CHAPTER III

THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE

> ... happiness in life is sought first and foremost in the enjoyment of beauty, wherever it is to be found by our senses and our judgement, the beauty of human forms and movements, of natural objects, of landscapes, of artistic and even scientific creation. As a goal in life this aesthetic attitude offers little protection against the menace of suffering, but it is able to compensate for a great deal.
>
> (Freud : Civilization and Its Discontents 38)

As we have stated in the first chapter, Larkin's writings of the pleasure principle occupy a very short span of his career, during the period of his apprenticeship under the influence of Yeats and Auden. His poems written between 1938 and 1946 and shortly after belong to this phase. It must, however, be noted at the outset that in many of his poems from this phase the stark reality of contemporary world casts a dark shadow, but the mood of pleasure predominates over the mood of unpleasure. The tinge of darkness in an otherwise bright atmosphere in his early poetry is the natural effect of the economic and political crisis of the time as well as of the poet's monoglotism.

There are several sources of the elements of pleasure in Larkin's early poems, like the ones outlined by Freud. They are: texture, form, natural setting, elements of fantasy, romantic feelings, and psychoanalysis of personal and social factors. First, Larkin finds pleasure in the formal perfection of a poem; even when he depicts a grim scene the beauty of the form provides him a source of enjoyment. Secondly, his source of pleasure comes from the content of the poem. In the poems of his mature years form is controlled and hence loses its exuberance. Therefore it does not provide as much pleasure as its early spontaneous expression does.

In his early work Larkin was mindful to form in its traditional expression: alliteration, rhythm, and music. David Timms thinks that "The Young Poet was more concerned to write poetry than to express his ideas and feelings through verse" (54). Lolette Kuby remarks that the poet's "voice is conscious of itself as an utterer not of thought, emotion, philosophy, or even idle reflection, but of poetry" (166-67). Larkin was deeply concerned with poetry as pleasure in his early phase and not with its ideas or philosophical content.

One of the major themes of Larkin's poetry is love. His love poems can be grouped under two broad periods - those written in his school days and youth; those composed during his maturity. We are concerned in this chapter with his early poems, although it is not always convenient to divide his love poetry into two segments.

In his early poems love is a persistent theme. It is natural for a poet in his teens to choose love as the most fascinating topic to deal with. In the poem "Is it for now or for always" the speaker is concerned with the sincerity and truthfulness in love. In the first two stanzas the speaker questions the pleasure of love, whether it is permanent or temporary. She is sceptical about its value:

> Is it for now or for always
> The world hangs on stalk ?
> Is it a trick or a trysting-place
> The woods we have found to walk ?
>
> Is it a mirage or miracle ?
> Your lips that lift at mine
> And the suns like a juggler's juggling balls,
> Are they sham or a sign ? (296)

The questions raised in these two stanzas show the state of uncertainty in the mind of the speaker. But the answer that comes in the last stanza dispels her doubts and uncertainties:

> Shine out my sudden angel,
> Break fear with breast and brow,
> I take you now and for always,
> For always is always now. (296)

The lover calls his beloved "sudden angel," which indicates that they are newly engaged or have fallen in love. The word "angel" is reminiscent of the terms Elizabethan love poetry employed. It

indicates also that the beloved is exceptionally beautiful. The lover asks her to shake off fear and gloom and to indulge in pleasure provided by love. The last two lines illustrate Larkin's concept of love, a concept which is quite different from his attitude expressed in his later poems. The lover in this poem tells his mistress that by love they can transcend what can be called the "objective time of the clock." Love alone is a force that can triumph over Time and can turn an instant into eternity.

In this poem expectations for a need for gratification produce a juxtaposition between past, present, and future; "now" as the real time is taken for "always" and "always" has become the present moment. This kind of collapse of time as a diachronic mode of consciousness makes the dynamic flow of love possible. Using all these images the lover wants to convince his beloved that his love for her is permanent and eternal. He wants her to enjoy love which is not Time's fool. The last two lines also show that the lover's craving for immortality and his desire to arrest the flow of time can only be realized by love.

Like the poet defending the function of love in arresting time in the poem we just discussed, in "The bottle is drunk out by one" he defends love against commercialism of modern society. He says that love as an affair of commerce is hollow and meaningless.

The bottle is drunk out by one,
At two, the book is shut,

At three, the lovers lie apart,

Love and its commerce done. (277)

But the poem ends with a pleasant expectation: the poet looks forward to the arrival of morning birds and girls with romantic sentiments.

I lie and wait for morning and the birds,

The first step going down the unswept street,

Voices of girls with scarves around their heads.

(277)

This is a scene from which the speaker derives utmost pleasure in Freudian terms, the expectation of a romantic scene is a kind of wish-fulfillment. The speaker here seems to be more in love with love itself as a pleasure principle than having any wish for sexual gratification. This definition of love as an innate principle of pleasure flowing through human consciousness is explored in greater detail in the poem "Like the train's beat" which is a representative poem about the pleasure principle. In this poem Larkin vividly describes the charm and vivacity of a Polish airgirl. She is simply a vision of beauty for him. By using this girl as a persona the poet celebrates the aesthetics of beauty in the form of a woman. This beautiful woman is seen travelling by a train through the landscapes and cities of England. The train journey is not a metaphor for the fleeting of time as in his later poems, but a vehicle which brings together the speaker and the other people in a bond of harmony. Sitting at a corner of the compartment the girl flutters English in a

foreign accent, which makes her noticeable by the other passengers. The poet compares the words uttered by her to the regular rhythm of the beats of the train. The rays of the "narrowing sun" falling on her through the window add to the lustre of her eyes and body. It gives the speaker a sense of utmost pleasure at such a charming scene.

> Like the train's beat
> Swift language flutters the lips
> Of the Polish airgirl in the corner seat.
> The swinging and narrowing sun
> Lights her eyelashes, shapes
> Her sharp vivacity of bone.
>
> (288)

The use of oxymoron, "wild and controlled," for her hair indicates that her beauty is both natural and cultivated. In Larkin's early poetry nature is presented as both wild and controlled, suggesting thereby that Larkin was not hostile to urban scenes and groomed landscapes in his early phase. Thus it is her cultivated beauty and "gestures" mingled with her foreign accent that make the Polish air-girl charming and attractive:

> Hair, wild and controlled, runs back
> And gestures like these English oakes
> Flash past the wendous of her foreign talk.
>
> (288)

Here beauty is a source of pleasure not only for the speaker but for all those who are sitting around in the train.

Foreign words fluttering from her lips, meaningless to the native people, make one feel that some "whorling notes are pressed in a bird's throat." The poet, with his imaginative power, depth of feeling and youthful longing for beautiful scenes in life, succeeds in presenting an exquisite image of beauty which is a source of pleasure.

While "Like the train's beat" deals with love in an abstract sense, the poem "Waiting for breakfast while she brushed her hair" depicts physical love as an intense experience. In this poem Larkin defines pleasure in terms of physical satisfaction. The speaker in the poem, after spending the night with his girl friend in a hotel, eagerly waits for her in the morning for breakfast "while she brushes her hair." While waiting he looks out of the window in a dreary weather and finds the morning and night featureless. The mood of happiness out of the sexual gratification is contrasted with the atmosphere outside. This contrast indicates that there is a conflict between the pleasure principle and reality principle. The inner feeling of happiness of the speaker is countered by the dismal mood of the setting :

> Waiting for breakfast, while she brushed her hair,
> I looked down at the empty hotel yard
> Once meant for coaches, cobblestones were wet,
> But sent no light back to the loaded sky,
> Sunk as it was with mist down to the roofs.

Drain pipes and fire-escape climbed up
Past rooms still burning their electric light.
I thought: Featureless morning, featureless night.
(20)

In the second stanza the pleasure principle triumphs over the feeling of the dreariness caused by the scene when the speaker discovers that he has misjudged the situation. In fact, the morning is not as featureless as the speaker assumes, but the fear that he might lose pleasure as he got it makes him feel so. Then suddenly he realizes that he is mistaken and utters:

Misjudgement: for the stones slept, and the must
Wandered absolvingly past all it touched,
Yet hung like a stayed breath; the lights burnt on
Pin-points of undisturbed excitement; beyond the glass
The colourless vial of day painlessly spilled
My world back after a year, my lost lost world
Like a cropping deer strayed near my path again,
Bewaring the minds least cluth. . . (20)

Such a reversal of response is more typically present in Larkin's later poetry. That is why, this poem is different from other poems belonging to this phase. It marks a distinct change in Larkin's voice. For the first time the poet here speaks in his own voice. It shows clearly both Yeats's and Hardy's influence on Larkin. Both Yeats and Hardy were fond of dealing with sudden quirks of fate. It also shows Larkin's empirical attitude in his observation of things in life. He prefers

clinging to the real to the mythical. He writes about such inane subjects as drainpipes, fire escape and electric light, uses such tangible epithets as "loaded sky," "cropping dear" and "unforced field." All these thematic choices and stylistic aspects link his earlier poetry to the later.

This change in his mood makes the speaker look at the objects in nature in a new way and derive pleasure from them :

> ... turning at kissed her
> Easily for sheer joy tipping the balance of love. (20)

The night spent together leads to emotional rapport between them. They kiss, not just for a mere tactile pleasure but for a deeper joy in living. This togetherness takes the speaker away from the bleakness of reality to a world of pleasure.

Though this poem is about sensual gratification the consummation of love is possible not just by physical union but by an emotional bond established through this union. The woman is the source of inspiration for the speaker to write. She provides him the stimulus necessary for his articulated energy.

In the third stanza there seems to be a conflict between the sensual and the creative impulse, the two sources of the pleasure principle. One can see in the woman a muse figure. She is the very reason for the coming of the

> . . . tender visiting
> Fallow as a deer on an unforced field
> How would you have me ? towards your grace

My promises meet and lock and race like rivers,
But only when you choose. (20)

But, as the poet implies, creative work, which seems to be jealous of the girl, is possible only when she is removed "terribly away." This means that after the removal of the source of sensual pleasure, creative joy can be experienced. In other words, all creativity springs from the sensual experience after it is fulfilled and pushed aside. Timms' remark on this is pertinent: "We only fully appreciate our affection for someone when we have lost her or him" (56). So the poet who has been affected by the departure of his beloved and who is obsessed by that departure has to "construct a verbal device that reproduces this emotional concept in anyone, who cares to read it, anywhere, any time" (RW 80). This idea is similar to that of Shakespeare seeking to immortalize beauty through art and of Yeats transforming the stuff of life into poetic artifacts. Thus creative writing (art) comes into being as a source of relief which pleases and makes one feel calm and serene.

Like love as a source of pleasure, fantasy also provides such a source. In some of Larkin's early poems speakers derive pleasure from the world of fantasy as a substitute for harsh reality. These poems follow the technique of dream. According to Freud, dream "is a disguised fulfilment of a (suppressed or repressed) wish" (The Interpretation of Dreams 80). Though the pleasure derived from such poems seems temporary and illusory, this momentary pleasure reduces tension. As Freud says, "The

substitute gratifications, such as art offers, are illusions in contrast to reality, but nonetheless satisfying to the mind on that account thanks to the place which phantasy has reserved for herself in mental life" (Civilization and Its Discontents 25). In the poem "Within the dream you said," full of lyrical intensity, the speaker finds satisfaction in fantasy which the dream has provided. He finds in the dream an outlet for his suppressed desire to kiss his beloved. The censor is not awake and his overwhelming desire to kiss his beloved is achieved when he is invited in dream by his beloved for a free physical enjoyment.

Within the dream you said,
Let us kiss then,
In this room, in this bed,
But when all's done
We must not meet again.

(299)

Though the speaker is worried that the moment of satisfaction may be short-lived when his beloved tells him "We must not meet again" a certain kind of gratification has been secured.

In the poem "So through that unripe day you bore your head" pleasure is derived through memory. The poet remembers the sweetest days of love spent with his beloved. Though those happy days of pleasure can never come back, they provide moments of happiness to the speaker when they are recalled. They have been preserved in his memory to provide relief at moments of tension:

. . . . Instead
It was your severed image that grew sweeter,
That floated, wing stiff, focussed in the sun
Along uncertainty and gales of shame
Blown out before I slept.

(283)

Though Larkin was not in direct contact with rural landscapes in his childhood, many poems in his early phase have beautiful description of nature in her various aspects. Nature undoubtedly is another source of pleasure for Larkin. Although it is apparent that his views about nature expressed either in his early poems which follow the pleasure principle or later poems of the reality principle do not embody any consistent philosophy, his power to depict nature's grand and minute aspects demonstates his emotional tie to nature.

Instead of taking a romantic view of "Nature's holy plan" and extolling its "healing balm" Larkin presents it as it appears in its naturalness. To him, nature does not reveal anything divine or sacred; it is only a place to which man goes seeking relief and pleasure. In the poem "Fragments from May" the speaker celebrates the coming of spring as a natural recurrence of man's hope and joy.

Stands the Spring: heralded by its bright-clothed
Trumpeters, of bough and bush and branch,
Pale winter draws away his white hands, loathed,
And creeps, a leper, to the cave of time.

(226)

The images used in this poem suggest gaiety and pleasure. The arrvial of spring heralds a royal procession. The boughs and bushes are dressed in green to celebrate the rejuvenation of the season of fertility. The winter, which stands for unpleasant things like old age and death, has escaped to "the cave of time." This image reminds one of the myth of resurrection in Greek mythology when the god of life defeats the god of death; it also implies the triumph of Eros over Thanatos. Life, love and pleasure replace the dreariness of the winter; for this reason the winter is described as sick with leprosy escaping to darkness for shelter.

Though the wind blows roughly ("boisterous wind"), it is not destructive to flowers, which have just sprung up. It is a harmless wind which removes yellow leaves from the branches to make place for a new blossom.

> Spring the flowers: a host of nodding gold
> Leaping and laughing in the boisterous wind,
> Tinged with a yellow as yet not grown old,
> Green and yellow set against the soil.
> Flowers the blossom - loaded, swaying arms
> Of sated stalks, heaped with pink and white
> Of fresh youth's cheek,they lightly throw their charms
> Into the fragrance of the deep, wet grass.
>
> (226)

One can see similarities between this poem and Robert Frost's "Nothing Gold Can Stay." While celebrating the arrival of leaves

in plants, he makes the sad conclusion that such wealth is transitory, "nothing gold can stay." But the difference between the Frost poem and Larkin's is that the latter never dwells in the future and remains content with the present: "Tinged with a yellow as yet not grown old." The wind in Larkin's poem is a harbinger of fecundity and birth. It deflowers the blossom and carries the male seeds to the ovule of another flower to give birth to new plants of "pink and white flowers." The "fresh youth's cheek" stands for the newly-appeared blossoms, indicating the triumph of life over death. Thus one can say that the wind acts here as an agent of Eros in Freudian terms "by bringing about more far-reaching combination of the particles into which living substance is dispersed, aims at complicating life and at the same time, of course, at preserving it." (Id and Ego 381).

The blossoms that appeared in spring are full-grown flowers in "Summer Nocturne." But the boughs are still loaded with new blossoms, indicating that nature is busy in self-preservation through its continuity of pleasure principle. "Summer Nocturne" opens with a night scene, but the night is not a symbol of darkness and fear but of pleasure. The night in June stands for beauty, liveliness and youthful exuberance. In Keatsian manner Larkin describes the atmosphere for its sheer beauty and freshness. The speaker is carried away to the world of pleasure by the natural perfume of the full-grown flowers and new blossoms. The "rapture" that the speaker experiences is "confused" in the sense that it is derived from several heterogeneous sources. Different flowers provide different kinds

of smell without any deliberate intention to please. Thus the sensation of pleasure that the poet derives from nature is a spontaneous one.

> Now night perfumes lie upon the air,
> As rests the blossoms on the loaded bough;
> And each deep-drawn breath is redolent
> Of all the folded flowers' mingled scent
> That rises in confused rapture now. (227)

The expression used in these lines like "night perfumes," "loaded bough," "redolent," "folded flowers," "mingled scent," and "confused raptures" indicate that the poet is simply overwhelmed with the "disorderly sweetness" of summer.

The night in the poem is not totally dark as the moon shines and spills "its ghostly light" on the trees and penetrates through them to the flowers. Such an atmosphere of darkness tinged with light constitutes a fantastic setting appropriate for dreams, an atmosphere reminiscent of Walter de la Mare's "The Listeners."

> As from some cool vase filled with petals rare
> And from the silver goblet of the moon
> A ghostly light spills down on arched trees,
> And filters through their lace to touch the flowers
> Among the grass. (227)

In such an atmosphere the speaker forgets time and wants to keep the moment of pleasure forever. And though there is a hint

of his awareness of unpleasant reality, pleasure he derives from the beauty of nature is not marred and "tomorrow's sun" renews life and transcends its contingencies.

> Now time should stop; the web of charms is spun
> By the moon's finger over lawns and flowers;
> All pleasures I would give, if this sweet night
> Would ever stay, cooled by the pale moonlight;
> But no for in a few white-misted hours
> The east must yellow with tomorrow's sun
>
> (227).

The metaphor of "tomorrow's sun" is replaced by the moon in the poem "The moon is full tonight." In this poem the speaker finds pleasure by looking at the moon. His gaze at the moon takes away his worries of this world. But the moon, while providing him with happiness, also "hurts" his eyes.

> The moon is full tonight
> And hurts the eyes,
> It is so definite and bright.
>
> (274)

The curious sensation of pleasure and pain he gets by looking at the moon defines the nature of his pleasure, which is derived, as psychologists say, from several mysterious sources including pain. The speaker assumes that the moon which sucks "All quietness and certitude of worth" from the earth is void of worldly evil and that is why, she shines brightly:

What if it has drawn up
All quietness and certitude of worth
Wherewith to fill its cup.

(274)

Larkin suggests a similar use of the beauty of nature as a source of pleasure in opposition to the ugliness of the world in the poem "The horns of the morning." In the first stanza of the poem the poet describes the arrival of the beautiful dawn. The dazzling cold dews make the meadow bright and shining. The vast expanse of the sky is coloured by the golden tint of the sun that makes the scene charming and romantic.

The horns of the morning
Are blowing, are shining,
The meadows are bright
With the coldest dew;
The dawn reassembles
Like the clash of gold cymbals
The sky spread its vans out
The sun hangs in view.

(275)

The earth which contained nothing as pure as the full moon in "The moon is full tonight" now turns to be the most brilliant here. The morning is unusual by its beauty. The earth also is bright, silent and celestial:

For never so brilliant,

Neither so silent

Nor so unearthly, has

Earth grown before.

(275)

The whole scene represents life in the full. The poet derives pleasure from such fullness and abundance.

As we have already suggested, Larkin in his early years wrote some poems under the influence of Auden. Like Auden's psychoanalytical treatment of themes, Larkin was also interested in psychoanalysis. There is a group of poems in Larkin's early poetry which indicate his interest in psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is supposed to relieve anxiety and stress and make one emotionally cleansed. Auden implicitly believed that by presenting in his poetry the psychonalysis of social and personal problems he would be curing the society and his mind of their ills. Needless to say, Auden regarded Freud as a saviour of mankind from this point of view. Similarly, Larkin's poetry of psychoanalysis seems to follow the pleasure principle indirectly by revealing the inner operations of the mind and the workings of the libido.

In the poem "Having grown up in shade of Church and State" the speaker regards the church and the state as repressive institutions which by imposing rules suppress man's libidinous urges. In this respect Freud's comments are worth quoting: "The gratification of instincts is happiness, but when the outer world

lets us starve, refuses us satisfaction of our needs they become the cause of very great suffering" (Civilization and Its Discontents 32). The child in the poem, who stands for all children, has been taught in his childhood the instructions of the church which are, as Freud would say, "based on compulsory labour and instinctual renunciation" (The Future of an illusion 16). But he has to read on bed at night secretly what was prohibited by the authority. In this he follows his egoistic instincts and tries to assert the power of his instinctual will.

> Having grown up in shade of church and state
> Breathing the air of drawing-rooms and scent
> Following the Test Match, tea unsweet in lent
> . . . . . .
> He smiles demurely at his uncle's jokes,
> He smiles demurely at his uncle's jokes,
> And reads the Modern Boy in bed at night.
>
> (229)

In the "uncle's jokes" and the stories and articles in the Modern Boy the boy finds secret satisfaction of his libidinal drive.

In the second stanza the boy is praised for his excellence at games, but the images used here suggest sexual satisfaction. The poem ends significantly with the line "We diagnose a case of good old sex." Similarly in the poem "Nothing significant was really said" the narrator recalls from his memory a meeting where the speakers started to reveal what was there in their unconscious. Every speaker at the meeting expected his future to

be brighter and dreamt of a happier life, except for one who believed that real happiness was the one achieved then and there:

> All but one declared his future great,
> His present sure and happy, they that staged
> Behind, among the ashes, were all stirred
> By memory of his words, as sharp as great.
>
> (235)

The events stuck in their memories were in fact half-forgotten "among the ashes" and yet are stored in the unconscious and appear in their sharpness and clarity when needed by the mind.

Though many of Larkin's early poems start and end with notes of sadness, they cannot be called poems of despair. Larkin's concept of pleasure is derived as much from the beauty of the poetic form as from the content. In most of these poems rhythm matches the mood; through rhythm the speakers celebrate their joy of living. In the poem "Winter Nocturne," as the title suggests, the winter stands still for its frozen lifelessness. All the images used in the poem suggest bleakness and gloom, but the poem is the pleasure of the form. Form is an important aspect in all of Larkin's poetry. But what distinguishes this group of early poems from the later group is that in this form is self-consciously employed, as in Hopkins and Yeats, as an artifact. Various constituents of the form such as imagery, rhythm, logic of argument etc. establish an architectonic of design for the sheer pleasure of the form itself. In the poems of his mature years, on the other hand, Larkin employs form and content as

indistinguishably blended into each other. Alliteration is a major device which Larkin employs in his early poetry to produce music which alleviates gloom by its sublime effect. In the poem "Winter" where the images imply unpleasant aspects of life the rhythm and music of the poem take away their unpleasantness. In this poem the poet describes nature in winter in its desolation and gloom. There is fidelity in the description but the poet's intention does not seem to be directed toward this fidelity; it is to establish a link between nature and inner feelings of the mind:

> Then the whole heath whistles
> In the leaping wind,
> And shrivelled men stand
> Crowding like thistles
> To one fruitless place;
> Yet still the miracles
> Exhume in each face
> Strong silken seed.
>
> (286)

These poems derive their effect from their music and rhythm and are perhaps intended to be read out aloud for thorough enjoyment. Their intricate word-play is a subliminal way of satisfying the hidden libido of the poet or the speaker. According to Freud, word-play is an expression of sexual instinct.

So far, we have been concerned with Larkin's early poetry. As regards his later poetry, a strong impression has been created

by scholars that it is the poetry of gloom and disenchantment. While this idea may be tenable on the whole, it would be unfair to say that there are no gleams of light in his mature poetry. A discriminating study of his poems will demonstrate that many poems of his mature phase pulsate with image of life and pleasure. There are many poems in The Less Deceived which express a greater sense of fulfilment and joy than the poems of the pleasure principle. For example, the poem "Wedding Wind", written in 1946 and published in The Less Deceived in 1955, indicates that Larkin's movement from the pleasure principle is not a linear one. In this poem the speaker who is a newly-wed woman speaks on a deep psychological level about her wedding-day which will not come back to her. The first stanza describes the wind blowing during the wedding day, almost as a harbinger of happiness :

> 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,
> Yet seeing nothing, when he came back
> He said the horses were restless, and I was sad
> That any man or beast that night should lack
> The happiness I had. (11)

The wind symbolizes the strong passion of the girl; therefore its violence at night is an "objective-correlative" of the fulfilment

of the sexual passion of the couple. The horses which stand for sexual virility are also made "restless" by the wind. There is just a perfect correspondence between the happiness of the couple on their marriage day and the empathy of the external world to their happiness.

> Now in the day
> All's ravelled under the sun by the wind's blowing.
> He has gone to look at the floods, and I
> Carry a clipped pail to the chicken run,
> Set it down, and stare. All is the wind
> Hunting through the clouds and forests, thrashing
> My apron and the hanging cloths on the line,
> Can it be born, this bodying forth by wind
> Of joy my actions turn on, like a thread
> Carrying beads? Shall I be let to sleep
> Now this perpetual morning shares my bed?
> Can even death dry up
> These new delighted lakes, conclude
> Our kneeling as cattle by all-generous water. (11)

The second stanza centres around the joyous feeling of the bride when she gets up in the morning the following day. It is an ordinary day for the man. He goes to stop the flood outside. She stays home to look after some domestic chores. The flood represents the reality principle that threatens the pleasure principle at home. Finally, the pleasure principle triumphs.

The rhetorical questions asked by the bride indicate that she is sure that her joy is permanent. She wishes that her joys are carried by the wind and fly "like a thread carrying beads." She wants everybody to share her joy and be happy like her. Love overtakes the newly-wed with such a force that the bride wonders whether the forces of disturbance can exhaust the emotion. In the last two lines of the poem she indicates that even death does not have power to dry up the lakes which symbolize fertility and life. The word "kneeling" adds a religious dimension to love.

A similar kind of joy provides the theme for "Coming," a poem published in The Less Deceived. It is a joy at the arrival of spring. At the beginning of spring there are signs of warmth which suggest the coming of new life. The speaker's heart is filled with exhilaration. The first part of the poem presents the dawn of the spring through its various sights and sounds. The yellow light "bathing the serene foreheads of houses" indicates that winter has gone away:

> On longer evenings,
> Light, chill and yellow,
> Bathes the sereve,
> Foreheads of houses.
> A thrust sings,
> Laurel-surrounded
> In the deep bare garden,
> Its fresh-peeled voice
> Astonishing the brickwork.

It will be spring soon,

It will be spring soon. (33)

The second part of this lyric deals with the poet's reminiscenes of his childhood:

And I, whose childhood
Is a forgotten boredom,
Feel like a child
Who comes on a scene
Of adult reconciling,
And can understand nothing
But the unusual laughter,
And starts to be happy.

(33)

The poet, whose childhood was not a happy one, now remembers his past and tries to reconcile with its harshness. Thus, through hindsight of vision possible from a distant perspective, the poet learns to live through "reality principle" which merges with "the pleasure principle." G.S.Fraser aptly comments on this fusion: "Poems of pure happiness are rare in Larkin (as moments of pure happiness are rare in life). But this is a happy poem, not merely beautiful one" (247).

This kind of fusion is also the poet's concern in "Spring" which appeared in XX Poems and was published in The Less Deceived. This poem also celebrates the beauty of spring. In the first six lines the poet gives us a vivid picture of spring which he treats as a female. People who come with their children to

"finger the awakened grass" enjoy the pervasive atmosphere of regeneration in nature. In the second stanza the poet gives a superb metaphoric transformation of spring :

> Spring of all seasons most gratuitous,
> Is fold of untaught flower, is race of water,
> Is earth's most multiple, excited daughter.
>
> (39)

The last lines reveal that those who have "visions" of "mountain clear" and "needs immodest" cannot participate in such a joyous celebration of nature. The Less Deceived, though a collection suffused with moods of melancholy and gloom, includes poems like "Spring," "Coming" and "Wedding Wind", poems which deal with rejuvenation and pleasure. Thus the awareness of both pleasure and pain finds equal expression in Larkin's poetry, and this is a theme we shall address in chapter six.

Despite the fact that Larkin's early poetry and some of his later poetry are steeped in the pleasure principle, the major thrust of his poetry is a shift from this principle to an awareness of the bitter truth of life. But it should be noted that even the poems of disenchantment do not generate pessimism; they are only destroyers of illusions. Larkin presents unpleasant motifs with a view to preparing the human mind to face reality without suffering a breakdown. The purpose is to prevent the mind from falling apart. In the next chapter our focus of discussion will be the poems of the reality principle.

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