

Philip Larkin & Spiritualism

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Abstract: *Every human being needs affection in the course of his or her life. Larkin's poem exalt the romance of travel and glory of transcending one's daily life and that Poetry of Departures, the rebel's gesture of renunciation appeals as an exercise of power; but the poet makes it seem, from one perspective an empty and artificial one.*

Keywords: *Affection, Discrimination, Expression, Immortality, Internal.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Larkin is one of the most popular poets of today for his significant message to the world. Larkin has been variously judged by the critics. Jim Hunter points out –, “Larkin is one of the most powerful poets of today for his clarity and honesty. He is extreme vision of the 1950's anti-hero visiting a Church he doesn't give a valid sixpence, he is sardonic at the expense (as it seems) of religion, faith, marriage, family and of literary pretension also, for he writes in a prosaic colloquial manner and is never obscure. His subject matter is faceless urban civilization and a faceless middle class world: a world of defeat, raw dryness and suppressed or underdeveloped emotions”^[1].

What is meant is whatever subject he deals he is able through the strength of his own feelings and powers of expression to make us far way from him in time and space share his feelings.

This is what means by universality of a great poets work. The internal is what matters finally – not the external, shown in the poem The Trees

*“Yet still the unresting castles thresh
In fullgrown thickness every May
Last year is dead, they seem to say,
Begin afresh, afresh, afresh”.*

(Poem No. 166)

One of the persistent themes of his poems is longing to return again to the shore of humanity, leaving the world of idle imaginings. There is an eternal thirst in him for the infinite. The poems of Larkin tend towards more freedom in its expression. His poems are rich with variety in thought. The purpose of his poems was to enlighten human mind to travel beyond the existence. This does not mean to deny the existence of external being. Thus to travel beyond the external to internal being was balanced, this was to balance the power of discrimination.

Larkin pleads for the significance of poetry; “.....Poetry like all arts, is inextricably bound up with giving pleasure, and if a poet loses his pleasure seeking audience, he has lost the only audience worth having, for which the dutiful mob that signs on every September is no substitute”^[2].

There was a private area in Larkin's personality and that was concerned with his poetry. This area was a Holy-of-Holies, which he alone entered. This may seem an extravagant way of putting it, but he himself always spoke of his poetry as a gift which he could not explain. Larkin valued the solitude very highly. In Best Society, a remarkably frank poem published only after his death, he places his need for solitude as starting in childhood, which is the foundations of our personalities:

*“When I was a child, I thought,
Casually, that solitude
Never needed to be sought”*

(Poem No. 56)

Later in his life he knew that this was no longer true. With this came the realization that the need for solitude was cutting him from other people, from commitment and the acceptance of responsibilities. In his longing for spiritual companionship Larkin saw in a particular person effulgence that was really of his own making. "Searching always in nature, in friendship with Monika Jones or within his own being for the source of the unknown treasure he occasionally glimpsed but never clearly saw"^[3]. He had found in the word 'Spirituality' an expression of the enlargement of spirit these ecstatic moments brought.

Spirituality, which Larkin pursued in life's long quest since childhood, remained for a riddle. The quest created, in another words, the 'intellectual sympathy' necessary for its intellectual sympathy necessary for its intuition and made immortality the subject of his poems. It was a metaphysical truth based on his direct experience of death. Larkin projects a serene faith in his own immortality. The most confident of all faith poem is "Out in the lane I pause' where he begins –

*"Is living; and for peace upon.
His life should rest;
This must everybody learn
For mutual happiness, that trust
Alone is best'*

(Poem No. 253)

For Larkin, the right relationship to the Divine Being was conceived as gaining Eternity in life. "As far as Larkin's position is concerned the poem 'Send No Money' is very close to Kafka's 'Vor dem Gesetz', where a man is refused admission to a building and is continually put off by the doorman for virtually all his life, although eventually, when it is already too late, it turns out that the entrance was exclusively for him. In this poem, someone is kept from getting the best out of his life by a false promise of knowledge; while his youth mates went to enjoy themselves, Larkin kept himself apart aspiring to wisdom^[4] –

*'Standing under the fobbed
Impendent belly of time
Tell me the truth, I said
Teach me the way things go'*

Larkin thus gives the impression that the reality of life as it presents itself to him falls blatantly short of what he expected –

*"Oh thank you, I said, Oh please
Tracing the trite untransferable
Truss – advertisement, truth"*

(Poem No. 146)

Larkin habitually conceived of smallness as the starting point of his quest, the initial condition beyond which only God-realisation was possible. There is something like an ultimate predicament covering not just individual aspects, but the totality of Larkin's situation. This suggests that Larkin doesn't fear atetran damnation or the fires of hell he doesn't seems to believe in any form of life after death whatever. But what distresses him is 'the total emptiness forever'. In Aubade he writes

*"The sure extinction that we travel to
And shall be lost in always, No to be here,
Not to be anywhere,
And soon, nothing more terrible, nothing more true"*

(Poem No. 208)

When Larkin was asked, Is that something that worries you? What he gave as an answer is a very close paraphrase of the lines quoted above: Yes, dreadfully, If you assume you're going to live to be seventy, seven decades, and think of each decade as a day of the week, starting with Sunday, then I' am on Friday afternoon now. Rather a shock, isn't it? If you ask why it bothers me, I can only say dread endless extinction"^[5].

2. CONCLUSION

The Poems of Larkin shows his faith in the immortality of soul, in the existence of God and his mercy. But science has made him aware of the brutal struggle for existence in nature and of the insignificance of men in the scheme of things. Larkin's solution for the heart searching and incertitude religion, which was at bottom intuitional. And this is the sum and substance of his faith as expressed in his poems.

REFERENCES

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