



Diagnosing ‘Quietus’ by Comparing Poems of Emily Dickinson and Songs of Sidhu Moose Wala

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Abstract

Death being a grave part and therefore, becomes difficult to write or sing about. The correlation of ‘death’ theme in the songs of Sidhu Moose Wala and poetries of Emily Dickinson is impeccable, despite the period gap between the two. The temporality of both the chosen artists has a long gap, but the similarities reside, as the topic of death was inconvenient during the 19th century and a matter of discomfort even in the 21st century. Sigmund Freud, explains ‘thanatos’ (death drive) in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), that “the aim of life is death”. It was originally proposed by Sabina Spielrein in her paper “Destruction as the cause of coming into being” (1912). Death or the topic of death is never simple as it is the most powerful drive which often develops with anger, anxiety, annihilation and destruction. The research paper intends to dig deep about ‘death’ from the hidden graveyard. It is an effort to unveil the character terrifically driving into personification in poems as gentleman, suitor, and a leveler and in songs as a comrade, enemy and a lover. The mystic appeal of death for Emily and Sidhu created a pathway to observe it more closely through their art. Thus, the paper is an attempt to explicate and to critically analyze the selected songs and poems through the beam of Freud in order to understand the perceptions of death.

Keywords:

Death, death drive, destruction, annihilation.

Introduction:

Trembling fear starts to occur when we hear or visualize death. The topic seems creating trepidation as death never speaks about its coming. The sudden change caused by death evaporates the life lived and leaves the memories behind. There is innumerable literature showcasing death in one way or the other but there are few artists who wrote about their death and faced it the same way they had written. This complex natural phenomenon is highly mysterious; we never know when, where and how it would strike.

The American poet Emily Dickinson had been the most eminent figure as she was the first one to write on the theme like death. Likewise, Sidhu Moose Wala was also the most influential Punjabi singer of the 21st Century. In the dogmatized world of living humans the dead decide to rule in the eyes and ears of all who are unaware of what's coming after the day ends. Emily in her poems on death shares different features echoing the ultimate end as Amitabh Roy in the article "The Theme of Death and Time in Emily Dickinson's Poetry" expounds that "She examines the sensation of the dying, the response of the onlookers, the terrible struggle of the body of her life, the adjustments in a house after death, the arranging of the body for the funeral, the church services and even the thoughts of the dead person. She had a strange fascination for death and imagined herself dead with mourners walking past her or lying in order to punish different friends"(167). This loss which she suffered through her poetry could be seen through the lines i.e

Because I could not stop for death-

He kindly stopped for me-

These lines explain that death has been personified as a gentleman who regards the living. In the same figure Sidhu Moose Wala the great Punjabi singer has targeted his songs on death with the English titles and Punjabi lyrics. In the song titled as '911' he says-

Maut naale guhdi aa sakiri balliye

Jivan har pal jo akhiri balliye

(I have close relation with death; I live every moment as if it's the last)

The perspective of seeing death is different for Emily and Sidhu as the former sees it as a powerful element and wants to conquer and the latter sees it as a paired personality who walks with him and attacks unknowingly. Emily in her poem "I heard a fly buzz" explains the scenario after her death.

I heard a Fly buzz-when I died-

The Stillness in the Room

Was like the Stillness in the Air-

Between the Heaves of Storm-

The poem in the very stanza explains her funeral and the presence of silence captures the quietness of being. Death here explains the feeling of being dead. In the similar way but with different style Sidhu explains in his song "Death Route"

Ho kalam bandook a ate shea aala jera

Haneeya ch gaddi te gaddi ch yaar tera

Death wala route aa, vajjde salute aa

Kal kihne dekhi ki karna savera

(Our pen is gun weapon and lion like heart; Car in darkness and your friend is inside the car; It's the route of death, everyone salutes me; who has seen future, what to do with brightness)

Both the poet and the singer write about their death and irony is presented in front of the world as Emily died in the silent apprehension which was also the part of her closed isolated room. She lived her life in a secluded way and always dressed in white. Unlike Sidhu who used to enjoy the company of friends and talked about being in the car and died in the car. The Analysis comprehends that what a human aspires or continues to live with, becomes the part and parcel of their existence and finally comes to an end.

The songs and the poems have ornamentalized death by again personifying it as a suitor and a lover. As both the artists here captures the picture with death as their only companion. Emily in the poem “Death is the supple Suitor”

Death is the supple Suitor

That wins at last-

It is a stealthy Wooing

Conducted first

The poem explains that death being the inevitable creature comes as a suitor and then as groom and woos every living person and finally wins over them. Sidhu in his song “Aroma”

Ohdon semi auto de,

Fire wajjan meri hik te ni,

Jad tak ke mainu ankhan,

Kare blink kude haye

(When you blink your eyes looking at me, it feels as if the bullets fired from the semi auto gun are hitting me on the chest)

Here the song could be interpreted as death being the lady and when she blinks while looking at her lover the gun fires. Sidhu explains closeness with death even in the lyrics of the song “Legend”

Main duniya de opposite chalda

Te parallel chalda aa death de

(I move opposite to the world but parallel to death)

In this song death is shown as a closer friend than any other in the world. Sidhu explicates that turn your back to everything in the world to see the giant picture of death. In the same context Emily in her poem “Not any Higher stands the Grave”

Not any higher stands the grave

For Heroes than for Men-

Not any nearer for the Child

Than numb Three Score and Ten-

Death neither compares nor differentiates as it equally judges everyone. Every living person is equal in the eyes of death. Therefore it has the highest position as Emily shares in her poetry. And thus Sidhu chooses death as his companion in order to have a unique personality who remains against the world while holding the hand of death.

While dealing with death by interrogating and bringing it on the paper and to the stage changed its philosophy as a proverb, when you go close to death, then death also comes closer to you. Sigmund Freud also portrays death in philosophical terms in the essay *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) he explains that this death incident has become a necessary end of our inner being. "It is certainly not a primordial belief: the idea of a 'natural death' is alien to primitive races; they ascribe very death occurring among themselves to the influence of an enemy or an evil spirit" (55).

Frank and Judith McMohan states that "we may have seen death, read about death, or even come closer to death, but we may have never died. Thus we face the ultimate unknown, and the fact that our society refuses to admit that death is a natural process" (413). Therefore, death being the unresolved riddle which was explored by Emily in her poems and the powerful companion of Sidhu in his songs for which he stood by and faced it fearlessly. So, in the end the death would serve us all. The last poem and song of Emily and Sidhu shares the last sigh. Emily's poem "So give me back to Death-

So give me back to death-
The Death I never feared
Except that it deprived of thee-
And now, by life deprived,
In my own grave I breathe
And estimate its size-
Its size is all that Hell can guess
And all that Heaven was-

In this poem she confesses about her death and explains that she always remained fearless and had seen death everyday through her poetries and now is the time. Alike Sidhu in his last song "The Last Ride" reveals about the final countdown.

Ho Mard Mashookan wangu Maut Udeeka
Khaure Kadon khadkau Darwaja Mithiye
Ho Chobbar de chehre utte nor dassda
Ni ehda uthuga jawani ch janaja mithiye

(A man waits for death like his girlfriend; do you know when death will knock? Everything is revealed in the eyes of the young boy, that the funeral will take place in his youth.)

In this song Sidhu sings about the longingness of death. And then by questioning about death he himself answers that it will arrive soon. To conclude this paper we come across some of the reoccurring theme of death which has tried to compare the poetries of Emily Dickinson and songs of Sidhu Moose Wala. Therefore, the

paper extended the deconstructive approach of both the artist as they twisted the death, personified it and even glorified it.

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