

## Animals and nature in Philip Larkin's "Going, Going," and "Take One Home for the Kiddies"

Ravindra Neupane <sup>a,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Tribhuvan University, Ratna Rajya Campus, Kathmandu

### Article Info

**Received:** January 15, 2024  
**Accepted:** April 17, 2024  
**Published:** July 22, 2024  
**Available online:** August 10, 2024

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.3126/gd.v9i1.68544>

**Keywords:** animal; ecocriticism; environmental literature; nature

### Abstract

*This article has focused on investigating the ecological awareness of Philip Larkin's poems "Going, Going," and "Take One Home for the Kiddies". The poet problematizes animals and the natural world, yet the concerns of (non) humans have largely been one-dimensional and universal. This article examines Larkin's poetry with a focus on his foresight of an impending catastrophe that environmentalists and ecocritics subsequently came to refer to as "the ecological crisis." It examines two of Larkin's poems, "Going, Going" and "Take One Home for the Kiddies" primarily concerning animal abuse and the environment. The link between Man and Nature is ultimately undermined by Larkin's ideas regarding human manipulation of nature. By concentrating on these two poems by Larkin, the broader use of rhetorical elements demonstrates the poet's sensitivity and outlines a precarious alliance between the human and non-human world.*

### Introduction

Human situations and the physical world provide complementing and contradicting perspectives. Nature, as a notion, drastically changes how people reflect the overlapping pieces both privately and publicly. But it wasn't until the latter half of the 20th century that people started to understand what literature could teach us about the dangers nature faces and how we relate to it. Many literary critics, like Keith Thomas, Leo Marx, and Carolyn Merchant, among others, created works in the 1960s and 1970s that laid the groundwork for ecocriticism in their pursuit of revealing such a relationship. Leo Marx (2000), for instance, analyzes how technology and encroaching industrialization are destroying America's natural landscape in *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (1964). Marx elucidated a recurrent issue in contemporary American writing, primarily one that depicts the conflict between an unspoiled environment and the swift destruction caused by machinery. Keith Thomas (1983) later encapsulated this same idea in his 1983 book *Man and the Natural World*, which employs literary works from both his time and earlier to highlight the tensions between environmentalists and the "negative" transformation brought about by urbanization and the development of technology.

This article uses ecocriticism to examine two of Larkin's poems: "Going, Going" and "Take One Home for the Kiddies." The predominance and development of the hypotheses, discontinuities, and ambivalence between animal oppression and the natural environment were of primary concern. In particular, Larkin's worries about how humans are altering nature were perceived as eventually upsetting the relationship between (non)humans. Although Larkin is known to have written many other poems that touch on nature and the world of non-human animals, this article shows how the implicit and indirect tones of these two poems-which discuss how the environment is "silenced" and "subjugated"-led me to choose them for my investigation.

### Ecocriticism

This article focuses on the idea of ecocriticism before going into the conversation of Larkin's writings. What conceptual framework may ecocriticism use to present Larkin's poems? How much can ecocriticism contribute to a true portrayal

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [rdkneupane@gmail.com](mailto:rdkneupane@gmail.com)

of the dynamic interactions between the human and non-human worlds? And to put it out there once more, why ecocriticism? The following descriptions of ecocriticism, though not necessarily exhaustive, will highlight the ensuing analysis throughout Larkin's poetry.

Carolyn Merchant (1990) brought up important points regarding the relationships between (non)humans in her book *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*. Specifically, Merchant makes two arguments about how science has devalued nature. She asserts that the metaphors that humans once used to describe nature—ones of sublimity—have been replaced by ones of dominance by science and technology. According to Merchant, an awareness of this conflict between science and nature should serve as the foundation for environmental advocacy.

Recently, the term “ecotext” has become widely used in both European and American literature to describe a wide range of literature that deals with environmental issues, specifically the destruction of nature and the transgression of the law of symmetrical organization, which states that people should live in harmony with nature rather than subjugate it. Communities, societies, and individuals are interdependent and comprise significant ecological models. Studying ecocriticism is crucial because it examines how people's aspirations, despair, views, and dreams are interconnected and often influenced by their environment. For example, the rise of Green groups and environmental political parties, as well as the ensuing ecological consciousness, are similar to literary compositions that emphasize place and nature.

The notion that there is an ontological cord connecting Man and the non-human world

that cannot be examined separately is emphasized in literary works a lot. The majority of the time, these contexts included information about the author, history, class, color, sex, and place. Humans have only recently begun to realize the extent of the damage they have caused to the environment since the late 20th century. According to Carey et al., (2000) man has plundered the earth, hunted animals, ruined forests, and contaminated the air and oceans.

The early efforts to conceive ecocriticism were mostly focused on reworking sets of parameters that had been established by the West, namely the ideas that were prevalent in Anglo-Saxon culture and the West as a whole. A gap for additional research has emerged because of how frequently these talks about applying these notions to non-Western countries come up; this makes it all the more important to reconsider these concepts and how they impact the environment. Environmental critique emerged in this setting, stressing the significance of place, or the world beyond humans, and calling for an end to human activities that have caused immense environmental damage.

Ecocritics have examined texts with ecological concerns using a wide range of literary styles and genres. One of the first books to address an important issue that helped to initiate conversations on ecocritical tradition is *The Comedy of Survival* (1972). The author, Joseph Meeker, contends that the Western cultural heritage that keeps culture and environment apart is a major factor aggravating nature's dilemma. Meeker has paved the way for academic research into the connection between science ecology and literature by utilizing this reasoning (Zhao, 2016). The basis of this age-old subject of the relationship between literature and the physical environment has been expanded by other critics who came after Meeker, such as Jonathan Bate, Michael Branch, and Cheryll Glotfelty.

Thus far, the majority of ecocritical endeavors have concentrated on fiction, by contrast, relatively few ecocriticism studies have examined poetry. Some of these works intentionally or unintentionally ignore other important points, including the disturbance of the relationship between humans and nature, in favor of concentrating exclusively on a few issues (pollution and destruction). To remedy this neglect, this study will look at issues related to human manipulation of nature, which ultimately reveals a complex interaction between people and their physical surroundings. The truth is that a large number of postmodern poets tackled ecological themes in their poetry, intending to draw attention to the harm that people cause to the environment. There exist poets who have inadvertently tackled ecological concerns. These poets may not have intended to depict environmental issues when they wrote about religion, metaphysics, and new technologies, but the way these poems are written suggests that the marginalization of ecology and their interconnected discussions with the world of (non)humans predominate.

Thus, ecocriticism transcends disciplinary boundaries, primarily affecting applied sciences and literary criticism. The statements made by Greens regarding environmental degradation—such as the eroding of agricultural land, and the extinction of some species—are supported by applied sciences (Gallagher, 2012 p. 61). The usefulness of these sciences is still questionable, though. The urban-industrial society, which is founded on applied sciences, is still seen as the primary cause of the current degradation of the ecosystem, even though the results of scientific research support environmental legislation (Cronon, 1996 p. 11). Given that ecocriticism considers the various relationships that exist between literature and the natural world, it is reasonable to assume that literary studies already in existence look at ecological hazards. This is a call to action for multidisciplinary sciences and technologies to help lessen the negative consequences of subversive human interventions.

The reasonable belief that urbanization, technology, and science have caused people to become disconnected from nature is a cornerstone of the ecocritical tradition and provides a strong framework for critics' analysis of literature. These works have influenced how ecocriticism is conceptualized now, and how these works are received has influenced the theoretical foundation that exists today. It elucidates the main issues of ecocriticism in the pages that follow, focusing mostly on Larkin's poetry. The main issues are how (non)humans move through unpredictable, frequently disrupting environments. By concentrating on Larkin's poetry, the hazy boundaries between the natural world and people are revealed.

### Larkin's works

Philip Larkin is regarded as one of the most important poets of the 20th century in England, both by readers and critics. Larkin used everyday words to write about everyday situations. By using everyday language, he was able to draw in a larger readership and provide himself with a clear and honest means of communicating his ideas. According to David Lodge (1989), who describes the stylistic qualities of Larkin's poetry, the poet was a "metonymic poet" (p.120). Lodge noted that to "evoke a scene, character, culture, and subculture," Larkin used metonymy (p.123). Larkin employs metaphors as well, albeit less frequently. But most of Larkin's symbolic poems speak to common readers, whose worries mostly revolve around matters related to people's private and public lives, particularly the interactions between people and their natural environments. Intriguing poems by Larkin are those that employ a creative range of topics and impressive rhetorical and pictorial strategies. The primary goal of images and rhetorical devices is to show how the components of the world outside humans follow a cyclical path.

Some critics claim that Larkin's poetry has flaws in every one of them. James Booth (2014) contrasts Ted Hughes' and Philip Larkin's use of animal imagery in *Philip Larkin: Life, Art, and Love* and concludes that Larkin is better. "Hughes endows his birds and rodents with human pride, guilt, and deviousness, while Larkin respects the non-human otherness of animals" (p. 361). Larkin was a tremendous animal lover, according to Booth. Larkin's poetry was regarded as a type of nonfiction that goes beyond a literal interpretation to a symbolic one. In his 2002 book *Animals and Birds in Philip Larkin's Poetry*, Roger Craik (2002) describes how Larkin's emotions for birds and other creatures were expressed in exquisite detail. According to Craik, Larkin's dramatic handling of animals in his poetry attests to the poet's nuanced animal sympathy. The art of Larkin goes beyond just surface and linguistic characterization. In his book *Philip Larkin: Subversive Writer*, Stephen Cooper (2004) challenges the conventional wisdom of Larkin's literary output, which has traditionally characterized him as a misogynist, racist, and reactionary.

In the sections that follow, the article offers an ecocritical analysis of Larkin's poetry, emphasizing two themes: the natural environment and animal persecution. Human-centered prejudice is interpreted through the lens of ecocentric ideas.

### Discussion and Analysis

Two of the many poems written by Larkin are the subject of analysis in this section. To clarify, the two poems were chosen to (1) convey the idea that environmental concerns are out there waiting to be "heard"; and (2) uncover issues about physical nature that are virtually always "silenced" and "subjugated" by humans for reasons of power. Written in 1972, the poem "Going, Going" was released in 1974.

Many commentators believe that the poem "Going, Going" portends the doomed fate that the planet may face. Larkin's poetry often deals with the devastation of the natural world, and this piece is no exception. Larkin's poem "Going, Going" embodies his distinctive style to the fullest. It begins with a pessimistic outlook on human progress, a long-held viewpoint akin to Larkin's. Secondly, the language used is highly indicative, as it is first metonymic.

First of all, the poem, "Going, Going" commences by praising the splendor of the English countryside. When the speaker was younger, he believed that there was a stunning natural setting outside of the city that could withstand the encroachment of structures and businesses without losing its integrity. When people get tired of the chaos and pollution in the city, they can always find solace in the "fields and farms" of the countryside:

I thought it would last my time

The sense that, beyond the town,

There would always be fields and farms (Larkin, Going, Lines 1-3)

It is as though Larkin foresaw the impending deterioration of beauty. This may be seen in the opening line of the first verse when the verb "thought," which is a more expressive verb than "believe," is used. With some doubt, the poet believed that such beauty would endure for the remainder of his life. He soon realized, though, and wished that was

all there was. He could have foretold that beauty's extinction, a belief that is reflected in the first line's melancholy, agonizing tone. The word "thought," which suggests that the poet was mistaken in his assumption, is the source of the pain. The stanza's second and third lines support Larkin's premise that the countryside is resistant to human exploitation since it is located outside of the city.

Second, the poet imagines a rural area resilient to the encroachment of structures, industry, and human subversion—a vision that, in the short run, proved to be untrue. Even in the most hopeful, best-case scenario, when the beauty of the countryside lasts for a brief period, the words "my time" paint a horrifying vision of the future. Comparing the lifespan of the poet to that of the natural world, it is little, merely a fraction of a second. "I thought it would last my time" also implies that the environment is badly impacted by the speed at which destruction is occurring. The countryside, even for such a brief existence, could not withstand human influence.

The lines "Where the village louts could climb/Such trees as were not cut down" encapsulate some of the frequent themes and ideals of idyllic literature, especially an appreciation of the independence that rural residents enjoy and the preservation of their beautiful and undisturbed surroundings. Regarding the poet's regretful realization that his prophecies were incorrect, the last line and the first line are related. The statement "I knew there would be false alarms" has a hidden connotation. The word "thought" seems to imply that he was mistaken if he had previously known this.

Thirdly, the poet's initial assumptions about some of the numerous early indicators of industrialization that put the countryside in danger are somewhat oscillated in the second stanza:

In the papers about old streets

And split level shopping, but some

Have always been left so far;

And when the old part retreats

As the bleak high-risers come

We can always escape in the car. (Lines 8-12)

Larkin gives a genuine portrayal of events. He reads some tales about how the city's historic streets are being overtaken by brand-new construction. Nevertheless, there are still grounds for optimism because the countryside is vast and industrialization is not destroying the ecosystem at a pace that will be catastrophic. When skyscrapers start to appear, people can retreat to a natural setting free of industry and intensive farming. According to Larkin, "things"—that is, nature—have greater power than people. The following are the forces that never stop nature from responding, defending itself, regaining its elements, and transcending urban life, where people have trampled over the natural landscape and caused the most harm to the environment:

Things are tougher than we are, just

As earth will always respond

However we mess it about;

Chuck filth in the sea, if you must:

The tides will be clean beyond. (Lines 13-17)

The last sentence follows ("But what do I feel now? Doubt?") disproves Larkin's assertion in the first line that the countryside is still pristine and lovely. As if the query "But what do I feel now?" acts out the peculiar emotion he has in the face of the ruin of the countryside, it reflects the sense of violation the speaker perceives in the decline of England. One could interpret the question Larkin poses and the opening line of the third verse, "Or age, simply?" as an introspective self-examination. Larkin questions his ability to understand the world around him fully. There are two main lines of inquiry: 1) Is Larkin's observation doubtful? 2) Considering how commonplace his age is, is Larkin's method of analyzing the world outdated?

Larkin considers the demands of the modern world as well. The world is deteriorating more and more as a result of people's constant need for more ("more houses, more parking allowed/more caravan sites, more pay"). The demand for new homes, public spaces, and parking lots will increase as the population expands. The poet doesn't appear to care about people who make more requests. The poet has no patience for those who advocate for increased growth since it typically comes at the expense of the home. The more we want progress, the more harm is done to the environment. The consequences for the pursuit of more are expanded upon in the fifth stanza:

Of spectacled grins approve

Some takeover bid that entails

Five per cent profit (and ten

Per cent more in the estuaries): move

Your works to the unspoilt dales

(Grey area grants)! And when (Lines 25-30)

The obvious requests for business owners to relocate their operations to undeveloped areas with greater incentives show how people, particularly governments, are purposefully destroying pristine nature (“estuaries” and “dales”). Businesses increase and relocate from the city to “unspoilt dales” in the countryside as the population rises. It is devious to use the terms “unspoilt” and “spectacled grins,” which are metonyms for the government. It seems that the untouched nature of the land is conveyed to the readers. Thus, the urban environment is spoilt, and investors were involved in destroying the “unspoilt” notwithstanding the spread of the gloomy surroundings. “Unspoilt” also implies that since urban life has been tarnished by development and industry, the natural environment in rural areas will soon become destructive. It’s only a matter of time till the picturesque farms and fields are gone.

Larkin then paints a picture of post-war England in which environmental preservation is sacrificed to satisfy wants. Businesses today are simply concerned with turning a profit; their avarice knows no bounds. The irony is that we benefit more from our infringement on nature the more we do so. The idea that corporations earn more from the elimination of “estuaries” is a bit sardonic and counterintuitive. Regretfully, further human meddling that delves further into one of the most exquisite environments maximizes returns. First of all, these natural ingredients are life-giving.

To recap, rivers have historically been connected to agriculture and food production because they provide a dependable, clean source of water for irrigation and drinking. It would appear that Larkin compared the rural landscape to a product for sale. The image of an important landscape up for sale or negotiation is one example of satire. Properties and consumables are the things that can be put up for sale in the actual world. The countryside, of all, is a national treasure to which nobody may lay claim. “Once a human has obtained anything from nature, he will continue to do so until nature has run out of things to provide” (Neupane 2023, p. 38). This level of human selfishness makes it increasingly impossible to auction off the land and preserve a healthy environment.

Larkin acknowledges that the charm of the countryside is starting to fade as he watches industrialization quickly approaching the breathtaking scenery. Larkin then expresses his worries about the future of England, for example, in the line “For the first time I feel somehow/That it isn’t going to last.” He does not attempt to hide his dislike for the leaders of England. They are referred to by Larkin as “tarts” and “crooks” who approve the proposals for property acquisition in rural areas. The metonymy “crooks and tarts” alludes to transgression and apathy (because “tarts” conjures images of prostitution) as well as greed (since “crooks” is linked to scammers), an attack on the inherent beauty of nature.

Larkin disproves his first idea once more. There will be chaos throughout the entire “boiling” (or “before I snuff it”) before he passes away. When this occurs, England can easily claim the title of “First Slum of Europe,” as it is always simple to destroy a traditional culture and the home environment. This is the kind of role that England’s leaders have. It is easy to understand how such destruction of the physical world has consequences: “And that England will be gone, with its shadows, meadows, and lanes.”

Larkin illustrates how people change what they want into what they think they want in the final verse, a feature of the contemporary consumer culture that the poet is bemoaning:

Most things are never meant.

This won’t be, most likely; but greeds

And garbage are too thick-strewn

To be swept up now, or invent

Excuses that make them all needs.

I just think it will happen, soon. (Lines 49-54)

The countryside will vanish at that point, and human avarice will be the cause of it all. Everything inspirational in England will become part of history, and the country will no longer be a beautiful place.

The poem delivers a strong message about the environment. If people act carelessly, the natural world will eventually be destroyed. The poem “Going, Going” alludes to something passing away. Though it may not have completely vanished, our domestic nature is undoubtedly being undermined in favor of industrialization. This serves as a warning about the massive destruction we are causing to the earth. Maybe the message of this terrifying poetry is to act now and put an end to human activity before the ecosystem becomes extinct.

Our analysis is consistent with previous research on “Going, Going.” According to John Ward (1991), “Going, Going” conveys a fairly melancholic idea that “developers and bulldozers are taking over England” (p.186). This is accurate, however it doesn’t look at how this agreement would affect the environment in general. James Booth (2014) offers an interpretation of Larkin’s late style by taking a different angle on the poem. Booth argues against a cursory interpretation of Larkin’s poem. He claims that capitalist avarice may be “environmentally destructive,” writing that “it seems, at first, that the degradation of the environment is to be blamed on the lower orders” (p. 374).

More broadly, an ecocritical interpretation of the poem would see the poet criticizing the industrialization that is encroaching on rural areas. Larkin uses a variety of techniques to do this. Linguistically speaking, the terms “crowd,” “mess,” “slum,” “filth,” “parking,” and “bricked in” all imply a disorderly scene—the kind of area that people ruin in their pursuit of more. Then, using literary tactics, especially metonyms, Larkin seems to be able to expose those who violate the laws of the unadulterated, pure nature.

Larkin seems to be pleading for people to take action against those insane individuals whose greed has no bounds. Larkin also appears to encourage people to take action by using symbols. Larkin is said to have been skilled at conjuring up visions of irreplaceable “estuaries,” “dales,” and “unspoilt” landscapes being given over to greedy corporations. Larkin addresses the main concern by concentrating on “Going, Going,” which is primarily whether or not people will still be able to appreciate nature in light of the devastation caused by industrialization.

Larkin expresses his passion for animals in his 2010 book *Letters to Monica*. He would often include drawings of various animals, particularly rabbits, in his letters. Any evidence of animal abuse by humans would enrage Larkin. He wrote, “I hear the Myxomatosis Committee says it will rage again this year”. In that case, I have no desire to have a vacation in England. It would be awful to be terrified to leave the house in case we came across any unfortunate people. For me, this Christmas was more than enough (p. 47). Half of Larkin’s belongings were bequeathed to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals upon his death.

The poem “Take One Home for the Kiddies” was initially published in 1964 in Larkin’s third collection of poetry, *The Whitsun Weddings*. The poem demonstrates how cruel people can be to animals. Larkin’s use of titles is a recurring theme in his poetry. “Take One Home for the Kiddies” appears to be a slogan used by pet stores or street criers to persuade parents to purchase a pet for their kids. The poet appears to be sending this message as his first. Larkin highlights the tone of contemporary society’s adult-only commercialism by having the salesperson address the parents rather than the children. The fact that adults are no longer accountable for a pet’s welfare once it is in the care of minors is especially significant. Adult people are prone to acts of carelessness towards the non-human world.

Larkin describes the animals in the pet store window in the first three lines of the first stanza of “Take One Home for the Kiddies”. They are exposed to the scorching heat because they are housed in a box with minimal straw and behind glass. The comforts of their natural habitat—shade, water, dirt, and grass—are taken from them.

On shallow straw, in shadeless glass,

Huddled by empty bowls, they sleep:

No dark, no dam, no earth, no grass (Larkin, *Kiddies*, Lines 1-3)

The poet switches to the children’s voice in line four, saying, “Mam, get us one of them to keep.” The kids beg their mother to get them a pet that they may “keep,” a term that denotes ownership and authority over the object being held. Larkin then adopts a meditative voice in the second stanza, reflecting on the meaning of the scene that is depicted in the first verse.

The mocking depiction of animals as “Living toys” reduces them to the status of ornaments that will eventually “wear off.” The kids will eventually find a way to get rid of the animal because the game is over:

Living toys are something novel,

But it soon wears off somehow.

Fetch the shoebox, fetch the shovel (Lines 5-7)

Similar to the first stanza, the second stanza ends with the mother being informed by the children's voices that they are "playing funerals." It appears as though the animal's entire existence—including its demise—was only a human game: "Mam, we're playing funerals now."

The final sentence makes clear that people have a tendency to treat animals who are essentially brought under their care in an egoistic and harsh manner. In this way, Larkin questions why people—even children—are cruel and uncaring toward animals. For this reason, adults somehow collude to let kids act in such a callous and uncaring way.

"Take One Home for the Kiddies" demonstrates Larkin's consideration, empathy, and regret for the natural world. Despite the poem's little length, each word seems to have a purpose and importance. "Shallow" implies indifference and carelessness as well as nothingness and susceptibility. "Shaded" suggests both exposure and vulnerability.

The word "huddled" conjures up images of physical restraint, fear, and imprisonment. "Empty bowls" mean that the unfortunate creatures are either starved or have a food insecurity, which makes them eat voraciously. The feeling of hardship these animals already experience is increased by the constant saying "no." "No dark" could refer to both the absence of shade and tranquil evenings. "No dam" can refer to both the absence of the merciful, forgiving mother and the lack of water. "No earth" indicates the absence of a basic component that is normally present in the natural environment. "No grass" could refer to a shortage of food, but it could also refer to an absence of naturally occurring food that animals enjoy eating, as opposed to food that pet owners typically provide their animals.

The harsh contrast to the depressing picture of misery Larkin depicted in the preceding lines is "Mam, get us one of them to keep." It is the height of human arrogance, a repugnantly apathetic attitude. Even if an animal's suffering brings humans some comfort, it doesn't matter. One adage from Palestine that sums up how people treat helpless, confined animals the best is "The knives are all out for a camel once it falls." The word "somehow" is used suggestively. Was it due to harshness, carelessness, lack of food, or other factors?

Larkin doesn't respond, but this is related to the first stanza, where the animals' numerous hardships may persist after they are transferred from the pet store to the homes of their new owners. The animals are placed in a "shoebox" after they pass away; the term "shoe" in the previous sentence colloquially means "wears off." The word "box" conjures up the picture of the window of a pet store; the animal, whether alive or dead, appears to be bound by human destiny to be kept inside a restricted space.

The words Larkin used to describe one significant aspect of nature—animals—have produced a depressing mood and a sense of hopelessness. However, the poem can also be interpreted as a plea for the restoration of harmony in the interactions between people and non-human realms. The media has come to associate the phrase "a puppy is not just for Christmas" with this poem many years after Larkin wrote it. It serves as a reminder that inanimate toys made of animals are not permitted. It is terrible that birds and animals are confined to cages and denied even the most basic needs.

## Conclusion

Larkin was likely an eco-poet and may have had an impact on the genre's growth even though he was unaware of eco-literature as a subgenre (the term having not yet been coined when he lived). The common issues he addressed in his poetry were that non-human and human worlds cannot coexist peacefully. Rather than serving as a motif, nature is highlighted as a component that supports the ecosystem. First of all, his poetry makes it clear that no matter how much human pressure is applied to the environment, the world of non-human species will suffer.

Second, Larkin's devotion to nature is evident in the way he approaches domestic nature from an ecological perspective. In "Going, Going," Larkin ponders why it is that people cannot accept reality as it is and why there is a mutual dependence on controlling the natural world. In "Take One Home for the Kiddies," he criticizes human cruelty to weak, defenseless animals and paints a depressing picture of how people treat animals. Our comprehension of ecological consciousness would unavoidably be improved, renewed, and refined by reading Larkin's poetry from an ecocritical perspective.

All the components in the chain suffer when that balanced structure is exploited by humans. With all of its plants and animals, the plains and valleys would suffer, which would have negative effects on people as well. Ironically, people take advantage of nature for financial gain, believing that this will make them happy. However, in the end, all they obtain are warped pieces of the environment that will never make them happy. Larkin's poems gently hint at the major concepts that are being conveyed to his readers.

Larkin continues to pose two crucial questions, making the portrayal of industrialization's diminishment of the English countryside environmentally compelling. 1) How equitable is greed across all borders? 2) In light of the

devastation of nature, how long-term sustainable are the profits? Larkin believes it is unlikely because the nation will soon be “gone.”

## References

- Booth, J. (2014). *Philip Larkin: life, art, and love*. Bloomsbury.
- Christine, et al. (2000). *Squanderin Paradise. Gland, Switzerland: World Wide Fund For Nature*.
- Cooper, S. (2004). *Philip Larkin: Subversive Writer*. Sussex Academic Press.
- Craik, R. (2002). “Animals and Birds in Philip Larkin’s Poetry.” *Papers on Language and Literature*, 38 (4). 397.
- Cronon, W. (1996). “The trouble with wilderness: or, getting back to the wrong nature.” *Environmental History*, 1(1). 7–28.
- Deacon, M. “Friendly Philip Larkin?” *The Telegraph* 16 Aug. 2014. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/11031426/Friendly-Philip-Larkin.html>.
- Gallagher, D. (2012). *Environmental leadership: a reference handbook*. SAGE, Publications, Inc.
- Larkin, P. (2010). *Letters to Monica*. Faber & Faber.
- Lodge, D. (1989). Philip Larkin: the Metonymic Muse. In: Salwak, D. (eds) *Philip Larkin: The Man and his Work*. Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-09700-5\\_12](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-09700-5_12)
- Marx, L. (2000). *The machine in the garden: technology and the pastoral ideal in America*. Oxford University Press.
- Meeker, J. (1972). *The comedy of survival: studies in literary ecology*. Scribner.
- Merchant, C. (1990). *The death of nature: women, ecology, and the scientific revolution*. Harper.
- Neupane, R. (2023). The Use of Children’s Picture Books to Promote Environmental Awareness. *Humanities and Social Sciences Journal*, 15(1-2), 30–41. <https://doi.org/10.3126/hssj.v15i1-2.63736>
- Quick, P. (2004). *An ecocritical approach to the southern novels of Cormac, McCarthy*. University of Georgia.
- Thomas, K. (1983). *Man and the natural world: changing attitudes in England 1500–1800*. Oxford UP.
- Ward, J. (1991). *The English line: poetry of the unpoetic from Wordsworth to Larkin*. Macmillan Education UK.
- Zhao, Y. (2016). “A brief account of American eco-criticism.” *Scholars Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(12). 1487–1490.