
THE REPRESENTATION OF SPIRITUALITY IN THE POEM

"CHURCH GOING" BY PHILIP LARKIN

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Abstract

Earth is a planet where people believe in God and religion. spirituality is more connected with religion. In the same way, this research is based on the Spirituality in poem " church going" by Philip Larkin. Spirituality is meaning, because there is significant in the fact that, so many people over the centuries have believed in religion. In this study, research going to explore theme of spirituality, in the poem church as a place of purification and Philip Larkin' s view for church and his faith in religion. These are the objectives of the research paper.

Key words: *spirituality, church, Religion, faith.*

1.0 Introduction

Church going is one of Philip Larkin's master piece from the postmodern era. Philip Larkin (1922-1985) was an English poet, critic and novelist. "Church going" was published in his poetic collection " The Less Deceived" in 1954. In his poem church going, the elements of spirituality and religiousness were most prominent. The word spirituality, which means the broad concept of a belief in something beyond the self. Larkin's pursuit of spirituality comes from contemplating the demise of organized religion, because people will always have the spiritual longings that eventually drive them to religion and church. Larkin acknowledge that religion won't truly vanish from the earth. Religion was , " For Larkin an emotive self delusion a vast motheaten musical broad /created to pretend we never die(cp 208). Also, Larkin claims that prior to going to church and religion, suddenly changed his emotions when he entered in church and changed his feeling of spirituality.

2.0 Problem to be investigated

Philip Larkin's "church going" is a poem which connected with many aspects: spirituality, religion and god. For this reason researcher has an interest to more know about the spiritual aspect. So, many questions are raised for this topic ,like what is the Spirituality? And how poet describes in the poem the concept of spirituality in "church going"? Also how much can people have faith on God? These are the questions responsible for the research paper.

3.0 Objectives:

- To explore the theme of spirituality in poem church going
- To find church as a place of purification
- To define poet's view /faith for church
- To know presence of silence in church going.

4.0 Literature review

This article is designed to do analyze the concept of spirituality in poem church going. There are many writers introduced us with spirituality by the reference of poem "church going".

1. The first review of article is about Philip Larkin and spiritualism by Dr. Pallavi Upadhyay. There researcher described Larkin as a spiritual person. Dr.pallavi upadhyay says about Larkin "he had found in the word spirituality an expression of the enlargement of spirit these ecstatic moment brought." Spirituality which Larkin pursued in life's long quest since childhood remained for a riddle. The poems of shows his faith in the existence of God and his mercy , this is the sum and substance of his faith as expressed in his poem.

2. "Depiction of modern man in "church going "by Philip larkin : A case study through modernism" by Hira Ali, Sahar Gul, Noor-Ul-Ain, Habiba khatoon. They describe "The Church going in Philip Larkin many times tries to saw himself as a modern man. But in the poem he introduced us stages of human life: marriage, death and birth by the spiritual way. Also, we can see Larkin on way of spirituality. But sometimes he neglected his faith in God, religion and spiritual longings."

3.in this article , The Art of An Anti Romantic and An Anti Modernist: Larkin About Modern Reality by Leman Demirbas. In the poem research says - Philip Larkin described. He thinks about church as a worthless place and he was wasting his time in the poem church going. so, in the beginning stanzas he neglected to spiritual elements but when he described human life at that moment readers can see them as a spiritual person in the poem church going.

5.0 Research Design

In this research paper , Researcher is going to introduce the word "spirituality", by giving the explanation of the poem "church going". Researcher will give review of literature regarding to the research paper.

5.1 Research method

In the research paper, researcher is used "Descriptive research method" for to work on the given title " The Representation of spirituality in Church going by Philip Larkin" .

6.0 Analysis of the poem “Church Going”

"Church going" is a spiritual poem in which Philip Larkin described his view related to religion - church,bibal,faith in god, Christmas are the symbols of human beings spirituality which saw by the Larkin in poem.

In the beginning of the poem Larkin introduced us to those people who never missed their prayers of Sunday and other those who haven't faith in God and social institutions related to religion. When he entered into the church he removed to his cycle clips and he shares glimpse in inside of the Church. He says that it is a place where faithless people can believe in God and church because it is a place where speeded a calm full silence which attracted to people for believe in God.

second stanzas in he described more religious items like, holy water, roof which was restored and cleaned. Here, poet was more attracted towards architectural unit of church. In the church he also read the biblical verses and say" herendeth". Which means he was dissatisfied with the thoughts of

the biblical verses. Before he leave to church he donated "Irish six pens" which saw disvalue of church in the mind of poet, and he thinks that this is a play e which is worthless place and he only there wasting his time.

further stanzas he described that " The church is a worthless place so, he needed to stop his visits of spiritual places. But he says that he was came here to search something and after he talked about future of Church. Where people would not visit to Church, that time some will be think church as a unlucky place but during the time of rain animals will make it their state. People can make it a museum. So, here poet discussed about the position of churches in future.

Forth stanza in he described " we can't avoid this place by saying it unlucky place. He gave many examples like many women will come to collect blessed stones for their child, some will come to search medicine for disease and other will come with hope to see supernatural elements there. At that time when people can't believe in god, religion and way of spirituality. But any one ask me to choose heaven or sky that time I would like to choose sky because heaven can destroy when people can't believe in god and spiritual way. But sky always be free and alive rather than heaven.

Larkin also narrates the dark future of Church. He thinks that in a future people will talking about the church as a suspicious place and they who knows they shares their past memories. Where church wasn't exist in the world. That time many visitors will come to know about the place. One of the visitor is a archeologist who will come to collect relics and enjoys by this historical site and ruins. Many visitors will come to celebrate the Christmas ceremonies in church.

In the church those who will come to investigate or their celebration, they will not be able to know the value of the place . Because they haven't knowledge that once a time there celebrated ceremonies like : birth, marriage and death. After poet described the silence inside the church.

In a last stanzas he says church as "a serious house on serious earth it is " because during the nineteenth century people was used word serious for Religion. For the religion place many people will have a hunger to more know about church ,their religion. Here ,poet described spirituality as a mixture of companions and needs. That time where poet begins poem, his view for church and spirituality, faith in god these all things are absent, but in this last stanza he accepted the church as a place which is a last destination of human life.

6.1 The Representation of Spirituality in poem "Church Going"

On the earth many people are following different kind of religion and their faith in God. In the poem church going, one of the religion is Christian which follows by Philip Larkin. Religion and faith are interconnected same as the Philip Larkin was connected with spiritual longings even though he not believe in god and spirituality.

Philip Larkin's definition of religion:

'I was a bit irritated by an American who insisted to me that it was a religious poem. It isn't religious at all. Religion surely means that the affairs of this world are under divine surveillance, and so on, and I go to some pains to point out that I don't bother about that sort of thing, that I'm deliberately ignorant of it: ' "Up at the holy end", for instance.' (Andrew Spacey, 2022)

The spiritual longings, church and faith are interconnected with notion of fate and destiny. According to James Underwood "in church going this list of rituals is merely arranged the church is acknowledged as a place with held unspoilt/so long and equably what since is found /only in sepretion- marriage, birth and death.

"It pleases me to stand in silence here;

A serious house on serious earth it is,"

Philip Larkin in poem "church going" discuss about the "serious house". During the nineteenth century people are used word "serious" for Religion which means poet narrates church as a religious house which always be trustworthy for human beings. According to Hira Ali, Sahar Gul and their contemporaneous shares their opinion that "in the last stanza of poem, the poet concludes that church going will never end and finds its resolution. When he says that "The bond of people and god can never be broken. The environment empowers us to find out the philosophy of life. If not from the church, then from the graveyard which shows us his spirituality, and you find that your final destination lies here beneath the soil. This ambience promotes a serious thought in you. The church will perform it's duties even in the future and give wisdom to the people to change their faith and destiny, at last the poet show us his faith in God and religion because he here to know the religion guides which important in our life. It is a spiritual way which has benefitted for the human beings.

.....sprawlings of flowers, cut

For Sunday, brownish now;.....

Philip Larkin proclaimed " the effect of world war in " church going ". So, he known as a post-modern and skeptical poet, which describes the reality of particular society. In this lines poet tried to acquaint the faith of people in god. The flowers which are spread there but those flowers are dried. Which means those flowers are dried but their smell spreads in the church which shows faith of people in religion. People are connected with god by spiritual way. If they can't come there " their flowers are tribute their faith in god by spreading their smell". The flowers are always be trustworthy, by the spirit of human being in the poem church going. Which means flowers are the symbol of spiritual longings of human beings.

.....Hatless, I take off

My cycle-clips in awkward reverence.

According to Abdul Ghaffar Ikram, "when Larkin enters, he decided to take off his cycle clips and not with respect but with awkward revenge." But it isn't true because Larkin search a chance to give a respect to God. He not wear a cap. So, he chose another way to give honor to God. Some times poet also feel awkward but he any how to give a respect to God. Church is a place where people to bow one's head in front of God which are the rituals came from ancient time/society. Which following by people till nowadays. So, here poet doesn't refuse to honor of God. It is a different kind of manner to give respect to God in church. There little bit reflects poet's spirituality for Religion, faith in god these all elements show us his character as a spiritual person.

"I sign the book, done an Irish sixpence"

In church going Larkin shares his experience of church .where he was signed book, to donate Irish six pens. During the period, America was influenced by the world war that time for people the Irish six pens wasn't valuable. But here Larkin shows his presence in book by the signature.

Many critics are criticized to Larkin's poem, for an example: James underwood " for Larkin it is the decline of the Church in both a spiritual and material sense. His poem is as much about the decline in Church going as it is literally about the church going "

But, Dr. Pallavi Upadhyay gave a statement: "He had found in the word "spirituality" an expression of the enlargement moment brought." Philip Larkin's feelings for church found in the lines. At that time he without leave the church first take care of their responsibilities which connected with Spiritual longings which attracts him to come in church. Here, Larkin first signed book which also shows his believe in god and after that he donate Irish six pens. Most of the motto behind to donate something to get more blessings from the poor people, so people are most of donate in the temple, church etc. In poem also Larkin's view to help someone by this coins(Irish six pens). Spiritual longings are seeing in the mind of Philip Larkin.

“A hunger in himself to be more serious, And gravitating with it to this ground,

Which, he once heard, was proper to grow wise in,

If only that so many dead lie round.

By this lines Larkin tries to say that "Those people who has a spiritual hunger ,they always be serious about religion, god and rituals". The spirit of religion attracts and take away them in church. "Church , Temple, Gurudwara etc. are the places which attracts most people to come their. Because people have faith in god and they can share the all thoughts of their mind. That is a reason of gravity in social institutions. Larkin shares that you can become a intellectual person because anyone can't disturb you and those who burial in the ground they are in deep sleep in lap of church's ground. Church has a bigger role to shape human being's life from birth, marriage and at the end death. These all ceremonies are performed in church. In the church all buries are completed his/her destination in spiritual house .So, Larkin says that "was proper to grow wise in" by this he tries to say "Human beings can become a good, intellectual person because buries can't bother to alive person". Here he compares human beings those who always be discommode to other people but those who buries in the ground of church they aren't bother to see persons success. By the way " Philip Larkin is saying that church (religion) is a place where you can complete your spiritual longings." It is proved that " Philip Larkin is spiritual person, so he gave suggestions to go spiritual way which provides peace of mind.

7.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, Philip Larkin was a spiritual poet. His poems are most influenced by world war. During the period people are most suffered, that time Larkin wrote religion poems. The church going is one of the poem which shows his faith in religion, he proved church as a pure place. When he was visited church that memories are described in the poem and he was realized great silence which provides mental peace in religious place. Philip Larkin shares that people can achieve their destination by the prayer of God which is possible by spiritual way. Other scope of further research is to define churches of 20th century (post - modern era) and 21st century.

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