

Emily Dickinson's Carlo, More Than Just a Dog

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During the 19th century, Emily Dickinson's poetry offers an extensive exploration of how she explores her autonomy as a woman poet interacting with the world around her including other women, men, and even animals. Animals provide a unique range of interaction for the poet as her works consider domesticated four-legged animal pets, those locally sourced wild animals found near the home, and exotic animals brought from overseas. While exploring these topics, it is also important to note Emily Dickinson's family's influence on her upbringing and awareness of animals. Dickinson's human-animal relationship with her pet dog Carlo provides the range of Dickinson's more in-depth intimacy and ideas regarding animals. Dickinson's writing highlights the importance of dog entities not only in her own life but how they may be used to bridge beauty and metaphor to human sentiments. These employed metaphors bring awareness to questions surrounding subjectivity, instances in which they are objectified (more or less), and instances where they are personified and anthropomorphized and perceived to have a soul or at the very least human expression in the same regard as Dickinson herself has. In the notable field of Victorian English, Dickinson is one of the most notable to not only highlight her relationship with her companion dog Carlo but allow him to be an entity to inspire her and those around her as a literary object both in letters, poems, and even in children's books.