

Analytical Essay

In what ways did Emily Dickinson's personal experiences contribute to her exploration of life, death, and spirituality in her writing?

For my Analytical essay I decided to explore the depths of the experiences in Emily Dickinson's life which include personal losses, deaths of family members and friends, immortality, and spirituality in her writing. Emily Dickinson was a great 19th century American poet. Her experiences of grief and mourning allowed her to dive deeply into these themes and create deep and thought-provoking works that resonated with real life. Emily even struggled with illness and mental health issues that likely influenced her perspective on life and the afterlife, adding a unique and personal dimension to her writing. Her personal losses played a significant role in shaping her poetic vision and continue to make her work relevant and compelling to this day as it is still influenced by many. Emily was also known as “The poet of Paradox” and her work reflects upon conflicted American worldviews. Her work has made a huge impact in American literature as it reflects upon popular aspects during the Romanticism time period. I deeply admire her unique style and unconventional approach to poetry which has inspired generations of writers and influenced the development of American literature.

Emily Dickinson is widely regarded as one of the most significant poets in American literature. She had written nearly 1,800 poems that were found by her sister after her death; however only around four were published during her lifetime. She never married, nor had children, and actually spent the last 15 of her years in the isolation of her bedroom. It was said that on the rare occasions that she was seen outside her backyard, she always wore a white gown. This color was said to have signified her passion. Although historians are not certain why she spent so much time in her room alone, I'm sure her isolation is what contributed to inspire her thought process and creativity within her work. Her thoughts, feelings, and insightfulness reflects upon her state of mind. Although some of her work is a bit confusing by giving a contradicting impression at times, it captivates the audience by its unique detail, descriptions, and format. Her use of paradox is intriguing as it expresses complexity and thought. It's admirable how although she was more introverted she still liked to communicate through poems and writing, even when commuting with her friends and family. Her unique ways of creating hymns and different forms of rhymes in a lyrical way as opposed to the usual traditional expectations of a poem were most interesting as they went in depth on topics such as life, death, faith, doubt, God etc. Much of her work is characterized by its detailed descriptions, unique use of punctuation, and use of slant rhyme. One of the ways in which her work impacted American literature was by challenging traditional poetic conventions. Emily's use of unconventional punctuation/capitalization, her preference for short and fragmentary lines broke poetic barriers with the standard verse forms of her time period. This approach to poetry guided the way for later writers to experiment with form, structure, and helped to introduce a new era of American poetry.

In addition to her stylistic innovations, Dickinson's work also had a significant impact on the aspects of American literature. Her poems often discussed themes of mortality, spirituality, human condition, and exploring complex and deeply personal issues in a way that was both profound and accessible. This focus on the world views of the people who helped to shift the focus of American literature away from external events and more towards the complexities of real human experiences. Her poetry had a profound impact on the role of women in American literature. As a woman writing in a male-dominated field she faced significant challenges and obstacles throughout her career. However, her refusal to conform to conventional gender roles, both in her life and in her work helped to pave the way for later generations of especially women writers who were able to draw inspiration from her example and legacy. Emily's approach to poetry focuses on the inner world and her refusal to conform to traditional gender roles have all had a profound and lasting influence on the literary world.

One of the most prominent themes in Emily's poetry is the idea of life as a fleeting and transient experience. In many of her poems she uses vivid imagery to display the meaning of life and the sense of quality that influences our existence. I admired her poem "Because I could not stop for Death" because she describes life as a journey that we undertake with death as our companion. This was a deep piece of writing that delivers goosebumps in her tones. "We slowly drove, he knew no haste/And I had put away/ My labor, and my leisure too,/ For his civility." Through this imagery Emily suggests that life is a temporary state and that our ultimate destination is death. Another theme I found in Dickinson's poetry is the idea of death as a mystery. In many of her poems she reflects on the unknown aspects of death, and the ways in

which remains an enigma to us. For example, in her poem "I heard a Fly buzz when I died" Dickinson describes the experience of dying as a moment of both clarity and confusion. For example, she wrote "And then the windows failed- and then/ I could not see to see." Throughout this imagery I learned that she suggests that death is a moment of both revelation/uncertainty and that it is impossible for us to truly understand what lies beyond. I admire how her poetry also reflects on the ways in which we confront death and the ways in which we seek to come to terms with our own mortality. In many of Emily's poems she explores the ways in which we try to find meaning in the face of death and even the ways in which we attempt to understand our own place in the universe. In her poem "This World is not Conclusion" Emily writes, "This World is not Conclusion./ A Species stands beyond –/ Invisible, as Music –/ But positive, as Sound –." She suggests that there is a greater meaning to life than what we can see or understand and that death is a transition to a different form of existence. This truly gives us something to ponder. These are powerful reflections on the themes of life and death, exploring the ephemerality of life, and the ways in which we confront our own mortality.

In addition to Dickinson's virtuous perspectives on life and death, I am also intrigued by her mindset on her exploration of faith and her struggle to reconcile her own beliefs with the world around her. In many of her poems she reflects on the challenges of faith, and the ways in which we seek to find meaning in the face of uncertainty. In her poem "Faith is a fine invention," she writes, "Faith is a fine invention/ For Gentlemen who see!/ But Microscopes are prudent/ In an Emergency!" Within this imagery she suggests that faith is not always sufficient to explain the

mysteries of the world and that sometimes we need to rely on reason and observation to make sense of our own experiences. She even reflects on the nature of God and the ways in which we relate to a higher power. An example of this is her poem "I taste a liquor never brewed," and the quotes "Inebriate of air – am I –/ And Debauchee of Dew –/ Reeling – through endless summer days –/ From inns of molten Blue –." This imagery is a suggestion that the experience of encountering God is one of intoxication and rapture, a sense of being overwhelmed by the beauty and wonder of the world. This may be an eye opening verse for people who are more religious or spiritual in aspects of belief. Emily's poetry reflects on the variety of ways we seek to find meaning in the face of suffering and adversity. She constantly explores the ways we turn to faith as a source of comfort and solace in difficult times. Many of these poems offer a powerful reflection on the themes of faith and God, exploring the mysteries of belief and the ways in which we seek to understand the divine.

In conclusion, Emily Dickinson's works have had a highly profound impact on our understanding of life, death, belief, spirituality, and more. Throughout her poetry she explores the complexities and mysteries of existence, offering profound insights into the nature of being. Her deep exploration of themes such as mortality, love, and time have helped us to confront some of the most fundamental questions about our own lives. Dickinson's work has also inspired many others to explore these same themes which continue to influence our cultural conversations about these various aspects to this day. Overall, Emily Dickinson's legacy is one that continues to inspire and challenge us to analyze all questions of existence and to seek meaning and beauty in

the world around us. Her work will continue to flourish in inspiration, encouragement, and prosper in future generations and writers to come.