

Themes in emily dickinson's poetry

Profession, Poet



Emily Dickinson continuously mentioned in her poems, death and different death scenarios which leads the reader to believe that she is not afraid of what the after-life is like. In the 19th- Century she was considered to be one of the two leading American poets with the other famous poet Walt Whitman. Emily Dickinson's unique management of death stands outstanding in the American poetry and literature history.

She spent most of her time in her room alone, writing poetry. She was born in 1830 and died in 1886 in her house. She was known for the lady in white, because she would only talk to visitors through a closed door and would only wear the color white. Emily Dickinson in her poetry correlates God and death.

In the poem I heard a fly buzz when I died, Emily uses symbolism towards the fly which is representing death. Many people read, talk and some have even had a chance to witness a death, but no one knows how death feels or looks like. Emily Dickinson tries to show readers a different way of accepting death. As an example, in this poem she states, I heard a Fly buzz when I died The Stillness in the Room Was like the Stillness in the Air Between the Heaves of Storm (I heard a fly buzz when I died, paragraph 1) in this part it shows how Emily Dickinson tries to put the reader in the eyes of the person dying in the poem. The fly symbolizes calmness and peace, which shows what they will see in the after-life as they leave the real world and go on to heaven. Another example in which Dickinson talks about death and the afterlife in the poem is With Blue uncertain stumbling Buzz Between the light and me and then the windows failed and then I could not see to see (I heard a fly buzz when I died, paragraph 5) in this line it shows how the fly slowly

left and when she tried to open her eyes she could not see anymore. This goes to show how god can be present in many ways and in many forms. It shows how she realized her soul was not in her body anymore. Now, it is part of heaven which means God has closed her door to the real world and opened it to the after-life.

Furthermore, Dickinson continues to mention death in her poetry putting as an example *Because I could not stop death* which is one of her most famous poems. Humans tend to imagine that death is the worst event that could happen in life. In this five paragraph poem, Emily portrays death as something that is peaceful and comfortable. Dickinson makes death look like more of a person than an event. She describes death as a man who is kind and a gentleman even though it is coming to take her away to the other world in a carriage. Emily states *Because I could not stop for Death He kindly stopped for me* (*Because I could not stop for Death*, paragraph 1) meaning that death comes as a surprise, when no one expects it, however, she received it very welcoming. *He kindly stopped for me* shows how she felt towards death, and how she was ready and calm for the death to come for her anytime.

Also, it represents how she is dying slowly, not in a hurry. Making the readers to believe she had a disease because of the long period of time she had to die. In the third stanza when Dickinson states, *We passed the School, where Children strove At Recess in the ring, We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain, We passed the Setting Sun* (*Because I could not stop for Death*, paragraph 3) she is referring to all the phases of her life. School meaning her childhood,

fields of gazing grain meaning her adulthood and finally the setting sun meaning how her life is ending and entering to the other world. Whenever someone is dying, based on God beliefs the human being get to see a flashback of everything they have lived in a short period of time, just like Emily tried to demonstrate in that paragraph. Finally, in the last paragraph Dickinson states I first surmised the Horses ? Heads Were toward Eternity (Because I could not stop for death, paragraph 5) demonstrating that they lastly arrived at eternity, meaning her time in Earth has come to an end. She emphasizes death as a journey and when they arrived at that last stage her journey ended. She was not longer dying, she was in fact dead.

In addition, Emily Dickinson continues having relationship with the afterlife and God in another of her poems I felt a funeral in my brain. She begins the first paragraph by saying I felt a Funeral, in my Brain, And Mourners to and fro Kept treading - treading - till it seemed That Sense was breaking through (I felt a funeral in my brain, paragraph 1) showing that she is not comparing the feeling people get when they are at a funeral. She states, I felt a funeral not I felt like a funeral meaning she was experiencing a physical sensation with her five senses. Also, in the second stanza she declares Kept beating - beating till I thought My mind was going numb (I felt a funeral in my brain, paragraph 2) which the reader gets the idea that the repetition of words Beating, beating represents her heart pounding and mind going berserk with everything she was facing in the moment. Equally important, in the last stanza she declares And then a Plank in Reason, broke, And I dropped down, and down And hit a World, at every plunge, And Finished knowing then (I felt a funeral in my brain, paragraph 5) Emily with this paragraph tries to explain

the readers she has nothing left now, her reason was the only thing she had and it was broken. Meaning her mind was not conscious anymore. The words I dropped down and hit a world express how she was transported to a different world that was not Earth and suddenly she also stopped knowing or thinking. Representing that she is now dead. This poem symbolizes how Emily lost control of her body but still was conscious of everything that was happening in her funeral. The intense description Dickinson uses in her poem makes the readers to portrait themselves as if they were experiencing something similar. However, there are many thoughts about this ending in Emily's poem I felt a funeral in my brain.

In the same way, Dickinson tried to expose more about dark and spiritual beliefs and symbolized it through her poetry. This poem is for someone who is really attached to nature and God. Emily starts the poem with a joyful tone. In the first stanza, Some keep the Sabbath going to church, I keep it, staying at home, with a bobolink for a chorister, and an orchard for a dome (Some keep the Sabbath going to church, paragraph 1) meaning she does not feel necessary to go worship church like other people because she had a garden that serves as a worship place. Symbolizing that humans do not need a specific place to worship God, it can be anywhere. In the second stanza, she refers to the clothing people use while going to church Some keep the Sabbath in Surplice, I, just wear my wings (Some keep the Sabbath going to church, paragraph 2) meaning that people tend to dress properly whenever they are going to church. On the contrary, when she says, I just wear my wings she believes that individuals should be in comfortable clothing to pray.

Furthermore, when she reached the third stanza she makes the readers believe that pastor's speeches are all about the afterlife. And the sermon is never long, so instead of getting to heaven, at last, I'm going all along (Some keep the Sabbath going to church, paragraph 3) this sentence means that she believes that the priest talks more about what happen when people die, rather than talking of the present life. She believes pastors must talk about what is going on in this life because is the life humans are living in the moment. Emily Dickinson shows towards this poem how she feels lucky to be one of the persons who can feel spiritual by herself. She makes the readers believe how God is always around us and that sometimes people who go to church, sit and listen to the pastor, do not have that spiritual connection with God. Emily believes that just like God is everywhere, individuals could reach him and feel close to him everywhere too.

Finally, another poem talking about God, its beliefs and how Emily feels about it. In I know that he exists based on Joe Dimattio a blogger that writes about love and religion he states Emily Dickinson was surrounded by a God world in transition. The old faith-based religion of the pilgrims had become an idea in constant need of revitalization (Joe Dimattio, 2018) Dickinson express her feelings in four paragraphs talking about God and nature, which make the readers get a different idea from what everyone says about God and life. In the first stanza I know that He exists. Somewhere in silence He has hid his rare life From our gross eyes. (I know that he exists, paragraph 1) she talks about how he exists, referring to God, but nevertheless she does not know where to find him. She makes the readers imagine that she believes in God and restates that he is everywhere just like she said in her

poem Some keep the Sabbath going to church. However, in the next paragraphs she makes people get the idea that she does not truly trust God.

According to Susan Kornfeld, a blogger who talks only about Emily Dickinson states that The poet frames this as a game. The woman who wanders in the woods seeking evidence of the Divine and imagining that an angel or God himself might manifest in front of her is hoping for a fond Ambush.(Susan Kornfeld, 2012) Which supports what Emily portrays on her poem, she started to give the audience the thought of her doubting God. Also, in the third stanza she added But should the play Prove piercing earnest Should the glee glaze In Death's stiff stare giving the audience the chance to believe that she is referring to a game that ends up in death. Also, she tries to the readers understand the game, she is trying to represent it as Hide and seek. Which represents how Emily feels with God because she feels he is not there when he is needed the most. Finally, she made the readers imagine that Emily Dickinson did believe in God, but some events happened in her life that made her doubt about his existence.

To conclude, Emily Dickinson frequently questioned the nature of the universe and Gods beliefs. Out of all the poems she created, only seven were published and the seven were famous for her unique way of management through writing about death, nature and God. Emily Dickinson changed the way people perceived death, and made it seem as if it was a peaceful event. Not only did she convince the reader to look at death as something not so worrisome, but she also made people reflect the power of God. Thus, this

way it is shown how Emily Dickinson was so curious and passionate about revealing answers and associating death and God.