



Philip Larkin

• Philip Arthur Larkin (9 August 1922 – 2 December 1985) was an English poet, novelist, and librarian. His first book of poetry, *The North Ship*, was published in 1945, followed by two novels, *Jill* (1946) and *A Girl in Winter* (1947), and he came to prominence in 1955 with the publication of his second collection of poems, *The Less Deceived*, followed by *The Whitsun Weddings* (1964) and *High Windows* (1974). He contributed to *The Daily Telegraph* as its jazz critic from 1961 to 1971, articles gathered in *All What Jazz: A Record Diary 1961–71* (1985), and he edited *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse* (1973). His many honours include the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry. He was offered, but declined, the position of Poet Laureate in 1984, following the death of Sir John Betjeman.

LARKIN'S LIFE



BRUNETTE COLEMAN

Toward the end of his undergraduate studies at St. John's, Oxford, around 1943, Larkin assumed the pseudonym Brunette Coleman during a period of confused sexuality and limited literary output.

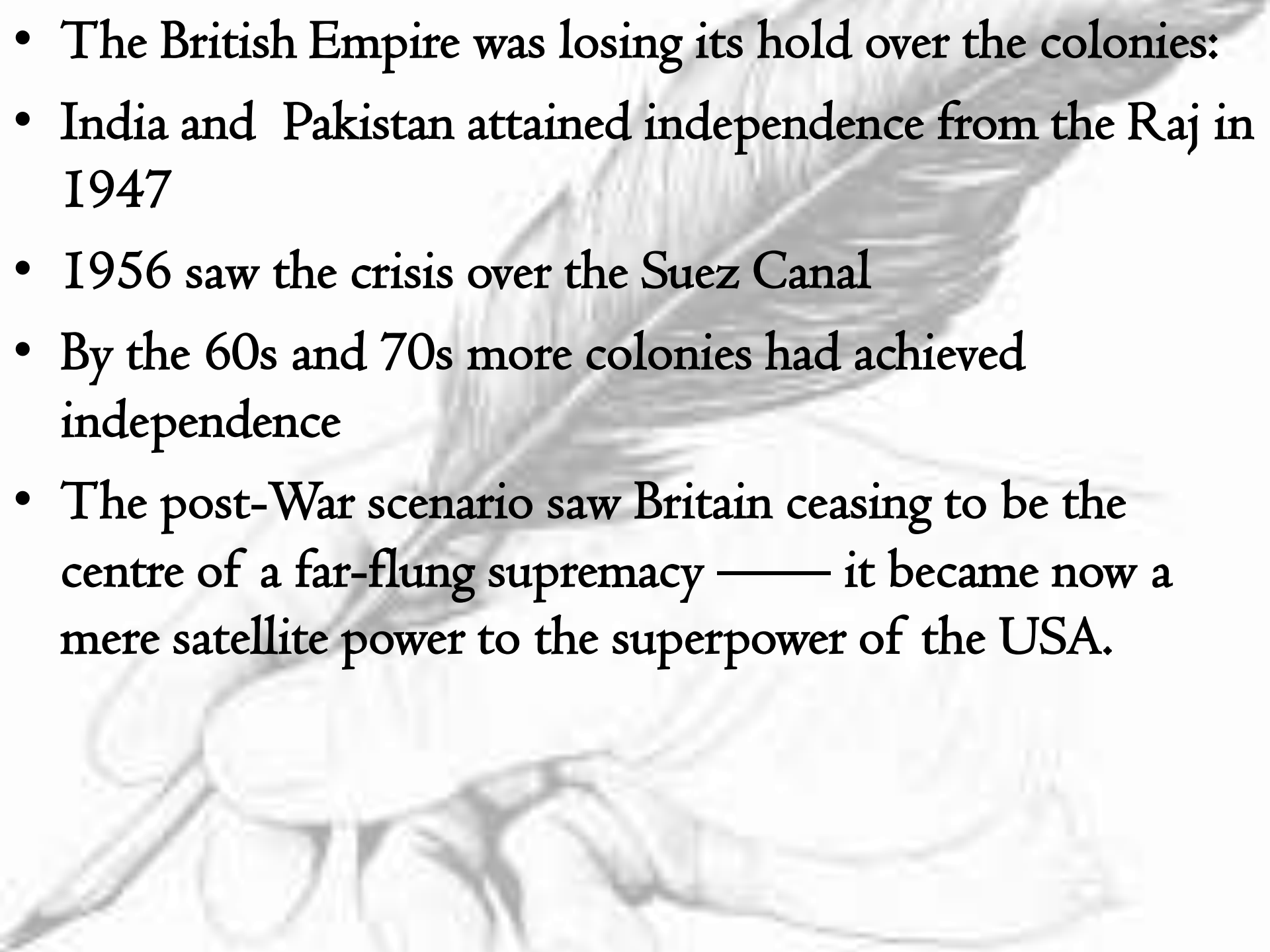
The Coleman oeuvre consists of a completed novella, *Trouble at Willow Gables*, set in a girls' boarding school; an incomplete sequel, *Michaelmas Term at St Brides*, set in a women's college at Oxford; seven short poems with a girls' school ambience; a fragment of pseudo-autobiography; and a critical essay purporting to be Coleman's literary apologia. The manuscripts were stored in the Brynmor Jones Library at the University of Hull, where Larkin was chief librarian between 1955 and 1985. Their existence was revealed to the public when Larkin's *Selected Letters* and Andrew Motion's biography were published in 1992 and 1993 respectively. The Coleman works themselves were finally published, with other Larkin drafts and oddments, in 2002.

WORLD EVENTS LARKIN SAW

- **The Wall Street Crash** of 1929, also known as the Great Crash, was a major American stock market crash that occurred in the autumn of 1929. It started in September and ended late in October, when share prices on the New York Stock Exchange collapsed.
- It was the most devastating stock market crash in the history of the United States, when taking into consideration the full extent and duration of its aftereffects.[1] The Great Crash is associated with October 25, 1929, called Black Friday, the day after the largest sell-off of shares in U.S. history.[2] The crash, which followed the London Stock Exchange's crash of September, signaled the beginning of the Great Depression.

- A year after Larkin began reading English Literature and Language at Oxford, the SECOND WORLD WAR broke loose.
- On account of his poor eyesight, Larkin was exempt from enlisting in the War and was able to complete his three years undergraduate degree.
- He forged a deep and lifelong friendship with fellow-poet Kingsley Amis
- Larkin, Amis and other university friends formed a group they called “The Seven”. They met regularly to discuss poetry and jazz.
- In 1943, Larkin was appointed as librarian of the Wellington public library in Shropshire. Later he became assistant librarian at University College, Leicester. In 1950, he took up the position of sub-librarian at The Queen’s University of Belfast.
- In 1955 he became University Librarian at the University of Hull, a post he held until his death in 1985.

- During the War, Larkin's hometown, Coventry was attacked.
- Along with apparent peace came the shock of the atom bomb in 1945
- The Labour Government in England under the Prime Minister Clement Richard Attlee (1935 – 1955) formed the WELFARE STATE
- There ensued a tension between NATO alliance states and the Soviet Union
- This led to the Cold War in 1947, a nuclear arms race between the political and military superpowers of the world.
- The Church of England was in steady decline and congregation numbers were fast falling. There was no community cemented by faith.
- Twentieth-century intellectuals who rejected religion had to confront a newly empty universe—— reason offered no substitute for religion.

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- The British Empire was losing its hold over the colonies:
 - India and Pakistan attained independence from the Raj in 1947
 - 1956 saw the crisis over the Suez Canal
 - By the 60s and 70s more colonies had achieved independence
 - The post-War scenario saw Britain ceasing to be the centre of a far-flung supremacy ——— it became now a mere satellite power to the superpower of the USA.

- However, the 60s in Britain saw the emergence of a glory of another kind →
- It was the era of fashion design, pop music and literature
- A “New Permissive Society” emerged in England
- British pop music was led to world dominance by The Beatles



- Flower Power heralded at the turn of the decade



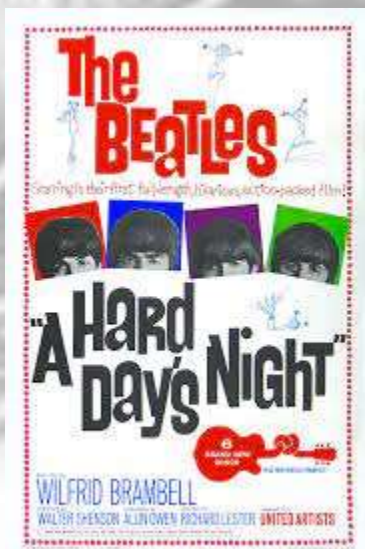
- Mrs Margaret Thatcher became the Prime Minister in 1979 leading a Conservative Government and Britain won the Faulkland War in 1982.

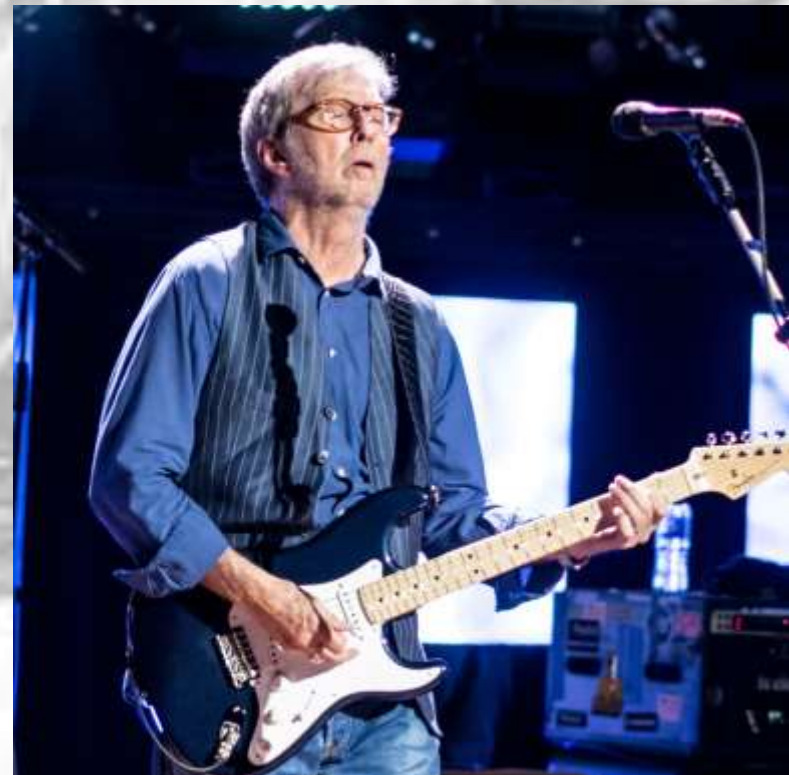


- 1960s British Music was the leading form of Pop in the world. Beat and Blues music were adapted from America by cult bands like The Beatles, The Animals (Fig 1) and The Rolling Stones (Fig 2) making way for British Invasion Blues Rock Music



- *A Hard Day's Night*, the famous 1964 musical comedy featuring The Beatles declared British fashion and culture as international icons.





PINK FLOYD – Psychedelic Rock



1948 - LAURENCE OLIVIER'S *HAMLET*

First non-US film to win the Academy Award for Best Picture



- “British New Wave” /Kitchen Sink Realism
- Less restrictive censorship towards the end of 1960s
- Hammer films (originally producers of B-Grade films) release *Dracula*
- 1969 – *Women in Love* showcased frontal nudity on the screen
- 1966 – *Blowup*
- Albert Broccoli – creates James Bond with Sean Connery
- Advent of spy films – *The Ipcress File* 1965
- History films – *Lawrence of Arabia* 1962

Philip Larkin as a Movement Poet

- On the other hand, the Movement poets reconstructed neoclassicism. According to John Press, it was "a general retreat from direct comment or involvement in any political or social doctrine."
- One way of accounting for the emergence of the Movement is to see it as a part of the general post-war period of reconstruction.
- The thematic shift and the return to traditional forms and rhythms therefore seem to be natural responses to a national mood of rebuilding.
- The Movement poets sought to create an ordinary brand of poetry. They preferred everyday pictures to sensational imagery, and prioritised a friendly, colloquial tone over rhetorical complications.

“AN ARUNDEL TOMB” IS A POEM BY PHILIP LARKIN, WRITTEN AND FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1956, AND SUBSEQUENTLY INCLUDED IN HIS 1964 COLLECTION, *THE WHITSUN WEDDINGS*. IT DESCRIBES THE POET'S EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO SEEING A PAIR OF RECUMBENT MEDIEVAL TOMB EFFIGIES, WITH THEIR HANDS JOINED, IN CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL. IT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED BY JAMES BOOTH AS "ONE OF [LARKIN'S] GREATEST POEMS". IT COMPRISES 7 VERSES OF 6 LINES EACH, EACH WITH RHYME SCHEME ABBCAC.

