

# Free literature review on salska a 1985 walt whitman and emily dickinson poetry o...

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American history has had a number of poets who have had an impact on the direction the course of poetry has taken. Most significant contributions were done by Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman in the last century. This was the period referred to as the Conflict and Celebration era. Their style of writing poetry was different from how people used to write before. They abandoned the traditional style to begin a much more modern style in the expression of American ideas in a unique way. There are slight differences as well as similarities in the two poets' works that warrant our discussion.

As far as this subject is concerned, a look at the two poets' works presents more differences than similarities in their styles of writings. Dickinson's poems were mostly ballads having four line stanzas that alternated in iambic trimeter and tetrameter. Her poems had a definite structure unlike Whitman's that did not have any form of structure. As regards the use of rhyme, the way Whitman's poems were structured, there were no traces of rhyme in his lines. On the other hand, Dickinson's work consisted of slant rhyme; that is, not fully rhythmic, but employed near rhymes. This was a break from the traditional style that fully employed rhyme.

With regard to form and content, the differences between the two writers' works can be established. Although they both centre their poetry on viewing the universe in terms of the needs of human kind, Whitman presents his poetry in a sympathetic and affective tone. He can be compared to Adam who names into being a completely new world. Dickinson on the other hand is unsure of whether she is able to penetrate other consciousness apart from

her own. She questions whether there can be a kind of relationship between external laws and the life she had always known.

Similarities between the two are that they present their poems in an independent, nontraditional and unrestricted fashion that is also spontaneous. They employ diction, alliterations, symbols, imagery, refrains and consonances in their poems. They both present a view of the universe in human consciousness. However, I prefer Dickinson's poems to Whitman's due to her literalism as opposed to Whitman's analogy. She views the letter and spirit of the poetic diction as well as the form and force of this language as interchangeable.

Vendler, H. (2004). *Poets Thinking: Pope, Whitman, Dickinson, Yeats*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.