



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

ENGLISH LITERATURE

EFFECT OF EMILY DICKINSON'S POEM ON MODERN WRITERS

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SUBIYA AHMED PH.D Scholar In Jharkhand Rai University

ABSTRACT

Emily Dickinson an early 19th century poet is a women poet, and this fact is integral to her identity." (Juhasz 1). Her poems are deeply rooted in her ideas of feminism. She was the torch bearer, a rebel of her time who proposed new ideas regarding the female perspective; she went her own way and wrote what she wanted to write. She was regarded as the most influential and most important poet to influence the history of English literature. Being a rebel women poet, Dickinson has carved the path for other female writers to express themselves beautifully through their works. Here in this research work an attempt has been made to highlight the portrayal of women in the poems of Emily Dickinson and how it has affected the writings of other modern poets.

INTRODUCTION

Emily Dickinson being one of the most famous poets of the American literature has been regarded as the torch bearer for the women poets. Writing as a woman in an ever growing patriarchal society, Dickinson laid out the framework for many young women to express their thoughts and feelings in a brand new discourse. She never shied away from difficult topics such as death or dreariness; she chose to show different aspects of everyday life that has always set her apart from other poets. In a time where women were held to the confinements of male belief that women should stay at home and tend to their house and children, Dickinson through her words tried to break the shackles of patriarchy; through her writing prowess she tried to enhance the role of women and encouraged them to speak their mind rather than becoming an object of beautification. She outlined her thoughts in a time which was overpowered by men. She highlighted stereotypical view of the society about men and beauty; as according to them beauty is the only truth for women to please everyone. She expressed her view on this through her writings where she stated 'he questioned softly why I failed?' 'For beauty, I replied. 'And I for truth, the two are one. Dickinson was very simple in her real life, she never got herself chained under the pressure of marriage or typical family life, and she was like a free bird never wanting to get caged by patriarchal dominance.

However in many of her poems she has depicted dominant male character and deepened the meaning of gender norms prevalent during the time and how men had standardized women practices around themselves she highlighted how men dominated every aspect of a woman's life from social to work as they did not have freedom at all. She always spoke out on this dominance, through the poems like, they shut me up in a prose, and she rose to his requirements, of women and of wife. Here in these poems she subtly referred to the sacrifices made by a woman which usually gets unnoticed in front of the society. Her ambitions and dreams are never talked about and often take on removed from her life the way wild grass are removed from a beautiful garden.

Dickinson broke many social conventions through her poetry; she inspired many female writers to voice out their opinions through their writings. Below are the views of some of the female writers who got inspired by the writings of Emily Dickinson.

Martha Nell Smith, professor of English at the University of Maryland- Part of what makes Dickinson feel so contemporary is its take on the gender dynamics that continue to influence how writing is perceived. Smith wrote, "Even in 2019, the bias against the female and femme genius is as strong as it's surprising or perhaps not as strong as one is assuming. Many assume woman's story to be least interesting as compared to men's story unless accompanied by some men's angle. Even today women sometimes feel constrained if

she talks too loudly or forcefully. At the same time there is a powerful story of how Emily Dickinson went her own way and was a rebel of her time. Her work has given me confidence to write what I want to write to observe carefully listen to my own druthers rather than try to please others.

Kristen Tracy, poet and acclaimed author: "I read Emily Dickinson in high school and I thought she was totally wild. Her poems were rhythmic and alive and clever and surprising. I always wanted my own writing to have that wildness. I always felt like she gave writing so much energy, as if she was emptying herself onto the page."

Megan Falley, queer-femme author and poet: Emily quiet musings, I believe made a path for my public expressions.

Evie Shockley, 2018 Pulitzer Prize finalist: "I began to Emily Dickinson's ability to create work that was both traditional and weird (distinctive, rule breaking and elliptical). I also later discovered that who she was might be more complicated than the narrative of the shy virginal recluse that I had been taught. She became important to me as the one woman poet working before the 20th century who was indisputably part of the canon."

Deborah Landau, American poet, essayist and critic: "Like everyone, I read her first in school, where she was presented as a kind of quaint nature poet; it was many years before I had a sense of searing singular power of Dickinson's poems- which are more like bombs than flowers".

Emily Dickinson, despite maintaining an outwardly appearance of submissiveness, her honest and uninhibited writing made her an early feminist voice. Though she was born into a strict religious puritan family, her poems are the products of New England life. She tried to break expected gender roles of the 19th century, she remained single when the society of her time expected her to play the role of a dutiful obeying wife and raise children. The andocentric society demanded complete dedication from women; however the poet lived her own life, stopped attending religious sermons, indulged in romantic thoughts and displayed homosexual or bisexual tendencies. As a female poet sometimes she is straightforward, easy to understand, but when it comes to her poetic expressions she is tough and complicated. While the mainstream questioned her unusual thoughts about gender roles, she carved a new path as her poetry became a source for everyone to learn and explore different ideas about gender and sexuality.

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