

THE ARGUMENTS TO SOCIAL APATHY IN SONG OF LOSING MY RELIGION BY R.E.M

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<p>Keywords: Losing My Religion; Mentality R.E.M.; Social Apathy</p>	<p>Abstract: Apathy is lack of interest or paying no attention to any social circumstance around. The idea is also indicated in various literary works including songs. Losing My Religion is a literary work created by the band R.E.M in the form of a song that talks about the heart of someone who lost his faith. The person has done many things for the people he loved but got no reply at all. He lost faith in what he wanted to pursue since he would never get no matter how many he tried. Then, how may social apathy be correlated with Losing My Religion by R.E.M? Through qualitative method, this paper underscores failure felt by the person in the song shapes social apathy towards his or her position in society. Gradually, the apathy affected the person's mentality to never trust anyone anymore. He will only believe any reality as dream. In conclusion, the lack of social sense and a strong sense of apathy will greatly damage people's mentality as reflected on the song. The person only looks down upon the person he or she loves, but the other denied the love by showing apathetic personality.</p>	
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INTRODUCTION

Music is recognized as a media of entertainment with various meanings inside. The song as part of music is literally part of literature in which it reflects matters of people's everyday life. Looking back at how songs are applied in everyday life, interpreting music as part of the life and development of the human soul is a very effective basic force to calm and to inspire many people. Positive minds and creative ideas could be triggered by listening to songs as its meanings are nothing but media to connect emotions of both in body and mind.

Losing My Religion is a song, by R.E.M, released in 1999. Many people thought this song is truly about someone losing his religion. However, the band's vocalist, Stipe, has repeatedly stated that the song's lyrics are not about religion. The phrase "Losing My Religion" is an expression from the southern region of the United States that means "losing one's temper or civility" or "feeling frustrated and desperate" (GeniusMedia, 2010). Stipe told The New York Times the song was about romantic expression especially on unrequited love. Indeed, the meanings of the song is different from the general perspective of it. While religion generally means connection with God, this song widens that aspect to faith.



Then, why did the person lose faith? It is mainly because the person he hoped for did not give him a little hope (Lockwood et al., 2017; Mousavi & Milasi, 2022). In this song, the person seems to struggles alone and hopes that the person he is referring to will repay all his struggles. This song would like to propose reality in which love is not reciprocal at all. Love in this song is only one-sided; making the person who loves does not get the same affection back again (GeniusMedia, 2010). Furthermore, the condition has made the person to feel isolated as if he or she has lost all of his or her world. The person must bear social apathy alone.

Social apathy in general is a psychological condition in which a person loses motivation, is unresponsive, indifferent or also does not care about the emotional, social, or physical aspects of life. Apathy is a common reaction to stress that can be centered on a particular object, for example to a person, activity, or environment (Lockwood et al., 2017; Mahmud, 2022). Apathy is often associated with depression, and it can be a reflection of a person's lack of interest in things that are considered unimportant. In various cases, social apathy is flourished unintendedly, with full awareness, or even combination of both of them. Therefore, social apathy could be related to unconscious feeling accompanied with hatred towards own self and others (Mahmud, 2022). This song is correlated with social apathy especially in the person being told. The person is the victim who fights for love though the other side does not consider it at all. The person then must fight against himself or herself in order to refuse to forget, to leave, and to give up (GeniusMedia, 2010). It will still be done even though in the end he or she will lose faith in what he or she is pursuing and hoping for.

METHOD

By using qualitative method, the researchers analyze the song through the concept of social apathy. The sources are derived from online and offline journals by comparing, reading, and quoting them into paper. The main data is a song by R. E. M entitled *Losing My Religion* while the tool of analysis is the concept of social apathy.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Desperation in Losing My Religion

Losing My Religion is a song by American alternative rock band named R. E. M. It was released as the first single from the group's 1991 album *Out of Time*. Building on a mandolin riff, *Losing My Religion* was unlikely to be a hit for the group, garnering wide airplay on radio as well as on MTV and VH1 due to its critically acclaimed music video (GeniusMedia, 2010). The song became REM's highest chart hit in the United States, reaching No. 4 on the *Billboard Hot 100* and expanded the group's popularity beyond its original fan base. At the 1992 *Grammy Awards*, *Losing My Religion* won two awards, *Best Short Form Music Video* and *Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal*.

This song tells how much someone struggles to get something though he or she could not get it. The person is only seen with one eye so that he ultimately loses his or her religion. The meaning of losing religion here is not losing the religion he embraces to, but losing his or her belief in getting what he or she wants. The full lyric of the song is following;

[Verse 1]

Oh, life is bigger



It's bigger than you, and you are not me
The lengths that I will go to
The distance in your eyes
Oh no, I've said too much
I set it up

[Pre-Chorus 1]
That's me in the corner
That's me in the spotlight
Losing' my religion
Tyrim' to keep up with you
And I don't know if I can do it
Oh no, I've said too much
I haven't said enough

[Chorus]
I thought that I heard you laughing
I thought that I heard you sing
I think I thought I saw you try

[Verse 2]
Every whisper of every waking hour
I'm choosing' my confessions
Tyrim' to keep an eye on you
Like a hurt, lost, and blinded fool, fool
Oh no, I've said too much
I set it up

[Pre-Chorus 2]
Consider this
Consider this the hint of the century
Consider this the slip
That brought me to my knees, failed
What if all these fantasies come flailing around?
And now, I've said too much

[Chorus]

[Bridge]
But that was just a dream
That was just a dream

[Pre-Chorus 3]
That's me in the corner
That's me in the spotlight
Losing' my religion
Tyrim' to keep up with you
And I don't know if I can do it



Oh no, I've said too much
I haven't said enough

[Chorus]

[Outro]

But that was just a dream
Try, cry, why try?
That was just a dream
Just a dream, just a dream, dream. (GeniusMedia, 2010)

The official meaning of this song is about unrequited love or one-sided one. The person who recounts this song loves somebody but the other has no interest in that individual. It is quite a sad song, and include a very lonely feeling to it (GeniusMedia, 2010). The person wants to struggle further, but he or she must stop since the love is never reciprocal at all. Here, the song then indicates alienation felt by that particular person.

In the Verse 1, the person is trying to convince him or herself that the person he or she loves is not larger than life. The person that he or she loves does not have to be the center point of the existence. The person is trying to push the other out of his mind (GeniusMedia, 2010). It is proved in the idea of distance that reflects refusal that the person always wants to realize. Interestingly, the lyrics repeatedly saying that the person has said too much and has set all things up. The lyrics goes on and on to all of the song. It is idea of denial that always interrupts the person to go further. The person wants to go on but he or she knows that it is meaningless. He or she then denies that feeling by saying that it is all set up (SongFacts, 2010). The person wants to be noticed but he or she will never get it. The love will always be unrequited yet the person's love keeps going on and on. The person keeps clinging to whom he or she loves with understanding that the love will always be one-sided.

The Pre-Chorus 1 reflects the person who struggles alone while slowly loses his or her faith. The person wants to keep up with the one he or she loves but the individual doubts it. The person must keep the feeling inside (SongFacts, 2010). He or she keeps blaming own self without saying bad thing to the other person. Gradually, the person closes own self from other matter including the love itself. The person starts to embrace loneliness since he or she is getting angry and frustrated trying to stay ahead of the game and keep up with the competition over the other person. The person, however, is already behind the game, in the spotlight, failing. He or she could not keep up with the pace at all.

The chorus is the saddest part of the song. The person is imagining the other that he or she loves. The imagination keeps going until it becomes dream. Laughing and singing reflect such happiness (SongFacts, 2010). The person wants the other to be happy either by the struggle that he or she made before. However, the happiness never comes since the other keeps ignoring that person. The lyric even said that that the other does not even try to do better. Once again, the lyric indicates single-minded point of view. The person always thought and acted but the reality will never change. Ignorance has become the person's staple friend.

Verse 2 explores how the person pours his or her heart out to a greater extent. The individual obsesses over the other person by constantly watching at all time. The person acts like a fool



who could never think of anything else but this other person (SongFacts, 2010). Consequently, since the love is unrequited, the person feels lost and blinded when not knowing what the other is doing or with whom that person is. The person said too much but never said enough since the other person never really know what kind of love that he or she offers. That sentence also indicates that the person knows that the love is never reciprocal, but he or she will keep struggling (GeniusMedia, 2010). Indeed, the struggling will always be accompanied with pain for own self, but it will never be hatred at all.

The last lyrics or the outro seems to summarize the song by emphasizing love that the person wants will always be a mere dream. The person keeps trying without any hoped result. The action keeps going on even being accompanied by sadness as seen in deed of crying. Then, the person keeps asking why he should always try if the hope is only a dream. The word of dream means like a wish that may indicate unobtainable feeling in negative aspect. However, the dream could be a positive aspect in which any kind of hope will come true someday.

Discussion

Social Apathy and Its Hindrance to Social Matters

Apathy is when someone lost any motivation to do something or is not interested in what is happening around him or her. Apathy can be caused by every day and even neurotic anxiety (Lockwood et al., 2017; Mahmud, 2022). Therefore, this condition may reflect symptom of a mental health problem though it often takes a long time to build. People who feel apathy may not want to think or act on their own behalf. For example, someone may no longer be interested in a relationship, unmotivated at work, uninterested in school, feeling empty without any certain reason, or disinterested by anything. One of the most important issues with developing societies is the phenomenon of social apathy (Lázaro-Perlado, 2019; Mousavi & Milasi, 2022). It correlates to condition of suppressing self to any environmental, human, and emotional issues in his or her social life.

However, condition of apathy is actually very positive in its etymological aspect. The word is derived from Greek words of *apatheia* that means ‘without suffering’ (Etymonline, 2020). The prefix *a-* means ‘without’ or ‘with no other’. *Patheia* is modification of *pathos* that means ‘suffering’, ‘hurt’, and ‘bad emotion’. The use of the word *pathos* is also seen in the word of pathology, which in fact is closer to current meaning of apathy rather than its former definition. ‘Without suffering’ is quite Stoic idea in which people should live without worrying too much. It should be done to consciously release the life from any bad conception.

The meaning is quite changing right now according to further complicated life recently. Being apathy today somehow may be free from a problem but will be much closer to further depression. In some way, being alone is healthy to maintain privacy and self-control (Colman, 2003). Meanwhile, people rarely know what is the true limit of being in a positive apathy. They close themselves from social interaction, enjoying that, and then forget how to re-open again to former situation. If that happens, people will choose to live in comfort zone. Then, living in total apathy is a total choice either. Moreover, he or she will be remote and hold the apathy furthermore.

The main idea of social apathy is being senseless to any social condition. It applies to individuals who would not want to concentrate to any public matters. These people think that they should stay away from any public interests (Mousavi & Milasi, 2022). The reason behind



this condition is both intentional and unconscious. If it is intentional, he or she is aware that action to any social contact is tiresome. It is usually noted through political kind of things in which a person does not care about important aspects of human life, such as emotional, physical, and social aspects (Gilead et al., 2018). This idea could be named as active apathy. If it is stated unconsciously, he or she does not really know that he or she is already tired to any social interaction. This matter is usually related to any psychological condition that hinders people to get socially involved. This side is better spoken as passive apathy.

In widened aspects of social apathy, the concept is related to five main characteristics. Those are explained in the following; first, apathy comes from inside of an individual in order to react to other wider idea, especially society. It is always related to individuals in which any reason behind it could be subjective and unique as well (Lockwood et al., 2017; Pontus et al., 2014). Though the reason of being an apathy is derived from social information, the embraced points could only be explained individually. Therefore, any apathy could always be defined as social one since individual does not merely correspond to matter of being individual but he or she relates information of expanded social condition (Colman, 2003; Mousavi & Milasi, 2022).

Second, social apathy finds no hope in the future. People with this feeling understand that hope is always needed, but they do not believe that it already came to surface. They think that all aspects will always lead to failure. Even if there is hope, it will not be a useful way out to do any response (Matsumoto, 2009). Hope may always grow, but there will always be shoes ready to stomp it. Therefore, people with social apathy think that it is better not to have hope at all rather than being hurt by being witness to others' deeds in destroying it (Pontus et al., 2014). The idea could be similar to Stoic idea in accepting all things by open hand. However, social apathy accept all things with cynical thinking (Kahn, 2018; Pontus et al., 2014). Somehow, ironies are also in their minds indicating perpetual bad condition at any kind of cost.

Third, social apathy does not believe to any progress that will be made. People assume that the condition will be the same again (Matsumoto, 2009; Mousavi & Milasi, 2022). Any change is inevitable but it will not totally revolutionize anything. In many cases, this condition is about boredom to old ways, but seeing no way out to the future (Goldberg et al., 2011). They hold to the idea of 'new bottle, old wine' in which any appearance may change to another, but the problems remain the same. Then, it will raise to idea of lack of empathy as well (Goldberg et al., 2011; Kahn, 2018). People with this apathy will reject any new idea since it will never solve the root of any problem either. Any stagnant condition is prominent and status quo will always be there accompanied with fixation shaped by any existing problem.

Fourth, the idea of apathy accentuates matter of negligence. People know that they have power to change things, but they never want to do it (Aleman & Lanctôt, 2021; Goldberg et al., 2011). They choose to do little things especially for themselves. Ethically, this idea is related to Hedonism, in which joy will always be reached while any pain is constantly avoided. By choosing only good things, people with this apathy will always stay away to any living dangerously. People will choose to do nothing since they believe that there are other people who will do it. In other word, being indifferent is the ultimate attitude of apathy (Aleman & Lanctôt, 2021; Lázaro-Perlado, 2019).

Fifth, beside negligence, main idea of apathy is closely related to unwillingness. In this case, this decision will presume that any renewal is impossible. It is better to take care of own



problems without considering others. However, this concept is the total opposite of conscience itself. People would always like to do good things, but ego may always choose differently. Ego as reflected on self will remain in state of sluggishness and even slothfulness (Gilead et al., 2018). They will think about 'que sera sera' or 'whatever will be, will be'. In most ways, this kind of thought is considered as bad, but somehow it could be rational either. One idea behind why it is rational is that there is no reciprocal condition that people will get if they do something further (Gilead et al., 2018; Lázaro-Perlado, 2019). They will not get what should be gotten by doing things, so they choose not to do anything.

Those five ideas indicate apathy is going out from any social interaction. On a hand, for those who take apathy as social stance does not shape any serious matter. It is not merely about meeting other persons, but also talking about social things. However, the circumstances may differ for those who use being apathetic as coping mechanism (Ahmad et al., 2018; Pontus et al., 2014). People with this symptom will be harmful to self by abandoning self-care, as they could not take any difficulties furthermore. If the condition keeps going on, individuals could be over-strengthened then it will omit existence of other people in themselves (Aleman & Lanctôt, 2021). For example, the ultimate situation of losing hope is never good in any aspect. If the condition is piled neurotically, condition to attain spirit to live is unobtainable, and then any attempt to end life could always be possible (Ahmad et al., 2018; Gilead et al., 2018).

The Indications of Social Apathy in *Losing My Religion*

The correlation between this song and the theory of social apathy is very strong. It is related to the basic meaning of the title of the song that goes out of any total definition. Losing My Religion does not mean that the person loses the religion he or she adheres to, but it shows lost of confidence in him or herself to reach what the person wants (SongFacts, 2010). In this song, though that person has already given a thousand signs, a thousand proofs, and a thousand statements of hope, he or she could never melt the other's heart.

Pre Chorus 1 indicates that there is no hope for that person to show his or her further love. The singer said it through losing religion by trying to keep up with the other one. It actually means that he or she is losing faith to get the attention of the other person. Then, that person realized that he or she said too much though it is not enough at all. The person thinks that the other fell in love, but the other one did not care at all (SongFacts, 2010). Here the apathy is situated to both sides of that person and the opposite. The other one is lack of feeling empathy to someone or something, as he or she is careless to that person. It may be seen as a pretense, but it is already a reality to the main person. Indeed, the lack of sympathy makes the person to have apathy either. Hope is lost since the other will never make the love as interaction but one-sided only.

The loss of hope then flourishes matter of being stagnant. The person has done the best to show how big the love is for the other, but the other will not comply at all. Any attention is not given at all since the other person only sees through one eye. The absence of sympathy also symbolizes useless sacrifice made by the main person to the other. As the interest do not come in both ways, the main person then loses his or her faith. It is useless to go on since there is no reciprocal interest either (SongFacts, 2010). Yet, that person realized by seeing to the past to how many things have been done to show the love to the other.

In Verse 2, the person in the song is trying to get an attention from the other person. Though it may hurt, the person will still do it. Later, the deeds make that person blind about anything like



a fool (GeniusMedia, 2010; SongFacts, 2010). The other does not care at all. Then the person tried again and again, but only failure is shown in the end. The person even thinks that it is not the main reality. It is merely fantasy that someday true reality will turn any unwillingness to perfect love. It is known how big or how thick the apathy of the other person is. Lack of feeling empathy from the other slowly kills the main person's life, hope and also dream of better future (Firozjaeian et al., 2017; Lázaro-Perlado, 2019).

Here, the presence of empathy has a very big impact on humans both for own self and others. Likewise, the lack of empathy has a very big impact on the people around, especially families, relatives, friends, co-workers, and other beings (Aleman & Lanctôt, 2021; Lázaro-Perlado, 2019). Because in the absence of empathy, the one who loses faith is not only one self, but also other people as well. Moreover, even slightest attention will have a big impact on the mentality of people who are trying.

Then, the chorus is quite sad as it totally reflects apathy. Everything that the person has done is out of any sense at all. The person could hear the other is laughing and singing, but those only exist in a dream of his own mind. It will never be a reality like the one the person hopes (Goldberg et al., 2011). It is because the other totally ignores that main person. Feeling apathy of someone really can break someone's mind, make someone's mind messed up, or maybe can lead to depression (Firozjaeian et al., 2017; Pontus et al., 2014). In addition, not being heard while speaking also has made people feel alone, made people feel unappreciated, especially people who have tried their best but did not get the attention at all.

In the end, the last lyrics or the outro seem to summarize the song by emphasizing love that the person wants will always be a mere dream. The person keeps trying even to the point of shedding tears to get the love of the person he or she loves. The effort that he or she does can be seen in how he or she has a hope that keeps growing as he or she tries to get the love. The word dream means a wish or hope that may indicate an unobtainable feeling in the negative aspect (Ahmad et al., 2018; Goldberg et al., 2011). Indeed, this is clear reflection of negative apathy. As it has been seen in the last lyric or outro that the person shows social apathy, he or she thinks that what he or she has tried continuously in all aspects will always lead to failure. The failure seen from this person in the last lyrics is that he gets unrequited love. That love is similar to final form that he or she must accept everything as it is.

CONCLUSION

In summary on this topic, *Losing My Religion* is closely related with social apathy. The true meaning of the song also indicates people who lose faith in someone they want to have, or in another sense, it is about unrequited love. The main person is only seen by one-sided relation. The person wants acknowledgment as a little appreciation of the efforts given. The affection could be so valuable that the absence of that may be damaging mentally. The song specifically said that any hope should always be preserved to bring better future.

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