Chapter 2

Prying into Roots: The Terrain of Family and Farmyard

Most of Heaney's poetry is born out of his search for continuity and the co-existing, yet contrary force of resistance. The factors that he contends with are those that try to obliterate him into anonymity, and in this struggle to evolve, there is a constant movement of looking backward. The aim of this chapter is to analyse how the smaller world of family, farmyard experiences and community contributed to building Heaney's selfhood. As he emerges into a poet, he goes back to pick up certain threads and break off a few. As this process is mostly found in the early part of his poetic career, only the poems of the first five books, Death of a Naturalist, Door into the Dark, Wintering Out, North and Field Work are made use of. The fact that the individuation of a person entails getting in touch with the developmental aspects is authenticated by Jung's study of the individuation process and Neumann's mythic interpretation of the phenomenon. Hence, the chapter is organised into three sections: the first shows the influence of parents and parental figures on Heaney; the second studies the learning experience he had in boyhood through common occurrences in a farm, the inevitability of death and funeral rites, and the pervading fear that is conducive to growth though paralysing; and, the final
Parents and siblings are found to exercise a strong and lasting influence in the psyche of any human being especially if he or she comes from a closely-knit family. In a country torn by strife, Heaney's family was bonded together with intimate domestic warmth and affection. It was a large family with nine children and his aunt Mary Heaney also lived with them mothering the children in her own affectionate way. Polly Devlin, Heaney's sister-in-law, in her book *All of us There* quotes Heaney's wife Mary envying this togetherness that was prevalent in Heaney's home:

> His family life was utterly together, like an egg contained within the shell, without any quality of otherness, without a sense of loss that this otherness brings. They had confidence in the way they lived, a lovely impeccable confidence in their own style.

(qtd. in Corcoran, *Student’s 12–13*)

It is but natural that Heaney when he started his poetic career in an atmosphere of contention in the outside world, turned to his circle of family and friends which was indeed a tower of solidarity.
The correlation between creativity and finding oneself is illustrated in "The Play Way", a poem in Heaney's first volume *Death of a Naturalist*, which recounts a class room scene. The teacher-persona, most probably Heaney himself, has planned to play in class Beethoven's *Concerto Number Five* and then allow the class to "express themselves freely / In writing." The music is played, the children stare wide and then the pens are busy. The poet describes, "Then notes stretch taut as snares. They trip / To fall into themselves unknowingly." Creative writing is indeed similar to "falling into themselves" at least in the early part of one's career. In *Preoccupations* Heaney writes, "these lines from *Timon of Athens* where a poet talks about the process of writing, have become a touchstone for me:

Our poesy is as a gum which oozes

From whence it is nourished."

The poems which speak of his family members not only recreate the various occasions which are indelibly stored in his memory but they also establish the thread of continuity in his vocation of composing poetry. Being a poet and working with words has not been in the family so far and hence it appears as though Heaney has made a break with his family tradition. In fact learning and writing was not appreciated as much as hard manual labour was. Heaney recalls his experience on his way to or from school
when people enquired him of his education. Invariably their derisive comment was, "the pen's lighter than spade" or "learning's easy carried." Heaney is proud of his ancestors and their efficiency in doing their work but he chooses to wind up certain areas while finding other strains which continue in his newly-chosen vocation. There is an individuality and a commonality which do not clash but co-exist, creating the personality of the poet.

"Digging" and "Follower" are two poems in *Death of a Naturalist* in which Heaney's father figures as a farmer. Patrick Heaney himself was brought up in a farm called "The Wood" which he later inherited from his uncle when Seamus Heaney was fourteen. Till then he had been farming Mossbawn. "Digging", being the opening poem in Heaney's first collection of poems, is very often considered to be his manifesto. As he sits near his window with his pen between his finger and thumb, he is attracted by "a clean rasping sound" of a spade sinking into "gravelly ground." His eyes move away from the paper to the potato drills in front of him where his father is digging. His mind goes back twenty years and then, it was not only the father doing the work. The poet also is seen assisting. He talks about "new potatoes that we picked / Loving their cool hardness in our hands." His mind's eye could see the previous generation as well: "By God, the old man could handle a spade. / Just like his old man." He remembers carrying milk in a
bottle to his grandfather who was cutting turf in Toner's bog, "going down and down", digging. He then retraces to the present and asserts:

But I've no spade to follow men like them.

Between my finger and my thumb

The squat pen rests.

I'll dig with it. ("Digging" DN)

Digging potatoes or turf does not continue in the case of Heaney, but the digging continues with a pen instead of a spade. Potato has been the staple food of the Irish for centuries and as a seed it is regenerative too. Being a tuber it is found underground and the seed potatoes are kept "buried under that straw" as Heaney reports in "The Seed Cutters" (North). The diggers and the poet become one because to Heaney "the act of writing is an act of survival" (Redress 185). Going underground to search for roots is synonymous to the poet's usage of a word not only as a pure vocable but also for the feel of the syllable and rhythm and other cultural attachments of the word. In "Learning from Eliot", Heaney refers to what T. S. Eliot calls "the auditory imagination." It is "the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back" (26). About "Digging", Heaney comments that the
"rhythm and noises" of the poem still please him and rather than saying that he wrote the poem he would say, "I dug it up" because it was "laid down" in him years before (Preoccupations 42).

In "Follower", Heaney's father is said to have worked with a horse-plough. He was an expert. As a boy Heaney followed the wake stumbling, and sometimes his father would carry him on his back. He wanted to grow up and plough just as his father did. In the closing quatrain there is suddenly a movement to present:

I was a nuisance, tripping, falling,  
Yapping always. But today  
It is my father who keeps stumbling  
Behind me, and will not go away.  

(DN)

In this poem the continuity is seen in the reversal of roles. Now as his father keeps stumbling after him, his mind goes back to the time when though he was a nuisance, his father let him follow. The father here, apart from referring to his biological father, also suggests the Irish heritage, the traditional past, the memory of his formative years and entanglement in family which he is not able to shirk. There are some areas of the past which Heaney does not want to carry into the present and this is obviously shown in the next poem of the same volume, "Ancestral Photograph."
Besides being a farmer, Heaney's father was a cattle dealer too, and in the olden days they held fairs where the cattle were herded into pens and the cattlemen "handled rumps, groped teats, stood, paused" argued and bargained. Heaney's father learned the trade from his uncle and he even followed the gestures made by him. The fairs had stopped and there was "no room for dealers." The context of the poem was the removal of an ancestral photograph, the photograph of Heaney's father's uncle from the bedroom wall. The sepia tints had begun to fade and so the poet decided to remove it but the removal was more than simply a work of cleaning up. The closing lines of the poem informs, "Closing this chapter of our chronicle / I take your uncle's portrait to the attic" ("Ancestral Photograph" _DN_). Heaney's father was a successful dealer and he always "won at arguing / His own price on a crowd of cattlemen" but Heaney does not seem to have had much part in it and neither does he want to emulate. The cows in his farm seem to have caught the attention of the poet more than the other animals. His animal poems include "The Outlaw" which describes the mating of a cow, "The Cow in Calf" that shows a pregnant cow in vivid terms, and "First Calf" describing the mother and the new-born. In Heaney's poetic world, procreation and life's continuity have a place but the art of buying and selling is not to be commemorated and hence the chapter is closed.
Heaney recalls the activities of his mother as well, and they become metaphorically related to Heaney's vocation. Margaret Kathleen Heaney, like most Irish mothers, had enough and more to do at home and hence her dealings are confined to the house and the yard. "Churning Day" describes the earthenware and the pre-churning activities done in the small pantry. Heaney writes,

My mother took first turn, set up rhythms
that slugged and thumped for hours. Arms ached.
Hands blistered. Cheeks and clothes were spattered
with flabby milk. (DN)

Then slowly "gold flecks began to dance" and soon butter was collected and piled in slabs on pantry shelves. But after that in their brains the scene was reenacted even to "the pat and slap of small spades on wet lumps."

Just as his father, his mother also used a spade to collect a part of their food, their sustenance. The butter, referred to as "coagulated sunlight" was a hidden article and his mother, like a poet sound in technique, mediated "between the latent resource and the community" (Heaney, Preoccupations 47). Instead of digging, she plunged the deal wood staff inside the sterile churn which was filled with cream. Heaney has told earlier that he has no spade, and in "Churning Day" he does not bring in any analogy like the pen-
spade comparison of “Digging.” Yet the wonder of creativity, as a blend of work and discovery, which Heaney finds as a poet in the merging of craft and technique, is found in this domestic activity too.

“Mother”, a poem in the second volume is about a pregnant woman. It is possible that it refers to Heaney’s mother, for the poem shows the woman at the pump and it could be Mossbawn’s “iron idol” and Heaney as the eldest of nine children might have noticed his pregnant mother working wearily. The female persona is tired of feeding the cows because she has to pump for half an hour at a time to fill the bowls in the byre and the cows empty them in no time. She has another reason to be tired:

I am tired of walking about with this plunger
Inside me. God, he plays like a young calf
Gone wild on a rope.

Lying or standing won’t settle these capers,

This gulp in my well. (DD)

The contrast between the tired mother and the active foetus within her is quite obvious. The picture is an analogy of Heaney as a poet symbolic of the external exasperation and internal currents of creativity. In Ulster, when explosions were rattling the windows day and night, and the young and old were brutally killed, what was
gnawing Heaney’s mind was the question Shakespeare posed in Sonnet lxv:

How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?

(qtd. in Preoccupations 33)

But the poetic force within Heaney was strong. Corcoran remarks:

This has its consonance with T. S. Eliot’s well-known concept of the ‘dark embryo’ within the poet ‘which gradually takes on the form and speech of a poem’. . . . I think it is possible to regard it [Door into the Dark] as a book in which a new, finer and more subtle kind of Heaney poem seems to be embryonically present, but not yet quite born. (Student’s 55)

“Sunlight” is one of the two poems dedicated to Heaney’s aunt, Mary Heaney, at the outset of North. Once again the setting is the “helmeted pump in the yard.” The atmosphere is homely and the action presented is Mary baking “in a floury apron / by the window.” Even the sun joins the scene standing “like a griddle cooling / against the wall.” After a detailed description of the aunt dusting the bakeboard with goose’s wing, Heaney goes on to say,

here is a space
again, the scone rising
to the tick of two clocks.
And here is love
like a tinsmith's scoop
sunk past its gleam
in the meal-bin.

Like the sun that is brought down to earth, Heaney ties down the abstract notions of love to the domestic activities of a loving home. The scone rises to the tick of two clocks. Just as the time-piece on the kitchen shelf is real, the heart that goes ticking and proclaiming its love is also real. Mary is remembered as "the affectionate centre" of his home. Heaney says, "She was the heart of the house in some ways, and as a child I was 'petted' on her as they say. There were two women, . . . Mary was always there as a kind of second mother really" (qtd. in Corcoran, Student's 12).

This poem can be contrasted with another poem "Summer Home" which deals with the present in the collection Wintering Out. There is a premonition of "summer gone sour" and the poet soon finds his wife weeping. He is not sure whose fault it is. The pain is deeply felt and the third and fourth parts of the poem go on to show the healing efforts that are taken to bring harmony. Yet the final section reveals,

"My children weep out the hot foreign night.
We walk the floor, my foul mouth takes it out
On you and we lie stiff till dawn"
Attends the pillow, and the maize, and vine
That holds its filling burden to the light.
Yesterday rocks sang when we tapped
Stalactites in the cave's old, dripping dark —
Our love calls tiny as a tuning fork.

("Summer Home" WO)

In the past, indicated here by "yesterday" and "stalactites", love was manifested clearly and in the unconscious depths also, love's presence was distinctly felt. But in this summer home when feelings are hurt, "love calls tiny" though there is an anticipation that harmony will be restored because the "tuning fork" could set the pitch. Mary Heaney's love, in contrast, is in scoopfuls and can be experienced in the domestic activities. Love is an abiding and continuing factor that can withstand trying heat, while finding out who is wrong can neither settle disputes nor heal wounds.

The poems that speak about his immediate family members reveal that Heaney values his roots. Even the images in these poems speak of continuity. There is a link that unites the two entities. His father who keeps coming after him is called "follower" suggestive of an invisible bond between the one who leads and the one who follows ("Follower" DN). The foetus is described as a young calf "on a rope" ("Mother" DD). The scone rises in accordance with the ticking of the clocks ("Sunlight" North). There is a resistance to trying to exist and the event or object continues to persist in
another form. After the photograph of Heaney's father's uncle had been removed from the bedroom wall, "there is a faded patch where he has been," an "empty plaque to a house's rise and fall" ("Ancestral Photograph" DN). Long after the buttermilk had been churned and the empty crocks put back, the acrid smell remained and their "brains turned crystals full of clean deal churns" ("Churning Day" DN). Heaney is not a stickler to tradition and neither does he follow the footsteps of his ancestors blindly. Obviously, the smaller and the intimate world which fostered him in his earlier years has given him love, confidence and a pride in his vocation. When he launches out into the stormy world of political and religious strife, what he has gained from the early years at home is like an anchor, so that the poet never drowns in depression and in spite of the cynical thoughts that cross his mind, he remains optimistic throughout.

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Heaney's formative years were spent on a fifty-acre farm called Mossbawn and he cherished the memory of his life there. Then they moved over to The Wood. Life in these two farms provided him with a lot of experiences which changed his perception as he began to grow up. Very often his understanding or his feeling comes into conflict with reality and out of the experiences emerges a better understanding which is conducive to growth. The experiences are
quite commonplace but they are special because they are personal and as the poet recalls in adulthood these early experiences, the wonder and excitement still remain and add colour to the already vivid descriptions. *Death of a Naturalist*, Heaney’s first volume, abounds with poems on Heaney’s early experiences.

"Death of a Naturalist", the poem that lends its title to the book, is one of the early poems that show an advancement in learning. At one level the poem simply shows how a little boy feels threatened when he faces a new situation and learns that there is more to what he had learned inside the class room. In the first part of the poem the narrator recapitulates how he used to fill jampots with frogspawn taken from the flax-dam and, naturalist-like, would enjoy watching them turn into nimble tadpoles. Miss Walls, his teacher, had told how daddy frog croaked and mummy frog laid eggs. To a farming community their colour would indicate weather changes: "yellow in the sun and brown in rain." The second part describes the revenge of the frogs. Their posture and behaviour forewarned the vengeance and Heaney ran away in fear. The unfamiliarity with the behaviour of the amphibian and the insecurity of the protagonist himself engender the feeling which would appear to be unsubstantial to an adult observer. Yet the experience was very real and though he “sickened, turned and ran”
it was not before he observed them well enough to describe in five long lines. Obviously there is fascination as well as fear.

At a later date when the boy has become a man and is living in a colonised country that is trying to resist the remnant of the colonial power and shed its colonial influences, the same experience is narrated in different terms. The protagonist had displaced the frogspawn from their native location and treated them as exhibits. The poem describes in a covert manner the resistance shown by the angry frogs to this imperial intrusion into the flax-dam that was most fecund with blue bottles, dragonflies and spotted butterflies.

Then one hot day when fields were rank
With cowdung in the grass the angry frogs
Invaded the flax-dam; I ducked through hedges
To a coarse croaking that I had not heard
Before. The air was thick with a bass chorus.

("Death of a Naturalist" DN)

The frogs sat "poised like mud grenades." Their "slap and plop were obscene threats." Not only did the frogs seem ready for revenge but the spawn deceptively helpless and yet with all the potentiality for striking back and armed with the clannish cohesiveness posed a threat: "I knew / That if I dipped my hand the spawn would clutch it" ("Death of a Naturalist" DN). Heaney identifies himself with both the invader and the invaded. In the first part he is the insensitive
intruder who dislodged the "warm thick slobber of frog spawn" from its rightful place. But soon he seems to identify himself with the dispossessed, seeking vengeance. With their ancestry reclaimed from the bog, he is of the "great slime kings" wishing to drive the intruder away.

At the end of the incident the protagonist has grown in several aspects. The knowledge of a reality that he received from this instructive experience is more poetic. Tony Curtis comments, "the hopeful promise of early life has become an aggressive confrontation with the adult angry frogs." The fear is more of being confronted by a "realisation that life is not what it seems; that life is about change, flux, maturation and transformation" (How to Study 119; 122).

Another advancement in learning is seen in the "Advancement of Learning" where the protagonist, scared of rats learns to "stare him out." Rats have been a "terror" to him for quite some time. He used to panic when they scraped behind the hen-coop or the ceiling boards above his bed. Even the musty dark interior of the barn was alive with the presence of the rodents. Hence when he saw a rat as he was walking along the embankment path, his "throat sickened quickly" so that he "turned down the path in cold sweat." But he finds another one "tracing its wet arcs on the stones." Then comes the change. He says, "Incredibly then / I established a dreaded /
Bridgehead.” Forgetting his fear he went on staring which was indeed successful:

This terror, cold, wet-furred, small-clawed,
Retreated up a pipe for sewage.
I stared a minute after him.
Then I walked on and crossed the bridge. (DN)

Rats are associated with infirmity and death (Cirlot 272). In agrarian societies it is a pest and in Egypt and China it is an evil-causing deity. The rat that creeps along the canal bank in T. S. Eliot’s “The Fire Sermon” is slimy and frightening. This fear, unreasonable as it may seem to be, is unconscious and hence no reasoning would overcome it. In Heaney’s poem the protagonist learns that evasion is no solution. The poet as an adult would have learned to face and overcome situations and he remembers this incident which taught him that many of the objects of fear are indeed harmless.

“Blackberry-picking” is another poem which brings out how the knowledge of reality is established over one’s feelings through an experience. Every August when summer rains and sunshine ripen the black berries, the children took milk-cans, pea-tins and jam-pots to glean the berries. But once stored in the byre, they are covered with a “rat-grey fungus” and the juice stinks. Every year untiringly the children pick the “glossy purple clot” and pepper their
hands with thorn pricks and their palms become "sticky as Bluebeard's." Yet nature successfully resists all human efforts to "hoard" their fresh berries. At the end of the poem, the "We" changes into first person singular and the protagonist says, "I always felt like crying. It wasn't fair / That all the lovely canfuls smelt of rot / Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not" (DN).

The transitoriness and the cloying nature of the pleasures of life could be the lesson that was impressed upon the boyish mind which is surfaced when the boy becomes a poet and digs deep within. The poem's metaphorical language like, "flesh was sweet", "Summer's blood . . . leaving stains upon the tongue", "lust for picking" the "hunger" that sent them over briars and wet grass and finally the analogy of Bluebeard who in the French folk tale keeps murdering his wives, are suggestive of the knowledge of sexuality (Corcoran, Student's 49). The plucking of the fruit is indeed symbolic of the end of Edenic innocence. The poem is dedicated to Philip Hobsbaum, who came to Queen's College in mid-sixties and kept an open house for the poets. In his home and under his guidance Heaney and many other young poets gathered much and learned to perfect the poetic art which would not rot and would taste good for long. Heaney thus overcomes the petulance he felt at the recognition of inevitability.
"The Early Purges" takes us back when Heaney was six and "first saw kittens drown." He does not participate in the killing but by passively observing the deed becomes an ally to Dan Taggart who keeps killing rats, rabbits and crows. The action invokes fear in Heaney for he might have unconsciously identified himself with the victims. He learns to overcome his feelings by allowing the voice of commonsense to assert itself:

And now, when shrill pups are prodded to drown
I just shrug, ' Bloody pups'. It makes sense:

'Prevention of Cruelty' talk cuts ice in town
Where they consider death unnatural,
But on well-run farms pests have to be kept down. (DN)

But undoubtedly he is disturbed by his passive connivance and his empathy is with the dead.

Later when the poet has to face the death of human beings, there is a replay of similar feelings. "Punishment" in North describes a girl who had been hanged and her body thrown into the bog as a punishment for committing adultery. Her tarred face and shaved head remind him of the present day punishments which are similar, inflicted by the Irish Republican Army on the Northern Ireland Catholic girls who dare to go out with the protestant British soldiers. Once again, though he does not approve of the atrocity, he does not raise his voice against it and later quietens his conscience
by saying that the outrage at the brutal treatment may be civilized but the Irish have subconscious tribal allegiance:

I who have stood dumb when your betraying sisters, cauled in tar wept by the railings, who would connive in civilized outrage yet understand the exact and tribal, intimate revenge. (“Punishment” North)

Thus Heaney has learned to compromise and to get along in difficult circumstances. The farmyard experiences have equipped him indeed to face life.

Sending the “pump up in flame” at the beginning of spring is a regular event in the farmyard and Heaney speaks of it in ritualistic terms in the poem “Rite of Spring.” During winter the water froze in the snout of the pump and to thaw it out they had to do “the twisting of wheat straw into ropes”, “lapping them tight round stem and stout” and then lighting the straw that sent the pump in flame. After letting it cool, the handle was moved and the poet reports, “and she came.” (DD). In a practical way Heaney has come into contact with the elemental energies quite early in life. Later as a poet he finds symbolical and mythical associations. The
pump is "omphalos", the centre of their world (Heaney, *Preoccupations* 17) and hence it becomes an altar on which a burnt offering is made at the beginning of spring, the time of rejuvenation. "She", the goddess was thus invoked, for according to Annwn, water was considered as "the first principle and source of all life" and the tribes of Goddess Danaan dedicated the main river sources as sanctuaries of the goddess (106).

Recalling the experiences of his early life Heaney seems to remember well the occasions of death and the accompanying rituals. He describes thus:

My childhood was full of death: only the first couple of times scary and strange. Two of my grandparents, and lots of grand uncles and aunts died when I was quite young and I went to the wakes and funerals. Then, since I was the eldest, in my early teens I used to represent the family at some funerals and the sight of the corpses had some definite effect. and I remember after writing "The Tollund Man" I began to think if I were to go to an analyst, he would certainly link the outlined and pacified and *rigor mortis* face of the Tollund man with all that submerged life and memory. (qtd. in Corcoran, *Student's* 14–15)
In the Irish countryside death was rarely just a family affair. The whole community joined in the wake, keeping awake over the corpse all through the night, keening, and the men drinking poteen and the shanachie telling stories. "The dead are commonly thought to return to claim the living — hence the elaborate precautions of St. John’s Eve or Halloween to placate the dead souls and prevent them from doing mischief" (Grene 54). Heaney’s first poem on death is “Mid-term Break” in which he tells about the death of his baby brother who was then four years old. He had met with an accident and Heaney was sent for from school. It was a mid-term break for him but it was also a break in the middle of the little boy’s term of life. When he came home to attend the funeral, Heaney was treated as a grown-up and he records.

I was embarrassed
By old men standing up to shake my hand
And tell me they were ‘sorry for my trouble’,
Whispers informed strangers I was the eldest,
Away at school, as my mother held my hand. (DN)

Death had helped him to assume manhood. Later in the “Funeral Rites” he reports, “I shouldered a kind of manhood / stepping in the lift the coffins / of dead relations” (North).
In “Funeral Rites”, Heaney remembers the scenes of dead relations laid out before the funeral takes place:

their eyelids glistening.
their dough-white hands
shackled in rosary beads.

Their puffed knuckles
had unwrinkled, the nails
were darkened, the wrists
obediently sloped. (North)

So goes the description about shroud, the candles, the women hovering about and the coffin with its gleaming crosses. The context of the poem is the sectarian murders of Northern Ireland and it is the present which evokes the past but Heaney does not stop with his own experience. He associates it with the racial past and goes on to describe the Norse hero Gunnar who lay with four lights burning in the burial chamber. In the “Mid-Term Break” also two stanzas are set aside to describe the snowdrops and candles and the “poppy bruise on his left temple.” In Field Work Heaney sings an elegy to his cousin Colum McCartney. He was a victim of random shooting and was killed as he was coming from Dublin after a Gaelic football match. Heaney talks about how the boy lay bleeding by the roadside. The last part of the poem, with overtones of “Purgatorio” describes the “brimming grass” on which he lay, how Heaney washed the
wound with handfuls of dew and cleaned with moss and plaited green scapulars to wear over his shroud ("The Strand at Lough Beg" FW).

All these descriptions show the fascination Heaney had for rituals. In “Funeral Rites” he says, “I knelt courteously / admiring it all.” In the same poem he remarks, “we pine for ceremony, / customary rhythms;”, Death is seen not as a cessation of life in these early poems wherein he talks about his experiences of facing death in his boyhood days or as a young man. His elegy to Colum McCartney, “The Strand at Lough Beg” focuses so much on the ritualistic actions that the poet is later criticised by the spirit of McCartney himself. At the Station Island when Heaney meets him McCartney says that he accuses directly the Protestant who shot through his head but he accuses Heaney indirectly: “You whitewashed ugliness” and “saccharined my death with morning dew” (“Station Island VIII” SI). This self-criticism is not to denigrate the value of rituals. In fact Heaney seems to believe that as ritual is a cementing feature of a community, it can contribute peace and harmony.

When rituals break down, violence automatically increases. When the traditional fox-hunting of the British, the bull-fighting of the Spaniards, the snake-worship of Indians become socially unacceptable, arms pile up and the communal hatred become inevitable.

(Devy 7)
In “Funeral Rites” Heaney announces,

I would restore

the great chambers of Boyne,

prepare a sepulchre

under the cupmarked stones. (North)

“When they have put the stone / back in its mouth”, after the body is placed in the sepulchre, “the cud of memory” is “allayed” and the feud is “placated” (“North”) for part of the burial ritual is to bury the hatchets with the dead.

In *Haw Lantern*, Heaney’s sixth volume of poetry, there is a sonnet in which he describes his mother’s hour of death. There is an obvious difference there from these early poems on death. There the poet speaks about the space that is cleared by his mother’s death and how that space is “emptied” into him to keep. Rituals are manifestations of religious beliefs and not based on reason. Funeral rites are farewell ceremonies, seeing off the dead to their future abode. Sometimes they are performed to appease the dead with the belief that the dead become more powerful than the living. In the early poems, as Heaney looks back at the experiences associated with death, he finds no sense of loss at the demise of the dear ones. This may be the result of a deeper consciousness of the Irish belief that the living migrate but the dead stay on.
The predominant feeling, in the poems that deal with Heaney's growing up into manhood, is fear. It falls into a wide continuum from the childish fear of darkness to fear in relationships. As seen earlier, he is not afraid of death, and attending wakes or funerals does not make him terrified. On the contrary the fear he experiences is a fear of the unknown or unacquainted because it could cause him pain. It also could be an existential fear passed on by generations that had succumbed to this paralysing emotion. Rats seem to make him panic. In "The Barn" the darkness is animate and in the darkness he could feel bright eyes staring at him and the two-lugged sacks moving "like great blind rats" and to "shun the fear", he had to lie face down. (DN) "An Advancement of Learning" is the account of how he outstared the rat for the first time and made it retreat. Wells had a great attraction to Heaney but one was "scaresome for there, out of ferns and tall / Foxgloves a rat slapped across my reflection" ("Personal Helicon" DN).

When the "gross-bellied frogs" invaded the flax-dam Heaney was sure that his robbing of the frogspawn was the reason for their threat. The only way to react to the situation was to run away and not be avenged. "The Early Purges" also shows such a fear which comes out of a guilty conscience. When Heaney saw the kittens, glossy and dead on the hill, he became "suddenly frightened." "The fear came back" when Dan trapped other animals and birds. In
"A Lough Neagh Sequence", the adult remembers how he was threatened while a boy, that he would be dragged into the waters by the lice if he did not comb his hair properly. The fear made him cautious while in riverbanks and fields (DD).

Pain that had been endured because of broken relationships causes a lot of fear and diffidence. In "Twice Shy" the protagonist's feelings are projected in the world outside. The traffic was "holding its breath," the sky was "a tense diaphragm" and dusk was "tremulous as a hawk" as the two young people walk along the embankment being extremely cautious of publishing their feeling (DN). "Honeymoon Flight" and "Scaffolding" also show the fear and nervousness that prevail in the course of building relationships. In the first poem, the couple are airborne and they "climb out of familiar landscape." They are "dependent on the invisible air" and paradoxically it is the air-pockets that jolt their fear and they go down. In the relationship of marriage the invisible emotion of love could equally be sustaining and jolting. Though the poem ends with a wise saying, "Travellers, at this point, can only trust" (DN), the presence of the lingering fear is obvious. The speaker in "Scaffolding" is less diffident and he is shown assuring his loved one thus:

So if, my dear, there sometimes seem to be
Old bridges breaking between you and me
Never fear. We may let the scaffolds fall
Confident that we have built our wall. (DN)

There are other poems like “Wedding Day”, “Summer Home”, “Shore Woman” and “Bye-Child” in the volume Wintering Out which show the pain and fear experienced in a conjugal situation or as a result of a sexual union. In North, Ireland is pictured as a woman and Britain’s rape has permanently left a sense of pain and fear. But most of these poems are not personal. Fear seems to continue in the poet though for different reasons. “Triptych”, “The Toome Road”, “Casualty”, “The Badgers” and “Elegy” in Field Work express a fear which even to an adult is well-founded. The “Singing School” sequence skillfully unites the fears of the past and the present. Placed in the second part of North, it elaborates the contemporary conditions of Northern Ireland. Speech patterns, pronunciations and “naming” can be a source of discrimination between Catholics and Protestants. It was generally believed that “Catholics, in general, don’t speak / As well as students from the Protestant schools.” Dismissing the idea of changing their accent, Heaney recalls an incident in school:

‘What’s your name, Heaney?’

‘Heaney, Father’.

‘Fair Enough.’

On my first day, the leather strap
Went epileptic in the Big Study.
Its echoes plashing over our bowed heads,
But I still wrote home that a boarder's life
Was not so bad, shying as usual.

("Singing School 1" *North*)

Little later in the same poem he narrates how he was stopped by the Royal Ulster Constabulary at the road block and was questioned in a way which echoes the priest's question: "What's your name, driver?" / 'Seamus . . .' / *Seamus ?* Such fears of being discriminated have been continuing from his boyhood days to the present and become intensified because of the past experience.

"A Constable Calls" is another poem in the "Singing School" sequence which illustrates the working of the ministry of fear. Heaney as a boy sat staring as his father made the tillage returns to the constable who had called in with his heavy ledger. After taking down everything, the constable questioned whether there was anything more and his father replied "No." To the boy it was a session of "Arithmetic and fear." The "polished holster" and the braid cord that looped into the revolver butt were symbols of authority that were frightening. He remembered,

But was there not a line
Of turnips where the seed ran out
In the potato field ? I assumed
Small guilts and sat
Imagining the black hole in the barracks.

(“Singing School 2” North)

Neither Heaney’s father nor the constable would be bothered about the “line of turnips” that Heaney’s father had failed to mention. Unlike the adults, the child assumed a sense of guilt and started imagining punishments and barracks. Only later would he call it a “small guilt” but it was troubling all the same and it was taking upon himself the guilt of the family. Analysing the poem, Ronald Tamplin finds that there are two sets of words, one to do with law and repression and the other with crops to which the law is applied. He comments that Heaney “builds into an ordinary enough childhood incident . . . a symbolic confrontation between repression and its representatives on the one hand and on the other, the dwellers on the land, indigenous as roots, storing themselves against the hour” (67). Fear here, is engendered by guilt which is unnecessary and which is brought forth unconsciously. Heaney as a grown-up and a poet, very often feels guilty of what he had not done rather than what he had and this trait seems to have been in him from his boyhood days.

Heaney seems to feel that the fear that he has experienced as an individual has not been damaging. He quotes Wordsworth in the
preface of “Singing School”: “Fair seedtime had my soul, and I grew up/Fostered alike by beauty and by fear” (North). “The Prelude” gives an account of incidents like “Nutting” and “The Stolen Boat” in which fear had made Wordsworth conscious of the Universal Spirit and had helped him to establish a contact. This had had a shaping influence on Wordsworth’s moral sense. Likewise, the awe and fear that Heaney experienced in his boyhood in his contact with the elements of nature, animal kingdom and human beings nurtured him and created a sense of wonder and mystery with which he clothes his poetic material.

There is also another fear that comes from the fragmented identity, the political divide and the religious intoleration. In “The Ministry of Fear” he refers to it: “Ulster was British, but with no rights on / The English lyric: all around us, though / We hadn’t named it, the ministry of fear” (North). This fear is seen in “Docker” when he says, “That fist would drop a hammer on a Catholic –” (DN). The aggrandizement of the invaders has not been the only reason behind the fear that is not healthy. The land has been cruel to them and in “At a Potato Digging” Heaney remarks how “Centuries / Of fear and homage to the famine god” had toughened “the muscles behind their humbled knees” (DN). “Storm on the Island” describes an Irish island, most probably Aran, where the earth is so wizened that no vegetation is found and when the storm rages they are
"bombarded by the empty air." At the fear that clutches the minds of the people, Heaney says, "Strange, it is a huge nothing that we fear" (*DN*). This is an existential fear that goes beyond reason and something that had been introjected in the prehistoric days.

The act of getting in touch with the past is metaphorically shown in different actions that are performed with a downward vertical movement or a circular movement. Digging, divining, retrieving from the bog and pumping out water are actions that send forth a shaft below the surface of the earth to get in touch with the hidden. Fishing is subaqueous. Darkness is associated with the subterranean regions and hence entering the darkness of the oratory, the barn, the smithy and the megalithic burial chambers show a similar movement. Out of the darkness of the night and "Out of wind off mid-Atlantic", the musician in "The Given Note" got his melody. (*DD*) The Badgers are seen in the darkness of the night and their appearance is believed to be visitations from the dead ("The Badgers" *FW*). The poet sees his shadow self in this nocturnal creature which to Heaney himself is "a kind of analogue for IRA activity" (Beisch 168). Dreams and fears surface out of the dark into the conscious level from the forgotten and forbidden areas of the past. Circular movements like churning, driving or walking round and round and praying with the rosary are also associated with the coming back to oneself or losing and finding oneself.
Most of the poems in Heaney's first five volumes are thus exercises of taking the poet back to the depths of the past. At a personal level, they link him with his immediate family, their vocations and their emotional support. They recount his early experiences in the farm which helped him to grow and learn, or dwell on the occurrences in the community which shaped his perceptions. The poems at a larger context link Heaney with his cultural, religious, historical and topographical past and they go beyond the personal memory into the transpersonal realm that Jung calls the collective unconscious. This can be seen as an effort of the developing ego towards an awareness of individual identity.

Gerald Slusser, a scholar on psychological development, religious symbol and culture, explains that just as in the physical growth puberty is caused from within, in the individual human psyche, the urge to form an individual identity is triggered from within, from the transpersonal psyche (48). This goading is a call to choose one's destiny and hence to Heaney, to whom the vocation of writing poetry was like a "release", it is seen at the beginning of his poetic career. In "Feeling into Words" Heaney confesses that "Digging", one of his early poems and the one that opens the first volume *Death of a Naturalist*, had for him "the force of an initiation." He felt he had found a voice and "Finding a voice means
that you can get your own feeling into your own words and that your words have the feel of you about them.” (Preoccupations 42–43). He goes on to say how it is like a unique signature, a fingerprint which can be employed for identification. Obviously, to Heaney, this is the birth of his ego consciousness. “With the onset of a conscious identity, the conscious personality, the ego . . . assumes an attitude and a relationship toward the realm of the unconscious” (Slusser 138). As the individuation process has to take place within oneself, there is a need to “return to the fundamental facts of their own beings, which means transcending the customary ways of understanding and acting, shaking off the blinders of tradition and custom, becoming conscious of oneself” (Slusser 42).

Jung’s views on individuation process would be helpful to trace the patterns in Heaney’s development. Jung calls the process a “quest of wholeness” which necessitates the forging of a link between the conscious and the unconscious aspects of the psyche. It is not a union of the two but reconciling of the conscious with that side of the personality – the unconscious – which has not been taken into account. This integration of the whole personality is achieved when a person leaves the trodden paths and seeks a new way of living, in the “development of the intellect or his special skill” (Fordham 76–78). Heaney’s shifting to digging with a pen from the ancestral occupation of digging with a spade is synonymous with the
beginning of the individuation process. From the Jungian point of view this is not an easy process because the conscious and the unconscious openly conflict and collaborate and this is linked to "the old play of hammer and anvil: the suffering iron between them will be in the end be shaped into an unbreakable whole, the individual. This experience is what is called the process of individuation" (qtd. in Fordham 77). This tempering experience is seen in "The Forge":

The anvil must be somewhere in the centre,
Horned as a unicorn, at one end square,
Set there immovable: an altar
Where he expends himself in shape and music.

Then grunts and goes in, with a slam and flick
To beat real iron out, to work the bellows. (DD)

Another factor that is closely related to this psychic phenomenon is the myth system which exists in all cultures. Slusser argues:

Finally, because the psychic makeup is universal (all humans share a common archetypal structure of the psyche, as we share the physical structure of the body), the myths of the world tell a universal story in a bewildering variety of costumes. It is the same story everywhere because it is the story of the psyche, its
According to Erich Neumann, a German psychoanalyst and follower of Jung, “the hero is the archetypal forerunner of mankind in general” (131), and hence every person is called to take a Hero journey. Isiah Smithson writes in his “The Evolution of Human Consciousness”, that ego that has the hero-potential originates from the unconscious, the Great Mother. It develops as a son-lover and progresses to a stage of struggling against the Mother. Finally the ties are severed with the primordial unity and the Hero figure emerges. The encounter with the Great Mother is often found as fight with the dragon or descent to the underworld (Davis 225). The detachment is not the end. The ego has to be reunited in the final stage of development with the unconscious self in a new identity and relation. There are several obstacles in all stages preventing the hero from succeeding in his venture but if he succeeds, the individuation process is complete and in Jung’s words “the treasure” is acquired.

Heaney’s early poems show the birth of the ego consciousness, the son-lover phase of growth, and the struggle with the Great Mother. The Earth has always been symbolic of feminine principle
because of its fecund quality. Heaney commenting on Montague's poetry has said that the ancient feminine religion of Northern Europe is the lens through which Montague looks and the "landscape becomes a memory, a piety, a loved mother" and Carlanda Green in her essay "The Feminine Principle in Seamus Heaney's Poetry" says, "Heaney could well be describing his own work" (4) when he is describing Montague's. Heaney's "Land", a poem in Wintering Out, describes man's union with the land and land is described in terms of a woman, as effigy of the Earth Mother:

a woman of old wet leaves,  
rush-bands and thatcher's scollops,  
stooked loosely, her breasts an open-work  
of new straw and harvest bows.  
Gazing out past  
the shifting hares.

The creative and sustaining potential of the earth is seen in the Antaeus poems in North. Without woman, man is powerless and faces destruction as is Ge's son Antaeus. In "Antaeus", Antaeus says, "When I lie on the ground/ I rise flushed as a rose in the morning." It is like "an elixir" to him:

I cannot be weaned  
off the earth's long contour, her river-veins.  
Down here in my cave
Girded with root and rock
I am cradled in the dark that wombed me
And nurtured in every artery
Like a small hillock. (North)

When Hercules the sky-born hero lifts Antaeus and keeps him away from the earth, the “mould-hugger” is debilitated and becomes powerless as “a profiled ridge, / a sleeping giant” (“Hercules and Antaeus” North).

The bog poems also show the Great Mother as the lover, in the aspects of both the giver and the taker of life. Heaney’s assertion that “The bogholes might be Atlantic seepage. / The wet centre is bottomless” (“Bogland” DD) is suggestive of fecundity as well as fatality. Also, in “Kinship”, a long poem of six sections, he prefers to refer to the “slime kingdom” as “bog”, which means “soft” in Irish. He describes it as “enbalmer / of votive goods / and sabred fugitives”, “Insatiable bride”, “vowel of earth” and relates his growth to “all this”:

I grew out of all this
like a weeping willow
inclined to
the appetites of gravity.

But the “mother ground” is also blood-thirsty, to whom “nothing will suffice” and she is one who perpetuates “slaughter for the common good” (“Kinship”, North). The crumbled earth which produces knots
of potatoes is referred to as “black mother” and “bitch earth” in “At a Potato Digging” (DN). This ambivalence is noticed in the mythical Great Mother, the unconscious, to which ego tries to relate and from which it is distinguishing itself. It is “elementary” in the sense it tends to hold fast to everything that springs from it, and “transformative” by driving towards development though not necessarily improvement. It has a way of posing a threat to obliterate ego (Davis 225). It is then that the ego has to fight and resistance becomes an unavoidable element in growth.

Digging to collect turf or gather potatoes, “striking downwards” to recover hundred-year old butter or “sabred fugitives”, and sending a shaft into the depths to tap water and all such vertical movements are intrusive and are acts of violence. The ground is to be possessed and the cultivation and control alone gives man the pride of manhood. Teresa de Lauretis writes referring to Lotman’s theory of plot typology:

In the mythical text, then, the hero must be male regardless of the gender of the character, because the obstacle whatever its personifications is morphologically female – and indeed simply, the womb, the earth, the space of his movement. As he crosses the boundary and ‘penetrates’ the other space the mythical subject is constructed as human being and as male; he is the
active principle of culture, the establisher of distinction, . . . Female is what is not susceptible to transformation to life or death, she (it) an element of plot-space, a topos, a resistance matrix and matter. (Armstrong and Tennenhouse 251)

The Hero, who thus asserts himself as a man and a hero, feels the necessity of doing it at a certain time in his life. Joseph Campbell, who studied the Hero myths in various cultures observes that the Hero's journey begins with a call to adventure and this is his observation:

the herald is a creature representing the simpler levels of animal development, e.g., a toad or a frog, . . . because the call to adventure is a call to begin the battle, to control the forces of instinct, to bring the forces to consciousness. In the symbolic economy of the psyche these instinctual forces are usually represented by some lowly animal form. (Slusser 64)

Surprisingly, "Death of a Naturalist", the title poem of Heaney's first volume shows a confrontation with the frogs. Like a naturalist interested in the life cycles of creatures, the boy had found delight in watching frogspawn grow into tadpoles. Then one day he met the adult frogs in the flax-dam: "Right down the dam gross-bellied frogs were cocked / On sods; their loose necks pulsed like sails." He
deduced that they were there “for vengeance” and so ran away in fear. Heaney calls this the death of a naturalist and the end of one form of existence suggests the birth of another. The early experience he had in the farm becomes the beginning of a new consciousness, that of a poet.

As a Hero journeys, numerous challenges pose a threat to his courage and he has to own his fear in building an authentic self. Maud Bodkin asserts,

The hero experiences the anguish that befalls the man who in the midst of a momentous enterprise turns from action, and plunging into the depths of his own being meets the shock of secret fears that the self-maintenance of his own courage held down while confronting the outer world. (127)

Both Maud Bodkin and Gerald Slusser talk about the Hero facing darkness in his onward journey. Slusser equates darkness with the unconscious and “instinctual drivenness” (55) while Bodkin sees the dark galleries within a mountain as the “dim subliminal recesses of the human soul” (128). Campbell is of the opinion that the journey signifies that “destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown” (58), and this region is represented as “a kingdom
underground, beneath the waves" and such which are "projection of unconscious content" (79).

It has been pointed out earlier that the dominant emotion that Heaney expresses in his early poems, is fear. The land, the water and the wind, the nocturnal creatures, relationships that might lead to marriage, marriage itself, the killing of pets and people, festivals like Halloween, the armoured cars and helicopters and the future in that island which was "full of comfortless noises" had all evoked a sense of fear in him. At the end of North he questions, "How did I end up like this?" Like a "Wood-Kerne", a deserter who has taken to the woods, he has

Escaped from the massacre,
Taking protective colouring
From bole and bark, feeling
Every wind that blows; ("Singing School 6" North)

Fear had driven him to take such a position. He had moved to Wicklow, south of the border in the Republic and the choice does not keep him in peace. In fact, he is afraid whether he has made the right choice. Entry into the dark, literally and symbolically, also abounds in the poems of Heaney. The barn, the stall of old Kelly's unlicensed bull, the smithy, the Gallarus Oratory, the depths of the bog, the megalithic burial chambers, the ninth circle of Inferno, the hollow trunk of the willow tree and the lough waters, all have a
dark interior which allures the poet. The longship of the Vikings exhorted to "compose in darkness" ("North", *North*).

Jung remarks that though the archetypal images vary from one culture to another, certain images, like water, are universal. Water, symbolically, is the mother from which all living things rise and in which they find their end. Even the sun is deemed to be rising from and setting in the waters. Hence besides the earth, water also is seen as the Great Mother Unconscious which is the source of ego-consciousness. Slusser writes, "she [Great Mother Goddess] is often found at the 'centre of the world' beside the Omphalos" (114). Omphalos is the conical stone at Delphi which is supposed to be the central point of the earth. To Heaney the pump outside their back door in County Derry marked the "centre of another world." The plunger of the pump slugging up and down sounded like "omphalos." "That pump marked the original descent into the earth, sand, gravel, water. It centred and staked the imagination, made its foundation the foundation of the *omphalos itself*" (*Preoccupations* 17; 20). The pump is referred to as "The invisible, untoppled omphalos" in "The Toome Road" (*FW*). In the early poems of Heaney, water is divined, pumped out, released and thawed out and the protagonist is obviously proud of his actions. Heaney's experience of clearing a drain is described thus:
I shovelled up livery slicks
Till the water gradually ran
Clean on its old floor.

...I labour
Towards its still. It holds and gluts. ("Bann Clay" DD)

Water is both comforting and frightening and reflects the poet who like "big-eyed Narcissus" used to stare into wells. This contact with water symbolises facing the Mother Unconscious in the process of individuation.

Heaney's titles for his collections are significant. They direct one's attention to the birth of ego-consciousness and its journey underground. "Death of a Naturalist", announces the birth of a new consciousness. The young man, who had been till then observing the animals, creatures and farmyard experiences as a naturalist would, ceases to be a naturalist and assumes the identity of the poet. "Door into the Dark", the title of the second volume is from "The Forge": "All I know is a door into the dark. Outside, old axles and iron hoops rusting;" (DD). The protagonist does not enter but listens to "the hammered anvil's short-pitched ring" and imagines what goes on inside. The other poems in the volume bring out experiencing darkness in various realms: the darkness of nightmare and dream ("Night Piece" "Dream") the darkness of underground and the dry-
stone oratory ("Bogland", "In Gallarus Oratory"), the darkness of the womb ("Elegy for a Still-born Child", "Cana Revisited"), and the darkness that broken relationships and death bring ("Gone", "Victorian Guitar"). As darkness is symbolic of the unconscious, the door into the dark refers to the setting out on a journey to face the unconscious.

"Wintering Out" is a term associated with cattle and the struggle borne throughout winter. In Listener Heaney explains, "It is meant to be, I suppose, comfortless enough, but with a notion of survival in it" (qtd. in Corcoran, Student's 71). It is suggestive of the distress endured by ego in the process of individuation. "North", the title of the next collection refers to Northern Ireland, where the struggle takes place, but also has the implication of darkness and infernal regions. "Field Work" refers to a direct association with the personal, political and the historical "dark". The last poem of this book is "Ugolino", a translation from Dante's "Inferno." Besides being "a dig" from the literary past, the poem takes the readers to Cocytus, the ninth and last circle of hell where Ugolino, an erstwhile count of Pisa keeps gnawing the skull of Archbishop Roger. The readers of the Divine Comedy know well that the travel through the subterranean regions would soon be over and the travellers, Dante and Virgil, would come out of Inferno and continue their journey to Purgatory. Similarly "Ugolino" presupposes a
change in the poet's movement of going downwards. The next book *Station Island* shows the poet's pilgrimage to a purgatorial place.

The poems of Heaney's first five volumes reveal the birth of the ego-consciousness or a break from a unified primordial being, or the collective sense of identity. This is a process that leads Heaney towards individuation. Poetry springs from one's consciousness and the consciousness is conditioned by one's experience. Heaney's poems show that he finds it difficult to wriggle out of the Irish traditions, his Irish Catholic identity and the socio-political identification. This is not something that is tutored but is structured within him. Hence, the process of individuation is empirically identified in the poems and a psychological reading attests to this fact. The archetypal pattern of descent to the underworld is manifested in the following ways in Heaney's poems: reliving his farmyard experiences; describing the rituals that connected him with the pre-Christian days; articulating words that linked him with historical and topographical past; and recalling the political and cultural experiences that lie deep in the racial memory. The archetypal symbol "connects one poem with another and, thereby, helps to unify and integrate our literary experience . . . it does indicate a certain unity in the nature that poetry imitates, and in the communicating activity of which poetry forms part" (Frye 99).
The above analysis shows how the microcosmic world of Heaney's family, the boyhood experiences in the farm and rituals in the community and the elusive yet powerful feeling of fear contributed to the growth of Heaney's poetic consciousness. In the early books, as Heaney individuates into a full-fledged poet, he digs into these experiences that had been stored in his unconscious. This phenomenon is in keeping with the psychological and mythical explanations given by Jung and Neumann that an individual when he or she proposes to leave the trodden paths of tradition and concentrate on the development of a special skill, finds it imperative to integrate the conscious self with that of the unconscious. This getting in touch with the unconscious is done by receding into the personal and racial past. Heaney's digging to reach the roots of the cultural, historical, religious and topographical heritage which forms the macrocosmic realm is dealt with in the next chapter. This one is exclusively about Heaney's personal past.

Heaney's parents and his aunt, a mother surrogate, have bequeathed love and pride in their occupations and in Heaney is seen an inclination to continue as well as to resist. This dialectic movement shows the process of individuation which Jung likens to the "play of hammer and anvil", the conflict and collaboration between the conscious developing ego and the unconscious. The
ordinary occurrences in the farmyard have supplied eternal truths. to the growing consciousness and recalling gives a renewed outlook of the limited understanding of the child. Ritual is an imaginative way of making sense of the worlds that are unknown and as death defeats all efforts of cognition, rituals that are associated with death are the oldest that are known to man. The rites of passage, taking for granted the continuity of life, is the most common one. The fascination that Heaney has for this structured activity, as revealed in the poems, itself is an act of continuity. Retaining these old practices may bring healing to a broken and bleeding nation. Fear that Heaney has experienced as an individual and as part of a community has been both curtailing and educative and the poet relives the feeling in his long and lonely journey of finding himself. This chapter thus has been a study of these facts to prove how prying into his roots is part of Heaney's individuation process and how in that phase the poet establishes a bond of continuity while at the same time he resists factors that hinder his growth.