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Much Madness Is Divinest Sense: Soul Seekers Common Sense

This paper is about reviewing two existing peer-reviewed pieces of literature on Much Madness-Divinest Sense by Emily Dickinson and synthesizing the main arguments and perspectives of different scholars on the poem's form, structure, and message. I would also include my observations and understanding of the poem based on the literature.

The poem "*Much Madness is Divinest Sense*" by Emily Dickinson explores the complex relationship between madness and sanity, challenging the reader to question conventional societal norms regarding mental health. Through an organic and fluid form, Dickinson captures the essence of madness, exposing society's dangerous tendency to judge those who deviate from the norm.

This paper will examine the themes of madness and sanity in Dickinson's poem and provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between spirituality and mental health by analyzing two articles. By contextualizing Dickinson's work with the broader discourse on mental health and spirituality, this paper sheds light on how society can better understand and support those struggling with mental illness.

One is not sure how Emily Dickinson understood madness, but it was not something she viewed from afar. Her connection with madness came from personal experiences mixed with emotions, and it became her conviction about madness.

"*Much Madness Is Divinest Sense*" is as follows:

*Much Madness is divinest Sense—
To a discerning Eye—
Much sense—the starkest Madness—
Tis the Majority
In this, all prevail—
Assent--and you are sane—
Demur—you're straightway dangerous—
And handled with a Chain.*

Stanza one begins with "Much Madness is Divinest, To a discerning Eye." One can capture Dickinson's writing style set up as a literary argument. In the first two lines, the word "divine," as used in the poem, will only make sense to some people. Nevertheless, who will be labeled "insane" and "sane"? Who can have a say in what is insane or sane and how it is determined? However, how madness is defined is generally based on the majority.

I read an article by S Sorajakool. *Much Madness is Divinest Sense: Wisdom in Memoirs of Soul-Suffering*, from a journal of spirituality in mental health. The article introduced Dr. Kathleen Greider, a Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling, who wrote a book titled, "*Much Madness Is Divinest Sense Wisdom in Memoirs of Soul-Suffering*." In the poem "*Much Madness is Divinest Sense...to a discerning Eye*." Dr. Greider focused on discernment. She believes the world sees that madness needs to be corrected, fixed, or chained. However, Professor Kathleen Greider takes a different path of discernment—Greider's desire to gather wisdom from experiences. Dr. Greider erases the usually drawn perception of mental illness from the public and replaces it with her high respect for the divinity and toward mental illness. We are so busy being obsessed with trying to fix, analyze, and discriminate that we do not spend the time to listen. We intend to become numb and forget that God always remains on the margin.

From the book. In "*Much Madness Is Divinest Sense: Wisdom in Memoirs of Soul-Suffering*" by Kathleen J. Greider, on page 3, the author points out that those who find some "divinest" sense in madness find it only with a "discerning Eye." Making this claim—there is the divinest sense in much madness that can be trustworthy only to the degree earned with the humility, discipline, and devotion that comprises the spiritual practice of discernment. Discernment is a most developed form of spiritual practice.

The poem gives us perspectives that make sense to you but may not make sense to me. To further read the poem, stanzas three and four read: Much sense- the starkest madness, Tis the majority. Which way ends up with the popular votes, and we will call this the majority. Since their practice or their say will become outnumbered, what they say will prevail. The majority is what makes up the society, which follows religiously.

Albert Herzing wrote an article, " *Much Madness ... Divinest Sense.*" written "In times as nearly psychopathic as ours, poets should be allowed to seek whatever sanity they can within the realm of the personal—a point of vantage from which, not so paradoxically, more that is of permanent significance may be commented on than from any public platform. From this removal, poets might make "divinest sense." out of our age's "madness." In any case, the real issues at stake are not so much those of current events as those of religion, philosophy, and morality—issues that involve, among other things, man's inner state and his spiritual relation to man.

In the book "Much Madness...Wisdom in Memoirs..." by Kathleen J. Greider, on page 4, the author mentions, "It suggests that divinest sense is sometimes formed at the stigmatized margins of society in person deemed strategy dangerous" primarily because they are different from the norm" And to regard to Madness the book also mentions "The poem also suggests that madness can be divinest sense when it tells us something of ultimate importance about the majority." –human experience in general.

In the last stanzas or lines 5-8: the poem also suggests that madness can be the divinest sense is "prevail. These stanzas state that the majority prevails. Therefore, whatever the majority thinks or agrees will make sense. When the majority agrees, you are sane; if not, you are considered dangerous and should not be freed.

In Conclusion, I found that "Much Madness Is Divinest Sense "by Emily Dickenson is one of her short yet powerful poems I will always cherish and it will be engraved in my heart. As Dr. Grieder states, that is about divine wisdom and madness. Bear to mind the scripture Romans 6:17(CSB), "Now I implore you brothers, watch out for those who cause dissensions and pitfalls contrary to the doctrine you have ever forget to leave God out. I am grateful for this poem, then reading the two articles led me to wonderful find my new book by Kathleen J. Greider. I will continue to seek to understand more about madness and the divinest sense and look forward to becoming educated, growing, and contributing to the cause. I will remember to listen and give grace, which is common sense,

Works Cited

Dickerson, Emily, "*Much Madness is Divinest Sense*," *Literature: A Portable Anthology*, edited by Janet E. Gardner et al., 4th ed. Bedford/St. Martins' 2017, p492.

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