

## Moon

An object can represent many different things to many different people. One object of interest is the moon. Philip Larkin, the speaker of *Sad Steps*, and Sir Philip Sidney, speaker of sonnet 31 from *Astrophel and Stella*, have different feelings and attitudes towards the moon. Each speaker uses various rhetorical devices to present their opinion of the moon. Larkin uses these devices to show his bitterness and the ridiculous nature of the moon and what people think of it, and Sir Philip Sidney uses these devices to prevail his admiration of the moon in its grace amongst the stars.

Sir Philip Sidney is in a state of awe when faced by the moon. He believes that the moon has the answers to all of his questions. He asks, through a series of rhetorical questions, whether "they call virtue there ungratefulness?" (line 15), or whether "they above love to be loved, and yet/ Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?" (line 13-14). Sir Philip Sidney believes that the answers to these questions can be found out from the moon, for the moon is omniscient. He further believes that the moon "can judge of love", and can solve his love troubles, as a "lozenge of love" (*Sad Steps*, line 11) would. Sir Philip Sidney's attitude toward the moon is quite serious, which is also the tone of the essay. He takes the moon very seriously, as if it were divine. He adds character to the moon, as if it were a person. He describes the moon's "love acquainted eyes" (line 5) and remarks how "wan a face" (line 2) it has. This imagery makes the moon more real and praiseworthy, for how can you admire a person without a face? The imagery adds a face to the moon for others to admire as does himself. Philip Larkin's attitude toward the moon is quite different, although there is a definite connection between the two poems.

Larkin's attitude toward the moon is quite bitter. Larkin is crude and sarcastic in his poem when talking of the moon. He teases Sidney's view of the moon, calling it a "Lozenge of love! Medallion of art!/ O wolves of memory! Immensements!" (lines 11-12) when Larkin actually believes the moon is only a sad "reminder of the strength and pain/ Of being young; that it can't come again" (line 17). Larkin seems resentful to the moon for reminding him of the youth which can never be revived in him. He uses terse and choppy sentences, which gives the moon a rough, "savage" illusion. Larkin's poem has a much more negative tone to it than Sidney's. Larkin describes the moon as having a cold "wide stare" (line 15) and a "hardness and brightness" (line 14) that could make one "shiver slightly" (line 13). It almost seems that Larkin is laughing at Sidney's outlook on the moon.

Even though both speakers are looking at the same object, they do not see the same object. Sidney seems like a faithful servant and admirer of the moon, while Larkin scorns the moon's sharpness and hardness. It is amazing how many different attitudes people can have about an object.

