Among Schoolchildren

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A JOHN MALONE MEMORIAL LECTURE

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JOHN MALONE

given by
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I AM honoured to have been invited to deliver this, the second John Malone Memorial Lecture, and I am very conscious of his eager and attentive ghost in the audience this evening. His presence was always both confirming and critical, listening to what he wanted to hear with real assent, and insisting on engaging with what did not engage him with an equal courtesy and rigour. It is, of course, as an educator that he made his career and his contribution to the public life and it is our formal concern to commemorate his pioneering and inspirational work in the educational sphere. But it was as a reader, a lover of poetry, a one man audience, that I knew him best. Something in him was genuinely animated by the encounter with writing and writers and to meet his candid gaze from the audience during a reading or a lecture such as this was to be fortified in the awareness that the writer's life was not just a matter of operating within a more or less closed-shop guild of practitioners but that it was an enterprise that had to transmit and receive its energies from a world beyond the coteries. He gave you the confidence that an often repeated phrase like "the writer's role in society" was not just a hand-me-down abstraction but a fact of the usual life. He reminded you of what the Italian poet Montale called "the second life of art", the life it lives in the memories and affections of those people who have been touched by it. He was no élitist, but he was no seller short of things either, and it is in the trust that he would have wanted himself honoured as a witness to the good force of imagination, to the practice and function of art and in particular, literary art, and the way that art and its practice can refract and compose the tensions of the world, it is in this trust that I approached the task of delivering the memorial lecture.

What I am involved in here is more autobiography than argument, carried on in the faith that the educational process is a matter of sympathetic recognition. The learning experience is both challenge and liberation so I hope you will bear with me if I adduce myself as an example of the bewilderments and attempts at resolution the sensibility can undergo in this country as it tries to grow into a coherent personality. I want to muse upon my own experience and the experience and writings of others in order to arrive at some clarification of what our attitudes should be as people who practice the responsible and influential arts of teaching in Ireland today. My title is the title of Yeats' great visionary poem which he composed in 1926 after a visit to a school in Waterford. Yeats had recently been a senator of the Irish Free State and as a result of his friendship with one Joseph O'Neill, who was then secretary to the Department of Education, he had for the moment become interested in the work of the schools and had visited several during 1926, the year the poem was written.

The first stanza sets the scene. It is full of the stuff of ordinary experience, close to the humdrum and the usual. There's a visitor in the school and the children are on their best behaviour, a little apprehensive because they have been warned that the man is not only a poet but a visitor from the Department in Dublin. We are in the world of routine, the reliable world of agreed behaviour: smiles, embarrassment, courtesy, desks and nuns. We are in a place where we are our official routine selves, where the great poet finally becomes just another official:

> I walk through the long schoolroom questioning.
> A kind old nun in a white hood replies;
> The children learn to cipher and to sing,
> To study reading books and histories,
> To cut and sew, be neat in everything
> In the best modern way — the children's eyes
> In momentary wonder stare upon
> A sixty-year-old smiling public man.

Yet any routine world, whether it be primary school classroom or college of education lecture hall, has based its routines upon some vision.

The mechanics and humdrum of its operation are evolved to further or realize some end, some ideal result posited on a vision of what the pupil or the student teacher should become. In the case of the school which Yeats visited, that vision was Maria Montessori's, which puts its trust in the harmonious expansion of the pupil's potential. Yeats himself was much in sympathy with this idea of education as a natural blossoming for he said in a Senate speech made as a result of his schools visit:

> I am sure for a child to spend all day in a school with a stupid, ill-trained man under an ill-planned system is less good for that child than that the child should be running through the fields and learning nothing.

All of us, I suppose, are in at least some agreement with this.

The Latin root of the verb 'to educate' is *educare,* to lead or bring or draw out, and our notions of education to a large extent centre upon this etymological core. The whole child-centred approach to pedagogy constitutes an orthodoxy that as educators we are leading those being educated towards themselves, drawing out what is in them, helping them to bring to consciousness areas of their being that would otherwise remain *terra incognita* to them. As each individual comes to a sense of his powers and skills, he is enabled and freed into some new independence, readied for commitment and truly active selfhood. Such is our orthodoxy, such is the philosophy which many of us would espouse.

And yet, of course, there is more to it than that. As well as the growth of the personality and the ideal of self-cultivation, there are other expectations which the state will lay upon its educators. These personalities will have to be citizens and as *The Teacher's Handbook of the Primary School Curriculum* puts it, "effective education for citizenship requires that each individual be enabled to feel that he is an integral part of the community deriving satisfaction from his full participation in its common life", and the point is then emphasized and elaborated by this quotation from an OECD report:

> This is not a matter of purely mechanical achievement of reading or writing or vocational training, but of sharing conceptions, loyalties and ideals common to all. This common citizenship is the cement of society without which it becomes weak and unstable and the prospect of social progress diminishes.

This cement of society, these shared conceptions, loyalties and ideals, this common culture of custom and attitude — all this is deeply relevant to the schoolroom also. It lies below, sustains and survives the world of routine, and it is to this area that I would like to direct the discussion because in this country, north and south, this social cement of a common culture and shared national attitudes is not strong or shared or common, and still requires thinking about if we are to conduct ourselves with confidence and clarity among schoolchildren.

The national schools were not long established here when a great-great-aunt of mine, one Catherine Bradley from the townland of Dreenan, in the parish of Lavey, Co. Derry, learned "to cut and sew, be neat in everything — In the best modern way". The best modern way for 1843, that is. I have an example of her school needlework, a sampler which she embroidered with the alphabet, first in lower case letters, then in capitals; then the numbers 1 to 10; and then, below these neat try-outs, there is this verse:

> Ireland as she ought to be
> Great glorious and free
> First flower of the earth
> First gem of the sea.

Girlhood's fire was in her blood. And it was symbolized by another embroidery, beneath the verse, of a shamrock. All very coherent so far, all part of a common culture and attitude, one that flowers in the wild earth of Dreenan to this day. But there are four more words on the sampler that force us to remember other attitudes. Squeezed in to the right of the verse, unbalancing the symmetry of the design and complicating the sentiments of the poem there are the words "God Save The Queen". The dominant system was making itself felt and the common culture squeezed itself a bit to the side to allow it in. And so, in that sampler sewn by a nineteenth-century schoolgirl, two value systems which now explode daily, are lodged like dormant munitions on one piece of, no doubt, Ulster linen.

Another emblem there, as Yeats would say, Ulster linen. Linen, Huguenots, bleaching greens, Belfast, industrial power, Curse the Pope, God save the Queen. Linen stands for "independent, rattling, non-transcendent Ulster", for all that is better and worse in the planter tradition, and when it goes with Ulster, it effects a semantic change in that ancient word. Ulster shrinks to a six-county region, its hero is not Cuchulainn but Carson, and its Great O'Neill not a rebellious chieftain from sixteenth-century Tyrone but a Unionist guards officer from Co. Antrim.

Yet it was a large map of this younger, smaller Ulster that hung in different shades of greens and blues and fawns in the first classroom I knew, with the border emphasized by a thick red selvedge all the way from Lough Foyle to Carlingford Lough. That vestigially bloody marking halted the eye travelling south and west; but travelling east, on slender dotted lines that curled fluently from Larne to Stranraer, from Derry to Glasgow, from Belfast to Liverpool and Belfast to Heysham, small black steamships lured the eye across the blue wash of St. George's Channel. Another emblem there, all of a piece with the reading book where we learned off "Oh to be in England" and the singing lesson where we belted out "The Lincolnshire Poacher", good enough stuff in itself, conscientiously and innocently taught and learned, but unconsciously transmitting attitudes and customs and habits of feeling that were at variance with the common hearth feelings of the pupils of that particular school. The official British culture, if you like, was at odds with the anthropological culture; they tended to exist side by side in the mind rather as Catherine Bradley's warring slogans lay contiguous but antithetical inside her dainty sampler.

Moving from primary school to university, when I think back on those years, I can see a similar tension. I was studying English, reading Shakespeare and Oscar Wilde and Chaucer and Dickens, considering the rhythms of the Authorized Version of the Bible and their effect on English prose, considering the tradition of courtly love, learning to find my way among the ironies and niceties of Jane Austen's vicarages, discussing Tennyson's loss of faith and Lawrence's phallic consciousness, learning of the rituals of club life in India by reading E. M. Forster and learning the rituals of the sherry party by attending receptions at the house of our Oxford professor, a man who was alleged to have confessed that he was the first of his family to have gone into trade.

Meanwhile, at the weekends and during the holidays, far from the sherry parties of Malone Road, the secretary of the local Pioneer Total Abstinence Association was enrolling me as a probationer in the society; far from the elegances of Oscar Wilde and the profundities of Shakespeare, I was acting with the Bellaghy Dramatic Society in plays about 1798, now playing a United Irishman, a blacksmith forging pikes on a real anvil fetched from Devlin's forge at Hillhead, now playing Robert Emmet in a one-act melodrama and having my performance hailed in the crowded columns of the *Mid-Ulster Mail.* Far from discussing the Victorian loss of faith, I was driving my mother to evening devotions in the "chapel" or looking for my name in a list of "adorers" at the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Far from the melodies of courtly love, I was acting as *fear a' tigh* at the GAA *ceilidh,* crying "Ballai Luimni" or "Corr Seisiur Deag" and trying to master a way of coaxing a training college student into the back seat of our Austin Sixteen. And far, far from Lawrence's phallic candour, finding myself subsequently confessing sins of immodest and immoderate embraces.

Was I two persons or one? Was I extending myself or breaking myself apart? Was I being led out or led away? Was I failing to live up to the aspiring literary intellectual effort when I was at home, was I betraying the culture of the parish when I was at the university? Obviously, such tensions and confusions were not the unique affliction of a Northern Ireland Catholic country teenager in the nineteen-fifties. In all kinds of ways the experience can be paralleled, notably in English novels of the same period, by poets such as Philip Larkin and Kingsley Amis, scholarship boys who wrote autobiographical fictions about the bruises they suffered when as lower middle-class provincial students they found themselves among the higher incomes and higher pretensions of an Oxford college or a redbrick common room.

What came to fill the gap between the parish and the academy, between the culture of the GAA hall and the culture of Shakespeare, what realigned my sense of belonging to a place with the attendant sense of displacement, was, first of all, Daniel Corkery and his potent monocular vision of *The Hidden Ireland.* Corkery's message was succinct and potent. "We were robbed", he said. We lost what made us what we are. We had lost the indigenous Gaelic civilization and he evoked that civilization in its decline with elegiac nostalgia as he wrote lovingly and romantically about the poets of Munster in the seventeenth century, poets of a people whom the parliament in Dublin regarded as "the common enemy": Eoghan Rua O Suilleabhain, Aodhgan O Rathaille, the poets of the Maighe, even Brian Merriman. At that time I was also reading in Irish the poems of northerners like Cathal Bui Mac Giolla Gunna and Art MacCooey, finding Tyrone and the O'Neills reflected in a poetry that belonged to the home landscape as truly as Browning's wise thrush belonged to his young summer weather across the water. And it was around this time that I had a small experience which ratified this sense of a relationship to a hidden Ulster in a memorable and intimate way, and ratified Corkery's notion of loss and deprivation.

I came across, in Dineen's Irish Dictionary, a word with the letters *Doir* in brackets after it, a word which was thereby defined as one peculiar to the Irish spoken at one time in my own English-speaking County Derry. The word was “Lachtar”, meaning a flock of young chickens. Suddenly I was animated with the fact of loss which Corkery had described. The word had survived in our district as a common and, as far as I had known until then, an English word but now I realized it lived upon our tongues like a capillary stretching back to a time when Irish was the lingua franca of the whole place. Suddenly the resentful nationalism of my Catholic minority experience was fused with a concept of identity that was enlarging and releasing and would eventually help me to relate my literary education with the heritage of the home ground. For example, much later I wrote a poem called *Broagh*. Broagh is the name of a townland where one half of our farm was situated, and in my new etymological frame of mind I realized it was the Irish word *Bruach,* the bank, the bank of the river Moyola, which bordered the farm. I also realized that it was a sound native to Ireland, common to Unionist and Nationalist, but unavailable to an English person, who could not quite manage the sound represented by *gh,* and would likely say *Broa.* Yet the Broagh riverbank was covered with docken, and docken was an old English plural, like *shoon,* the archaic plural of shoe. And our riverbank field was called ‘the long rigs”, and *rigs* is a Scottish word, probably brought over by the planters in the seventeenth century. So the poem, although very short, tried to do justice to all the elements of heritage in my natural speech, although it could not have come into being without the excited, vindicated right of the Irish to have its equal say.

Riverbank, the long rigs
ending in broad docken
and a canopied pad
down to the ford.

The garden mould
bruised easily, the shower
gathering in your heelmark
was the black O

> in Broagh,
> its low tattoo
> among the windy boortrees
> and rhubarb-blades
> ended almost
> suddenly, like that last
> gh the strangers found
> difficult to manage.

Small as it is, this piece of verse represented a turn of the tide. I felt that I had made Broagh exclusive, made the English language work to tell my story.

But however much Corkery helped, the integration would not have been possible without Joyce, and specifically the Joyce who wrote about Stephen Dedalus's linguistic self-consciousness in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Stephen, in that famous passage, feels inadequate when he hears the English Jesuit speaking English, and contact with the English accent itself leaves him smarting. He thought:

> The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words home, Christ, ale, master, on his lips than on mine . . . His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech.

But that was Stephen's view and not necessarily the view of his creator, James Joyce himself. Stephen, the character, looks with envy at the unity of culture and possession of a shared language and a unified myth which ratifies English identity. Joyce, the writer, did not necessarily look with the same envy at this state of affairs. He accepted the universe of Ireland as a different, if also a desperate state, with its own integrities and destinies which had to be defined and resolved in accordance with their own structures and idioms.

If, at the point in the book I have just quoted from, Stephen is allowed to express a nostalgia for the more civil and coherent English world, and allowed to feel that his Drumcondra word "tundish", his "lachtar", as it were, is an embarrassment, a kind of Firbolg birthmark rebuked by the Milesian superiority of the standard English "funnel", at a later point Joyce allows a different perspective to enter. Stephen, like many another Irishman and Ulsterman, had felt himself deprived of his full human inheritance just by reason of his cultural and geographic placing. "It wounded him to think", Joyce writes, "that he would never be but a shy guest at the feast of the world's culture and that the monkish learning, in terms of which he was striving to forge out an aesthetic philosophy, was held no higher by the age he lived in than the subtle and curious jargons of heraldry and falconry". But as Stephen comes to a sense of the complex reality of the world he inhabits, this unease drops away. Against his previous linguistic inferiority complex, we must set this later diary event at the end of *Portrait*:

> That tundish has been on my mind for a long time. I looked it up and find it English and good old blunt English too. Damn the dean of studies and his funnel! What did he come here for? To teach us our own language or to learn it from us? Damn him one way or another.

What had seemed disabling and provincial is suddenly found to be corroborating and fundamental and potentially universal. To belong to Ireland, to speak its dialect, is not necessarily to be cut off from the world's banquet because that banquet is eaten at the table of one's own life, savoured by the tongue one speaks. Stephen now trusts what he calls "our own language" and in that trust he will go to encounter what he calls "the reality of experience". But it will be his own specific Dublin experience, with all its religious and historical freight, so different from the English experience to which he had heretofore stood in a subservient relationship.

And if Joyce is exemplary in revealing that the conceptions, loyalties and ideals of cross-channel culture are not necessarily to be shared by our insular imagination, he is also exemplary in refusing to replace that myth of alien superiority by the myth of native superiority. If the coherence of English culture is a fruitless aspiration, equally fruitless is the dream of a Gaelic order restored. Joyce is against all such alibis. What Stephen called in the diary entry "our own language" is, after all, the English language modified by its residence in Ireland. If he has gone to the trouble of freeing his mind from the net of the English myth, he is also intent on deconstructing the prescriptive myth of Irishness which was burgeoning in his youth and which survives in various sympathetic and unsympathetic forms to this day.

Consider, for example, some lines from a poem by the late Sean O Riordain, a significant voice in modern Irish writing, a poet who lived in Cork city but whose dream home was among the native speakers of Dunquin in Co. Kerry. I have translated the title as "Come Back Again", and these are the opening verses:

> Leave the Glen of the Mad in the east,
> Drain the spirit of the age out of your blood,
> Close your mind to all that happened

> Since the battle of Kinsale was fought,
> Since the load started to weigh heavy
> And the road got longer. Unshackle your mind
> Of its civil English tackling,
> Shelley, Keats and Shakespeare.
> Get back to what is your own.
> Wash your mind and wash your tongue
> That was spancelled in a syntax
> Putting you out of step with yourself.

By a curious coincidence, I worked on this translation while I was on a bus trip to Lady Gregory's demesne at Coole Park; and it seemed to me as I journeyed towards the walled garden with its autograph tree carved with initials of W. B. Yeats, A. E., George Moore, Sean O'Casey and others, it seemed that I was heading for a head-on collision, spiritually and linguistically, if not geographically, with those who would follow O Riordain's advice to find their destination in "Dunquin in the evening light".

As somebody whose sense of poetic form derived not only from Yeats and Patrick Kavanagh, but also from Keats and Shakespeare, I found the advice to ditch all that impossible, since I do not find the syntax of my speech puts me out of touch with myself. And I also found the advice to ignore history since Kinsale impossible to accept since it is that history which has made us all what we are. But I did respond to a sense of homecoming at the end of the poem, a sense of release and repose when the poet goes on to describe his destination; for as well as being polemic, this is a poem, an expression of the writer's inner division and of his repining for that universal, paradisal place where our conflicts will be resolved. Nevertheless, while the curve of the feeling is true, for me the line of the argument has to be untrue.

That Irish is a fortification and an enrichment I hope I have made clear, but I also hope I have made clear that as a teacher and writer, I do not yield to the notion that my identity is disabled and falsified and somehow slightly traitorous if I conduct my casual and imaginative transactions in the speech I was born to. Both languages are part of the landscape and mention of landscape reminds me of a line in Brian Friel's *Translations* which is entirely pertinent. "It can happen in a civilization", says the schoolmaster in that play, "that the contours of a language no longer match the landscape of fact". The schoolmaster was recognising that in the social and economic landscape of nineteenth century Ireland, Irish would necessarily give way to English. But the landscape of fact also includes the cultural and political contours, and those contours have been changed by the retrieval of political independence for twenty-six counties. So that English can properly give way to the return of Irish to mark some parts of the new map, say Dunquin. But what of Finaghy on a July afternoon?

There we find the obverse of the O Riordain position. If he would obliterate history since Kinsale, the loyalist imagination at its most enthusiastic would obliterate history before Kinsale. If O Riordain needs to unshackle his tongue of its English harness in order to create a secure and true spiritual home, the anti-O Riordain would exclude all taint and acquaintance with the Irish dimension of his experience in order to ratify the purity and liberty of his stand. As with O Riordain's poem, the loyalist's fidelity is capable of a double application. It can, on the one hand, be a holding, grounding, utterly necessary exercise in self-definition and self-respect, an insistence on dwelling within conceptions and ideals which animate a certain community and the individuals within that community. It can say, we prefer the dream of a mainland home, we shall remember ancestry and maintain solidarity with our traditional values, and it has in fact strenuously maintained its right to say and do this. But the very strenuousness of this maintained effort constitutes its negative aspect. Just as the O Riordain poem, in its sectarian application, would refuse to recognise history and language other than its own espoused versions of them, just as it would turn a vision of fulfilment into an instrument of coercion, the same neurotic intensity is in danger of turning conceptions and loyalties within the Unionist tradition into refusals and paranoias. And hence it is of paramount importance that all who work among schoolchildren, as educators, are clear-headed, sure-footed, nimble and accurate, open and aware of the psychic and historical realm within which they operate so casually and so potently.

Catherine Bradley's sampler, with its ambivalent if not duplicitous texts, still hangs in the balance, and more precariously than ever. It has great allegorical force as a representation of divisions within the country, but I would like to supplement it with another parable.

To go back to "lachtar". To discover its roots was one stage of growth and grounding, a contrary but essential discovery of ancestry and loyalty. But ancestry and loyalty are not everything. The myths of identity are only one domain of reality. The facts of lived experience are equally important, though, oddly enough, sometimes they are harder to establish. But a few years ago, long after the thrill of finding links in "lachtar" with an Irish-speaking Ulster, I remembered with equal affection a different word, one without any particular historical or cultural charge, a twentieth-century word, technological, without affiliation, as unattached in the South Downs as in South Derry, but also a word associated with the brooding world of chickens. This was "incubator", and as I write it, its neuter syllables are alive with warmth and cheepings and musty smells, for the incubator was part of the idiom of chicken farming too. It summons the whole secret world of the child in the outhouse, the world of wonder and tenderness. And these deeply-lodged intimacies, this phenomenological conditioning of the personal life, is as crucial to the salvation of our human souls as the conditionings we undergo from our myths of identity. And it is the educator's and the artist's special task to reveal to himself and to others the vitality of this inner personal world, and to testify to its fundamental value. The life that the word *incubator* lived in me, unlike its cousin *lachtar,* has little to do with historical affections and group bonding; it lives in the ground of pre-reflective being and if I were to prepare my own sampler to remind myself of the complex recognitions we are all capable of and which we should all live up to, I could do no worse than embroider it and its enigmatic cousin "lachtar" on the pallid but durable texture of some remnant of linen.

Another memory. Another parable. Across the road from us in the days of the incubator, lived the Evans family, and my companion from that house was Tommy Evans, whom I used to envy because of his airgun and the other gun which his father had above the door in their house. Though the word tradition meant little to us then, it can now be said that we belonged to different traditions. But on the morning I want to recall, tradition was the last thing on our minds. It was Christmas Day and we had assembled to compare our toys and one of his sent a sharp pang of jealousy through me. This was a brightly painted wooden battleship, all reds and whites and many blues, which he set proudly on the calm waters of the rain-butt at the gable and guided it through its manoeuvres with a touch of his possessive and well-satisfied finger. I had nothing to compare with it. I did have a kaleidoscope, a little prism of brilliance and illusion, a lightship rather than a battleship, which did not impress him and lost its attraction for me as I stared at the fluent prow of the boat and listened to the discreet slurps of its wake against the wooden sides of the rain-butt. But the kaleidoscope was three-sided, shaped like one of those large bars of Toblerone, and I gradually realized that there was something boat-like in its form: any one of its three edges could act as a keel, and before long I had it sunk to its imaginary gunwales, in the water, a tug attending the battleship. But a soggy pasteboard tug, that very soon became leaky and waterlogged and sank. And when it was retrieved, its insides had been robbed of their brilliant inner space, its marvellous and unpredictable visions were gone. I went away that morning poorer and more disappointed than ever.

I went away poorer but I return in memory enriched. For that little incident seems to me now like a lesson in the proper conduct of a life, the proper use of our own particular gifts. The world of rain-butts and battleships may be the milieu in which we have our early existence, but the chances for our existence should not be reduced to that. The kaleidoscope of our inner freedom of choice and vision should not be submerged in the element of slogan and prescription. Educators have, of course, the duty of explicating the world in which we the citizen lives, the world conditioned by history and politics and cultural heritage, the world of airguns and envies, they have some responsibility for initiating the young into that social realm. But I would emphasise that an ampler dimension exists, an ideal of divesting oneself of the world, which is as critically important as the skills for investing in it. As Derek Mahon puts it with characteristic grace and downbeat accuracy:

> The ideal future
> Shines out of our better nature.

So I would end where I began with Yeats' poem. Its final stanza is a guarantee of our human capacity to outstrip the routine world, the borders of ideology and the conditionings of history. It is a vision of harmony and fulfilment, of a natural and effortless richness of being, a vision, in fact, of the paradisal place, but an ampler vision than O Riordain's, where the earthly conflicts between flesh and spirit, beauty, truth, effort and ease, will and temperament, are all elided and assumed into harmony and unity. The images which Yeats uses here are drawn from art and nature, from human order and elemental cycles, and they are couched in a rhythm and a language that is full of summer lushness, full of delight in earthly sensuousness, with words like "chestnut tree", "rooted blossomer", "leaf and bole". But there are also other words like "swayed to music" and 'brightening glance", which are radiant with unearthly expectation:

> Labour is blossoming or dancing where
> The body is not bruised to pleasure soil
> Nor beauty born out of its own despair
> Nor blear-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil.
> O chestnut tree, great rooted blossomer,
> Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?
> O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
> How can we tell the dancer from the dance?

This is one of the high watermarks of poetry. It has all the energy and physical presence of a green breaking wave, deep and on the move, rising with thrilling self-propelling force, solid and mysterious at once, gone just as it reveals its full crest of power, never fully apprehended but alluring with its suggestions. And what it suggests is the necessity of an idea of transcendence, an impatience with the limitations of systems, a yearning to be completely fulfilled at all levels of our being, to strike beyond the ordinary daily levels of achievement where one goal is won at the expense of another, to arrive at a final place which is not the absence of activity but is, on the contrary, the continuous realisation of all the activities of which we are capable.

It is the mode of thinking which we should cultivate in ourselves and try to awaken in our pupils: munificent, non-sectarian, energetic and delightful. This is poetry escaping from the actual into the imagined, from external circumstance to internal penetration, from outer to inner space. The mode is the mode of dream and revelation. It does not refer for its validation to the routine facts and events of daily life but to the inner possibilities dormant in our nature. It alerts faculties that doze inertly as we go about our usual business, stirs capacities that are too seldom exercised. The walls of the world expand, the scope of our possibilities opens and widens for the duration of the stanza. We go beyond our normal cognitive bounds and sense a new element where we are not alien but liberated, more alive to ourselves, more drawn out, more educated.