

## **Movement Poets/Movement Poetry/The Movement (Part-2)**

[BA (Hons.), Part-1, Paper-1]

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These two volumes point to a deliberate frankness in his tone. In fact, in his *Letters* published in 1992 Larkin revealed his penchant for 'four-letter words.' The poem 'Church Going' (*The Less Deceived*) carefully balances agnostic dissent with a leaning towards tradition and belief. In traditional iambic metre the fallible, clumsy speaker, a post-war Welfare State Englishman, gives a rational understanding against a religious experience. 'The Whitsun Wedding' and 'Afternoon' from *The Whitsun Wedding* present an England of false cheer, cheap-fashions, joyless wedding parties and drab recreation grounds.

Thom Gunn, who has ridden alongside Larkin in Movement anthologies, is a very different kind of writer and is one who early resolved to see out the heroic in the experience of nihilism. In his early volume *Fighting Terms*, his uneasy energy and admiration for a Hemingway-like masculinity startled his readers. *The Sense of Movement* (1957) and *My Sad Captions* (1961), for all their range and skill, still left one with unresolved doubts. In an early poem he writes of those who, like Byron and like 'strong swimmers, fishermen, explorers,' 'Dignify death by thriftless violence-.' In studied casualness, Gunn's poems tell of a new

individuality. 'Human Condition', in particular, says, 'I am condemned to be / An individual,' and concludes with 'I, born to fog, to waste, / Walk through hypothesis, / An individual.' Gunn is often compared with Donne by virtue of his logic, economy and startling energy.

Among the other Movement poets, Enright and Conquest base their poetry in reality. Enright (*Laughing Hyenas*) uses colloquial speech stripped of elaborations, while Conquest (*Between Mars and Venus*) is devoted more to landscape. Donald Davie, even with the obscurity of his language, and Kingsley Amis, though principally a novelist, both conformed strongly with the current of the Movement.

The Movement poetry in general displays a conscious scepticism and an empirical attitude. Aiming at colloquial ease, decorum, elegance, precision and gravity, it ushered in a new classicism in English literature. However, having been forced into an ambivalent position between opposing the Modernism and accepting the traditional, it never could be any greater than an unorganised and token rebellion.