

Emily dickinson a unique voice



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EMILY DICKINSON Romanticism has many complex aspects, but one of its most impressive elements is how it uses nature as a source of inspiration. The sublimity of the natural world inspires the imagination of artists to soar high above ordinary daily goings-on. By stepping outside of human life, a sort of poetic communion can take place between the artist or poet and the natural world. The poet can then bring this experience back to his reader. Emily Dickinson often accomplished this effect. She was a truly unique and romantic poet.

Many of Dickinsons poems are quite remarkable for the way in which the speaker steps out of herself and seems to go careening around the world. She becomes more of a life force than a person and can see and experience almost anything. She shows that even the smallest things around us—a grain of sand, a pismire, a cow—contain an enormous history and an enormous power. A mouse is capable of inspiring the awe of an entire religion (Blake 56). Most significantly, she seems to believe, like Whitman, that “ the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all machinery.” This is a celebration of all that has gone into creating the world and how deeply it can inspire us—like the best romantic poetry.

Emily Dickinson can also be seen to affirm some of these same themes in the poem LXVI, about a bee:

Contending with the grass,
Near kinsman to herself,
For privilege of sod and sun,
Sweet litigants for life.

.....

Her public is the noon,

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Her providence the sun,
Her progress by the bee proclaimed
In sovereign, swerveless tune.

Once again nature is an enormous canvas which is all interlinked and inspires great beauty. The bee is “kinsman” to the grass, and all the things of the world are “sweet litigants for life.” And on top of these sentiments, the bee is “sovereign.” These emphasis on nature shows how unique she is. Two important elements of romanticism are the individual versus society and a reliance on human emotion over cold rationality. Both of these principles can be seen in effect in Rousseau’s *Confessions* and Emily Dickinsons poetry (Knapp 102). Rousseau’s long autobiography *Confessions* constantly points out how different and apart he is from other people. “I am not made like any of those I have seen; I venture to believe that I am not made like any of those who are in existence. If I am not better, at least I am different” (Rousseau 23). This is a central theme of romanticism. The person who lives truly, understanding himself and nature, in tune with his emotions, is a person apart. The romantic is often portrayed as alone and sensitive—either ostracized by others because of his uniqueness or choosing like a hermit to be free of the conformist and corrupting world of society. This book also celebrates the power and centrality to life of emotion. He writes that, “If I had ever, a single time in my life, tasted all the delights of love in their fullness, I do not believe that my frail existence could have endured it; I should have died on the spot.” This too is a vital aspect of romanticism, one which Emily Dickinson captures perfectly in her work.

Work consulted

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