



**University of Tripoli
Faculty of languages
Department of English**

The mood of uncertainty in Emily Dickinson's poetry

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the Master degree requirements of
in English literature.**

By: Yosra Ibrahim Benlamin

Supervisor: Dr. Muhamed Tunisi

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Declaration

I Yosra Ibrahim Benlamin the undersigned hereby confirm that the work contained in this thesis, unless otherwise referenced is the researcher's own work, and has not been previously submitted to meet requirements of an award at this University or any other higher education or research institution, I furthermore, cede copyright of this thesis in favour of University of Tripoli.

Student name: Yosra Ibrahim Benlamin

Signature:

Date:/...../.....

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful mother, for her endless love, and measureless support, and encouragement. I am truly grateful for having such a mother.

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I would like to thank God Almighty for giving me the strength, knowledge, ability and opportunity to undertake this research study and to persevere and complete it satisfactorily.

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I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my mother for her continuous support and encouragement. Her inspiration when the times got rough are much appreciated. It was a great comfort and relief to know that she was always willing to provide management of the household activities and her countless times she took care of my children while I completed my work. My heartfelt thanks.

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The mood of uncertainty in Emily Dickinson poetry

Abstract

During the romantic period, some of the famous poets tended to focus their attention to explore the unknown and help build up a shape of unexplored knowledge. Many argued that life is full of contraries and uncertainties without which one could not be able to explore new ideas and facts. These doubts, ambiguities, mysteries, and uncertainties are captured in literature in a form of shadowy texts such as some of Emily Dickinson's poems "Tell all the truth but tell it slant", "I'm Nobody! Who are you?", and "This World is not Conclusion". By examining these poems, this study analyses how these works provide a distinctive set of narratives about the probable interpretations and uncertain facts. Moreover, this study aims to discuss how Emily Dickinson offers a model of concept that marks uncertainties not as a defect that has to be eliminated, but rather as a principle of transcendent productivity that deals with unlimited set of investigations and findings. It also describes the stylistic choices and the hidden key features to draw on the theme of uncertainties used in "Tell all the truth but tell it slant", "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" and "This World is not Conclusion", not for the purpose of seeking an answer, but rather for the sake of nourishing minds of imposing the unknown.

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Chapter 1

The concept of uncertainty in Emily Dickinson's poetry

1.1 Introduction

One of the essential principles of understanding life is the concept of uncertainty. Over years, it seems that thinkers implement it to postulate numerous laws and predictions. According to Kashyap, 2014 “the physical laws are deductive and are based on three statements - a specific set of initial conditions, a specific set of final conditions and universally valid generalizations”, thus, different outcomes and predictions are generalized. This happens when complexity is, on purpose, increased in terms of highlighting the unknown facts and findings. When predicting various outcomes, even not accurate ones, the possibility of investigating new phenomena is highly increased.

Emily Dickinson's collection of poems includes some of dominant poems about uncertainty. “Tell all the truth but tell it slant”, “I'm Nobody! Who are you are you?” and “This World is not Conclusion”, have been considered among her greatest works due to the ultimate depth and the uncertainties they explore in very few lines. These poems are about the philosophy of life seeking to explore the unknown in ambiguous thoughts and feelings.

Emily Dickinson's life, experience, love and self-awareness of life all have been embodied into spiritual poems. However, in these poems Dickinson provides a model of thinking that frames doubt not as a threat to confidence, but rather as a source of spiritual richness. It poses questions rather than providing answers to make the reader aware of the unusual and the unknown. Many factors influenced Emily Dickinson's life and writing. She was inspired by every individual existing in nature including her home, friends, family, and her own experiences. Additionally, her writings including her letters were the connection between the outside world and her own view of life. Dickinson's horizon was broad although she lived an isolated life. Even though she was completely isolated from the outside world, she was able to see everything with her mystical eyes.

Emily Dickinson has the capacity of expressing her thoughts freely to explore her own and man's consciousness. She continues to use the language of Calvinism¹ just as a background to

¹ NFIs: Non Food Items.

reset her transcendental philosophy. Nevertheless, “It is a concept which suggests that the external is united with the internal. Physical or material nature is neutral or indifferent or objective; it is neither helpful nor hurtful; it is neither beautiful nor ugly. What makes one give such attributes to nature is that individual's imposition of her/his temperament or mood or psyche”. (Reuben, 2019)

Transcendentalists⁶ are strong believers in the power of the individual. It is primarily concerned with personal freedom. Their beliefs are closely linked with those of the Romantics.

American transcendentalism is essentially a kind of practice by which the world of facts and the categories of common sense are temporarily exchanged for the world of ideas and the categories of imagination. The point of this exchange is to make life better by lifting us above the conflicts and struggles that weigh on our souls. As these chains fall away, our souls rise to heightened experiences of freedom and union with the good. Emerson and Thoreau are the two most significant nineteenth century proponents of American transcendentalism (Brodrick, n.p)

Emily Dickinson is not considered as a transcendentalists⁶ poet though some of her poems seem to be transcendental, yet not quite. Generally, she aims to question the universal truths of surrounding and its mysteries, such as the circumstance of human conditions, sense of life, place of man in the world, faith, God etc. Emily Dickinson's works are simply a reflection of her ideas and are not restricted to any disciplines, but rather she kept them as simple as possible with profound meanings inside.

In fact, American writers and poets of the 19th century created literature to criticise and detail imperfection. Emily Dickinson did the opposite as she was focusing on the imperfection and tried to investigate and provide possible interpretations for it. She retired from the outside world by the age of twenty-three in a favor of all isolation to estimate life and its secrets. As for being reclusive, it is also a theory that she might have agoraphobia, which is the fear of being in crowded, public places and the fear of leaving a safe place. Emily Dickinson has built her own little world that carries unlimited knowledge and experience.

What most distinguishes Dickinson's works from others is that she does not write about her topics as fixed or known entities. Her poetry and her letters look at every experience, object, and emotion as if they are wholly new, every punctuation mark, style, language used

and even every simple word counts for something in Dickinson's works. Her works look upon life in a strongly unexpected way. She provides models of concepts that describe every single clue in different aspects which makes her works encourage thinkers to dive deeper into the perception of the surroundings. (Wald,2010)

It is very known that Emily Dickinson shows a deep obsession with death, but this obsession could be due to the mystery surrounding it. Since no one knows what happens after death, it is always been a bit controversial, some people believe that it will keep living and others believe it ends all. This could be the main reason she tends to write about death. In most of her poems, she has a tendency to be mysterious. One can say that Emily Dickinson seeks and explores what others at that time were unable to. (Spiller, 1963)

1.2 The purpose of the study

Facts and uncertainties are looked upon as contraries, as uncertainties raise doubts that make minds restless and hesitant. Facts on the other hand, provide comfort and trust that something is true. The term fact as defined in Oxford dictionary is "A thing that is known or proved to be true". Moreover, doubt in Oxford dictionary is "A feeling of uncertainty or lack of conviction". Emily Dickinson's poems are full of uncertainties and doubts, therefore it is important to define the term doubt in its deep meaning.

Doubts, however, seem to be negatively understood. "Doubt is characterized as a state in which mind is suspended between two contradictories propositions and unable to assent to either of them" (Wikipedia contributors, 2020). Being uncertain is a state of mind where it starts to believe or disbelieve something or being hesitant to make a final decision about truths, facts, concepts or any evidences and phenomena. Doubts provide minds the ability and opportunity of examining and investigating surroundings. Thus, this study aims to

- explain how Dickinson's selected poems reveal uncertainties where the poet integrates readers to dive deeper into the meaning of life;
- discuss the theme of uncertainty through three selected poems of Emily Dickinson which are: "Tell all the truth but tell it slant", "I'm Nobody! Who are you?", and "This World is not Conclusion". Thus, it shows the hidden clues and the visual imagery included them;

- analyse and explain how doubts and uncertainties in Emily Dickinson's poems are illustrated not as threats but rather as a provenance of unknown knowledge to provide a valuable awareness seeking to provoke new questions and understanding;
- demonstrate and explore how Emily Dickinson imposes mysteries, uncertainties and ambiguities to raise the reader's curiosity and evoke the possibility of investigating the unknown.

Looking deeper at Emily Dickinson's selected poems, this study also analyses the poetic stylistic choices, language used, and how the poet uses and combines certain words together, and the hidden key features, even her use of punctuation marks to impose the theme of uncertainty.

1.3 The significance of the study

Once someone is struck by the concept of uncertainty, what comes to minds is to seek any interpretations for why such a phenomena happened and how did it happen? And who is responsible about it? An endless set of hypothetical questions come to mind to realise natural and unknown findings which grab thinkers to imaginary world provoking an ultimate depth of surroundings.

Uncertainties drive thinkers to go where others fear to go. This study is to explore how Emily Dickinson managed to prove that uncertainties can travel in term and across boundaries far beyond the physical world. Therefore, the primary focus of this study is the mystery and uncertainties in some of Emily Dickinson's selected poems. It examines and analyses the significance of meanings variation. This variation opens an unlimited set of investigations and explanations thus providing possible interpretations.

Though a lot of her poems focus on the theme of death, critics and readers assure that she cared about it only for the sake of understanding the mystery surrounding death. She imagines, describes, and analyses any concern carries uncertainties and doubts. In her notion, life is far from being only restricted to stable facts and evidences, but rather it carries hidden interpretation that should be discovered. Thus, her works make readers think deeper and nourish minds to be active recipient of surroundings. This series of analysis and interpretations explore the nature of uncertainty as seen through the words and descriptions in her letters and poetry. Through this study readers will not only develop their understanding of what

uncertainty meant to the poet, but also develop their own personal ideas about what the proposed theme means to them.

1.4 Methodology

What is reality? And how we reach it? And which ways help to think about it? Any research in all aspects and fields of life adopts methods from which they derive possible results, findings and interpretations. At the same way, each researcher, and according to his/her study, and to what they aim to get out of it, selects certain methods that can be appropriate to their research. In fact, there are no integral advantages and disadvantages of adopting one or other type of method. Each research approach carries advantages that distinguish it from other approaches. It is all about the research type and the proposed topic to be investigated.

Methodology is a critical section for both writers and readers, because reliable methods derive trustworthy content and thus affect the value of any research. Readers need to know and understand how data is gathered and how it is analysed. Any method should be accurate and appropriate to fulfill the requirements of any study thus enable readers to acknowledge the validity and reliability of the research.

Due to the time limit given to complete this study, the researcher will analyse three selected works of Emily Dickinson: "Tell all the truth but tell it slant" "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" and "This World is not Conclusion" which carry the theme of uncertainty. The questions that the researcher will investigate are: why does Emily Dickinson impose uncertainties in her poems? How did her own doubts and mysteries enable her to articulate the problem of being uncertain? How did the selected works illuminate her works as a whole carrying ambiguity and uncertainties that helped to represent remarkable poems?

This study is a qualitative one, and since qualitative studies aim to gain extensive knowledge of fundamental meanings and suggest several explanations of problems, in this study, however, the researcher selects this method to analyse and examine the characteristics and the hidden key features used in "Tell all the truth but tell it slant", "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" and "This World is not Conclusion" to depict the effect of uncertainties and ambiguities in these poems to reach the ultimate depth of unknown.

The qualitative approach is influential in terms of obtaining data through open-ended interpretations of what exists and how each individual thinks of it and also why does he/she

think so. Thus, this study discusses suggested interpretations of the subject to develop better understanding of the poets' writing techniques by imposing the uncertainty theme. This thesis used the qualitative approach to support the analysis of the underlying meanings presented. The central property of qualitative research is that it studies the way people make sense out of their own real-life experiences in their own observances and in their own words. This information is usually expressed in everyday language using every day concepts.

At the same time, by using the analytical descriptive method, the researcher analyses and describes how Emily Dickinson offers an approach that reveals uncertainty not as a risk of self-assurance, but rather as a source of transcendent richness that deals with inquiries and open unlimited set of investigations and findings. Also, this study describes the stylistic choices and the poet's unique techniques used in these poems to visualize the theme of uncertainty.

The analytical approach is used to maintain the validity of exploring the proposed topic. It constitutes each poem in separate parts to develop a better understanding of the key hidden features and stylistic choices used in Emily Dickinson' selected poems and how the theme of uncertainty depicted. Therefore, the analytical research is required because it brings together small details about the poet and her works, often unobservable, to create more provable expectations about any phenomena being considered. In an association, analytical research helps in decision-making about various suggested interpretations and its effectiveness.

This study draws mostly upon primary sources, including Websites and some available printed materials to discuss what other writers said about the theme of the research and how they generally view and describe Emily Dickinson's poems. Other materials are mainly gathered from the original texts to analyze and describe the essential information needed. This thesis followed the Specifications Guide for Writing Theses and Dissertations issued by the University of Tripoli, Administration of Graduate Studies.

1.5 Literature review

Poets are searchers and examiners. The insights and wisdom inside their writings reflect man's worries, feelings and concerns assuring readers that poets are connected by human's worries and doubts as well as their joys. By raising readers' curiosity through diving into the meaning of the poets' writings, these works remind readers that poetry has always been able to cope with uncertainties and ambiguities.

By using uncertainty features that create an atmosphere of ambiguity in her poetry, Dickinson invites the readers to interpret the meaning of her poems in various ways instead of providing them with specific interpretation. “those who read Emily's poems call her a "genius" because of her unique writing style. This poet's creativity was never killed even though she grew up in a Calvinist² family, and was asked to follow a strict code of behavior”. (Lin, 2017) Various books, such as *The American Literature* and *The Poetry of Emily Dickinson*, and short critical essays of Emily Dickinson's poems show her deep awareness of the significance of uncertainty

Although Dickinson uses different poetic devices in her poetry, her use of images, punctuations, and dashes is particularly interested. She uses a unique style of writing that distinguishes her writings from others. She wrote what she felt without considering the traditional standards of writing poetry. Dickinson depicts the theme of uncertainty in most of her mysterious subjects. By exploring each device separately within each specific poem, the relationship between the use of these devices and the uncertain meaning of the poem becomes obvious. Dickinson’s choice to create ambiguity in her poetry emphasises her belief in the importance of the process of discovery, rather than the finding of definitive meaning.

“Dickinson’s temporary closures and frequent imaginative disclosures leave doubts and unanswered questions while affirming the reality of something sensed or intuited beyond.” (Darms, 1995). The use of uncertainty theme in most of her poems creates a feeling of unity and continuity. Since each line is a continuation of the previous one, each line adds a meaning to what has come before it. From this unity; however, a sense of ambiguity arises. As each line is connected to the other lines, many different meanings develop in the same time continuously.

Emily Dickinson gets the readers involved in order to be part of her deep introspections each with one’s own understandings. Howe and Perry (2015) argue that “Emily Dickinson’s poetry functions where scientific attention to the physical world and abstract theorizing about the ineffable intersect. Critics who emphasize the poet’s dedication to the scientific often take for granted how deeply the uncertainty that underlies all of Dickinson’s poetry opposes scientific discussion of the day”.

“The absence of certain, finalized meaning in both the anxious condition and the desirable outcome of Dickinson's writing and its transmissions to the reader” (Sedgwick

² NFIs: Non Food Items.

2001). This is true, since Dickinson's poems do not rely on certain facts or findings, but rather rely on individual's mindfulness of any common phenomenon from which reader could provide distinguished interpretations and thus supplies souls with nourishment of discoveries. Similarly, this study looks at the works of Dickinson as a source of unlimited findings which suggest that there is a high probability that something is true without any type of confirmations.

"Dickinson sought to reconcile the finite to the infinite without relinquishing the integrity of the human soul or the validity of physical nature" (Spiller, 1963) In fact, to reach the truth does not mean to be certain and provide definite conclusion. Seeking the truth is far from being only restricted to what one thinks is exactly true, however, the physical world as well as the metaphysical one carry introspection to derive a general conclusion about an infinite number of suggested interpretations. Likewise, this study investigates how Dickinson's use of uncertainty provides suggestions, analysis and predictions of certain phenomena to reach an indefinite interpretation of probable facts but is not necessary true just to gain a high prospect.

Dickinson uses complex descriptions and ideas in order to create multiple levels of interpretations. The reader's incapacity to ultimately indicate one level of interpretation creates ambiguity both in the image and in the meaning of the poem. By using the uncertainty interpretations, Dickinson creates a poem in which multiple ideas are considered at the same time. Dickinson is not searching for a definitive answer, instead she is determined to explore new ideas and new findings.

"Emily Dickinson's works can be understood in terms of dynamic and variable interactions with uncertainty. Sometimes uncertainty is horrifyingly meaningless, while on other occasions it is liberating and meaningful: Dickinson's grotesque is predicated upon the interplay of both these perspectives". (Sedgwick, 2001). Being uncertain is a process where minds build a predicted outcomes and possible interpretations. Though this matter seems to provide hesitant and weakness, thinkers and poets such as Sedgwick and Emily's view approve that being uncertain about something provides meaningful outcomes and trust. Likewise, this study highlights and analyses how Emily depicts this theme to approve that mysteries, ambiguity, and uncertainties are liberating and meaningful.

Savinell, (2009) argues that "Dickinson uses other poetic and grammatical means to counter exclusion and frustrate the very principle of choice. She often tends to multiply choice in order to defuse it, and to play on degrees and alternatives in all possible ways". Each reader

develops his own interpretation of Dickinson's poetry and finds his own meaning, allowing readers to engage in her poetry as active participants rather than being passive recipients. Dickinson does not preach one definitive meaning to her readers. Rather, she both creates ambiguity and attempts to guide the reader through it.

By using poetic devices that create an atmosphere of uncertainty in her poetry, Dickinson pushes the reader to interpret the meaning of the poem instead of providing him/her with the meaning herself. The ambiguity in the meaning allows the reader to come to his own conclusion. The lack of a definitive meaning in Dickinson's poetry emphasizes the reader's participation in the process of understanding and minimises the importance of the conclusion. Dickinson's use of imagery, enjambment, and dashes are integral to her creation of ambiguity, because they show the numerous possible interpretations and they engage the reader in the process of understanding varied meanings.

By engaging the reader into his/her own process of discovery through her poetry, Dickinson highlights the importance of the searching and thinking process itself, rather than the result of that process. Howe, (2006) explains that "what Dickinson representing in her writings is a process itself. The interest is in the spirit of execution. The spirit of execution is a spirit of experiment and openness to the order which chance can create". Dickinson was performing her own experiment in which the process of experimenting was more important than the conclusion. Her poetry reflects this view while encouraging the reader to engage in a similar process of experimentation.

Adler, (2019) said "This is the popular image of Emily Dickinson: a Sphinxlike figure, difficult for normal minds to reconcile. Scholars have historically made much of her reclusiveness and her idiosyncrasies, which are seen as counterbalances to her genius rather than evidence thereof". Dickinson kept her writing, as well as her writerly intentions, as simple as possible. She is simply and starkly concerned with being herself and accommodating her view of the world to that concern.

Dickinson's poetry is filled with ideas of uncertainties because she concentrates on themes that do not have an absolute interpretation. Dickinson depicts the theme of uncertainty, not for the purpose of seeking an answer, but for the sake of highlighting and exploring. When Dickinson writes on indescribable subject matter, it is not only the subject matter itself that creates a lack of certainty, but also the form that Dickinson uses to express these subjects. Dickinson uses special poetic devices that depict the theme of uncertainty in

her poetry and depict the ambiguous and uncertain natures of the subjects about which she writes.

“There is no doubt that critics are justified in complaining that her work is often cryptic in thought and unmelodious in expression. Almost all of her poems are written in short measures, in which the effect of curt brevity is increased by her verbal penuriousness” (Shackford, 1913) Emily Dickinson's works have had an extraordinary influence in literature. Using original wordplay, unexpected rhymes, and immediate line breaks, she bends literary conventions, proving a deep and respectful understanding of formal poetic structure even as she seems to challenge its restrictions.

Dickinson's poetry is like a tool that connects the reader to the poem and to encourage and engage the reader to have his/her own process of exploration, following Dickinson as a guide. It is clear from her use of uncertainty that her poetry involves the reader to interact with the poem to understand the meaning in his/her own way. Through engaging the reader in this process, Dickinson's poetry affects the reader by providing an understanding of the self-identity and capacity.

Her poems are frequently mysterious because of their unusual solidity, exceptional grammar, strange style and strained figures of speech, and often comprehensive symbolism and allegory. She discusses unsolved and varied attitudes towards great questions about life and death, and she expressed these in a unique variety of tones.

Chapter 2

about the poet and her poetry

2.1 Early Life of Emily Dickinson

Emily Dickinson is an American poet of the nineteenth-century New England. She is one of the most mysterious writers of all time. Although she is now regarded among the greatest American poets, it was only in the 1930s when scholars and critics began to read her poetry as a literary text almost fifty years after her death. However, every author has a unique style that distinguishes him/her from others, but Emily Dickinson's choices of words and the way she uses them make her such a unique poet and very different. Emily Dickinson, the middle child of Edward and Emily Norcross Dickinson, was born on December 10, 1830 and died on 15 May 1886 after two and a half years of ill health.



Illustration (1) Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Emily Dickinson's themes are indeed universal, but her particular points of view tend to be very personal; she reconstructed her world inside the works of her poetic imagination. This is why knowing some background of her personal life and her company of mind is fundamental for enlightening much of her work. Such background; however, must always be understood with attention and sensitivity, otherwise, it can lead to quick judgments, misunderstandings, and falsifications. Understanding her life and the atmosphere she lived in help to recognise some of her fundamental patterns of subject matter and behavior, particularly her contrasting approaches and how her subjects merged into one another.

She ran her father's library which enabled her to read and learn and then became a good writer, which women were unable to do at that time. "Emily said of her father: 'his heart was pure and terrible'. His strictness can be shown through his censorship of reading materials; Walt Whitman, for example, was considered 'too inappropriate' and novels had to be smuggled into the house." (Pettinger, 2006). Although she was completely different from her father's thinking, she loved and respected him a lot. She used to have an independent mind

and quiet willing to refuse certain Orthodoxy principles⁴. Her relationship with her father, a Calvinist lawyer may have been one of the driving attraction-repulsion and may be reflected in her poetry. There are many factors that make a person has a sense of humor, including personality, culture, and past experience. Nevertheless, this type of personality is not easily defined.

Emily was quick-witted and intelligent; she had a good sense of humor but was often ill at ease in other people's company. She gave the impression of being somewhat agitated and intense. Her friend and literary critic, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, would later say how tense the meeting with her was. Emily herself often thought of herself like a child; even tomboy and she referred to this in many of her poems. (Pettinger, 2006).

She implements the sense of humor to perform the same cognitive social, and emotional functions as play in general. She was simple in everything she did in her appearance, attitude, and writings.

Emily Dickinson was loved by her family and friends. She was a fun, strongly intelligent, young woman. Her retirement from society came after she attended territorial dominion school at Amherst Academy where she was known as a wit and brainpower person. For her, the withdrawal of society was for the sake of preserving the world rather than renouncing it. Among her aristocracies, Dickinson's closest friend and adviser was a woman called Susan Gilbert, who may have been a passionate interest of Dickinson's as well. In 1856, Gilbert married Dickinson's brother, William.

The Dickinson family lived on a large home known as the Homestead in Amherst. After their marriage, William and Susan settled in a property next to the Homestead known as the Evergreens. Emily and sister Lavinia served as chief caregivers for their ailing mother until she passed away in 1882. Neither Emily nor her sister ever married and lived together at the Homestead until their respective deaths (Biography, 2014)

Emily Dickinson's isolation during her later years has been the source of much speculation. Researchers have thought that she suffered from disorders such as depression and/or anxiety, or may have been isolated due to her duties as caretaker of her sick mother. She rarely left the house of the Homestead. At that time, from the late 1850s to mid-'60s,

Dickinson was more active when it comes to her poetic improvement as a poet. She made small bundles of poems known as fascicles without informing anyone from her family members. She kept her works for herself and did not try to get anyone involved. Her works are derived from her inside to her deep inside. She did not tend to publish any of her works nor did she aim to be a public figure.

In 1881, in the town of Amherst, Massachusetts Emily Dickinson was called as the Myth. She has not been outside of her own house in 15 years. She dresses wholly in white, and her mind is said to be perfectly wonderful. “We can only guess at why Dickinson preferred white. Maybe she just felt fine in that color. One of her most engaging and lasting characteristics is the “blameless mystery” that she wraps around her poetry and around herself, keeping us at arm’s length and always wanting to know what we never will.(Wald,2010)

Emily was said to be beautiful, with a soft voice and dark eyes. She dressed in a fairly simple way, and alive photos. Her hair was kept in a simple straightened style. She wrote finely, but no one ever seen her. At school, she was a virtuous student but spent only one year at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary before leaving school due to health problems. In the years prior to her isolation at the house in Amherst, Dickinson was quite social, attending gatherings, exciting her father's Washington political friends during a trip there, and attracting everyone with her witticisms.



Illustration (2) Emily's iconic white dress on display in her room.

Something happened in her life that shifted her from a social person to an isolated one, and that alteration is one of the greatest mysteries surrounding Dickinson's legend. However, around 1850 she started writing her poems. Her first works followed a traditional established structure of common poems; but after that, she began creating huge amounts of poems. Dickinson began experimenting with her style and structure that distinguished her from other poets. “Her style is idiosyncratic and intense, a reflection of her complex and reclusive personality, but her poems have a freshness,

innovativeness, and humor which have given her a very high standing as an early modernist” (McRae and Boardman, 1995)

In 1886, Dickinson’s health began weakening and she found herself slowly becoming unable to be as active as she used to be. Dickinson was only fifty-six when she was suffering from a severe case of Bright's disease. She died on May 15, 1886, and was buried in a white coffin in Amherst. She secretly created a huge list of poetry while locked in her room and refusing visitor after visitor. Her personal life and its ambiguities have dominated her accomplishments in poetry and her astonishing innovations in poetic form, to the dismay of some scholars.

2.2 Her works

Like most poets, Emily Dickinson wrote about what she felt, recognized, and about what interested her. A keen thinker, she used descriptions from nature, religion, law, music, commerce, fashion, and domestic activities to review universal themes: the wonders of nature, self-identity, death, immortality, and love. She sought the mysterious themes and tried to highlight and discuss them in very simple words with deep meaning.

Dickinson’s poetry was quite different than the established poetic standard of 19th century American literature. She used short sentences; dashes, slant rhyme (words that do not quite rhyme), and other poetic techniques that were not in common usage at that time. Her works are considered fresh and new until now. They carry simplicity and hints of humor that make her poetry have a cleverness, distinct voice, and a huge impact on American poetry.

Regarding her poetry and religion, the most person who encouraged and supported her was the young lawyer in her father’s office whom she called “tutor”. Perhaps her beloved’s death was one of the serious reasons for her skepticism⁵ and incredulity. (Spiller, 1963) Like most Amherst families, Dickinson’s family held daily religious atmospheres in their home. Dickinson received her own Bible from her father. Her understanding and knowledge of the Bible and her facile references to it in letters and poems have long impressed scholars.

Her religious experience was always seeking for the truth; she refuses to be in a state of believing a creed based on habit or authority. Instead, she increases the number of values and thoughts to derive findings beyond what minds default. Despite her non-participation in public religious life, Dickinson’s poems reveal an intense interest in issues of faith and doubt, suffering and salvation, mortality and immortality. The death of some of her friends and family

members, the Civil War, and her close observation of nature's cycles encouraged the poetic reflections on her mysterious themes throughout her life.

Emily Dickinson was an innovative and talented American poet who wrote nearly 1800 poems during her brief lifetime from 1830 –1886. Only 7 of Emily Dickinson's poems are known to have been published in her lifetime. Devoted to private pursuits, she sent hundreds of poems to friends and correspondents while keeping the greater number to herself. "Upon her death, Dickinson's family discovered forty handbound volumes of nearly 1,800 poems, or "fascicles" as they are sometimes called" (Emily Dickinson, n.d). Questions related to publishing Dickinson's work became much more complicated after her death when her sister Lavinia discovered a large collection of manuscripts (now known as the fascicles) that Emily had never mentioned. The dramatic story is fraught with emotional intensity, differing loyalties, and personal sacrifice.

Her sophistication and profound intellect have been lauded by laymen and scholars alike and influenced many other authors and poets into the 21st Century. Editors at that time assume that the manuscripts of Dickinson's works were not intended to be published. Some argue that she did not publish her works because she did not want to change or edit them. She maintained to keep her works as she wrote them without any alteration. Much of her writings were found after she died by her sister, Lavinia, but even then, her works were often altered by editors before they were published.

Most of her poems were not completed and written on scraps of paper, such as old grocery lists. She wrote them in a way that did not limit or bind her feelings that were exchanged into words written in her way. She did not consider any traditional standards or grammatical rules; rather, she just wrote what she felt, spontaneously. Eventually, when her poetry was published, editors arranged her works with titles, rearranged the syntax, and standardized Dickinson's grammar. In 1955, Thomas Johnson published Dickinson's poems in their original formats, thus displaying the creative genius and peculiarity of her poetry.



Illustration (4) Emily Dickinson's original scrap. (Wald, 2010)

In her writings, she admired the works of Elizabeth, Robert Browning, and John Keats. “The myth of Emily Dickinson as the dark-haired, inveterate recluse who created her innovative poetry in isolation from the outside world is just that—a myth, according to this wonderful, unprecedented exhibition”.(Goodman, 2017) The speakers in Dickinson’s poetry, like those in Browning’s works, are sharp-sighted observers who highlight the certain limitations of their societies as well as their imagined and imaginable escapes. “Her poems are a personal confession, and in its self-revelation, its honesty --- almost obscene. It comes out of an intellectual life toward which it feels no moral motivated by an arrogant passion for the truth. “Truth is so rare a thing,” she once said, “it is delightful to tell it.” (Hussain and Qaddawi, 2013)

To define meaning without confining it, to inhabit a house that never became a prison, Dickinson created in her writing a distinctively clear language for expressing what was possible but not yet realised. “Like Keats, Dickinson was concerned with the transitory and the permanent, with mortality and immortality. However, the theme of death and life after death took a large space in Dickinson’s poems because doubt and belief held her mind unresolved to the end. That is why one finds a reflection of melancholy in her poems” (Hussain and Qaddawi, 2013). In fact, Dickinson agreed strongly with the famous theory of Negative Capability which was first used by the romantic poet John Keats in 1817. In this theory, he explained the capacity of writers to pursue a vision of artistic interpretations even if it leads to intellectual confusion and uncertainty.

Dickinson’s poems are lyrics, generally defined as short poems with a single speaker (not necessarily the poet) who expresses thought and feeling. As in most lyric poetry, the speaker in Dickinson’s poems is often identified in the first person, “I.” Dickinson reminded a reader that the pronoun “I” in her poetry does not necessarily speak for the poet herself. Her descriptions sometimes create imaginary scenes but are more likely to create uncertainties landscapes, generalized scenes, or allegorical scenes.

She is such a deep mysterious thinker where one can find many examples of how she combines symbolism and allegory. This blending of symbolism and allegory in Dickinson’s poems is another reason for some readers’ difficulty when they encounter her many poems for the first time; yet, Emily Dickinson’s suggestive powers are paramount: she is always a challenge to the reader. The reader of Emily Dickinson’s poetry is invited to answer the unanswered questions posed by the poet rather than expects them to be answered, since the

poet is not convinced that only one answer is appropriate, and each reader can retrieve his conclusion.

In most of her poems, the speaker is not herself but a supposed person, thereby anticipating the perhaps too popular modern idea that poems are always spoken by a fictitious person. Her poems sometimes seem ambiguous, yet after a rereading they are often suddenly illuminating for new knowledge. To paraphrase Dickinson, scrutiny of this problem keeps the mind nimble. Probably she wanted to keep her own and her readers' minds as nimble as possible.

Emily Dickinson's poems have a different structure. She wrote mostly short poems in length, rarely consisting of more than six stanzas. Her themes are mainly about friends, love, nature, death, religion, uncertainty, and immortality. More importantly, she did not give titles to her poems; however, others have given titles to some of her poems using the first line of the poem. Her poems are very simple in words with deep meanings inside. Dickinson did not actively seek publication and only very few prominent members of the literary establishment knew about her abilities as a poet.

Emily Dickinson delayed the publication of most of her poems until after her death in 1886. Some argue that her shyness and withdrawal caused her not to publish her works though her poems were written with a full and deep meaning as if she was writing them to be read by the public. She preferred to enclose her poems to her friends only, believing that in this way they would be accepted without alteration. Among people to whom she showed her works for advice were, Sister Sue, Mabel Todd, Samuel Bowles, Helen Hunt Jackson, and Josiah Holland. (Spiller, 1963)

What distinguishes Emily Dickinson as a poet is her ability to describe abstract concepts with concrete images. In most of Dickinson's poems, abstract ideas and material things are used to explain each other, but the relation between them remains complex and uncertain. The use of words is characterized as the gathering source of abstract meanings. Her confidence in choosing undiscussed themes gives her poems a distinguished style. Also, by the shifting tone she imposes, the use of words, punctuations, dashes, and the fact that she did not follow the traditional standards of writing

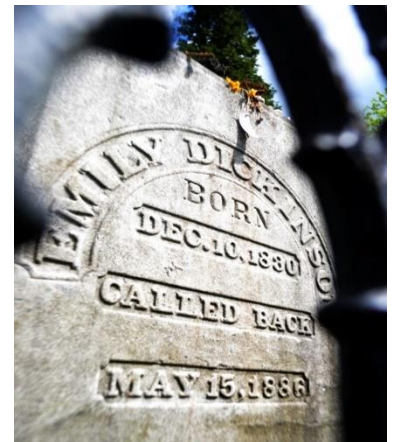


Illustration (5) Emily Dickinson's grave in West Cemetery. (Emily Dickinson Museum, n.d)

poems make her poems unique and remarkable. She was capable to suggest abstract questions about the mystery of the world within meaningful simple short poems.

2.3 The concept of uncertainty

The uncertainty concept is considered as one of the famous and significant aspects in findings mechanisms. It is regarded as the most distinctive feature that differs from classical theories of the discoveries. It states that one cannot assign concrete values for certain phenomena, but rather by uncertainty, one can derive unpredicted knowledge. “Uncertainty is considered a key dimension of everyday behavior that has a significant influence on decision-making (Yoshida and Ishii, 2006)

When it comes to uncertainty; psychologically, the state of mind becomes hesitant, thus it derives unlimited interpretations or/and findings. Uncertainty as a concept adapts the variety of humans’ findings. It suggests interpretations of future discoveries and the past ones as well. According to Daw and Dayan, 2005,

the common feature of these different categories of experimental manipulations is that they create states that signal the need to actively regulate our representations of the environment, to obtain better predictions and therefore achieve better adaptation. This regulation can include suppression and replacement of current representations, or adjustments of current representations that reflect the level of predictive unreliability of the environment. (Mushtaq, Bland, and Schaefer, 2011).

Werner Heisenberg German physicist and philosopher discovered a way to formulate quantum mechanics in terms of matrices. In 1927, he published his uncertainty principle, upon which he built his philosophy and for which he is best known. For him, “the position and the velocity of an object cannot both be measured exactly, at the same time, even in theory. The very concepts of exact position and exact velocity together, in fact, have no meaning in nature”. (Uncertainty Principle, 2020). In addition, Daw and Dayan, 2005 clarified that

most of the available experimental studies referring to the concept of uncertainty have taken place within the realm of research on decision-making processes. More specifically, these studies usually employ tasks

in which participants have to learn to predict future outcomes on the basis of past outcomes that often take the form of positive and/or negative reinforcements.” (Mushtaq, Bland, and Schaefer, 2011).

Uncertainty in these paradigms is usually manipulated by the variation of the predictive power of past outcomes. So the concept of uncertainty could be applied to all the aspects life to derive new interpretations and findings. But, the main question of this study is what is Dickinson’s point of view regarding this principle?

2.4 Dickinson’s point of view of uncertainty

When the main measures of human live seem to shift in a flash, it is recapped that poetry can service to manage with different truths and consider the mysteries forward. When moving out into an unexplored environment, poetry can grab reactions. It can share human being’s vulnerabilities and concerns along with powers. However, when it comes to writing, the question of how best to address Dickinson’s works has become more and more controversial, presented by increasing full-length of books and researches. This study has closely deliberated the literal variations of each selected poem and has chosen to include further interpretations on a case by case basis.

One of the shadowy things about poetry is how a reader can think beyond from written lines with what he/she imagines and feels about the meaning of the poem. It is one thing to say that Dickinson’s poems are the ones that carry the concept of uncertainty with an entire depth in the meaning inside. Similarly happens with her most famous poem, “I’m Nobody! Who are you?” The meaning of this poem is virtually taken to be that it is an inaccuracy to seek reputation, that it may be desirable to be a nobody than a somebody.

It started with questioning and wondering “Are you- Nobody- too?” In this poem and in so many others, she intentionally raises the curiosity of feelings throughout her writings. She used to be different in everything she did. She was always seeking the unknown and rejecting to surrender that a certain phenomenon is completely true or vice versa. However, Dickinson’s poems are full of such statements of artistic intent, an affirmation of the delights of private, unidentified art-making, and rejection of publicity. But, generally, Dickinson’s poems manifest the pleasures of the private world versus the dreariness of the public world. Thus, the reader has to mark a variety of expectations about both Dickinson’s poetry and its deep meanings.

Dickinson's works are filled with flashes of ambiguous sense since she focuses on themes that do not have a certain explanation; such as precipitous, actuality, and unlimited ideas. Nevertheless, Dickinson selects these themes, not for the tenacity of pursuing a solution, but for the sake of exploring them. Since these topics cannot be defined, Dickinson discovers their consideration so crucial and emphasizes them in her works. When Dickinson writes on any theme issue, it is not only the theme matter itself that builds an absence of certainty, but also the method that Dickinson used to express these themes. Dickinson employs poetic devices to increase the vagueness in her poetry to empower the sense of implementation.

Throughout her writing life, Dickinson investigated questions of the ineffable in her own experience through poems and letters. She often begins her writing with what looks like an answer to a question that has not yet actually been posed. An opening statement seemingly declares a truth, and is often followed by surprising alternatives: oppositions, puns, critiques, and openings of language indicate that the original statement is contingent and subject to revision (Darms, 1995)

Emily Dickinson resisted confirming any interpretations that she openly recognised with the community of believers and tried to receive their traditional principles with questions. She preferred to describe her philosophies and views rather than consented the limitations of structured truths and resisted these limitations until her death. Literature standards also had little importance to the writing of her poems. Indeed, she consciously avoided particular stylistic influences and traditional standards. "She wrote to Higginson: 'I marked a line in one verse, because I met it after I made it, and never consciously touch a paint mixed by another person. I do not let go it, because, it is mine'". (Thackrey, 1954)

This resistance is categorized in her works by an endless set of enquiring about life, death, religion, and love. She emphasises much more on the hidden and unseen nature of truths and the unexplainable matters and its effect in the natural world. All of these influences and more, no doubt, provoked Dickinson's decision to think deep inside and withdraw from the restrictions and boundaries of the external world she lived in. She tried to discover the universe with all its unlimited prospects without being limited to any rules or standards.

Uncertainty is regarded as one of the major themes of Emily Dickinson's poems; however, themes of mortality, mystery, supernatural, and the natural world are significant as well. Facts and uncertainty are claimed to be contraries where facts are stable and constant, while uncertainty is unstable and inconstant. Dickinson's unique abilities invoke the mysteries in her writings by employing the uncertainty and the unknown thinking. Her special use of words and their sounds enabled to create an everlasting piece of beauty to help readers dive deeper and explore the inevitable fate of the world even with the mysterious facts and experiencing unknown phenomena. (Yoshida, 2006)

What is exceptional about Dickinson is that there is always something hidden underneath the surface. Her poems carry riddles that any reader tries to put its pieces together and explain its mysteries. It is a characteristic of Emily Dickinson's works to be ambiguous in delivering her pieces of art. She illustrates explicitly this doctrine; as each line presents a piece of a puzzle, thus triggers the reader's imagination to find out what is being implied. Her works prove a huge ecstasy of life and affection of nature. She mysteriously deals with every single matter. Emily Dickinson tries to consider and search the inquiry of the way of life - not only her own but of each individual - and her place and role in the world.

The notion of uncertainty describes the ability of human beings to explore and review their surroundings in different ways. It describes the capability of the individual to observe, reason, and activate beyond any assumption of a determined capacity of the human being. Throughout her works and poems, Dickinson suggests a philosophy that uncertainty is treasured in itself and that it does not require to affirm anything to know that it is significant. She assures that uncertainty is a sign of joy, hope, reflection, discovery, and also has a self-creative function.

Dickinson assures that a poet should have no identity inside his works; such as providing his points of view or admitting existed facts, but a poet should have the capacity to impose the uncertainty, self-abandonment to the mystery, and delight in doubt. She always refuses to provide a definite answer to her questions and doubts, as if she says every single matter carries more than one interpretation and these interpretations should be investigated by each research alone. Dickinson's sense of humor and her skepticism help to communicate the urgencies of her doubts and need to search faith.

Emily Dickinson's mind had the power of understanding all other different thoughts and points of views – so that it enclosed a universe of thought and feeling within itself, and had

no one bias, or exclusive quality more than another. However, poetry which goes obviously to influence or persuade readers to agree to the poet's point of view is not considered as a sufficient and successful work. According to this declaration, poetry should be more indirect, and interactive through the influence of its image without the poet making his own identity too obvious.

A poet ought to be open rather than searching for an entire knowledge of every certainty, unknown, or doubt. It is a notion that is considered as a dismissal of set philosophies and prejudiced systems of life. Emily Dickinson seeks to explore a single truth or explanation of the ambiguities of the world. She assures that a poet has desires from the world that are full of doubt and uncertainty, which cannot be simplified, but a poet can transform them into an art. Therefore, Emily Dickinson's works convey the philosophy of acceptance of uncertainty, self-abandonment to ambiguity, and delight in doubt. (Johnson, 1955)

Chapter 3

Analysis of Emily Dickinson's selected poems

3.1 Tell all the truth but tell it slant

There are various concepts about the specific “truth” Emily Dickinson is describing in this masterpiece. She depicts the image of enlightenment of the surroundings or something in between. The speaker of the poem is addressing the nature of truth, rather than one specific element. One of the mysterious things about poetry is how a reader can walk away from a poem with what he/she thinks is a clear sense of its message or moral when really the poem itself says something far more complicated than that. Whatever her target, the fact that she did not explain an exact fact allows the poem to reach a wider audience. Through poetry, any reader can interpret his/her own understanding without bounding themselves to the text.

One of the most significant things in the world is light. This is closely related to the idea of the truth and goodness, and is therefore controversial in this poem. It is sometimes “Too bright” and appears to be “Lightening” shocking and powerful. Light may be a good thing, just as the truth is, but an onlooker would be “blinded” by so much of good things. The metaphor in line seven is that the reality is like a bright light, diamond, or gem that can give a dazzling appearance. Many will gradually become “blind”, leading to the loss of light forever. Through this explanation, one can understand Dickinson's point of view of uncertainty significance. She seeks not to deliver facts directly without thinking and discovering, but rather she carries to each phenomenon a set of questions and hesitations out of which an unknown knowledge could be discovered.

The poem is a didactic³ one that teaches a lesson and is very informative and advising. It shows a clear simple message. One must tell all the truth but must tell it indirectly. Truth can be too much for human comprehension if it is told directly. “It is this apparent easiness in the text that tricks us into what seems a very logical and simple conclusion. However, once we read the text carefully, peeling, and analyzing its different layers, we are able to look at this poem in a new light.” (Márquez, 2016) Therefore, the understanding of the text by the readers does not depend on its textual meaning, but on how these meanings are interpreted by this culture, and then form the meaning of the text. The result of any type of translation is a

³ NFIs: Non Food Items.

kind of conceptual structure that decodes the source of the text ambivalent message and exposes its uncertainty.

Tell all the truth but tell it slant —

Success in Circuit lies

Too bright for our infirm Delight

The Truth's superb surprise

As Lightning to the Children eased

With explanation kind

The Truth must dazzle gradually

Or every man be blind —

“Tell all the Truth but tell it slant” is an eight-line poem that is separated into two sets of four lines or quatrains. As was common within Dickinson’s poetry, this piece is structured in the form of a traditional church ballad. The lines alternate in meter between iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter. This means that the odd-numbered lines contain four sets of two beats, the first syllable of which is stressed and the second unstressed. The even-numbered lines contain one less beat, making them iambic trimeter. The rhyme scheme also alternates. The second and fourth lines rhyme as do the sixth and eighth lines.

The remaining pairs are slant or half-rhymes, such as “slant” and “delight”. These two words are connected due to the consonance or a similar sounding hard constant sound, ’T.’ On the other hand, there is the assonance or ‘E’ vowel sound between the fifth and seventh lines. This uncommon pattern of rhyme is impossible to ignore when considering the content of the text itself. The speaker is telling a reader that one should only tell partial truths, and to do so, she is using partial rhymes. (Baldwin, n.d) She uses the image of lightning in “Tell all the truth but tell it slant,” to challenge the certainty in meaning.

This poem begins with an authoritative atmosphere by giving an instruction that appears to mark the poem as directions for the readers. Emily Dickinson states to only tell the truth, and to tell all of the truth “Tell all the truth”, but she assures not to tell it straight “but tell it slant”. The first line of the poem is frequently used as a way of thinking about what

poetry can provide: it explains the truth but from a “slant” way. Here the word slant could mean gentle. She explains that the truth is like the sun. It is very bright and could hurt others. One could hurt people by telling the truth.

Emily Dickinson depicts the theme of uncertainty in most of her poems; and perhaps, she never wrote about it any better than in her untitled poem, “Tell the truth but tell it slant” where she cleverly illustrated how words can be manipulated to offer multiple layers of meaning. What does Emily recommend in this poem? What does she leave for readers to resolve? The first line immediately begins the ambiguity of this poem. Does she think that the truth should be told clearly, or it should be told in some way? What is the truth, or is there actually anything like it that is obvious in our human understanding?

In this poem, Dickinson gives a lesson in the ethics and virtual values by explaining the way how the truth should be told. She says just telling the truth is not enough. It should be told but with careful consideration of how to deliver it. She says to tell the truth; but be conscious of the delivery, and be conscious of the individual who will receive it, because it could be too powerful. In other words, she assures communication in kindness and love. It is not enough to just tell the truth, but rather it should be told with compassion, gentleness, and love. One cannot accomplish anything if the one who receives this truth is being hurt or damaged by. Truth has a powerful impact in the sense that it could be beautiful, but it also could be harmful.

There is a difference between fact and truth. The difference between them is that fact is something that cannot be opposed with reasoning, for it is logic itself. Like for example; when someone says that the fire is hot. Here the speaker is not telling the truth, but he is telling facts. But the truth is something that depends on a person's perception and understanding. A fact is a reality that mainly cannot be logically rejected.

Emily Dickinson assures that if it is necessary to tell the truth, so it should be told with consideration and care. How somebody would like to receive the truth? Sometimes receiving the truth is very painful. “She is arguing that we humans cannot handle too much truth, that we, to borrow T. S. Eliot’s words, cannot bear very much reality. We are imperfect creatures, and the truth is too pure and good for our ‘infirm’, or diseased and weak, ‘Delight.’.”(A Short Analysis of Emily Dickinson’s ‘Tell all the Truth but tell it slant’, n.d)

The first line of the poem is considered as the title of the poem. “Tell All the Truth But Tell it Slant”. That is not really the title. This poem does not have a title. In fact, none of

Dickinson's poems does. Since their discovery, editors have given the poems numbers in an attempt to organize them. They are numbered in an order they were supposedly written. There are several ways to view the meaning of truth in general. That is what she does. She depicts, line by line, the poem's beauty with patience calibrated so it is not frustrated or confusing.

Human delight is "infirm" or weak. It cannot handle everything, whatever one determines to be referenced by, the "Truth". When it does come suddenly, it arrives as a shock. It is a "superb" or perfect, irresistible "surprise". This might seem like an advantage, but as the speaker mentioned before "Delight" is not very tough. One must be careful about what they share. There is a simile in lines three to six "Too bright for our infirm Delight / The Truth's superb surprise/ As Lightning to the Children eased / With explanation kind". Dickinson explains the shock of being confronted with a surprising truth as something too bright for to realise just like the phenomena of lightning is for children. "We also find the use of alliteration to highlight words that support the poem's central theme such as tell – truth as well as slant - success – circuit"(Márquez, 2016).

In the second part of the poem, she goes on to relate the paring down of reality to how lightning is compared to a scared child. When one takes away some of the mystery, or in the case of truth or information, then the impact will be learned. The final lines warn the reader that something needs to be done, or that all people are going blind. The shocks of the whole truth are distracting ones from a complete, through understanding. Dickinson explains that the fact has the potential to mislead individuals, if it is revealed too directly.

In lines 5 and 6, she offers a clarifying simile as she compares the shock children experience when hearing lightning to the shock that human experience when hearing the profound truth: it must be dazzled by it gradually with explanations kind. Without such a cautious approach, those who hear the truth will "be blind." As part of her ambiguity, one can ask if blindness refer to the effects of viewing lightening directly. If so, does it mean that most people cannot handle the truth and that upon hearing it, so they tend to misunderstand and misinterpret it? Either way, once readers read her poem, it seems clear that Dickinson does not have a very noble view of the capabilities of humanity while receiving the truth. Beyond all the interpretations of this poem, it is clear that Dickinson gives a lesson in ethics and how humans should be careful while telling the truth.

The second line, “Success in Circuit lies” clearly has the primary meaning that success is found in the circuit; however, “Dickinson chooses every word very carefully, and the secondary meaning of “lies,” that is, dishonest statements, would not have been unintentional. Also, the metaphor of using “kind” explanations to appease children is not quite apt, because these explanations often move quite far from the truth, whether for simplicity’s sake or because the truth is too disturbing.”(Cullina and Chainani, 2009)

This poem is considered as the most controversial poem. Though it is short with simple words, it carries a lot of deep meanings inside. In this poem, Emily Dickinson used special use of dashes and punctuation marks. The first dash after slant means “because” indicating the end of the introduction and leading into the rest of the poem. The second dash after the word “blind” is used to remind the reader to keep thinking about the speaker’s purpose in the poem. Using capitalization is also one of the stylistic choices Emily Dickinson adopts in her poems.

The word “Truth” is capitalized to show that it is the subject and the core of the poem. Also, the word “Circuit” emphasises the need to be indirect when telling the truth. “Dickinson’s use of common meter provides the first clue of how the text’s meaning is brilliantly disguised in this poem. The text is structured in a fairly simple manner, making it ‘easy’ for the ordinary mind to take in the words. However, there is nothing simple or easy about this poem. One must go beyond the outer layer to uncover all the truth.” (Márquez, 2016)

The rhyme scheme of the poem is (a,b,a,b,c,d,e,d). She is different from normal poetry because she did not feel like she had to be limited by rules. Also, for the fact that she wrote for her own self and could not expect that one was supposed to read her poems. She uses internal rhyme in “bright” and “delight”. “Indeed, the repeated open ‘i’ sounds in the words Dickinson chooses to end her lines – ‘lies’, ‘Delight’, ‘surprise’, ‘kind’, ‘blind’ – call to mind the eyes and the importance of the visual, of seeing the truth. (Compare, in this connection, a much earlier poem, by the Elizabethan poet Sir Philip Sidney: Sidney also ends each of his lines with an i sound.) And the words ‘dazzle’ and ‘blind’ in that second stanza call to mind the idea of staring directly at the sun. Dickinson doesn’t mention the sun in this poem, but this may be what she is hinting at in the final two lines of the poem.” (Treale. n.d)

Dickinson is also able to capture a powerful inside in a small number of lines where she includes some metaphors in her poem. She compares truth to light and assures that the truth which opens eyes to new ideas is compared to light showing things in the deep darkness

that were previously overlooked. It is just as light is sometimes too bright and hurts eyes or surprises if turned on too suddenly, the truth may hurt feelings. However, in this line, and others, Dickinson depicts the theme of uncertainty obviously. She says that it is not preferable, to tell the truth instantly, as it may hurt instead of giving happens. Each reader has his own way to understand the poem's meanings. Dickinson's works open minds to different dimensions and this is the way Emily Dickinson adopts in her poems.

Another metaphor is in the last two lines. It says that the Truth must dazzle gradually or every man be blinded. It is a metaphor because a person will not literally go blind if told the truth but may ignore or not believe what he has been told, because it was too much to handle. She also imposes alliteration in this poem tell/ truth/slant/success/ circuit/ superb/surprise. These words are significant in the poem to emphasize her theme.

Dickinson doesn't want to hide the truth from those who do not want to see it, but instead, she wishes to make the truth more palatable to those who run the risk of being "blinded" by it, as by the sun's glare. "As the famous line from the 1992 film *A Few Good Men* has it, "You can't handle the truth!" There are times in all of our lives when we would rather bury our heads in the sand and run away from harsh reality; making reality a little less harsh is the sermon Dickinson appears to be preaching here.(Treale, n.d)

For Emily Dickinson, the world is full of mysteries. She always strives to question and discover although she was unable to answer these mysteries to her satisfaction, Dickinson wanted to look for her own suggested answers. Through her poetry, "Dickinson explored topics such as the afterlife, the character of God, the value of faith, the grace in solitude, and the importance of selflessness. While she never expressed definitive conclusions about many of these topics, her poems allowed her to experience different viewpoints on these subjects and approach a more personally satisfactory understanding of the world around her" (Fifhouse ,2018)

The final line ends with one of Dickinson's characteristic dashes "or every man be blind_". This makes it seem as if the poem is not yet over, it continues somewhere in the distance as if there is more "Truth" to be shared. "Tell all the truth but tell it slant" has extraordinary short lines, where Emily Dickinson advances the argument of the poem utilising

incredible and noteworthy symbolism. Finally, the poem raises the reader's uncertainty by trying to explore what kind of "Truth" she has at the top of the priority list – if she has a specific truth at the top of the priority list here it stays implicit. However, this is the thing that gives the poem its value; with regards to the deep meaning inside each line and how she explains the value of telling the truth in an advisable voice tone.

3.2 *I'm Nobody! Who are you?*

Here is another poem that makes it hard to separate Dickinson the poet from the human being. Emily Dickinson was a prolific writer where during her lifetime she wrote more than 1800 poems but she remained utterly unknown. Dickinson lived a relatively reclusive life in her house in Amherst. Out of about 1800 poems she published only 200 poems. "I am Nobody! Who are you?" is one among Emily Dickinson's best-known poems, and one among her most celebrated opening lines. However, the opening lines are always the most attractive ones, this poem's first line is remarkable and memorable. It presents her defense against why she preferred spiritual privacy. In this poem, she declares that being a nobody has advantages, because one is not being guided by others and has absolute privacy.

In this poem, the speaker directly mirrors the opinions and feelings of the writer herself. Dickinson revealed her disdain for advertising and publicity in many of her poems. In one poem, she announced that publication was "fornication of the soul" thus comparing the published poem to the sold body. In other words, she strongly believed that the thoughts of one's mind were meant to be kept isolated, or privately shared, but never sold. Though, this poem shows another side of Dickinson- the side that also wished for companionship. Although she refused the idea of advertising, Dickinson would have still required some form of friendship.

The voice made by Dickinson in "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" is echoed in Robert Frost poem "The Road not Taken" when he declares that "I took the one less traveled by". "One famous example is Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken," which tends to be read as a call for people to strike out on their own independent course, when really Frost marks no substantive difference between the two roads in his poem." (Socarides, 2014)

A similar thing happens with "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" The message of this poem is almost always taken to be that it is worthless to seek fame, that it is preferable to be a nobody than a somebody. Together with the fact that Dickinson only published seven poems in her lifetime, this poem becomes a statement of artistic purpose, a declaration of the joys of private,

unknown art-making, and a rejection of publicity. Nevertheless, to make this poem into a manifesto on the pleasures of the private world versus the solitude of the public world, one has to make a variety of assumptions about both Dickinson and poetry.

In this poem, the speaker seems to reveal Dickinson's interest in finding a company with another individual. The speaker is eager to meet someone, as she believes that the person she is meeting is "Nobody" just like herself. This reflects Dickinson's aspiration to have companionship with someone who also avoided the publicity and shared her visions on the importance of privacy. Dickinson, having lived a very isolated life, did not seem to have many people whom she trusted. Rather, she wrote down her thoughts which would not be published until after her death. This poem, however, discloses Dickinson's desire to have relationships with other people without being forced into the publicity eye. (Pettinger, 2006)

Dickinson tells that one can become a public figure, but has to maintain that figure is very difficult. Somebodies have to keep working hard to keep their names floating in the society of their admirers. The poet does not like being a public figure because it is quite evident that she prefers privacy in her life. It is also obvious that a creative mind is not controlled by the surrounding, instead, a creative mind finds its subjects in the surroundings. "The rhyme of 'too' and 'know' is only half-rhyme: 'too' looks back to 'you' ('who are you?') More than it looks forward to 'know' ('know' itself picks up on the 'No' of 'Nobody'). The use of the longer word 'advertise' among shorter, simpler words draws attention to that word, and this is deliberate. Nobody draws attention to Nobodies; but to do so would be to attempt to make them conspicuous, to advertise them, and the word *advertise* (easily the longest word in the stanza) is itself conspicuous in the poem. (Treale. n.d)

This poem opens with a literally clear declaration—that the speaker is "Nobody." This nobody-ness, however, quickly comes to mean that she is outside of the public sphere; perhaps, here Dickinson is touching on her own lifestyle of being isolated and avoided to become a published poetess, and thus the fact that to most of society, she is "Nobody".

I'm nobody! Who are you?

Are you nobody too?

Then there's a pair of us! – don't tell!

They'd banish us, you know!

How dreary to be somebody!

How public, like a frog

To tell your name the livelong day

To an admiring Bog!

This poem is a remarkable early example of Dickinson's elegant approach in her writing style. She uses her trademark dashes quite convincingly to interrupt lines and interfere with the flow of her poem, as in "How dreary— to be—Somebody!" Additionally, the poem vividly illustrates her astonishing way of language. The juxtaposition⁷ in the line "How public—like a Frog—" shocks the first-time reader, combining elements not typically considered together, and, thus, more powerfully conveying its meaning. Frogs are "public" like public figures—or Somebodies—because they are constantly "telling their name"—croaking—to the swamp, reminding all the other frogs of their identities.

It is followed by a quick analysis of its meaning and features. It is summarised in a very simple way by describing how it is considerably likable to be a Nobody instead of somebody – that anonymity is favored to fame or public attention. Nobodies can remain and enjoy their anonymity, but it is harder to seek out companionship in the public eye. Dickinson sees anonymity as an advantage. The poet proudly declares her familiarity, her similarity to everyone else rather than her rareness.

"The speaker does not seem bitter about this—instead she asks the reader, playfully, 'Who are you?' and offers us a chance to be in cahoots with her 'Are you – Nobody – Too?'. In the next line, she assumes that the answer to this question is yes, and so unites herself with the reader 'Then there's a pair of us!', and her use of exclamation points shows that she is very happy to be a part of this failed couple." (Cullina & Chainani, 2009). The poem begins with an introduction from the speaker who announced herself as nobody. She asked about the identity of the addresser and it could be the reader "Are you_ Nobody_too?"

Then, she announces that there is a pair of nobodies. Here Emily Dickinson strongly connected the speaker with the reader of the poem by asking a direct question full of ambiguities and uncertainties. Once readers read it, it provides a pause in the minds. First, the speaker of the poem asks “Who are you?” here she encourages each one to discover his identity by asking a direct question that the answer is expected from the poem’s addresser. Then, she says “Are you_ Nobody_too?” she expects that also the addresser is nobody and strongly related the speaker to the addresser when she says “Then there’s a pair of us! – don’t tell!”

The poem was first published in 1891 in *Poems, Series 2*, a collection of Dickinson’s poems assembled and edited by Mabel Loomis Todd and Thomas Wentworth Higginson. The poem is composed of two quatrains, and, with an expectation of the first line, the rhythm alternates between iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter. The poem alliteration simile, satire, and internal rhyme but no regular end rhyme scheme. However, lines 1 and 2 and lines 6 and 8 end with masculine rhymes. The poet incorporates the pronouns, you, we, us, your into the poem and in doing so, she draws the reader into the piece. The poem suggests anonymity is preferable to fame.

She declares “how dreary to be somebody”. She talks about how horrifying and boring it must be to be someone. The speaker links being somebody to frogs who are seeking attention and basically what are they doing is making their noise in the swamp. The somebodies become public figures and are busy circulating their names, croaking like frogs in a swamp. She compares the people around with bog and warns the addresser against the consequences.

“Anaphora occurs in the second stanza, both with the repeated “How” in lines 5 and 6 and with the repeated “To” in lines 7 and 8. To understand why anaphora is used here, it needs to be considered within the overall movement of the poem. The first stanza showed the speaker recognizing another “Nobody,” speaking to this addressee in excited, hushed tones and imploring him or her not to tell anyone that the two have found each other. In other words, the first stanza develops the idea of being a “Nobody.” (Howard, 2019)

The poetic conceit is highly admirable in this poem. One cannot expect human is going to be compared to croaking frog, and that too in a very different context. The poem vividly illustrates her surprising way with language. The juxtaposition in the line “How public __like a Frog__” can definitely shock the first time reader, combining elements not typically considered together and thus more powerfully conveying its meaning. (Frogs are “public” like public figures __or Somebodies__ because they are constantly “telling their “name” __croaking to the swamp, remaining all the other frogs of their identities)

The first line includes a declaration of the speaker where she affirms that she is nobody, which is a controversial issue in itself. The exclamation mark carries many ambiguous interpretations that readers of the poem start questioning what it means. Is it included to provide a sense of astounding? Is the speaker energised to be nobody? However, she concludes by assuring that being a Nobody is better than being somebody.

The main theme of the poem is seeking self-identity in an uncertain way. She investigates all that goes with it. What are the human’s personalities and the substance of it? What protection and internal life? What almost one’s role in society, and their open persona? The poem begins with the line “I’m Nobody! Who are you?” that has become one of the foremost prevalent of cites and is regularly cited as the title of the poem, but in reality, none of Emily Dickinson’s lyrics is titled.

The two stanzas of “I’m Nobody!” are highly typical for Dickinson, established of loose iambic trimeter occasionally including fourth stress “To tell your name—the livelong June”. They follow an ABCB rhyme scheme; though in the first stanza, “you” and “too” rhyme, and “know” is only a half-rhyme, so the scheme could appear to be AABC, and she frequently uses rhythmic dashes to interrupt the flow. This short poem consists of two stanzas. The lines have loose iambic trimeter with occasional fourth stress. The rhyme scheme is ABCB, with a half-rhyme in the first stanza.

The presence of rhythmic dashes is typical of Emily Dickinson. The dashes are deliberately kept to interrupt the flow to produce short pauses. However, the poem is very short and powerful that questions the need for attention-seeking instead to highlight the virtuous of anonymity and isolation. Dickinson assures that just because being nobody and not familiar to the world, this does not mean that he/she is not living a great life worth living.

The poem is very relevant to this era and it assures that being famous or known does not mean that one had a fulfilled life. In fact, she was someone the world did not know at that time.

Emily Dickinson's unconventional use of punctuation and capitalization made her poems very unique and different. In fact, her use of dashes and capital letters is very common practice. "The use of dashes is typical of Emily Dickinson. Commas are unusual in her work while capital letters 'Nobody-Too' are common. Both give a kind of breathless emphasis to the words: she uses very few words but each one is very important to the whole poem, and the most important words are given further emphasis through dashes and Capital letters". (McRae and Boardman, 1995)

The theme raises the sense of uncertainty by investigating how one can find the identity of self and gather the best ideas that can come from exploring the unknown. It uses the simile and metaphor figure of speech because it was able to compare or associate different things in similarity "Nobody" vs "Famous" persons and used the word "like" in line 6 in the second stanza. Furthermore, to divide the poem, when the word "they" was mentioned in line 4, wherein the poet was relating to famous people or any person located in high levels of society. With a very short content of only 8 lines, Dickinson was able to quickly reach out to others who would want to have the same privacy she experienced and also gain fruitful outcomes from this choice.

How do the contrasts and/or similarities between discourse and idyllic frame influence the readers' involvement in the lyric? Domhnall Mitchell (2000), a famous specialist of writing, said that the sonnet "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" may be a shape of confessional verse. That is why it employs the likeness and representation figure of discourses since it was able to compare or liken not at all like things in likeness, which is the Dickinson and associated others being the "Nobody" sort of people judged against the "Famous" sort of people (who would not likely to favor honest of a "Nobody"). To begin with, a thinker would interpret that Dickinson was talking approximately about herself, but there is a speedy turn of disposition when the lyric gets to be about the reader. Finally, the poem advocates the readers to inquire themselves, "Who are you" as well as it connects an immediate relationship between the thinker and the addresser of the poem. (UKessays, 2018)

Emily Dickinson frequently had this mood of being in isolation. She stayed at home, mostly writing poems in her notebooks and writing hundreds of letters, sharing her poetry with her friends and close colleagues. She lived a private life and thus often felt unknown.

Nevertheless, this logic and mood of invisibility did not seem to concern her at all. In contrast, she did not want to be in such an interest for glory, reputation, and celebrity or even being observed rather it is obvious through this work that she criticized such attention seekers and even disciplined them.

Being isolated or alone is known as a threat and should be avoided. However, in this poem, Emily Dickinson tries to depict the sense of uncertainty by questioning “I’m Nobody! Who are you? Are you-Nobody-too?”. It endeavors to say that it is acceptable to be withdrawn and that people are not certainly alone in feeling like they want to keep themselves to themselves. . (Howard, 2019) With this idea, then, “Nobody” already means something different from what it could be once you read the poem.

While in that example, "Nobody" indicates an absence (there were no people around), “Nobody” here does indeed the contrary—it declares someone’s existence by directly asking the recipient “Are you-Nobody-too?”. Within the last analysis, Dickinson has taken something that would have been seen as a blemish and wears it as a symbol of distinction and worthy of a rallying cry. “Conversely, she does appear to be excited to meet someone who shares her opinion, which implies certain loneliness in being ‘Nobody’. Dickinson explores both the virtue and the loneliness in solitude in this poem, but she ultimately concludes that solitude is worth the price”. (Fifhouse, 2018) Slightly, in this poem “I’m Nobody!” she creates the influential declaration of her nobody-ness and assuring that someone else mostly readers have a similar feeling as well.

3.3 This World is not Conclusion

What is attractive about Dickinson’s works is her struggling and hesitating with the mystery of beliefs, as she does between what is common of traditional faith and the worrying existence of doubt. In most of her poems, she explains and investigates her anxiety of death, her concerns about the afterlife, and her doubts of all her surroundings. Her works carry ambiguity, with hiding which meaning to lean, which is considered as the main reason her work is so unique of all times. “Emily Dickinson’s poem, ‘This World is not Conclusion’ is a paradigmatic example of her ambivalence about Christian faith. It reveals, as many of her poems do, her struggle with doubt”. (Hansard, 2017)

The poem begins relatively surefootedly with statements about the afterlife. ‘A Species stands beyond,’ refers to people who have died,[2] watching, “beckoning” and “baffling” Dickinson’s choice of the word “species” is quite interesting, as it has Darwinian overtones and foreshadows the doubt to come. “Philosophy,” trying to fathom the mystery, is so confused it’s grammatically inept.[3] “Through a Riddle,” refers to death.[4] It is through the Riddle that we come to know, finally, what there is in the afterlife. But, notice “Sagacity” is left behind, and puzzlement ensues. (Hansard, 2017)

Dickinson’s uncertainty is also depicted in the struggle between faith and doubts; and knowing Dickinson’s unpredicted personality, the reader is left uncertain where the poet leads him/her by the end of the poem. “The beauty of Dickinson’s poem here is the ambiguous ending. Doubt seeps through the lines as much as faith is grasped, and we are never certain exactly where she will land. For many of us, the war between faith and doubt is like this. There are times that it doesn’t resolve. But God is always there in the background waiting for us to return, even in the midst of ambiguity.” (Hansard, 2017).

She often initiates her writing with what looks like an answer to a question that has not yet actually been posed. An opening declaration apparently declares the truth and is often followed by astonishing alternatives: disagreements, puns, analyses, and beginnings of language indicate that the original statement is subjected to amendment. She challenges the thinkers about topics that may never have occurred to us. Dickinson improves the poem by opening to possible new meanings, selecting to adapt, adjust, disprove, request, and mock, rather than explain, verify, or substantiate.

This World is not conclusion.

A Species stands beyond –

Invisible, as Music –

But positive, as Sound –

It beckons, and it baffles –

Philosophy, dont know –
And through a Riddle, at the last –
Sagacity must go –
To guess it, puzzles scholars –
To gain it, Men have borne
Contempt of generations
And Crucifixion, shown –
Faith slips – and laughs, and rallies –
Blushes, if any see –
Plucks at a twig of Evidence –
And asks a Vane, the way –
Much Gesture, from the Pulpit –
Strong Hallelujahs roll –
Narcotics cannot still the Tooth
That nibbles at the soul –

Almost in all her poems, the first line is a striking line which attracts the reader's attention. "As she does in numerous other poems, Dickinson begins this one with a claim: 'This World is not conclusion.' The rest of the poem fleshes that idea out. There is more to reality than this everyday world we live in, but we can only form conjectures about it. Christianity has inspired martyrs but Faith still 'slips'. There really is no conclusion—all our searching lead to questions rather than answers. Existence doesn't 'conclude' at death. Dickinson is using both meanings of 'conclusion': the answer to a question and the end of an affair". (Kornfeld, 2012).

The punctuation in this poem assures her speculation. The first line begins with such certainty declarative statement and is the only one that ends with a period. There is something forced in this, like a forced smile, the way one tries harder to pretend that everything goes in a satisfied manner, especially when it is not. Thereafter, all of the mid-line commas emphasize hesitation and doubt. "The first twelve lines were first published in the Outlook, LIII (25

January 1896), 140, titled 'Immortality'... The same lines were also issued in *Poems* (1896), 139, without title, and appear in later collections" (Johnson, 1955).

In the first four lines of the poem, Dickinson opens with a clear declarative and confident statement that highly unlike Dickinson's style. The word "conclusion" is capitalized (most of Dickinson's abstract nouns are capitalized), so it seems to have an extra metaphysical weight. It is unusual for Dickinson to end stop with a full-stop (an idiosyncratic full stop). There is a finality in the first line, like a conclusion reached, as though stating an aphorism. It is very rare for Dickinson to end a statement with a full-stop.

It would be simplistic to think that Dickinson is stating her own view, as this conclusion is immediately opposed in the next line with the use of the word "species". "Species" is an odd word to use for heavenly creatures. "A species stand beyond", it cannot be considered as a logical continuation of the previous line, but it aims to have another opening line of investigations. "The word offers many possible readings, and this is consistent with Dickinson's dealing with doubt and paradox. "Species" is not a genus or a class, let alone a kingdom or (except perhaps as noted in [Fr 294]) any kind of hierarchical category, general name, or concept of a more ideal, divine, or heavenly place." (Darms, 1955)

The similes in this poems suggest the abstract nature of the afterlife. It is not something which can be epically proved, but something one can intuit. She says: "Invisible, as Music – But positive, as Sound", this line suggests that after life something cannot be empirically proven but it is something that one can intuit it, something much more personal than abstract. It is something found beyond this life, but although it has physical existence (like sound) it is mysterious and invisible.

Dickinson was writing in a time of the philosophy of transcendentalism and she was affected by it. Emerson, who is considered as the father of transcendentalism *Dialogue on Nature Religion* suggests that no empirical proof of religion can be satisfactory. Transcendentalism philosophers argue against the empiricism philosophers like Locke, who believed that knowledge derives from experience and evidence. "In philosophy, empiricism is a theory that states that knowledge comes only or primarily from sensory experience". (Wikipedia). Similarly, Dickinson argues that knowledge is not necessarily derived from evidence. She is showing skepticism towards the nature of the afterlife. The word "Species" was discussed by Darwinian on the origin of species 1859 casts doubt of the Biblical version

of creation. So, this is another hint that Dickinson's poem is skeptic's one where it questions the ideas of faith and the afterlife.

"While the speaker of this poem believes in an afterlife, she is completely uncertain what that afterlife will be like, and thus it confounds her that people would endure so much to reach it". (Fifhouse, 2018). In the second four lines, Dickinson suggests that understanding the nature of the afterlife is confusing even for philosophers. This is the alliterated antithesis: a contradictory experience of the believer. The words "beckons", "baffles" and "Riddle" suggest that doubt is a quality that causes difficulties, but it also suggests that it could be positive as it gives a pleasing sense of exploring. Therefore, the poem is not frustrating, but it enjoys puzzling trying to pose questions about what the afterlife is. Dickinson uses some slant rhymes (half-rhyme) such as "Beyond and Sound". A sub-division is observable in the rhyme scheme ABCB "know/go; borne/ shown; see/way; roll/soul"

In the next four lines, Dickinson suggests the nature of the afterlife where she uses the verb "to guess", "puzzles" to suggest the inability to explain matters of faith and concepts of the afterlife. "Guess" and "puzzle" are playful verbs that seem as enjoyable riddles. The words "borne" and "shown" are slant rhymes that might create a sense of inclusion. The alliteration in "beckons" and "baffles" show that conventional religious wisdom is questioned where they reflect curiosity and confusion.

Immediately the tone changes from a certain to an uncertain one. The reader is pushed to wonder what is the meaning of the word "riddle" that comes "at the last"-it is a euphemism for death? Sagacity, or enlightenment, or wisdom, has to go through the process of this "riddle" or death, to finally be achieved. Through this abrupt change of tone, the questioning of the received wisdom about the afterlife is investigated. In effect, Dickinson seems to say that one can know for certain about the afterlife only by dying. Line 9 and 10 have a similar structure- they begin with a phrase, and are followed up by two types of people, "scholars" and "men". The word "men" is not ordinary ones, but it means those who have "borne/the contempt of generations" and "Crucifixion" –in short, martyrs.

Dickinson appears to be observing this in a disappointing way: the understated manner in which she refers to both scholars and martyrs, in the same breath, appears to highlight how faith and belief have led people to strive for the truth over the centuries. Generalizing from this point about humankind's puzzlement and strife with faith, the poet moves on to the next thought using a dash to connect it from line 12.

In the next section of the poem, Dickinson personifies Faith as a young, light-headed girl and raising questions like whether faith can be a reliable point to understand the nature of the afterlife. She uses the verb “slips” to argue that also faith can fail in explaining the truth of the afterlife not only philosophers and “plucks” that say faith has weak evidence about the afterlife. She also uses the metaphor by using the word “vane” as it refers to the weather vane where the faith asks what directions to go and the weather vane changes directions. She argues that faith in a metaphorical way has no solid understanding of the afterlife and that faith changeable like a weather vane. The reader is further puzzled and nonplussed-if Faith itself does not know the way, then who does?

She now began to record in poems each new awareness of her relation to the inscrutable. ‘This World is not Conclusion,’ she avers almost truculently, as though she hoped the assertion would forestall her own doubts; ‘and through a Riddle, at the last / Sagacity must go.’ We have the witness of martyrs who have endured contempt and crucifixion for their faith, yet our uncertainty persists.... On occasion she queries whether simple stoicism may not be the answer. ‘Our journey had advanced,’ she imagines, to the fork in being’s road called Eternity. (Johnson, 1955)

In the final four lines, Dickinson uses the phrase “Much Gesture” which implies that she is criticizing the performance not the substance. And again the phrase “Strong Hallelujahs” suggesting a powerful performance. She aims to have an individual approach to understanding life instead of conforming without thinking. However, there is no “audible” speaker, no character is narrating a story. Emily Dickinson uses the sense of irony when she says “Plucks at a twig of Evidence –And asks a Vane, the way” the idea is that it is vanity when asking a vane to try to know the answer from a vane which is hopeless and ridiculous. She wants to assure the reader that all life is vanity. “Much Gesture, from the Pulpit –Strong Hallelujahs roll –Narcotics cannot still the Tooth That nibbles at the soul”.

Emily Dickinson used to investigate and question all certain ideas which from the beginning to the end she rejected. One can observe that the questing is directed less at her own uncertainties than at the gestures she saw and the hallelujahs she heard. She never again came

near to matching the richness of those years, nor did she ever again deal with the philosophical problems that are now considered central in almost all the poems she was writing. “A marked change occurs in the nature and the virtuosity of the poems written after she had made her adjustment to Wadsworth’s removal, and had undertaken, as it were, her preceptorial studies with Higginson. The lyrical, despairing outbursts of the bereaved bride come abruptly to an end. In their place she wrote a whole series of poems that establish her philosophical position on the nature and destiny of man”. (Johnson, 1955)

The last stanza is a final reversal of the first one, its quiet assertion having been gradually replaced by the noise of debate and then by the attempt to drown that out with rolling hallelujahs. But modern man is afflicted by doubts, and there is no drug to relieve his pain. ‘Narcotics’ is the sharpest epithet she ever applied to the sermons and hymns of an orthodoxy she found inadequate. The poem has moved steadily downward from a flat statement of belief to a confession of gnawing doubt that ‘nibbles the soul.’ There is no attempt at a resolution of the debate, and this is the source of its special effect. There is even a suggestion that it has spread to the pulpit, where ‘Much Gesture’ implies too much for a faith that is firmly held, which adds a final irony. Such is the plight of the religious sensibility in an increasingly rational age, but the poet does not take sides. (Anderson, 1960)

Dickinson starts the poem with an affirmative tone saying that this world is not the end, there is something after. Immediately after this affirmative tone, she says humans are puzzled by it and suffer to understand, explain and come up with answers “To guess it, puzzles scholars”, and that all humans attempt to understand by using science and philosophy but it cannot be determined. The tone and the mood are too serious. “Narcotics” is an interesting metaphor for sermons “much gesture” and hymns “strong hallelujahs” – like narcotics, these have a numbing effect on the mind of people, prompting faith.

The last image, the tactile one, calls to mind small creatures, mouse-like “nibble” at the “soul”, understanding faith and calling to question everything that has been handed down by religion over the centuries. The last image is a metaphor for doubt, which assails everyone, making the certainty with which the poem began extremely uncertain. “Dickinson doesn’t end with conclusion at all. She doesn’t say, “I’ve had it; this world is all we get.” That’s telling.

Don't get me wrong, I don't see a ray of hope shining through these last lines, but the ending does still tell us something. She hasn't ended with a period, but a dash. She's left room. Room for what, we don't know, but neither does she. We'll all have to wait and find out.”(O’Neil, 2017). Dickinson says to the reader we are alike; we are puzzled, we are left in the dark, we are uncertain.

Conclusion

The uncertainty concept is considered as one of the famous and important aspects of findings mechanisms. It is regarded as the most distinctive features that differ from classical theories of discoveries. It states that one cannot assign a concrete value for certain phenomena, but rather by uncertainty one can derive unpredicted knowledge. “A conceptualization of uncertainty as a psychological state is developed. Sources of variability in the perception of uncertainty considered are attributes of the environment, individual cognitive processes, the variety of an individual's experience, and social expectations. Suggestions for future research and for interpretation of past research concerning uncertainty are made.”(Downy & Slocum, 2017)

Dickinson was very well educated where she had several years of formal schooling, and she spent one year at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, which was the longest period she ever was away from home. Although she supposedly had several male suitors, Dickinson never married. Throughout her late teens and early 20s, Dickinson suffered the deaths of several friends and family members, an occurrence that would contribute to her seeming attraction with uncertainty, as displayed in her often emotional poetry.

During her early life, Dickinson went to a religious school and continued to be concerned with questions about faith and the meaning of existence. Bible texts, had also a major influence on her literary context, and her poems often employ a meter and diction similar to that found in hymns. “Dickinson's reclusiveness, however, does not mean that she lacked literary influences. She is known to have valued the writings of William Wordsworth and Ralph Waldo Emerson, as well as Charlotte Brontë and William Shakespeare” (Howard, 2019). Dickinson's literary influence was comprehensive, and she is now considered one of the most important poets in the English language.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Dickinson was a huge fan of William Shakespeare's writing. In her correspondences, Dickinson once declared “Why clasp any hand but this?” about Shakespeare. As a result of Emily Dickinson's life of solitude, she was able to focus on her world more sharply than other authors of her time – contemporary authors who did not affect

her writing. Emily was original and innovative in her poetry, most often drawing on the Bible, classical mythology, and Shakespeare for allusions and references.

However, why Emily Dickinson did not publish her poems? In her lifetime, only seven of her poems were published, and she died unknown in 1886. Then, a treasure of 1800 poems was found. Her sister Livinia discovered many poems hidden away inside her room. She showed them to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, one of Emily's good friends, together with Nobell Todd edited them to fit the convention of the poetic ruled of that time, and published them. A complete and mostly unnoted collection of her poetry became available for the first time when scholar Thomas Johnson published the books. Dickinson died before becoming famous; and her legacy was later rescued from her desk—an astonishing body of work, much of which has since appeared in piecemeal editions, sometimes with words altered by editors or publishers according to the fashion of the day. (Franklin, 1999)

“I'm Nobody! Who are you?” Comes as an example of one of Dickinson's more comical poems with a bitter satire to the public figures and the mass who creates public figures. The light tone of the poem, childlike use of words, and the structure of the sentences clearly present her satire way of the public figures whom she described as frogs. Dickinson might be talking about her lack of publication as a poet and thus in the outer world she is a Nobody and she hates being published.” (Roma, 2017).

However, Fifhause, 2018 says that “Dickinson herself essentially confirms this supposition in her poem ‘I dwell in Possibility’, where she proclaims poetry to be the ultimate tool for “gather[ing] Paradise”. Poetry encourages Dickinson to explore the world through all different perspectives without following one narrative. It is this independence of the form that lends its use as a tool for capturing undefinable truths, which is crucial in Dickinson's quest to redefine the world in a way she finds agreeable.

Emily Dickinson's poems can be mysterious and seem like a riddle. Her lines and stanzas are short with a natural style which is almost shady. These qualities give her the most distinctive voices in American poetry. Some of her poems are unfinished, some are unedited drafts, and none of them have titles. So, in all of her poems, the first line was taken as the title of the poem. Also, all of her poems are passionate poems, even though she had a reclusive

life, but she had a strong passion for the world, her mind was so rich in ideas, thoughts, and experiences and they were revealed through over her works.

Her poems were also seem as a reflection of her life experiences. She was initially criticised for her unique style. She invented a truly unique style that did not follow many of the traditional literary rules. She experimented with capitalisations and used many dashes. She even created pauses in the stanzas and used slight rhyme words that have a similar sound and not that identical. Emily Dickinson imposes the theme of uncertainty seeking for the deep thinking and opening doors of knowledge and findings. In her poetry of uncertainty, Dickinson is not challenging the reader but inviting him to pause, think and come to a conclusion of his own.

Regarding her use of punctuations, she was familiar of her use of dashes in most of her writings. In addition, there have been some different theories about what that means. Some argue that the dashes that she uses are representative or a kind of jumping from one idea to something else related and is a quick move to another area. It can also indicate a pause for a moment to think about that what one is reading is linked to what he/she reads. Unlike other punctuation marks, the use of dash does not provide a barrier between sentences or ideas, but it rather connects the ideas and thoughts of the author. It is like a bridge connecting one idea to another.

Though her materials were simple, her treatment of them was innovative, because she was willing to break whatever poetic conventions stood in the way of the intensity of her thought and images. Her conciseness, brevity, and wit are tightly packed in all her poems. Typically, she shows her observations via one or two images that reveal her thought deeply. She once characterised her literary art by writing “My business is circumference”. Her method is to reveal the inadequacy of declarative statements by evoking qualifications and questions with images that complicate firm assertions and affirmations. In one of her poems, she describes her strategies this way: “Tell all the Truth but tell it slant--/ Success in Circuit lies”. This might well stand as a working definition of Dickinson's aesthetics.

Emily Dickinson uses dashes in the majority of her poems. She used it in a new distinctive way, as she did not use it, in the same way, every single time. So, readers do not know what exactly does she mean by using them in each poem, and this is one of the secrets that made her poems very unique and distinctive.

Emily Dickinson's poems were very famous for its unique style and simple words. "Dickinson is well known for her use of dashes in her poetry. Hoffman explains that scholars often attribute Dickinson's preference for the dash to a desire to maintain a level of uncertainty in her poems, as the dash is more indeterminate than other types of punctuation (213-14). Even in her punctuation, Dickinson avoids restraining herself to conclusive statements that could hinder her search for the truth" (Fifhouse, 2018). Dashes are her (trade mark) by which she confirms the theme of uncertainty, and leaves the reader uncertain of what she means.

Dickinson invented a unique style with her poetry that disregarded many common literary traditional rules. She experimented with capitalisation and the special use of dashes. Her work was inspired by the rhythmic devices of religious songs, but she commonly interspersed her own inspired pauses within the stanzas. Despite her inconsiderate approach to grammar rules, Dickinson's poems regarded as unique literary masterpieces

In her poems, she depicts the theme of uncertainty to describe the ability of the thinkers to observe, reason, and drive beyond any assumption of a predetermined capacity of the human being. Emily Dickinson's poems are rich with intensive and varied experiences; motivated by an overconfident passion for the truth. However, looking at the entire body of her poems, Emily Dickinson imposes uncertainty and doubt to assure that every known fact carries a provenance of ambiguity that leads to unknown facts.

Emily Dickinson provides the concept that being uncertain about something opens dimensions of introspections and nourishes minds with unknown findings. "It seems certain that Emily Dickinson approached the writing of poetry inductively-that is, through the combining of words to arrive at whatever conclusion the word pattern seemed to suggest, rather than using words as subordinate instruments in expressing a total conception." (Thackrey, 1954)

Emily Dickinson's poems assure that the best ideas can come from the unknown. One can occupy his/her time with writing poetry like what Emily Dickinson is known for during her life time. Yet, even if one decides a secluded life, society may hunt. Dickinson writes in such a way that she dictates and pushes the reader's mind to think the same and view society in his/her own way. The advantage that can be seen here is that she is leading to self-evaluation and growth in uniqueness as individuals.

Poetry is like a mirror reflection that helps to visualise hidden emotions and to hear unheard thoughts. The mystic words used in an artistic way to allow readers to feel what the

poet is feeling, to listen what the poet is listening and to share what the poet is going through. In the selected three poems, Dickinson shares her thoughts about individual characteristic and personalities; in fact, she cleverly wins the case of an introvert. Though she lived a reclusive life, her poetry showed the opposite throughout the unlimited imagination she depicts and her ability to write meaningful and beautiful poems. She was inspired by nature and deep feelings which she was able to express with her command use of words.

The ambiguity, mystery and doubt throughout the three selected poems, and others, represent the theme of uncertainty which has been depicted clearly in these poems. In her unique style, Dickinson asserts how man can think of the concept of uncertainty in a positive way that grabs thinkers' attentions and motivates readers to discover the known findings. However, these selected poems, "Tell all the truth but tell it slant", "I'm Nobody! Who are you?", and "This World is not Conclusion" are independent of each other in terms of their meanings as well as from literary perspective, but they share Emily Dickinson's view about uncertainty. Her special attention on uncertainty affected her writing style in poetry.

Despite the fact that uncertainty is known as a negative idea where it makes minds restless and hesitant, uncertainty theme revealed as a modern approach that can open doors of unlimited interpretations and findings. However, "she was ultimately unable to answer many of her own questions about both the world and religion. Dickinson's inability to form conclusions on several topics is highlighted by the internal and external contradictions of many of her works as well as her preference for dash punctuation. Additionally, this reading of her works as uncompleted doctrine is supported by her use of hymn structures in her poetry" (Fifhause, 2018)

In Emily Dickinson poems, it is impossible for the reader to stay separated from the poetry. In order to understand her poems, the reader unconsciously becomes an active participant in the poem rather than being a passive recipient. Dickinson creates a circular logic: her poetry touches the reader's feelings because the reader is bound to engage with the poetry, and the reader is compelled to engage with the poetry because he is affected by it.

Dickinson is one of the most mystic poets of the nineteenth century that had great dedication to poetry. What leads Emily Dickinson to focus more on mysterious ideas than obvious and direct ones was her suspicious about every truth surrounding her, thus she tried to depict her own vision in her poems. Through reading Dickinson's poems, readers become able to understand and investigate a variety of ideas about life. In "This World Is not a

Conclusion”, Dickinson suggests that there is another world as a conclusion of this world then she compares it with music and sound which exist but one cannot visualise them.

Dickinson's poetry is challenging one because it is radical and original in its denial of most of the traditional nineteenth-century themes and techniques. She created her own style without intending to do so. She wrote her poems for herself and did not seek any popularity or fame. Dickinson wrote what she felt and what she aimed to investigate. Her poems are rich with mysterious ideas and unanswered questions. She has never targeted her works to find answers of her questions but rather she aimed to reason, think and explore what behind these questions.

Her poems require active involvement of the reader, because she seems to leave out so much with her style and remarkable contracting metaphors. Since her use of dashes is sometimes mystifying, it helps to read her poems aloud to hear how carefully the words are arranged. It is also worth keeping in mind that Dickinson was not always consistent in her views as they change from one poem to another, depending upon how she felt at a given moment. Dickinson was less interested in absolute answers to questions than she was in examining and exploring their circumference.

Choosing not to deal with certainties, Emily Dickinson instead explored what existed between each subject matter; what lay between life and death, religion and atheism, the abstract and concrete. In a period where knowledge and facts were required to be clear, Emily was looking at what could not be classified and investigated. Reading even her early work, it is clear that Dickinson was staging a one thinking revolution.

This study assures that the theme of uncertainty was depicted clearly in the selected poems of Emily Dickinson. Although the theme of uncertainty is very common philosophy in most of her poems, but due to the time limit given to accomplish this study, three poems were selected which are: Tell all the truth but tell it slant”, “I’m Nobody! Who are you”, and “This World is not Conclusion”. Each of the above poems presents the theme of uncertainty in different aspects and meanings as they were discussed in this study.

Emily Dickinson’s poems are rich with intensive and varied experiences; motivated by an overconfident passion for the truth. Her poems were unique to its era. They are mostly short lines, typically lack titles and often use slant rhyme as well as unconventional capitalisations and punctuation. She did not give titles for her poems because she refused to limit the meaning of the poems. She is rebel in a way that she aims to freely think, observe, reason and search.

She wrote her poems with a deep passion. She had no need or desire to publish for fame, instead she wrote for her own self. Some scholars argue that the reason for this was a mixture of her own unwillingness to revise them in a manner which would make them more ready publishable, and the distinctive nature of the poems making them undesirable to common tastes at that time. She was shy in nature and lived in solitude where she considered poetry as a means of escape from the world. Perhaps, her poems can best tell the reason behind hiding her talent, she stakes that fame is not desirable.

Dickinson makes no effort to organize her thoughts and feelings into a coherent, unified worldview or any traditional standards of writing poetry. Rather, her poems simply record thoughts and feelings experienced naturally over the course of a life devoted to reflection and creativity. Her works intrigue some critics who often disagree about them. Her clean, clear, fashioned poems are some of the most fascinating and challenging in American literature.

Of course, Dickinson's greatest achievement as a poet of inwardness is her brilliant and unique style. Dickinson often writes spontaneously, meaning that she compresses a great deal of meaning into a very small number of words. This makes her poems mysterious, but when their meaning unveil themselves, they often explode in the mind all at once, and the lines that seemed as a secret can become intensely and unforgettably controversial. Emily Dickinson's poems exhibit her astonishing powers of observation and description. Dickinson's imagination lead her into very odd style.

Looking at the entire body of her poems, Emily Dickinson imposes an atmosphere of ambiguity, mystery, uncertainty and doubt to assure that every known fact carries a provenance of ambiguity that leads to unknown facts. Humans are able to effectively handle uncertainties in the environment to predict future events and make appropriate decisions. Emily Dickinson provides the concept that being uncertain about something opens doors of introspections and nourishes minds with possible unknown findings.

In her poetry, Emily Dickinson is expressing her inner feelings and the struggle she is going through with her faith and society. She registered the difference of what she sees and what she believes, and this difference drives her to express her true feelings of all her surrounding regardless any language standards or rules. Her short, almost mystical verses (on

such themes as faith, death, immortality) seem like obscure riddles reflecting a painful inner struggle.

In the three selected poems “Tell all the truth but tell it slant”, “I’m Nobody! Who are you?”, and “This World is not Conclusion” she depicts the theme of uncertainty on three different levels: on the level of personal identity, ethics and on the world we live in. The scope of the theme of uncertainty in the three poems, range from our behavior, to ourselves and our world respectively. In these poems, Dickinson concluded that we are uncertain how we conduct ourselves, we are uncertain of who we are, and we are uncertain about the world we live in.

Glossary

- 1- Calvinism: the Protestant theological system of John Calvin and his successors, which develops Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone into an emphasis on the grace of God and centres on the doctrine of predestination
- 2- Calvinist: an adherent of the Protestant theological system of John Calvin and his successors. "she was a strict Calvinist"
- 3- Didactic: intended to teach, particularly in having moral instruction as an ulterior motive. "a didactic novel that set out to expose social injustice"
- 4- Orthodoxy principles" the quality of conforming to orthodox theories, doctrines, or practices. "writings of unimpeachable orthodoxy"
- 5- Skepticism: a sceptical attitude; doubt as to the truth of something. "these claims were treated with scepticism"
- 6- Transcendentalists: are strong believers in the power of the individual. It is primarily concerned with personal freedom
- 7- Juxtaposition: the fact of two things being seen or placed close together with contrasting effect. "the juxtaposition of these two images"

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قدمت هذه الرسالة استكمالاً لمتطلبات الاجازة العاليه (الماجستير) في الادب الانجليزي

اعداد: يسرا ابراهيم بن لامين
مشرف: د. محمد التونسي

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