



CHAPTER – III

THE POETRY OF PHILIP LARKIN

THE POEMS OF PHILIP LARKIN

III

Larkin has been regarded as the most important poets of twentieth century literature. His poetry appeals to the mind. Larkin's poems appeal to that mind which always apprehends idea in experience. Larkin describes what he sees, what he experiences. He states the experiences by giving them certain shapes. His experiences always relate with contemporary problems and conflicts that are burning in the society. They are real, they are factual and so they are close to human life.

Larkin completely concentrates his attention on "man and his sufferings". Larkin believes that the immanent power rules on man, and man becomes a victim, Nature stands as the actor and man as a sufferer. For nature, individual has no role. He has to live and die. Man is a feeble, inactive creature. He is helpless before the big power. The power crushes the human body and the human mind. Larkin presents the philosophy in his poems.

Larkin believes in Time and thinks that time exercises its remote control over the lives of human beings. Larkin concludes that there is something wrong, doubtful and suspicious when human will coincides with the will of nature. Time is a man's enemy and is nature's strong agent. Time runs ahead of man's will.

Larkin's first volume "The Northship" was published in 1945. The poems reveal the experiences of solitary person. They tell us about nature, about men and women , and about customs. His poem "Dawn" expresses his love for nature.

He speaks in the lines :

To wake and hear a cock

Out of distance crying,

To pull the curtains back

And see the clouds flying

How strange it is

For the hearts to be loveless,

And as cold as these.

His another poem “ All catches alight” also expresses his love for nature.

He speaks :

All Catches alight

At the spread of spring :

Birds crazed both flight

Branches that fling

Leave up to the light

Every one thing,

Shape, colour and voice

Cries out, Rejoice !

A drum taps a wintry drum.

Larkin's second volume “The Less Deceived ” presents twenty nine poems. It is published in Hull in 1955, when he was twenty two. The greater ability Larkin presents in the poems “Church Going.”

In "Church Going" Larkin says :

A shapeless recognizable each week

A purpose more obscure. I wonder who

Will be the last, the very last to seek .

This place for what it was; one of the crew

That tap and jot and know what rood-lofts were?

Some ruin-bibber, randy for antique

Or Christmas-addict, counting on whiff

Of grown and bands and organ pipes and myth?

Or will he be my representative.

Larkin in the another poem "Toads" speaks :

I don't say, One bodies the other

One's spiritual truth;

But I Do say it is hard to lose either,

When you have both.

The poems reveal Larkin's detached attitude to look at life. The poems speak about daily routine, the monotonous nature and man's surrender to the circumstances.

Larkin's third volume "The Whitsun Weddings" shows Larkin's as a mature poet. The poems present Larkin as a keen observer of life. The poems bring various characters, various events and fashions of the Time. The poem "Here", Mr. Bleaney "Dockery and son", The Whitsun Wedding " , reveal the personality of Larkin.

Innocence, the pathos and grim humour of experience, the renewal of nature were the characteristics of 1950's. The dread of the future, and of death were the subjects of 1950's

Alun Jones says :

"It is in the poetry of Philip Larkin that the spirit of the 1950's finds its most complete expression in English Poetry." ¹

Larkin's fourth volume of poems "High Windows" reveals his super talent and creative ability. His pessimism, his helplessness reflects in the poem. "Living", "The Building", "To the Sea" and the other poems represent Larkin as the poet of self snubbers and self loathers. His poems mirror the picture of contemporary age.

Lolette Kuby Speaks :

"The fundamental reason for the
present low pressure of poetry
in England is simple one : that
poetry has become the most
self conscious of the arts, the one
in which the analytical
consciousness has come most close
to the creative one. The poets
who survive are those like
Larkin who, sensitive and gifted,

can make an art of their
very self conscious.”²

The four volumes of Larkin bring his vision of life. The saddest heart of Larkin pines for the common man's fate and he courageously reveals the tragic impact of fate that rules on the life of man.

Larkin deals with the themes like love, marriage, God, Time and Destiny in his poems. He tries to present the subjects from the routine life like railway platform, fashions, marriages, They talk about platforms, stores and about television.

Mexamotosis¹

“Mexamotosis”, the poem seems to tell about a disease and about the horrible pains and torture. Mexamotosis is a disease and common man can not escape from it. The disease is also a curse of Fate and man is a mere victim. He has to endure the torture and the grief. Man has no capacity to control it. Nature is a strong power,

and man is a mere puppet. Larkin decides to reveal the common man and his fate.

He says :

Caught in the center of soundless field

While the inexplicable hours go by

What trap is this? Where were its

teeth concealed

You seem to ask.

According to Larkin fate lingers in the life of man. The outside facts control the man and the man accepts his future. The trap of Fate is subtle. By and by the power rules on man and destroys him completely. The hopes remain no where, happiness gets scattered. Larkin's poem impresses the inability of common man to face the diseases.

Dry Point²

Larkin's poem "Dry Point " describes the destruction of things in the nature. The poem reveals Time as an irritant. The struggle is going on between the man and the Nature. The ultimate power is Nature. Man strives for good , he struggles for his own existence. He realises that everything comes to an end. Every thing that is born, has to decay. Everything transforms into ashes. Larkin calls Time as "endlessly honoured irritant."

He says :

Endless time honoured irritant

A bubble is restively forming at your tip,

Burst it as fast as we can

It will grow again, until we begin dying.

The Time waits for a chance, and when he gets it, he destroys everything. The walls collapse, the ashen hills stand, the lakes get shrunken. The magic gets discredited. The boasting of man comes to an end. Man stands as a silent observer and accepts his defeat. Larkin's poem reveals the cruel Fate and the feeble nature of man.

Take One Home For The Kiddies ³

“Living toys are something novel,

But it soon wears off somehow,

Fetch the shoebox, fetch the shovel,

Mam , we’re playing funeral now.

The children in the poem symbolise the nature , and nature’s ruthless, and ~~un~~conscious cruelty. The small children are naughty . They answer arrogantly. They shout, they create noise and bring a torture to the men and women. Their actions are wrong , they are impulsive. They disturb, and they injure the elders.

The will of a small boy is spontaneous. The actions are horrible, their behaviour is cruel. They are linked with emotions. Life for them is a game. Funeral is not a serious thing for them . They play the game and they enjoy themselves Nature too does the same thing with human life . The human life is short. It is transitory. Nature always gives a warning to men.

No Road ⁴

The poem reveals Larkin's attitude to Love and Nature. The road is an image and it tells about the relationship of love between the lover and his beloved.

For some reason the lovers have kept their thoughts away from their hearts. They have avoided the meetings. They have agreed to stay away from the road of love. They avoid conversations. In the beginning, it stands difficult but slowly they get used of it. The love dissolves through the slow process and with the passage of Time, They too accept the limitations and separate from each other.

Larkin says :

Leaves drift unswept, perhaps; grass creeps unmown,
 No other change,
 So clear it stands, so little overgrown,
 Walking the way tonight would not seem strange,
 And still would be allowed. A little longer

And time will be the stronger

The lover seems to refuse the contacts with his beloved. The contacts are destroyed in the passage of Time. The love is killed, the possibility comes to an end .

P.R. King puts it :

“Beginning with a tender melancholy,

the poem ends, as so often in a

Larkin poem, with a final stanza

Expressing a realistic self-awareness

Which amounts almost to a stoical

Acceptance of his limitations”.³

Deceptions⁵

The poem seems to be based on an account presented by Larkin's aunt Mayhew. The poem describes a girl who was raped in an attic of 19th century.

Mayhew's according to the girl's report says :

Of course I was drugged and

So heavily I did not regain

consciousness till the next morning. I

was horrified to discover that

I had been ruined, and for some

days I was inconsolable, and

cried like a child to be killed

or sent back to my aunt.

Larkin seems to be sympathetic for the girl. He has realized the suffering and pains which the girl experienced. Larkin is realistic. He has understood the situation and he is aware of the modern milieu. The people are busy with their involvements, they are reluctant. The lady can think of nothing else, the memory of the event is cutting, sharp and raw.

The poet also says that the man who rushed to fulfil his passion and achieve peace has been deceived in his understanding. He is more deceived than the girl. The agonising experience remains the same. The men, women observe the scene and keep quiet.

Next Please ⁶

Larkin seems to reveal a pessimistic note in the treatment of time. He is obsessed with the destructive passage of time. He likes to divide past, present and future into distinct units. The poem presents a serious thought. The poem tells that we are standing on a cliff and look forward to the fulfilment of promises in the sparking armada of promises.

Larkin uses a beautiful image of a ship and tells that the ships never bring promises but they leave us nothing but disappointments.

The deserted decks say

“Something is always approaching”. The present and future are the parts of our life but the end is death. Larkin, gives words like “Dark, “Birdless”, “Black” which stand for death.

Larkin says :

Only one ship is seeking us, a black

Sailed unfamiliar, towing at her back

A huge and birdless silence. In her wake

No water breeds or break.

Toads ⁷

Larkin seems to bring a contrast between the two options of being employed as a regular salaried worker and of freedom from such work. The poet describes that the work is like a toad. The work sits heavily on his mind. It is very difficult to get rid of it.

The man has to work all the days of the week except Sunday. He has to put up with it just for bills. The suffering of the man is always disproportionate to the salary. The experience relates the humdrum routine work and the melancholic attitude of the poet to look at life.

The poem speaks about the poet who desires to refuse the regular pension but he could not refuse. The dreams and joys are depended upon the pension that he is to come with retirement. The burden is so heavy that it prevents him to win his beloved and a name and the earning.

The poem presents the two personalities one is rebellious and the other submissive. Both complement one another Rosenthal rightly puts it,

“He is inhibited by a thwarting
caution, which prevents him from
becoming either a carefree romantic
or swashbuckling operator.”

Toads Revisited ⁸

Larkin seems to tell that his life is different than the other people who live a comfortable life.

The poet loves to walk in the park. He loves to enjoy the lake, the sunshine and the green grass. But these things never suit to his temperament. He soon realises that the reality is quite different.

The beautiful things in the nature are only for the rich. For the poor, the routine work is a must. They have to accept the reality. The freedom from the work would bring them madness. They would get dejected and isolated.

Mr. Bleaney⁹

Larkin presents a wonderful pen picture of Mr. Bleaney. The poem is a dramatic monologue and it tells about the meaninglessness of life.

The poem opens thus :

“This was Mr. Bleaney’s room.

He stayed the whole time he was

At the bodies, till they moved him.”

The poem speaks about Mr. Bleaney and his room. He was all alone living in his room. The room signifies the world in miniature and the solitary life he was living. The room was dark, drab and was uncomfortable. The things were a few and cheap. The things were bringing a vulgarity and uneasiness and were reminding the life of a bachelor.

Timms remarks that the name

“Bleaney” reminds one of bleakness and meanness.⁴

Larkin says that the room was cheap. The bed, the chair, and the lamp the things were not in good order. The extinguished cigarettes, the noise made by “jabbering set” bring him a sense of despair.

The poet has to endure it. He has stayed in the room. He has only the television set. The narrator wonders, whether he will also have to share the same fate as his predecessor in the room, Mr. Bleaney.

Dockery and Son ¹⁰

The poem seems to express Larkin's dismal, disillusioned attitude to look at life. Larkin defines it as a boredom and is a fear. A sense of loneliness persuades the poet. His personal experiences make him to conclude that life is nothing but an empty dream. Life is meaningless.

Larkin says :

Life is first boredom, then fear,
Whether or not we use it, it goes,
And leaves what something, hidden,
From us chose,
And age, and then the only end of age.

The poem speaks about a life of a bachelor. The bachelor is a worldly wise man. He has his own philosophy. He has lived a happy life. He is known to the coming advancing age. He knows about death. He is a mature man and has realised the ultimate truth. At present he thinks himself a stranger. He thinks being excluded.

The reality is horrible but one has to deal with it. It is necessary to cope with the differences between what it is and what is wished or what is expected. The birth and the death, the happiness and sorrow, are the aspects of life and man can not escape from the circle of life. The Only end of life is death and man must prepare to face it. The bachelor knows the truth.

Church Going ¹¹

“Church Going is an autobiographical poem of Philip Larkin.”

George Macbeth says :

It is one of Larkin's most famous poems. ⁵

Larkin calls a church “a serious house on serious earth.” Church tells about the eternal truth, that is death. Church is related with mysterious life.

The rafters of the churches are filled with white clothes saints and angels. There is always a deep silence and grave atmosphere. The church represents birth, marriage and death.

A visitor pays a visit to the church. He goes inside it and makes the door shut. He gets shocked by the deep silence. He feels very awkward and he exclaims :

Hatless I take off

My cycle clips in awkward reverence.

He gets tortured by the question why he should stop there if the place is not “Worth stopping for”. The poet thinks on the problem, he meditates on it and comes to a certain conclusion. He thinks that a different substitute may stand on the ground when the church would be out of use. The people may call them unlucky places and would avoid them.

The Whitsun Weddings¹²

“ The Whitsun Weddings “the poem describes the city of London. Larkin presents a realistic description of London. The poem presents a scene and shows a tardy commuter speedily catching a train. The thing has become habitual and he has become the part of it.

Larkin in the poem gives a list of various objects in the nature, the wide farms, the cattle, the canals and the industries. He also speaks about the flowers, about the smell of grass. The poet minutely observes the scene with his keen eyes and gives his own experience to the readers.

Larkin records :

Wide farms went by, short shadowed cattle, and

Canals with floating of industrial forth ;

A hothouse flashed uniquely; hedges dipped

And rose, and now and then a smell of grass

Displaced the reek of buttoned carriage cloth

Until the next town, new and nondescript,

Approached with acres of dismantled cars.

The poet observes the wedding scenes during his journey. He looks at the passengers and their behaviours. He stands as a detached observer and records things as they are. The poet intends to give the

panorama of English rural and urban landscape, the houses and the streets. The poem reflects the society of London.

Here ¹³

Larkin expresses his romantic attitude in the poem "Here". The poem reminds Wordsworth and his poem "Solitary Reaper"

The poem seems to point out the frustration and melancholic atmosphere which is created in the world of men and women. Larkin thinks that the industrilisation is the main cause of the frustration. The industrial terror, the problem of un-employment and the materialism are the root causes of frustration. Men have lost their souls in the noise of the big satanic wheels. The electric mixers, toasters, washers and drier have occupied the lives of men and women. Larkin hopes that simple and urban dwelling places and peaceful life would help the people to live happily and breathe happily. Nature provides mental satisfaction, and a peace of mind. For Larkin, nature is a teacher, a friend, and a philosopher. Nature is the best remedy.

Wants¹⁴

The poem “wants” brings Larkin’s thought on death. Larkin has observed the life of common human beings. They are engaged from the morning upto evening in their daily activities. They forget a short time the sorrows and disasters. The evening and the shade of darkness and night makes them restless. They realise the meaninglessness of life and the emptiness of the activities. In the heart of hearts they realise the existence of death.

Life is an empty dream. The whole life though stands beautiful, never brings happiness or light. The childhood, the young age and the old age are the three periods and the old age is nothing but a suggestion of coming death. Larkin thinks that death is inevitable, unavoidable and man should prepare his mind to face it.

Larkin in the same poem speaks about “Oblivion”, oblivion is forgetfulness. Larkin thinks that every man is afraid of forgetfulness. They think they are likely to be forgotten . Larkin differs from common run of poets who desire for posthumous

remembrance and fame because he wishes that death may bring him complete forgetfulness.

An Arundel Tomb ¹⁵

P. R. King praises the poem and says it is Larkin's most moving expression of the relationship between "love", "time" and "truth".

Larkin believes that love is a symbol of imperishable devotion of two minds. Love brings the two souls together and proves the immortality of the idea "love". Physically the lovers depart but they remain permanent in the world. Love is power and it is never to be nourished in the passage of time

The poem opens thus :

Side by side their faces blurred,

The earl and countess lie in stone,

Their proper habits vaguely shown

As jointed armour, stiffened pleat,

And that faint hint of the absurd

The little dogs under their feet.

Larkin tells about a medieval knight and his lady who are dead. Both are buried in the Chichester cathedral. After the death of the lovers the sculptor carved their statues in the certain postures. Their faces have blurred, the garments are torned in the passage of Time. The sculptor has carved the figures of the dogs at their feet. The picture looks to be incongruous as if it were a blot and was associated with the monument.

I Remember, I Remember ¹⁶

“ I Remember, I Remember” the poem seems to be related with the personal feeling of the poet. England was his birthplace and Larkin recalls his associations and exclaims that it was the place where he was born.

Larkin says :

Coming up England by a different line

For once, early in cold new year,

We stopped, and watching men with number plates

Sprint down the platform to familiar gates

Why, Coventry ! I exclaimed, I was born here.

Larkin has delicate memories with England. He speaks “ the town that had been mine.” His tone becomes naturally soft when he recalls his father, his family and his friends. But he controls himself and realises that the experience is not new. All people experience the same, and become sensitive.

So he concludes and says :

“Nothing, like something, happens anywhere”.

Wedding wind ¹⁷

Larkin in the poem “Wedding Wind” expresses his thoughts about death. Perhaps the poet was in a sad and dejected mood and at the same time he listens the whisper of the wind. The wind Larkin thinks as a pre-omen send by death. Larkin believes that death sends

a message of his arrival through some things. Then he arrives and spreads his sinister wings and carries men to the dark region where nothing remains except darkness.

Larkin says :

The wind blew all my wedding day

And my wedding night was the night of the

High wind;

And a stable door was banging again and again,

That he must go and shut it, leaving me

stupid in candle night, hearing rain,

Seeing my face in the twisted candlestick,

Yet seeing nothing.

The speaker was alone and he gets surprised to see that there was no one who could share the speaker's contentment. The wind was hunting through the clouds, and through the forest. The door was banging, and the poet could listen the raining and could see

nothing. The speaker has to remain calm and quiet as he was unable to solve the questions regarding birth and death. The death comes and carries everything.

Whatever Happened ¹⁸

The poem “Whatever Happened” describes an event and tells about the harsh nature of Time.

Larkin says :

At once whatever happened starts receding ,

Panting and back on board we line and rail

With trousers ripped, light wallets and

Lips bleeding

Larkin’s poem seems to narrate about an event happened accidentally in the life of the narrator. The speaker is a tourist, he is strongly beaten near a waterfront heavy tank and he is “rolled” by a girl there. They experience a brutal and chaotic condition. The

accident was a mishap. The same experience transforms into a philosophic form.

Larkin says :

Curses ? The dark ? struggling ?

Where is the source

Of these yearns now

(except in nightmares ofcourse)

Lines On A Young Photograph

Album ¹⁹

The poem is a reflection of Time. Larkin speaks about past present and future. Larkin has a photograph of a young lady. He has realised the blooming beauty of the lady. He hopes that the photograph of the beautiful lady would creat a deep impression on the minds of viewers. The memory of the beautiful lady would remain the same in the beholder's eyes.

Larkin says :

In short a past that no one

Now can share,

No matter whose your future ,

Calm and dry,

It holds you like a heaven and

you lie,

Unvariably lovely there,

Smaller and clearer as the

years go by.

The photograph for Larkin is reality and it is an idealisation too. The beauty is invulnerable. Larkin comments that the beauty is detached from and is free from the sympathetic beauty which is conferred by the eye of the beholder. The Time would remain the same. Larkin speaks that the time would never stand as an obstacle in the memory of man. The beauty and the lady would stand

permanent in the photograph as a single entity and “Smaller and Clearer”.

Money²⁰

In the poem “Money” Larkin says about despair, about gloominess which is the outcome of the problem “Money”.

The men and women suffer because of money. Money, Larkin tells is the root cause of disillusionment. The rich are also restless due to money and the poor are mad due to money. The whole routine of man is linked with money alone. The towns, the villages, the slums and the churches all are after money. Money brings despair, sorrow, frustration and gloominess.

Larkin says :

I listen to money singing, it's like

Looking down

From long French windows at a

Provencial town,

The slums, the canal the churches

Ornate and mad,

In the evening sun. It is intently sad.

Send No Money²¹

Larkin's poem "Send No Money" presents a detached outlook to look at life. Here is a boy who has accepted a complete detachment in his life. He knows the ultimate truth. He has decided to sacrifice all the things and looks at life stoically.

The life has taught him to face the calamities in the future. He has his own philosophy to look at life. He is honest and frank in his opinion and he is courageous to state it.

Larkin says :

Half life is over now,

And I must meet full face

On dark mornings

The bestial vision went on

By the blows of what

Happened to happen

Days²²

George Macbeth says that the poem is not concerned with day to day activities which are generally the province of Larkin. It seems to aim at a plain timeless quality.

Larkin says :

What are days for ?

Days are where we live,

They come, they wake us

Time and Time over

They are to be happy in :

Where we can live but days ?

For Larkin days are not inseparable from us. They are linked with our life We wake up with dawn and we complete our routine. We live in time and within our bounds. The priest and the doctor

help us in our need. One solves spiritual problem and the other physical. Both are related with birth and death.

Wild Oats²³

Larkin in the poem "Wild Oats" tells about his awkward position in the matter of love. He experiences a sense of disappointment and he himself stands responsible for it. He tells about his experiences which he experienced before twenty years ago.

Larkin records how he met the two girls. He ~~telk~~ that one was beautiful like a bosomy English rose and the other was plain. He ~~coarted~~ the plain girl. He planned to engage to her and then decides to break it off. He loved the beautiful girl from the bottom of his heart. He could not express his love to her.

Finally he gained neither. He was rather shy and was unable to declare his true love. But the real reason of his disappointment was different. He was dishonest to his true feelings. He could not ~~bare~~ the departure.

Larkin says :

That I was too selfish, withdrawn,

And easily board to love,

Well useful to get that learnt

In my wallet are still two snaps

Of bosomy rose with fur gloves on

Unlucky charms perhaps.

Aubade ²⁴

The poem "Aubade" is a clear expression of Larkin's ideas about death. The poet likes to repeat the horror from the prospect of dying. The Poet loves to live life and wants to control and manipulate life. He does not want to submit to the death. He is not ready to surrender to the predetermined pattern of unsucccess. He gives importance to choice. Human being is born with some special qualities and he has his rights to choose his own way of life.

The horrible reality tells him that there is a gulf between the reality and idealism. The illusion is different and reality is also different. There is a difference between the solitude and sociability.

The reality comes close and the poet realises that he has no right to choose. The death comes and carries the life. Death, in Larkin's view, is an utterly comfortless blank. Larkin's personality has two parts and they are another.

Larkin says :

I work all day and get help drunk at night

Waking at four to soundless dark, I stare

In time the curtain edges will grow light,

Till then I see what's really always there :

Unresting death, a whole day nearer now

And where and when I shall myself die.

Reference Back²⁵

“Reference Back” Larkin’s poem, tells about the universal theme “Time” Larkin believes that man is always in a thrall of Time. The man is always after dreams and illusions but Time always strips all illusions and brings bare realities

It is always an attempt of man to avoid realities. Time is a strong factor who binds our hopes and dreams. But the growing age makes us realise that the hopes and dreams are to be vanished. The dreams destroy and the sense of loss spreads every where.

Larkin also remembers the past. He recalls his childhood and the youth in which he has invested excitement and meaning. He looks the present his adult life which is mundane and is drab. The sense of disappointment makes him to think about Time and Death.

Larkin confirms that “Something hidden from us” destroys all attempts of man to control the lives. It comes and seizes all happiness of man.

Larkin reminds :

Truly, though our element is time,

We are not suited to the long perspectives

Open at each instant of our lives.

They link us to our losses : worse

They show us what we have as it once was,

Blindly undiminished just as though

By acting differently we would have

Kept it so.

Self's the man²⁶

Larkin's poem "self's the man" talks about marriage. He selects one Arnold and his family life. He wants to compare the life of Arnold with the life of the poet. The poet is a bachelor. The poet thinks that Arnold is less selfish than he is. Arnold gets married and provides for his family. But the poet soon realises that Arnold has to pay the price. He has to work all the day, to hand his money over his wife. He has to fulfil the demands of his wife. He can not get away from the things.

Larkin says :

He has no time at all,
 With the hippers to wheel round the houses
 And the hall to paint in his old trousers.
 And that letter to her mother
 Saying won't you come for the summer.

The poet does not stand confident about his deal with the marriage. The end is rather doubtful. Larkin seems to speak about unillusioned view of contemporary living and its problems.

Reasons for Attendance²⁷

Larkin was a detached observer of life. He wants to turn away from the society. The poem seems to present Larkin as a stoic person, watching the life with a calm attitude.

Larkin pays a visit to a party and peers through the dark to the lighted glass. The young men and women are dancing solemnly on the beat of happiness. The poet looks the dances. He experiences the "Feel of the girls" He listens the trumpet's voice. The voice is loud

and authoritative. The poet could not share the joy. He stands outside and records the scene.

Larkin says :

But not for me, not I for them : and so
 With happiness. Therefore I stay outside,
 Believing this : and they maul to and fro
 Believing that ; and both are satisfied,
 If no one has misjudged himself or lied.

The poem speaks about Larkin's refusal to participate, so the poem has an air of self-alienation.

Poetry of Departure ²⁸

The poem seems to suggest Larkin's attitude towards liberalisation and towards the imprisoned daily routine life. Larkin admires the men who attempt to free themselves from the routines of dull life. Larkin examines the response of admiration and

approval, of the people when they listen someone, who has made a break and has departed from the routine life.

The poet too hates his home. He detests his room, his good books and the good bed. He wants to go away from the orderly and conventional life

Book, China, a life

Reprehensibly perfect.

The poem present a double irony. The well-ordered life might be a cowardice in the face different ways of living. His escape from the routine and to live in an imaginary world is also a strange thing. Still the honesty of Larkin expresses his characteristic aspect of his nature.

Posterity ²⁸

“Posterity” seems to be a comment on practical life and imagined life. The poet tells about the young post graduate student in America. He wants to select such a subject which would offer

him to secure tenure as a university lecturer. But he has selected another subject. He has no sympathy for the chosen subject. He has selected a topic of Protest Theatre. The young family demands a safe Ph.D. He is helpless. The poem keeps up the tone of suppressed anger and cynicism. The poet too becomes a part of old type natural failed up guys. He realises that his life is not without disasters. He has to earn his bread and has to look for the money. He has to be practical.

Sunny Prestatyn ²⁹

The poem "Sunny Prestatyn" tells about the dream of perfection which contrasts with the real world in which men and women live.

The poem describes a railway station and shows us a poster advertising. The poster is of a girl in a swimsuit and it advertises the pleasure of prestatyn. The poster is alluring and is attracting.

The Poster presents a girl who is beautiful, face snaggled toothed and boss eyed. Her expressions are appealing. The language used on the poster is course and rough.

The poster brings a tension between fact and fantasy, reality and illusion. The advertisement and cliché sex symbol is a part of the advertiser's untruth, a dreamworld which contrasts with the real world.

Yers de Societe ³⁰

Larkin's poem "Yers de Societe" is likely to make an attack on the truth and hypocrisy. The poem seems to explore the tension between solitariness and sociability.

The poet with his wife attends a cocktail party. The sender has send the invitation and the poet has to keep up his social relations. The poet leaves himself in the crowd and spends his time. The poet loves to live away from the society. He loves loneliness and solitude. He wants to live alone. He prefers to be lonely but he knows that he could not live lonely. He has to remain in the society

and has to follow the false morality. He has to accept the invitations.
 He has to admit the human weakness. He has to wear the tension
 and has to live life without making any excuse.

Larkin summarises :

The time shorter now for company,
 And sitting by a lamp more often brings
 Not peace, but other things.
 Beyond the light stand failure and remorse

Whispering Dear Warlock-Williams :

Why of course –

Triple Time ³¹

Larkin speaks about, future and past in the poem “Triple Time”. Larkin thinks to measure the span of lifetime by linking the future and the past.

The future does not move slowly into the past. The title “Triple Time” says at the march three steps to the beat.

The ships and their processional approach bring the meaninglessness. Larkin speaks about the conventional division of time into future.

The Building³²

Larkin reveals a stoical acceptance of death. Larkin speaks that the building is a busy hospital. All experiences of man's life are connected with the building.

Larkin's poem expose the picture of the people who are constantly moving in and out of the large public building. They wait for somebody. They “tamely sit”, their faces are restless and resigned. Their faces reflect the seriousness of illness and anxiety of death. The young the middle aged and old all are gathered there and live with the “last of hope”. They are all in hospital to confess that something has gone wrong. The building never cures the souls but only cures the body. Larkin seems to record the life honestly.

If, My Darling³³

Larkin seems to reveal the difference between the romantic illusion and reality. Here is a young lady. She wants to see the image of herself in the eyes of her lover. The lover perhaps wants to say that the lady loves him because she does not know him. He tells to go beyond his eyes. She would fail to understand him. She will not find anything related to romantic illusion, she will see a materialistic man. The invitation turns from illusion into reality.

Talking in Bed³⁴

“Talking in Bed” the poem reveals that love has little room for honesty. The poet presents a situation. The two lovers come together with an expectation of genuine closeness. The relations are based on honesty. For Larkin honesty in love is a difficult thing. The poet speaks about the impossibility.

The wind and sky reflect the inability of the two to settle a close relationship.

Larkin handles the subjects like Time and Death, Idealism and Dualism, Free will and Fate. He also reveals the illusory visions of man. Failure of the promise of love. He comments on old age and death.

Larkin has said,

I don't think, I want to change;

Just to become better at what I am.

* * *

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Larkin's Poetry. 1974.
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3. Dr. Rangachari; Philip Larkin, A study of select poem, p. 109.
4. Ibid; p.103.
5. Ibid; p.112.