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ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES OF PHILIP LARKIN'S WOUNDS IN THE MIRROR OF FREUD'S PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY A B S T R A C T

Philip Larkin is one of the prominent post-modern poets who tackled with various themes in his poems. He approached his ideas directly or indirectly. This study aims to analyze selected poems of Philip Larkin as one of the most vital figures of English poetry. The analysis of the poems is achieved on the basis of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory which is regarded as a great criterion used in modern English literature. Psychoanalysis is a well-known method that helps critics and readers to interpret and dive deep beneath the meanings of the lines of the poems to get familiar with the unconscious mind of poets.

Sigmund Freud in his work *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) believes that poetry is the dream of poets and writers. So, the one who reads the literary work has to use psychoanalysis as a focal method and technique for finding and figuring out the hidden meanings and intentions of the writer within the work. Psychoanalysis, to a great extent, aids critics and readers to understand the conflict between Id, Ego and Superego as well the inner psyche of the writer in order to comprehend the reasons behind the writer's actions and behaviors.

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تحليل اسباب جروح فليب لاركن في مرآة نظرية فرويد النفسية

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الخلاصة:

فليب لاركن هو احد شعراء مابعد الحداثة البارزين الذين تناولوا موضوعات مختلفة في قصائده. لقد عبر عن افكاره بشكل مباشر او غير مباشر. تهدف هذه الدراسة الى تحليل قصائد مختارة لفليب لاركن كواحد من اكثر الشخصيات حيوية في الشعر الانجليزي. يتم تحليل القصائد على اساس نظرية التحليل النفسي لسيغموند فرويد والتي تعتبر معيارا كبيرا يستخدم في الادب الانجليزي الحديث. التحليل النفسي هي طريقة معروفة تساعد النقاد و القراء علي التفسير والغوص في اعماق معاني سطور القصائد للتعرف على العقل اللاواعي للشعراء.

يعتقد سيغموند فرويد في كتابه "تفسير الاحلام" (١٩٠٠) ان الشعراء حلم الشعراء والكاتبين. لذلك على من يقرأ العمل الادبي او النص الادبي ان يستخدم التحليل النفسي كوسيلة محورة وتقنية لإيجاد واكتشاف المعاني والنوايا الخفية للكاتب داخل النص. التحليل النفسي الى حد كبير يساعد النقاد والقراء على فهم الصراع بين الهوية، أنا، وأنا العليا وكذلك النفس الداخلية للكاتب من أجل فهم الأسباب ما وراء التصرفات الكاتب وسلوكياته.

كلمات المفتاحية: التحليل النفسي، العقل الواعي، أنا العليا، احلام، اللاواعي.

1. Introduction

Philip Arthur Larkin (1922-1985) is considered as one of the best and most glitter stars in the shiny sky of English literature and poetry in particular. His poems are mostly viewed as a sign of pessimism and passivity in which readers can easily find the features of sadness and disappointment. Yet, many critics believe that it is the reader's misreading of the poems that lead them to feel that way, otherwise, in many famous poems of Larkin positive perspectives about life and future are observed. Moreover, most of Larkin's poems which tackle the themes of love, time, deception and life are seen as paving the way for readers to look at the bright side of the future.

It is noticeable that there are hidden sexual desires and feelings which are revealed directly or indirectly to readers. Larkin's poems *Poetry of Departures* written in 1954, *Wants* written in 1951, *High Windows* written in 1967, and *No Road* written in 1950, are convenient instances for understanding the poet. The poems will be dealt with according to the theory of Psychoanalysis in a very obvious way in this paper.

2. Theory of Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis is a method that is practiced for the treatment of psychological and emotional disorders of human beings. Psychoanalysis might be mentioned as an approach to the interpretation of any literary work rather than a special school of literary theory and criticism due to its free and boundless explanation and interpretation of the work or a person's life.¹ *Vernon, Hall* defines the term psychoanalysis as a suitable method and way that assists in understanding and interpreting literature better.²

Sigmund Freud is unarguably considered as the pioneer and founder of psychoanalysis theory. Freud was born in 1856 in Moravia. He received his education in Vienna. The Bible profoundly affected his interests. He was influenced by Darwin's theories in his attempt to understand the world. He was also impressed by Jean Martin's investigation of hysteria that resulted his idea of regarding hysteria as a psychological disorder rather than a physical illness. Freud and Breuer published *Studies on Hysteria* which focused on the emotional side of the patient³.

Sigmund Freud coined the term psychoanalysis in 1896 as he was a neurologist, psychologist, and investigator of the activities of the unconscious mind. The term was used as a main treatment for the disorders of the unconscious mental processes. He also divided the personality of human beings onto three phases or parts which he named them id, ego, and superego.

After Sigmund Freud, other psychologists as Carl Jung, Northrop Frye, and Jacques Lacan have developed the theory throughout the 20th century. Some of them could establish their own schools of psychology and literary analysis and some others have just taken certain ideas and refused the others. For instance, Freud's student Carl Jung worked on some ideas in his Master study and refused the rest. He added a new branch to the theory and named it Analytical Psychology. Additionally, Northrop Frye was well known for his text in literary criticism entitled "Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays" in 1957, and he could develop the symbolic or archetypal criticism in the middle of 1950s. During 1960s, Jacques Lacan, a Neo-Freudian French psychoanalyst could expand and revise Freud's theory to give a new life breathe to psychoanalytic criticism and assure its important impact on today's literary criticism⁴.

Freud's Psychoanalytic Criticism was introduced to people for the first time during 1920s and 1930s but it is still effective nowadays. However, it has been

debated and revised by many psychologists. Psychoanalytic Criticism gives a way to literary analysis via portraying human beings as complicated creatures failing to understand the effect of the unconscious on man's motivations and everyday behaviors. After a long period of its introduction, psychoanalytic criticism focused on the author and it is known as a Psychobiography.

Psychobiography is a method of analysis that starts with a close attention on author's biographical information through personal letters, lectures, biographies and any other types of documents that related to the author. These data and collected works, as Bressler believes, create the author's personality with its features, inner and outer conflicts and mental disorders that surely help critics to dive deep into the interpretations of the author's perceptions and principles.⁵

The ambiguous and hidden meaning of a text can be revealed by applying the psychoanalysis theory in interpreting a literary text. Psychoanalysis theory helps readers to understand the author's personality and how his life experiences affected the process of writing. It can also be a useful tool for analyzing characters' behaviors, the role of the language and symbols used in a text, and how they appeal to the audience and the readers which are all regarded as the major aims of the theory of psychoanalysis when it is applied on any piece of literary works.⁶

2.1. Freudian Theory

The modern Freudian theory as a new method that has been used by critics has two main preferable techniques: Firstly, it supplies the means of treating people who have mental disorders. Secondly, it provides the way of dealing with the different complexities of people's mind. In fact, Psychoanalytic or Freudian theory was named after its founder, Sigmund Freud; an Austrian Neurologist who had a clinic for treating patients diagnosed with hysteria and founded the psychoanalytic theory. He believed that the reason of the patients' cases seems to be psychological rather than physical and it was caused as a result of the suppression of desires that denied their unconscious confront⁷.

Going through self-analysis in 1987 alongside researches and patients' analysis resulted that fantasies and experiences play a major role at the beginning of neuroses. Freud's permanent studies and devotion to the field made him become more interested in psychology studies rather than his clinical occupation especially, the unconscious mind which he named *superego*. Sigmund Freud believes that

human's mind has three best destinations or parts which he named **Id**, **Ego**, and **Superego** or, conscious, preconscious, and unconscious parts.



The **Id** is also called the primitive or original habitual of personality contains sexual desires and hidden wishes that Freud calls **libido** which is a general sexual power. **Id** focuses and operates on an instinct that Freud calls **pleasure principle** which is an idea that orders the person to fulfill the desires and wishes directly with no postpone and delay, regardless to its results and consequences and if the order is postponed, the person would be sorrowful and experiences un-pleasure.

Id also contains illogic, irrational, and fantasy which has nothing to do with reality and it is totally selfish by its nature. When a newly born child comes to the world it is completely his Id which directly responds to the urgent needs and desires and later ego and superego develops⁸.

Freud believes that the id part of human's mind consists of two instincts, which he named as Eros and Thanatos. Eros is mentioned as life impulse that helps the person to survive and guides for the activities that continue life and living such as breathing, eating, and sex, and this instinct is called libido. On the other hand, Thanatos is described as death instinct that consists of a number of aggressive and destructive energies exist in every human being which will be called violence if they are used toward others. Freud argues that the force of Eros is stronger and more powerful than Thanatos that aids the individual to get survived rather than self-devastated.

The **Ego** is also a part of the id that has changed by the direct impact of the outer world. It is that part which moderates between the id and superego to conciliate between both. It also strives to negotiate between the fantasy of the id and the outer real world and always considered as a decision maker of someone's personality because ego usually works by the use of reason and rationality, unlike the id which is irrational and always chaotic. The ego focuses and operates on an instinct which Freud calls **the reality principle** as a base of working so as to stay realistic and at the same time to fulfill the id's needs in a reasonable way far from negative results of society. This is due to the fact that the ego pays attention to the social norms and rules while making its mind up to avoid committing fatal mistakes that are unaccepted in the society.

Ego resembles id in trying to get pleasure and staying away from sadness but not the way Id gets it. In other words, ego seeks to obtain pleasure in a realistic way so as not to cause danger for the id and itself as well. Ego always looks like a sincere advisor for the id, and Freud compared the relationship between the id and the ego to a horse which is the id and its rider which is the ego, that usually shows the id good and safe directions. If the rider which is the ego fails to use the reality principle, the individual experiences anxiety and sadness. Moreover, Ego possesses another significant feature called secondary thinking, which is a realistic and rational process that works for the purpose of problem solving to help individuals control their wishes by means of thinking and choosing the best option⁹.

The **Superego** is viewed as the best part of human being's mind. It contains the good principles, values, and morals of a specific society which one learns from parents and the surrounding environment. It grows up during the psychosexual stage which Freud calls Phallic stage, around the age of 3 to 5 years. The superego is also seen as an agent that administrates the two consequences of the behavior; **the Rewards** that contain the sense of pride and self-satisfaction, and **the Punishments** that contains the sense of guilt and shame.

Freud describes the superego as an important part of the unconscious which always advises for the good and right actions and it is seen as a critic of the self that contains a set of moral values, ethics, and prohibition codes. The codes work to control the wishes and desires of the id which are not allowed according to the norms of the society such as violence and sex. It works at the same time to impress

the ego to choose the moral objectives rather than owning just a realistic aim and trying to reach its perfection.

Moreover, Freud divides the superego into two parts; the **ideal self or perfect self** which is the first part of superego that consists of the behaviors that are acceptable and considered as good ones according to the society and family values. It is also described as a picture of a guidance that tells the person how to act and how to behave with others in the society. When the person obeys these rules and instructions, he/she feels proud and comfort.

The second part of the superego is called **conscience or moral principles** and it is seen as an inner power and voice that alerts the person when something wrong is done and causes the ego to feel the sense of guilt and shame as a punishment for the bad behaviors. It is also viewed as a box that contains the bad and unaccepted behaviors according to the society scales¹⁰.

The unconscious mind stores hidden desires, fear, irrational thoughts, and disguised truth which will eventually be revealed through the conscious and actions. The term was initially explained by Carl Gustav. Initially, it was believed that the unconscious stored memories, but the unconscious was redefined by Freud to be a dynamic system that contains memories alongside uncertain conflicts. Freud compared the conscious and the unconscious to an iceberg. The visible part or the surface is the conscious, while the hidden huge part under the water is the unconscious. Our actions are the result of hidden uncontrolled force inside us.

Freud divides the human psyche into three different models:

- The first model is the **dynamic model** which means that our mind is divided into the conscious and the unconscious, or the rational and the irrational. Freud believes that the unconscious part of our mind and psyche is responsible for most of our actions and behaviors.
- The second model of the human psyche is the **economic model** which shares the same ideas as the first model in the battle between the conscious and the unconscious for taking control of the individuals' behaviors and actions. Freud introduced two principles to govern the human psyche: the pleasure principle and the reality principle. The pleasure principle seeks self and instinct satisfaction and this instinctual energy is called cathexes. The

pleasure principle is resisted by the anti-cathexes energy which is controlled by the reality principle as it recognizes the regulations. Both principles are in a constant fight for taking control.

- The third model of the human psyche is the **Typographical Model** which divided the human psyche into the **conscious**, **preconscious**, and **unconscious**. The conscious is the link between the real world and the mind. The preconscious stores the memories that are brought by the conscious. While the unconscious stores the sorrowful experiences and emotions, guilty hidden desires, and even unresolved conflicts that can't be directly recalled to the conscious part, rather they sneak into our dreams, art, or so many other ways.¹¹

2.2. Sigmund Freud and the Significance of Dreams:

Sigmund Freud wrote a book entitled *The Interpretation of Dreams* which is considered as one of the best books in the history of 20th century and it was published in (1900). In his book, Freud states that the unconscious part of human's mind is free to express during sleep and it's done through dreams. In other words, Freud believes that our dreams or writings are the outlet through which hidden desires and suppressed feelings will be revealed. Meanwhile, those hidden desires will sneak out by making a window to the id or conscious part¹².

2.3. Freudian Principles:

Sigmund Freud's principles of analytical criticism were made under the hand of Ernest Jones who wrote an essay about *Hamlet* suggesting that he suffered from a psychological problem and was victimized for the oedipal complex. The principles that should be kept in mind are:

- The conscious
- The significance of sexuality
- The importance of dreams
- Symbols: symbols are two types: Yonic which represents female symbols as lakes or tunnels, and Phallic represents male symbols as trees or towers.
- Creativity: the connection between creativity and dream¹³.

Freud argues that the behavior of human being is never done haphazardly but, whatever is done is the outcome of their object-directed purpose, which he generally divides into three stages:

- The Pre-oedipal stage which Freud indicates as the innate instinct of every new born individual to fulfill their basic needs such as need for shelter and food which are the main source of joy which Freud refers to as a sexual pleasure. He divides the sexual pleasure into three phases or stages Oral, Anal, and Phallic stage.
- The Oedipus complex: This name is taken from the mythical Greek name of Oedipus, the son of queen Jocasta king Liaus, and someday Oedipus kills his father in order to marry his mother. This is a stage of the person's sexual desire involvement with the opposite sex of the parent that is the stage of the competition with parent of the same gender and every human being's action is motivated by sexual instincts. He believes that what happened to the life of Oedipus was due to his sexual complexity between him and his mother¹⁴.
- The Unconscious: it is the third and final stage of human's mind which is hidden. Freud compares it to the bigger part of the iceberg beneath the ocean. The unconscious part of mind contains the feelings of anxiety, pain, struggles, and unaccepted behaviors which are repressed and oppressed outside the world of the conscious, and it can create physical and psychological problems such as anger, distress, and difficult interactions with society.¹⁵

3. Psychoanalysis and Literature:

Psychoanalysis is never seen just as a division of psychology or medical study, but it also interacts with other subjects of religion, cultural studies, philosophical subjects, and literature. Sigmund Freud as the chief founder of psychoanalysis has always connected it to art generally and specifically to literature. He analyzed Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Sophocles *Oedipus* in "The Interpretation of Dreams" based on their oedipal elements and how the plays of Shakespeare and Sophocles affected the audiences.

Freud explains the strong and profound relation between psychoanalysis and literature by comparing the imagination, dreams, play, and any other art works so

that he could comprehend the creativity of the writers, especially in his work “psychopathic Characters on Stage” which was written in 1942. He describes the relationship between psychoanalysis and literature especially poetry and argues that poetry is the art of enjoyment and intensive feelings of the poet.

Moreover, in his work; *The interpretation of Dreams* (1900) Sigmund Freud very clearly compared poetry to dreams and he believes that there is an obvious dream in every poem that poets write with suitable symbols, irony and humor story. He adds that the dreams are seen as the main spring of imaginations and inspirations of poets as well as the musicians.

For Freud, both poetry and psychoanalysis share the same language which is used as a tool to unleash their unconscious mind and to express their hidden desires and wishes freely and at the same time to help others interpret the dreams of the poet when they dive deep into the hidden meanings of the text¹⁶.

Additionally, Freud in his work entitled *Creative writers and Day-dreaming*, which was published in (1995), introduces the theory of psychoanalysis on the structure of the literary work to comprehend the nature of the work. Due to the fact that Freud views a literary work as a daydream, he argues that both daydream and literature have the satisfaction of the unsatisfied desires and wishes in their world of fantasy. Freud tries to get the answer of some basic questions that arouse in his mind about the places where the creative writers get their materials in, and how they can move the emotions in readers by their writing.

Psychoanalytic theory as a school and approach to literary criticism pays attention to some of the following focal points while interpreting any literary text or a piece of literature:

- The author: the personal life of the author is very important for the theorist and critics to understand and analyze the work.
- The characters used in the work; the theory uses the motives and actions of the characters as a tool to analyze the character of the author.
- The text itself: the language and the symbols that are used can be analyzed by the theory.
- The demand of the unconscious: the theory explains what the author's unconscious mind requires and commands.

- The theory of the iceberg: the status of the id, ego and superego can be analyzed by the theory.
- Dreams: the theory analyzes the dreams as expression of the author's conscious mind.
- Behavior and action: mostly the childish and sexual behaviors.
- The relationship: the theory analyzes the conflict and relationship between neurosis (id and ego) and the creativity of the author¹⁷.

4. Psychological Analysis of Philip Larkin's selected poems:

Philip Larkin is one of the English poets who reflect the influence of the 2nd World War on people's life and the misery he suffered from in his poems. *Wants* is one of the well-known poems from his collection "The Less Deceived" which was written in 1951. Reading from the surface level, the poem appears to be simple. Yet, digging deep into the interpretive meaning of the poem, many hidden and psychological perspectives can be recognized, as the speaker's suppressed desires and wishes which the poet expresses unconsciously like his wish for loneliness and solitude from the family gatherings.

Moreover, the hidden Sexual desire or Libido of the speaker who might be Larkin himself has a great role in the interpretation of the poem and the creation of the speaker's personality. It is noted that even the title of the poem foregrounds the wishes and desires that someone looks for. When the lines of the poem are not put regularly and they don't follow an arranged pattern of the rhyme scheme, it foreshadows the manner of the speaker's mind or sexual feelings which might be half-connected or unconnected just the way that happens in dreams¹⁸.

In his work "The interpretation of Dreams", Sigmund Freud explains how the mind works when someone dreams and he focuses on the unconscious mind and its major role in affecting the way he/she acts, feels, or thinks. The best way for revealing the hidden desires of the unconscious mind is through dreams, which for the writer is, the text.¹⁹ Thus Philip Larkin in this poem uses the technique of anaphora which is the repetition of the words "Beyond all", "wish to be alone", "However", and "desires of oblivion runs" to emphasize his insistence for being alone which he sees as a personal dream:

“Beyond all this, the wish to be alone:
However the sky grows dark with invitation-cards
However we follow the printed directions of sex
However the family is photographed under the flagstaff -
Beyond all this, the wish to be alone.”

In this stanza, sex and loneliness are mentioned by the speaker which psychologically gives the insight about the poet’s interpersonal and intrapersonal life which Freud calls monadic and dyadic personality or the psyche of the individual. From the unconscious mind of the speaker, they are in conflict and struggle to choose the identity. When the speaker repeatedly seeks to be alone it’s his wish to be monadic or intrapersonal which shows the personality of someone who likes to live alone and not to interact with others even his or her family members²⁰.

On the other hand, when the speaker tells about the “invitation-cards” and “we follow the printed directions of sex” as well as the family gatherings, they all reveal the weakness of the dyadic personality of the poet against the power of loneliness and solitude.²¹

Additionally, there is a conflict between the conscious mind of the speaker, which is Id, and the other part of Id, which is Ego, and the battle is called neurosis by Sigmund Freud. The battle arises as a result of the insufficient release of the dreams to block external responses. Freud believes that any piece of literature is the verbal communication of the unconscious mind of the author:

“Beneath it all, desire of oblivion runs:
Despite the artful tensions of the calendar,
The life insurance, the tabled fertility rites,
The costly aversion of the eyes from death -
Beneath it all, desire of oblivion runs.”

In this stanza readers can easily figure out the anxiety and depression that the poet or the speaker has which was caused due to dissatisfaction of the pleasure principle from his childhood period which Freud calls Id.²²

Another poem of Larkin that tackles the themes of Chaos and stability of the people's personal wishes and desires within a specific society is *Poetry of Departure*. The poem is one of the best autobiographical poems of Philip Larkin that was written in 1954 from his second poem collection "The Less Deceived". The poem is viewed as an inner conversation between the mind parts and psychology of a person. Psychological choice of people and what the society prefers sometimes totally contradict each other as it is clearly revealed in the lines of the poem:

"Sometimes you hear, fifth-hand,
As epitaph:
He chucked up everything
And just cleared off,
And always the voice will sound
Certain you approve
This audacious, purifying,
Elemental move."

Moreover, Psychologists like Carl Jung, who was a rebellious student of Freud, believes that the unconscious to a great extent affects our conscious behavior and the unconscious is organized like the structure of languages. Similar to languages, the unconscious part of the poet's psyche in this poem can be analyzed systematically. However, Sigmund Freud believes that the unconscious part of humans is a chaotic and un-organized and it holds only dark, hidden desires and secret wishes.

Thus, the second stanza of the poem portrays the neurosis conflict between the id and ego in the mind of the poet about the decision between staying and leaving the country he lives in to make readers sure that he is not satisfied with the lifestyle he has due to the laws of the society which bans the unconscious mind of the individuals as well as the poet to reveal the hidden desires and wishes they have. In psychology, these laws are called "the laws of father":

"And they are right, I think.
We all hate home
And having to be there "
I detest my room,

It's specially-chosen junk,
The good books, the good bed,
And my life, in perfect order:
So to hear it said"

There is no doubt that no one hates his homeland and no one ever wishes to leave it but, when the poet calls for leaving the country despite of having good life, it is due to the oppression of his dreams which he thinks if he leaves, he can freely express them:

"He walked out on the whole crowd
Leaves me flushed and stirred,
Like Then she undid her dress
Or Take that you bastard;"
"Surely I can, if he did?
And that helps me to stay
Sober and industrious.
But I'd go today,"

This stanza depicts the poet's profound and deep hatred and anxiety towards someone who is mentioned as unknown person who might be his own father or the boss of the office or the society norms that are seen as obstacles for the speaker's hidden wishes and dreams. He wishes to take a risky action just as the unknown man did and he believes that he can be the man himself although he is not sure about the outcomes when he compares the life of the people who work and has daily routines as "Sober and industrious". Yet, he insists to experience it and break the routine rules of life.

The fourth stanza of the poem goes around the poet's strive to shift his life from being ideal into rationality which is something determined in the psyche of the speaker which more likely seen as a dream that must come true. Yet, when the poet recognizes that it is hard for him to change the routines of life, he wants to give readers the insight about his unconscious mind that human beings are deprived from the choices and options of their childhood's suppressed desires. The reasons for that suppression are different from one society to another due to family restrictions or psychological disorders

"Yes, swagger the nut-strewn roads,

Crouch in the fo'c'sle
Stubbly with goodness, if'
"It weren't so artificial,
Such a deliberate step backwards
To create an object:
Books; china; a life
Reprehensibly perfect."

Overall, it is quite clear that Philip Larkin in this poem shows his psychological weaknesses and shortages that psychologists call achievement motivation as enthusiasm, psychologically bothered by the society rules, and the false family norms that he believes they inherited from their parents. For Larkin, life is just like a bowl which is full of bitter and naked truth that psychologically hurts him and he tries to find a gap to tell the truths, because he believes that the whole universe is in need of an escape from the prison of the suppression towards the absolute and ultimate freedom of mind and actions²³.

High windows is another poem of Larkin that revolves around what Sigmund Freud calls "Oedipus complex" in his work "Interpretation of dreams" (1899), that indicates the individual's sexual attachment to the parent of the opposite sex or gender. The poem, which is from a collection of the same name was written in (1967) and published in (1974). *High Windows* can be considered as a clear example of Sigmund Freud's Oedipus Complex because it reveals the poet's repression of his sexual desire that was suppressed by his family or social norms from the early stages of his age within his family as Freud believes that everyone has sexual desires from the early period of his or her age.

When I see a couple of kids
And guess he's fucking her and she's
Taking pills or wearing a diaphragm,
I know this is paradise

The first stanza of the poem portrays the poet's observation of a young couple experiencing their sexual desires freely. The poet's unconscious mind haphazardly reminds him the time when he was young as the couple and the family and society were preventing him from such behaviors, because, having sex

and sexuality was a prohibited subject by the norms of the society. The poet also contemplates:

Everyone old has dreamed of all their lives—
Bonds and gestures pushed to one side
Like an outdated combine harvester,
And everyone young going down the long slide

In these lines of the second stanza, the poet expresses his psychological deprivation as a young man when he was at the couple's age. In fact, it is the traditional norms that deprive him from the personal desires and sexual wishes he had²⁴. Sigmund Freud believes that sexual desires and feelings are more important to be satisfied and fulfilled to protect the person from making problems and for having a joyful life²⁵. The same sense can be felt from the poet's lines.

To happiness, endlessly. I wonder if
Anyone looked at me, forty years back,
And thought, That'll be the life;

The poet very clearly expresses the scene which might be shocking for him to observe while he was working as a librarian in the Hull University. He portrays the image of the young generation in 1960s when they could express their sexual feelings without being embarrassed. The poem can generally be viewed and analyzed as one single process of the poet's unconscious mind which he sees the window as an open gate to express his desires and wishes which were prohibited during his childhood and youth.

About hell and that, or having to hide
What you think of the priest. He
And his lot will all go down the long slide
Like free bloody birds. And immediately

Philip Larkin in these lines expresses his regret for his inability to show his inner feelings and wishes to the opposite sex in this frank way as the couples do now, which he compares their life to a paradise in the first stanza. However, what the poet wants to convey is related to the religious perspective rather than a sexual

desire, because he wants to ask and imagine what would the religious men said about him if they would have seen him in such a scene.

Thus, Larkin mocks them as he sees their lusty and animalistic desires. He informs the readers that the promises that had been given to them by the high window which might indicate the Church's window and the priests were all fake and illusion. According to Larkin, they bring nothing except disappointment and emptiness:

Rather than words comes the thought of high windows:
The sun-comprehending glass,
And beyond it, the deep blue air, that shows
Nothing, and is nowhere, and is endless.

In the final lines of the poem, Larkin jealously refers to the future of the next generations who will have more freedom to express their oppressed desires, boundlessly regardless to their social and parental obstacles. Larkin concludes the poem with a fruitless wish of the couple who hope to have an absolute freedom for achieving an endless joy and happiness, but "the deep blue air" is their endless wish which "shows nothing" and can be found in "nowhere".²⁶

Sigmund Freud, as the father of psychoanalysis, believes that the main motivation of authors for writing is sprung from the secret desires and some of the forbidden wishes that are developed during the authors' babyhood but has been suppressed in the unconscious. The appearance of these wishes becomes a literary work.

Moreover, Freud believes that the text is in fact an author's dream and it should be interpreted as a dream. This understanding of a literary work means that we must consider a text as a distinctive wish. Furthermore, Freud thinks that all of our present dreams and wishes are originated during our babyhood and we were eagerly wished to be satisfied sensually and emotionally, because these wishes are the outcome of our past wishes which are actually too strong and too forbidden to be confessed by the mind's censor which is the ego.²⁷

No Road is an ideal poem from Larkin's collection "The Less Deceived", which can be analyzed according to psychoanalytic perspectives due to having some psychoanalytical features as hidden desires, symbolism, and the language. The poem was written in 1950, and published in 1955. It consists of three sestets

that are six lines for each stanza sharing the same regular rhyme scheme with ABABCC.

The title of the poem and the first six lines refer to the ex-lover of the poet and the poet himself having plans and agreed to let the time collapse what they have constructed in their unconscious mind before. The poet portrays how their garden of love and feelings turned into a wild destination. The two lovers are driven apart by neglecting and ignoring their emotions and feelings towards each other:

“Since we agreed to let the road between us
Fall to disuse,
And bricked our gates up, planted trees to screen us,
And turned all time's eroding agents loose,
Silence, and space, and strangers - our neglect
Has not had much effect.”

The poem shows a dark and gloomy mood to readers by letting his ex-lover go and depart regardless to the feelings which they might still have toward each other but, still they cannot live together. The lines of the poem very vividly portray the poet's inner struggle between his rationality and emotion which are called id and superego according psychoanalytic theory.

The trees, plants, and gates are all symbolized as the obstacles and barriers between the roads, the same way the poet shows that neglecting their emotions is the main reason that drove them a part and “silence”, “and space”, “strangers”, and “our neglect” wiped the world of future they have previously built up in their unconscious mind which is psychologically called superego or the morality principle by Freud:

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

The second stanza of the poem shows the weakness of the poet who cannot do something so as not to let the two lovers drive apart and let the time erodes what they have built. While the grass is growing and the gates are about to shut, the poet shows that he is unable to move and he wishes to let the time illuminate everything

they had. “And still would be allowed. A little longer”, and “And time would be the stronger,” very clearly reveal that the speaker does not feel the pain of the departure anymore.

Additionally, these six lines of the poem reveal a pattern of psychological behavior which is responsible for a good deal of the narrative progression. As we shall see, this pattern is grounded in the poet’s fear of intimacy, the unconscious conviction that emotional ties to another human being will result in one’s being emotionally devastated:

“Drafting a world where no such road will run
From you to me;
To watch that world come up like a cold sun,
Rewarding others, is my liberty.
Not to prevent it is my will's fulfillment.
Willing it, my ailment.”

In the last six lines of the poem, the poet reveals that he blended feelings about their departure and he believes that every couple of lovers might be past one day and every memory they share will be “cold” which in cases he agrees what the time and future brings to them.²⁸

The language that Larkin uses here and the words that are full of metaphor and dark or negative imagery help readers to comprehend the unconscious mind and emotional state of the poet, especially in the first stanza of the poem when the poet shows an awful image of his lover and himself, it clearly shows that they are separated completely and there is no hope for re-union.²⁹

5. Conclusion

Throughout the long journey of this study, it is concluded that psychoanalysis as an independent theory can be used as a strong tool for finding the hidden meanings of Philip Larkin’s poems. Through shedding a bright light on the manner of applying Freudian theory, perspectives, and important principles to selected poems of Philip Larkin, readers can have a deep insight about the poet’s unconscious mind.

Larkin’s poems, analyzed throughout the study, can be viewed as dreams which are amazing in the way they please readers, disturb readers, fear, depict unspoken desires, or doubts. Moreover, the suppressed and oppressed wishes and

desires especially the sexual ones have great negative impacts on the poet's writing and behaviors in a way which made him to be known as the most pessimistic poet of his time and era. Larkin was not considered as "England's other poet Laureate" haphazardly but, telling the naked truths and being trustworthy in conveying his direct messages are some distinctive features that led him to the top in the history of English literature forever.

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- ⁴ Charles E. Bressler, LITERARY CRITICISM: An Introduction to Theory and Practice (United States, 2011), 124-125.
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- ⁶ Mahroof Hossain, "Psychoanalytic theory used in English literature: A descriptive study", *Global Journal of Human-Social Science: Linguistics & Education*, 17, no.1 (2017): 41-46.
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²⁸ Emma Baldwin, "No Road by Philip Larkin", Poem Analysis, 20 May 2021, <https://poemanalysis.com/philip-larkin/no-road/>.

²⁹ Ana Sonnenberg, *The Conflict Between Reason and Emotion, Analyzing Philip Larkin's "No Road"* (Munich, Grin Verlag, 2006), 71208, ISBN: 9783638628471, <https://www.grin.com/documents/71208>.

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