



The Role Of Faith In Life's Uncertainty: A Study With Reference To Emily Dickinson's Poem - "I Never Saw A Moor"

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Abstract: The current paper explores Emily Dickinson's treatment of faith in her poetry, amidst the uncertainties of life. Examining and exploring how her poetry deals with the complexities of doubt, uncertainty and a never ending search for meaning in life. Emily Dickinson's poetry often revolves around the themes such as nature, death and existential questions, where faith is portrayed both complex and simple at the same time.

Through an analysis of key points in the poem "I Never Saw a Moor", the study investigates how her unique style and usage of vivid imagery and language mirrors the certainties and uncertainties in the human experience. The paper shows Dickinson's exploration of faith along with her complex and paradoxical outlook on religious as well as philosophical ideas, presenting her as a poet who believes in having faith and hope can really guide one in navigating through life's uncertainties in a world full of chaos.

Keywords: Ambiguity, Faith, Uncertainties, Doubt, Confessional Poetry, Emily Dickinson, Philosophical

INTRODUCTION

People often tend to believe only in the things that are visible to the eyes; they even say, "Seeing is Believing", but is it really so!? Because in this world full of infinite unanswered questions and where every answer further leaves a question where you are left to ponder on it forever, is it just to stick only to the things which are certain and concrete and show disregard to all that seems abstract and uncertain? If one goes only with sight and chooses to remain unbothered towards all that cannot be seen or touched, do you think that the world will look welcoming to anyone? NO! then it will be entitled as a depressing and a lonesome place to live in. When the world itself is paradoxical in nature and the life – a fine blend of certainties and uncertainties, ultimate peace and endless worries; what keeps one going? What makes one to go on trying? What is that something buried deep in one's heart that gives courage to keep going and what do we call it that helps an individual to come up against all the difficulties of life? And the only answer is, 'The Faith' or 'The Hope'; even if all the odds are stacked against you, a small belief can help you to stay afloat!

That's why it's not always 'Seeing is Believing' that wins the argument, but also 'Feeling' some things existence though they are not visible to the naked eye and holding on to that belief along with trusting the unseen, the unknown. Because most beautiful things in life can only be felt, rather touched or be seen; such as love, kindness, freedom, a sense of peace, joy, divine truth and other emotions.

Throughout the poem “I Never saw a Moor”, readers can observe the speaker’s repeated use of the word- ‘Never’. Generally, we see that the term ‘never’ is always associated with something that is negative in sense or something which is beyond one’s limit; but here Emily Dickinson very thoughtfully, uses it to give rise to a hidden hope which resides in every dreamer’s heart. A message to go on believing in something though the path may be uncertain, though the results unknown and unpredictable!

Here Dickinson clearly asserts, to believe in the existence of a moor, the sea, heaven or even God, one does not have to see them directly. Seeing through eyes is all relating to the human senses, and having belief or faith on something and its existence is totally independent of sensory experiences. The notion which Dickinson holds up reflects her view on spirituality as well, conveying how faith is all about conviction and trust and not evidence.

Throughout the poem Dickinson frequently compares and contrasts between the things that can be seen with the ones unseen. A significant shift from ‘Creation’ to ‘Creator’ can also be noticed while moving from stanza one to stanza two. If we take spiritual or religious elements into consideration and see from that point of view - the moor, the sea, heather, the waves are the creations of the almighty God or of that supreme power which governs over the universe and all its affairs; also these represent all those components of nature that are physically existing in this world somewhere though the speaker has never gotten a chance to experience them directly!

Similarly, how these ‘real’ elements of nature are a distant reality to the speaker because of her self-isolation from the outer world and the society, makes the speaker to put the transcendent mysteries or the divine truths of the world such as, eternity, the celestial or spiritual realm etc., into a same frame as the former. She equally considers these abstract concepts such as, the God, heaven and the afterlife all to be equally true just how the other earthly things can exist though one may not get a chance to experience them firsthand. Dickinson tries to prove how even after living in this mortal world for so long one can be devoid of experiencing the mere concrete elements of the nature but can also believe in their existence blindly just by reading about them or hearing its glory, then how can one question or disregard the existence of other complex ideas which are completely impossible for one to understand just because they are beyond one’s comprehension and far from vision?

Despite not having seen the moor or the sea, speaker is confident in their existence. This confidence reflects the certainty that comes with the faith. Even though not having the direct experience with any of the things concrete or abstract to be exact, the speaker affirms in the poem as follows,

“Yet certain am I of the spot

As if the chart were given”

This shows how faith and the power of imagination bridges the gap between the known and the unknown, certain and the uncertain! The moor, the sea, heather all these in the poem stand as a metaphor for all those things, which one never sees or can never experience, but can only desire for their encounter one day. This persistent longing paves a way to a strong belief further giving birth to an urge to imagine them and try to feel them from the mind’s eye, in a way at least to experience a sense of fulfilment within, as they are a far reality to them.

As a quote from Harper Lee’s famous book, ‘To Kill a Mockingbird’ states,

“People generally see what they look for, and hear what they listen for”

In just one sentence how beautifully the power of perspective in coping up through life’s difficulties is summarized here isn’t it? How it all solely depends upon our individual outlook towards life and its challenges makes all the difference at the end and not the situation. The meaning which we can derive out of it is the same as when Dickinson talks about “The Chart”, in the poem. We all possess that chart or the map to find way through the difficulties or the uncertainties of this life. We just haven’t figured it out yet; we all have chosen to take the same route that everybody else has taken before us, without stepping out of our comfort zones. But only those few who keep faith in the uncertain and dare to take up the road that is less travelled by

as Robert Frost had penned down, will truly live and can explore, because faith is not all about certainty it's that courage to live with life's uncertainty.

CONCLUSION

Just to reflect and symbolize the uncertainties of life, throughout the poem, poet too frequently shifts from concrete to abstract concepts very often. From life or living things to the subjects like death, God and afterlife; from being totally clueless about something to being as certain as if having a map in hand; through her vivid imagery, depicting how even the real things existing in nature can seem questionable and as a mirage to some but other total abstract concepts like divine truths and such doctrines are always strongly meant to believe, protect and to pass on without questioning. Thus Dickinson never fails to amaze her readers by her unique style of writing along with her unconventional inventive themes in her poetry. The poem begins with a doubt but as it moves towards the end, it sheds off all its uncertainties behind and advances towards utter confidence and absoluteness, by proving how the presence of faith in one's life plays a significant role in the absence of true certainty.

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