



Page Number 279-280, 2018.

Cite This Article: Mohd Rafiq, "Nature in Emily Dickinson's Poetry", International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research in Arts and Humanities, Volume 3, Conference World Special Issue 1,

Abstract:

I will attempt to explain Nature in Emily Dickinson's poetry. Emily Dickinson was an American poet who spent entire life in writing poems particularly on Nature. Her poems consist of latter that she had written to her father and sister-in-law. These poems in shape of letters were published later after her death. She observes and finds Nature all around her in the hills and in the animals. She thinks that there is no efficient way to express the simplicity of Nature and there is no any art from that would helps us to express the Nature in any form. She tries to tell that Nature is around us everywhere. We can only enjoy Nature, but we are unable to capture in any art form. Emily Dickinson, in her poems has used nature as the tool of imagery, symbolism and metaphor to express her feelings in precise manner, where the reader could relate to and understand the intentions of the poet. The poet is a person who loves Nature and her poems would have nature as an element of imagery and symbolism. The deep meaning of her poems is that we are surrounded by Nature everywhere; it may be any as big as the hill or as small as the squirrel. But inspite of being surrounded by Nature everywhere, no human art or skill could reach even closer to the perfection of Nature. Nature is simple and brilliant and our wisdom is nothing in front of it.

Key Words: Gentlest Mother, Core of Nature, Innate Mystery, Sunrise, Storms, Bees, World of Man, Grotesque, Cycle of Seasons & Transcendental

Introduction:

Emily Dickinsn was born on Dec. 10,1830 in a small American Town called Amherst. Her father, Edward Dickinson was a lawyer who died in 1874 and her mother became a paralysed a year later. Although part of prominent family with strong ties to its community, Dickinson lived much of her life in reclusive isolation. Of course, her acquaintances were likely aware of her writing, it was not until after her death in 1886 when Lavinia, Dickinson's younger sister, discovered her cache of poems the breadth of her work became apparent to the public.

Having a strict puritan education, Emily Dickinson was marked by restraint; however, her poetry provided the outlet that her passions curved. Influenced by the Transcendental and Romantic Movements, Dickinson's passions found there outlet in the wonders of Nature. She perceived the relationships among all Natural things. One critic wrote that Dickinson perceived the relationship between a drop of dew and a flood, between a grain of sand and a desert, her keen observation of Nature helped Dickinson to understand the universality of the human experience. There was always a universal truth in Nature. For Dickinson, private emotions, such as unfulfilled love, took an importance of great and profound events in which Nature is connected. Dickinson also compares the growth and actions of animal life to human development. She spent much of her times observing Nature in her garden and from her window, feeling a strong connection with Nature just as Thoreau and Emerson did. In her poem "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass", the allusion to the serpent of Eden cannot be missed. So, while the poem is about Nature (the snake), the allusions to the serpent of Eden cannot be over looked again the universal experience. A reclusive person, Emily Dickinson scrutinized the Natural world at her feet for the truths that would reveal.

In the poem, Nature the Gentlest Mother, Nature is personified as a gentle mother. There is no image in the world more benevolent as a gentle mother. Nature watches over her creations, personified as children. Humans represent the inter polar, an unwanted guest that frightens Nature's children. It is like when a mother is walking down the street with her children and some drunken buffoon comes barreling down using foul language and the mother does everything in her power to shield her children's ears and distract them from the uncleanness of the world. That is what Nature does when human travelers come near. Nature represents and purity and love, far outstripping the creations of humans. Some of Emily Dickinson's poems portrays Nature's decaying and corruptive authority. Death lies at the core of Nature, continually threatening man with extinction. In few poems like The Morning after Woe and I Dreaded that First Robin, she analyse Nature's betrayal of those hearts that love her best. The destructive power of Nature's wind, rain and lightning-storms also impressed Miss Dickison. But her chief response to Nature was a fascination with its continual change, the daily passage of the sun, the sudden alternations brought by storms, the miracle of spring-growth, and the deceptive appearance of Indian summer. The unusual and odd aspects of Nature attracted her and she transmutes unpoetic subjects like crickets, flies, weeds, and rats into art. She qualifies her genuine enthusiasm for the beauty of external Nature with an awareness of its innate mystery and strangeness. Never certain of any clear correspondence among God, Nature, and man, she remained a skeptic who both admired and doubted. Miss Dickinson refuses to employ Nature as a guide for moral behavior. She show too an unusual skill in presenting sensuous impressions. Her poems on birds, flowers, insects, natural presses rarely become didactic or insist upon divine analogues.

The drama of sunset particularly attracted her .One poem, "I, Tell you how the sun rose, "uses a series of action-verbs and domestics images to convey the quick surprise and changing colors of the down. The dramatic occurrences of summer-rains and lighting-storms impressed her equally. Unleashed power of these storms, with their complete dominion over man's world, gave her sense of "circumference" and religious fear which deepened their picturesque effect. "The Wind begun to knead the grass" employs touches of local colour which, together with a fantastic of action-verbs, exhibit the mysterious chaos of a sudden summer downpour. A later storm-poem, "there came a Wind like a Bugle." Enlarge the feeling of reverence and surprise that any life can survive such onslaughts. MISS Dickinson loved flowers and had a greater knowledge of them then of any other item in Nature, through her poems on the rose, buttercup, and the daisy are generally conventional and sentimental.

Some of Miss Dickinson's best Nature-poems pertain to bees, birds, and insects. She was particularly found of bees and delighted in caricaturing their incessant activity. Alight poem "A bee his burnished carriage," describes the honey-gathering

process as the frank seduction of a quivering rose. Two of her descriptions of birds dazzle the reader their exuberant images and extravagant conceits. Those descriptions pertain to the oriole in the poem "One of the ones that Midas Touched," and the blue jay in the poem, "No brigadier throughout the Year." However her most famous Nature-portrait is that of the humming-bird in the poem. "A Route of Evanescence," which besides registering a vivid poetic response to Nature, also conveys Miss Dickinson's sense of the mystery and elusiveness of Nature.

In the best Nature poem, Miss Dickinson skillfully deepens her concrete detail and sensuous surface-imagery by contracting the world of man with that of Nature. One group of Miss Dickinson's Nature poems deals with the neglected and grotesque aspects of Nature, the rat, the mushroom, the fly, the bat, the snake, the weeds, the frog, the stones, the spider, and the caterpillar. Although romantic writers avoided those aspects of Nature and earnest moralists ignored their existence, Miss Dickinson, make them live before us. The lighter, humorous, side of Nature's off shoots in depicted in the poem, "The mushroom is the Elf of plant," Making use of the fairy associations connected with elves, she whimsically explores the illusory, transitory qualities that underlie Nature's surface. The poem, "A narrow Fellow in the Grass" contains a disturbing investigation of Nature's mystery. Here Miss Dickinson examines the terror and awe that the presence of a snake can give rise to. The snake in the poem develops into a symbol of the unknown. A sense of hidden terror behind Nature's surface-beauty fascinates and frightens the onlooker. Another poem, dealing with the bat, is perhaps Dickinson's finest treatment of Nature's misfits. Though this poem never achieves the frightening intensity of the verses about the snake, it raises some perplexing questions concerning the purpose behind Creations and men's limitations in comprehending the divine plan.

The seasonal cycle had also a great appeal for Dickinson. The miracle of the barren winter containing the seeds of fruitful summer and the rich crops foretelling the death of harvest never ceased to fascinate her. But she realised that no one could fully understand Nature's processes and so she restrained her enthusiastic response to the change of seasons with undertones of this mystery. Spring was of course her favoured season, since it displayed the wonder of rebirth and openly promised the warm beauty of summer. The poem, "New Feet within my Garden go", considers the whole cycle of the seasons. Emily Dickinson constantly examined man's relation to the world of natural phenomena. She did not resort to any easy religious affirmation or indulge in excessive romantic enthusiasm. She looked closely at Natural objects, contemplated their functions, and recorded her responses with scrupulous exactness. This is amply illustrated by the poem, "Of Bronze and Blaze" which concedes the grandeur of the northern lights, the poem "How Happy is the Little Stone" dealing with the simplicity of a stone and the poem "Further in Summer than the Birds" which deals with the songs of the crickets. These poems clearly restraint the slow artistic melting of martial images into provocative thought. All Dickinson's best Nature-poems continually challenge and invite new readings, and will therefore continue to fascinate as long as there are sensitive readers of poetry. Her unique approach to the external beauty of nature, the power of storms, the strangeness of creation, the fleeting aspects of the material and the mystery of the seasonal process fully demonstrate that even the most neglected and hackneyed subjects can be revitalized by genius.

Conclusion:

This study corroborates the embodiment of Nature in her poetry. Emily Dickinson was a versatile and genius poet of Nature. She expressed contradictory attitudes towards Nature. At one extreme, Nature is portrayed as "the gentlest mother". She loved the great aspects of Nature. She was full of interest and affection for its creatures. There a close association between her use of symbols of Nature and death. She did not consciously set out to promulgate a doctrine or even to be a Nature poet, rather she found the external world so variously and intricately related to the inner world from which she drew her poetry that she could not avoid including it.

References:

1. Well, H.W. introduction to Emily Dickinson, 1947. Hendricks House Inc.
2. Gelpi, A. Emily Dickinson, The Mind of the Poet, 1965, Harvard University Press.
3. www.beamingnotes.com/2014/4/26/analysis-nature-emily-dickinson.
4. www.enotes.com/honework-help/what-significance-nature-emily-dickinsons-poems-120131
5. www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/e/emily-dickinsons-poems/nature-scene-and-meaning