Journal of Advances and Scholarly Researches in Allied Education
Vol. 19, Issue No. 3, April-2022, ISSN 2230-7540

Philip Larkin: Serious Concerns behind Facade of Jokes

Vinay Rameshrao Khorgade[1]*, Prof. Dr. Kirti Shekhawat[2]

[1] Assistant Professor

[2] Professor

Abstract* - A small number of poems by the English poet Philip Larkin are the focus of this investigation (1922-1985). The scholar is drawn to the poem because it addresses the universal but tragic issue of life and death in a methodical, tried-and-true format. The purpose of this study is to investigate the sources of pessimism and the possible explanations for Larkin's out-of-the-ordinary views on the contemporary world. Most of his poetry reflect his sense of helplessness in the face of mortality. His dark poetry evoke feelings of illness, hopelessness, and the unpredictability of existence. His poetry on the subject of death are very moving and make us consider the darker side of existence. The loss of his father really affects him, and death is a recurring theme in many of his poetry. The purpose of this study is to investigate the causes of pessimism and the possible justifications for Larkin's out-of-the-ordinary views on the contemporary world. The poems selected for this article do an excellent job of reflecting this.

***Keywords* - Philip Larkin, Jokes**

- X -

INTRODUCTION

On August 9, 1922, in Coventry, England, Larkin was born to Sydney Larkin (1884-1948), a native of Litchfield, and Eva Emily Day (1886-1977), a native of Epping. Prior to relocating to Manor Road, a huge three-story middle-class mansion replete with servants' quarters was purchased for the family in Radford, Coventry, where Larkin spent his first five years. Their Manor Road home was razed in the 1960s as part of a plan to upgrade the road. They had survived the bombardment during World War II. He had an elder sister named Catherine, or Kitty, who was ten years his senior. His father was a self-made man who had worked his way up to the position of Coventry City Treasurer. He had become disillusioned in old life, however, and had attended two rallies in Nuremberg in the mid-1930s, combining his love of literature with his excitement for Nazism. His favourite author is D. H. Lawrence, although he also read his son Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, and James Joyce. The lady who gave birth to him was timid and submissive.

One of the most celebrated English poets of the 20th century, Philip Arthur Larkin died on December 2, 1985. His debut poetry collection, The North Ship, came out in 1945, and he went on to write two novels, Jill (1946) and A Girl in Winter (1947), before gaining widespread attention in 1955 with the release of The Less deluded (1974). In addition to editing The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse and serving as jazz critic for The Daily Telegraph from 1961 to 1971, his work may be found in the anthology All what Jazz: a Record Diary 1961-71 (1985). (1973). 1 Among his numerous accolades is the prestigious Queen's Gold Medal in Poetry. After John Betjamin's passing in 1984, he was given the title of poet laureate, but he turned it down. His poetry, as characterised by Andrew Motion and Donald Davie, are distinguished by a "very English, dismal precision" about feelings, locations, and interpersonal connections.

HUMOR

Exams may be stressful enough without having to deal with the added challenge of trying to write about anything entertaining. 'This Be The Verse' is a prime example of Larkin's signature dry wit, an essential part of his persona as a poet. It's useful to be able to pinpoint precisely what he does that makes us laugh.

The use of bathos is essential to Larkin's comic effect in this poem. Bathos is a literary technique that uses humour or banality to undermine a more serious or serious-sounding tone. He employs a number of tried-and-true literary techniques, such as the iambic pentameter and a quatrain stanza with cross-rhyming couplets (ABAB). The result is an air of sophistication, or even antiquity. There's a hint of this in the poem's title, too: the definite article "the" and the poem's forceful tone make "This Be" seem all the more monumental. So, Larkin prepares the reader to take his poetry seriously by having it deal with weighty topics. Afterward, he discredits it with a little of bathos. After reading the headline, you may be surprised by his use of profanity: "they screw you up." He then continues with a wink and a poke, humorously telling you, "don't have any kids yourself." Therefore, Larkin generates humour by juxtaposing a strict and conventional poetry style with profanity and a common topic. Not that this means the poem is without seriousness; on the contrary, the idea of the "coastal shelf" conjures up disturbing thoughts of humanity's slow deterioration over the course of many generations. Larkin often used wit not just to undermine but also to contrast and highlight moments of seriousness. While we chuckle at his message, we are also thinking about it seriously and wondering whether there is any way to stop the'misery' from being passed on from generation to generation.

POETIC STYLE

Poems by Larkin have been described as being "ordinary, conversational, clear, a quiet, contemplative, sardonic, and direct with mundane experiences." T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, and W. B. Yeats all left their marks on Larkin's early work, and his evolution into a fully formed literary personality in the early 1950s paralleled Thomas Hardy's rising effect on Larkin at the same time. Hartley describes Larkin's "mature" writing style as "that of the dispassionate, sometimes compassionate observer" who focuses on "ordinary people doing ordinary things," which is exemplified in The Less Deceived. Known for his " plainness and scepticism," Larkin's mature lyrical character stands out from the crowd. Although most of the poems in The North Ship are metaphorical, Terence Hawkes argues that they owe a great deal to Yeast's symbolist lyrics ""not...a movement from Yeats to Hardy, but rather a surrounding of the Yeats Ian moment (the metaphor) within a Hardyesque frame," as Larkin puts it, describes the evolution of his mature style. His presents itself as "the loss of England, or rather the loss of the British Empire, which demands England to define itself in its own terms while before it could define "Englishness" in contrast to something else," writes Hawkes." The often-quoted "Going, Going" was written by Larkin in 1972 and depicts the passionate fatalism with which he saw England in his last years. He ends the poem with the words, "I just think it will happen, soon," which serve as a prophecy of the imminent destruction of the countryside and an expression of an idealised sense of national unity and identity: "And that will be England gone... it will linger on in galleries; but all that remains for us will be concrete and tyres."

As seen in his last major poem, "Aubade," Larkin's style is inextricably linked to his recurrent themes and concerns, such as death and fatalism. While praising Larkin's "remorseless factuality" and "crudity of language," poet Andrew Motion notes that "their rage or contempt is always checked by the... energy of their language and the satisfactions of their articulate formal control." Motion also draws a contrast between two facets of Larkin's poetic personality. According to Motion, this is a "enhancing fight between extremes" that enriches life and leads him to the conclusion that his poetry is often "ambivalent": "In their extended fights with despair, they speak to vast sympathies, feature periods of sometimes sublime beauty, and reveal a poetic inclusivity which is of tremendous value for his creative descendants," says the critic.

As time passes, it alters our body types in predictable ways, as if the whole universe were moving in unison. At the finish of the race (old age of retirement), the horses feel free and gallop for delight, which is referred to by Larkin as a "state of pleasure," but in the first stanza, the scenario is reversed; terms like "cold" and "distresses" make the horses look melancholy in their retirement. The lovely, realistic picture that Larkin paints is what draws in researchers and readers. Death's ultimate destiny is affecting us profoundly, and it's becoming more clear to us. Since Larkin discusses the eventual fate of every person, there is nothing fantastical or unexpected about his writing. The simple truth is that we have everything it takes, like horses, to win the race and find happiness at the finish line, but old age, although pitiful, is compelling because it demonstrates that there is no need to rush since time has passed and humans want rest. Larkin addresses his male readers in the third person.

LARKIN AND FAÇADE JOKE

It's not hard to discover passages in which Larkin disparages America or uses clichés about the country. His remark to Ian Hamilton about "the modernist revolution in English poetry" is widely cited and misconstrued (sometimes on purpose), as is another one of his comments about "the abolition of the novel." What I find distasteful, and I really blame Eliot and Pound for this, is that poetry appears to have gotten itself into the hands of a critical enterprise that is concerned with culture in the abstract. It seems to me that Eliot and Pound share certain traits with the Americans of the early twentieth century. When Americans first started travelling to Europe at the tail end of the 19th century, locals there joked about how culture-hungry they were. Lines like "Elmer, is this Paris or Rome?" were common. Simply put, "What day is it?" Sayings like "Thursday," "Then it's Rome," etc. are commonplace in Italian culture. This was associated with the notion that one may acquire culture in its whole, as if it were a la carte, which was quite stereotypically American.

The focus on humour and English clichés about obnoxious American visitors are typical generalisations, but Larkin makes a serious point regarding the concept of organising "culture whole," which he elaborates on in the following paragraphs. In a subsequent interview, Larkin acknowledged this about himself, adding, "I believe everyone has his own ideal of America." A writer once advised me to just visit the two coasts of the United States: the remainder of the country is a desert filled with racists. I want to live in a world where helping a girl decorate the Christmas tree is considered an engagement and the shotguns of her brothers begin to grease if you don't call on the minister. A rural setting reimagined.

There is a risk of oversimplification, but these sentiments are significant because they explain why Larkin reacted the way he did to specific forms of poetry, politics, and societal change. His letters display a racist rage now and again, but it's too sporadic to represent a consistent bias. It is difficult to attribute consistency to Larkin's views on cultures other than his own, as pointed out by Clive James, who notes that the praise for Sidney Bechet, Duke Ellington, and Billie Holliday is equal in scale to the criticism of "niggers" and "wogs." This is not to justify or excuse the former comments, but rather to show that doing so is problematic. However, he did perceive the Modernism of the 1920s as an imported product, to be treated with distrust, as he notes above by placing the blame "at the door" of Eliot and Pound.

As a member of the generation of English men who had experienced World War II, Larkin was predisposed to view Americans with something akin to haughty contempt because of America's late entry into the conflict, the apparently brash presence of 'Yanks' in Britain prior to D-Day, and America's sidelining of the British in the closing stages and aftermath of the war. This undoubtedly influenced his choice of American authors to read. Despite this, Larkin often praised American authors, especially poets (though because it has not suited certain agendas this fact is often ignored or glossed over). Also, as a guy who understands the impact of a writer's source material, he would have been cognizant of the impact that certain American poets had on his own writing. The poets Eliot, Robert Lowell, and Sylvia Plath have had the most significant impact on Larkin. There is a disparity in the impact and duration of these impacts; Eliot's was constant, Lowell's was fleeting but significant, and Plath was an unseen force whose manifestations enthralled and troubled Larkin.

Almost the opposite was true of Larkin. The day he graduated from college, he said, it was "like popping the cork out of a bottle" in terms of his imagination. A cursory examination of his bibliography reveals a steady decline and final cessation of creative output between 1942, when he was twenty, and 1975, when he was forty (when he was fifty-three). When an interviewer noted that Larkin's evaluations "tend towards a biographical interpretation of a writer's work," Larkin said, "I guess eventually they must, because they both pertain to the same person." Larkin was a firm believer in dedicating the self to the poetry. It's true that Eliot would claim they don't, but I disagree and believe he's mistaken.

During his career, Larkin's poetic language evolved from the icy distance of his Audenesque and Yeatsian beginnings to something warmer but ultimately more sensitive. Again, this is in contrast to Eliot's gradual development of a distinct, independent voice, which was helped by a commitment to Christianity and a happy marriage, both of which Larkin saw as anathema to himself. The relationship between Eliot and Larkin as it was understood in the late 1950s and early 1960s has to be discussed at length before we can go on to the poems themselves. There has been a general consensus among critics on the extent to which Eliot was referenced or affected by the poetry of the 1950s, including that of Larkin. The Modernist poetry of Eliot and Pound was met with "negative feedbacks," as insisted239 by Al Alvarez, and "almost wilful philistinism," as in Peter Ackroyd's description of the aesthetic of narrow forms, narrow cadences, and an even narrower idea of poetry, which found its apotheosis in the work of Philip Larkin.

Larkin's constant addition of "and Pound" to his criticisms of Eliot's influence on poetry serves two purposes: first, to highlight Eliot's American background by pairing him with another American Europhile; and second, to present Eliot and Pound in a simplistic manner (which Larkin himself admits to the simplicity of, through his "I'm afraid" or elsewhere, "I do rather lay this at the door of Eliot and Pound"244) as components.

Weddings and other rites of passage are represented in the poem by Larkin in three distinct ways: first, on the various station platforms; second, in "this fragile travelling coincidence" (all these people in the same carriages at the same time); and third, in the poem itself. The phrase "feeling of something falling" may be interpreted in three different ways. The train pulling into London symbolises not just newlyweds embarking on their life together, but also the completion of the poem. When compared to the preceding poem, this final interpretation stands out as crucial, as it represents Larkin's satisfaction with the poem and his belief that it may be let free now that it has said all that needs to be said about the topic. The guitar melody in "Two Guitar Pieces" is beyond the poet's control, therefore the poem finishes with a sense of unresolved tension. Still, after the trip is over in "The Whitsun Weddings," "the brakes tighten," and the tension causes the poem to "loose" itself.

ARCHIVE AND IMPERIALISM

While Larkin objects to the unyielding nature of the "right" view, he offers no alternative to it beyond the "wrong" one, demonstrating that he does not understand that the problem lies not with the predetermined answers but with the lack of variety that would result from considering alternative perspectives. When just one perspective is considered, no new hypotheses are generated or put to the test, severely limiting what may be learned. This is something that Larkin does not realise, but he is not alone in this. Even while they recognise the inevitable of omission, the modern editors of the OED still see a complete work that could account for all situations as attainable, as Willinsky points out. The editors of the most recent version call it "an accurate and complete registry of the full lexicon of English," he says. So, despite its shortcomings, Larkin's monotheism is an improvement over the intellectual milieu he encountered at Oxford and was typical of his day.

Larkin's lack of multiplicity IS obvious in both his writing and his style of living, which he compartmentalises almost as if it were possible to keep distinct elements fully separate/o. Different people and situations bring out different sides of his personality, and he doesn't encourage his friends to socialise with one another. He constantly weighs what's expected of him against what he wants to do, and what he expected against what he got, as if these things could be disentangled in any meaningful way. Although his emotions fluctuate, he often describes them in terms of stark, binary choices that only serve to deepen his predicament by leaving him with little room to manoeuvre toward a middle ground. The reluctance to embrace change is the root cause of this mindset, but the additional stress and lost opportunity for self-awareness are the consequences.

As with the librarian from "Model Village," Larkin shows he shares the librarian's desire to remove danger, without which no new information may be learned. 35 Fear of where and what sort of work the personnel office may send him prompted Larkin to apply for a library position in the first place, demonstrating the potency of risk aversion as a drive to take action. The fact that he got this job despite having been rejected from others where (in the interview) he came off as disinterested in the work is directly tied to his comparatively upbeat attitude. Since his early to mid-childhood, he found solace in librarian-like pursuits; he would occasionally, possibly in search of a form of authority not normally given to children, gather and bind his own works into volumes. It's understandable that he has a favourable outlook on libraries, given that he is essentially reenacting some of his favourite childhood activities in his professional life by taking up the librarianship. Later in life, Larkin finally admits that he enjoys his writing.

It is possible that, like the mad librarian, Larkins's extensive control over his working life and the systems that governed the conditions under which he worked seduced him into feeling that his whole life was, as far as is possible, under control. This would explain why Larkins's complaints about life, his fear of death, and the depression and angst that were part of his writer's block in his later years have no apparent connection in his mind to his job. At Wellington and Hull, while he was responsible to a higher authority, Philip Larkin took command of his own work and did not have someone looking over his shoulder or limiting the scope of his ideas, which is more freedom than most people have in the workplace. Larkin was at the pinnacle of his library career at Hull, where he participated on influential committees that gave him a role in the selection and publishing of books, the design of the library itself, and the implementation of top-level administrative policies. The collection, organisation, preservation, distribution, and simple retrieval of records, art, and information: data in the form of tangible stuff, are all fundamental to the running of a library, and all of these tasks were related in some way to the notion of an archive.

The majority of Larkin's career, and most of his authority and influence, was spent managing what was, in technical standards of the time, an enormous and unwieldy database. Similar to the management of the British Empire, the gathering of information is seen as an end in itself when it is used to create and maintain a database like a library. As a result, people may start to believe that facts are more important than they really are and that having all the information necessary to make the best judgments is as important as having all the facts themselves. However, deciding on a course of action takes more than just a review of the facts and the application of logic. This is in part an intuitive process, unrelated to the particular data it manipulates, since it is impossible to know and judge the attractiveness of all conceivable outcomes. The concepts that the value of data is more directly related to its application and that it is hard to disentangle neutral data from personally and culturally entrenched subjectivity are obscured by the emphasis placed on data collection.

CONCLUSION

Larkin's legacy as one of the most important poets of the 20th century in English remains safe and sound. His breakthrough came with his second novel, The Deceived (1955). Since then, he has been widely acknowledged as a major figure in the history of English poetry. A lot of effort has been put into editing, reviewing, translating, and researching his work. His detractors generally characterise him as a fatalist and passivist. On the other hand, Larkin's detractors often only draw attention to these details via indirect citations. The first IBrt of this research will analyse his poetry's structure in pretty great depth in an effort to prove that his passivity is a healthy outlook on life and that his pessimism is a source of power. The successful incorporation of common experience into conventional poetic forms is a crucial component of Larkin's work that has not been studied or recognised as much as it should have been. Bringing the reader's attention to the profound impact of these poets on the young Larkin, this remark highlights the significance of their work. Reading these poems, however, shows that he not only adopts their literary tactics, but also their rhythm and melody, notably that of Yeats, which is a "particularly strong sound, widespread as garlic." Man in the 'desert' is constantly reminded of this truth as he walks the lonely platform, waiting restlessly for the train that he knows will never come. But man is imprisoned by time, as shown by the clock (the schedule of the train's daily excursions), and his failure to solve this problem is the consequence of his mind's captivity in time rather than the confinement of his soul in his body. Man's inadequacy and inability to perceive the true essence of existence stem from his habitual dependence on the mechanical time of the external world.

Man in the 'desert' is constantly reminded of this truth as he walks the lonely platform, waiting restlessly for the train that he knows will never come. But man is imprisoned by time, as shown by the clock (the schedule of the train's daily excursions), and his failure to solve this problem is the consequence of his mind's captivity in time rather than the confinement of his soul in his body. Humanity fails and misunderstands itself because it depends on the mechanical time of the external world. As "One guy strolling a desolate platform; One man restlessly waiting a train," it conjures up an oppressive sense of time that fits well with the men's sentiments of anxiety and boredom. The analogies shown here are undeniably real. In this way, man is trapped in the tragic net of routine existence, where he is brutalized by the relentless march of time. As a result, man loses the ability to make decisions and satisfy his own wants. The knowledge of his own mortality and the meaninglessness of his existence, or, as John Press puts it, "the random nature inherent in human existence," torture him.

REFERENCES

1. Philip Arthur Larkin (http:/www.britanica.com/ EBchecked/topic/33650/ Philip-Larkin) , Encyclopaedia Britannica .Retrieved 12 November 2009.

2. Oliver Boyd, Philip Larkin and The Movement,(London: Longman Group Limited, 1973), p.15.

3. Andrew motion, Philip Larkin: A Writer's life, (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), pp 468-469.

4. Regan Stephen, Philip Larkin (Basingstoke: Pal grave Macmillan, 1997), pp32-53.

5. Larkin, Selected Letters of Philip Larkin 1940-1985, p.115.

6. Terry Whalen, Philip Larkin's imagist bias: his poetry of observation. Published in Critical Quarterly, vol. 23, no.2.

7. Larkin, Philip. The Whitsun Weddings London: Faber and Faber , 1971.

8. Larkin, Philip. High Windows London: Faber and Faber , 1974.

9. Sagar, Kaith, "Philip Larkin" Criticism in Action(ed) Maurice Hussey, London: Longmans Green and Co, 1969.

10. Larkin, Philip The Less Deceived Hessle: The Marverll Press , 1962.

11. BrownJohn, Alan. Philip Larkin Essex: Longman, 1975.

12. Trimms, David " Philip Larkin" Modern Writers Series, Edinburgh : Oliver adn Boyd , 1973.

13. Ali, H., Gul, S., Noor-Ul-Ain, Khatoom, H. (2017). Depiction of modern man in “Church Going” by Philip Larkin: A case study through modernism. European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences, 6(1s), 124-129. URL: http://europeanscience.com/eojnss_proc/article/view/5146

14. Bakhtin, M. (1981). The Dialogic Imagination: Austin University of Texas Press.

15. El-Komy, A.S. (2013) Philip Larkin as a post-modernist: A Philosophical Approach. Harmes Journal, 2(2)

16. Ibrahim A. J. (2013). Life and Death in Philip Larkin’s Poetry: An Analytical Study of At Grass, Next Please, MrBleany and The Trees instructor.

17. King, P. R. (1979). Nine Contemporary Poets. A critical Introduction. London: Methuen.

18. Larkin, P. (2012). The Less Deceived: Faber & Faber Motion, A. (1993). Philip Larkin: A Writer’s Life.

19. Faber & Faber Sarkar M. (2016). The Poetry of Philip Larkin and Ted Hughes: Englishness and Post- imperial Space. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

20. Swarbrick, A. (1995) Out of reach: The Poetry of Philip Larkin . Hound Mills: Mackmillan.

Corresponding Author

Vinay Rameshrao Khorgade*

Assistant Professor