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FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT: TRANSCENDENCE IN THE SELECTED POEMS OF PHILIP LARKIN

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Abstract
This paper explores the pervasive motifs of darkness and light in the selected poetry of Philip Larkin, examining how these images underscore the central themes and emotional landscapes within his works. Larkin's use of light and dark imagery often reflects the dichotomy between hope and despair, life and death, and the transient nature of human existence. The study aims to analyse the symbolic significance of light and dark imagery in Larkin's poetry, investigate how these motifs contribute to the thematic depth and emotional resonance of his works and enhance the understanding of Larkin's philosophical contemplations and the philosophical tradition of naturalism that is featured strongly in his poetry. Through a close reading of his selected poems, this study employed a qualitative analysis to delve into the poet's nuanced portrayal of light as a symbol of fleeting joy and enlightenment, juxtaposed against the encroaching darkness that symbolises existential angst and inevitable mortality. The analysis reveals that Larkin has stayed true to the philosophical tradition of naturalism, and the analysis of the selected poems reveals the contrasting images of light and dark, which effectively capture the complexities of the human condition. Light is depicted as a transient source of joy and enlightenment, while darkness represents the inevitable presence of existential dread and mortality. This juxtaposition highlights Larkin's introspective vision and his ability to convey profound philosophical insights through his poetic artistry. There is thus a movement towards positivity and hope despite the melancholic mood of Larkin's poetry which is often pervasive in most of his poems. By analysing these contrasting images, the paper aims to show this progression from negativity to a certain positive transcendence, thus contributing to a deeper and newer understanding of Larkin's poetic artistry and his philosophical contemplations on life's ephemerality.

Keywords: images, literature, Philip Larkin, poetry, transcendence

Introduction
Philip Larkin (1922-1985), one of England's most celebrated poets, left behind a huge legacy of his timeless works for an infinite audience of readers, who up to this very day are amazed by the clarity and simplicity of his poetry. He is often described to be "the most widely celebrated and arguably the finest of the Movement, a group of poets that emerged in the 1950s" (Tuma, 2001, p. 445). Born

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in the town of Coventry in England on August 9th, 1922, Larkin received his tertiary education at St. John's College, Oxford (1943) and graduated with a First. Larkin worked at the University College of Leicester and Queen's College in Belfast before finally becoming the librarian at the University of Hull in 1955, a post he accepted until 1975. His work encompasses poems under the collections entitled "*The North Ship*" (1945), "*XX Poems*" (1953), and the more popular "*The Less Deceived*" (1955). Two more collections followed, "*The Whitsun Weddings*" in 1964 and lastly "*High Windows*" in 1974. In 1984 Philip Larkin was offered the title Poet Laureate but he declined, and the title went to Ted Hughes. Philip Larkin passed away on December 2nd, 1985, at the age of 63. Larkin's precision use of language, melancholic outlook, and wry humour coupled with his sharp commentary on life and society made him popular in Post-War England. Larkin's impact is evident in the work of many modern poets who appreciate his straightforwardness, honesty, and ability to find poetry in the mundane, exploring the complexities of human experience.

Philip Larkin is considered one of the best English poets of his time. His poetry style is direct, widely accessible to the public in terms of his writing approach, offering an honest worldview of the human condition in an often-bleak view of everyday life. Larkin's poetry has a distinct appeal as it is down-to-earth and unpretentious. His sharp wit and keen eye for details coupled with his keen sensitivity and clarity for the language has been one of the hallmarks of his poetry. His poetry often explores everyday themes such as love, loss, the passage of time, and life's disappointments. He addresses these topics with candid honesty and dark, dry humour that makes his work both poignant and thought-provoking.

Larkin's quest began with his own voice, or his poetry, and no matter how crude or level his language is, it has succeeded in capturing the human emotional drama that unfolds in other aspects of life as well. From society, individuals, and architectural landscapes to humanistic portraits, Larkin framed these moments in his true world. In the search for this other world, he showed concern for his country England and as he highlighted the ravages of pollution and industrialization coupled with his general view that life is a mess, he searched for a state of enlightenment.

Larkin's writing is influenced by the English Movement of the 1950s, which emphasized a return to traditional forms and rejected the experimental styles of modernism. He greatly admired T.S. Eliot, a major influence on the Movement, along with W.B. Yeats, Thomas Hardy, and Edward Thomas. While Larkin embraced the Movement's focus on formal clarity, he infused his work with a unique voice characterized by sharp wit and sombre realism.

Larkin has also been described as a "metonymic poet" by Lodge (1989, p. 120) and it is in this approach that Larkin's poems are deep, accessible, and vividly associated with community living and are socially comprehended. Nikhilesh (2022) mentions that "Although Larkin is current in terms of the subject matter he writes about, he is traditional in terms of the manner he writes in; he is sometimes thought of as one of the Movement poets, although the disputes this, he is the most pessimistic of all modern poets." (p. 203). This paper then aims to show the progression from negativity to a certain positive transcendence, challenging the reductive readings of Larkin's work, thus contributing to a deeper and newer understanding of Larkin's poetic oeuvre and his philosophical dimensions.

Method

Using critical analysis and close reading, this paper seeks to unravel Larkin's poetry and its movement from the theme of darkness to light as seen in his selected poetry. It is undeniable that Larkin's poetry exudes a sense of pessimism and gloomy darkness that entails nearly every collection of his works. From his earlier collections, one can sense that Larkin's world remains constantly wrought in the manifolds of despair and failings.

The selection of poems for this paper (a total of nine) was done based on several themes such as his skepticism of religion, the exploration of mortality, his cynicism and political insights, and Larkin's exploration of the ordinary and the profound. As such the selected poems also reveal moments of "transcendence" and Larkin's mastery in articulating the complexities of the human experience, particularly through a lens of existential doubt, personal struggle, and quiet observation of life's rhythms. They remain important because they offer a deep, often sombre, but always relatable exploration of human life and its uncertainties. The selected poems (from Larkin's four volumes of poetry) also demonstrate the progression of positivity and hope and remain a core focus of this paper and are extrapolated in the findings and discussion section.

In the literature review on Larkin, Timms (1973) observes that Larkin's first collection of poems "The North Ship" is "about the way our lives so rarely turn out how we hoped they would- we fail so often, particularly in love. Some deal with loneliness: again, a characteristic theme of the later verse, where it is examined in a more complex fashion." (p. 33). This darkness seems pervading in his second collection of poetry "*The Less Deceived*" which is not about the author being a wiser person and his refusal to be fooled but "about suffering and its maturing effects" (p. 58). This reminds us too of Thomas Hardy being a major influence in the poetry of Larkin following the likes of Auden, Yeats, Betjeman, Keats, and Dylan Thomas. Perhaps there is a meaning beyond all this bleakness; even in "*The Whitsun Weddings*" such thoughts continue to prevail. Colin Falck says that in a review of "*The Whitsun Weddings*" Larkin "misrepresents life, in the sense that he implies that life is pointless" (p. 102). There are of course some poems that deal with love in "*The Whitsun Weddings*" that give us a breather but overall, his poems have a sense of yearning for a deeper understanding of life. Roy (2023) highlights that "the overall mood of Larkin's poetry is grim and pessimistic" (p. 358) and Everett (1991) speaks of Larkin's poetry as "however violent or ugly in detail (as some of the later ones are) pursue a faithfulness that will make them in some sense "like a heaven": but this heaven is essentially a fallen Eden, a dwindling Paradise glimpsed always from the outside and through a vision of limits" (p. 250) and Herald (1996) in "*Larkin's Predicament*" states, "Larkin almost invariably is identified with a downhearted, pessimistic temper and tone of voice." He concludes also "the vast majority of his verse is devoted to what is generally taken to be negative aspects of life, such as loneliness and dejection, disappointments, loss, and the terrifying prospect of impending death." (p. 1). Until recently, scholars Idrus and Mukahal (2021) also highlight how Larkin's work was also a criticism of the imminent degradation of nature, the oppression of animals, and how the poet's work should be read from an ecocritical point of view as Larkin expresses his overall dissatisfaction on the state of things, environmentally (p. 56). Ubeid (2020) notes

that as Larkin's reputation grew, his critics recognized his "perfect presentation of thematic concerns and excellent craftmanship" that exist in his poems. (p. 2).

Through the review of literature, the common thread of discussion is the common view that Larkin's works are sombre, melancholic and bleak. Against such an understanding, this paper aims to show that from the "darkness" in the poetry of Larkin for which he is universally known, there exists some "light" in his works. The understanding of "light" in this context is hope, optimism, or faith in which I hope to expound and shed some light upon the complex images in his poetry.

Findings and Discussion

As a preliminary start, I shall focus on a series of poems to illustrate his bleak outlook towards life. One of the poems is "*To Failure*" which goes on to show how failure is personified as a person.

> You do not come dramatically, with dragons
> That rear up with my life between their paws
> And dash me butchered down beside the wagons.
> (Thwaite, 1988, p. 28)

With such vivid images, Larkin's description of failure is somewhat horrifying and graphic. Failure seems to be a permanence in his life that will be around for an indefinite period. Larkin's obsession with the theme of failure is shown in the poem "*Negative Indicative*" (p. 79). One would guess that the title itself would be a sufficient telltale of the contents of the poem. The poem "*Light Fails*" signifies total darkness or total failure, while "*Autobiography at an Air-Station*" (p. 78) foresees the echo of failure and futility as seen in the second stanza:

> Six hours pass: if I'd gone by boat last night
> I'd be there now. Well, it's too late for that.
> The kiosk girl is yawning. I feel staled,
> Stupefied, by inaction-and, as light
> Begins to ebb outside, by fear; I set
> So much on this Assumption. Now it's failed.

The image of failure is associated with the withdrawing or going away of light, coupled with a sense of regret, inaction and boredom. Larkin feels submerged with dread as the light goes away. Somehow, he equates the element of darkness with the image of failure. Similarly, in "*Vers de Societe*" (p. 181) for example:

> Only the young can be alone freely.
> The time is 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…

Here, once again the image of failure, sadness and a sense of futility "stand beyond the light". At the end of such a tunnel, one will only be caught in the webs of total darkness, as the light goes, darkness and abandonment enter. Failure sets in once again as quietly as it enters. One would find it deceptive that Larkin would name one of his poems "*Success Story*" (Thwaite, 1988, p. 88) which ironically begins with:

To fail (transitive and intransitive)
I find to mean be missing, disappoint,
Or not succeed in the attainment of…

Again, the obsession with failure takes shape but then again so does the image of decay, suffering and pain. Life is but a walking shadow, a long path that is full of impediments and affliction soon to be met with impending fatality. This kind of image is seen in "*Dockery and Son*", (p 153) where Larkin sums up life in his point of view, "Life is first boredom, then fear. Whether or not we use it, it goes," or the more sombre "*Nothing To Be Said*," (p. 138):

For nations vague as weed,
For nomads among stones,
Small-statured cross-faced tribes
And cobble-close families
In mill-towns on dark mornings
Life is slow dying.

Life to Larkin is but a slow demise and "appears as a continuous series of setbacks, as one long process of decay, marked by the lamentable waning of whatever poor abilities one might have possessed once" (Herald, 1996, p. 5). Death and decay, two images that diffuse in the dark moods of Larkin are inseparable from the forlorn state that follows with it. This slow dying is often associated with Larkin's dissatisfaction with life which has more distress in it than meaning. As a person will mature in life, and acquire the wisdom of life, it is for Larkin nothing but pain and tribulation. The poem "*Maturity*" in the second stanza elucidates the poet's dilemma, life is an act that goes along the painful existence of living.

And this must be the prime of life…I blink,
As if at pain; for it is pain, to think
This pantomime
Of compensating act and counter-act,
Defeat and counterfeit, makes up, in fact,
My ablest time. (Thwaite, 1988, p. 62)

In the poem "*Aubade*", the concern is more for the advent of death and the subtle bemoaning of time lost or opportunities squandered. This first stanza presents the fear of dying as something dreadful that horrifies even the mind and soul:

Yet the dread
Of dying, and being dead,
Flashes afresh to hold and horrify. (Thwaite, 1988, p. 208)

The image of the grim reaper and nothingness', the sensation of time wasted and unused is put across in the following lines.

The mind blanks at the glare. Not in remorse
-The good not done, the love not given, time
Torn off unused-nor wretchedly because
An only life can take so long to climb…

The image of disillusionment is manifested again in "At thirty-one" which is perhaps a summary of Larkin's life.

At thirty-one, when some are rich
And others dead,
I, being neither, have a job instead…(p. 69)

Similarly, another poem by Larkin "*The Life with a Hole in It*" is another example of this void of darkness that exists in his life. Herald (1996) comments "Larkin thus gives the impression that the reality of life as it presents itself to him falls blatantly short of what he expected. This disillusionment is particularly prominent when it comes to an assessment of what he has, or rather not, achieved so far in his life." (p. 7) Hence, the third stanza has a sense of immobility and restriction that is akin to the frame of mind of Larkin. The life he has, is described as "immobile and locked, Three-handed struggle between "Your wants, the world's for you, and (worse) The unbeatable slow machine That brings what you'll get" (Thwaite 1988, p. 202).

Larkin also has this feeling of being duped in life that he expresses his sentiments in a plainspoken way in the poem "*Send No Money*." The sense of being cheated after being promised is only realized in the later moments of the persona's life, by then it is too late since the persona has sacrificed half his life waiting for the promised boon.

Half life is over now,
And I meet full face on dark mornings
The bestial visor, bent in
By the blows of what happened to happen.
What does it prove? Sod all.
In this way I spent youth,
Tracing the trite untransferable
Truss-advertisements, truth. (Thwaite 1988, p. 146)

In the poem "*The Old Fools*," Larkin talks of death as an image of darkness that will blank him out forever. The permanence of the disintegration into oblivion is catastrophic and it is this phobia that he writes in "*The Old Fools*."

At death, you break up: the bits that were you
Start speeding away from each other for ever
With no one to see. It's only oblivion, true:
We had it before, but then it was going to end. (Thwaite 1988, p. 196)

In an interview with "*The Observer*", Larkin (1983) again stresses that one of his fears in growing old is that he dreads the "endless extinction" of his identity, (p. 55) which thus shows us another of Larkin's concerns; the wiping out of one's identity by death. Larkin also deals with other various images that portray his "darkness" such as the image of the amphibian in "*Toads*" from "*The Less Deceived*" in which he expresses his resentment towards the creature, a possible symbolic manifestation of the pressures of work and maybe the society that Larkin detaches himself from.

Why should I let the toad work
Squat on my life?
Can't I use my wit as a pitchfork
And drive the brute away?

Six days of the week it soils
With its sickening poison-
Just for paying a few bills!
That's out of proportion. (Thwaite, 1988, p. 89)

The image of loneliness, despair and the thoughts of being deserted in one's old age is seen in "*Toads Revisited*" from "*The Whitsun Weddings*" which applicably shows Larkin's view of life as being nullifying and empty.

Turning over their failures
By some bed of lobelias,
Nowhere to go but indoors,
No friends but empty chairs…

Finally, in the last stanza of the poem which clearly depicts the cul-de-sac of hope, it is the end, and the emptiness of the graveyard that the persona heads to is described:

When the lights come on at four
At the end of another year?
Give me your arm, old toad;
Help me down Cemetery Road. (Thwaite, 1988, p. 148)

And now in this second part of the paper, we shall see how the poems of Larkin shift from the "darkness" to the point of optimism and love while at the same time, I shall study the various images of affirmation in his poetry. Heaney (1997) writes:

> Yet while Larkin is exemplary in the way he sifts the conditions of contemporary life, refuses alibis and pushes consciousness towards an exposed condition that is neither cynicism nor despair, there survives in him a repining for a more crystalline reality to which he might give allegiance. When that repining finds expression, something opens and moments occur which deserve to be called visionary. (p. 24).

In a way, Larkin's poetry is appealing because he moves away from the aesthetics of Modernist writers to a more realistic depiction of social and ethical concerns affecting society (Can, 2015).

Meanwhile, King (1994) quotes Whalen (1968) on the poems of Larkin as having "a gesture of an eternal land of the spirit." (pp. 52-53). To begin with, the poem "*To Write One Song, I Said*" from "*The North Ship*" foresees light as the image of renewal, peace and hope. As the persona enters the graveyard to obtain some form of inspiration for his song, he is inspired by the tune of "A solitary bird," and the sudden blaze of sunlight that floods through the 'sodden' graves.

> That stones would shine like gold
> Above each sodden grave,
> This, I had not foretold,
> Nor the birds' clamour, nor
> The image morning gave
> Of more and even more,
> As some vast seven-piled wave,
> Mane-flinging, manifold,
> Streams at an endless shore. (Thwaite, 1988, p. 291)

It is at this moment that King (1994) sees the persona as having what Heaney (1997) calls "the visionary moment". King says, "It is possible to say that a mysterious, unexpected transaction occurs catching the persona off guarded in this short meditation." (p. 4). Whatever it is, there is some form of affirmation received by the persona that enables the golden sunlight to stream in an "endless shore". Undoubtedly, a sense of optimism and hope exists in a place of death.

In "*The Less Deceived*", the poem "*Church Going*" provides an account of the persona stopping by a small church while cycling. While recognizing it as an ordinary church, he enters it and upon finding it empty, he explores it. He contemplates what to do but then decides:

> Back at the door
> I sign the book, donate an Irish sixpence,
> Reflect the place was not worth stopping for. (Thwaite, 1988, p. 97)

The persona wonders curiously who the church plays host to in the wee hours of the night, but such rumination becomes "A shape less recognizable each week." Not satisfied, he ponders on what attracts the crowds to visit such a place. The persona questions the identity of the visitors to the place once it is deserted. While he meditates on the scene, "tending to his cross of the ground" he finds that:

It pleases me to stand in silence here;
A serious house on serious earth it is,
In whose blent air all our compulsions meet,
Are recognized, and robed as destinies.
And that much never can be obsolete,
Since someone will forever be surprising
A hunger in himself to be more serious,
And gravitating with it to this ground,
Which, he once heard, was proper to grow wise in,
If only that so many dead lie round.

Though the persona is a non-believer of the Christian religion, he "affirms the sacramental power churches hold on the human imagination. In them he finds his hunger or yearning for the mysterious and the secret most nearly answered" (Whalen, 1968, p.4). Although the cyclist is unable to identify with the religious practice, he can recognize the central importance of the altar and its religious significance in the end (Gardner, 1978). From his doubts and curiosity to the longing for the answers to his questions to his indifference, the persona believes there is a force that lies beyond all this religious structure. He thirsts for the moment and nearly achieves the light of his enlightenment.

The "*Wedding Wind*" is another poem from "*The Less Deceived*" volume that has images of hope and renewal. The elements of wind, rain, light, water and sunlight are affirmative elements that co-exist in unity and contribute to the jubilant atmosphere of a farmer's bride as she indulges the first day of her marriage with these elements:

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 candlelight, hearing rain,
Seeing my face in the twisted candlestick… (Thwaite, 1988, p. 11)

The new bride is obviously happy with her new life; the rain and candlelight lull her to sleep on a chilly day. She wonders why any creature or man should "lack the happiness I had". She experiences calmness and peace as she feeds the chicken the next day as the winds blow forth and caress her dry clothes and her soul, thus bringing her happiness.

Another of Larkin's poems "*Coming,*" exudes hopes of expectation for the coming of spring. The persona is hopeful for the season to arrive and to liberate him from his childhood which is like a "forgotten boredom". His waiting for spring is for the joy that comes with it, the "unusual laughter" and the happiness that follows suit. Meanwhile, another of Larkin's most affirmative poems "*First Sight*" presents an image of icy cold winter and the lambs that were born in that season. All hope is lost as the lambs are too weak to survive the coldness but then as the poem progresses, there's some hope in the lines:

Hidden round them, waiting too,
Earth's immeasurable surprise.
They could not grasp it if they knew,
What so soon will wake and grow
Utterly unlike the snow. (Larkin, 1988, p. 112)

Thus, in the poems of Larkin, some affirmations give us a different outlook towards his poetry. From the pessimism, there exist too, themes of love such as in the poem "*Arundel Tomb*" of which the concluding line is one of the best known in Larkin's poetry: "What will survive of us is love".

The surface of the tomb, sculptured after the figures of a nobleman and his wife is seen to be holding hands, and this seems to be an incongruity, a detail that the artist has added to make it look pleasant. Herald (1996) comments that:

> "The implausibility of such a gesture, its incongruity with the prevailing air of 'joined armour, stiffened pleat' makes it easy for the persona to dismiss it as something rather accidental, and therefore inessential, like a sculptor's frolicsome caprice or a detail made necessary by the overall design of the sarcophagus, but any rate something the couple themselves never intended". (p. 3)

Another affirmative example would be the poem "*The Whitsun Weddings*" (Thwaite 1988, p. 114). The persona witnesses a wedding party from a train on a Whit Sunday and while the train stops by every station, he watches the newlyweds, and the entire scene develops before his sight. Before this, he notices the heat and fascinating scenery that unfolds along the journey. According to Timms (1973), Larkin "finely evokes the sights and smells of the country. The description is not merely of what one sees, but of what he sees when he is moving: cars are blinding windscreens; greenhouses a sudden flash of reflected sunlight; hedges are green lines that rise and fall as he passes." Upon reaching a station, however, he scrutinizes closely the people in the large wedding crowd and notices "The fathers with broad belts…", "mothers loud and fat; An uncle shouting smut;" the "parodies of fashion" and the rather awkward dressing that "Marked off the girls unreally from the rest."

While the poem generally "criticizes the industrialization process in England at that time, which distorts the beauty of the English countryside" (Mukahal & Idrus, 2024, p. 213), however, in the final stanza, as the train leaves for London, there is a note of optimism.

We slowed down,
And as the tightened brakes took hold, there swelled
A sense of falling, like an arrow- shower
Sent out of sight, somewhere becoming rain.

Leonard Jeyam (1994) in "*Transcending The Ordinary: A Study of the Poetry of Philip Larkin*" comments

> "Love, as we have seen in 'Love Songs in Age', is unchangeable, and is ever-ready with its regenerative power to redeem a lost Edenic state. It is the symbol of the arrow-shower then that embodies this constancy, this aspect of love as it 'swells' lifting us momentarily from the ordinary world, gaining sustenance from a spiritual universe, moving hopefully, inspiringly, into the future" (p. 97).

Thus, it is the image of the rain as a regenerative force of life that is shown in the end. This generative power is like the marriage union that binds the groom and bride and thus, as they begin their new lives, a new generation will be born and so will hope and optimism for the future. Davie (1973) says that Larkin's poetic language is not "an apocalyptic voice" (p. 81) but an honest way of expressing the truth of what he sees in life and despite the monotony, Larkin's poetry does try to show us that there are moments of "elegance and tenderness" in all aspects of communal life as seen in Whitsun Weddings. Mason (2023) also reasons that Larkin's poetry, even in the face of isolation and alienation, contains "moments of connection and understanding" (para 5).

In essence, Larkin wrote as a social commentator, an activist, a critic, and above all, a poet whose treatment of his themes is "unique, realistic and convincing" (Ahmed, 2022) and there are moments of optimism and heightened consciousness in his poetry that at times, are illuminating and enlightening.

In Larkin's other poems like "*The Building*" and "*High Windows*" there exists images of optimism and faith. In "*The Building*", Larkin discusses how the hospital is like the church and how the building tries to "outbuild cathedrals", including providing shelter from the "coming dark" or impending death. In "*High Windows*", Larkin talks about the theme of freedom or the finding of "paradise through the throwing of restraints" (King, 1994, p. 11). Motion (1993) also comments that the title poem "*High Windows*" ironically "affirms the speakers longing for the sacramental; they are symbols that manage to transcend the flow of contingent time altogether" (King, 1994, p. 12).

However, we put it, Philip Larkin the poet and novelist searches with the voice within him. It is undeniable that most of his poems have images of darkness, death and decay but what follows suit amidst all his other failings in life is also images of hope, love and faith. His "hunger" for the sacramental and his need for a temporary visionary moment are also his search to understand the world and the meanings beyond it. James (1982) comments, "There are good grounds for calling Larkin a pessimist, but it should never be forgotten that the most depressing details in the poetry are seen with the same eye that loves those drums. The proof is in the unstinting vitality of the language" (p. 105). Even in his death poems, readers can essentially feel "the concern for truth, goodness and beauty and the admiration for love" (Jiang, 2010, p. 63). While the tone of Larkin's poems might be pessimistic and dark, there is a constant hint that the sense of bleakness dissipates slowly and just as death is an inevitable occurrence in life and in Larkin's poetry, a constant focus, the poet at times "hints optimistic insights" (Du, 2023, p. 151) over the course of his poetry.

Conclusion

Through the analysis of his selected poetry collection, there exists in the poems of Larkin a state of brilliance from the negative regression that is generally well known. Thus, it is in the language of Larkin which is his poetry that he transcends even if it is only for a brief illusory moment. The themes of love, fertility, the mysterious divine love, freedom and the elements of water, wind, heat, and light make up most of the images of optimism and progression. Even those moments are brief; he progresses and writes with a creative flair.

While Philip Larkin is often associated with melancholic themes, his poetry contains subtle yet profound threads of optimism. His work captures fleeting moments of beauty, renewal, and solace, offering glimpses of hope amidst life's challenges. For instance, one can sense his environmental concern in *"The Trees,"* where Larkin reflects on the cyclical nature of life, suggesting that, despite decay, there is a sense of resilience and continuity in the natural world. This quiet celebration of life's persistence softens his more sombre contemplations.

Larkin also finds meaning and value in the mundane. His poems often highlight the significance of simple, shared experiences, whether it's human connection, a fleeting joy, or the small comforts of routine. His appreciation for these moments conveys a sense of gratitude for life's quieter pleasures, even as he acknowledges its transience.

Humor, though not discussed in this analysis is another vehicle for Larkin's optimism. His wit adds warmth to his work, reminding readers that laughter and irony are integral parts of existence. Furthermore, his unflinching honesty about human struggles brings a sense of understanding and solidarity, which can feel oddly uplifting.

Although understated, the optimism in Larkin's poetry lies in its ability to find light in ordinary life and its recognition of the beauty in imperfection and impermanence. It is therefore timely that Larkin’s poetry be studied from another perspective and that this paper adds another dimension to his. Philip Larkin is a great poet who compromises neither reality nor his audience but writes with fervour, simplicity and liveliness that speak the truth for the kaleidoscope of human life.

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