RESEARCH TITLE

# "Despair's Verses: Decoding Melancholia in Philip Larkin's Selecting Poems Through the DSM-5 Lens"

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## Abstract

"Despair's Verses: Decoding Melancholia in Philip Larkin's Poetry Through the DSM-5 Lens" embarks on a compelling journey through the shadows of Larkin's poetic landscape. This study employs the diagnostic precision of the DSM-5 to unravel the profound intricacies of melancholia embedded within the verses. With a keen focus on psychological nuances, the research unveils the depth of despair, examining its manifestations, echoes, and impact on the human psyche as expressed by one of the 20th century's preeminent poets. By forging a bridge between literary analysis and clinical understanding, this exploration enriches our comprehension of Larkin's work and contributes to the broader discourse on the intersection of artistic expression and mental health. Prepare to traverse the haunting corridors of Larkin's melancholic tapestry, where despair's verses echo with both poetic resonance and diagnostic insight.

**Key Words:** Philip Larkin, melancholia, DSM-5

عنوان البحث

# أشعار اليأس: فك رموز الكأبة في قصائد مختاره لفيليب عدسة DSM-5" "لاركن من خلال

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المستخلص

يبدأ في رحلة مقنعة عبر ظلال المشهد الشعري لاركن. تستخدم هذه الدراسة الدقة التشخيصية للدليل DSM-5 لكشف التعقيدات العميقة للكآبة المضمنة في القصائد المختاره. DSM-5 التشخيصي والإحصائي للاضطرابات العقلية ومع التركيز الشديد على الفروق النفسية، يكشف البحث عن عمق اليأس، ويدرس تجلياته وأصداؤه وتأثيره في النفس البشرية كما عبر عنها أحد أبرز شعراء القرن العشرين. من خلال إقامة جسر بين التحليل الأدبي والفهم السريري، يثري هذا الاستكشاف فهمنا لعمل لاركن ويساهم في الخطاب الأوسع حول تقاطع التعبير الفني والصحة العقلية. استعداداً لاجتياز الممرات المؤرقة لنسيج لاركن الكئيب، حيث تردد صدى أبيات اليأس مع كل من الرنين الشعري والبصيرة التشخيصية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: فيليب لاركن، الكآبة، DSM-5.

## 1.1    Introduction

During the fifth and fourth centuries BC, Melancholia was characterized as a distinct ailment with distinct psychological and physiological symptoms. Hippocrates said in his Aphorisms that enduring emotions of anxiety and despondency indicate Melancholia. According to the 10th-century Persian physician Al-Akhawayni Bokhari, Melancholia is a persistent ailment resulting from the impact of black bile on the brain (Liddell, 1894). Furthermore, the first clinical manifestations of the disorder were characterized by an inexplicable sense of anxiety, an inability to respond to inquiries or the provision of inaccurate responses, self-induced laughing and tears, and the expression of incoherent speech, all in the absence of fever (Salecl, 2004).

Moreover, scholars, intellectuals, and individuals in the fields of philosophy and art have also posited conjectures on the correlation between profound achievement and melancholy. The writer, who has long been attributed to either Aristotle or one of his pupils, recognized the pervasive presence of unhappiness, pain, and loneliness in the lives of prominent individuals in ancient Greece. (Van der Eijk, 1990). He questioned, "Why have all men become outstanding in philosophy, statesmanship, poetry, or the arts melancholic? Citing the sorrows of mythical heroes like Hercules, Ajax, and Bellerophon, as well as historical figures like Plato and Socrates" (Sullivan, 2008, p. 884).

Today, we relate sadness to nostalgia and longing, a subconscious yearning for something seen as los (Lahtinen, 2012). Nevertheless, Aristotle described melancholy as a particular physiological state resulting from imbalances in the body's four senses of humour over two and a half millennia ago. This idea held that the body was composed of blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile and that changes in these substances affected an individual's physical and mental well-being. This thought would underpin Western medical knowledge and practice for the next 2000 years. This concept would serve as the foundation for Western medical knowledge and practice for the subsequent two millennia. Each kind of humour was linked to a particular emotional inclination, and it was believed that those with a heightened presence of black bile were more susceptible to feelings of melancholy and despair. While several individuals had transient melancholic moods as a consequence of temporary imbalances, others exhibited a predisposition towards such moods consistently owing to their inherent and lasting constitution (Lahtinen, 2012). This article comprehensively analyses Philip Larkin's melancholic disposition as a postmodern poet, elucidating how his poetic works reflected his psychological well-being. The use of DSM-5 will moreover serve as a means to illustrate Larkin's encounter with melancholy.

## 2.1    The Historical Background of Melancholia

The etymology of the name "melancholia" may be traced back to the ancient medical concept of the four humours, which posited that every illness or disease arises from an imbalance in one or more of the four essential bodily fluids or touches of humour. Just as an individual's predominant sense of humour contributes to the formation of different personality types. According to Hippocrates and later scholarly tradition, individuals characterized by a melancholy temperament were believed to possess a constitution that exhibited a predominance of black bile. The etymology of the term "melancholia" may be traced back to its Ancient Greek origins, where it is derived from the terms "melas", meaning "dark, black," and "kholé" meaning "bile." This nomenclature is attributed to the belief that melancholia arises from an overabundance of black bile. The detailed evolution of hilarious theory is intricately linked to several factors, including the Four Elements, the fall season, the spleen as the principal organ, and the qualities of coldness and dryness. The study unveiled the celestial body Saturn's influence on the astrology field, thus the term "Saturnine" (Gourevitch, 2003).

In addition, Hippocrates documented various symptoms, including diminished appetite, abulia, sleeplessness, irritability, and restlessness (Gourevitch, 2003). The Hippocratic clinical depiction of Melancholia has notable similarities with the modern classification of depressive syndromes, as shown by the presence of six symptoms that align with the diagnostic criteria for Major Depressive Disorder outlined in the American Psychiatric Association's DSM(Gourevitch, 2003). The Hippocratic clinical description of Melancholia shows significant overlaps with contemporary nosography of depressive syndromes (6 symptoms out of the 9 included in DSM diagnostic criteria

for a Major Depressive) APA (Edition, 2013). Galen, a physician in ancient Rome, added "fixed delusions" to Hippocrates' list of symptoms. Galen thought that melancholy contributed to cancer (Azzone, 2012a). Galen posited a correlation between sadness and the development of cancer. In contrast, Aretaeus of Cappadocia posited that Melancholia included a state marked by a combination of profound sadness and perceptual distortions (Clarke & Macrae, 1988).

During the Middle Ages in Europe, the prevailing religious perspective replaced the humoral and somatic framework in understanding prolonged sadness. The vice of sadness was included in Evagrius Ponticus' Greek vices catalogue. (Azzone, 2012b), tristitia vel acidic in the 7 vice list by Gregorius Magnus)(Wallace, 2015).

According to Huizinga (2021) ), in his scholarly examination of French and Burgundian courtly culture, it was seen that a pervasive sense of sadness permeated the collective psyche of individuals throughout the concluding phase of the Middle Ages. Sermons, poetry, and memoirs often explore the anguish and disintegration associated with the earth's imminent demise. Huizinga cites excerpts from poems by Eustache Deschamps (1346–1406), which he characterizes as "repetitive and melancholic variations on a consistently sombre motif." Additionally, Huizinga references Georges Chastellain's (1405–1415) preface to his Burgundian chronicle and Jean Meschinot's (1420–1491) poetry from the latter part of the fifteenth century. The concept of merencolie combines notions of introspection and the functioning of the imagination, encapsulating a tendency among individuals of the time to associate any profound intellectual engagement with feelings of melancholy, as noted by Huizinga (ibid).

### 2.1.1   The Experience of Melancholia in the Elizabethan and Renaissance Age

English writers in the 16th and 17th centuries similarly explored the existential side of melancholy. In the 1630s, dramatist John Ford claimed, "Melancholy is not, as you conceive, indisposition of body, but the mind's disease" (cited in Sullivan, 2008). This focus on melancholy's psychological experience—slightly distinct from its physical manifestation—proved well-liked. Hamlet, the canon's most prominent sad character, investigates his issue philosophically instead of medically. Only twice in the play does the word "melancholy" exist, and scarcely any humour or other medical terminology is spoken. The courtiers flocking around Hamlet never describe his situation as particularly abnormal despite his morbid references to "self-slaughter," the "sterile promontory" that is the earth, and "this quintessence of dust" that is the man (Anglin, 2017).

Moreover, in the distant past, there were other unpleasant symptoms associated with Melancholia; these could be fear, torpor, stomach pains, fits, haemorrhoids, and frenzies. Nevertheless, the consolation was that brilliant individuals could all suffer from them. Moreover, the treatment of those days would always make modern doctors wink with disbelief. Medical people of 17th century England, like Shakespeare's son-in-law John Hall, were already prescribing strong purgatives, bloodletting, flavoured drinks and enemas (Sullivan, 2008).

Furthermore, many scholars have still characterized the Renaissance as the "golden age of melancholy" when questions regarding the condition's links to inspiration, frustration, and greatness abounded (Enderwitz, 2015, p. 17). Although debates about melancholy by no means disappeared during the 18th century—Samuel Johnson (1709 – 1784)   showed a particular interest in the topic, famously claiming that Robert Burton's (1557- 1640) *Anatomy of Melancholy* was the "the only book that ever took him out of bed two hours sooner than he wished to rise" (cited in Boswell & Croker, 1853, p. 217)

The Romantic period saw the resurgence of melancholy. During this particular era, artists and writers sought to elevate grief, including it in the concept of the sublime, which constituted a significant aspect of their artistic principles. As per the perspective of Romantic poets, the comprehension of sorrow did not diminish but intensified the experience of elation. According to the renowned poet Charles Baudelaire, I encounter challenges when attempting to conceive of a manifestation of aesthetic appeal devoid of any semblance of grief. The Romantics believed that pursuing aesthetic beauty based on harmony, considered an ideal within Enlightenment society, was no longer a sufficient objective for creative endeavours. As mentioned earlier, the writers actively pursued

introspective contemplations, prioritizing the realm of emotions above rationality and emphasizing tension over harmony. The individuals derived pleasure from the perceived potential of acquiring knowledge via the experience of mourning. In his poem "Ode on Melancholy," Keats implored his readers to experience the profound intensity of sorrow, encouraging them to immerse themselves in its powerfully. He likened this feeling to a celestial phenomenon, describing it as an abrupt manifestation akin to a cloud shedding tears from the heavens (Keats & Hühn, 1820).

### 2.1.2   The Melancholia of the Ninetieth and Twentieth Centuries

During the majority of the 19th century, there was a tendency to romanticize melancholy in literary works. However, the advent of Freudian theory brought about a shift in attitudes and perceptions, leading to a transformation in this regard. In his essay titled "Mourning and Melancholy," Sigmund Freud delineated the concept of disease as a narcissistic pathology that arises from the individual's perception of personal loss (Freud, 1924). Moreover, Freud posited that the experience of sorrow arises from a disruption in one's self-identity, which occurs as an individual progresses through different stages of life. This phenomenon is distinct from the historical attributions of sadness to humoral imbalances, astrological forces, or neurological disorders.

Following Freud, melancholy was viewed as a rarer ailment, with depression being more frequently diagnosed by medical professionals. While numerous authors have attempted to highlight the differences between modern understandings of sadness and ancient ideas of melancholy—Famously, Susan Sontag wrote, "Depression is melancholy, minus its charms"(Sontag & Broun, 1977, p. 17) — certain similarities cannot perhaps be denied.

In addition, psychiatric research in the 20th century has made efforts to both corroborate and refute the hypothesis that there exists a link between genius and mental illness, with varying degrees of success. Dean Keith Simonton and other contemporary scholars have posited that there are some cognitive and dispositional features shared between psychopathology and creativity, which align with certain symptoms. However, it has been emphasized by these scholars that a causal connection between these attributes is improbable. The belief in the correlation between melancholy and genius will probably continue to endure in our society for an extended period, as evidenced by the sustained fascination with the lives and artistic contributions of troubled individuals such as Sylvia Plath. Additionally, contemporary endeavours to retrospectively diagnose historical figures like Vincent Van Gogh further contribute to the perpetuation of this belief (Simonton, 2019).

### 2.1.3   The Contemporary Connotation of Melancholia

Gordon Parker and Dusan Hadzi-Pavlovic defined "melancholia" as a particular movement and mood disease (Parker, Hadzi-Pavlovic, & Eyers, 1996). They attached the term to the concept of "endogenous depression" (claimed to be caused by internal forces rather than environmental influences).

Besides, Melancholia was classified by Michael Alan Taylor and Max Fink in 2006 as a systemic condition that could be recognized by sad mood rating scales and was supported by the presence of aberrant cortisol metabolism (Taylor & Fink, 2006). The distinguishing features of this condition were considered to be a depressed mood, abnormal motor functions, and atypical vegetative symptoms. The psychiatrists established many categories, including conditions such as cognitive impairment depression, psychosis-related depression, and depression after childbirth. In the context of medical diagnostic classification, it is noteworthy that the terms "melancholia" and "melancholic" continue to be employed, as evidenced by their inclusion in the DSM-5. These terms serve to delineate specific characteristics that may manifest in cases of major depression. Such features encompass a persistent diminishment of interest or pleasure in activities typically deemed enjoyable, a lack of emotional responsiveness wherein mood fails to experience even momentary elevation, a profoundly despondent mood characterized by feelings of hopelessness, loneliness, desolation, or emptiness, a dearth of warm and affectionate interactions with friends or family, and a pervasive state of anhedonia. Symptoms indicative of terminal insomnia include undesired early morning awakenings occurring at least two hours before the individual's typical waking time, notable agitation or impairment in psychomotor functioning, as well as a marked decrease in appetite (DSM-5, 2017).

Moreover, the prevalent sense of intellectual melancholy is often seen in the portraiture of the era within the realm of visual arts. This is evident via the deliberate postures used by the subjects, such as the crossed arms and the placement of a floppy hat over the eyes, reminiscent of the archetype of the lover. Similarly, the figure of the scholar is often shown with a contemplative pose, whereby the head is supported by the hand (Ribeiro, 2005). The descriptions provided are derived from the frontispiece of the 1638 edition of Burton's Anatomy, which prominently showcases the archetypal figures prevalent in that era. The photographs were often produced in outdoor settings, where the natural environment offers a perfect backdrop for engaging in spiritual reflection or a gloomy interior (Fraser, 2016).

Within the realm of music, the phenomenon known as the post-Elizabethan cult of Melancholia is closely linked to the renowned figure of John Dowland. Dowland, whose emblematic phrase was "Semper Dowland, semper dolens" (meaning "Always Dowland, always mourning"), is often identified with this particular movement. The gloomy man, known to contemporaries as a "malcontent", is personified by Shakespeare's Prince Hamlet, the "Melancholy Dane". In the context of the German Sturm und Drang movement, exemplified by Goethe's The Sorrows of Young Werther, the Romantic period, as evidenced by John Keats' Ode on Melancholy, and the Symbolist movement, as seen in Arnold Böcklin's Isle of the Dead, a comparable phenomenon emerged, albeit without a shared nomenclature. The modernist counterculture of the 20th century was driven by a shared experience of alienation and a feeling of purposelessness, sometimes referred to as "anomie." Additionally, the preoccupation with death in prior artistic movements has been labelled as memento mori. The intellectual sphere was undoubtedly influenced by the Romantic Weltschmerz and the medieval acedia, as shown by existing similar notions(Yuwono, SE, Suryananta, & Yandha, 2021). This current research aims to examine melancholia's influence on Philip Larkin's psychological condition and its manifestation in the chosen poems.

## 3.1    Analysis of Melancholy from a Literary and Theoretical Perspective

In a paper titled "Melancholia and the Bomb: Robert Lowell, Anne Sexton, and the Fragmented Atomic Psyche," Beardsworth (2019) did research. This research investigates how the confessional poetry of Robert Lowell and Anne Sexton addressed the regulation of psychological and emotional reactions to the nuclear era. Furthermore, Beardsworth argues that the cultural Cold War strategically advanced the proliferation of nuclear weapons as a means of preserving national autonomy in opposition to the communist adversary. This was achieved by normalizing the presence of atomic culture and emphasizing the technological and economic benefits of nuclear advancements, alleviating anxieties by establishing influential psychological, biopolitical, and technological institutions. The confessional poetry of Robert Lowell and Anne Sexton serves as a testament to the psychological impact of nuclear discourse on American society. These poets shed light on the profound influence of ideological manipulation in the aftermath of nuclear devastation, highlighting the toll it takes on individuals' mental well-being.

Also, Ziarek (2010)conducted a study on the aesthetic aspects of Melancholia as portrayed in contemporary novels written by women, with a particular focus on the works of Adorno, Woolf, and Larsen. Nevertheless, the author emphasizes the erratic and contradictory movements of suffering experienced by both individuals and entities, the suppression of political freedom, the independent nature of artistic expression, and the interplay between language and emotions. The author asserts that Melancholia is used in many feminist and philosophical theories and the realms of politics and aesthetics. According to the individual's perspective, the diverse nature of Melancholia, including both aesthetic and political dimensions, provides an opportunity to examine the interconnectedness of gender politics and aesthetics while acknowledging and preserving their distinctiveness. Furthermore, when examined through the lens of feminist aesthetics, the film Melancholia not only signifies the origins of art in an unfair and gendered distribution of labour and power but also highlights the ethical and political responsibility of art to acknowledge and document the silent anguish experienced by women who are deprived of the ability to express themselves through language. He transcends the deeply rooted dichotomies of historicism and subjectivism, subject and object, and formalism and materialism.

In a scholarly article entitled "Melancholia in Wumi Raji's Rolling Dreams", Kekeghe (2017) did an investigation. The author's research is based on psychoanalysis, a psychological theory, to analyze the disturbing imagery found in the poems. Additionally, the study incorporates deconstructionist theory to independently and comprehensively explore the gloomy and multi-interpretable nature of the poetry collection. As per his perspective, engaging in creative expression is a cognitively demanding undertaking that necessitates deep exploration of the creator's internal states. Writing often occurs in isolation, allowing authors to use dialogic techniques to shape their picture. As a result, they may exhibit typical neurotic episodes, often seen as indicators of creative brilliance. The recognition of despair as a prominent characteristic of the creative imagination has been duly recognized. Numerous authors articulate their troubled emotional states via written expression, a seemingly contradictory emotional release process within creative cognition. This phenomenon has garnered considerable attention in current research on script therapy, particularly in academic circles within Europe and North America. According to his statement, psychotherapy research has shown that engaging in the process of re-creating distressing situations may lead to psychological rejuvenation for the individual involved. Poetry, as a literary form, offers a suitable avenue for addressing themes of melancholic sadness due to its reliance on emotional commitment and spontaneity.

### 3.1.1   The Relationship between Sigmund Freud and the Concept of Melancholia

In a research titled "A Psychoanalysis of The Protagonist in Paulo Coelho's Veronika Decides To Die," Vasuki (2016) did an analysis. This research applies Freud's Theory of Death Instinct to analyze the character of Veronika, aiming to uncover the underlying cause of the emptiness she experiences in her life. According to his perspective, the death drive entails a tendency towards self-destructive behaviour. According to the author, self-destruction arises only from an individual's inability to express rage against another individual. Veronika's adherence to a monotonous lifestyle is evident both in her activities outside the Villete institution and inside its confines. During this encounter, the protagonist encounters Zedka, who proceeds to elucidate the true nature of "madness." Veronika's demise may be attributed to the stagnancy that pervades every aspect of her existence. Therefore, the application of Freud's psychoanalytic theory of Melancholia is used in order to ascertain the underlying cause of Veronika's depressive condition, ultimately leading to her decision to take her own life.

### 3.1.2   Contemporary Theory and Melancholia

Undertook an examination of F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel, Forter (2003) analysed "The Great Gatsby" within the framework of Contemporary theory. Forter said that the book embodies a prevailing aspect of American modernism that exhibits concerning connections with present-day theoretical frameworks. According to the author's perspective, the novel's exceptional value lies in its poignant and reflective response to a particular societal deprivation. Moreover, the author examines the aforementioned decline and its underlying factors, subsequently demonstrating how the book strategically employs its sense of sadness to serve the interests of the traditional social class and gender norms. Furthermore, it is observed that Fitzgerald used Melancholia as an artistic mechanism to convert an emerging criticism of contemporary capitalism and sexism into a passive acceptance of these societal constructs. Hence, Forter argues that this melancholic surrender is inherently intertwined with the stylistic elements that render Gatsby as canonically representative of the "modernist" movement. These strategies provide a visually compelling and authoritative assertion that loss is irreversible and desire is unattainable, so anticipating the acceptance of structural Melancholia in current theoretical discourse.

### 3.1.3   The Survey of Melancholia in the Lense of Julia Kristeva

In an academic research entitled "Subjectivities Acquired and Forfeited in Melancholic Female Eunuchs in Alice Walker's Selected Novels," Sedehi (2016) did an investigation. In Alice Walker's "The Color Purple", "Possessing the Secret of Joy", "The Third Life of Grange Copeland", and "By the Light of My Father's Smile", the characters Celie, Tashi, Mem, and Magdalena are shown as experiencing a profound feeling of grief stemming from the absence of their respective mothers. This research utilizes Julia Kristeva's concept of the gloomy subject and Greer's analysis of the female

eunuch to provide a fresh interpretation of the female characters in the film Melancholia. According to the individual's perspective, these female characters have experienced the loss of their biological or surrogate mothers, and have faced various forms of sexual oppression and harassment, which subsequently contributes to their psychological state of melancholia. The lack of knowledge about their own bodies among these female characters results in their unquestioning acceptance of traditional rites and the authority of males. Therefore, Germaine Greer has used the term "female eunuch" to describe the state of women's ignorance and the distorted portrayal of female sexuality. Hence, Sdehi amalgamates the theoretical frameworks of Kristeva's gloomy subject and Greer's female eunuch in order to provide a fresh interpretation of Melancholia as it pertains to the chosen female protagonists. However, this present study distinguishes itself from the aforementioned studies above by examining the portrayal of Melancholia in Philip Larkin's poetry using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) as an analytical framework.

## 4.1    Discussion

The power of Larkin's work as a whole remains undeniable. It introduces us to a universe that is distinctly his while somehow resembling our own. This universe is shown in a way that implies a specific point of view, supported by the tightly reining rationalism and the unmistakable conviction that reality is, in all practical senses, what it seems to be, which are hallmarks of his writing. Its strength comes from the fact that it situates humanity's enormous archetypal problems and events in the context of our suburban everyday life, with all the reduction and immediacy it implies.

Additionally, the surfaces of his poems are so quiet, the depths of the best so profound that one might reread them for a lifetime without having distilled their last drop of melancholy.

The bleakness of Larkin's vision, present in his writing from the beginning, has intensified through time. The almost bottomless bitterness expressed in some of the pieces in *High Windows* may be taken, depending on one's taste, as signalling either the perfecting of an artist's focus or the surrender of his imaginative flexibility.

The early verse collected in *The North Ship* (1945) has almost nothing of the poet's characteristic voice. As Larkin notes disarmingly in a preface written twenty years after their original publication, the poems are primarily mouthpieces for the 'potent music, pervasive as garlic' of the middle Yeats. Moonlight, drumtaps, and ominous horse riders are frequently and floridly introduced. What now seems prophetic in these pieces is the recurrent appearance of the theme of loneliness as a fact of life, a given, against which any struggle can only end in exhausted defeat.

To wake and hear a cock

Out of the distance crying,

To pull the curtain back

And see the clouds flying-

How strange is it

For the heart to be loveless and as cold as these.

<div align="center">(Larkin, 2012, p. 70)</div>

In this poem, the aubade form is reversed; the speaker discovers that his heart is "loveless" and "Cold" upon awakening from sleep, which is typically a cause for celebration due to factors like mental and physical rejuvenation and the beginning of a new awareness (as in Donne's "The Good Morrow"). The external world, however, shows its preparedness to welcome a new day. However, the speaker fails to respond because the "cold" and "lovelessness" reality pulls him back. Cast in the mould of a mood piece, "Dawn" thus repeats the theme of "within" the dream, but the note of self-pity so conspicuous in the latter piece has been chastened here by the adoption of a tone of relative neutrality as revealed in the use of the word "strange" which is "unevaluated, certainly not pejorative."44 Again, The communicative power of the images used here is rather feeble. While the auditory image of a "crying" (not crowing) of a cock suggests desolation. So, both images suit the

speaker's mood of depression, but neither can be perceived as having any vital relation with the lack of warmth and affection that the words "loveless" and "cold" connote.

The attempted objectivity, as evident in the semi-narrative mode in the first five lines of "Dawn", is foiled by the extremely sentimental confessionalism of the last line, making the poem an unabashed advertising of emotions.

Furthermore, Larkin's melancholy, compounded with sentimentality, also finds expression in "Kick up the Fire." In this poem, the speaker prolongs his talk with his guest, possibly his beloved, till "two o'clock" at night. Nevertheless, immediately after her departure, he is overwhelmed by "the instantaneous grief" of loneliness, and a feeling of "dump idleness" overpowers him:

Yet when the guest

Has stepped into the windy street and gone,

Who can confront

The instantaneous grief of being alone?

Or watch the sad increase

Across the mind of this prolific plant,

Dumb idleness?

(Larkin, 2012, p. 72)

This lyric is another mood poem, giving lugubrious expression to the speaker's feelings of grief and "dump idleness" growing from his sudden and cute awareness of being alone." The poem offers a blend of metaphorical and prosaic language. But there is an unmistakable touch of poeticism in the expression "the night comes to rest" and in the farming of the rhetorical questions. While the first question operates at an abstract level, the second makes an abortive attempt concerning the speaker's doleful state of mind. The metaphorical import of the "shadows" in the second line is unclear, and the projection of the likeness between the state of "dumb dullness" and a "prolific plant" that goes on increasing sadly "across the mind" is rather far-fetched.

That Larkin's metaphors are unfocused in The North Ship is evidenced by another poem in the volume titled "Like the train's beat." The speaker in this poem sits in the railway carriage and watches a Polish girl talking to her companion. The speaker can not understand the girl's language, but he feels sexually attracted to her as her "Hair, wild and controlled, runs back: / And gestures like these the English oaks/ Flash past the windows of her foreign talk." Here, again, Larkin uses Dylan Thomas's trick of blending two ideas into a metaphor that remains entirely appropriate. The picture of the oaks flashing past the train's windows is understandable. Nevertheless, Timms argues, "there is no sense, literal or metaphorical, in which her [the girl's] talk has 'windows'.

There are occasions in "The North Ship" when the poet attempts to eschew vagueness and evoke a specific situation, but the attempts remain ultimately abortive, as evidenced by "one man walking a deserted platform". This poem begins in a narrative mode, accommodating a descriptive strain, sustained in the first section but snaps in the second, where it yields place, quite characteristically, to semi-symbolist speculations. Dawn is approaching. Furthermore, the rain is "driving a cross a darkening autumn." The speaker sees a lonely man walking a deserted platform and then "restlessly waiting" for "a train," the rain "Beating each shuttered house, that seems/ folded full of the dark silk of dreams./ A shell of sleep cradling a wife or child." The speaker's thought veers round to the man who nourishes an untraceable "ambition" to be "perpetually journeying" each dawn which is possibly a device to beguile the hour "when lovers re- embrace" in the bed. Since he is "dispossessed" of this love-induced illusion, "starset and cockcrow"- which mark the hour of the advent of dawn- rose him out of his sleep and call him "on the next desert." The images of "the dark silk of dreams" enfolding the people in the closed houses and of a "shell of sleep" lulling the near and dear ones into a seemingly abiding state of cosiness are all suggestive of a vast but meaningless world of illusions that love creates. "sleep" here becomes a symbol delusion. In contrast, the image of the "shell" reinforces

its complex and impregnable nature. The word "next" in the prepositional phrase "on to the next desert" hints that the world of love is itself a desert and the life of a lonesome journey shorn of all illusions is another desert and that the latter form of life is preferable because the former only sinks "a grave round the still-sleeping head." The speaker's attitude to love here is nihilistic. The principal images forged in "One Man Walking a Deserted Platform" are important for their effect of telescoping the abstract and the concrete- "silk of dreams," "shell of sleep," etc. The poem may contain the seeds of Larkin's maturer poetry in two aspects – first, in its vivid, realistic setting and second, in the speaker's sympathetic identification with another individual. 48 There is, for instance, an attempt here at evoking an atmospheric effect with the help of some minute details like a lonely man, a deserted platform, cocks crowing, etc., although this evocation sounds more like an imitation of Edward Thomas than something original.

While "One Man Walking a Deserted Platform" seems to operate under the shadow of Edward Thomas, "Nursery Tale" betrays the influence of Walter de la Mare on Larkin. Larkin's obsession with the drabness, meaninglessness and absurdity of life and his self-pity find gruesome expression in this poem. The poem begins as a fragmented memory of a nursery tale. The story is not told in its entirety. Only some details are scooped up from memory. The speaker remembers "The horseman, . . . /The hand finding the door unbarred/ And . . . the room where he was brought." There is a puzzling, mystifying unspecificity about the "he" referred to in the quoted lines. Perhaps the person referred to was mortally wounded in an ambush and was carried by a horseman into a forsaken house on a moonlit night. The situation is macabre and ironic, for this man was offered not a proper meal but "a sort of meal, " a travesty of a treat. There was one decayed pewter plate in which was served the "battered carcase of carrion crow." The second part of the poem builds upon this nursery tale. The speaker feels that there is a markable similarity between the predicaments of the victim of the ambush in the tale and that of himself, ambushed in life: "So every journey that I make/ Leads me, as in the story he was led,/ To some new ambush, to some fresh mistakes" (CP, p. 289). This certainly rings with an overt note of self pity of a kind quite foreign to the later Larkin. The speaker in this poem makes his failures heroic by comparing himself with the horseman in the nursery tale. Every journey he undertakes is ironic, for the end is known beforehand: "So every journey I begin foretells/ A weariness of daybreak, spread/ with carrion kisses, carrion farewells" (CP, p. 289). Every fresh journey for him, in other words, is the beginning of a new course of dreariness. The speaker in "Nursery Tale" is thus engulfed in ennui. For him, love is putrid, and, as the phrase "carrion kisses" suggests, sex is repulsive. So, life is hopeless. The poem thus ends with a total negation of the possibility of any meaningful experiences in life.

In the "Ugly Sister", the speaker is a lady whose ugliness prevents her from being loved. Consequently, she is left to live a life of abject loneliness, which she tries to combat partly by taking recourse to the world of "music" (evidently a symbol of art) and partly by adopting a philosophical stance as suggested by her proposed act of turning herself to the contemplation of the objects of nature;

I will climb thirty steps to my room

Lie on my bed;

Let the music, the violin, cornet and drum

Browse from my head.

Since I was not bewitched in adolescence

And brought to love,

I will attend to her trees and their gracious silence,

To winds that move.

<div align="center">(Larkin, 2012, p. 86)</div>

The picture of loneliness evoked in the first stanza is rather corrosive. The dispassionate dryness with which the speaker presents the sequence of her activities after her day's work shows that she is extremely bored and that her life, even at home, is only a course of drudgery. This acute consciousness of the drabness of life makes the second stanza seem to have been uttered with a deep sigh of helplessness and self- pity which in turn indicates that the speaker considers solitary contemplation of the elemental presences less as an effective antidote than as an inextricable attribute and an inevitable anchorage of, loneliness. Moreover, while it is too much to claim, as Swarbrick so emphatically does, that the poem "summarises the conditions which *The North Ship* poems elaborate," it can indeed be acknowledged that the poem offers the briskest, most delicate and most succinct articulation of the state of loneliness and of profound melancholy that accompanies such a state.

According to DSM-5, adults with severe emotional loneliness, particularly, were associated with increased depression, resulting in melancholia. Moreover, loss of pleasure in all, or almost all, activities. Lack of reactivity to usually pleasurable stimuli does not feel much better, even temporarily, when something good happens. A distinct quality of depressed mood characterized by profound despondency, despair, and moroseness or by so-called empty mood. Based on the selected poems above, I found that Larkin suffers from severe melancholia that has a tremendous negative impact on his life. This psychological disorder drives Larkin to experience loneliness, depression, anxiety and less interest in life.

## 5.1     Conclusion

Like hysteria at the turn of the last century, Melancholia at the turn of this one has mainly come to define how we think about our subjunctives. However, it is a mental condition characterized by the great depression of spirits and gloomy forebodings. Moreover, the person experiences chaos in his thinking and behaviour; hence, Larkin's selected poems echo and manifest the interrupted mourning process of the daily life behaviour of his melancholy. Additionally, the repetitive melancholic image in the selected poems shows how he was encapsulating himself in a suffocating gyre of tormenting.

Furthermore, the study applied DSM-5 in the selected poem as a tool of analysis to prove how melancholia plays a pivotal role in the life of Larkin's behaviour and psychology. It also increases his helplessness, as reflected in the mentioned poems.

Philip Larkin's melancholic tone in his poetry is a poignant reflection of the human condition, capturing the complex interplay of despair and the passage of time. Through his verses, Larkin delves into the essence of solitude, mortality, and life's inevitable disappointments. His introspective exploration of melancholia unveils a shared vulnerability that resonates with readers, offering a mirror to their own struggles.

In concluding the exploration of Larkin's melancholia, it becomes evident that his poetry transcends mere personal reflection, evolving into a universal commentary on the inherent challenges of existence. Larkin's ability to articulate the shadows that linger in the corners of our lives fosters a sense of shared understanding, reminding us that melancholia is an intrinsic part of the human experience. Through his words, he invites readers to confront the complexities of their own emotions and find solace in the shared struggle for meaning. In essence, Larkin's melancholia becomes a vessel for collective introspection, inviting us to acknowledge the beauty and poignancy that can be found even in life's most melancholic moments.

Although there have been recent endeavours to diagnose Melancholia, more investigation is required in order to further our comprehension of this condition. This paper tries to comprehend the gloomy demeanour shown by Philip Larkin, as exemplified in his poetic works. The application of DSM-5 is used to demonstrate the adverse effects of this condition on Lekin's life. Ultimately, will we ever realize how critical this disorder is worthy of being studied in future?

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