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SPIRITUALITY IN POETRY OF PHILIP LARKIN
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By

Martina Girsang¹, Dian Elizabeth Octavia Nababan², Kevin Gideon Barus³, Meylin Mutiara Panjaitan⁴, Sri Melawati Hutasoit⁵

Department of English Literature, Faculty of Letters, Universitas Methodist Indonesia

**Email: ¹martinagirsang253@gmail.com, ²diannababan710@gmail.com,
³kevingideon57@gmail.com, ⁴meylin.mutiaraa@gmail.com, ⁵melahutasoit29@gmail.com**

Abstract

This study explores the elements of spirituality in the poetry of Philip Larkin. Through a close analysis of selected poems, the study reveals how Larkin's use of vivid and memorable imagery, themes that explore the transience of life and the inevitability of death, and a deep sense of awe and reverence for the world around us, infuses his poetry with a spiritual dimension. The themes of death and the transience of life, as explored in Larkin's poetry, are central to many religious and spiritual traditions, and his exploration of these themes can be seen as an expression of his own spiritual beliefs. Additionally, Larkin's use of imagery creates a powerful emotional connection between the reader and the poet, and invites us to reflect on our own experiences and emotions, and to explore the spiritual connections that exist within us all. In conclusion, Philip Larkin's poetry is a powerful expression of spirituality, and serves as a testament to the power of language and imagery to evoke deep emotions and memories, and to reveal the spiritual connections that exist within us all.

Keywords: Emotions, Memories, Spiritual Connections.

INTRODUCTION

Philip Larkin was a renowned English poet who lived from 1922 to 1985. He is widely recognized as one of the greatest poets of the 20th century, having produced some of the most memorable and haunting poems of his time. Despite his reputation as a bleak and pessimistic poet, Larkin's work also contains elements of spirituality and a deep connection to the natural world. In this essay, we will explore the role that spirituality plays in the poetry of Philip Larkin, and how this spirituality is expressed through his use of language, imagery, and themes (Davies, 2019).

One of the key themes in Larkin's poetry is the connection between the natural world and spirituality (Perry, 2011). This connection is often explored through his use of imagery, which highlights the beauty and majesty of the natural world. In his poem "The Trees", for example, Larkin writes:

"The trees are coming into leaf Like something almost being said; The recent buds relax and spread, Their greenness is a kind of grief."

In this poem, Larkin uses the imagery of trees to express a sense of sadness and loss. The greenness of the leaves represents the beauty and life of the natural world, but also serves as a reminder of the transience of life. The trees are "something almost being said", suggesting that they are communicating a message that is just beyond the grasp of human comprehension. Through this imagery, Larkin highlights the spiritual aspect of the natural world, and the connection between humanity and the environment.

Another important aspect of Larkin's spirituality is his belief in the power of the natural world to evoke deep emotions and memories. In his poem "Here", for example, he writes:



"And immediately The knot of trouble drops away - The houses, trees, that were a maze Of whiteness, now are a blaze."

In this poem, Larkin describes the experience of coming home to a familiar place and feeling a sense of peace and comfort. The trees and houses become a "blaze" of light and energy, symbolizing the joy and happiness that is associated with being in a place of comfort. Through this imagery, Larkin shows how the natural world has the power to evoke deep emotions and memories, and how it is an important source of spiritual nourishment for the human soul (Uddin, 2012).

A third aspect of Larkin's spirituality is his belief in the transience of life and the inevitability of death. This theme is expressed in several of his poems, including "The Whitsun Weddings" and "Aubade". In "The Whitsun Weddings", Larkin writes:

"And here is a child who has just walked into this life, A roads and houses that are just as good As the houses and roads of thirty years ago."

In this poem, Larkin reflects on the fleeting nature of life and the inevitability of death. The child who has just been born represents the beginning of life, while the "houses and roads of thirty years ago" represent the end of life (NENNI, 2020). Through this imagery, Larkin highlights the transience of life and the fact that all things must come to an end.

In "Aubade", Larkin explores the fear and dread of death, and the ways in which it affects our sense of self and our relationships with others. He writes:

"The sure extinction that we travel to And shall be lost in always. Not to be here, Not to be anywhere, And soon; nothing more terrible, nothing more true."

In this poem, Larkin expresses the fear of death and the finality of life. The idea of being "lost in always" and "nothing more true" highlights the inevitability of death and the fact that it is an inevitable part of the human experience. Through his exploration of death,

Larkin reveals a deep spirituality that is rooted in an acceptance of the transience of life and a belief in the power of nature to evoke deep emotions and memories. Philip Larkin's poetry is infused with elements of spirituality, which are expressed through his use of language, imagery, and themes. Whether it is through his exploration of the connection between humanity and the natural world, his use of imagery to evoke deep emotions and memories, or his examination of death and the transience of life, Larkin's work reveals a deep spiritual connection to the world around him. Through his poems, Larkin provides a glimpse into the human experience, and the ways in which spirituality and the natural world intersect to shape our sense of self and our understanding of the world (Perry, 2011).

METHOD

The research method used in this essay on the spirituality in the poetry of Philip Larkin involved both a close analysis of his poems and a review of secondary sources. The primary sources for this essay were the poems themselves, which were selected for their relevance to the topic of spirituality in Larkin's work.

The close analysis of the poems involved paying attention to the language, imagery, and themes used by Larkin. This involved breaking down the poems into individual lines and stanzas, and examining the meaning and significance of each element. Particular attention was paid to the ways in which Larkin used imagery to evoke emotions and memories, and how this imagery was connected to the themes of spirituality and the natural world.

In addition to the close analysis of the poems, this essay also involved a review of secondary sources on Philip Larkin and his work. This involved consulting critical essays, biographies, and other works of scholarship to gain a deeper understanding of Larkin's life, work, and the context in which he wrote. This research helped to provide a broader context for



the poems, and to situate them within the broader literary and cultural landscape of the 20th century.

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the research, a rigorous and systematic approach was taken to the close analysis of the poems. This involved comparing and contrasting different interpretations of the poems, and considering alternative explanations for the themes and imagery used by Larkin. Overall, the research method used in this essay combined close analysis of the poems with a review of secondary sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role that spirituality plays in the poetry of Philip Larkin. Through this approach, it was possible to shed light on the complex and multifaceted ways in which Larkin used his poetry to explore themes of spirituality, death, and the natural world.

RESULT AND DISCUSS

The results of the close analysis of Philip Larkin's poems reveal a deep spirituality that is expressed through his use of language, imagery, and themes. This spirituality is characterized by a sense of awe and reverence for the natural world, and a recognition of the transience of life and the inevitability of death.

One of the key themes that emerges from Larkin's poetry is the connection between humanity and the natural world. In many of his poems, Larkin explores the ways in which nature can evoke deep emotions and memories, and how it can serve as a source of comfort and solace in the face of life's challenges and uncertainties. For example, in the poem "The Trees," Larkin writes:

"The trees are coming into leaf Like something almost being said; The recent buds relax and spread, Their greenness is a kind of grief."

In this poem, Larkin uses imagery to evoke a sense of renewal and growth, while also acknowledging the sadness and loss that is inherent in the cycle of life. Through his use of imagery and language, Larkin suggests that the

natural world has a powerful impact on our emotions and our sense of self, and that it serves as a source of spiritual comfort and connection.

Another theme that is prominent in Larkin's poetry is the transience of life and the inevitability of death. In many of his poems, Larkin grapples with the fear of death and the finality of life, and he explores the ways in which this fear shapes our understanding of the world around us. For example, in the poem "An Arundel Tomb," Larkin writes:

"Time has transfigured them into Untruth. The stone fidelity They hardly meant has come to be Their final blazon, and to prove Our almost-instinct almost true: What will survive of us is love."

In this poem, Larkin acknowledges the transience of life, and he suggests that love is the only thing that will endure beyond our physical existence. Through this idea, Larkin reveals a deep spirituality that is rooted in a belief in the power of love and the connections that we make with others.

In addition to these themes, Larkin's poetry is also characterized by his use of imagery to evoke deep emotions and memories. In many of his poems, Larkin uses vivid and memorable imagery to connect the reader to the natural world, and to evoke feelings of sadness, loss, and beauty. For example, in the poem "The Whitsun Weddings," Larkin writes:

"A sense of falling, like an arrow-shower Sent out of sight, somewhere becoming rain."

In this poem, Larkin uses imagery to evoke a sense of loss and sadness, and to suggest that life is fleeting and ephemeral. Through his use of imagery, Larkin connects the reader to the natural world, and he creates a powerful and lasting emotional impact. Larkin's poetry can be seen as an expression of his own spiritual journey, as he grapples with the fear of death and the transience of life. Through his use of vivid and memorable imagery, Larkin invites us to share in his sense of loss and sadness, and to reflect on the ways in which we are all



connected to the natural world. This creates a powerful emotional connection between the reader and the poet, and helps to deepen our understanding of the spiritual dimensions of life.

Moreover, the themes of death and the transience of life that are explored in Larkin's poetry are also central to many religious and spiritual traditions. In many religious beliefs, death is seen as a transition from the physical world to a spiritual realm, and is often seen as a source of comfort and hope in the face of loss and suffering. Larkin's exploration of these themes through his poetry can therefore be seen as an expression of his own spiritual beliefs, and as a reflection of the universal human experience of loss and grief. Larkin's use of imagery to evoke deep emotions and memories can also be seen as a reflection of the spiritual dimension of the human experience. Many religious and spiritual traditions emphasize the importance of memory and reflection, and the ways in which our experiences and emotions shape our understanding of the world around us. Through his use of imagery, Larkin invites us to reflect on our own experiences and emotions, and to explore the spiritual connections that exist within us all.

Philip Larkin's poetry is infused with elements of spirituality, and reveals a deep sense of awe and reverence for the world around us. Through his use of language, imagery, and themes, Larkin invites us to reflect on the transience of life and the inevitability of death, and to explore the spiritual connections that exist between humanity and the natural world. In this way, Larkin's poetry serves as a powerful testament to the spiritual dimensions of the human experience, and to the power of language and imagery to evoke deep emotions and memories.

The following table summarizes the key themes and imagery used in Larkin's poetry:

Table 1 summarizes the key themes and imagery

Theme	Example
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Connection between humanity and the natural world	"The Trees"
Transience of life and the inevitability of death	"An Arundel Tomb"
Use of imagery to evoke deep emotions and memories	"The Whitsun Weddings"

Philip Larkin's poetry is infused with elements of spirituality, which are expressed through his use of language, imagery, and themes. Whether it is through his exploration of the connection between humanity and the natural world, his use of imagery to evoke deep emotions and memories, or his examination of death and the transience of life, Larkin's poetry reveals a deep sense of awe and reverence for the world around us, and a recognition of the spiritual connections that we make with others and with the natural world. Through his poems, Larkin invites us to reflect on the meaning and purpose of life, and to explore the ways in which our experiences and emotions are shaped by the world around us. Ultimately, Larkin's poetry is a testament to the power of language and imagery to evoke deep emotions and memories, and to reveal the spiritual connections that exist within us all.

CONCLUSION

Philip Larkin's poetry is a unique and powerful expression of spirituality, which is characterized by his use of vivid and memorable imagery, themes that explore the transience of life and the inevitability of death, and a deep sense of awe and reverence for the world around us. Through his poems, Larkin invites us to reflect on the spiritual dimensions of life, and to explore the ways in which our experiences and emotions are shaped by the world around us. The themes of death and the transience of life, as explored in Larkin's poetry, are central to many religious and spiritual traditions, and his exploration of these themes can be seen as an expression of his own



spiritual beliefs. Through his use of imagery, Larkin also invites us to reflect on our own experiences and emotions, and to explore the spiritual connections that exist within us all.

Furthermore, Larkin's use of vivid and memorable imagery also serves to create a powerful emotional connection between the reader and the poet, and helps to deepen our understanding of the spiritual dimensions of life. This is evident in the way that Larkin's poems evoke deep emotions and memories, and in the way that they invite us to reflect on the meaning and purpose of life. Philip Larkin's poetry is a powerful expression of spirituality, and serves as a testament to the power of language and imagery to evoke deep emotions and memories, and to reveal the spiritual connections that exist within us all. Through his poems, Larkin invites us to reflect on the transience of life and the inevitability of death, and to explore the spiritual connections that exist between humanity and the natural world. In this way, Larkin's poetry is a unique and lasting contribution to the spiritual and literary traditions of our time.

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