

THE THEME OF MYSTICISM IN WALT WHITMAN AND EMILY DICKINSON'S POETRY

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ABSTRACT: *As mystic poets, Emily Dickinson and Whitman are the two very important and talented writers in the arena of American literature. Both of them are famous for their divine poetry. Emily Dickinson focused greatly on self-awareness as opposed to Walt Whitman who focused on nature. However, he is called a 'Modern Christ' but his dual nature is found in his poetry as he fused profound spirituality with an equally profound animality. In Emily Dickinson's poetry perfection, lightness, boldness and a chaste refinement are found which signify her individualism. This paper highlights two of these transcendentalist poets' similarity and disparity of views, their experience of personal life, their poetic style and diction.*

ABSTRACT: Poetry, Mystic Poets, Dickinson, Whitman, American Literature

INTRODUCTION

Whitman's grand poem "Song of Myself" is a sprawling combination of biography, sermon, and poetic crosscurrents. His poetry shows the impact of the romantic idealism which exists in the years before the civil war and also shows some replica of the scientific realism which dominated the literary scene after 1865. His poem on nature shows the harmony in Nature that has a halo of mysticism. An ideal poet, he believed that he is the poet of man first, then of nature, and finally of God. These elements are united by the poet's harmonious visionary power. Whitman's ideal poet is a singer of the self; he also understands the relation between self and the large realities of the social and political world and of the spiritual universe. He intuitively comprehends the great mystics of life, birth, death, and resurrection and plays the part of a priest and a prophet for mankind.

Miss Dickinson is a recluse; but her poetry is rich with a profound and varied experience; motivated by an arrogant passion for the truth. The introspection of Emily Dickinson's poetry is that she discovers some grounds, in the nature of her soul and its affections for a personal conception of such ideas as Heaven and Immortality. Her favorite subject is not death, as is long supposed; for life, love, and the soul are also recurring subjects. In her poetry, she carries the doctrine of self-sufficient individualism with its compliment of passionate moral mysticism. Emily Dickinson's opinion of the traditional anthropomorphic "God" who was still her day, a portentous gentleman.

Her real reverence to God that makes her a mystic lies in a more manifest and more beautiful evidence of divine will than creeds and churches.

The Words "Mystic" and "mysticism" have little importance in modern materialistic society. Evelyn Underhill says, "In Christianity the natural mysticism is latent in humanity and at a certain point of development breaks out in every race, and is attributed for the first time true and distinct personality to its Object ." ----- namely God.

“The aim and content of Christian mysticism is not self or nature but God. Mystic experience does exist in any poetic or creative expression. Down the centuries, the poets are visited by that power which the ancients call the Muse. In the same way, the mystic describes his ascetic union with Divine Truth. Both poets and mystics have experience of vision or of the inspiring breath, which the mystics call “the dark night of the soul”. So mysticism involves an obsessive concern with problems such as death, the existence of the soul, immortality, the existence of God and heaven, salvation and redemption. Mysticism also means the power to establish a spiritual contact with God. The mystic is a visionary who holds a direct relation with the ‘Divine Spirit’. The themes of Dickinson’s poetry reveal extreme preoccupation with the effect of death, the nature of the soul, the problem of immortality, the possibility of faith and the reality of God. There is strong mystical element in her poetry. Miss Dickinson’s poems are concerned with the Creator, the Redeemer with death and immortality. The themes of many of her poems deal with deep insight, faith and religious conviction but there is no effort at a complete identification with the Divine Spirit, which motivates the true mystic. She believes in God but her belief was not enriched by any vision of God. She is obsessed with death and heaven. Her speculation was imaginative and was based upon sensory experience. We can find metaphysical thoughts in the poems like – “Great streets of silence led away”, “I went to heaven”. “I died for beauty”, “Safe in their Alabaster Chambers”, “Ample make this bed”, and “what inn is this “. Death, in these poems is an invisible as the union with God, which was to be reserved until death. Dickinson has no longing for death which the mystic hopes for communion with God after death.

Having Calvinistic upbringing, Dickinson was preoccupied with death and immortality. She regarded immortality as the “flood subject”. The problem of immortality and its mystic became a cause of poetic tension in her. She desired immortality and asserted that the soul never changed. She denied the orthodox vision of paradise and feared that eternity would be annihilation. She firmly believed that love endured beyond the grave would lead her to immortality. Majority of her poems accept God as a true personality, an omnipotent ruler and a supreme royal person. In some of her poems, she uses the word “Soul” for the word ‘person’ or ‘human being’ used by other poets. Some of her love poems dedicated to God-“Given in marriage unto thee, “Title Divine is Mine” and “Mine – by the right of the white Election” in all of which she speaks rapturously of her marriage with God. In “I taste a liquor never brewed”, she expresses the ecstasy that accompanies a divine revelation. “Those not live yet,” states about the existence of the soul after death. Some poems deal with the tradition of the Christian church, the last supper, the Crucifixion which are common element for Christian tradition. Her attitude towards God is that “ He exists”.

Dickinson looks upon death as the gateway to the next existence of special glory which is common with the conventional paradise, offered in the hymns and sermons of her day.

God presides over an opulent kingdom whose splendor is signified by Miss Dickinson with words like “purple”, “royal”, “privilege”, “emerald”, “diadems” and “courtier”. Such words and concepts help to reinforce her view of religion. Dickinson radically challenges Christianity and indeed all religious belief. This extraordinary range of opinions as to what Dickinson believed and the abundance of textual evidence support each of them. It has prompted many scholars to adopt what we might call an agonistic attitude toward Dickinson’s beliefs. As **Denis Donoghue** put it, “of her religious faith virtually anything may be said. She may be represented as an agnostic attitude toward heretic, a skeptic, a Christian (quoted in Yazzi Zo)

A list of her poems infer a coherent idea of God. They are “of course –I prayed/ And did God care?”; the outgrown childhood god of “I prayed, at first a little Girl”.

The faceless denaturalized “Infinitude” of “My period had come for Prayers”; the

Diseyesque savior of vermin addressed in the poem that begins” Papa above! / Regard a mouse/ Overpowered by the cat!” No one , I assured them. In the poem,” of course. I prayed” we can see her true distinct attitudes. Here God emerges as an inconsistent source of blessings and as the ultimate guarantor of the meaning of our lives. Here Dickinson expresses her rage at God’s refusal to respond to prayer. As we go through the poem, we can see in the following lines, she wants to dramatize a childish, egocentric relation to God, in which God is seen purely as a function of one’s own needs. The end of the poem is more adult, intellectualized version of the same relationship. So she says- ‘

Of course- I prayed – And did God care?

He cared as much as on the Air

A Bird-- had stamped her foot

And cried “Give Me”----

My Reason—Life—

I had not had – But for Yourself

‘There better charity

To leave me in the Atom’s Tomb Merry, and Naught, and gay, and numb—

Than this smart Misery.

Moreover, Dickinson shows here her “immature” relation to God and prayer whose symptoms could range form childish rage to metaphysical wit to a profound rejection of human existence.

In the poem those—dying then, “shows Dickinson’s instability of her religious beliefs. So she says—

Those—dying them,

Knew where they went—

They went to God’s Right Hand—

That Hand is amputated now

And God cannot be Belief

Makes the Behavior small—

Better an igvis fatuus

Than no illume at all.

Here there is a sharpness of the imagery of the amputated “Right Hand” to the deeper shock of moving from a description of beliefs (What God is now). The decay of human belief in some way led to God’s amputated “abdication” or conversely, whether “Those dying then” were simply shielded by their belief from the harsh realities. The last lines of the stanza assert that God is not there but it is not true. It refers to human acceptance of God’s absence. But though Dickinson’s God rarely seems to make her happy but she never discards the idea that human and Divine are made for each other. Dickinson’s religious belief is not a static answer but a lifelong pursuit of the most difficult existential questions, a pursuit that makes them supremely sensitive to the nuances and contradiction of the human effort to engage with that which is beyond us.

We should also keep it in our mind that when Emily Dickinson uses the prefix “I” in her poetry is often uncertain whether she refers to herself or more generally the reader. Nevertheless, from around 1862, there is an increased emphasis on a shift from human love to a mystical devotion. In the absence of meaningful human attachments, she shifts her focus to perhaps the only real alternative—the Divine Mystery.

“Title divine –Is Mine!”

The Wife—without the sign!”

Empty my Heart, of Thee—

Its single Artery—

Begin, and leave thee out –

Simply Extinction’s Date—

Her devotion to the eternal, mystic dimension beyond time and beyond death is also a product of her inner experiences which often left her dazzled by the hidden ecstasy of life. Sir Chinmoy observes her doubted glimpses of a life beyond the mundane and says—

“--her mind violently refused to believe in the authenticity of Emily’s illumining, fulfilling and immortalizing experiences. The mind stood adamant between the finite and the infinite, between the body and vital and the heart and soul, between the consciously known world and the unconsciously known world-----.“

Though she lived through period of tumultuous change, but it did not affect her. She has been described as one of the America’s greatest religious poets. 1865 was the height of the American civil war; Darwin was developing his theory of evolution , symbolic of the new scientific rationalism. Religious questions were specially prominent , her generation saw an increasing division between the puritanical Calvinism of New England and the new liberalizing influence of Transcendentalism epitomized by Emerson. Her poems are revelatory of her hidden joy and are glimpses of an immortal consciousness.

“Behind Me – dips Eternity

Before Me—Immortality –

Myself the term between—

T' was my last gratitude when I slept – at sight –

T' was the first Miracle Let in—with light –

There is powerful skepticism and uncertainty though in her heart there is intense inner revelations and wonderment of life. She frequently feels of being “shut out of heaven”. This may have stemmed from her own doubts about her inner experiences. Her ebb and flow like fluctuations of belief and intent create a dynamic contrast within the poetry.

The precision and feeling in her poem stretch both the imagination but also delight in encompassing the material and mundane as Ted Hughes said of her poetry—

“She grasped the “centre” and the “circumference” of things to use 2 of her favorite expressions—as surely as human imaginative ever has”. She reveals through her poems a divine experience with the mantic certainties of a true seer poet.

Because I could not stop for Death

He kindly stopped for me –

The carriage held but just ourselves

And immortality.

T 's so much joy! T's so much joy!

If I should fail, what poverty?

And yet, as poor as I have ventured all upon a throw;

Have gained! Yes! Hesitated

This side the victory!

So every day, every moment she longed for death and perhaps it was a solution which would pave the way forward from the impediments of human life and human frailties. So she says—

“I died for beauty—but was scarce adjusted in the Tomb

When one who died for Truth, was lain

In an adjoining Room” –.

Emily Dickinson is still regarded as a seer poet who contemplates death and immortality engaging the reader in his own musings and contemplations.

Like Whitman, Emily feels the need to challenge the role of religion, yet both ultimately are incapable to tossing old beliefs entirely. Many of her poems seem to question God's existence and in one of her poems, she seemingly makes fun of God, saying –

“That me had rather not with Him

But with each other play.”

Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson both have been hailed as original and unique artists. They each have like proportions a very unique epic—like manner. He developed his own rhythmic structure, creating complex lines and stanzas. Whitman's style of free verse become synonymous with his name and works, and helped distinguish him as a great American poet. His preoccupation with sex, the human body, and numerous other "taboo" subjects, changed the American public view of poetry. Dickinson's works are just as unique, due abruptly, outwardly. Innocuous words are often capitalized, and her tendency to write meters typical of hymnals, all distinguish her from other writers. Both Whitman and Emily Dickinson write of common and everyday objects and people, while addressing the larger issues of life within the context.

Though they share common themes but their works seem to be quite different. There is a sense of commonality which runs in both of their works. Both poets are acclaimed as American writers, offering up distinct voices and beliefs that echo still today.

Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself" is an authentic new voice in world literature. Whitman's mysticism reconfirms and clarifies the essential teachings of life. Whitman's 'self' is not the ordinary, phenomenal self of Whitman but the transcendental 'I' which means consciousness, the Mystical Self, the Cosmic Mind.

Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson belonged to the same period but they were extremely different from each other. They had a few similarities, but they were vastly different people. Emily Dickinson was more of a dark, serious person, whereas Walt Whitman was more at ease with him, and seemed comfortable in his own skin. In one of Emily Dickinson's verses, she says about different feelings of success and it is quite different from Walt Whitman's poem

"I hear America singing".

First of all, success is counted sweetest.

Emily Dickinson appreciates success. The imagery she uses is that of battlefield, comparable with Whitman's poem, she talks about the work to achieve something. This poem is about success and having pride in knowing the hard work to gain achievement. Dickinson's soldier is not materialistic. He contributes to the country, through his loss of life.

Although the many differences, there are some similarities to link them together. In Whitman's poem, "I hear America Singing" he wants to say at the end "Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs. "After reading the poem one can understand the American's love of the great working spirit, where a worker sawing, or a girl working. She goes on to say that with giving the ultimate gift, which is a soldier dying in a battle, that he now knows the clear meaning of success. In her poem, (Success is counted sweetest) there is little joy, despite the success of victory where as (I hear America singing) Whitman is more joyful and descriptor. In Whitman it is the trades people and product.

In many of Emily Dickinson's poems "Death" is the principal subject. Other nineteenth century poets like Keats and Whitman, were also death haunted. Her poems about death and religion focus four points:

- a) Death as possible extinction.
- b) Poems dramatizing the question of whether the soul survives death.

- c) Those asserting a firm faith in immortality. Those treating gods concern with people's lives and destinies.

"I heard a fly buzz—when I died" is a representative of Emily Dickinson's style and attitude. After describing the moment of her death, the speaker lets us know that she has already died. The death room's stillness contrasts with a fly's buzz that the dying person hears. All the persons around her concentrate in the face of a sacred event: the arrival of the king "who is Death"

Already detached from her surroundings, she is no longer interested in material possessions. She is making ready to guide herself towards "Death."

The fly's blue buzz is the image representing the fusing of color and sound by the dying person's diminishing senses. Some critics comment that the fly is the symbol of the fresher's world left behind. The onlookers studying the dying face for the signs of the soul's fate beyond death.

In "I know that he exists", Emily Dickinson shows her anger against an absent or betraying God. In "Safe in their Alabaster Chambers" she describes the hard Whiteness of Alabaster monuments. The dead is incapable of feeling the softness of coffin likening or the hardness of the burial stones. They are "the meek members of resurrection." As they wait for the future and they may be awakened in heaven. "Behind the – dips Eternity" affirms immortality. The speaker is trapped between the immeasurable past and the immeasurable future. Death is represented as the dark of early morning which will submerge into the light of paradise. The second stanza celebrates immortality as the realm of god's maleness. There is the promise of resurrection probably of what God has given her of Himself—that guarantees that she will live again. Emily Dickinson wanted to believe in God and immortality.

Emily Dickinson sent "The Bible is an antique volume" to her twenty-two year-old nephew; Ned when he was ill. At this time, she was about fifty-two years and had only four more years to live. The first three lines echo standard explanations of the Bible's origin as holy doctrine, and the mocking tone implies skepticism. It then quickly summarizes and domesticates scenes and characters from the Bible as if they were everyday examples of virtue and sin. Lines nine through twelve are the core of the criticism, for they express anger against the preaching of self-righteous teachers. In conclusion, she pleads for literature with more color and presumably with more varied material and less narrow values. The poem may be a complaint against a Puritan interpretation of the Bible and against Puritan skepticism about secular literatim. On the other hand, it may merely be a playful expression of a fanciful and joking mood.

A mystic always hears a lucid music in his heart and obeys secret rhythms of his own. Gradually the music increases, the rhythms get stronger, and the inner symphony takes shape. But at the same time, he ceases to hear the music of the contemporaries who are calling the truth. Such a man was Whitman, when "Leaves of Grass" appeared, it was considered as an authentic new voice in world literature. "Song of Myself" is the some total of momentous personal revelation accounted for the transformation in Walt Whitman's observation –a mystical experience which focused the deepest levels of his being. And his "Song of Myself" is the song of every one's self. He is such kind of mystic who age upon age confirms and clarifies each-other's essential teaching.

We, through our inquisitive mind whatever we experience try to believe on it. Faith is not the same thing as conviction. Unless knowing some thing, conviction does not come. In the world of mysticism, truth is only conjecturable by our intellect is known by the suddenly awakened intuitive power. So he says—

I believe in you, my soul—

Loafe with me on the grass loose the stop from your throat.

I mind how once we lay such a transparent summer morning.

Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge

That pass ill the argument of the earth.

We found our own O my soul in the calm and cool of the day-bread (25)

If however, we read the poetry with an uncommitted eye, we find that we are really never in a consciously American world, but always within the purely magical universe of Whitman's "self" and its strange visitations.

"Song of Myself" is an engine of self-making. Walt Whitman is not merely a character in this poem—a "persona" . "the singer or even simply "self". He is a man and a man's name. The poet tries to erase the boundary between art and life, between Walt Whitman—the poet and the actual man who lived in Brooklyn. His work reveals his personality and his personality gives weight of personal truth to his work. A number of critics find in this poem a direct pattern of mystical evolution. The poet records the various phases of the journey of the soul towards union with a divine in being the various sections of the "Song of Myself".

Thames Miller divides the poem into seven major sections as a record of the various phases of the mystical experience. In Section I to5 reveals the entry of the self into the mystical state. By leaning, loafing and inviting his soul and by observing a spear of summer grass ,the poet enters into a mystical trance. Whitman had also a mystical experience of inner illumination. He realized that the self in him, the self in others and the self in the universe are the same self. We are all part of that "self" which sustains the whole creation. In these sections, the poet gets rids of the society and goes to the woods, "undisguised "and "naked."

He wants to return to the original state of nature. In section5, the poet is aware of his soul which gives him spiritual strength and higher perception. The poet thus states his mystical journey. As a mystic Whitman believes that both the outer-self and the inner-self are equally important. So, Whitman can not be called a mystic in the original sense.

The poet is not satisfied with describing only the physical ,concrete and personal aspect of human life. He thinks of the larger, deeper, and ideal aspect of human self. When Whitman "celebrates himself", he dose not merely refer to his limited physical self. He points to his larger inner-self also. After a certain stage of mysticism, the inner and outer self become identified .

"I and this mystery here he stand

Clear and sweet is my soul-----

And clear is all not any soul.”

“Song of Myself” reveals a myself who has travelled both the physical and metaphysical world. It is the true mystical journey of the poet from body to the soul.

In the opening sections of “Song of Myself”, Whitman rids himself from outer reality and goes to the wood ‘undisguised and naked ,’ where he will permit to speak at every hazard.

In section 3 of ‘Song of Myself’ the poet delights in looking at every inch of his body. He says—“I am satisfied – I see, dance, laugh and sing”. The poet’s physical vision with his bed fellow has mystical significance. The existence of the unseen is felt through the seen. He points to the vision of the soul with God. The poet goes into mystical trance when he visualizes.

“The hugging and loving bed-fellow sleeps at my side all through the night, and withdraws at the peep of the day with stealthy tread.” Here the poet suggests the mating and then the separation and shows the union and diversity. Whitman uses the sex--symbolism to suggest divine mystery. The loving bed-fellow is compared to god and the poet’s encounter with the bed-fellow is his awareness of mystical sense. This is the union of the physical and spiritual union of the soul.

In section 6 ,the poet deals with the essence of his poetry—grass which would be a reminder to mankind of the greatness of God. The mystic goes forward on his way with higher levels of consciousness. The poet expands his self further and further until it embraces all mankind. He thinks aloud if the grass is the handkerchief of God,

“Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the lord”

A scented—gift and remembrance designedly dropt,

Bearing the owner’s name someway in the corners that we may see and remark and say whose?

The lord might have dropt it for mankind to ponder over whose work—man ship it is. A spear of grass would lead mankind to think of God and his ways. One is mystified to think that it is the same God who created the entire universe and who also created this tiny, insignificant grass that reveals the mystery of the universe,

“the smallest sprout shows that there is no death,

If ever there was it led forward life.”

The spear of grass bears witness of the fact that death is not an end of life, it is a beginning of another life. The poet exclaims in section 16,

“I am of old and young , of the foolish as much as the wise,

Regardless of others, ever regardful of others, Maternal as well as paternal, a child as well as a man-----

Of every hue and caste am I, of every rank of religion

A former, mechanic, artist, gentleman, sailor, quaker, Prisoner, fancy-man, rowdy, lawyer, physician priest”

Section 17 to 32, deals with the purification of self. Here the poet turns from his vast expanded Self to the equality of all being. So he declares , “I am the poet of the body and I am the poet of the soul,”

In sections 28 to 30, the poet finds physical ecstasy and fulfillment of a new perception. Thus he purifies the senses through glorification. Like the oriental mystics, he does not renounce physical pleasure or the senses.

In section 32 to 37 there is illumination of the dark side of the soul so he says—

“Space and Time now I see I is true, what I guessed at what I guessed when if I loafed on the grass.”

Like the traditional mystic, the poet has got his way from purification to illumination. He gets glimpses of the mystic knowledge, which he looks for. The poet is free from divine physical restraints and transcends space and time. The poet rises up like a ‘meteor’ ‘Speeding through space, speeding through heaven and stars.

But in section 33, his soul moves from ecstasy to darkness and despair:

“Agonies are one of my changes of garments. I do not ask the wounded person how he feels, I myself become the wounded person,”

The poet identifies himself with the sick, the injured, the destitute, the rejected, the unwanted, the despised.

Section 39 to 43 deals with Union—an emphasis on faith and love. Here the poet identifies himself with Christ

“That I could look with a separate look on my own crucifixion and bloody crowning-----
-- Crosses rise, gashes heal, fastenings role from me. “ The poet suddenly achieves absolute mystic knowledge. He gets union with God.

Section 44 of “Song of Myself” is a profound insight into the poet’s mystical experience. Here Whitman supplies answer to the various questions in life. He launches all men and women forward with him on a mystical journey with the unknown and he also speaks of the timelessness of time,

“I launch all men and women forward with me into the unknown-----

The clock indicates the moment but what does eternity indicate?”

Time is something broad and less . There is no beginning and end to time. Soul too is immortal and it only changes its form after death.

In section 48 of Song of Myself Whitman writes-----

“In the faces of men and women see God, and in my own face in the glass.

I find utters from God dropt in the street and every one is sign’d by God’s name.”

In sections 50-52, the poet self emerges from mystical state, He gets rid of his mystical trance.

Here the poet says that, God is present in every thing, in every object in the world. The poet wants the readers to accept the fact that even time contains God. God is present in those who understand him. God is present in every-being.

Whitman's glorification of 'death' is found in section '49' Here he says that death is not an end but a beginning. He is unafraid of death and accepts it as part of life. The body _the physical form dies but the soul is immortal. It ascends towards the moons, stars. It becomes one of them. Then Whitman delineates his approach to death and asks the readers not to shatter at the word 'death' and expresses the 'oneness of all' is the soul's merge with the divine after release through death.. The poet now has realized his self and with his self-realization, his mystical journey is over-Whitman accepts the fact that there is no chaos or death in the world. And the universe has a certain order maintained under the able guidance of God. God is the one force who is the creator of the world and the universe. In addition, he does not reject the materialism. He does not subscribe to the belief that objects are illusive. And there is no tendency on the part of the soul to leave the world for good. He writes-

"I accept reality and dare not question it.

Materialism first and last imbuing.

Hurrah for positive science!"

However, the real self, which is behind the other self, is not, understood by facts but the intuition. He constantly explores the materialism to penetrate to the real. Thus, we find that a view of mysticism runs through Whitman's poetry. His mysticism has various characteristics mentioned above. He has created a unique mysticism for America – a democratic mysticism which is available to all in equal terms—embracing both body and soul, life and death, myth and science, active and passive. Therefore, Whitman is a mystic without a creed. He believes that the body is the manifestation of the soul, which is liberated by death for a higher life.

Whitman attempted to construct a series of images of the self in his photographs .Emily Dickinson sought the exact opposite. Whitman advertised his self-image Dickinson's image is of a entire—personality who looks out upon the world without revealing anything about the self—inside. The self of her poems is not for a public -saying. Whitman's poetic language seems labored; Dickinson sought a mode of identification through a language of restriction. If Whitman is the poet as prophet of America unity and possibility, Dickinson tests the self in its separation and aloneness. Whitman sets up an implicit unity between self and nature, self and God, Dickinson endlessly speculates and questions isolation basic to her consciousness. Whitman is endlessly expansive, singing the "Song of the open Road", she defines herself in time rather than space, in history rather than myth where Whitman celebrates his self.

Dickinson attempts to find herself through her self-identity_ a series of personae who are private projections of the self. They have no national role. They remain part of a private desire and suffering. She can be 'empress', 'queen', 'wife', 'mistress' and 'child'. Whitman endlessly presents himself as an individual of action. He justifies his 'self 'as the maker and 'savior of lives'. On the other hand, Dickinson looks and contemplates. If she has, "lovers they come to her secretly just as she pines and longs for their return. She is long suffering Whitman identifies with Christ as the maker of miracles, Dickinson with Christ as the victims on the crucifix. Whitman pushes everything out-wards, so that the world (America) become his sight of

definition. Dickinson repels the world in order to concentrate of the self. Whitman 'bathes' in his syntax, celebrating an achieved 'self'. But Dickinson articulates the 'self' which underlies Whitman. The following lines express her sense of the poet:

This was a poet – It is that

Distills amazing sense from ordinary Meanings –

And Altar so immerse .

Both Emily Dickinson and Whitman made the constant use of I , the first person singular. The poems are not autobiographical based on actual experience. But they are auto biographical in the sense of being true an imagined experience.

A poem records an experience, which is at least possible, and we enter into it because it is better than our actual experience. It is good in the sense, "it gratifies those aspirations which we cherish secretly for ourselves." Dickinson went from poem to poem into the magnificent image of her 'soul' which she has created in the poem. Her interesting literary parallel is Walt Whitman who was blamed for his aggressive masculinity which he assumed in his poem that is what Whitman's mask. Both had found their proper mask.

Emily Dickinson used words to express thought and emotion which are both small and large. She did possess great self-confidence in the use of words .Like Whitman, her use of the words serve as paradox. Her intuitive or intellect told her that human communication was unavailing owe to the use of the greatness of the universe and of the complexity of man's experience within it ; whereas her emotional nature ravel before us, her delight in a struggle , and her unlimited courage make the attempt regardless of the futility.

Whitman used anaphora, alliteration in his poems. Through anaphora, he can express one theme in several different lines with several different ideas while having a definite link between each thought. Although each line ,he says about different thing-

I celebrate myself

I see ----

I belief-----

Dickinson used euphoria. Whitman's poetry has the archetype as like chaismas that means it is a mirror pattern in words, sounds or other elements.

Finding himself in the catalog of people and places , he attempts to give a feeling

of universal scope. Ordinary life becomes mingled with mystical significance. He identifies himself with every being and every object and this identification forms an integral part of his concept of what 'I' am.

An interesting aspect of Emily Dickinson's poetry is that of her reverence for words in a way in which she frequently uses terms of language and communication. In the beginning of the poem she says_

" Step tightly on this narrow spot!"

In another poem, she mentions natural objects which were implied by human communication.

The hills , in purple syllables, the days , adventures tell to little groups of continents just going home from school.

Frequently her reference of death has often been called a “ riddle”. She used her language as an instrument for communication.

Her use of poetic language is short-hand typed which would combine the advantage of of conciseness with suggestiveness. The poem starts-----

I heard a fly-buzz

When I died

The stillness in the Air

Between the Heaves of storm

And then the Windows failed-and then

I could not see to see____

Whitman’s language is prosaic. He begins the poem with a short prelude and then begins telling of the year 1861 and how all the men were having to leave. His mood is imperative and indicative. His poem has opera like narrative and musical quality. Here Whitman acts like a Bard .

In Song of Myself Whitman’s own views are masked by the implied author through +which he speaks. By using a mask, the author is retelling his narrative.

Emily Dickinson’s attitude toward words was something of a paradox. The disappointment of her love offers her the entire universe as a substitute for her lost love. The marriage that had been denied in the real world ,went forward in the spiritual on her side. In dozens of her poems witness-:

Title divine is Mine!

The wife without the sign!

The universe in its Divine aspect became the mirror image of her husband.

In her poem, there is the slow, small meter, a device for bringing each syllable

Into close-up, as under a microscope, but there is the deep focus where all the words lie in precise.

Like Whitman, Emily Dickinson makes the constant use of the first person singular in her poem.

The figures I have seen

Set orderly, for Burial

Reminded me, of mine.

Whitman uses Grass, Time, Death and Dirt as symbols in his poem whereas Emily uses in 'There is a certain slant of light referring about winter, afternoons with their "Heavenly Hurt" and their "Seal Despair" when that winter light goes," It's like the Distance/ On the look of "Death" is a metaphor for winter light and at the same time winter light is a metaphor for death.

Whitman used the vegetable symbol 'grass' which is his nature poetry, Emily is not descriptive with birds or flowers or repeatedly describes dawn, noon and sunset.

Her poems are also subjective where her psychic experience as beatitude was glee as the Happiness without a cause. For glee is intuitive and lasting is the gift of god. She could only explain her glee as a divine gift--a compensation in joy for what she had renounced in atisfaction and a foretaste of the mood of Heaven. And one of her gleeful poems begins_

" T's little-I could care for pearls-

Who own the ample sea-

Her symbols are terrible symbols. The experience of suffering is like dying of the cold or it resembles the approach of maelstrom which finally engulfs the victim

She glorifies her personal, enlightened world and explores the vast and dangerous and poignantly real world of herself whereas Whitman is a universal trotter. He discusses the places and tells of all the people, things he passes and sees on .Along with him , everyone

is in the journey and going through this same event and everyone has the same feeling, emotions about the war. The catalog shows common links among humans.

Both of them refer to immortality and Dickinson in some of her poems is in journey with

Death where she is asked to take her for a drive. So she says_

Because I could not stop for Death,

He kindly stopped for me;

The carriage held but just ourselves,

And immortality

In comparison, Whitman's assertions for his 'new' poetic language seem labored. Dickinson's sought a mode of identification through a language of restriction. Whitman tries to project a link between self and nature, self and God, but Dickinson endlessly speculates and questions . Isolation is basic to the graph of her consciousness . Whitman is endlessly expansive, singing the 'Song of the open road' , so Dickinson is endlessly reductive. Her journeys are either inward or establish metaphors for death. .Amherst is her locale, around which all else resolves.

Whitman justifies his 'self' as the maker and savior of lives. She is , above all, long suffering.

He identifies with Christ as the maker of miracles , Dickinson with Christ as the victim on the crucifix. Whitman uses the comma as his central mode of punctuation. The full-stop for

Whitman implies closure: an end to the poem and the voice which speaks it. In Dickinson the full stop is a conclusion. For Dickinson mysticism is a way to unite with the lover-Jesus Christ whereas to Whitman mysticism is the practice through which his soul can be merged with the Divine Self-the Almighty.

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