CHAPTER V

Conclusion
Philip Larkin and Thom Gunn two significant poetic voices of the twentieth century English poetry could be easily cast, and often are, as the two opposite poles that were contained within the ridiculously vague grouping of poets, writing in the 1950s, that has come to be known as 'The Movement.' They can also be seen as fairly straightforward proof that group existed only in name, and even then, only in the literary print media. Nearly sixty years on from the publication of *New Lines* (1956), Robert Conquest’s anthology of this new group which also contains its manifesto of sorts in Conquest’s proclamation-cum-declaration of an introduction, the grouping seemstoo many critics as almost wilfully nonsensical.

Indeed, that the group has only been enshrined (and therefore rendered both credible and valid) in twentieth century English poetry is due to two key factors. The first is the near-hysterical tone of the critic Al Alvarez’ rebuttal to *New Lines—Poetry* (1964), in which he cements the Movement’s existence and allows for its influence only insofar as he can criticise it as part of a ‘negative feedback’ against the Modernist poetry of the 1920s. The second factor, which seems to have prolonged the group’s accepted existence is perhaps more cynical—the readiness with which the group was first accepted, then challenged, then eventually debunked is a perfect example of the literary world’s need for schools and groups, no matter how unwilling the so-called members of them are to be thrust into a category.
This is not a new opinion, as regarding comparisons of any writers contained within the pages of *New Lines*. In her biography of Ted Hughes—a contemporary of Gunn at University, though they did not meet until years later—Elaine Feinstein, trying to give a sense of the literary world of the 1950s has this to say of ‘The Movement’:

As a Movement it could be more defined by what it was against...Dylan Thomas, the most celebrated poet of the preceding generation, was felt to depend far too much on rhetoric to be trusted. (Feinstein, 42)

In his own reflections on the period, Gunn said that

What poets like Larkin, Davie, Elizabeth Jennings, and I had in common at that time was that we were deliberately eschewing Modernism, and turning back, though not very thorough-goingly, to traditional resources in structure and method. (My Life Up to Now, ix-x)

Though, Thom Gunn has long been associated with the Movement and he not only vehemently denied any true connection with the Movement, he even questioned its existence. However, the poems in his first two books, *Fighting Terms* (1954) and *The Sense of Movement* (1957), adhere to the Movement’s aim i.e. to imbue poetry equally with both intellect and emotion, to structure it around a rigorous metrical framework, and to steer clear of the alleged excesses of the neo-romantic movement then in vogue in England. It is also pertinent that several of his poems appeared in *New Lines*, the 1956 collection that introduced the Movement, Gunn does seem to have
been at least a peripheral member of the Movement. Even the title of his second book, *The Sense of Movement*, appears to pay homage to the group. It is important to note, however, as Gunn does, that many British poets had aims like those of the Movement.

Philip Larkin and Thom Gunn were grouped broadly together as young poets in the 1950s, perhaps for reasons of convenience or publicity, but have long since been recognized as having diverted from that similarity or perhaps having had precious little in common in the first place, and being very different personalities.

Certainly, their recorded opinions of each other wouldn’t suggest that they would have wanted to be thought similar. Although in one letter Larkin comments that Gunn looks ‘handsome’ in comparison with himself, he soon afterwards comments “What a genius that man has for making an ass of himself.” Gunn is more charitable in the opposite direction he says that Larkin is a poet of ‘minute ambitions’ who carried them out ‘exquisitely,’ which I think is something of a compliment although intended as a back-handed one.

Larkin’s reputation is still for many that of a misanthrope whereas Gunn’s is, amongst other things, as a hedonist but they might have a little more in common than it first appears. They are two favourite and significant poets not only of their periods but of any period. One of the ways that they might be compared rather than contrasted is by putting back together that original shackling that they underwent, whether under protest or not, as members of the putative ‘Movement.’
The joint *Selected Poems* published by Faber that featured Gunn and Ted Hughes was originally conceived as featuring Larkin, too, but whereas that book perhaps helped to associate Gunn with Hughes on account of a perceived shared interest in violence, there is hardly much in common between them as poets in any useful sense and Gunn’s kinship with Larkin, although not complete, has more substance.

Yeats and Auden were inevitable models for them both as young poets, acknowledged in inter-textual references as well as conscious imitation in early poems, such as Gunn’s ‘Unsettled Motorcyclist’ and Larkin’s ‘Ultimatum’ as well as Gunn’s use of personae and Larkin’s Yeatsian idiom in ‘XX Poems’. But Gunn and Larkin’s poems, like ‘On the Move’ and ‘Church Going,’ are similarly made things, using big Yeatsian stanzas with complex rhyme schemes, that also move from observed specific detail to broader, philosophical conclusions. That isn’t to say that these are the only such poems or poets that ever did such a thing but it is to say that these two poets could work with similar methods.

Larkin’s misanthropy was perhaps something that he worked on and developed as a kind of defence. As a naturally shy man, he adopted an awkward and sometimes uninviting manner whereas Gunn, a much more adventurous individual, saw the world in his early poems as divided between ‘self’ and others, with a lone protagonist condemned to separation from his fellows. Comparing the poems of *The Less Deceived* with those of *The Sense of Movement*, one might think of Larkin as the poet kneeling ‘by all-generous waters’ whereas Gunn is ‘born to fog, to waste.../ An individual.’
Gunn goes through immense stylistic and thematic shifts, in *Touch* and ‘Misanthropos’, reaching out to ‘break down that chill’ and eventually finds himself merging with natural elements in geysers and under the influence of LSD whereas Larkin’s poems adopt the trademark niggardly and rude attitude in ‘This Be the Verse’ or ‘Posterity’ under the influence of gin and tonic.

Larkin’s misanthropy always had a cartoon aspect to it. One knew that a proper reading of the whole poem and other poems uncovered a rather more generous and celebratory spirit than he sometimes pretended to. Not only are there poems like ‘The Trees,’ but the heavily qualified ending of ‘An Arundel Tomb’ and even the return to life at the end of the morbid and terrifying ‘Aubade’ show for certain that there was a light in Larkin’s gloomy universe. ‘This Be the Verse’ is ironic and few would read it as a literal piece of advice.

Moving in the opposite direction, celebrating nature, cheap thrills, promiscuity and adventure, Gunn’s heroic quest for fulfilment in his later work is ultimately a way of escaping the anxieties he came from, or Sartrean nothingness and egotism, and from those he encounters later, like the AIDS virus in 1980s San Francisco. In *The Man with Night Sweats* he is inadequately human in his realization, “As if hands were enough/ To hold an avalanche off.” It is almost as if they changed places and came to see the world in some small ways from the point of view that had been the others. And at some point, they must have passed each other going in opposite directions. Where Larkin writes in *High Windows* of
The sun-comprehending glass,

And beyond it, the deep blue air, that shows

Nothing, and is nowhere, and is endless. (67)

Gunn had written in ‘Lights Among Redwood,’

At once

Tone is forgotten: we stand

And stare—mindless, diminished—

At their rosy immanence. (124)

So, perhaps they were not so different after all, Larkin, the awkward librarian and Gunn, the West Coast hipster, the former an arch Conservative and the latter a cool Liberal, the so called little Englander and the trans-Atlantic stylist. They were both rigorous critics within their different areas and their poems benefitted from clarity of diction that their early methods continued to provide them with as well as a wide range of reading from other centuries as well as other languages. There is no photograph of them together because they never met but it can be said that if they had tried hard enough they might have found they had more in common than they thought.

While Larkin was rarely willing to admit to any of the New Lines writers—with the exception of Kingsley Amis—and despite a lifelong, concealed love of Dylan Thomas, Larkin did feel that Modernism offered ‘culture wholesale’ and disliked the idea that he saw Eliot and Pound as having introduced as being able to ‘order culture whole.’
This anti-modernism—with its insinuated anti-Classicism—would seem to debar both Larkin and Gunn from writing poems of a Metamorphic bent, particularly about the human body. It was the allusions of *The Waste Land* and Pound’s *Cantos* to which Larkin alluded in his distaste at poets trying to ‘order culture whole,’ and Gunn’s rejection of Modernism’s intellectual resources and Dylan Thomas’ ‘myth-kitty’ can be seen as a step away from the mesmeric, the esoteric and the metamorphose.

Larkin and Gunn, markedly different poets, with clearly different concerns, perform an almost double-act in their writing over the years, in relation to bodily change. Larkin, sees the body as an unstoppable decay from the word go, with only a few, brief glimpses of sexual purity serving as anaesthetic to the rotten progress of age. Gunn, by contrast, sees the body as never unchangeable, never static, and his discovery of ‘his own voice’ works in tandem with not just a change in language but a change in the bodies that he has made the subject of his language. Both poets, however, were aware of the horrible possibilities that their most positive outlooks on the human body could have. Where they are most similar is where they find the body to turn upon itself, turning the pleasures and redemptive powers of desire into harpies that prey on the poet.

In the first poem of what is considered to be Larkin’s first ‘mature’ collection, *The Less Deceived* (1955), the thirty-one-year-old poet clearly enjoys his flicking through a female friend’s photos:
At last you yielded up the album, which,
Once open, sent me distracted. All your ages
Matt and glossy on the thick black pages!
Too much confectionary, too rich:
I choke on such nutritious images.
My swivel eye hungers from pose to pose—
In pigtails, clutching a reluctant cat;
Or furred yourself, a sweet girl-graduate;
Or lifting a heavy-headed rose
Beneath a trellis, or in a tribly hat
(Faintly disturbing, that, in several ways)—
From every side you strike at my control. (Lines on a Young Lady’s Photograph Album, 13)

While he lists the accoutrements and props of life—hairstyles, pets, flora and hats—what ‘strikes’ at Larkin’s control is the steady onward march of all the young woman’s ages. It is the changing body that excites and startles Larkin at first. There is even the ‘furred yourself,’ which may be an allusion to the fur trim on graduation robes, but can equally be seen as an animalistic reference to the freer hair—no longer restrained by pigtails and youth—of the woman as a graduate.
Any reader of Larkin's letters, as well, will recognise the possibility of a further allusion; to the 'fur' of bodily hair—particularly pubic and underarm—that the poet found so erotic in his dealings with women. Andrew Motion refers to the line "Furred yourself..." as having a "sexy Tennysonian innuendo," (Motion, 233) and even if we discount the specifics of that 'fur,' the change that has come over the subject of the photographs reaches its positive climax in that line.

From then on the poem is a slow, and recognisably Larkinian realisation that such change only documents the many missed possible lives that might have been lived through these bodily changes. It also shows the inevitable downward-turns that change will bring the body until the final terminal change i.e. death.

Martin Amis has spoken of Larkin being of 'a certain type...,' of his having 'Early Death Awareness Syndrome,' which of course would colour his awareness of bodily changes and shifts, but the cheeky theft of the girl in the bathing suit is more than simply a voyeuristic 'hungering eye,' more than the poet fancying a girl. The image of the girl in the bathing suit, like that of her 'furred' as the sweet girl graduate serves to offer the few salvageable aspects of the changing body that Larkin sees. Insofar as the graduate and the bathing costume serve a sexual purpose, or are, as Motion puts it, 'erotic,' they work to distract the poet and reader from the decay and lost futures. Where the body in the images is attractive, sexual and confident, there it still has worth to the poet. Otherwise, it is merely aging and going.
Thom Gunn’s first collection of poems, *Fighting Terms* (1954) was published while he was still an undergraduate, and so often captures the bodily confusion that is a hangover of adolescence and puberty. Added to this is the confusion of Gunn’s slowly coming to terms with his homosexuality, and so in these poems we see the start of an uncurling, as it were, which continues throughout his entire career, the poet’s body extending and adapting, shifting and metamorphosing as he becomes more and more realised about himself.

In the early poem, ‘Carnal Knowledge’, the poet depicts a night spent in bed with a girl who may suspect the cause for the poet’s impotence. The arresting impression of the poem, however, is not simply a missing erection but an entire body missing:

Even in bed I pose: desire may grow

More circumstantial and less circumspect

........................................

Flaccid, you want a competent poseur.

I know you know I know you know I know. (‘Carnal Knowledge,’ 15)

The separation between mind – or, indeed, inclination – and body has never been clearer. The body is weirdly lifeless without desire, and even the poet’s claim to be sexually inexperienced or inept rings hollow. ‘The magnanimous pagan’ is a claim to sexual ignorance and therefore an immaturity of desire, but the poet admits that this is actually a front, and that instead he is ‘a
forked creature’ – a snake, in other words, who is hiding the true nature of his desire.

The double dishonesty, then, is revealed in the poet’s suspicion that the girl is more than aware that he is gay. That, in itself, does not seem to be the problem. The body is the problem, as it lies ‘without a roll or stir flaccid.’ The rest of Gunn’s career shows a slow filling of the body with identity and purpose, which in turn changes and grows the body beyond the physical constraints of materiality.

Larkin’s thoughts of the body are only fully realised, worthwhile and alive when at its most sexual, perpetually operates at odds with the unstoppable changes and new additions to that body as time passes. In many places he writes about the indignities of age. He divides life into ‘first boredom, then fear’ and his letters are full of a self-loathing and more general loathing of the body itself – weight gained, hearing and sight lost, all these were horrors to him.

In a poem from his third collection, *The Whitsun Weddings* (1964), Larkin considers a tourism poster which itself ages, as a photograph should not.

Come to Sunny Prestatyn

Laughed the girl on the poster,

Kneeling up on the sand

In tautened white satin.

Behind her, a hunk of coast, a
Hotel with palms
Seemed to expand from her thighs and
Spread breast-lifting arms.

The tight white satin both sexualises and purifies the body underneath, which is rendered real and unstaged not by the laughing slogan at the start of the poem but instead by the side-effect of her breasts lifting as she spreads her arms.

This odd amalgam of sexuality with purity, however, does not save the body from the ravages of time.

She was slapped up one day in March.

A couple of weeks, and her face
Was snaggle-toothed and boss-eyed;
Huge tits and a fissured crotch

........................................

She was too good for this life.

Very soon, a great transverse tear
Left only a hand and some blue.

Now *Fight Cancer* is there. (‘Sunny Prestatyn,’ 34)

While Larkin is – as ever – utterly clear about what has happened, his ‘She was too good for this life’ has the hint of his extreme pessimism about
it. There was no way that the passing of time would bring anything but a body turned bad, the violence of time passing and the eventual removal of the person – by cancer, though not as Larkin himself would be removed by it.

Gunn’s most honestly metamorphose effort, his 1971 book *Moly*, was a critical disaster for the poet. His mentor Yvor Winters went so far, after having read the copy Gunn sent him, to suggest that the poet should turn his hand to prose. What is so different about *Moly* is the abandonment, largely, of the insinuations or suggestions that had so characterised Gunn’s work up to that point. In two poems in the book, ‘Rites of Passage’ and ‘Moly’, the poet describes not a transcendent, out-of-body change of direction but an utterly physical, corporeal altering.

In ‘Rites of Passage’, the poet makes no bones about what is happening, and does not hide it in metaphor or simile:

Something is taking place.

Horns bud bright in my hair.

My feet are turning hoof.

And father, see my face

- Skin that was damp and fair

is barklike and, feel, rough. (‘Rites of Passage,’ 185)

There is no half-measure here, the poet grabbing the reader’s hands to touch his new skin, imploring the reader to see and touch, rather than hear. It is as
if Gunn has challenged himself to change his writing as drastically as the change from man into beast. In ‘Moly’, he does something entirely similar, but goes further:

These seem like bristles, and the hide is tough.

No claw or web here: each foot ends in hoof.

I push my big grey wet snout through the green,

Dreaming the flower I have never seen. (‘Moly’, 187-7)

These two poems are the first in the book, and so inform the reader that a change has happened, but not of subject or inclination but of the whole corporeality of the poems. It is Gunn saying that, if his poetry is to grow, mature and alter, then the body will as well.

Larkin’s last decade can be seen in harrowing terms, though to a certain extent his entire life was one of increasing fear, so it’s difficult to imagine how scary the last part really was after so many decades worrying. It is entirely appropriate to see his one allowance of joy in the human body – sexual purity or innocence – as finally turning harrowing and awful. While he may have stolen the image of the girl bathing to remind him of the ‘sweet’ subject, and while he may have mourned the obscene uses to which the happy pin-up was put by graffiti, eventually even sex itself would be polluted by the increased jealousy and insecurity of Larkin’s age.
In a poem published posthumously, Larkin forces the reader to, for once, not identify with his general observations but watch appalled as his words finally corrupt the last refuge of joy in the corporeal – sex.

Love again: wanking at ten past three

(Surely he’s taken her home by now?),

The bedroom hot as a bakery,

The drink gone dead, without showing how(‘Love Again’, 215)

All joy is gone from the body. The heat of sexual action – both the jealousy thought of and the masturbation being done – has turned the room hot and oppressive. The poem does not recover from the shocking corporeality of the ‘wanking’ and the absent woman’s body. The sexually ideal and pure has gone, and there is no stopping the body only bringing horrors in its changes. It was one of the last poems Larkin wrote.

Gunn’s poetry about the gay scene in 1960s and 70s California is harshly followed by his work about the AIDS crisis, ‘the plague’ and its aftermath. In ‘Lament’, he depicts the slow change of sexual energy that so enlivened and changed the body in the past, into the business of dying – a change no poetry can render good, as even Ovid repeatedly proved.

Your dying was a difficult enterprise.

First, petty things took up your energies,

The small but clustering duties of the sick,

Irritant as the cough’s dry rhetoric. (‘Lament,’ 465-8)
Gone is the new, metamorphose language of *Moly*, instead simple rhymes mirror the slow unromantic decay of the body – the effort of stretching a rhyme beyond the next line is too much for the wasting that is taking place. The body can no longer change and turn to the searching and finding that previously concerned Gunn’s writing. The final bodily change completes the metamorphoses that have unfolded throughout Gunn’s work. But the final bodily change is death, and so there is no wonder, only horror. If Gunn saw Larkin and himself as stepping away from Modernism and refusing its sources and allusions, then both of them demonstrated in their careers clear reasons for doing so. As beautiful as Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* are, to these two poets, the changes in the body point to one end.

Imagery in poetry gives it depth, interest and feeling, in short it makes it come alive. There are various ways of doing this; with straightforward descriptive writing or using metaphors, similes and symbolism. In order to show the absolute appropriateness of the claim that imagery is an essential component in poetry. Let us examine few examples from the work of Philip Larkin and Thom Gunn e.g. Larkin’s ‘Toads Revisited’ and ‘The Whitsun Weddings’ and Gunn’s ‘Nasturtium’ and ‘Cafeteria in Boston’ and some other poem by these poets. These poets have very different ways of incorporating imagery in their work. Philip Larkin is more unobtrusive in his use, although a close reading of his work shows how frequently he exploits this component; Thom Gunn is more obvious and uses it with great dexterity. Larkin’s poetry not only names the things familiar to us in our everyday world, it also endows phenomena with a symbolic resonance. At a simple level, a toad becomes a symbol of work: it squats oppressively. In
the first two verses of ‘Toads Revisited’ the reader gets the impression that the persona is lying on the grass in the sunshine, he refers to the playground noise as ‘Blurred.’ Here he is making use of the Synesthetic metaphor which transfers meaning from one domain of sensory perception to another. The descriptive used is normally associated with the sense of sight not hearing, but by using it in this context it gives emphasis to the feeling that the persona is getting away from everything by being in the park. The noise is not distinct, where it lies, it is peaceful. He goes on to describe the people he sees in the park after stating that the lazing in the park does not suit him.

The descriptions he offers of the people who pass are derogatory and gives the reader a strong sense of the persona’s disapproval, for example “Hare-eyed clerks with the jitters.” (Larkin, verse 6, 18) By using the term ‘Hare-eyed’ it reinforces the kind of image he wants the reader to see, as he uses it in conjunction with ‘jitter.’ We are able to picture the clerks displaying the same flighty characteristic of a Hare. Using a dehumanising metaphor reflects the contempt the persona feels for these men. This feeling is reiterated as he goes on to describe their day, which he manages succinctly by using descriptions of activities suggestive of certain points in the day, “Watching the bread delivered/ The sun by clouds covered/ The children going home/ Think of being them.” (Larkin, verse 6, 18) It also emphasizes the emptiness of their day. The seventh verse brings this feeling to a head and the poignancy of the scene he describes is brought out strongly by the simplicity of the imagery, “Turning over their failures/ By some bed of lobelias/ Nowhere to go but indoors/ No friends but empty chairs” (Larkin, verse 7, 18) Although he is talking about memories they are
having of failure, by the use of a concretive metaphor, he is giving physical existence to an abstraction. This enables the readers to visualise the way in which the retired man’s thoughts are working. The last line symbolizes the feelings about retirement. Each line seems to further emphasize that the speaker is nearly at the end of his working life. Another instance of Larkin using a concretive metaphor is in his poem ‘Dockery and Son,’ “I try the door of where I used to live” (Larkin, 1964, 37) On a similar theme of memory, in the same poem he says, “Those warp tight-shut, like doors” (Larkin, 1964, 38) By using the metaphor of a door it helps the reader to understand the persona’s predicament of not being able to unlock his memories or realise forgotten dreams.

As stated earlier, Thom Gunn uses imagery with dexterity, a fine example of this is his poem ‘Nasturtium.’ This particular flower is considered a lowly specimen; some even consider ita weed. So Gunn’s writing about it is significant. The flower is symbolic of a person’s struggle to lift oneself out of degradation and poverty in order to succeed. The nasturtium grows out of poor soil-waste land, in this poem it manages to find a knot-hole to escape through. When describing the flower’s struggle, Gunn uses a humanising metaphor, which enables the reader to make the connection to the symbolism of the poem as a whole, “From poverty and prison/ And undernourishment/ A prodigal has risen.” (Gunn, verse 3, L5-7, 50) This is not normally the way one would expect a flower’s struggle to be described. This is a description directly reflecting the hidden meaning in the poem. The word ‘prodigal’ is normally associated with human beings and can have several meanings. The complex imagery and complex symbolism
enables the poem to have many interpretations. This particular poem has social, metaphysical and political meaning. The political meaning can be seen in the last verse, “Street—handsome as you wind/ And leap, hold after hold/ A golden run away/ Still running, strewing gold/ From side to side all day.”(Gunn, verse 3, L4-8, 50) It can be seen as describing an anarchic force, nothing will stop it. It has its freedom and the persona is celebrating this in the terms- ‘golden,’ ‘leap’ and ‘street—handsome.’ It bursts with hope, a celebration of victory over adversity.

Another poem where Larkin uses complex symbolism is ‘The Whitsun Weddings.’ The poet controls his metaphors well. The poet’s ability to convey exalted emotional states with simplicity and accuracy is astonishing. He uses the traditional elemental symbols of water and light. ‘The Whitsun Weddings’ concludes with the procreative image of rain to suggest how the couples’ futures lie before them waiting to burst into life. The prelude to this is set out in the previous verse “I thought of London spread out in the sun, Its postal districts packed like squares of wheat.” (Larkin, verse 7, L9-10, 23) The idea of harvest time and spring are alluded to in these lines, which are a time of new life and reproduction. The image of the arrow-shower is complex and arrows might suggest cupid’s darts. The image of procreation and growth is made clear by the shower. The journey itself is used as a metaphor for time and change and the marriage ceremonies are also a symbolic expression of change.

Thom Gunn’s ‘Cafeteria in Boston’ is a good example of emotions being expressed through imagery. On the surface the persona describing food that is not of a good standard and a vagrant scavenging that he finds
difficult to stomach “I could digest the white slick watery mash/ The two green peppers stuffed with rice and grease.” (Gunn, L1-2, 48) His descriptions of the food are disgusting, that is exactly the emotion he is portraying under the surface with regards to his sexuality. He seems to be describing his reaction to the vagrant eating left-overs, but in fact he is talking about the moment he first realised his sexuality or indeed both scenarios. The confused tastes in his mouth translate to confused thoughts in his mind. He describes the bitterness he felt towards certain factions in society who rejected him because of his sexuality or he could be expressing the bitterness he felt towards himself, it is open to interpretation. That is the beauty of imagery and all its components, an individual can see a different interpretation, although generally the poet is attempting to lead the reader to certain conclusions.

So we have seen that Thom Gunn and Philip Larkin were the most remarkable poets of The Movement. While Larkin seems to be saying in many of his poems is that a sensible man settles for second-bests. Many of his good poems are about being tempted by love or by the prospect of happy domesticity into some permanent kind of emotional relationship, but he retreats since Larkin needs a kind of freedom. He seems to be the poet of emotional economy and his poetry is about not affronting the unoffered occasion. On the other hand, Gunn’s poetry is about snatching at occasion, whatever the risks and whether it offers or not. Gunn is often a witty poet, but he is never heartily familiar in tone. Keeping a certain cool distance from the reader, Gunn’s poetry unlike Larkin’s is less a poetry of acceptance of society, rather it is a poetry of firm assertion of the romantic will.
Thus we see that both Philip Larkin and Thom Gunn are first rate poets of English literature in the second half of the twentieth century. They may be poles apart in the vague group of poets known as The Movement, but they have left an indelible imprint in the minds of critics and readers alike. They are definitely important milestones in the journey of English poetry. Their contribution in the evolution of English poetry is undoubtedly immense and they will continueto shine in the galaxy of English poetry, showing the way to future poets.
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