

An Ecofeminist Interpretation of Selected Nature Poems by *Emily Dickinson*

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Abstract

As one of the most prominent women poets in the nineteenth century, Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) made a great impact in the field of American literature. Dickinson's genius for creating poetry was incontrovertible. Her profound thoughts, creative images, unique writing style and innovation all established her high position as an important woman poet. Her nearly eighteen hundred poems have been increasingly attracting critics from all over the world to interpret and analyze Dickinson's poetry from various perspectives applying psychology, linguistics, phenomenology and feminist literary criticism. Critics, however, seldom research on the combination of her ecological awareness and feminist consciousness. As a 19th century woman, long before the feminist movement and ecological activism, Dickinson expressed her rebellion to Male Supremacy Culture and showed her ecological awareness in her works. This paper applies the ecofeminist approach on selected nature poems by Emily Dickinson to scrutinize her claim upon ecology to challenge the established gender roles. The research further aims to provide a detailed ecofeminist interpretation and present a new perspective to appreciate the nature poetry written by Emily Dickinson.

Keywords: poetry, nature poetry, feminism, ecofeminism, Emily Dickinson, male supremacy, gender roles

Introduction

Ecofeminism originated in the 1970s. The term “ecofeminism” was coined by the French feminist Françoise d’Eaubonne in 1974. Ecofeminism claims that there is born inter-connectedness between women and nature that are both oppressed and exploited in the patriarchal society. It emphasizes that the root of their “Otherness” is the patriarchal traditional duality and ruling logic. And hence, it declares that women and nature have to unite together to protect their own benefits and win freedom and power. Many feminists have argued for that, as Rosemary Ruther wrote in 1975 in her book, *New Woman/New Earth*:

Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination. They must unite the demands of the women’s movement with those of the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socioeconomic relations and the underlying values of this [modern industrial] society. (204)

In his book *Ecofeminist Nature* (1997), Noel Sturgeon defines Ecofeminism as “a movement that makes connections between environmentalisms and feminisms.” (12) In her book *Ecofeminist Philosophy* (2000) Karen Warren illustrates a key insight of ecological feminism that is captured by the phrase “it’s all connected.” In more precise terms, ecofeminism stresses the depth to which human realities are embedded in ecological realities, and the fact that we are all composed of physical and conceptual connections and relationships.(27)

Ecofeminism is thus presented as a general school of thought that urges feminists to pay attention to environmental issues and ecological interdependencies, and that environmentalists attend to the connections among ecological degradation and the other forms of social oppression. Ecofeminism thereby emphasizes on the ways that nature has been envisioned as female (or feminine), the parallel and mutually reinforcing oppression of women and nature, and the ways that environmental problems and issues specifically affect women. The ultimate goal of ecofeminism, however, is to construct the harmonious world of nature, women and men.

Ecofeminist literary criticism has been developing since 1990s, which combines feminism and nature together to examine the “absence” and “presence” of women and nature in literary works. Although the ultimate goal of ecofeminist literary criticism is “the study of the relationship between literature and the environment (Glotfelty 14), there have been different approaches to ecofeminist literary criticism relating to women’s position, gender relations, feminism, and the way in which Western society is seeking to control or manage women and environment. The most important approaches though are social construction and essentialism.

The social constructivist approach (which tended to dominate French and British writing) drew from the Marxist and social feminist literature to show how women's position in society (as care-takers of children and other vulnerable family members, domestic workers, and low paid/status workers) derived from prevailing social and economic structures, which exposed them to a particular set of environmental incivilities. The specifically ecofeminist approach here proposed that, since the same social and economic structures also produced wide scale environmental damage, then women could, in some sense, 'share' this experience and were therefore better placed to argue on nature's behalf. (Campbell 37)

The essentialist argument that supported some of the North American analyses proposed that women had a particular relationship with nature by virtue of their biology (predominantly as actual or potential child bearers) and that this proximity to nature qualified them to speak more eloquently on nature's behalf. As a matter of fact, essentialism is often used as a tool to mobilize a group around a perceived characteristic which sets it apart, and certainly, cultural ecofeminism (prioritizing essentialist arguments) did so. Its strength was to demonstrate the possibility of a way of thinking and being which reversed the normal hierarchy in which men stood at the peak. (Campbell 57) This research paper shall investigate ecofeminist aspects in the nature poetry of Emily Dickinson through an interpretation that is based on the constructivist and essentialist approaches.

In the world of poetry, the ecofeminist critic takes the ideals of ecofeminism and investigates how they are translated into the language of poetry. An ecofeminist literary criticism of a poem explores the importance of nature and the importance of women building a relationship with nature. It encompasses the fact that both nature and women were given very specific roles to them by the male dominated society and hence embraces the reimagining of nature as something that is not only subjected to male authority, but as something that also concerns women. Ecofeminist poetics further insists on the importance of language and its usage as a way of reclaiming creature of nature as an object not to be harmed or ignored, but as an active object whose activities should be considered and respected.

Discussion

As a woman and a devotee of nature, Emily Dickinson has feminist consciousness and ecological thought. It is unknown whether she is a feminist and/or an environmentalist, but it can be found from her life and poems that Dickinson always purses female identity and shows great enthusiasm to nature. Nature as a matter of fact is Dickinson's favorite theme. Nature represents purity and love, far outstripping the creations of humans. For Dickinson:

Nature, the gentlest mother,
Impatient of no child,

The feeblest or the waywardest,
Her admonition mild

In forest and the hill
By traveller is heard,
Restraining rampant squirrel
Or too impetuous bird.

How fair her conversation,
A summer afternoon,--
Her household, her assembly;
And when the sun goes down

Her voice among the aisles
Incites the timid prayer
Of the minutest cricket,
The most unworthy flower.

When all the children sleep
She turns as long away

As will suffice to light her lamps;
Then, bending from the sky

With infinite affection
And infinitier care,
Her golden finger on her lip,
Wills silence everywhere.

In this poem, Dickinson feminizes nature as a “gentle mother” to reveal the interconnectedness and common position of women and nature. The poem is a description of mother earth and how she takes care of all of her children and her household. Nature is "impatient of no child" which is a symbol of how Mother Earth takes care of all of her children and people on the planet even when her own children harm her. On the ecological level, this harm can be interpreted in terms of pollution and global warming and things of that sort. Mother Nature however will never turn her back on her children; she will always be there for them. Nature is an aid to her children. She is there in the hills and forests in a way to aid the travelers of these lands. Although Dickinson has little intention to become an ecofeminist, her female idea and ecological viewpoint challenges the traditional patterns of nature poetry

In the third stanza of this poem, there is a use of personification: “How Fair her conversation”. Emily Dickinson is describing all of the flora and fauna, and she describes all of the critters that are on the Mother Nature's planet. They are feminized as nature's ‘household’ and ‘assembly’. The Mother Earth takes care of her children with days from summer by providing nice weather to the critters and the trees. This is the time of the year when agriculture flourishes in comparison to winter where it does not. Mother Nature could make a harsh winter year round, but she does not because she is taking care of her household.

Emily Dickinson further emphasizes the connection with nature. She says that nature, or Mother Nature, has an effect on every creature that is on her planet. Dickinson says that it is the smallest cricket or the most unworthy flower still gets taken care of by Mother Nature. Nature watches over her creations, personified as children. Humans, on the other hand, represent the interloper, an unwanted guest that frightens nature's children. This is very much similar to the role women play as mothers and nurturers of life. The mother does everything in her power to shield her children “with infinite affection/And infinitier care”.

In Emily Dickinson's poem, “Nature is What We See,” the reader can better sense her love and appreciation of nature. The theme of the poem is nature's simplicity, yet her poem suggests that nature is anything but simple; it is mysterious, magnificent, and inexpressible. The surface meaning primarily suggests that nature is natural and simple in theory, but exploring the underlying meaning, we see how Dickinson uses various patterns to describe the diversity in nature. An ecofeminist reading of the poem can thereby compare Dickinson's images of the diversity of nature to those of women. Women are often connected to the simple role imposed by the patriarchal society. This image of women is not true and must be challenged upon examining the true value of the woman as a real partner and creator of life. Dickinson writes:

Nature is what we see –
The Hill – the Afternoon –
Squirrel – Eclipse – the Bumble bee –
Nay – Nature is Heaven –
Nature is what we hear –
The Bobolink – the Sea –
Thunder – the Cricket –
Nay – Nature is harmony –
Nature is what we know –
Yet have no art to say –
So impotent Our Wisdom is
To her Simplicity.

Dickinson starts the poem in reference to sight, with distinctive objects (hill, squirrel, bobolink, and bumblebee), all obvious things people can clearly see and visualize. She adds the abstract (heaven, afternoon, thunder). Dickinson, then, takes it further that nature is more than sight, it is what people hear, 'Bobolink', 'the Sea', 'Thunder', 'Cricket', are all indications of her attempt to define nature through the senses. Next, she mentions that nature is harmony to suggest that nature is speaking to her in various degrees, through sight and sound.

Dickinson then compares nature to heaven, which suggests that both are mysterious and impossible to describe. "So impotent, Our wisdom" indicates that humanity lacks the ability to understand the powers of nature, even suggesting that humans are too busy to care about the insignificant things that nature presents and yet nature is so simple "To her Simplicity". Dickinson appears to be frustrated, unable to understand the morality of humanity; "Nay" is a negative response that indicates how perplexed she is. Trying to express with words "Yet have no art to say" she is aware that it is useless; there are no words to describe the mysteries of nature.

In conclusion, Dickinson seems to say that humans do not notice the simple things in life, or they tend to ignore them. The more she peers in nature, the more confused and frustrated she appears. Humans are unable to appreciate the beauty of nature which is compared to heaven in its harmony and glamour. Although Dickinson has little intention to become an ecofeminist, her ideas and ecological viewpoint of nature's identity reveals how far she is.

Another poem exploring and emphasizing the mysteries of nature through the limited knowledge of a human lens opens "What mystery pervades a well!" In this poem, Dickinson uses multiple elements of nature to describe the mysteries of nature and the positions of humans. The poem begins with an idea of wonder as presented through a device used by humans:

What mystery pervades a well!
That water lives so far –
A neighbor from another world
Residing in a jar

Dickinson then relays the haunting and mysterious qualities of nature:

But nature is a stranger yet;
The ones that cite her most
Have never passed her haunted house,
Nor simplified her ghost.

In this stanza, much of Dickinson's ecofeminist thoughts are exposed. Nature is used to symbolize both a "haunted house," as well as the "ghost" that inhabits it. While nature might be portrayed as

an inspirational harbor, it can also embody alarming qualities. The complexities of nature as shown here are explored in Yuto Miyata's article, "The Rejection of the Traditional Idea of Nature in Emily Dickinson's Poems": "The word 'haunted,' originally meaning to be visited by a stranger form of spirit, may imply that nature is haunted by an unidentified ghost. Perhaps this unidentified ghost is nature's inner truth: it can never be revealed to man, though it has many outer aspects to be observed" (81). According to this poem, the mystery of nature will continue to evolve and increase as human are more intent on scrutinizing its mysteries. Dickinson's concern with the mysteries of nature and the pursuit for their interpretation exposes a relentless ecofeminist quest to understand Nature.

Like many romantic poets, Emily Dickinson had the eye of a creative genius. Thoreau said:

There is just as much beauty visible to us in the landscape as we are prepared to appreciate, - not a grain more. The actual object which one man will see from a particular hill top are just as different from those another will see as the beholders are different, we cannot see anything until we are possessed with the idea of it, take it into our heads and then we can hardly see anything else". (Dickinson 18)

Dickinson always felt obliged to unify with nature to be able to appreciate its beauty that is being constantly diminished by humans. In her "There is another Sky", Dickinson is pointing out that a person may be disappointed in quest to experience beauty in the world due to all the bad deeds of humans. However, when we look inside ourselves and one another, we may find a flourishing beautiful garden of delights. The same applies to women's life in their patriarchal societies; they would be surrounded by ugliness only to reach for beauty within their souls by spotting nature's beauty and ignoring all imperfections created by men so as to be able to create their own "little forest(s)":

There is another sky,
Ever serene and fair,
And there is another sunshine,
Though it be darkness there;
Never mind faded forests, Austin,
Never mind silent fields -
Here is a little forest,
Whose leaf is ever green;
Here is a brighter garden,
Where not a frost has been;
In its unfading flowers
I hear the bright bee hum:
Prithee, my brother,

Into my garden come!

Dickinson's ecological and feminist thoughts are very much revealed. In this poem, she extends an invitation to women to look on the brighter side of things even if at that present moment, life isn't too great. She expresses her thoughts of how her life may be dark and dismal, but that there is another life on the other side full of luminous skies, and bright vegetation. If men destroy forests and corrupt fields, she can, and so can women, cultivate "little forest(s)" that are much brighter with "unfading flowers" to create their own garden "Into my garden come!" so as to ensure their survival.

Beauty was not all about nature for Dickinson; her spot of nature was further as a great teacher. She observed the patterns of the seasons, the cycle of generation, growth, decay, and rebirth. This cosmic pattern lay right before her, before anybody who wanted to observe it, yet it went unnoticed, as one of her earliest poems says. In her "A LADY red upon the hill", Dickinson reveals an unprecedented ecological thought and appreciation of nature and laments how such a perfect cosmic pattern is not treasured by humans. In this poem, Dickinson feminizes nature as a woman to describe the disciplines it manifests. 'Brooms' in the second stanza highlight the hard work exerted to create this disciplined beauty which "The neighbors do not yet suspect!" only 'the woods' and the 'Orchard, and buttercup, and bird-' can grasp and enchant.

A LADY red upon the hill
Her annual secret keeps;
A lady white within the field
In placid lily sleeps!

The tidy breezes with their brooms 5
Sweep vale, and hill, and tree!
Prithee, my pretty housewives!
Who may expected he?

The neighbors do not yet suspect!
The woods exchange a smile— 10
Orchard, and buttercup, and bird—
In such a little while!

And yet how still the landscape stands,
How nonchalant the wood,

As if the resurrection 15
Were nothing very odd!

Dickinson marvels at this cosmic life pattern and sees herself, and life, inseparable from this process as shown in her “I’ll tell you how the Sun rose”,

I’ll tell you how the Sun rose –
 A Ribbon at a time –
 The steeples swam in Amethyst
 The news, like Squirrels, ran –
 The Hills united their Bonnets –
 The Bobolinks – begun –
 Then I said softly to myself –
 “That must have been the Sun”!
 But how he set – I know not –
 There seemed a purple stile
 That little Yellow boys and girls
 Were climbing all the while –
 Till when they reached the other side –
 A Dominie in Gray –
 Put gently up the evening Bars –
 And led the flock away –

The poem "I'll tell you when the sun rose" is about the sunset and the sunrise. In this poem, Emily describes the sunset and sunrise, as a village, and the things in that village. But the poem also describes the difficulties of perceiving the world around us and this is where Dickinson's thoughts as an ecofeminist are best revealed. The sunrise is described in terms of a small village, with church steeples, town news, and ladies bonnets, whereas the sunset is characterized as the gathering home of a flock. In this poem she probes nature's mysteries as a true ecofeminist through the lens of the rising and setting sun.

Dickinson begins by asserting that she is going to tell her audience “how the Sun rose.” She metaphorically compares the sun’s rays to ribbons that are let loose one at a time. The colorful rays slowly unravel over the ocean where the church steeples seem to “swim in Amethyst.” As the bright fire of the sun appears, the darkened blackness first turns blue, before taking on its brightness in the full glow of the sun. Then suddenly the sun’s appearance spreads quickly.

She then reports, “The Hills untied their Bonnets-/The Bobolinks — begun.” All of nature is waking up and color can be seen as far away as the hills, while the birds have started to sing. In her surprised musing, Dickinson then utters to herself, “That must have been the Sun”! It is as if she was seeing it for the first time and marveling at the effect the mere rising of the sun has had

on all that she sees. Marveling the beauty of nature is a fascination always exhibited in Dickinson's poems.

Dickinson seems to imagine her location closer to the sunrise than to the sunset, which is, of course, not literally true being a woman, but her little drama depends on this little fiction. Even though she cannot "know" for sure how the sun set, she can imagine and report what she thinks she sees. It seemed to her that as the sun set, she saw "a purple stile" where "little Yellow boy and girls were climbing." She sees children climbing over a barrier, possibly going home after a day of tending sheep or perhaps simply on their way home from school.

After climbing the stile, the children finally reach the other side, which heralds the lowest point of the sun before it disappears. And what causes the sun to finally disappear is that a cleric or perhaps even a householder shepherd closes a gate and leads away the flock of children or perhaps sheep. At this point, the speaker would be in darkness and have no idea what happens next. The uncertainty of the how the sun set causes the speaker's language choices to be tentative, not as certain as she was about how the sun rose. This uncertainty paints Dickinson's sustained search for nature's many revelations in her life as a woman. It betrays Dickinson's ecofeminist mind grappling with issues of a sense of place and identity as explored through nature phenomena.

In the poem "I started early, took my dog," Dickinson narrates the potential and perceived benefit of her ecofeminist utmost wish of merging with nature. The story begins with the simple-enough task of taking a dog for a walk on the beach:

I started Early – Took my Dog –
And visited the Sea –

But this early-morning stroll is anything but ordinary. Though Dickinson, indeed, was known to walk her dog, Carlo, on the grounds of her house, they never ventured as far as the ocean. Having never seen it, Dickinson must imagine the sea, and she transforms it through metaphor into something much more familiar to her: a house, complete with a "Basement" and an attic ("the Upper Floor").

As if paying a social call, she's greeted not at the door, but at the shore—by 'mermaids' and 'frigates' (square-rigged ships of the 18th and early 19th centuries), which hold out their "Hempen Hands" (their ropes) to her as though she were a shipwrecked mouse scurrying between the ship's deck and the dock, with the possibility of escape:

The Mermaids in the Basement
Came out to look at me –

And Frigates – in the Upper Floor
Extended Hempen Hands –
Presuming Me to be a Mouse –
Aground – opon the Sands –

In Dickinson's imagination, the sea, as a representation of nature, becomes a magical place, and the poem, filled with friendly, unthreatening creatures, is like a nursery rhyme. That comforting sense of simplicity is heightened by her unique syntax and punctuation, filled with dashes and unusual capitalization. Each dash demands that we pause for a moment between the capitalized words, emphasizing the rhythmic and lyrical qualities of the poem. Much as the full "stops" of a telegram charge every subsequent line, Dickinson's dashes slow us down and make every inventive detail and carefully chosen image seem all the more deliberate. The effect lulls us, as waves do, and also forces us to feel the drama of the poem's language.

But all is not as it seems. In the third stanza, we see a literal turning of the tide. The waves begin to take on a menacing tone:

But no Man moved Me – till the Tide
Went past my simple Shoe –
And past my Apron – and my Belt
And past my Boddice – too –

The advancing water threatens to drown the speaker as it rises dramatically, phrase by phrase, past her chest. Taking on the characteristics of a man, the ocean becomes volatile and voracious, threatening to devour her:

And made as He would eat me up –
As wholly as a Dew
Opon a Dandelion's Sleeve –

"And then—I started—too," the speaker says, repeating a crucial verb from the poem's first stanza. In the poem's first line, "started" implies "starting a journey." Repeated here, it suggests she is "startled" by fright, retreating as the tide continues to pursue her:

And He – He followed – close behind –
I felt His Silver Heel
Opon my Ancle – Then My Shoes
Would overflow with Pearl –

The speaker who so calmly “visited” the sea with her canine companion at the start of the poem now flees from it, with the sea (still a “He”) running “close behind,” lapping at her feet. As though he is trying to consume her, his “Silver Heel” touches her ankle. She pauses to imagine what might happen if they truly become one: “Then my Shoes / Would overflow with Pearl” (the ocean’s bubbly, white-washed surf). Though Dickinson is obviously threatened by the possibility of consummation here, there’s beauty in it, too: the way pearls are beautiful, once they’ve been released from their shells.

What truly interrupts her dream of being subsumed by the sea is the inescapable reality of the town, a place so “solid” that her imagined Poseidon must concede (and recede) back to his ocean floor:

Until We met the Solid Town –
 No One He seemed to know –
 And bowing – with a Mighty look –
 At me – The Sea withdrew –

The use of the pronoun “we” in this final stanza reveals an ecofeminist interest in nature. It reiterates that the speaker and the sea are indeed united for a moment, and then separated at last. Our final sight of the sea is as a “bowing” gentleman whose “Mighty look / At me” (a lowercase “me” that contrasts with the capitalized “Me” in the third stanza) leaves her feeling a tangible sense of loss not being able to unite with it.

Invited, awed, and ultimately cowed by her imagined experience, Dickinson’s vision portrays the sea as a place that’s both welcoming and wary in a clear connectedness to the complexity of nature and the necessity to appreciate its beauty as well as its powers.

But why unify with nature? Why become part of it? Why be merged in it? Simply because it is the only way to grow, exist and survive:

Growth of Man — like Growth of Nature —
 Gravitates within —

Atmosphere, and Sun endorse it —
 Bit it stir — alone —

Everywhere we look, every time we turn, there is growth going on, in some fashion and form. Growth is a constant in our lives and when we, nature and humans, including all flora and fauna stop growing, we begin the process of dying. Dickinson claims that “Growth” occurs seamlessly,

following the natural rhythms and patterns of life. But still it is not an easy process; we have to fight through all the odds to be able to grow because it is the only way to relish a life.

Each — its difficult Ideal
Must achieve — Itself —
Through the solitary prowess
Of a Silent Life —

Effort — is the sole condition —
Patience of Itself —
Patience of opposing forces —
And intact Belief —

As a true ecofeminist devotee, Emily Dickinson always perceived and depicted union with nature as the only source of survival. Dickinson never loses hope in creating a union with nature because the only way of survival. Hope is manifested everywhere; it is part of nature. She repeatedly uses common images and sensitive language which are common in nature to define and to praise nature as the only source and hope for living. In her “Hope is the thing with feathers-”, Emily compared "hope" to a "bird", which represents one little element of nature.

"Hope" is the thing with feathers--
That perches in the soul--
And sings the tune without the words--

Emily believes that hope is always in our soul, and that it's something one can never lose. Nature represented by the bird's continuous song denotes eternal hope that never dies, and is always within the roots of our soul.

And sweetest—in the Gale—is heard--
And sore must be the storm--

That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm--

Employing more images of nature, Dickinson describes the bird's song of hope as sweetest in the wind. It conjures up images of a bird's song of hope whistling above the sound of gale force winds and offering the promise that soon the storm will end. The next three lines reveal a great deal of Dickinson's ecological thoughts. They metaphorically describe what a person who destroys hope feels like in clear reference to the negativity and anger human create when destroying nature.

In the last stanza, Dickinson uses more elements of nature as representations of hope: "I've heard it in the chilliest lands". Hope is heard even in the coldest, saddest lands. Hope is eternal and everywhere. The birds song of hope is even heard "And on the strangest sea." Hope exists for everyone.

I've heard it in the chilliest land--
And on the strangest Sea--
Yet, never, in Extremity,
It asked a crumb—of Me.

In the last two lines, Dickinson conveys a wonderful ecological thought about the benevolence and generosity of nature. She informs us that the bird of hope asks for no favor or price in return for its sweet song. Hope is a free gift which exists for all of us. All we must do is not clip the wings of hope and let it fly and sing freely. Its song can be heard over the strangest seas, coldest lands, and in the worst storms. It is a song that never ends as long as we do not let it.

Conclusion

The nineteenth century great poet, Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), is known for her fierce originality of thought and compressed verse, which profoundly influenced poetry thereafter. The strength of her literary voice, as well as her reclusive and eccentric life, constitutes the sense of Emily Dickinson as an ineffaceable literary character who continues to be discussed today. This research paper has applied the ecofeminist approach of feminist criticism on selected nature poems by Emily Dickinson. It aims to scrutinize her nature poems and establish Emily Dickinson's claim upon ecology to challenge the established gender roles. The research paper further presents a new perspective to appreciate the nature poetry written by Emily Dickinson.

To conclude from this ecofeminist interpretation of selected nature poems by Emily Dickinson is to establish that although Dickinson has little intention to become an ecofeminist, her female idea and ecological viewpoint challenges the traditional patterns of poetry. Like the traditional poets, she acclaims nature as "the gentlest mother" or unifies with nature. However, she is different from the traditional poets. In the first place, she loves nature. She perceives it as a mother and a teacher. She marvels at the natural cosmic pattern and invites readers to recognize the beauty inspired by nature around them and within their souls. In the second place, Dickinson feels worried and suspicious about the relationship between nature and human beings. She stresses the diversity in nature and questions the human ability to understand, respect & exchange a healthy relationship with nature. In the third place, Dickinson never gives up hope in either the benevolence and generosity of nature or the capability of humans to comprehend it.

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