painted scanning empty space, but his spirit flares in exhilaration because of the promise of Jesus: “This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise” (ST).

Vehicles that cross the frontiers and passageways that lead into regions beyond are found in plenty in the later poems of Heaney. To ancient man rivers and seas have been boundaries and they had not known many ways to cross. Hence boats have been symbols of crossing the
boundaries, surmounting the obstacles. Charon’s boat, Scyld’s ship of
death, the boat the poet sailed in at Inishbofin (“Seeing Things” ST), the
boat that carried the royal favourites up the Thames (“A Royal Prospect”
ST), the boat that took Heaney’s aunt to London (“Squarings xxvii” ST),
the one in which the apothecary took his Spanish grandson (“The
Sharping Stone” SL), and the big ferries described in “Holding
Course” (HL) are the usual ones that ply on water. But in some poems they
cross the elements and sail on air. The boat that the monks of
Clonmacnoise saw appeared in the air; the paper boat that Heaney’s
father made was an “ark on air” (“Flight Path” SL); in Inishbofin Heaney
felt that he was in “another boat sailing through the air.”

Heaney employs the images of balancing as he is of the opinion that
balancing is the objective of poetry. “Terminus” (HL) shows Heaney
carrying a bucket of water in each hand. He also weighs grain in a
balance. He says he “inherited / A stack of singular, cold memory-weights /
To load me, hand and foot, in the scale of things” (“Squarings xl” ST). The
poem “Weighing In” (SL) is about balancing. It marvels at the way a
socket-ripping solid iron, when placed against another on a weigh bridge is
not a “dead weight” any more. The poem broadens its scope to imagine
balancing “the intolerable in others / Against our own” and the necessity of
“weighing in” to check the power over the powerless for “Peace on earth,
men of good will, all that / Holds good only as long as the balance holds.”
The truth of this statement is illustrated in the poem “Mycenae Lookout”
(SL). Like the chorus of Aeschylus’s play, the watchman could foresee
bloodshed and he “balanced between destiny and dread.” These metaphors show that as a result of the “rethink” there is an enlarged awareness in the poet that shows itself in the kind of word stuff he uses.

The element of change is discernible in the portrayal of his parents too. The figures of Heaney’s parents appear both in the early volumes as well as in the later ones but he crosses the frontier of his own writing by treating them differently. They are invested with a personality while the earlier poems focused on visible actions. In the early poems Patrick Heaney is seen as a farmer and a cattle-dealer and the poet is concerned about the continuity of the vocation and not the person himself. In the portrayal of his mother too, Heaney sets her in the context of churning butter or pumping out water and her actions get more attention than she herself. In *The Haw Lantern*, *Seeing Things* and *The Spirit Level*, there are no less than eight poems that talk about his father and a sequence of eight sonnets that deals with his mother, titled “Clearances”, gets a prominent place in the volume *The Haw Lantern*.

The poems on Patrick Heaney and the reference found in “Clearances” show him as a representative of the older generation whose silent contribution need not be obliterated. “The Stone Verdict”(*HL*) presents him as one who had “an old disdain of sweet talk and excuses.” “He relied on through a lifetime’s speechlessness.” In the last minutes of his wife’s death, he is supposed to have said “more to her almost than in all their life together” (“Clearances 7” *HL*). Towards his children there was
the "detachment of dumb love." He was a "broad backed, low-set man / who feared debt all his life" ("Man and Boy" ST). "Maimed by self-doubt", he is always seen with an ash plant in his grasp. The stick becomes part of his identity and in the later poems it becomes an extension of himself and the soul's guide. In the British folklore ash is a tree of rebirth and in the Norse myth it stands for knowledge. One is reminded of Joyce who in section XII of "Station Island" is seen with an ash plant in his hand. In "Follower", a poem in the first volume Death of a Naturalist, Heaney sees his father as a "nuisance" "who keeps stumbling / Behind me and will not go away." But in his maturity he says he could "feel his legs" ("Man and Boy" ST) and proposes to "face the ice" in the "dangerous pavements" "with my father's stick" ("1.1.87" ST). He is also sure that the dotted line his father's stick made on the strand will not be washed away by the tide ("The Strand" SL). The legacy left by his father is co-opted.

"Clearances" was written in memory of Margaret Heaney, the poet's mother, after her death in 1984. Unlike the earlier poems, this sequence shows the son – mother relationship and is very moving indeed but it is more than an elegy. Jay Parini writes, "the quietly smoldering 'Clearances' though not 'ambitious' in any obvious sense becomes an ars poetica of sorts, a handbook for reading Heaney" (71). This sequence becomes his "ars poetica" because in these sonnets he announces his intention to cast away certain "opaque fidelities" that are no longer viable or tries to revise them and this he calls the "Co-opted and obliterated echo' in the epigraph to the sequence.
Margaret Heaney had been taught by her uncle how to split the biggest coal block and she in her turn taught Heaney how to hit. He says, “Teach me now to listen, / To strike it rich behind the linear black.” The first sonnet tells of another legacy passed on to him by his mother. A great grandmother had married outside her faith and Heaney who has been conscious of his divided identity, feels that the cobble thrown at “his great grandmother’s turncoat brow” keeps coming at him. He proposes to “dispose” “the exonerating, exonerated stone”, “now she’s gone.” The next few poems reveal simple domestic scenes like peeling potatoes and folding sheets that brought the mother and the son together. His mother was shy of her learned son’s vocabulary and so Heaney governed his tongue and “would relapse into the wrong / Grammar” which kept them “allied and at bay.” He describes her death thus: “The space we stood around had been emptied / Into us to keep, it penetrated / Clearances that suddenly stood open.”

The final sonnet in the “Clearances” sequence is more about himself than his mother or it can be said it is about the cleared space with which Heaney began to identify himself and which reminded him of many spaces which are both empty and full of potential. He writes,

I thought of walking round a space
Utterly empty, utterly a source
Where the decked chestnut tree had lost its place

.....................

Deep planted and long gone, my coeval
Chestnut from a jam jar in a hole,
Its heft and hush become a bright nowhere.

("Clearances 8"HL)

Heaney’s aunt had planted a chestnut tree in a jam jar in the year he was born. Later it was transplanted and Heaney was identified with that tree. When the family moved away from that house, the new owners felled the tree. In “The Placeless Heaven”, Heaney talks about the space where the tree was: “In my mind’s eye I saw it as a kind of luminous emptiness, a warp and waver of light, and once again in a way that I find hard to define, I began to identify with that space just as years before I had identified with the young tree”(Government 3–4). To Randy Brandes he tells, “It’s a sense of node that is completely clear where emptiness and potential stream in opposite directions”(6). The image of empty spaces full of potential is found in many of Heaney’s later poems. The “nilness round the space” in “From the Frontier of Writing” (HL), the “vacant centre” in “In Memoriam: Robert Fitzgerald” (HL), the riddle in which the man carried water (“The Riddle” HL), the space between the “undrowned father” and the son when they came “face to face” and no words were spoken (“Seeing Things” ST), the “empty space” the “good thief” was scanning (“Squarings xii”), the space that flees between” the army truck and Heaney’s car (“Squarings xxvi” ST) and the “great gulf” between the news reader and the listeners in Heaney’s home (“A Sofa in the Forties” SL) are a few examples of a kind of generative image, that is to say an empty space becoming a filled space or a source.
The change in the imagery is suggested of a change in Heaney's outlook. A mythical equivalent can be found in the coming back of the Hero from the nether world. The final stage is the Sacred Marriage and union with the Divine centre. Slusser informs, “The process is twofold and the motifs are intertwined: the freeing of the captive and the Hero’s union with her, and the death and resurrection – ascension of the Hero” (144). Every step has a preparation and

the preparation for the sacred marriage requires certain internal work; in this case the careful observation and following of the inward way of dream, vision and imagination . . . . In the previous period the main work has been the building of the ego through human relationships, personal, achievements, power or creative work. In this new period, the second half of life, the work comprises the assimilation of transpersonal and suprapersonal contents. (143)

“The adventure of the Hero, to which all of us are called is one of transcending the successive boundaries that establish consciousness in a limited form until the final state which is the coincidence of opposites” (Slusser 153). Heaney’s use of vision and imagination and the transcending of boundaries in his poems show his moving on to the next stage.

The psychological parallel that shows the process of individuation also gives a similar description of characteristics. Fordham is of the opinion that “there is no wholeness without the recognition of the
opposites" (79). The individuated person is reunited with the unconscious self in a new identity. He, “through his acceptance of the unconscious has, while remaining aware of his unique personality, realized his brotherhood with all living things, even with the organic matter and the cosmos itself” (Fordham 77–78). Heaney’s recognition of the opposites and the change in imagery, motifs and similes show Heaney’s broadening of consciousness that seems to be the mark of the individuated person.

Heaney’s poetic output shows a development in his poetic consciousness and this can be traced in the nine volumes of poetry that have been published so far. Each stage of development comes out of the successful accomplishment of what needs to be done in the previous stage. In finding and establishing his identity as a poet of Northern Ireland, belonging to the Catholic minority and yet growing in the literary milieu of the British Protestants. Heaney needed to get in touch with the unconscious past of himself and of his race. Having successfully explored them in his earlier books, Heaney resolves their echoes in the present. At this stage Heaney has been influenced by certain experiences to which he was exposed. His readings of poets from the Eastern bloc whose developmental climate resembles his and who had been also thrown into the political and cultural turmoil of their time influenced his thinking. His stay in America and his nearing middle age also had their impact on him: “I would say the American experience may have confirmed and assisted
what I think happens anyway as you get toward their fifties, that is a certain rethinking of yourself, a certain distance from your first self' (qtd. in Foster 132-33).

This chapter which reviews the seventh, eighth and ninth volumes of Heaney shows the different areas in which Heaney has broken from the past and established himself as a mature poet. His vision has widened beyond the narrow limits of his region, his childhood and interests, and his message is for the whole humanity. The recognition of this fact came to him by way of being awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. Heaney had always been observant and now he visualises the invisible and the abstract, and records them with the same skill. The submerged anger and the resistance that had characterised his poems earlier have changed as a result of seeing things differently. The poetic text becomes a resistance against all forces that perpetuate boundaries and see them as a bone of contention. Preserving the past gives way to making new beginnings. The poet does not sever his ties with the past. The past promotes a different outlook and the feature of continuity lies undisturbed.

A poem that illustrates this effectively is “Tollund” (SL) written in 1994. Earlier Heaney has written, “Some day I will go to Aarhus.” “Consecrate the cauldron bog / Our holy ground and pray / Him to make germinate” the corpses (“The Tollund Man” WO). In “Tollund” Heaney goes to Jutland once again, now not as a pilgrim and there is no mention of the bog men. He notices the change that has come over the land and the
remnant of the past as well. Neil Corcoran writes, “Heaney returns to Jutland and the place again seems reverberant with the associations of home. Registering both familiarity and strangeness... the new poem figures not the stasis and repetition of the earlier sequence but the possibility of change and renewal” (“After Yeats” 174). Heaney portrays himself and his companion as

More scouts than strangers, ghosts who'd walked abroad
Unfazed by light, to make a new beginning
And make a go of it, alive and sinning,
Ourselves again, free-willed again, not bad.

(“Tollund” SL)

Heaney has a long way to go but he has emerged out of the underground and “the treasure” is his.