

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Sacramental Images in Philip Larkin's Poems

A Thesis

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By

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This Thesis entitled **Sacramental Images in Philip Larkin's Poems**, submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Mukunda Prasad Upadhyaya, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

The sacramental in Larkin's poetry is linked to a fully realized experience of spiritual grace. Sacrament is normally defined as a sign, seal, or symbol of Christian experience or profession the visible means by which divine grace is sought or conferred. In Larkin's poetry the sacramental is defined as a metaphysical mystery or secret somehow just beyond human understanding. It is holy or sacred, evocative of visionary moment. Sometimes there is the suggestion that the persona in one of his poems intuitively grasps the existence of the sacramental; often this occurs unexpectedly while the persona is meditating on some unrelated topic. This experience, while momentary, belies Larkin's otherwise terse, slightly repressed inventory of a world stripped of spiritual meaning. His sacramental relics may have relinquished their transforming power, but the fact that he muses on them at all indicates they have not lost for him their mysterious, their secret appeal. He is fascinated with how to interpret the sacramental in light of his own penchant for skepticism.

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