

Jewelry in Emily Dickinson's Poems

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Introduction

Emily Dickinson employs jewel vocabulary in 121 poems out of 1775 poems, that is one poem out of fourteen. Surprisingly various kinds of jewelry appear in her poems, although she writes "I never wear Jewels—" in her letter.¹ Here is a list of terms which are related to jewelry and the number of times which Dickinson employs them in her poems:

agate(1), amber(23), amethyst(6), beryl(4), chrysolite(1),
chrysopiase(3), coral(2), crown/crowns(24), crystal(3), diadem/
diadems(14), diamonds(8), emerald/emeralds(12), garnet(2), gem(8),
jasper(2), opal(4), pearl/pearls(30), quartz(2), ruby (8),
sapphire(4), topaz(3), jewel(4)

The purpose of this paper is to study, through jewel imagery, what ideas Dickinson presents, what effect she brings, and what aspects of jewelry fascinate her.

The first chapter is going to deal with how a speaker recognizes the value of jewels, the second chapter, how jewels represent the relationship between a man and a woman, and the third chapter, how Dickinson captures the jewel imagery in nature.

1 Value

Let us begin to study poems which discuss the value of jewels. No

other poem expresses the value of jewels more directly than poem 998 ("Best Things dwell out of sight"). The poem lists three things, "The Pearl—the Just—Our Thought" as best things. The characteristics of best things are to "dwell out of Sight," "to shun the Pulic Air," "Legitimate," and "Rare." It is difficult to see the "Best Things" because the essence of essence ("Germ's Germ") is deeply hidden. These expressions refer to Dickinson's own values, which are not shared by the public.

The similar idea is reflected in poem 583 ("A toad can die of light"). The first stanza deals with death, while the second stanza describes life as a "Ruby." As the speaker cannot distinguish his/her identity of Ruby, he/she is advised to measure wine or ruby without "Flask" and "Cask." Rebecca Patterson states that "Perhaps it is only by stripping off the containers and getting down to the 'Naked,' the 'Bare,' that one arrives at fundamental discriminations."² One of the important notions which Dickinson implies for jewels is the essence, which can be reached by stripping off the shells. The poem also refers to status; while death confers the same status to all whether they are "Toads" or "Earls" or "Midges," life does not. According to Dickinson's view, people cannot know somebody's status until they reach his deep inner self of essence.

Now, we will discuss poems which represent a speaker's childhood experiences which are related to jewels. Poem 299 ("Your Riches—taught me—Poverty.") declares a different wealth made the speaker realize that he/she was no longer rich. Through jewel imagery, the third stanza confesses how the speaker is blind to wealth:

Of Mines, I little know—myself—
But just the names, of Gems—

The Colors of the Commonnest—
 And scarce of Diadems— (ll.9-12)

The sixth stanza employs "Gem" as comparison, saying that "To have smile for Mine—each Day, / How better, that a Gem!" The final stanza recollects the speaker's girlhood:

It's far—far Treasure to surmise—
 And estimate the Pearl—
 That slipped my fingers through—
 While just a Girl at School. (ll.29-32)

Opinions about who the subject refers to vary among critics, as this poem was sent to both Benjamin Newton, who introduced Dickinson to literature, and to her sister-in-law, Sue. Paula Bennet claims that the person is Sue³, while Whicher⁴ and Greg Johnson⁵ claim it is Newton. Jerome Loving says that "It matters little—of course, who the particular subject was—Newton or Sue."⁶ The spiritual richness which the narrator experienced permeates the poem through a skillful use of vocabulary, including jewel terms. Terms which are related to monetary value is one of the devices: "Riches," "Poverty," "Millionaire," "Estate," "beggars," "Treasure." Another device is that the poem involves place names such as Buenos Ayre, Peru, Golconda, as well as mines and jewels. These remote place names suggest the large and significant scale of wealth.

The last stanza in poem 299 is similar in idea and imagery to poem 245 ("I held a Jewel in my fingers—"). The narrator deplores "The Gem" which "was gone" while he/she was sleeping on the day when it

was warm and "winds were prosy." What he/she now owns is "an Amethyst remembrance." "The Gems" signify "artistic apprenticeship or friendship or love,"⁷ "the beloved,"⁸ and "the poet's genius."⁹ The word "prosy," which means 'dull' in this context, is opposed to 'poetic.' Therefore, it may be proper to think this poem as one about poetic experience; the poet's keen sensibility makes it possible for him/her to compose poetry.

The experience that a narrator cannot have a jewel when it is necessary is again stated in poem 693 ("Shells from the Coast mistaking—"). The narrator cherished "Shells from the Coast mistaking—" "for All." That is, his/her longing for the pearl has grown while he/she did not have it. When he/she happened "To entertain a Pearl" he/she thought it is too late, but the pearl said, "My Period begin." The narrator did not possess a pearl when he/she wanted to, which made it possible to appreciate the pearl. The poem reminds us of one of Dickinson's typical ideas: when people lack something, they realize its value more. Therefore, "My Period begin" indicates that now that the narrator has enough ability to recognize the value of pearl, he/she is entitled to possess the pearl.

Poem 320 presents significant experience, which is somewhat different from the poems which have just been examined:

We play at Paste—
 Till qualified, for Pearl—
 Then, drop the Paste—
 And deem ourself a fool—

The Shapes—though—were similar—

And our new Hands
 Learned Gem-Tactics—
 Practicing Sands—

To “play” is one of Dickinson’s key words; she learned a lot through play. For example, poem 689 (“The Zeroes—taught us—Phosphorus—”) records that “playing Glaciers” made the speaker guess “Tinder” by balancing “power Of Opposite.” “We” “learned Gem-Tactics” through playing with “Paste.” Most jewels are not beautiful when they are picked from the underground; they do not have brilliant and fascinating qualities until they are skillfully cut and sufficiently polished. Accordingly, “Gem-Tactics” means to transform coarse material into refined material.

This poem is generally considered to refer either to a poem or to a poet. Thomas H. Johnson states this poem is about “the development of the artist,”¹⁰ and Richard B. Sewall says that the poem emphasizes “the necessity of constant revision, or practice, in literary composition.”¹¹ Furthermore, Helen McNeil interprets the poem as “the poet’s passage from apprenticeship to the practice of poetic truth.”¹² There are also some other interpretations. For example, Rebecca Patterson defines the subject of this poem as friends,¹³ and Robert Weisbuch as “the art of constructing one’s life in general.”¹⁴

We will further consider the view that the narrator is not deserving of pearls in other poems. In poem 84, which was sent to Samuel Bowles in 1859, two persons are contrasted:

Her breast is fit for pearls,
 But I was not a “Diver”—

Her brow is fit for thrones
 But I have not a crest. (ll.1-4)

As Jean M. Mudge¹⁵ and Vivian R. Pollack¹⁶ have pointed out, "Her" refers to the wife of Samuel Bowles, Mary, whom Dickinson greatly admired. "She" has high status and is dignified, as "pearl" suggests, while "I," who is expressed as "a sparrow," lead a humble life. The speaker claims that "my" way of life is different from "hers." The second line means that "I" was not a person who dove into the sea to obtain pearls. Namely, only a courageous person is able to obtain pearls. Not seeking for pearls, the persona chooses a calm and feminine way of life, building a "sweet of twigs" and twining "My perennial nest."

Poem 452 ("The Malay—took the Pearl") employs the same idea and imagery as found in poem 84, but the narrator's feeling is quite different. While the speaker hesitated to touch the sea in order to capture the pearl, because he/she was "Unsanctified," the Malay took the pearl and brought it home. The speaker had thought that he/she was worthy for "the Destiny" of the pearl, as he/she was "the Earl." However, contrary to the speaker's expectation, "the Negro," who was unconscious of the pearl, seized it. The poem declares that a person who is indifferent to the pearl actually acquires it. The poem turns over a fixed idea that a pearl is more appropriate for a person of higher status than a person of lower status. From a different perspective, while the speaker, who feared to touch the sea and prayed that he/she might be worthy for "the Destiny" of the pearl, was passive, "the Malay" was wild and courageous. That is, it is essential to take a risk to reach the pearl, the poem insists.

As for the pearl in this poem, Ruth Miller remarks that "the imagery

of pearl is associated with a poem,"¹⁷ and Theodora Ward states "The pearl is not only a jewel for which a great price may be paid, but it's spherical form represents the wholeness that Emily was searching for."¹⁸ Moreover, Greg Johnson remarks it as "symbol of the essential value of life which the poet is struggling toward."¹⁹

While Dickinson takes jewels as valuable things, there are some cases in which jewels are less valuable. The beginning of the second stanza of poem 7 ("The feet of people walking home"), which depicts ideal after-life, says:

Pearls are the Diver's farthings
Extorted from the Sea— (ll.9-10)

While people wear pearls, appreciating the worth and beauty, divers take pearls from the sea in order to make a living. To put it in another way, pearls are daily bread for the divers. Their main concern is how much money they can get by selling the pearls. Thus, pearls are very realistic things, which made Dickinson describe pearls as "farthings," very small amount of money.

Poem 312 ("Her—'last poems'—") laments Elizabeth Barret Browning who greatly influenced Dickinson and died on 30 June, 1861. Her greatness cannot be praised by giving her crown or diadem: "'Tis dull — conferring / On the Head too High to Crown — / Diadem — or Ducal Showing — ." "Emily Dickinson says she was first awakened to the immediacy of poetry by reading the poems of Elizabeth Barret Browning."²⁰ It was by the standard of Mrs. Browning's verse that Emily Dickinson judged other women's poetry. The spiritual greatness which Dickinson felt towards her cannot be compared with crown or diadem.

Poem 466 describes a person who does not need jewelry because he/she is satisfied with the present situation:

'Tis little I—could care for Pearls—
 Who own the ample sea—
 Or Brooches—when the Emperor—
 With Rubies—pelteth me—

Or Gold—who am the Prince of Mines—
 Or Diamonds—when have I
 A Diamdem to fit a Dome—
 Continual upon me—

The richness and happiness which the persona possesses is expressed by “the ample sea,” “Rubies,” and “A Diadem to fit a Dome.” The speaker also calls himself/herself “the Prince of Mines.” The supreme happiness is described as “love,”²¹ “death,”²² “immortality,”²³ “human experience,”²⁴ and poetic inspiration.

Dickinson expresses her own idea of fame in many poems (poems 431, 448, 675, 866, 883, 1009, 1066, 1232, 1475, 1531, 1659 1763). She ironically regards fame in this world, namely, she does not intend to obtain fame as the public does. In her belief, fame should be judged by oneself. The second stanza of the poem 713 (“Fame of Myself to lack—Although”) asserts the idea, saying that if “I,” myself think “I” have no fame, then to be praised by people would be “A futile Diadem.”

In cases in which jewels are employed as valuable things, jewels refer to something which spiritually satisfies a speaker, using them metaphorically. Alternatively, jewels are sometimes used as less valuable. In

this case, jewels represent most often people's standards which are different from Dickinson's.

II The Relationship Between Men and Women

We now turn to considering jewels which symbolize the relationship between a man and a woman.

Poem 334 ("All the letters I can write") filled with feminine imagery was sent to Dickinson's cousin Eudocia Flynt in July 1862, with a flower. The letters "I" write to "you" are "Syllables of Velvet—" and "Sentences of Plush." Velvet and Plush are sexual in a sense, as they are associated with the sense of touch. The sexual words follow in the latter half of the poem:

Depths of Ruby, undrained,
Hid, Lip, for Thee—
Play it were a Humming Bird—
And just sipped—me— (ll.5-8)

Ruby refers to "Lip," a flower, and "Depths" suggests the narrator's deep love for her beloved. As he does not accept her love, she is in deep grief. Her heart-rending feeling is expressed in the word, "Play," which means 'pretend.' Dickinson depicts the woman's deep and painful feeling as a "Ruby."

A persona's one-sided love for her beloved is again depicted using the imagery of jewels in poem 339 ("I tend my flowers for thee—") dominated by sexuality:

My Fuschzia's Coral Seams

Rip—while the Sower—dreams— (ll.3-4)

Occupied by her love for the “Bright Absentee,” the persona cannot suppress the feeling. However, she cannot see him forever, which makes her all the more distressed. The red color of ruby and coral in the two poems which have been just discussed shows intense passion.

Not only do jewels denote female feeling towards a man, but they also represent delicate relationship between men and women. Dickinson’s crucial question in poem 213 is who has more authority:

Did the Harebell loose her girdle
To the lover Bee
Would the Bee the Harebell hallow
Much as formerly?

Did the “Paradise”—persuaded—
Yield her moat of pearl—
Would the Eden be an Eden,
Or the Earl—an Earl?

In the first stanza, the poet questions whether the bee would still respect the woman, if the woman, “the Harebell,” accepts the man, “the Bee.” The second stanza repeats what has been stated in the first stanza, changing the scene from this world to the world beyond this world. The “Harebell” is equivalent to “the Paradise” and “Eden,” while “the Bee,” to the “the Earl.” The woman’s “moat of pearl,” which corresponds to “her girdle,” connotes strong defense and holiness. The second stanza focuses on status; that is, if the sacred wall between a man and a woman collapsed, how would it affect their status? The

speaker fears that her status would be lowered.

Poem 493 ("The World—stands—solemner—to me—") again employs pearls as symbols to show the relationship between a man and a woman. Marriage, for a woman, means not only the relationship between a man and a woman, but also the nature of her world view. In other words, a woman has to have contact with the world through a man after marriage. Then the lines which include the pearl imagery follow:

A doube—if it be fair indeed—
 To wear that perfect—pearl—
 The Man—upon the Woman—binds—
 To clasp her soul—for all— (ll.5-8)

The pearl represents the contract in marriage, which restricts the woman's freedom as the words "binds" and "clasp" indicate. The speaker, who is in great anxiety, views whether the contract is fair for the man; she thinks she may not be such a wonderful person as he expected. The speaker is very modest, not expressing her feeling that the man may not be as nice as she expected. This leads the reader to also think that the man may be not a human being, but a God instead. Inder N. Kher finds deep meaning in "that perfect—pearl": it is the symbol of creation,...the love act becomes a kind of prayer, an angelic act of creativity. This is what Dickinson calls 'whiter Gift within,' the gift of revelation and self-illumination."²⁵ A woman's destiny is expressed in more pearl imagery in poem 732 ("She rose to His Requirement—dropt"). The persona, who is going to marry, is filled with hope, dropping "the Playthings," of her girlhood and taking "the honorable Work" of marriage in the first stanza.

This hope, however, is suddenly changed into disappointment and anxiety:

If ought She missed in Her new Day,
Of Amplitude, or Awe—
Or first Prospective—Or the Gold
In using, wear away,

It lay unmentioned—as the Sea
Develop Pearl, and Weed,
But only to Himself—be known
The Fathoms they abide— (ll.5-12)

A woman has two extreme possibilities after marriage: “Pearl,” happiness or “Weed,” unhappiness. According to Inder N. Kher “pearl” means the wanted and “weed” means the unwanted.²⁶ The woman lives in “The Fathoms” of “the Sea,” which refers to a man. That is to say, it is only her husband who knows the life of his wife, as she lives in the enclosed world. Even if the wife is dissatisfied with her life after marriage, she will have to endure it, without complaining.

The well known poem 1072 (“Title divine—is mine!”) employs jewels as the signs of marriage:

When you—hold—Garnet to Garnet—
Gold—to Gold—
Born—Bridalled—Shrouded—
In a Day— (ll.8-11)

"Garnet" and "Gold" symbolize the transition from marriage in this world to marriage in heaven. The marriage ceremony brings the speaker dramatic change, announcing victory.

The similar idea is brought into poem 1737 ("Rearrange a wife's affection"). The persona deplors her low status filled with agony as a woman in this world, but she puts on her "Diadem" after "Sunset," that is, after death. Joan Kirby explains the two contrasting worlds as follows: "Day is the conventional world of society; night is a time of carnival, inversion and the breakdown of gender distinction."²⁷

What is crucial for Dickinson is how a jewel, which is a symbol of marriage, would affect a woman's status after marriage. In a jewel, Dickinson finds complicated feeling such as hope, expectation, anxiety and dissatisfaction which the relationship between both sexes brings.

III Nature

Let us proceed to study the jewel imagery in Dickinson's references to nature.

The most frequent use of the jewel imagery is in relation to the sunset, which is one of Dickinson's favorite scenes. The following eleven poems belong to this category: poem 219 (amber, emerald), poem 221 (chrysolite), poem 223 (ruby), poem 266 (opal), poem 291 (sapphire), poem 552 (amber), poem 628 (opal, amber), poem 666 (sapphire), poem 776 (beryl), poem 1609 (amethyst), poem 1636 (amethyst). The jewel imagery creates various dimensions in addition to colorful scenes.

In poem 106 ("The Daisy follows soft the Sun—"), the daisy, which Dickinson often uses in her letters, is very obedient to the sun. However, as the sun declines, the daisy's reaction to the darkening world becomes quite different from the sunny world. Expectation replaces

obedience: "Enamored of the parting West—The peace—the flight—the Amethyst—/Night's possibility!" Stealing the sun's authority, the daisy is no longer humble. The daisy represents a woman, and the sun represents a man. The daisy anticipates that after sunset, she will experience freedom and possibility in the world. Amethyst is the symbol of hope.

Poem 219 ("She sweeps with many-colored Brooms—") employs the jewels to express artistic value as well as colours. A housewife who sweeps the floor with a broom parallels an artist who paints a colorful picture with a brush. To borrow Wendy Barker's phrase, "this housewife's brooms are transformed from ordinary implements of housekeeping into triumphant images of art."²⁸ The unique combination of the housewife and art gives the reader a humorous image. The housewife is also described as humorous as she leaves "threads" after sweeping. "Threads" refer to the streaking beauty of the sky at sunset. The useless, trifle or dirty things such as "the Shreds," "dust," a "Ravelling," a "thread," and "Buds" are transformed into beautiful and noble things by the jewel imagery.

Poem 291 ("How the old Mountains drip with Sunset") also creates noble and graceful scenes out of "Sapphire" and "a Duchess". The third stanza compares the sun with "a Duchess":

Then how the Fire ebbs like Billows—
 Touching all the Grass
 With a departing—Sapphire—feature—
 As a Duchess passed— (ll.9-12)

As the sun gradually sets, influencing all the things in nature without exception, the nobleness of nature is enhanced. The imagery of the sea

makes the readers imagine the brilliance of the sapphire, reflecting the sea.

The "Sunset that screens" opens a new world "by menaces of Amethyst/And Moats of Mystery" in poem 1609 ("Sunset that screens, reveals—"). The poem conveys Dickinson's important ideas that effacing things sharpens a human being's sensibility. Dickinson depicts the world beyond this world as an "Amethyst." When Dickinson more intensely recognizes "menaces of Amethyst/And Moats of Mystery," she realizes "Amber Revelation" in poem 552 ("An ignorance of Sunset"). The poem depicts revelation as omnipotent, while human beings are depicted as inferior. Although the jewel imagery in poems 1609 and 552 suggests heaven, the same imagery in poems 70, 161, 191, 215, 256, 374, 457 and 758 also articulately refers to heaven as a jewel. In a sense, the heaven, Dickinson considers, is the extension of this world.

The following seven poems employ the jewel imagery in relation to the sunrise: poem 121 (amethyst), poem 122 (amber), poem 204 (ruby), poem 232 (diadem), poem 304 (topaz, ruby), poem 318 (amethyst), poem 327 (amber). Dickinson uses not only the colour red, which is easily associated with the sunrise, but also other sunset-like colours as purple, yellowish brown and yellow itself. Poem 304 beautifully depicts brilliant light which is abruptly casted at the very moment when the sun rises with the jewel imagery: "The Day came slow—till Five o'clock—
/Then sprang before the Hills/Like Hindered Rubies—or the Light /A Sudden Musket—spills—/The Purple could not keep the East—/The Sunrise shook abroad/Like Breadths of Topaz—packed a Night—/The Lady just unrolled".

No other use of the jewel imagery more powerfully influences the speaker's mind than that in poem 1573 ("There came a Wind like a Bu-

gle—”) in which a storm is depicted. The overwhelming power which seemed to come from outside the universe is called “a Green Chill upon the Heat,” “an Emerald Ghost” and “The Doom’s electric Moccasin.” Paul J. Ferlazzo finds death in Dickinson’s use of storm lightning the imagery.²⁹ Both poems 601 (“A still—Volcano—Life”) and 1146 (“When Etna basks and purrs”) employ jewels in referring to the eruption of volcano. “Hissing” coral “lips” which part and shut are destructive in poem 601. In poem 1146, Etna “shows her Garnet Tooth.” Here, the jewel imagery conveys gigantic and awful imagery, expressing anger and terror.

Looking over landscapes, Dickinson suggests what a mountain looks like in poem 572:

Delight—becomes pictorial—
When viewed through Pain—
More fair—because impossible
That any gain—

The Mountain—at a given distance—
In Amber—lies—
Approached—the Amber flits—a little
And That’s—the Skies—

In the first stanza, Dickinson expresses the view that people cannot realize delight until they experience pain. “Delight— becomes—pictorial” and “fair” all the more, because it cannot be reached. In the second stanza, this idea is applied to nature. When there is “a given distance” between the mountain and the viewer, the mountain lies in amber, which

connotes an illusionary and dreamlike world. When the viewer approaches the amber, it turns out to be just "the Skies;" the dream is changed into reality.

The phrase, "at a given distance" in poem 572 is equivalent to "The Angle of a Landscape" in poem 375 ("The Angle of a Landscape"). Looking out of the window, the speaker depicts "The Angle of a Landscape." The jewel imagery dominates the last two stanzas:

The Seasons—shift—my Picture—
 Upon my Emerald Bough;
 I wake—to find no—Emeralds—
 Then Diamonds—which the Snow

From Polar Caskets—fetched me—
 The Chimney—and the Hill—
 And just the Steeple's finger—
 These—never stir at all— (11.13-20)

The things outside the window seem to give a message to the speaker, although the poem does not mention what kind of message it is. "Emerald/Emeralds" refers to spring and "Diamonds," to winter. "Diamonds" seem to be related to "my" deep inner self as the phrase "Polar Caskets" indicates. As for the jewel imagery, Greg Johnson explains that "...the very transience of what she (Dickinson) sees enhances its worth, and characteristically she translates perceptual value into the language of material, measurable wealth."³⁰

As for its relation to creatures, the jewel imagery appears in poem 161 (emerald, beryl), poem 605 (pearl), poem 916 (onyx) and poem 1463

(emerald). "Emerald Nest" and "Beryl Egg" in poem 161 ("A feather from the Whippoorwill") imply eternity and spring. Both eternity and spring are also symbols of happiness and hope and the emerald is their symbol.

In poem 605 ("The Spider holds a Silver Ball"), a poet is compared to a spider. The pearl connotes several meanings. A "Silver Ball" represents the spider's inner self and to compose poetry is to describe it. Greg Johnson comments "Though spider's hands are 'unperceived,' his possession of the 'Silver Ball' suggests that within him is an artistic potential that is concentrated, valuable, and ripe for expressive achievement...."³¹ The pearl also implies the spider's pure mind, plying "from Nought to Nought—/In unsubstantial Trade—." Furthermore, the pearl refers to the aspect of a woman, although the pronouns "Himself" and "Him" are deliberately used; the spider secretly "unwinds" "His Yarn of Pearl." It reflects the fact that Dickinson composed poetry in secret at night in the age and society in which women were not expected to assert themselves by writing poetry.

Poem 916 ("His Feet are shod with Gauze—") depicts a bee's breast of green with black stripes as follows: "His Breast a Single Onyx/With Chrysophrase, invalid." The showy description of the bee's appearance leads to his free life, which is Dickinson's ideal as a poet.

In one of her best poems, poem 1463("A Route of Evanescence") Dickinson's sharp eyes catch the flight of a hummingbird, which is difficult to see because of its small size. She describes the swift flight as "A Resonance of Emerald—" in the third line. "Emerald" refers to the green wings of the hummingbird. What seizes the narrator's eyes is the influence which the hummingbird gives to nature around him as he passes through it. Dickinson's unity of sound and sight is very skillful.

Paul J. Ferlazzo indicates that "A Resonance of Emerald" suggests that sound and sight merge in one fleeting sensation because the bird moves so fast."³²

Although the jewel imagery is often ornamental, there are many cases in which Dickinson employs jewel imagery when it intensely appeals to her mind; nature gives her mystery, wonder and surprise.

Conclusion

Dickinson was concerned with the imagery relationship between jewels and human beings rather the jewels themselves. Jewels are, she insisted, things through which people reflect themselves; she does not take them with absolute value, but with a relative one. That is, the value of a jewel depends on how one perceives it.

As jewels are symbols of marriage, it is natural to use them as imagery in the contract between a woman and a man. Dickinson, who was disappointed with her low status as a girl, anticipated her status would be higher after marriage. Therefore, she pinned her destiny on a jewel, which symbolizes the power relationship between a man and a woman.

It was difficult for Dickinson to recognize jewels, which are small and rare. Unless she was attentive, she often overlooked them. When she finds jewels, it is a special moment, and her discovery overwhelms her spirit. Her jewel imagery signifies various conceptions of nature such as wonder, violence, beauty, gracefulness, brilliance, happiness and hope.

Jewels make it possible for Dickinson to open new worlds one after another. The discovery of jewels parallels that of her constant search for her own identity.

NOTES

All quotations from Emily Dickinson's poems are from *The Poems of Emily Dickinson, Including Variant Readings Critically Compared with a Manuscripts*, 3 volumes, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1955).

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