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A Study on Poetry of Philip Larkin

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Abstract – Norman Heffares, a modern literary critic has commented, "Philip Larkin's greatness issecure. Nearly half a century later, the same can be said with perhaps even greater force". Obviously, Norman Heffares intends to emphasize. Larkin's convincing stature as a poet and that his achievement remains unfaded even now. L arkin has earned his place among the century's most illustrious and illustrious poets. As a result, this article examines Philip Larkin's poetry, interviews, and private writing to develop the theoretical framework of the poetry.

Keywords – British poet, Philip Larkin, English Poetry

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INTRODUCTION

An English Library's Seymour Smith F. declares that "no contemporary literature in the world exceeds English poetry and poetic theatre, and maybe none matches it." [1]. As a poet, Larkin has been lauded by Anthony Thwaite and Roger Day as "a top-selling and widely liked poet," so it's easy to see why he's considered one of the greatest living poets working in English. Larkin stands out in the crowded field of contemporary poets, including John Betjeman, Seamus Heaney, Douglas Dun, Tony Connor, Elizabeth Jenings, Norman Nicholson, Ted Hughes, and Sylvia Plath. Although Larkin is contemporary in terms of subject matter, he is conventional in terms of style; he is often regarded to be one of the Movement poets but denies it; he is the gloomiest modern poet. My effort in this chapter was to portray Larkin in a manner that would not need prior knowledge or further assistance to navigate the poet's many facets [2, 3].

There isn't much to say about the life of poet and librarian Philip Larkin. Even though he never got married, he seldom travelled outside of the United Kingdom, never performed public readings of his work, and he was apprehensive of speaking in front of an audience. "I now view myself as a freak and a failure, and my whole existence as a comedy," he said in a letter. As far as I can tell, most people are shielded from the realities of their own lives by their jobs. [4]. Autumn and winter are better than summer and spring since they are not intended to be pleasurable, isn't it??" a sad wit would say[5].When asked about his grumpy recluse persona, he confessed ruefully that it was just as much of a charade as appearing in public, but considerably more comfortable. Even yet, he had a large circle of acquaintances, many of whom described him as thoughtful, kind and amusing at times. Our fascination with this gloomy, self-deprecating attitude comes from the fact that it belonged to one of the greatest English poets of all time.

Sydney Larkin, Larkin's father, was the City Treasurer of Coventry when he was born in 1922. In his self-mocking poetry 'I Remember, I Remember,' he portrays the areas where his "childhood was unspent" ('And here we have that wonderful family / I never rushed to when I felt melancholy.') in an uninteresting way. His remarks about his family are shocking. At 21, he wrote, "Marriage is a repugnant institution unless the partners have enough money to remain decently away from one other imagine sharing a bedroom with a withered old lady"'. There is, of course, a youthful bravado to this, but his disdain for family life, which he called "an enormous absurdity," was deep-seated and long-lasting. In an autobiographical fragment written at the age of 30, he describes his childhood as being dominated by fear and boredom, and paints a bleak picture of his parents' marriage, claiming that it had left him with the conviction "that marriage is an enormous absurdity." Despite this, when his father died, he expressed real pain and admiration: 'I felt extremely proud of him,' he wrote to a friend after the burial; 'as my sister commented later, "we're nothing anymore, he did it all." [6] His father's dignity and integrity were constantly protected by him, to the point that he resented anybody who tried to discredit it. The way he saw his mother seems to have been highly ambiguous. At meal times, mother was "resentful, self-pitying, and full of funk and distrust," he said, and "the awful whimpering monologues she put my father to

before breakfast and all of us at meal-times... have lingered in my consciousness as something I mustn't risk experiencing again" [7]. Nevertheless, he acted like a dedicated and faithful son, taking excellent care of mom during her lengthy widowhood. Those who knew him stated he was dedicated to her despite his regular complaints about how boring she was and his guilt about being bored with her. When it comes to Philip Larkin, this is one of the many contradictions.

As a poet, he published his first collection of poems called The North Ship in 1945 from the Fortune Press, which also published his novel Jill the following year; his second (and final) novel A Girl in Winter was published by Faber & Faber in 1947; he had XX Poems published in 1951; a pamphlet of five poems was published in 1952; and in 1953, his third collection of poems, called The North Ship, was published. This is a record that may be shared by dozens of other obscure poets who are only known to their closest associates and the most ardent subscribers of niche journals. For those who believe that literary reputations are founded on quality rather than publicity, the following narrative provides a glimmer of hope. In spite of the fact that George and Jean Hartley's Marvell Press operated on a tight budget and could not afford to promote the book (their first) with extravagant promotion, it garnered favourable reviews and quickly became a best-seller. It has become a collector's item; and Larkin has become one of the best-known poets in the United Kingdom since his work appeared in the Hartleys' poetry magazine Listen. This group, led by Dylan Thomas and included a number of university professors, advocated for clarity, classic forms, and common sense in opposition to the romanticism of the 1940s and more broadly against modernism as a whole. They came to be known as the "Movement." To characterise the'refusal to relinquish logical structure and accessible language even when the poem is most powerfully charged with sensual or emotional aim', Robert Conquest wrote an introduction to the anthology New Lines (followed by New Lines 2 in 1963), which he edited in 1956. Although this is true of most of the poets included in the anthology: Elizabeth Jennings, John Holloway, Kingsley Amis, d. J. Enright, Conquest himself and John Wain, it is not true of Thom Gunn and only partially true of Donald Davie. This is a good summary of Larkin's work. Larkin was only pals with Conquest, Amis, and Wain in New Lines, but the grouping isn't entirely deceptive as a description of the 1950s poetry scene since the writers subsequently went their own ways.

With his four major books, Larkin dominated the English poetry scene. After the first collection, 'The North Ship' was published in 1945, the second, 'The Less Deceived,' was published in 1955, and the third, 'The Whitsun Weddings,' was published in 1964. His last book of poems, titled 'High Windows,' was released in 1974. The last three books of poetry by Larkin are what have made him famous as a poet. [8]

THE NORTH SHIP

'The North Ship,' Philip Larkin's first book of poetry, was released in 1945 and included poems written between 1943 and 1944. The poems in this book are typically seen as worthy only of juvenilia, and it is true that most of this collection is derivative poetry. The collection was reprinted by Faber & Faber Limited in 1966[9].

The influences of W.B. Yeats and Vernon Watkins may be seen in the 'North Ship,' with Yeats' style, attitude, and lyrical, and Watkins' transcendentalism. Vernon Watkins spoke at the Oxford English Club in 1943. Larkin was there, and the experience left an indelible effect on him. He didn't like for Watkins' poetry, but he admired him much and shared his excitement for Dylan Thomas and, most all, W.B. Yeats. Much of The North Ship feels like a pastiche of Yeats, with nothing to offer apart from blatantly unoriginal music. In poems like 'Conscript,' Auden's influence may be seen; Larkin mostly took associational methods from Dylan Thomas, although this impact is minor [10].

In terms of subjects, attitude, and style, the poems in 'The North Ship' are unmistakably Yeatsian. Morality, love (or rather, lovelessness), sex, and art are topics that reoccur throughout Larkin's later poems, where they are dealt with more maturity. However, Larkin's Yeats is the early Yeats, not the Yeats of "The harsher, final poems," as he explains in the preface. 10. The title poem, 'The North Ship,' is a trademark of the collection's overall mood and significance. The 'North Ship' travels north, navigating a dangerous and freezing sea under the guidance of 'a fire-spilling star,' and eventually reaches 80 degrees north, where the 'drunken boatswain' sings, 'A lady has 10 claws.' This narrative, told in a series of five poems, represents Larkin's sexual problem. "The poem's dreamlike picture of faraway coldness blending with sexual anxiety reveals how Larkin employed Yeatsian paradigm to externalise and mythologise his own psyche," argues Andrew Swarbrick. [11].

THE LESS DECEIVED

'The Less Deceived' has 29 poems that have been organised with 'with care' to reflect Larkin's own choice of order for his collections' poetry. The adult Larkin began to emerge with XX Poems, a privately produced collection published in 1951, and he had obviously arrived with The Less Deceived (which featured more than half of the XX Poems). This is, in the opinion of many Larkin fans, his best book.

The book was initially titled Various Poems, but when George Hartley approved it for publication, he complained to the feebleness of the title, so Larkin renamed one of the poems 'Deceptions,' and pushed the volume's original title. We can start by looking at that poem, which is unique among Larkin's work in that it tells someone else's storey: it begins with a past event he has been reading about in Henry Mayhew's pioneering work of interview journalism, London Labour and the London Poor, published in 1851, rather than a personal experience. Mayhew's account of the young woman who was drugged and discovered the next morning that she had been 'ruined,' and 'cried like a child to be killed or sent back to my aunt,' is deeply moving, and almost any modern reader will sympathise with the victim: the first stanza of the poem, about her suffering ('Even so distant, I can taste the grief, / Bitter and sharp with stalks, he made you,') is deeply moving, and almost

Years and slums have buried you. What can be stated except that pain is precise, but readings will become unreliable if Desire is in charge? You wouldn't mind if you were less deluded than he was, staggering up the breathless stair, out on that bed. To barge into the barren attic of fulfilment. [12]

This technique needs tremendous delicacy, since implying that his disappointment was greater than hers would be to engage in callous masculine self-pity; yet, the poem attempts to imply something very close to this while being cautious not to disregard the woman's pain. It is therefore essential that the poet admits that he cannot console her, even that he has no right to do so, but only after a first stanza that so powerfully succeeds in sharing her grief; and equally essential is the line, 'For you would hardly care,' which admits that her suffering is more important than the subject of the poem, the deceptions of desire- by means of a metaphor that hovers brilliantly on the edge of a literal account of the stanza

Less deceived: Larkin is a firm believer in the concept. 'Never write anything because you believe it's true, just because you think it's beautiful,'[13] he wrote in one of his journals, but he did not follow his own advice. A passage from 'Dockery and Son' says, 'Life is first boredom, then dread.' This was absolutely true for Larkin, and it is surely not attractive. Indeed, it appears to be a textbook example of how not to write poetry, both in terms of content (who wants poetry that completely eliminates everything the poets wanted to write about?) and style (a flat sentence made up of three abstract nouns, one of which is a basic cliche of all versifying, the other two utterly devoid of resonance - 'boredom' is such a boring word). Nonetheless, the statement has become well-known, and it sounds like Larkin. How did he manage to turn such statements into poetry? To grasp this, we first consider the difference that Larkin alludes to, namely, the conflict between truth and beauty; however, there are other, more enlightening ways to put it.

MAIDEN NAME

Your maiden name was no longer used once you married.

It is impossible for you to be linguistically equivalent to that youthful beauty since you were gratefully mistaken by law with someone else: You can't be semantically the same as that youthful beauty since the five light sounds it makes no longer represent your face, voice, and all your variations of elegance. These words were said in her honour and gratitude. Among the old lists, old programmes, a few school awards, and bundles of letters wrapped in tartan ribbon, it is now a phrase that pertains to no one.

Is it therefore odourless, weightless, weak, and completely untruthful? If you want to be more subtle, try whispering it.

No, it's referring to you. Or, because you're no longer with us, it means what we think of you now: how lovely you were, and how close you were, and how young you were, and how vivid you were, and how you must still be there among Those first few days, unmarked again. So instead of losing form and significance with your fading bags, your ancient name protects our loyalty.

This is a poem that is both classic and unique. There are a thousand poems on how young beauty fades, but few about how women change their names when they married. Let's start with the term'semantically,' which is both the most significant and the least important word in the poem. The least significant because, being the poem's only non-poetic touch, it works as a footnote or parenthesis, hardly a part of the poetry, only a notice of the kind of comment being made. And it's the most significant since it informs us that language has already communicated the poem's point. The real topic of poetry, according to postmodern poetic theory, is language itself, notably its unreliability. Larkin's conventional, language-loving poetry are a denial of this notion, but this poem demonstrates that they are, strangely, a confirmation of it. Although it is a nostalgic poem, it is also a cold and analytical investigation of the meaning of meaning, exact in its logic as it explains how words indicate the no longer-existent past to our current awareness.

THE WHITSUN WEDDINGS

Faber & Faber released The Whitsun Weddings, a collection of 32 poems, on February 28, 1964. 'To generate a variation of mood,' Larkin organised the 32 poems in the book in such a manner that if one does not love one poem, 'at least the next one will be different,' as the poems demonstrate a broad range of interest. Andrew Motion discusses the primary characteristics of The Whitsun Weddings' diverse qualities: "The Whitsun Weddings is a more

homogeneous work than The Less Deceived, in which elements of Larkin's Yeatsian and symbolist lineage rub against a simpler way."

Philip Larkin lived in leased housing for the most of his adult life since he never married and never bought a home until he was past 50. This began in Wellington, where his first lodgings were small, chilly, and lacking in privacy; as he became more prosperous, his lodgings naturally became more spacious, culminating in the comfortable flat in Pearson Park where he lived for eighteen years; but he never lost the feeling of rootlessness, and one of his bleakest and most powerful poems, 'MrBleaney,' emerged from it: 'This was MrBleaney's room.' He remained at the Bodies the whole time he was there, till they relocated him.' Curtains with flowers, thin and tattered, Fall to within five inches of the window sill, whose window displays a stretch of tussocky, strewn construction land....

Advertisements, on the other hand, are full of falsehoods, as we all know, but if you accept them, they become myths as well. So 'Essential Beauty,' a poem about advertisements on hoardings, doesn't have to remind us of their deception; it can devote all of its eloquence to their beauty: To our living flawed eyes that see beyond this world, where nothing is created as fresh or scrubbed as cleanly as it might be, they rise serenely to declare pure crust, pure froth, and pure ice.

HIGH WINDOWS

When I see a couple of children, I am reminded of the importance of education.

What do you think? I know this is heaven when I see him fucking her and she's either taking medication or has a diaphragm on.

Bonds and gestures that the elderly have cherished for their whole lives are now relegated to the background, like an antiquated combineharvester, while the young are speeding down the long incline. As long as you're happy, you'll never stop. For the last forty years, I've wondered whether anybody saw me and thought, "That'll be the life; no God, no sweating in the dark about hell and that, or trying to conceal what you think of the priest." A lengthy, steep plunge awaits him and his cronies. Like a flock of unpunished bloodsuckers. Additionally, as soon as possible

As an alternative to words, the image of lofty windows springs to mind: That which is seen through the sun-comprehending glass and beyond it into the infinite expanse of blue air.

This poetry moves in two stages. Aside from the crude, explicit language, the opening stanza's premise that sex is reserved for males and contraceptive measures are reserved for women is also objectionable to some readers. By initially using the cycle of generations as an excuse, I'm elderly and jealous, and in my time, I symbolised the freedom from religion. Was that also envied by the old? This poem's title, 'the long slide,' was once regarded by Larkin as a viable picture to depict both emancipations. You can understand why: It's a picture that conjures feelings of elation or terror, the joy of descending or the dread of losing control. The first time the picture is used, there is just a mild feeling of terror, but the second time it is more disturbing since it implies that 'he and his lot' are both vile and fortunate.

It's only when a picture opens out to nothing that the notion of fresh, emancipated generations is thrown away for good. Unlike the combine harvester's logical purpose, and the lengthy slide's high degree of approximation, the final picture is entirely open-ended. That Larkin preferred to live on the top floors of buildings, and that when he purchased his own home, he remarked, "I despise living on the ground level; all my poems were composed on top floors" is noteworthy, no question. Nonetheless, it is evident that the picture had a great deal of significance for him, but it doesn't tell us what its role is in the poem Does it teach us that pleasure is as freeing as the deep blue air and the comprehension of sun, or as empty as the final line? A figment for the comparison, perhaps, that to see himself in these children forty years ago is to see through the lofty windows into happiness - or into nothingness? Both the persona who delivers the poetry, as well as its author, may have contributed an unclear picture to it.

As a consequence, Larkin has shown that there is nothing except anxiety, pain, and grief in the past, present, and future. According to Peter Childs, time is an opponent to him and existence is a prelude to death. [14]. Time is an opponent because it is a destroyer of joy, life, and everything else. Time is an adversary. This is the first thing I've realised: time is the echo of an axe within a forest,' Larkin writes in his four-line poem "This is the First Thing." These two sonnets are immediately evoked in our thoughts when we read this one. 'When I have seen by Time's falling hand defac'd / The rich huge cost of outworn buried age; /... / That Time will come and take away my love,' the bard declares in the opening stanza. Where should Time's greatest treasure from the chest of time be hidden? he asks himself in the second verse of this poem. In Larkin's view, the passage of time systematically and irreversibly robs the planet of all it has, including its physical resources, honour, and even hope. 'And not a fieldglass sees them home, / Or weird stop-watch predictions,' because those once-proud horses are now in their final decrepitude,' writes Larkin in 'At Grass.' We witness young moms feeling the

eroding, lacerating, corroding, caustic impact of the cyclic passage of time on their brains and bodies in 'Afternoon.' "The poem starts with the notion of time passing, of summer coming to a close, and this feeling of decay and decline is extended through the remainder of the poem," Andrew Swarbrick says of the poem's melancholy philosophy. Every day at the municipal playground, the poet observes women and their children and imagines their shared experience: marriage, children, the daily routine of housekeeping, and the purchase of home goods. Their beauty has become thicker, and we are powerless to stop it. Someone or something is pulling them away from their normal routine. “What dominates the poem is a melancholy sense of endless cycle of time, of growth anddecay"[15].

We've seen how Larkin regards time as a deteriorating, eroding, and destructive force so far. But he also mentions the limit of this negative temporal action, a limit that only appears in extremely few instances. There could not have been any significance if time ruined everything, Larkin appears to be saying. He is implying that although time cannot erase or destroy everything, there are a few things that are stronger, mightier than time - a few things that can endure despite time's negative. For example, in 'An Arundel Tomb,' he promises us that, despite the ravages of time, the stone effigies of the baron and his wife - his hand 'holding her hand' - may have succumbed to the ravages of time, but the couple's (apparent) mutual love would endure:

Time has transfigured them into Untruth. Stone's steadfastness

Our almost-intuitive belief that

love is the only thing

that will survive of us has been confirmed by their last blazon.

"An Arundel Tomb" seeks to finish the collection [The Whitsun Weddings] on a positive note of hope by honouring the triumph of love through time, according to Andrew Swarbrick. Nonetheless, the poem also talks of time's relentless, everlasting growth, implying that time, in the end, triumphs over all, even love. "Rather than love, 'Arundel Tomb' memorialises time," Swarbrick adds of the same poem, contradicting what we've just heard from him. The pair embarks on a "supine immobile adventure," and the paradox represents the passage of time as a constant condition of change." [16].

Larkin's obsession with death, like his obsession with time, is nearly obsessive. Time is a deteriorating, destructive, and annihilating power, and in the case of human beings, it is akin to an agent of mortality, such that man is prone to decay and death as long as he survives within the domain of time. Death is a topic in several of Larkin's notable poems, including 'Next, Please,' 'Ambulances,' 'Days,' 'The Building,' 'Dockery and Son,' 'Heads in the Women's Ward,' and, undoubtedly, 'Aubade.' David Timms is correct in asserting that death is a key motif in Larkin's work. Timms also lists ageing as another 'obsessive' motif of the poet, although we disagree with him on this point. "Death and ageing, two of Larkin's most obsessive subjects," Timms writes in his M.A. thesis on Philip Larkin. [17]. "Death... is a significant issue in Larkin's poetry, and he wrote about it often and passionately," says Roger Day.

The Movement offered only "a token rebellion" and did not attempt H change the prevailing social structure. Thus, there was an initial anti-establishment fervour (attitude) in the Movement yet it was politically inoffensive (not aggressive). In contrast to the poets of 1930s many of whom were upper middle class political activists, the poets of the 1950s were lower-middle class and politically neutral. Morrison tries to show that the social and political ambivalence finds its way in the Movement poetry in terms of hesitation, and conversational asides_ The whole sense of an audience in Movement poetry is shaped by questions of socio-political identity, especially by the difficulty of appealing to an academic elite and at the same time being responsible to the general public in a modern democracy_ Anti-romantic fervour of the Movement is not a literary response to the work of Dylan Thomas but it is a careful strategy in Britain, more intent on pursuing communal and egalitarian ideals than it had been before the second work.] war. In a new welfare state democracy, this amounted to an admission that the poet was not "a mystic or visionary removed from the society, but a responsible citizen responsibly employed" (Morrison, 1980, 178).

The early poetry of Philip Larkin conforms to the Movement ideology especially in its struggle for neutral ground. The self-effacing ‘modest’ discourse and a self-depreciating ironic persona are the product of the Movement's belittling ideology; The poem 'Church Going' fits the 'Movement programme' by carefully balancing susceptibility to tradition and belief.

It is significant to consider Philip Larkin in the context of modernism, He expresses a strong distaste for all sorts of modernism that "irresponsibly exploits the technique in contradition of human life", (Required Writings, 1983, 297) while Critics insist that Larkin's poetry has a profoundly symbolist and by implication modernist dimension.

The revolt referred to above, the development of science and technology, and new areas of knowledge such as Psycho-analysis and socio-linguistics spurred Modernism. Freud had revealed the extent to which the flow of thought is determined by forgotten memories and repressed instincts, mostly sexual. The doctrine of psycho-

analysis unfolded the energies of unconscious mind and strengthened the tendency to substitute free association for logical or chronological sequence in poetry. In addition to psychology, anthropology revealed the race consciousness. [17]

T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, the leaders of the modernist school, anti-romantic in their attitude, are acknowledged to draw their inspiration from the symbolists. Symbolism and imagism are the characteristic features of modernism since the modernists insist upon definite clear-cut images of sense perceptions, especially, visual perceptions without any romantic vagueness. (Monroe Spears, 1970, 130).

Larkin has earned a respectable critical acclaim for his literary work. There are several full-length critical and scholarly' books related to his achievement which recognize him as a major poet. Alan Brownjohn in Philip Larkin (1975) studies Larkin's work in relation to Auden, Lawrence and Hardy and finds him much nearer to Lawrence than Auden. He recognizes Larkin's poetry as the amalgamation of the beauty and experience and feels that his poetry is not bound to constitute a programme shared on any significant level with his contemporaries. The writers who were identified as belonging to 'The Movement' share a common 1950s feel, but little else. He maintains stressingly that there is an embarrassing gulf in literary complexity between Larkin and all the others (Amis, Donald Davie, D.J. Enright, Thorn Gunn, John Wain and Elizabeth Jennings). On the basis of "Verbal devices" he proves that Larkin is different than Yeats or Betjeman or an ideological programme such as that supposedly adopted by The Movement'.

P.R. King devotes a full chapter to Larkin in Nine Contemporary Poets. He indicates that for "Larkin, poetry is a way of being honest and demands a fidelity to experience". (1979, 1-43) King points out that Larkin rejects both the politically committed poetry of the 1930s and the neo-romantic surrealism of the poetry of the 1940s. He says that Larkin's relation with The Movement' was casual, not causal. He makes out a very important point that Larkin is a detached yet careful observer of the behaviour of others and himself. King marks out the poetic concepts and concerns of Larkin lucidly and examines his poetry accordingly. His findings are that Larkin refuses to compromise either with the reality he personally perceives or with the audience, with whom he so earnestly deslres.to communicate.

Andrew Motion in Philip Larkin (1982) discusses Larkin's poetry from different angles. It may be considered a work of practical criticism since it grounds upon the textual analysis of various poems from all the four poetry books of Larkin. He works out the choice of words, rhythmic structure and ultimately the theme and the message of the poems. Motion examines Larkin from various points of view e.g. 'Did Larkin develop', 'Larkin's stature, 'A modernist inheritance' etc. He investigates into the major themes of Larkin's poetry. Motion is of the view that Larkin had certainly responded to the example of French symbolist at an early age. He argues that combined influence of W.B. Yeats and Thomas Hardy is persistently seen in Larkin's poetry. [16]

There are some divergent views about his work. He has been identified as a "serious religious poet" (Watson, Critical Quarterly, 17,. 1975, 358) and a poet of a “profoundly conservative ideology marked by nostalgia for past imperial glories and despair over the modern Britain" (Torn Pauline, Into the Heart of Englishness', Times Literary Supplement, 20-21 July, 1990, 779- BO). The feeling of isolation and alienation appears to be pre-dominantly stressed in his various poems_ Andrew Motion in Contemporary Poets sees him as an 'inflexible pessimist" (19B2, 16).

CONCLUSION:

Larkin's work has been examined from many angles, but some aspects of it have received little critical scrutiny. The purpose of this thesis is to draw attention to this issue. His relationship with people, nature, and society will be examined in this film. His poetry must be examined as a whole to determine its distinctive features. Only by delving deeply into his poems can one determine the depth of his concern for themes and the persuasiveness of his language.

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