

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Emily Elizabeth Dickinson is considered one of the most important American poets and is known for her pioneering approach to language and expression. She was born on December 10, 1830, in Amherst, Massachusetts, in the United States. Emily is a revered figure in American literature renowned for her distinctive poetic voice and the mystery surrounding her reclusive life. She lived most of her years in the Dickinson family home, rarely venturing beyond its walls. Her isolated way of life sharply contrasts with the significant influence she would later exert on the realm of poetry. Additionally, Xu Nuo asserts that poetry represents the ideal fusion of form and content (Xu, 2022).

Emily Dickinson is one of the most important American poets of the nineteenth century and is considered by many critics as one of America's greatest and most original poets of all time. For many critics, Dickinson's poetry is widely regarded as a milestone in American literature. Dickinson wrote forty volumes of almost 1,800 poems. Many critics argue that Dickinson's poems speak of love, death and nature (Omar, 2020, 16-21).

The poetic themes are revealed through the theories of textuality, expressivism, mimesis and historicism. The poetry of Emily Dickinson reveals very personal images and symbols; hence, there is a need to be familiar with her life for it has some bearing on her poems (Gido, Barbecho, Arias, Dacanay, Nemenin, 2018).

Emily Dickinson's poetry is rich in subject matter, with poems on the theme of the nature of life being an important part of Emily Dickinson's work and particularly noted by researchers. Through the method of textual analysis, this essay analyses her life-theme poem from the perspective of content analysis and rhetorical criticism, combined with Dickinson's

life experience. Her poems explore the issues of life and eternity from many sides, with the significance of finding the true nature of life and revealing the true meaning of life (Zhou, 2023).

As a religious poet, Emily Dickinson was obsessed with the subject of death and immortality; about third of her poems feature this enigma which baffles not only the ordinary multitudes but also those great thinking minds throughout the human history (Liu, 2016). The theme of death is one of the themes that are often tackled in literature. Death is the end of tragedies and many poets wrote elegies to eulogize their loved ones (Jassim, 2022).

Emily Dickinson is totally a perfect poet who expresses her deepest thoughts under the guise of various themes. But her primary fascination was with death, which she focused extensively with great insight in exploring the unknown of death. She often placed herself in the position of the person who was dying in an attempt to convey what it may be like to actually live. Her finest poems with the theme of dying emphasises the different aspects of compounding loss, pain, and power of the experience along with the equally as powerful sense of gain. One forth of her poetry is about the theme of death. She sees death in different angles than the other poets. In her views, death is not dead; rather death is beautiful, fantastic and mystical. Death is inevitable for all of us from the moment we come to this world (Somatkar, 2016).

Dickinson's poems speak of love, death and nature, they are intimate and personal. The contrast between a quiet life in a secular home, where she was born and where she died, and the depth and intensity of her poems caused numerous speculations about Dickinson's personality. Dickinson's works pose a separate phenomenon in the poetry of 19th century (Zawadzka, 2019).

The prominence of femininity and individualism, key elements in transcendentalism evident in Dickinson's work, positions her as a pivotal figure in modern literature. She

articulates the potency of feminine and individual power across several poems, elucidating these themes with intricate detail. Moreover, it makes understanding how she valued the spirit in terms of individualism and how she achieved her writings by shutting herself alone, believing in her femininity and her spiritual skills. A contextual analysis is given to the poems (Mohamad, 2022).

A renowned female poet of America in the nineteenth century, Emily Dickinson is considered as the pioneer of modern poetry and imagist movement of American and Britain poetry in the twentieth century. Her poetry, with profound implications and unique styles, has made immortal contributions to the prosperity and development of world literature. Her ingenious poems in her whole life, covering numerous themes, such as nature, love, life, God and friendship and so on focusing on multiple subjects of her poetry, interpreting her distinctive outlooks on nature, love and life, through which, the wild and ferocious nature, the happy and sorrowful love as well as the hasty and deliberate life will be reflected (Mei, 2021).

More than 500 Emily Dickinson's poems are directly or indirectly related to nature and ecology. The poems express her attitude and thought represented in nature poetry (Zuo, 2019).

Emily Dickinson's poetry is unique. Her poetic style is condensed, her metaphor is sharp and new, and she often ignores metric and even grammar. Her poems contain short sentences, omitted titles, uneven rhymes, and unconventional capital letters and punctuation. Many of her poems deal with death and immortality, and these two themes also appear repeatedly in her letters to friends. Despite some disapproval and doubts about her literary strength from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, Dickinson is now almost widely regarded as one of the most important American poets (Zhou, 2022).

Poetry is greatly influenced by the cultural background and personal experiences of the poets. Emily Dickinson's poems exemplify this because she draws a lot of her motivation from her heritage of New England and her life experience which had harsh incidents such as loss of

friends and relatives. Her limited interaction with the society gives her adequate space to reflect and write about different aspects of life. Emily's poetry is also influenced by the doubts she holds about Christianity, especially in relation with survival of the soul after death. Although Dickinson is a religious person who believes in the inevitability of death and afterlife, she is a non-conformist as she is skeptical and curious about the nature of death. Transcendentalism is the other factor that contributes to Dickinson's preoccupation with death as indicated in her poems (Sadeq, 2017).

Dickinson's dissatisfaction with her tradition made her question most of its theology and belief. Many of her poems talk about the theme of death and immortality. In fact, her religious experience was always seeking for the truth; she refuses to be in a state of believing a creed on the basis of habit or authority. Her poems are a personal confession, and in its self-revelation, its honesty, almost obscene. It comes out of an intellectual life toward which it feels no moral responsibility. The poems of Dickinson are a constant appeal to experience, motivated by an arrogant passion for the truth. "Truth is so rare a thing," she once said, "it is delightful to tell it." (Hussain & Qaddawi, 2013).

As a poet with varied writing styles and extra-ordinary talent, Emily Dickinson occupied a very prestigious position in the field of American literature. Her poetry deals with a unique and large number of thematic expressions including death, love, nature, immortality, pain and suffering (Aldabaleeh, 2018).

1.2 Problem Identification

Based on the background, the primary problem addressed in this thesis is the need to systematically analyse and interpret the thematic elements in Emily Dickinson's poems. Her poetry is renowned for its complexity and enigmatic nature, often leaving readers with a sense of ambiguity. Therefore, the main problem is the understanding and unravelling the thematic richness of Emily Dickinson's poems, which are characterized by their brevity, unconventional

style, and the poet's reclusive life, to gain deeper insights into her perspective on subjects such as love, nature, death, and religion.

This problem identification sets the stage for the thesis to delve into a structured examination of Dickinson's themes and how they are portrayed in her poetry. Thus, the problem identification can be stated as the following:

1. What prominent themes are reflected in Emily Dickinson's poems?
2. How does Emily Dickinson express the themes related to human experiences in her selected poems?

1.3 Objective

In accordance with the problem identification presented above, the objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To determine the salient themes reflected in Emily Dickinson's poems.
2. To examine how the themes relating to human experiences expressed in her selected poems.

1.4 Scope

Building upon the contextual foundation provided in the preceding research, this thesis confines its scope to a meticulous exploration of recurrent themes in Emily Dickinson's poetry. These themes encompass subjects like love, nature, death, and suffering. Simultaneously, the researcher scrutinizes the portrayal, interconnection, and significance of these themes within Dickinson's body of work. To maintain a focused approach, this study deliberately refrains from delving into other aspects, thereby allowing fellow researchers, particularly those exploring Emily Dickinson's poems, ample opportunities for their investigations.

1.5 Significance

The significance of this study is twofold: theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the study's findings can advance literary scholarship by providing a structured framework for analyzing recurring themes in poetry. It contributes to the exploration of genres within 19th-century American poetry and offers interdisciplinary insights, linking literature with fields such as psychology and sociology. This enhances literary analysis methodologies and deepens our understanding of the broader theoretical landscape of poetry.

On a practical level, the analysis is poised to offer recommendations to readers and researchers, providing educational value for literature. It has the potential to influence curriculum development, aid literary critics and analysts of Dickinson's work, inspire creative writers, and facilitate cultural understanding by connecting past and present societal themes. The study serves as a valuable resource for both academic pursuits and creative endeavors within the realm of literature.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Expressive Criticism

Expressive criticism is when people look at art, like poetry, and think it's mainly about showing the artist's feelings or imagination. It suggests that poetry mainly reflects the poet's emotions or imagination, rather than merely imitating things. This idea gained importance in literary theory during the early 1800s. It involves critiquing a work by focusing on its emotional and artistic elements, highlighting the critic's personal and subjective reaction. This approach often explores the feelings, impressions, and experiences evoked by a piece of art or literature, rather than strictly analyzing it based on technical or objective criteria. Such criticism can offer valuable insights into the influence and significance of creative works.

Expressive criticism treats a literary work primarily in relation to its author. It defines poetry as an expression, or overflow, or utterance of feelings, or as the product of the poet's imagination operating on his or her perceptions, thoughts, and feelings; it tends to judge the work by its sincerity, or its adequacy to the poet's individual vision or state of mind; and it often seeks in the work evidences of the particular temperament and experiences of the author who, deliberately or unconsciously, has revealed himself or herself in it (Abrams. Harpham, 2009).

Expressive criticism focuses on the artists emotion. It is well known among poets, for poetry is based on emotion. Expressive criticism describes poetry as an expression, as an overflow of a poet's feelings. Expressive criticism is unlike many other forms of criticism in that it does not focus on the style of writing, or grammar, or diction; it focuses on what is being said by the author. This form of criticism originated from a cultural movement in Germany and Austria in the early twentieth century called, expressionism. Expressionism was focused on the

arts, it's true meaning changing constantly over time. Ironically, this term was first used to describe French artists, not Germans. If work produced by Van Gogh and Munch is inspected, the critic will find that their work is based off of human experience. It was for this reason that expressionism was claimed to not be a style (Bonin, 2013).

Expressionism started at as paintings, sculptures and so on. It was not until later that literature, theatre, and music were added to the list of expressionism. After all, couldn't it be argued that literature, theatre, and music are just as much a part of the art community as a painting by Van Gogh? There is still much disagreement over the definition of expressionism. The one thing about it that is known for sure, is that it is very individualized. That is why expressive criticism is mainly used on poetry (Bassie, 2020).

What really started the expressive movement was the age of Romanticism. Romanticism deeply affected our modern consciousness and literary commentary. The three main concepts that expressive theorists still stick to today are imagination, genius, and emotion. Expressive theorists believe that individuality is something that must be conveyed in literary work. They believe in going above and beyond the objective theorists idea that a poet's job as a poet is to stray away from personality. Objective theorists believe that criticism should focus on the poem and not the poet. What those critics don't understand is that the poet is the poem (Bonin, 2013).

With the emergence in the early nineteenth century of an expressive criticism (the view that poetry is essentially an expression of the poet's feelings or imaginative process), imitation tended to be displaced from its central position in literary theory (Abrams. Harpham, 2009).

One of the big names associated with expressive criticism is William Wordsworth. Wordsworth defines poetry as "emotion recollected in tranquillity". He says, "a poem is inner made outer". Wordsworth was a naturalist. In any poem of his, that known fact becomes clear.

He, himself, always plays a major role in his own poetry. Who he is as a person, reflects in his poetry (Bonin, 2013).

The triumph in the early nineteenth century of expressive theories of literature (which conceive a work primarily as the expression of the feelings, temperament, and mental powers of the author), followed by the prominence, beginning in the 1920s, of objective theories of literature (which maintain that a work should be considered as an object in itself, independently of the attributes and intentions of the author and the responses of a reader), served to diminish, and sometimes to eliminate, rhetorical considerations in literary criticism (Abrams. Harpham, 2009).

Expressive writing has really evolved since it was first created. It is not only the main writing style of poetry, but it is now used in therapies, to help clients better understand their own emotions. The reason for this, is when something is expressive, it cannot be judged as fiercely as something that is factual. Critics cannot have an influential opinion about how somebody feels (Pearson, 2009).

Other criticisms tend to downplay the importance of the author while critiquing his or her work. Expressive criticism directs its focus on the author. While expressive criticism is more likely to be used with poetry it is also useful when critiquing novels and essays. Most people tend to focus on word choices and different styles, and mistakes that have been made, rather than why the author wrote the essay or novel, or even a short story. By focusing on the author, readers may better understand what they are reading (Bonin, 2013).

2.2 Theme

A theme is like a big idea or lesson that runs through a story. It's something that not only applies to the characters and events in the story but also tells us something important about life in general. Themes are like messages that the author wants readers to understand and think about, things that can teach us something about ourselves and the world around us.

A primary concept, message, or subject that is explored and developed throughout a work of fiction or non-fiction is referred to as a theme in literature. It acts as the underlying idea that provides the narrative depth and significance, enabling readers to empathise with the characters, incidents, and feelings on a deeper level. Themes that speak to basic human emotions like love, friendship, bravery, or the conflict between good and evil may be ageless and universal. They may also be particular to the setting of the narrative, illustrating societal problems, historical occurrences, or cultural standards. To explain and reaffirm the topic, authors employ a variety of literary devices, including as narrative, characters, and symbols. This gives readers a better understanding of the issue and numerous facets of life as well as the human condition. An analysis of a literary work's subject reveals the underlying meanings and points of view the author wishes to get over, which improves readers' comprehension and enjoyment of the work.

There is always at least one topic in each literary work, be it a poem, novel, essay, or something else entirely. Some authors have certain topics they wish to explore in their work before they even start writing, while many writers just start writing and let the ideas come to them organically as they go. However, most of the time authors don't identify the topic directly in the work itself, even when they do set out to explore a certain one. As a result, each reader will probably have their own thematic interpretation or comprehension of the work, and they must instead come to their own judgements about what themes are at work in any specific piece.

When a poet uses poetry, a theme is the main concept or underlying message that the poet wants to get across. It stands for the main idea or subject that the poetry examines, frequently focusing on universal human feelings, experiences, or facets of existence. Poetry may deal with a broad range of topics, including love, the natural world, mortality, social justice, and personal development. Poets convey and explore these issues using a variety of

literary devices, such as images, symbolism, and metaphors, enabling readers to interact with the poem's underlying meaning and feelings. Poems get depth and resonance from themes, which enable readers to relate to the poet's viewpoint and ponder the meaningful concepts expressed in the rhymes

2.3 Themes of Emily Dickinson's Poetry

Emily Dickinson, a renowned female poet of America in the nineteenth century, considered as the pioneer of Modern Poetry and Imagist Movement of American and Britain poetry in the twentieth century. Her poetry, with profound implications and unique styles, has made immortal contributions to the prosperity and development of world literature. While living in a solitary and inactive life, known as "Amherst recluse" in American literature, she has created 1775 ingenious poems in her whole life, covering numerous themes, such as nature, love, life, God and friendship and so on (Mei, 2021).

Emily Dickinson, the popularly known poet of seclusion and solitariness, is talking about love and death and time and eternity in her poems. Irritated with the human society, Dickinson found refuge in nature. The lap of nature also supplied to Dickinson the thought of love (Khan, 2016).

One of the most fascinating aspects of any poet is his conception of his art. Many poets have written extensively on the theory of art around which they orient their poetry. Others have clearly revealed their theories by writing criticism of other authors. Emily Dickinson, however, left no critical essays, no elucidation of her artistic principles. It is quite probable, indeed, that she did not consciously concern herself to any extent with poetic theory. She may have written, and written in her unique way, through an instinctive need which would admit of no plodding deliberation or stylistic experimentation (Thackrey, 1954).

Emily Dickinson's poems have many features. She wrote generally short poems in length, rarely consisting of more than six stanzas. More important, she did not give titles to her

poems --- others have given titles to some of her poems using the first line of the poem. The major themes of her poetry include friends, love, nature, death and immortality, etc (Kher, 1974).

Emily Dickinson's poems are characterized by an unmatched emotional and intellectual intensity that is cast into direct and accessible language of unusual brevity and grace. Some of her poems run for only a few lines but they survey the entire cosmos of human experience, including life and death, solitude and society, morality and nature. Many of her 1,775 poems are devoted to love, which Dickinson expressed from the position of the lover, the beloved, and the poet who marvels how love transports and transforms us. This selection gathers Dickinson's thrillingly unique poetry about the central animating experience of our lives (Baer, 2029).

The twentieth century English poetry is celebrated for uniqueness of thought and expression. The brilliant themes of modern platform attribute Emily Dickinson to be the greatest poet of twentieth century. She chose to advocate a distinctive approach to punctuation, capitalisation and verse variety. Her poetry is known for originality, precision of words and phrases. An emotional appeal, imaginative treatment of facts, pithy expression and vibrant imagery is the true essence of her poetry. The treatment of love and death occupy an imperative place. The circuit of natural world has brought the thought of love. The insight in the appearance of love was incredible for her. The human obsession found an exceptional expression in her poetry. Most of her poems passionately deal with the effects of human soul. She describes the anticipation of lover's visit, meeting of the lovers and promise of divine bliss in an effervescent way. In the meantime, she observes death as the free agent and mysterious courtier. The sensation of a dying person with crisp objectivity is articulated in her poetry (Deepak, 2016).

2.3.1 Love

Miss Emily Dickinson was a great poetess of America. She wrote poems on a variety of themes among which the theme of love plays a salient role in his poetry. She had written a large number of poems on this theme through which she expresses her private love affairs with several persons. But her love poems are full of ambiguity, obscurity and puzzling to comprehend easily. To understand her love poems we must turn to her private life— because her poems are the reflection of her own life— her thoughts, feeling, sentiments, whims and philosophy which are something wayward (Menonimus, 2023).

Most of Dickinson's poems trace themes like death, love and spiritual ecstasy. It proposes that Mysticism is some kind of spiritual practice of the soul that got weary of the material world; it is a religion of love of the Divine (Hemad, Douri, 2022).

Miss Emily Dickinson had never been married and led a virgin life. But though she remained unmarried throughout her life yet she went into contact of some distinguished male friends. With whom, it is believed, she had fallen in love. Amongst them, one was Helen Haunt Jackson who achieved fame by writing a book entitled *Romana*. He remained a friend to her for some years and inspired her to pursue the writing of poetry. Secondly, she went into the touch of another literary man by the name of Mr. Benjamin Newton. He tried to guide her in the field of poetry reading and writing. An intimacy developed between them and Miss Emily took him to be her would-be lover or a life partner. But one day in 1853, while Miss Emily was twenty-three years old, he died suddenly. The death of Benjamin Newton gave her a shock. A year later, she travelled to Philadelphia where she met a married clergyman by the name of Charles Wordsworth. She respected him much and took him as her lover and exchanged several letters with him. But eventually, in 1860 Charles Wordsworth cut off communication with her. Then she chose a life of seclusion and had been keeping herself most at home. In 1878 she met another gentleman by the name of Otis P. Lord. He was a judge of the supreme court of

Massachusetts—a distinguished and casually attractive man. He was one of her father's best friends and much senior to her (Menonimus, 2023).

Trauma, manifesting in various forms from her childhood to her reclusive later years, pervades Dickinson's secretive existence. Her poetry, marked by a profound personal touch, weaves the pain of loss, social isolation, unrequited love, physical suffering, and existential quandaries into metaphoric and symbolic language (Lyu, 2024).

Dickinson had written about a dozen letters to which proved that she was emotionally in deep love with him. But neither to him nor to the former friends had she revealed her love deliberately. Perhaps the cause of her secrecy in expressing her desire of love to them was that all those persons were distinguished and well-established for which she, thinking herself to be a worthless simple girl, hesitated to express her deep love to them. But throughout her life, she had kept their images warm in her mind and in her poems she often made references to them. But her love as expressed in her poems is less and less physical and more and more spiritual. She thought that physical love begot pain, sufferance and despair. It is only spiritual love that inspires a heart to live. As she was rejected by her friends so she became desperate in worldly or physical love and wished to unite with them spiritually and this thought kept her heart warm. As her love is spiritual, she wished to be united with her lovers in heaven so her love poems have become ambiguous—because, after death, she imagined to get united with her lover. But who was her loved person? Sometimes God or Christ stands as her lover who would give her shelter in heaven amid joy, peace and happiness and sometimes she refers to her earthly friends whom she had lost. A critical study of her major love poems clarifies something of the mystery (Menonimus, 2023).

Most of her love poems are composed with the concrete gathering of the lovers. The lovers meet, separate and realize that they cannot live together passionately as they would imagine. The poetess speaks about her lover in the poems and utters that she cannot live a

complete life with the male partner. But in the mean time she can't imagine them aging and dying. The poetess finds no promise in conservative religions. Her straight appeal to god for comfort remains a distant reality. The love poems of Dickinson portray not only happiness but also frustration in love. She writes about her dream male with greater aspiration. But in the course of time she says about the result of separation from him has seemed finally to fade away. She realizes and opines that their relationship was inspiring and scarce their love for Divine. Her treatment of love is vital and can be elucidated in a passionate manner (Deepak, 2016).

In American literature, Emily Dickinson as a love poetess is a difference because her sense of love is more divine and spiritual if compared to other love American love poets (Menonimus, 2023).

2.3.2 Nature

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), a great American poetess, had been living throughout the late English Romantic Age and went something under the influence of the English Romantic Movement. Her portrayal of Nature was not Romantic to the true sense of the term—because unlike the English Romantic Poets she did not seek peace, beauty, mystery, moral lesson and joy in the objects of Nature. She, on the contrary, portrayed nature as it was. Sometimes she takes delight and sometimes she mocks at natural objects. She seeks no wisdom, no lesson in nature. She only shows the external aspects of nature with their transience. Sometimes Nature becomes hostile to her. Hence her portrayal of Nature may be called sentimental and whimsical having no fixed aim or philosophy. But it is worth praising that she has brought into account the trifling objects and beings like—bee, flies, caterpillar, whining birds, frog, snake, lizards etc. and the natural phenomena such as—storm, seasons, sunrise and more she has given a good portrayal of various kind of followers, such as—rose, buttercups, daisy, lotus etc. But in many poems, she takes all these objects of Nature not as a primary or main theme but as a metaphor to explain her thought and feeling in poetry. A close study of

her major poems shows us how she treated the objects of Nature in her poetry (Menonimus, 2023).

Emily Dickinson is a poet of nature not in the traditional sense of the term. She lived in a life of secrecy and self chosen confinement. Human society was never a matter of interest to her. Rather she found solace and comfort in the lap of nature. Thus Dickinson is a poet with difference and the study of Dickinson as a poet of nature is matter of scholarly interest for years after years (Khan, 2016).

Nature is one of the important themes in Emily Dickinson's poetry. With the deterioration of environment, the ecological connotations in Dickinson's poetry are attracting increasing attention. From the ecocritical perspective, and with reference to eco-logical ethics, some of Emily Dickinson's representative nature poems are analysed in this paper, thus to reveal the profound ideas of ecological ethics (Lv, 2015).

But in many poems, Emily takes all these objects of Nature not as a primary or main theme but as a metaphor to explain her thought and feeling in poetry. A close study of her major poems shows us how she treated the objects of Nature in her poetry (Menonimus, 2023).

2.3.3 Death

Miss Emily Dickinson has been known as an American lyric poet. Her poems involve in many aspects, such as nature, religion, life, death and so on. The mystery of death, as an important part of the mystery of nature, has attracted much attention from Dickinson. Out of some one thousand and seven hundred poems, perhaps some "five to six hundred" are concerned with the theme of death. Studies on the death theme of Dickinson's poems emerge in endlessly since her unique perspective and bold imagination of writing (Jiang, 2023).

Emily Dickinson dedicated much of her thought on the subject of death and the afterlife. She came across many tragedies in her childhood. The death of friends in childhood, parents, a beloved nephew and the people in the Civil War has engaged Dickinson in a quest to

understand death and what it brings in her life. The matter of immortality, eternity and the supremacy of God seemed to preoccupy her. Dickinson planned to reveal her feelings, experiences and beliefs in her poetic work of art. This has helped her to trace out the images of death and makes her multifaceted. The poems of Emily Dickinson revolve round the theme of death. Her contribution to American Literature is her poetic insight into the nature of death. Being a spiritualist she affirms the deathlessness of death. In fact she assigns death next to God. Death is always powerful, evergreen and the free agent of God. The man made creations and kingdoms depart permanently with the passage of time except death. It is evident that death is immortal and holds a divine place in nature (Deepak, 2016).

Sometimes he has gone away from Christian principles and traditional belief. She says, certainly that death leads one to heaven and it makes an end to the sorrow, sufferance, distress and despair in life. Her place as a poet of death is after none in American literature though there was Walt Whitman who also wrote some poems on the same themes but it was Dickinson who always bore the memory of imminent death with her and unlocked that feeling explicitly in her poems (Menonimus, 2023).

According to Emily, the ultimate barometer of life is death. With the annals of American literature, Dickinson's singular perspective on mortality is noteworthy. Dickinson struggled to overcome the constant fear of death throughout her life. She investigated mortality from every angle possible; she found it difficult to forget any funerals or deaths that had occurred in her life. She personified death by different symbols throughout her poems. Her poems personifying death mainly through the symbol of "Him" to have as many contradictions as the universe, and as many complexities. He is timid and bold. He is a lover, a murderer, a brigand, a thoughtful coachman, a democrat, a despot, a wild beast. She has no final view of death personified. He remains the great unknown, the great mystery. Her vision of death as

reflected in her letters as well as poems is paradoxical. She considers death both friend and a foe. She fears as well as she welcomes it (Jadav, 2019).

2.3.4 Suffering

Emily Dickinson, one of the great poetess of America, had written poetry on a variety of themes; but almost all her poems are the utterance of a forlorn, crest-fallen, desperate soul and through the poems she has poured down her sorrows, pain and sufferance that she faced and felt in life. And in doing so, she has thrown her discriminating eyes on the nature of pain—its stages, its effects on the human soul and finally the relation of pain with death and God. A study of her poems shows that throughout her life she nursed in her heart, a deep source of hidden pain, sufferance caused by despair of her personal life. But all the pain and sufferance she bore always with herself under suppression, which grew out bit by bit in her poetry. But what were the causes of her despair that caused her to suffer in life? To get its proper reply, we must look back to her personal life (Menonimus, 2023).

Dickinson's treatment of death is characterized by a tragic and pessimistic outlook, marked by an abundance of pain and suffering. The fear of death consistently haunts her mind, profoundly shaping her perception of life (Afghan, 2024).

Emily remained unmarried throughout her life. All these cases, perhaps, had broken the spirit of her heart and she became desperate. The despairs caused by these events begot pain in her which got reflected in her poems. But she had never cursed pain in life. Instead, she took pain as a touchstone for estimating the depth of the human soul. Her outlook on pain and suffering was that pain humanized human soul and it was necessary to have a better life after death (Menonimus, 2023).

Dickinson views death as the provider of comfort, a rescuer from the worldly pain and agony, a solacer in the world of despondency, a way out to the world of perpetual bliss and what not (Tiwari, Khanday, 2017).

Emily Dickinson's position facing one of the most intriguing mysteries of humanity, and that sometimes she showed it as a refuge for the end of suffering and human misery. This theme is not only recurrent in the Dickinson's poetry, but in many others works of the North American literature (Ferreira, Silva, 2021).

2.4 Review of Related Literature

The prior research on environmental studies in literary works is presented in this part. This seeks to clarify the research analysis and demonstrate how the current study differs from earlier studies. Additionally, it demonstrates the originality of this discovery. Here are a few earlier studies that are connected to the research.

2.4.1 Aldabaleeh, Y. (2018). International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature 7(3):60. Ordinary Themes Presented with an Extra-ordinary Talent: An Overview of Emily Dickinson's Notable Poems (Article).

Yousef Aldabaleeh posits that, in examining poetry centered on themes of love, death, and nature, Emily Dickinson emerges primarily as a poet rather than a thinker or philosopher. While the themes of love, death, and nature are not novel, Dickinson revitalizes and imbues them with a renewed vitality through her distinctive poetic craftsmanship. Her extraordinary perceptiveness, combined with a unique flair for expression, breathes new life and originality into these timeless themes.

Thus in order to shape and formulate Emily's poetic attitude towards nature, love, death, pain and suffering Dickinson borrowed images and concepts from her predecessors and the contemporaries. Provoked constantly by the enchanting scenes of nature of New England, and disturbed continuously by the experiences with death, love and God, Dickinson was conditioned to a mode of expression which involved the use of words that evolved themselves into meaningful metaphors and complex concepts. Her authentic portrayal of the disintegrating puritan belief led her to use paradox and irony in the elaboration of her themes. Through the themes she used and the way she expressed them, she has come to gain the important role of a

crucial aesthetic link between the seventeenth century metaphysical and the twentieth century neo-metaphysical.

2.4.2 Al Manifi, M. (2018). Conference Paper: Emily Dickinson as a Poet. King Abdulaziz University.

Murtada Al Manifi discusses about Emily's self-portrayal in verse characterizes her life and art with a vivid strain of poetic irony, "small, like the wren; my hair bold, like the chestnut burr; and my eyes, like the sherry in the glass that the guest leaves". Whatever may be the real cause of her self-imposed exile, she had the strong romantic urge to invest the simple things seen, felt or imagined, in her surroundings, with the charm and freshness of a new vision. She lived in a sublime atmosphere of the mind that made nature a part of her poetic experience and a medium of her mystical vision. Nature comes to her not only with an irresistible sensuous appeal but also in its ultimate disintegrative form of death. Though she is anchored in the Puritan faith of New England, her mysticism paradoxically transcends and excels it by her power of self-revelation.

To trace the mysterious urge behind Emily's self-absorption or her long voluntary confinement to her house and its garden, except a few necessary trips, is to unravel the intricacy of her love life, as is commonly believed. But though her love poetry seems to have gained a model through this brief tragic encounter or experience, she does not live a starved life... Rather her life is one of the richest and deepest ever lived on this continent.

Anything might inspire Emily Dickinson to write verse, a fleeting thought, a garden view, a sunset, a death, a clanking of the locomotive or a theological riddle. But she never bothered about writing to be read with ease and appreciation. She used backs of envelopes and odd pieces of paper for this purpose. Consequently, her sister Lavinia had a tough time sifting the bundles for printing. In 1890 and 1891 two volumes of Emily's verse came out, winning her great renown. In 1945 a large collection of her poems came out - six hundred in number - with a suggestive, striking title *Bolts of Melody*. Her prodigious fertility in the sphere of the

brief meditative or dramatic lyric appears to be breath-conditioned' in a way, as many poems as the breath coming in and going out.

Emily has a keen eye for the shades of beauty in nature, but she perceives human nature with piercing insights. In a poem on life, death and immortality, she pictures the last journey, passing into eternity, is touchingly mystical. Her poetry, chiefly, deals with the relationships between man, nature, and God. She also renders psychological experience with sincerity and charm.

2.4.3 Sharma, R. (2017). World Wide Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development: International Journal: Recurrent Themes in Emily Dickinson's Poetry. WWJMRD 2017; 3(10):19-20.

Richa Sharma highlights that American literature had a long period of apprenticeship. The nineteenth century American poetry has been represented by the three great poets- Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. Emily was one of the great poets of all time, perhaps, the greatest of all American women poets. She wrote about 1800 poems, only seven of which were published during her lifetime, five of them in the Springfield Republican. Though she was not a philosopher, nor even a consistent thinker, she strikingly illuminated hidden recesses in the human soul. Themes and imagery of her poems are borrowed from ordinary life Amherst of her time, her father's influence, the loss of her near and dear ones, and the ordinary things around her like. Even a cursory glance at her themes reveals an extreme preoccupation with the reality of God, the possibility of faith, the effect of death, the problems of immortality, the nature of the soul, love, passion, pain, social scene and nature.

Nature has been one of the most recurring themes of English and American poetry since the closing decade of the eighteenth century. The chief exponent of this subject, William Wordsworth penetrated beneath the outward manifestation of nature, explored its utmost philosophical limits and gave to her a separate life and soul of her own. The highly sensitive and creative mind of Emily must have definitely been influenced by the nature poetry of

Wordsworth. She, while sitting in her little solitary world, at the window pane, observed every minute object of nature with her keen power of observation and gave an outlet to her microscopic power of imagination. She wrote more than 500 poems on nature. To her, Nature appears as the gentlest mother, very affectionate, loving and care taking soothing and comforting her bruised children. A minute observer of Nature as Dickinson was, nothing of Nature escaped her notice. The common objects of nature like sun-rise, sun-set, birds, flowers, changes in the season, the magical movement of the rotation of day and night, wind and the storm fascinated and stirred her imagination and filled her with exultation and immense pleasure. 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. If Emily Dickinson loved external nature and faithfully recorded her impressions of it, she was even more fascinated by the complex social scene around her. She responded to the interplay of community events and human personality, meditated on friendship, and closely examined her own deep experience of love and passion. Apart from the poems written on the theme of Nature and social scene, she wrote more than a hundred poems on the theme of love.

Emily's own experience of passion occasioned most of her love poetry, but she also considered the subject from a philosophical view-point. As she matured, she realized that love created the only harmony in the universe and that divine love surpassed nature's beauty and human affection. Love triumphs over both life and death to achieve an almost divine status.

Unlike most other American poets, she was religiously oriented. With a great spirit of religious unorthodoxy, Dickinson relies more on her soul to lead her to Heaven and to God than all the sermons and church-goings that conventional religion recommends. Her written comments show how distressed she was by the religious pressures. In fact she discarded the

sway of religion and relied more on intuition and imagination. She could not accept the harsh dogmas of innate depravity, arbitrary election and predestination, or revere the Bible as true history and the only moral guide for man.

If human love and spiritual bliss were one side of life's coin, the reverse showed pain and loss or death. For Emily Dickinson as for Hawthorne and James, the knowledge of pain became a touchstone for estimating the depth of a human soul. Primarily she notes that true pain becomes such an essential part of one's being that its departure causes a deeper loneliness in the soul. Since pain's intensity is unrelenting, one can never master it, nor even hope for time to assuage its power.

Death is one of the perennial themes of Dickinson's poetry. Dickinson's large new house was close to the centre of town and beside a cemetery. Funeral processions usually passed the Dickinson house on the way to the cemetery, and it is small wonder that Emily grew up conscious of death- it was impossible to avoid. Just as Death is the gateway to Immortality, in the same way, the death poems of Dickinson end only to usher in a new phase in her poetical career.