UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL
INSTITUTO DE LETRAS
PROGRAMA DE PÓS–GRADUAÇÃO EM LETRAS
CURSO DE DOUTORADO EM LETRAS
ÁREA: ESTUDOS DE LITERATURA
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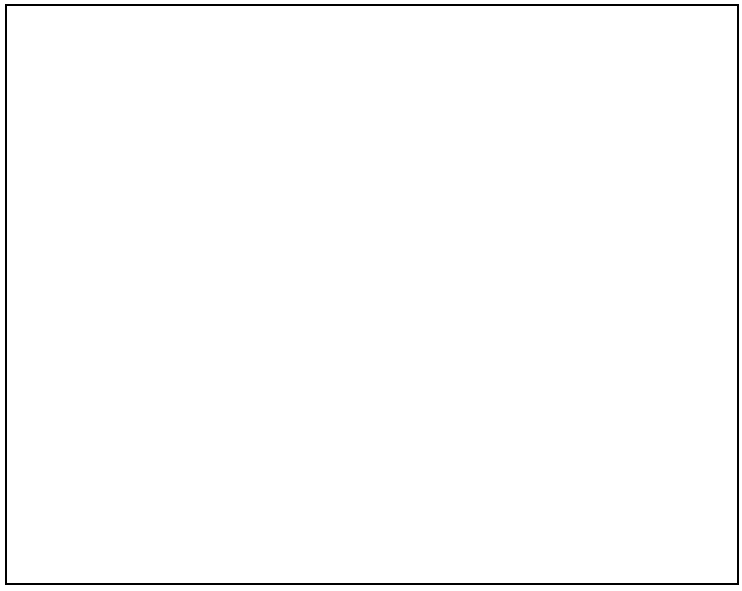
EMILY DICKINSON IN HER PRIVATE BUBBLE: POEMS, LETTERS AND THE CONDITION OF PRESENCE



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EMILY DICKINSON IN HER PRIVATE BUBBLE: POEMS, LETTERS AND THE CONDITION OF PRESENCE

Tese apresentada ao Programa de Pós–Graduação em Letras da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul para a obtenção do titulo de Doutor em Literatura de Língua Inglesa

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The Spider as an Artist
Has never been employed –
Though his surpassing Merit
Is freely certified

By every Broom and Bridget
Throughout a Christian Land –
Neglected Son of Genius
I take thee by the Hand –

(Emily Dickinson, 1873)

“Are you too deeply occupied to say if my verse is alive?”

(Letter of Emily Dickinson to T. W. Higginson, April 16, 1862)

“Imagine someone so shy you never see her, someone who guards her privacy so fiercely that some people believe she does not exist. Imagine someone who becomes more mysterious the more you know about her. Imagine Emily Dickinson.”

(Andrey Borus, 2005, page 7)

ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to show that Emily Dickinson was not concerned with the publication of her poems and she herself decided to withdraw from the outside world, a decisive event which contributed to the original production of her almost eighteen hundred poems and over eleven hundred letters. Emily Dickinson withdrew into her untouched private world – which here is called “the bubble” – and developed the contemplation process based on the approach of apprehending perceptions which resulted in the instant captions that have enchanted readers. Since her withdrawal was as a result of her own free choice and own writing and living conventions, she was able to be the craftsperson that enjoyed living and writing. Her perception of nature by taking instant captions of the observable natural objects is perfected by the process of contemplation developed in some of her poems. The theoretical and methodological basis of the study comes from the analysis of the complete edition of poems edited by Thomas H. Johnson, the letters edited by Mabel Loomis Todd, and the concept of Nature by Hans Georg Schenk. For the analyses of different issues related to Dickinson’s verses, withdrawal, and apprehension of perceptions, the works of the biographer Richard Benson Sewall and critics such as Albert Gelpi, Barton Levi Armand, Karl Keller, Sharon Cameron, among others, were consulted. This study aims to demonstrate that Emily Dickinson was not concerned with publication and her withdrawal within her bubble was a positive event for her life and poetry. Such conclusion might contribute to enlighten the knowledge about the life and work of such an amazing personage of American Literature and American society as Emily Dickinson has been so far.

Key–words: Emily Dickinson, withdrawal, aprehension of perception, contemplation process, the perception of nature.

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INTRODUCTION

My interest in Emily Dickinson's poetry has been encouraged since I first made contact with several of her poems almost twenty-five years ago. After reading her poems regularly and working with some of them in class, the necessity to know more about the poet has increased considerably. Beginning my doctoral studies in 2004, I had the opportunity to enjoy such a pleasant exercise of getting involved with the almost eighteen hundred poems, over eleven hundred letters, and the very interesting features of her life, especially concerning her withdrawal.

The way Emily Dickinson conducted her life; kept the large amount of poems mostly for herself; and persisted in the purpose of writing letters are relevant in attempting a better understanding the poems she wrote. The present study aims to show that Emily Dickinson was not concerned with the publication of her poems and she herself decided to withdraw from the outside world. Such decisions contributed to ensuring the maintenance of a private untouched world, according to her convention. Consequently, she established her own perception of awareness and developed an outstanding condition of presence even up to present times. Taking advantage of such condition, Dickinson was able to develop the contemplation process based on the approach of apprehending the world by writing intimate letters as well as interesting poems which offer instant and unexpected captions of the natural elements she was in contact with.

In order to achieve the aim of this thesis, the full edition of Emily Dickinson's poems published by Thomas H. Johnson in 1961, the edition of Emily Dickinson's letters published by Mabel Loomis Todd, in the Dover edition of 2003, and the

concept of Nature by Hans Georg Schenk are taken into consideration. For the analyses of different issues related to Dickinson's verses, withdrawal, and apprehension of perceptions, the works of the biographer Richard Benson Sewall and critics such as Albert Gelpi, Barton Levi Armand, Karl Keller, Sharon Cameron, among others, were consulted.

The first chapter introduces Emily Dickinson's verses, which include both letters and poems. Emily Dickinson acquired a particular habit of writing letters and poems while effectively exempting from public regulation and interference. In spite of many studies providing details about Dickinson's life and poetry, there are not many studies attempting to develop a hypothesis about why Dickinson did not publish her poems during her lifetime.

Sharon Cameron (1992) was someone who developed an approach to respond to this question. Cameron's first suggestion is that Dickinson could not publish because of conventions of printing which reflected the traditions of established poetry and violated the features of Dickinson's few poems printed during her lifetime; therefore her poetry could not be printed because of its uniqueness. Her second suggestion is that Dickinson chose not to print because her distinctive way of writing poetry required a private space in which conventions would not be contested; consequently, that allowed Dickinson to develop her own formal creativity and inventiveness. The third suggestion is that Dickinson could not choose how to publish her poems because she could not decide whether to publish her poems in sequences, or as lyrics, or she could not publish them in both formats together.

The present study, similar to Cameron's second suggestion, focuses on the perspective that Dickinson exempted herself from having her work printed not just because her distinctive way of writing poetry required a private space but also because her distinctive way of living required it too. Dickinson tried to illustrate the exclusiveness of her emotion as well as its unique choice of object or its rejections. Being aware of the necessity to control emotions and inner feelings, Dickinson might also have been in doubts about publishing and might also have raised the same questionings within her private world. Emily Dickinson rarely met visitors; instead she preferred to listen to conversations from the upper floor and be the craftsperson at work, writing poems, sending and answering letters.

Emily Dickinson's free will of living intensively within her private world is focused on the second chapter; which also introduces the indicative idea that Dickinson's withdrawal was a positive event in her life. Dickinson's refusal to publish her poems was essential for the maintenance of her untouched world even though it kept her away from the nineteenth–century audience. Dickinson succeeded in maintaining the place and the environment she chose for her written production and for herself in such a way that she totally prevented them from receiving any interference. Cameron (1992) emphasizes that Dickinson would not have room to raise her questionings in a public space; so she took for granted that avoiding publication was the best option for her as well as keeping her world untouched would provide her ecstasy of living.

Dickinson lived in the world of possibilities that gave her profound satisfaction in the process of thinking and in the value of solitude. She did not quite fit within the comfortable definition of female behavior: she never married and eschewed the role of wife and mother remaining a sister; instead she preferred the shadowy times of late afternoon and early mornings, and refused to pin down her writing to tidy endings which delight in ambiguity. As Sharon Cameron has shown, "Dickinson chose not to choose." We might conclude that Dickinson herself was not keen on audience during her whole life. Allen Tate (1932) reinforces that Dickinson never had the slightest interest in the public since "She never felt the temptation to round off a poem for public exhibition." The offer of T. W. Higginson to correct Dickinson's poetry might have been an invitation to throw her work into the public circle, yet she rejected it.

Conceiving that the ideal world of Dickinson's imagination was livelier than any outer world, both her inner world and her outer world faced each other in such a way that, she did not fully renounce the outer world by avoiding taking part in social events. She had an isolated womanhood during her years of creativity however; from her private world she stood as the spokeswoman for the whole generation of nineteenth–century women. She kept her poetry for herself, did not publish it and sewed the poems into fascicles which were tied up with strings that she made herself. Therefore, she could be the publisher of her poems because she organized them the way she wanted, selected the words the way she wished, and did not allow outside interference.

Emily Dickinson's deliberate way of writing poetry and letters required a private space in which her perception and apprehension of nature could be conceived without interference and contestation. The rules that she established for herself and for her poetry contributed to the maintenance of her private world, which this study names: "the bubble".[1] By deciding to continue her seclusion from the outside world, Dickinson began to set the limits of her bubble, allowing in just what was really important to her. This strategy contributed to the development of her method of preventing interference from the outside world and the production of over seventeen hundred poems.

Chapter three shows that Dickinson took care of her private bubble; based on the fact that she established her own conventions and selected the relevant objects in order to apprehend the perception of what involved her. The restricted voice and consciousness of social standards of her time did not impede her from living freely according to what was important to her. Allen Tate (1932) assumes that Dickinson "did not reason about the world she saw; she merely saw it." The built up world that she focused her immediate perception on was connected to the fascination with an unknown world. As such world exists for her, it supports her as well as it supports her eccentricities. The bubble then is something created and developed for her unique benefit and utility besides being the background for what she – as a poet – has to say. From the bubble, she has at her disposal the lenses through which she can bring nature to focus and control the caption she wants to apprehend. From that position Dickinson can concentrate her personal feelings, anxieties, and visions.

As this study suggests living within her bubble was a positive event in her life, avoiding contact with people, Dickinson intensified her strategy of writing short notes or letters instead of talking personally to friends and family besides protecting herself from being with people. This strategy might seem to be like hiding herself away so that she would not be noticed. Nevertheless, Dickinson kept herself aside, talked to her future audience through letters and poems, called people's attention through the awareness of perceptions, and developed an exceptional condition of presence which established her in a different situation not commonly found in other poets.

[1] I adopted this term, which will be used from now on, independently for the present study. However, after reading George F. Whicher's book This Was a Poet, 1938, I realized that he had already used it in his book though in a different perspective.

David J. M. Higgins (1961) also affirms that “the letters of Emily Dickinson show a great deal of ‘stage presence’”. For Higgins, even though there may be disadvantages in the exposure to society and friends through the restriction of mail, there are many rewards too. Dickinson preferred to introduce herself to the world only by deliberate art, avoiding meeting friends, making theatrical entrances, whilst she dressed in white and carried flowers. Even though her letters may be deliberate creations – from the greeting to the final signature – they may carry a degree of exposure and communication connection.

The contemplation process focused in chapter four reflects Dickinson’s approach of attentively reflecting on the contingent of her intention of perception. In preserving the place in which she herself decided to live and which she deserved to keep untouched, Dickinson developed and displayed a condition of presence which enabled her to choose the elements she thought were meaningful to her. Moreover, she chose the friends she decided to keep, the place where she decided to live and how she would carry on the task of maintaining that place. If she had done the opposite, she might not have stood out showing such powerful condition of presence nor would she have developed the approach of attentively reflecting on the mysteries that intrigued her.

The woman in white, the Muse of Amherst, or the one who kept herself busy writing letters and verses to some audiences, building up her own image and delighting readers by her poetry, performance and personality is Emily Dickinson. Living within her bubble and perceiving experiences from the place in which she chose to be and live, she tried to reflect on and capture from the elements that she selected to be part of her world. “Words were living creatures for her.” (Benfey, 2001) Making all the efforts to capture the feelings that the poet sees and hears, she describes it precisely in such a way that her statements are due to the directness with which the abstract framework of her thought acts upon its unorganized content. Directness, shortness, and density are part of her style that emerged from a deep exploration of thoughts and a deep contemplation of the world around her; everything caught from her private bubble.

Chapter five introduces Dickinson’s connection to nature – especially being nature characterized as a complete unstableness and mystery – and the way it

fascinated her. The concept of nature by Hans Georg Schenk contributes to relate natural objects to the instant captions proposed here. The instant captions that Dickinson captures from what she observes represent the immediateness and originality of her perception of nature. Those images are associated with Dickinson's understanding of the vision she has of the natural world; it is an essential element for the development of her poems. Evidence suggests that essential to the vision of nature in Dickinson's writing are the awareness of the concept of nature and the elements she selected to be part of her apprenticeship. Analyzing her poetry closely, it may be accomplished that among her substantial preoccupations are the searching for meanings in her inner world, her condition of apprenticeship with regards to nature in order to develop a perceptual process of creation, and the combination of a style marked by economy of expression and a startling imagery view.

Those who know little about Emily Dickinson's life are tempted to think of her as someone who was shut out to love, fame, living a narrow village life, without other people, and to whom the world and everything else passed by. However, the withdrawal into her father's house or even into her own room in The Homestead was turned into a significant condition of presence. Being limited to her confined place and having little personal contact did not lead to an unnoticeable condition facing the community, but evoked instead a condition of presence characterized by outstanding performance. The majority of people in Amherst – Dickinson's native town – knew about the small plain girl in white who lived in The Homestead and whom few people had had the privilege to meet face to face.

Studying Dickinson's poems and letters enables the establishment of connections between her vision of nature and the vision that resulted from the contemplation process. Such connection performed by a particular craftsperson, produces outcomes of interesting samples of poems to be studied and appreciated by poetry lovers. At last, Emily Dickinson was a nineteenth–century poet, whose life was led by activating thoughts, perceiving sensations, and capturing instant captions from nature which she kept for herself in her bubble during her life time and for a future audience.

1. EMILY DICKINSON'S VERSES

Assembling Emily Dickinson's poetry and letters may provide a better glimpse of the consolidation of her life with regards her withdrawal into her private craftsperson bubble; the apprehension of perceptions when developing the contemplation process; and her intimacy with Nature and natural objects when amazed and busily capturing the great Mother's mystery through remarkable instant captions and views.

As the accomplishment of writing poems and letters is supported by daily events, flourishing ideas, and approaching feelings, the written topics that result from that action are easily fitted on the paper or in a paper box. Dickinson's inclination to bear such attitude towards writing may have begun without presenting any pattern, nevertheless presenting an early specific style and regular tendency. Such attitude seems to have become a daily task for Dickinson.

Emily Dickinson became engaged in the task of writing poems and letters at an early age. Throughout the course of her childhood, her correspondence recorded "the development of her imagination and her growing sense of poetic mission" (Gelpi, 1965). Gelpi also suggests that in 1842 – when Dickinson was twelve years old – she was already used to sending letters to her brother Austin, the eldest of her family. Austin Dickinson, was just eighteen months her senior, and at that time lived with his parents and sisters in a wooden house on North Pleasant Street and was a close companion during the first twenty–five to thirty years of their lives. Anderson (1966) states that Austin shared with Dickinson an interest in books and ideas that included

art and literature, which might also have motivated them to maintain their habitual written correspondence.

Some of the letters that Dickinson wrote to Austin mentioned imaginative fearfully dangerous situations and described scenes with huge hens and charming harmless grass snakes. Those childhood fantasies indicated Dickinson's tendency to create fancies and may have been the starting point of her years of apprenticeship in developing her technique of writing verses. Austin Dickinson's marriage to Susan Gilbert did not interfere in the siblings' regular habit of writing letters to each other. Even though Edward Dickinson, Emily Dickinson's father, built a home for the new couple on the grounds of the Homestead as a wedding gift so that they lived only a lawn away, Emily rarely visited her brother's new home, but they maintained a lifelong written correspondence.

Susan's and Emily's relationship sounded meaningful for Emily not just by the fact that she was enchanted by Susan's enthusiasm for reading, but Emily made "Sister Sue"[2] a confidant of her poetic life which resulted on Emily Dickinson sending her many poems. Their written communication, both poetry and prose, provided Emily with an encouraging audience. However, with the passage of time, differences arose between them and the intensity of the friendship declined. The reasons for this decline are not a part of the discussion in this present study.

Charles R. Anderson (1966) states that since the earliest years Dickinson supported the association of ideas in a natural and unique manner producing surprise with great novelty and brilliance. At the age of fourteen, in one letter to an absent classmate, she explained that she had not written sooner and excused herself by writing: "I hate to be common."[3] Gelpi (1965) also reminds that in 1852, when Dickinson was twenty–two years old, she sent a letter to her brother Austin with the imaginary scene where "shy little birds would say chirrup, chirrup in the tall cherry trees". Dickinson also included a poem which was the first serious poem to be sent with a letter.

[2] That's the way Emily Dickinson named her sister–in–law in her letters.
[3] Dickinson's earlier letters to classmates and school friends do not mention the name they were addressed to, except the first letter of the name.

Dickinson continued her pattern of writing poetry and prose so much that when she was almost reaching her thirties, in 1858, she was sure of her insight and developed her technique of writing verses and preserving them in bound packets as well as writing letters to close friends and relatives. Her lifelong correspondence provided her with a sustaining close pen pal friendship. In 1862 and 1863, Dickinson composed more than five hundred poems. By then the design of her art was set, the confidence of writing letters was consolidated and therefore she just followed up her task of increasing the production of poems and writing down her “message” – or those things that she did not want to say personally – in letters.

1.1 Poetry

The way that Emily Dickinson refers to poetry and the large quantity of pure poems she wrote is a testimony to her sense of poetic vocation. If a definition to poetry must be introduced here, it seems relevant to present how Emily Dickinson defined it to T. W. Higginson during their first interview at her house in 1870:

> If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry. These are the only ways I know it. Is there any other way? (Todd, 2003, p. 265).

Her definition to poetry is related to feelings, emotions and reaching a large range of possibilities. Poetry may enable the reader to be touched by each of the senses such as hearing, touching, smelling, tasting and seeing. Even conforming to Allen Tate’s assertion about Dickinson’s lack of interest for printing, Richard Wilbur (1960) suggested that Dickinson was an individual who felt superior and her faith in words was so strong that her poetry was an eccentric mastery of life. Being that kind of person, the exposure of her private thoughts and visions to the real world was not important. From her first poems and letters to later ones, her strategy became a routine and it consolidated her private world since the missing all prevented her from missing minor things:

> The Missing All – prevented Me
> From missing minor Things.
> If nothing larger than a World’s
> Departure from a Hinge –

Or Sun's extinction, be observed –
´Twas not so large that I
Could lift my Forehead from my work
For Curiosity. (P 985)

Dickinson's ability to ascend when facing minor losses comes from the regular facility of absence of more important things. If Sharon Leiter's words are to be consider in the sense that "Not having is a positive good, a source of inner freedom", the poem above presents considerable evidence that the only way Dickinson can sustain her desire to live and her desire to perfect her real world and to vitalize her imagination is to welcome the absence of outside world contact which is for her a symbolic desire for a social life. The cycles of deprivation that she describes in the poem are attempts to consolidate her self–maintenance. Vivian R. Pollak (1990) states that writing poems and letters was an effort to keep Dickinson alive since through it she expressed a diversity of feelings and experiences.

Garrison Keillor also attempts to find a proper definition to poetry and in the introduction of his book *Good poems for hard times* he asserts that "Poetry is free speech" since it is on the side of fabulous visions, close to the perfection of small birds, and related to the democracy of chitterling language. Poetry is made of glory which is available to those with no fortune, but with somewhere to walk to and ears to hear, and a mind to transport them. "So are the poets, the angels and shepherds of the sleeping world" (Keillor, 2005). Emily was aware of possessing these three elements; she had her garden, flowers and greenery to walk through; she had the birds and other little animals to listen to; and she had a powerful mind to develop every glimpse that her attentive ears and eyes processed so well.

1.1.1 Publication of poems during her lifetime

Dickinson published her poems in manuscript rather than in print. By 1858 she had adopted the practice of collecting her poems into booklets which she sewed together with string. The small number of poems published in Dickinson's lifetime had their essential features altered because they violated the tradition of established poetry. After the publication of her poems in the *Springfield Daily Republican,*

Dickinson expressed her complaints about the changes publishers had made. Those changes were especially related to punctuation and grammar. Therefore, she collected her poems privately and kept them for the world which she never saw but to which she sent her message.

Aiken (1924) and Tate (1932) – who were among the first scholars who took Emily Dickinson seriously as a poet – asserts that seven poems were published during her life time. Before them, Thomas Johnson had emphasized that eleven of Emily Dickinson's poems were published prior to her death in 1886.[4] For the present study we are taking into consideration the seven poems referred to by Aiken, Tate, and Sewall.

The first poem was published during her early twenties, five poems were published during her thirties, and the last poem was published during her late forties. Samuel Bowles, who was the editor of the *Springfield Republican Newspaper,* published her first five poems. Some critics, including Albert J. Gelpi (1965) and Karl Keller (1980), state that Emily Dickinson's relationship with Samuel Bowles seemed to be very intense, for Dickinson was a poet who wished Mr. Bowles to accept her for the whole person she was; however, he kept her at a distance. Keller (1980) stresses that Dickinson sent Samuel Bowles as many as thirty seven poems, including some of her best.

It seems unreasonable that Samuel Bowles published the five poems without Emily Dickinson's approval since these poems were not the ones Dickinson had sent him. T. W. Higginson might have learned from the beginning that Dickinson was not concerned with publishing them but Samuel Bowles might not. The first poem Bowles published had been sent him by William Howland – Emily Dickinson's friend –, it is not known how Mr. Bowles got the second poem, and the other three poems had been sent to Mr. Bowles by Susan H. Dickinson – Emily's sister–in–law. Since the poems that were published were not the ones Dickinson had herself sent to Samuel Bowles, it is suggested that Dickinson was indeed not concerned about publishing her poems.

[4] The number of poems published during her life time remains controversial, with scholars divided over whether they were seven, eleven, or a different number.

Concerning the dates when the poems were printed, Richard Sewall (1963) stresses that Samuel Bowles printed the first poem, “Sic transit Gloria mundi”, on 20 February 1852, when Dickinson was twenty–two years old and lived on Pleasant Street. The second poem, “I taste a liquor never brewed”, was printed nine years later, on 4 May 1861 – by that time Dickinson was thirty years old and had moved back to the Homestead. The third poem, “Safe in their Alabaster Chambers”, was published the following year, on 1 March 1862, one month before Dickinson had sent her first letter to T. W. Higginson, she was then thirty–two years old. The fourth poem, “Blazing in Gold and quenching in Purple,” was published two years later, on 30 March 1864. By then, Dickinson, had reached the age of thirty–four, and had maintained a correspondence to T. W. Higginson. Finally, Samuel Bowles published the fifth poem, “A narrow Fellow in the Grass,” on 14 February 1866, for Valentine’s Day; by then Dickinson was thirty–six years old, more than half her life span, considering that she lived to the age of fifty–six.

It is interesting to notice that the last three poems that Samuel Bowles published came out within an interval of exactly two years each and were written when Dickinson was in her thirties. It might indicate that the publication of Dickinson’s poetry – if it were to happen – would not follow an immediate and irregular pattern. The shy venture of Emily Dickinson towards an audience, her refusal to follow conventional forces of the day, and her decision not to publish all occurred during the begining of her correspondence with Higginson. The following sharp lines show the measure of her worldly reputation.

Fame is a bee.

    It has a song –

It has a sting –

    Ah, too, it has a wing. (P 1763)

Using this metaphor about fame, she compares it to a bee which might be good and might also be bad since it is a stinging insect. Later in another poem Dickinson expands her metaphor about fame comparing it to deceitful food that when it is given to a man it immediately causes death.

Fame is a fickle food
Upon a shifting plate
Whose table once a
Guest but not
The second time is set.
Whose crumbs the crows inspect
And with ironic caw
Flap past it to the
Farmer's Corn –
Men eat of it and die. (P 1659)

Fame was not appealing to Emily Dickinson and events contribute to the free and pure development of her strategy. Emily Dickinson's business was writing poems and letters and she kept on understanding her task despite the fact that there was no evidence of possible publication. Different to the publication of the first four poems that were published in The Springfield Newspaper, the following poems that were published appeared from a different source. Henry Sweetser, who was Emily Dickinson's cousin by marriage and a New York publisher, published her poem "Some keep the Sabbath going to Church," in the *Round Table* newspaper on 12 March 1864. For the following fourteen years, from 1864 to 1878, it seems that things had settled down and the poems of Dickinson were quietly kept in drawers and tied packs at The Homestead.

Emily Dickinson's way of life and her wish to write were not conditioned by predecessors or to people who would inspire her on the production of poetry. Even though T. W. Higginson had inquired of Dickinson if she had read Walt Whitman, she answered that "I never read his book, but was told that it was disgraceful".[5] Even if it is not mentioned that she had read some of the great poets, it seems apparent that she might have had a slight contact with some of them by reading or by listening to commentaries – even if the latter were from an adjacent room – made by regular visitors who came to her father's house.

[5] Letter to T. W. Higginson of 26 April 1862.

Helen Hunt Jackson, on the other hand, was one of Dickinson's most appreciative literary friends. It is confirmed by Keller (1980) who affirms that "Emily Dickinson no doubt saw herself and Helen Jackson as equals: the same age, both from Amherst, both unmarried when they met, both aspiring writers, both appreciated by important critics like Higginson and Holland, both women." Dickinson's and Helen Jackson's friendship seemed to be stronger on Dickinson's part despite Jackson being critical of Dickinson's appearance, life–style, and her verses. Regarding Dickinson's verses, Helen Jackson asked Dickinson to write with simplicity and directness.

In fact, Dickinson wrote for Helen H. Jackson a couple of poems she had requested, but Dickinson ignored the appeal for simpler and more direct lines. Helen Jackson invited Emily Dickinson to contribute to the newspaper *Masque of Poets*. So, in 1878, the poem "Success is counted sweetest," was published in Boston. Keller (1980) also states that Jackson clearly envied Dickinson's abilities, this seems to apply to before Dickinson's death, because in 1885, Jackson asked to be the inheritor of Dickinson's poems; Dickinson obviously ignored the request. All in all, Dickinson had friends who wanted her to publish her poems, but she declined to do so. In Pollak's terms (2004), "In fact, she declined piecemeal publication of her poems as well as commercial publication, in general. She seems to have turned her back on everything we might associate with a literary career in the nineteenth century, except her love of reading and writing. That kept her going."

This study conforms to Pollak's point of view as well as to what Wheeler (2002) says about Dickinson's poetry publication, that is, "by not publishing, at least in any traditional way, Dickinson gains space for experimentation" and it enlarges the ability of her poems to mean authorized versions. Even for the poems that were published there is some controversy – some critics list seven as being the total amount of poems published during her life time, other critics list up to twelve. At last, the seven or the twelve poems published during her life time were not representative for Emily Dickinson's wish for publication since she was just looking for appraisers of her original and intensive approach of writing verses. As her attempts failed, she quited seeking for people to appraise her poetry, and so Dickinson kept to her task of developing her own approach to writing poems and letters. Unwilling to publish her

poetry; Dickinson kept her poems unique and, followed her own conventions, which led her to write some of the most startling and original poetry in the English language.

1.2 Letters

From before the nineteeth-century, the habit of writing letters was a traditional activity which was costumarily used by many sectors of society and people. These written or printed communication were directed to people or organization especially when, in the nineteenth-century, society did not have the facility of telephones nor of computers. However, a letter was not just a written communication form for Dickinson; it meant much more than that. Urging to get a literal meaning of the word "letter" from a well known dicitionary, The American Heritage Dictionary was consulted and it presents the definition of "letter" as being a "written or printed communication." Emily Dickinson was very certain of herself when she felt the necessity to give her definition to "letter". Just before she died, in 1885, Dickinson wrote:

> A Letter is a joy of Earth –
> It is denied the Gods – (P 1639)

In referring to Emily Dickinson's letters, they might be important giving biographical information that portrays the writer's artistic and psychic development since they reveal details and passages of her personal life. Mabel Loomis Todd - who approached the task of arranging Dickinson's letter for the Dover edition – reminds that Dickinson's letters suggest "a refreshing atmosphere of homely simplicity." (Todd, 2003) Village life, even in a college town such as Amherst, was very democratic in the early days and handwriting letter gave a particular fascination for the readers; such delight may be destroyed by the conventional and coldness of print. Jane Eberwein informs that "Since Dickinson did not keep a diary, the letters were the only prose available to her readers; their publication offered a rare insight into her private world, thus providing a much needed context for her poems." (Eberwein, 1998)

Dickinson preaches that the attributes of a letter may involve warmth, grace, and fondness, but in order to benefit something or someone they are maintained

Warm in her Hand these accents lie
While faithful and afar
The Grace so awkward for her sake
Its fond subjection wear – (P 1313)

Letters are usually to be sent, to be mailed to somebody; but that was not what happened to most of Emily's letters. Some of them, when she had finished, she gathered up the loose sheets, "stacked them neatly in a box, put the box in the drawer of her writing table, and shut the drawer firmly." (Spires, 2001) Real life seemed infinite and deeply serious for Dickinson so that minor trivialities had no part in her constitution. The letters offered such joy and color that she gradually gave up all journeys and completely withdrew from even the simple life of a college town but maintained the almost daily task of writing letters to keep the thoughtfulness of her correspondents.

1.2.1 Emily Dickinson's Letters

Although Emily Dickinson seldom saw her friends and relatives, she thought of them affectionately and frequently wrote to them, a fact which is attested by her letters. Thanks to the dedicated scholars who compiled her letters after her death – and Mabel Loomis Todd is one of them - today lovers of Emily Dickinson have at their disposal a couple of editions of those letters which mold the fabulous nineteenth–century American poet she was.

As Edward Dickinson, Emily's father, used to pass in front of the post office, he also used to collect the mail, open it, and read it to whomever it was to. Such occurences confirm that Emily would not have any privacy so there is the evidence that Emily wrote many letters but seldom got some. The evidence that Emily wrote letters but did not receive letters may be confirmed in one of her letters to Mrs. Holland.

Friday

DEAR FRIENDS, – I write you. I receive no letter.

I say "they dignify my trust." I do not disbelieve.

I go again. *Cardinals* wouldn't do it. Cockneys wouldn't do it,

but I can't stop to strut, in a world where bells toll. I…….[6]

From the introduction of the letter above it is apparent the indictment of an appeal to the friend who had not writtern when Emily had expected to hear from her. The possibility of her father Edward collecting the letters from the post office and not giving them to Emily is an unknown fact and probably unproven in reliable literature. The procedure of sending Emily Dickinson's letters was not performed by mail services because she selected some close relative or friend to hand out and return her correspondence. Elizabeth Holland was one of them – she was a close friend of Dickinson's and had performed this task for almost thirty years.

DEAR FRIENDS, – I thought I would write again.

I write you many letters with pens which are not seen.

Do you receive them?[7]

In the book "An Emily Dickinson encyclopedia", Jane Eberwein lists three editions of letters of Emily Dickinson. The edition by Mabel Loomis Todd - the close childhood friend of Dickinson's - was known as the first edition of Dickinson's letters, a collection published in 1894 by Roberts Brothers; eight years after Dickinson's death. It was reprinted again in 1951 by the World Publishing Company and again in 2003 by Dover edition. The second edition was published in 1931 by Harper and Brothers, and was also edited by Mabel Loomis Todd. The third, a three–volume collection was edited by Thomas H. Johnson and Theodora Ward in 1958 and published by Harvard University Press.

So large is the number of letters that Dickinson wrote to each of several correspondents, that here the concentration will mostly be on the letters that Dickinson wrote to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the poetry editor for *The Atlantic Monthly*, a magazine of Amherst, her hometown. Those letters are published in Mabel Loomis Todd's edition of 1894, and reprinted by Dover Publications in 2003.

When Thomas Wentworth Higginson - a politically radical and well known man of letters - published the essay "A letter for a young contributor" in *The Atlantic Monthly*[8] *,* he mainly recommended writers to develop a simpler and more fluent style

[6] Letter to Mrs. Holland from a Friday of an unknown year, but probably about 1861.
[7] Letter to Mrs. Holland, Late Autumn Sabbath Afternoon, 1853.
[8] The offering of advice on writing and publication dated of April 1862.

even saying that writers should make verses to be alive. That advice might have incited Dickinson to ask him if her verses were alive too. Consequently, Emily Dickinson's first letter to Thomas Wentworth Higginson was in April 1862, when she had already reached her thirties. Asking for literary advice, Dickinson started her letter

> April 16, 1862
>
> MR.HIGGINSON, - "Are you too deeply occupied to say
> if my verse is alive?
> The mind is so near itself it cannot see distinctly, and I
> have none to ask.
> Should you think it breathed, and had you the leisure to
> tell me, I should feel quick gratitude.
> ……[9]

Enclosed with that letter there were four of her now widely known poems for Mr. Higginson's criticism. The 1955 publication by Thomas H. Johnson, of T*he Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* brings together the original texts of the 1775 poems she wrote and states that those four poems were 'Safe in their Alabaster Chambers' (216), 'I'll tell you how the Sun rose' (318), 'The nearest Dream recedes – unrealized' (319), and 'We play at Paste' (320)". Those poems were supposedly written in different years (1859, 1860, 1861, and 1862, respectively).

Thomas W. Higginson replied to Dickinson's letters, but his replies cannot be found intact just some short extracts which present few commentaries on her poetry and on her. Johnson (1961) also agrees that as the letters that T. W. Higginson wrote back to Dickinson did not survive, the letters Dickinson wrote back to him may imply such information. On his reply to her first letter he might have told her that her poem was "imperfectly rhymed and its metric beat spasmodic" (Johnson, 1961). Mr. Higginson had difficulties in classifying Dickinson's poems. Furthermore, her poems did not convince him that she wrote poetry. "Her verses were not strong enough to be published" (Johnson, 1961) was the opinion that Thomas W. Higginson once gave to one of his friends.

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[9] Letter of 16 April 1862.

By the time Dickinson wrote to Higginson in 1862, she had made her choice and only wanted to have it confirmed. She received a certain confirmation that her verses were alive and breathed; therefore she kept going. Dickinson wrote her second letter to T. W. Higginson on the 26th of the same month, ten days after the first one. There is ample evidence that she did not feel disappointed about his comments and advice because she tenderly expressed her gratitude to him by writing "thank you for the surgery; it was not so painful as I supposed."[10]

That seems evident that she was no longer a beginner; she was an artist whose original talent was fully developed. She knew that her job was in plain and constant development since she continued the letter, writing that "I bring you others; as you ask, though they might not differ"[11] and enclosed three other poems, which, according to Johnson (1961), were "'South Winds jostle them' (86), 'Of all the Sounds dispatched abroad' (321), and 'There came a Day at Summer's full' (322)." Once more, these three poems were supposedly written in different years (1859, 1860, and 1861, respectively).

Besides asking for advice, Dickinson wrote to Higginson declaring that two editors of newspapers[12] had asked her if they could publish some of her poems. In the same letter, Dickinson uses the expression "they asked me for my Mind".[13] As Dickinson knew they "would use it for the world"[14], she did not accept the offer because her exposure to the outside world was something she did not want. The time between the second letter and the third letter – which was more than thirty days – suggests that she accepted her fate of developing her own course.

On her third letter to T. W. Higginson, she wrote "I thanked you for your justice, but could not drop the bells whose jingling cooled my tramp."[15] Anderson (1966) emphasizes that her phrase reveals that "her peculiar music was a deliberate device, rather than the failure of a bad ear, and that she was determined to continue

[10] Letter to T. W. Higginson of 26 April 1862.
[11] Ibid.
[12] According to Keller (1980) the editors were Mr. Holland and Mr. Bowles.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Letter to T. W. Higginson of 08 June 1862.

her pioneering with verbal “Bells”,”[16] In some ways it is related to the auction of the mind which she named Publication.

Publication – is the Auction
Of the Mind of Man –
Poverty – be justifying
For so foul a thing

Possibly – but We – would rather
From Our Garret go
White – Unto the White Creator –
Than invest – Our Snow –

Thought belong to Him who gave it –
Then – to Him Who bear
Its Corporeal illustration - Sell
The Royal Air –

In the Parcel – Be the Merchant
Of the Heavenly Grace –
But reduce no Human Spirit –
To Disgrace of Price - (P 709)

With regards to the poem above, Sharon Leiter (2007) states that “By applying the language of economic transaction to poetry and publication, she evokes the debased state to which spiritual activity is reduced when it comes entangled with materiality and thus subject to a world whose value are not its own.” By the time Dickinson wrote the poem, which, according to Johnson (1961), was in 1863, Dickinson was aware of the corruptive condition of being exposed to the external world at the same time as she was indeed confident of the benefits of her decision for

[16] The quotations are from Charles Anderson.

privacy and the intensity of her world. The maintenance of her "private world"[17] depended on keeping her productions to herself even though her poems were not written to herself; they were written to a close and growing audience from which she did not get feedback.

> This is my letter to the World
>
> That never wrote to Me –
>
> The simple News that Nature told –
>
> With tender Majesty
>
> Her Message is committed
>
> To Hands I cannot see –
>
> For love of Her – Sweet – countrymen –
>
> Judge tenderly – of Me (P 441)

Emily Dickinson may not have expected the world to write to her, or sent her any simple news, or address any tender comments. She might not have expected Mr. Higginson or anyone else to write back offering some feedback or judging her verses and thoughts. She was the one who wrote "You think my gait "spasmodic." I am in danger, sir. You think me "uncontrolled." I have no tribunal".[18] According to Anderson (1966), the awareness of Dickinson's power was mostly hers; the following letter can confirm this.

> DEAR FRIEND, - Are these more orderly? I thank you for the truth.
>
> I had no monarch in my life, and cannot rule myself;
>
> and when I try to organize, my little force explodes and leaves me bare and charred.
>
> I think you called me "wayward." Will you help me improve?[19]

That extract reveals Dickinson's self–criticism and self-control which she had learned mostly on her own. If we consider that T. W. Higginson first visited Dickinson in 1870 and the second visit was three years later, in 1873, we may conclude that – during the time in between their encounter - Dickinson wrote to him only twice. She wrote a letter soon after his first visit, in August 1870, and the second letter was

[17] The quotations are mine.
[18] Letter to T. W. Higginson of 08 June 1862.
[19] Letter to T. W. Higginson which is not dated but Anderson - and I do so - suggest it is probably after July 1862.

written one year later, in the winter of 1871. Thus the correspondence between them was interrupted from 1872 to 1873. His second and final visit to Dickinson was in December of 1873 – three years after the first one – even though there is not much information about what took place during their last encounter.

After almost three years of abstention from writing to Mr. Higginson, Dickinson wrote to him again in July 1874, after her father's death. However, Mr. Higginson might have written to her before, because Dickinson wrote at the end of her letter: "your beautiful hymn, was it not prophetic? It has assisted that pause of space which I call 'father'."[20] From 1874 to 1886, two years before she died, Dickinson kept her correspondence with him to at least once a year since - Mabel Loomis Todd gathered thirty-one letters to T. W. Higginson in the Dover edition; however, Dickinson's strategy of avoiding any influence was really carried out.

This study suggests that Dickinson avoided influence even though she maintained her correspondence with T. W. Higginson. In her second letter to Mr. Higginson, she wrote that he had inquired about the books and the authors she had read. She said "For poets I have Keats, and Mr. and Mrs. Browning."[21] That statement indeed does not indicate that she avoided influence from predecessor poets; nevertheless, she avoided influence from the outside world which could be more threatening to her than any of her predecessor. She wanted to be different from "people"[22] since she thought intensely and deeply about different topics. For Dickinson, people did not reflect about the world around them; and T. W. Higginson himself called Dickinson's very depraved of over-statement:

> "How do most people live without any thoughts? There are many people in the world, - you must have noticed them in the street, - How do they live? How do they get strength to put on their clothes in the morning?" (Todd, 2003, p. 265)[23].

Dickinson was obsessed with creative forces and her belief in what she was striving for: her private world. Consequently, within another year, she doubled the number of three hundred poems that she had composed. That event may suggest

[20] Letter to T. W. Higginson of July 1874.
[21] Letter to T. H. Higginson of 26 April 1862.
[22] The quotations are mine.
[23] According to Todd, this was one of "the very wantonness of over-statement" Emily Dickinson said to T. W. Higginson in their first meeting in her house, on 17 August 1870.

that she felt fulfilled just by the fact of enclosing some verses within letters to friends and relatives from time to time.

Those poems that Dickinson enclosed with letters might be thought to have been sent as a result of influence from male literary predecessors. However, the perception of influence on Emily Dickinson applies more to nineteenth–century women poets as they seek independence from their powerful male precursors who became composite male figures. Margaret Homans (1985), for example, emphasizes that Emily Dickinson derives her unique power from her particular way of understanding her ability to overcome difficulties concerning identity and literary influence of predecessors.

> Power is a familiar growth –
> Not foreign – not to be –
> Beside us like a bland Abyss
> In every company –
> Escape it – there is but a chance –
> When consciousness and clay
> Lean forward for a final glance –
> Disprove that and you may – (P 1238)

As for creation, Dickinson made little or no use of standard patterns, but she made good use of her imagination. She activates her power of consciousness, her distrust for nature which comes from the conscious absence of innocence. As her first concern is the vocation of the poet, the poet is above the physical world and the action of writing letters and verses is placed in the same plane as God. Homans explains, “Divinity is only as powerful as the mind of its imaginer” (Homans, 1985). Therefore, writing the letters kept Dickinson’s communication with people from the world, despite the fact that she had rarely been meeting them face to face.

Saying what she wanted to say by writing letters was more important to Dickinson. So, she used to send letters to welcome someone who had just arrived in the town; to apologize for not being present when invitated; or to thank visitors for visiting her family even if they had not seen each other personally. In fact, Emily Dickinson was the most famous letter writer of the little town Amherst and it seems evident that Dickinson knew that and the community people did too.

1.3 Visitors

The lady, whom the people called the Myth of Amherst, had rarely been seen outside her house. No one who might have called upon her house had had the chance of seeing her, except some little children once in a great while when she handed down candies from the second floor window. Despite dressing wholly in white, possessing a perfectly wonderful mind, and writing fine poetry and prose, Emily Dickinson rarely gave people the chance to meet her or to exchange any words.

The Dickinson house on Main Street – described by Anderson (1966) as "a small–scale brick mansion, situated in spacious grounds on the edge of Amherst" – was the setting where Emily Dickinson acted out almost her whole life. Besides having a spacious ground, in the garden there were trees, bushes, plants, and Dickinson might be touched by what she might have seen, smelt, and heard from that vantage outings which provided her inspiration for poetry. [24]

PICTURE 01 – The Homestead, Amherst– picture taken by the author on May 07th, 2008

[24] The pictures of The Homestead and the garden presented here were taken with my camera on my visit to The Homestead, Amherst, in May, 2008.

Since Dickinson's father – the prominent lawyer of Amherst – had a very active life in the local and country community, the house was a center of village hospitality. The Homestead was recognized as one of the finest houses in Amherst and was privileged to be located on The Main Street and near the town center. Ministers, visiting lecturers at the College, judges, professors, political figures and business promoters of the region were always welcome and the circle was extended as time went on.

As Dickinson gradually passed into the status of spinsterhood, the most important friendships of her career were developed with people who were older than her. Those close relations enriched the years of her seclusion by keeping her in touch with the world she had rejected. That world was supported by contact with them through letters, poems, speeches and conversations heard from the next door room or the second floor.

T. W. Higginson himself might have wanted to meet Dickinson personally because after four years of written correspondence, he expressed a wish to see her. Such longing may be implied from the letter Dickinson wrote back to him

> You noticed my dwelling alone. To an emigrant, country is idle except it be his own. You speak kindly of seeing me; could it please your convenience to come so far as Amherst, I should be very glad, but I do not cross my father's ground to any house or town. Of our greatest acts we are ignorant. You were not aware that you saved my life. To thank you in person has been then one of my few requests….You will excuse each that I say, because no one taught me[25] (Todd, 2003, p. 263).

Such an appointment, however, only happened two years later, in August of 1870. His remarks about their first encounter make reference to his panic of presence when they finally met face to face. Blackmur (1956) reminds that just after Mr. Higginson first met Emily Dickinson – the date is not known – Higginson wrote back to his wife expressing his feelings about Dickinson: "I never was with anyone who drained my nerve power so much. Without touching her, she drew from me. I am glad not to live near her." Mr. Higginson was intimidated by Emily Dickinson's power and how she might threaten his doctrine of form and his literary position. After all, he was a literary pattern model expert, who dictated the rules and guidelines of how a good poem should be written.

[25] Letter to T. W. Higginson. The year is 1868; the month and date are not known.

Dickinson's decision to keep her poems away from public eyes and keep herself away from public exposure seems to show her capacity to remain in complete control of her immediate personal experience. For Blackmur (1956), there was no world of refuge and also no world of exposure; there, however, was centered the condition of presence; Dickinson was looking for the best focus which did not demand target because the target for her was to have power – and she had enough to this for her purpose. She was aware that if she were able to keep the outside world at a distance and avoid exposure to this world, she would have the power to write her poetry. That condition represented freedom for her.

In the same month that Mr. Higginson had first visited Dickinson, she wrote back to him stating, "You ask great questions accidentally. To answer them would be events. I trust that you are safe."[26] It seems evident that the possibility of exposure or presence of friends or other human contact would have given her the sensation of interference into what she established to be part of her life. She might feel safe for both, but it is especially safe for her because she would keep the image and limits she had created for herself.

It was Dickinson's free will to remain in seclusion from the outside world. Such seclusion is illustrated by her refusal to come downstairs to meet people, her "flurried flights from the room or from the garden at the approach of outsiders; her listening to music from the next room" (Gelpi, 1965). In the biographical study by Jay Leyda the gradual course of Dickinsons's withdrawal from appointments is not minutely traced. Leyda (1960) stresses that Dickinson's appointments to meet people happened "at the foot of the back stairs by moonlight alone".[27] Leyda's most elusive questioning in her study is why Dickinson withdrew from the outside world. She even suggests that Dickinson was tired of the world. This study does not conform to that suggestion because Dickinson was aware of the outside world – despite not being very active about it – because she needed to assure her private world inside her bubble in which she was happy.

Gelpi (1965), on the other hand, states that Dickinson's life in retirement was made possible because of those – family members, friends, neighbors, and visitors –

[26] Letter to T. W. Higginson of August 1870.
[27] Leyda, Jay. *Years and Hours of Emily Dickinson*. Yale University Press, 1960.

who supported her personality and her eccentricities. Dickinson continued to read magazines, books, newspapers despite the fact that she, as well as her sister Lavinia, had a lot of daily housework to do in the house. Besides being lucky to come from a wealthy family, Emily and Lavinia had parents who encouraged the children to have an education, which was unusual for that time, and Emily and Lavinia did not have to marry and have children nor become a schoolteacher.

Most of Emily's conversations happened "from behind a door that stood ajar to screen her" (Gelpi, 1965). A communication model based on oral with real face-to-face talking may seem to be the best way to communicate since it demands the presence of the individuals who are taking part in the dialogue. In addition, face-to-face chatting happens at a specific time, at a specific place and it is unique because it does not have an identical second copy. Letters and poems, on the other hand, may be intentional creations – even though there may have been several drafts and versions before reaching the ideal finished form – which show an outstanding condition of presence.

Although Dickinson did not meet visitors at The Homestead, the way she conducted her life, established her own communication pattern to keep in touch with people, and the way she wrote poetry and letters resulted in a regular condition of presence which may be definitely accepted by the visitors and readers when they became involved with her by reading her poems and letters. Readers may have felt the presence of the writer who was deliberately the owner of the voice which addressed the audience. "We visit the Dickinson Homestead not for architecture" says Benfey (2001), "but for art" because within its walls and spaces lived Emily Dickinson, one of the greatest and most original poets.

To answer the door and welcome visitors became impratical and a task Dickinson avoided, and with the passage of time it became normally undertaken by other members of the house. Consequently, she rarely ventured beyond the Homestead boundaries, even to visit her brother and his family next door so proclaimed her own pronouncements on torn corners of envelopes or on the back of grocery lists. Even though those torn pieces of paper might have not represented something worthy for critics of the nineteenth century, Dickinson originally kept them

for herself in case of a future need. That circumstance also helped her to maintain her ecstasy on living and writing, specially, inside her bubble.

1.4 Craftsperson at work

During her childhood and youth, Emily Dickinson enjoyed the usual experience of friendship and exchanged mutual devotion with relatives and friends. As she matured maturity she had some attachments with young men but none of them ripened into love. As she gradually withdrew more and more from a gregarious life, friendships of her career began to develop with older people than her. Her struggle with the problem of church membership took place between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five.

The nineteeth-century Congregational Community within which Emily Dickinson received, or at least was supposed to receive, her Christian formation, attempted to include meanings appropriate to Christian traditions, but she was barely acquainted with these. Eberwein (1987) emphasizes that Emily Dickinson "dispensed with the concern for sin and fear of damnation that were emphasized within her church and that especially dominated its appeals to the young." When Emily Dickinson was at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, the pressures of evangelism resulted in a revival which swept all the seventeen girls attending. According to Anderson (1966), Emily Dickinson drew back from commitment, almost alone amongst the students, and she maintained her resistence to this throughout the following years that the revivalism continued.

At the age of twenty-four year she made her final decision not to side with the orthodox establishment and continued to attend church services periodically until the age of about thirty, but Emily Dickinson never became a member. In fact, she did not trust the values of evangelical conversion and found her true church in the creation of poetry, which, for her, was a constant spirit of discovery and renewal. The terms of such evangelical conversion preached the salvation of people and demanded them to go to church and read the Bible. Emily Dickinson did read the Bible, but she was not keen to go to church. The pursuit of spiritual truths led her to develop a religious reclusion. Instead she preferred to work in the garden, where contrary to what other

people thought, she was not alone, but had the company of the “Chorister” and even a “Dome”.

Some keep the Sabbath going to Church –
I keep it, staying at Home –
With a Bobolink for a Chorister –
And an Orchard, for a Dome –

Some keep the Sabbath in Surplice –
I just wear my Wings –
And instead of tolling the Bell, for church,
Our little Sexton – sings.

God preaches, a noted Clergyman –
And the sermon is never long,
So instead of getting to Heaven, at last –
I’m going, all along. (P 324)

For Charles R. Anderson (1966) Emily Dickinson was profoundly religious since “it was the esthetic rather than the moralistic aspects of religion that concerned her, the discipline of art replacing the rituals and doctrines of a church.” She took the idea of the home as her private heaven and went even one step further in allowing her home to take the place of church and even heaven itself. In the poem above, Dickinson refuses to leave her home to attend church and provides natural substitutions for the religious setting inside a church. In the same way Wendy Martin (2007) stresses that in her modest bedroom, “Dickinson embraced the home as her occupation, base, and inspiration, staying exclusively within The Homested and celebrating the domestic in her writing.”

Even within the house, she preferred the more private rooms, writing in her bedroom, working in the kitchen alongside her sister Lavinia and the family servant Margaret Maher, tending the flowers in the conservatory and garden, but rarely entering the parlor which was the room where Dickinson’s family welcomed visitors. The poem above shows “the thirty–one year old Emily, who had resisted strong social pressures to convert formally to Christianity throughout her girlhood, in a mood of self–confident, good natured mockery.” (Leiter, 2007) By the time Dickinson was thirty, she had stopped accompanying her family to services at the church. For a

"Chorister" she has the Bobolink, and she wears the uplifting "Wings" of her spirit instead of the white ritual gown. The garden is her earthly heaven, the simple natural world around her.

As Dickinson spent most of her time in The Homestead on Main Street, it was the place in which Emily saw the world passing by. The main road passed in front of her house and her bedroom was in the west front of it. In the nineteen century every different carriage that arrived in the community was known by Emily. She watched every important person or important event in the community at a distance. Being very selective for people and selective for the place where she wanted to go, she decided to write to people in order to say what she wanted to say and work in her garden or in her room as she mentions in her letter written to her sister, Lavinia Dickinson, while Emily was receiving treatment for her eyes in Boston.

> DEAR VINNIE, – Many write that they do not write because that they have too much to say, I that I have enough. Do you remember the whippoorwill that sang one night on the orchard fence, and then drove to the south, and we never heard of him afterward?
> He will go home, and I shall go home, perhaps in the same train. It is a very sober thing to keep my summer in strange towns – what, I have not told, but I have found friends in the wilderness. You know Elijah did, and to see the "raves" mending my stockings would break a heart long[28] (Todd, 2003, p. 125).

Wearing the wings of imagination and writing pure verses and concise deep letters, Emily spent most of her time in her room writing letters and poetry verses. With the time passing, it seems evident that the more people from Amherst knew that she preferred to be at home, the more they respected her decision. By respecting her decision, they also contributed to building up the outstanding condition of presence in The Homestead, in the community of her time, and in the contemporary readers' heart.

[28] Letter to Emily's sister, Lavinia Dickinson, of 1864.

2. WITHDRAWAL

The over seventeen hundred poems and over eleven hundred letters Dickinson wrote are worthy sources of data to infer that she lived a reclusive life, wrote the amazing verses which were not recognizable as precious pieces of poetry during her lifetime and for a period of fifty years after her death, and that her withdrawal was as a result of her own happy free personal will. This present study concurs with Margaret Homans' point of view (1979) that Emily Dickinson was a woman who definitely enjoyed living and writing poetry.

By writing letters throughout her life they contributed to her maintaining a connection with the outside world. Additionally, these connections offer biographic details about the poet's life besides showing that the way she lived was associated to the poetry she wrote. Scholars from the nineteenth–century thought that Dickinson's seclusion and her way of conceiving the world were very eccentric and refer to them as a negative characteristic of her life and poetry.

Free will of living intensely played an important role in Dickinson's decision to withdraw from society, so that she was able to apprehend the world around her, and to establish the ideal place for her to be in. Suzanne Juhasz (1996) emphasizes that Dickinson withdrew into her mind and that her seclusion was something real and substantial for her, in order to determine the way she had decided to live. In order to define the place where Dickinson lived, Juhasz points out two different perspectives: the traditional critical point of view, which she departs from, and the feminist one, which she moves toward. From the traditional critics' view, the way Dickinson moved into her mind was considered a mere withdrawal.

It might seem convincing that David Porter (1985), for example, considers the way Dickinson assessed her mind. He states that the distinctive qualities of Dickinson's creative mind might be responsible for the main difficulties readers have in understanding her poetry. The separation from the outside world affects language and ones personal reality, but Porter fails to recognize the connections between the actions that sustained Dickinson's life and the poetry she wrote. Juhasz (1996) also points to Richard Sewall as another example of a critic who does not analyze Dickinson's poetry dispite describing Dickinson's portrait sensitively, regarding her distinctive features and technique.

From the feminist critics' views, the way that Dickinson moved into her mind was not considered a withdrawal or a retreat, but a strategy. That strategy did not demand defending, or a regular refusal to face the principles of her times. Juhasz remarks on the concern with gender because it

> informs the nature of art, the nature of biography, and the relation between them. Dickinson is a woman poet, and this fact is seen as integral to her identity…"Strategy"[29] means that Dickinson chose to keep to her house, to her room, to live in her mind rather than in the external world, in order to achieve certain goals and to circumvent or overcome certain forces in her environment and experience that were in opposition to those goals (Juhasz, 1996).

Suzanne Juhasz stresses that Dickinson needs to develop her strategy of living as well as of writing in order to reach her goal of writing original poetry. This study reinforces the view that Dickinson chose to live her normal life, withdrew from the external world and lived her most significant life in her bubble which she developed for herself. Living inside her bubble contributed to fortify the power Dickinson had to write poems and letters. Being able to write poems free from outside interference allowed her to be the great poet that she became.

Hans Georg Schenk (1979) recalls that Henry David Thoreau's retirement from the world lasted for a temporary two years and was not a remote and completely isolated seclusion. Many visitors dropped by his small cabin though he was rarely disturbed; and that he could "indulge in the closest communion with Nature and the Universe." Thoreau detained the typical Romantic postulate that each man should follow the guidance of his own emotional impulses. Emily Dickinson, in her white

[29] The quotations are from Juhasz.

dress, seemed “to be everywhere and nowhere at once, fluttering through the house like a ghost, stirring a batch of gingerbread in the kitchen, or walking in the garden, lost in reverie” (Spires, 2001).

Wanting to be unburdened by the pressures of everyday life and wishing to value solitude, Thoreau needed to write or think about something. Emily Dickinson, however, “withdrew from society more than Thoreau did” (Herstek, 2003) and for a substantially longer period and on regular standards of behavior. The world is the place from which she escapes in order to preserve her hopeful style “and the place she wishes to reenter in order to satisfy her thirst for experience” (Pollak, 1984).

Dickinson was a great poet even though critics from the nineteenth– century did not recognize her as one. Cynthia Griffin Wolff (1993)[30] criticizes the way most scholars have interpreted Dickinson’s poetry as an unmediated reflection of her state of mind. Wolff refers to the poet who has written the text and to the speaker in poems as something essential in order to have a better understanding of the real Dickinsonian tonality. Wolff also emphasizes that although Dickinson’s verses are saturated with the first person singular, she herself insisted upon that distinction: “When I state myself, as the representative of the verse, it does not mean me, but a supposed person.”[31] T. W. Higginson, however, did not separate Emily Dickinson – the individual woman; and Emily Dickinson – the author. That dilemma also seems to have confronted most of Dickinson’s readers up to present times.

Most critics, as well as people who do not know much about Emily Dickinson’s life, are tempted to think of her as someone who was blocked out to life, in which little happened and little was demanded from her. As early as the beginning of the twentieth century, Emily Dickinson’s work of art was considered unconventional and not at all substantial by her contemporaries. Later, Dickinson’s poetry has become less unusual and more contemporary. Her poetry remained expressive of her vision of reality and a serious attempt to engage with its meaning. Due to her unconditional reclusion, critics also tend to overlook objective contexts of her work. A lyric poet like Emily Dickinson does not express philosophic generalizations but she measures detailed moments which may be called present moments inundated by floods of

[30] *The Emily Dickinson Journal*, Vol. II, No. 2, 1993.
[31] Letter to T. W. Higginson of July 1862.

eternity:

> How much the present moment means
> To those who've nothing more –
> The Fop – the Carp – the Atheist –
> Stake an entire store
> Upon a Moment's shallow Rim
> While their commuted Feet
> The Torrents of Eternity
> Do all but inundate – (P 1380)

The overwhelming flow of sad happenings during Dickinson's life contributed to her re–evaluation of feelings about the moments that meant a lot to her in a world of a broad range of successive events. Present moments were relevant for Emily Dickinson in the sense of encouraging her, who was a craftsperson for an unpretentious time. In addition, critics should not resign themselves to an aimless chronological reading of almost 1800 lyrics and more than a thousand letters in order to perceive, in the successive moments of recurrences, relations and patterns without reducing the poet's mind to abstraction. Dickinson knew that somehow she had to manage somehow her daily moments and to bear the fulfillment of her desire to live and write, which were the process and the condition of her authentic life despite being different from the standards and conventions of the nineteenth–century.

John Crowe Ransom (1956) refers to Emily Dickinson's time as "the furious energy" which produced the most bustling torrent of verses in that century. By placing Dickinson in her own time, Ransom recognizes that she was considered a spinster, but not a typical spinster. Being the spinster refers to a female who has remained single beyond the conventional age of marrying and may indicate a tendency to get involved in community affairs, church entities or house choirs, or simply participating actively in the local community.

Dickinson, on the contrary, followed her own pattern set for herself. She pursued a reclusive life, refused to enter into the real world, kept to her room, and frequently absented herself from the community, and even from household and kitchen affairs. Nevertheless, Emily Dickinson was actively engaged in writing, revising, and sometimes perfecting those intense lines which gave her great pleasure and happiness for her. Moreover, Ramsom suggests that Emily Dickinson was sure

that she was the lucky one in being able to do so.

Dickinson preserved the connection with relatives and friends, but relations were conducted by correspondence and in a deliberating sensibility and informal style, she was one of the best performers of the century. When she made her decision to be a poet, she sent some poems to a man of letters, T. W. Higginson, who kindly recommended to her not to seek their publication. Ransom (1956) suggests that she made little effort to find another counselor. If it is to be true that the soul must learn how to manage life when having little of the world, and how to master the most of it, by concentrating and focusing on the specific things, Dickinson's performance, in her writings as well as during her reclusion, was deliberated by a kind of art on most of the social occasions. She conducted herself beautifully and wrote notes and letters in a style remarkably similar to her poems, and, for some critics; her reclusion might reflect a retreat from life.

Archibald MacLeish (1963) refuses to recognize that Dickinson’s withdrawal into her father’s house and into her own room was a retreat from life. MacLeish calls it an adventure into life, a life of herself, which even being threatening and intense was also authentic. From her established space she was able, even meaningfully, to quietly live, write, and master the stimulus and tension of her attainments which were loaded by ecstasy and happiness in an extraordinary manner.

Such is the Force of Happiness –
The Least – can lift a Ton
Assisted by its stimulus –

Who Misery – sustain –
No Sinew can afford –
The Cargo of Themselves –
Too infinite for Consciousness
Slow capabilities. (P 787)

Such ecstasy on living and writing sustained and enabled her to commit herself to her private world. The tone of her poems is measurably relevant to the sustainability of her voice and her bubble, so poems are loaded by life and happiness which, consequently, is bearable to any reader. After T. W. Higginson’s visit, Dickinson wrote him a letter which started

"Winter, 1871

To live is so startling, it leaves but little room for other occupations,

though friends are, if possible, an event more fair.

I am happy you have the travel you so long desire, and chastened

that my master met neither accident nor Death.

……..

Menagerie to me

My neighbor be.

Your Scholar" [32]

According to Albert Gelpi (1965), Emily Dickinson's father, the eminent Edward Dickinson, feared that the social behavior of young people would bear watching upon his family as well as friends and callers would be intruders upon their private sanctuary. Obviously, Emily Dickinson's circle was considered closed, with regards to an outside social life as well as within the family, and her father's gaze was extremely firm. Edward Dickinson's private life was a singular dedication to the construction of a shelter around him for those he loved to the same extend that in 1838 he wrote to his wife, "Home is the place for me – & the place of all others to which I am most attached."[33]

For Emily, home was also the fundament of the family to which all members were attached. Writing a letter to Austin in 1851, Emily stated "Home is a holy thing, – nothing of doubt or distrust can enter its blessed portals."[34] Home became for all an irresistibly magnetic center and later in a letter again, "Father takes care of the doors, and mother of the windows, and Vinnie and I are secure against all outward attacks". These facts seem to show that Emily's relationship with each of her restricted and closed interlocutors followed the pattern of an inflexibility which followed established rules while she remained vigilantly reserved in manner and social relations.

Charles Anderson (1966) stresses that besides withdrawing herself from the village; Dickinson secluded her poetic self from the outside community, even from her family. Her correspondence was an instrument for defining isolation and for creating

[32] Letter to T. W. Higginson , Winter, 1871.
[33] Letter of Edward Dickinson to his wife, Emily Dickinson's mother, when he was away.
[34] Letter to William Austin Dickinson, Autumn, 1851.

poetry. Persisting to continue in her private way, she became far more eagerly aware of the benefits of her withdrawal than her contemporaries of the modern artist's alienation from society. In addition, from her vantage point of withdrawal she was able to see more clearly the world around her and the meaning of her powerful verses than those who were involved in the conventions of the day. Dickinson observed and informed to regular people how they should deal with life in the same way she taught them how they should read her letters:

> The Way I read a Letter's – this –
> 'Tis first – I lock the Door –
> And push it with my fingers – next –
> For transport it be sure –
>
> And then I go the furthest off
> To counteract a knock –
> Then draw my little Letter forth
> And slowly pick the lock –
>
> Then – glancing narrow, at the Wall –
> And narrow at the floor
> For firm Conviction of a Mouse
> Not exorcised before –
>
> Peruse how infinite I am
> To no one that You – know –
> And sigh for lack of Heaven – but not
> The Heaven God bestow – (P 636)

Instead of participating in the daily happenings of the little town of Amherst, Emily Dickinson staged a private celebration in her world since her bubble was deliberately the lonely and secluded place which was indispensable for a poet dedicated to the inner world as she was. The world of personal business of writing provided her serious poetry with a source of metaphor; she discovered that no institution would understand and hold her; so she opened out the supposed world of possibilities and explored her ways to exercise and supplement her voice.

Most available biographical data concerning Dickinson's withdrawal confirms that there was a deliberate isolation in her private world, and, at the same time, there

were moments of complete joy and amazing creation. However, these elements are not sufficient to better understand the reason her poetry was so original and startling. Although critics have seen her as an isolate figure, it seems unjust to limit the interpretation of her poems and letters to just explaining the relation of them with her isolated condition in an unconstructive context.

What remains of a poet may be the fabulous and amazing poetry which may describe the person who created it. However, there is a lack of biography explaining the poetic achievement of a poet since there will always be something additional to which there is no explanation. In the case of Emily Dickinson, poetry, which was her deliberate free choice and her own way of living, seems to derive from the same desire which resulted in her personal and poetic achievement.

This feature is pertinent because writing poems and maintaining her correspondence seem to be substantial to endure the way she constructed her life, that is, it represents an inversion of the regular pattern of analyses which departs from biography details to the work of the process of art itself. The fact that Dickinson carried out her daily life within the limits of her backyard, her house, or even her room, illustrates her free choice of living and writing verses. Therefore, she herself seems to have worked hard on the development of her own myth which collaborates with the narrowness and multiplicity of her persona.

Trying to engage in the venture of reevaluating Dickinson's relation to the kind of poetry she wrote faces obvious difficulties, for Dickinson characteristically employs strong strategies that show how that simultaneously disclose poetic relationship too deep to be acknowledged openly. The reflexive form of her poems represents an invitation to restrict the analyses of patterns of reference to the poems and letters.

The attempt to get a better understanding of what bears the dilemma which departs from the reflection process; consequently asks the question of how would it be possible to approach Emily Dickinson and her poetry? It sounds inadequate to think of her as the creator of the poetic text even if these amazing lines of poetry are simply considered as this. The poetic I and the persona are problematic by the fact that the poet, more than nobody else, embodied the myth of her character that was nicely protected by her bubble; her withdrawal played an important role in this task.

Dickinson estimates the importance of her searcher, the persona by whom she justifies her own way of living.

Finding is the first Act
The second, loss,
Third, Expedition for
The “Golden Fleece”

Fourth, no Discovery –
Fifty, no Crew –
Finally, no Golden Fleece–
Jason – sham –too. (P 870)

The redefinition of principles resembles beauty which consists of a satisfactory union of experience and the progress of the reader’s knowledge. Dickinson’s working time is based on revitalizing an imbalance between her aspiration and the faculty of experience. Her idea of beauty includes questioning and dealing with the circumference as assumptions that match with her expectations of what is poetry and her aspiration for life.

On the other hand, through her letters and poems, analyses would allow the occurrences of better understandings of the secret vectors that guided Dickinson’s poetic and personal life. In spite of her obsessive attraction for what lays beyond the visible world, Dickinson was not the one who renounced that world altogether. As an active working poet, she is concerned with the variations and possibilities she can develop in order to understand the process of contemplation. Although Dickinson withdrew from the external world, particular objects are selected from it to embody the confrontation of her knowledge and the realities of it.

It seems unreasonable to strongly criticize Dickinson’s poetry by defending a specific hypothetical assumption, as for example the danger of developing a psychoanalytical interpretation of her decision to stay inward. By attributing figures to the facts or undetermined features, there would consequently follow the renunciation of the esthetic moment which allows the poet, to some extend, to enjoy the esthetic experience of withdrawal. The causes of Dickinson’s isolation do not explain the way

her withdrawal is clearly evident to the understanding of her poetry.

Therefore, the approach to developing a critique to deal with her poems would be more of suggesting the re–introduction of them, without revealing their causes, which, pretentiously would be the understanding driving force. The density of the creative aesthetic moment tends to dissolve itself when its causes are compared and measured. This study does not intend to present any unintelligibly anti–critical interpretation, but to reinforce the conclusion that poetry results from a pathological fruition, whereas in the case of Emily Dickinson, especially, fruition does not result from a forced or punitive confinement but represents the condition of producing poems which resulted in ecstasy on living.

> Which is the best – the Moon or the Crescent?
> Neither – said the Moon –
> That is best which is not – Achieve it –
> You efface the Sheen.
>
> Not of detention is Fruition –
> Shudder to attain.
> Transport's decomposition follows –
> He is Prism born. (P 1315)

The verses above reveal that she knew the importance of achieving the total dimension of meaning in her poetry in order to avoid effacing "the Sheen". Therefore, she had to pursue originality and develop pure meanings. Consequently; her goals in the bubble were something desired, planned, constantly searched for, developed, and achieved.

2.1 The value of solitude

Life in retirement seems to be possible to Emily Dickinson because of those who supported her in the needs of her personality and somehow the fancy of her deviations appear to be similar to those expected of a genius. The singularity of her behavior: her odd appearance, her white dress; her frequent refusal to come down the stairs to meet relatives, friends, or other occasional visitor; her offer of freshly baked sweets in baskets which were lowered down out of the window – were used

for her own needs. Her peculiarities of manner might be attributed to a deliberately conceived performed role which Gelpi (1965) believed “came so naturally to her”.

Being reclusive becomes alternately a store from which she selects her inner feelings to invest in the process of writing. “A deceptive silence, the apparent quiet of the volcano before it erupts, concides with the poet’s awareness of the absence of activity others see in her daily existence.” (Diehl, 1981) The energy of her life must be submerged into a covering silence from which she can get the foremost assertion of the self to satisfy her stillness. By the conventional measures of her life, Smith (2008) says that Dickinson has “passed from neighbor to Amherst neighbor, and Dickinson was surely aware that she existed as a legendary character within the town.”

Being a woman with a strong character; Emily Dickinson was one who was unconventional in manners and habits; in all she did she was the one who surprised the community by staying inwards. In the course of her unconventional pursuit she came across the real world of nature and her understanding of it as something to be revealed in the same way as her understanding of loneliness.

There is another Loneliness
That many die without –
Nor want of friend occasions it
Or circumstance of Lot

But nature, sometimes, sometimes thought
And whoso it befall
Is richer than could be revealed
By mortal numeral – (P 1116)

Dickinson used to write about loneliness in her letters and poems, but only a few of her correspondents knew what that meant and most of them, including T. W. Higginson admitted that they did not understand her way of living, though they were impressed by the way she lived and the way she conceived her personal daily life. Her correspondents became impressed, principally by her concise and original style; hardly anyone else could write in such succinctness so powerfully; “is richer than could be revealed/By mortal numeral – “(P 1116). When Dickinson wrote that, in

1868, she was almost in her forties and although it might not have stimulated her to further study on the world of loneliness, she was led to a profound reflection.

Dickinson took all kinds of deep questions about the world of possibilities, which please her because the outcome was a profound satisfaction in the process of thinking and in the inclusiveness of things which resulted from the values of solitude. Such solitude derives from the way the poet conceives life. Dickinson is someone who does not suffer from the pace of life; she rarely makes hasty judgments of people and books; she does not accept the opinions of other people without consideration; she does not do things at the expense of the time when she should be thinking things out. She would seek silence since “Silence is Infinity” and is usually what threatens people.

> Silence is all we dread.
>
> There’s Ransom in a Voice –
>
> But Silence is Infinity.
>
> Himself have not a face. (P 1251)

Different from the other people, during Dickinson’s whole life, she was not crowding people, things, and events into her life; and in so doing she enabled herself to have the quietness for meditation, reflection, and contemplation which are essential in creating a worthwhile opinion about anything. Her daily life was especially prevented from the excessive development of social intercourse. So she did not get involved with a greater barrier to her contemplations among the “regular people” who develop their sociability.

Neilson (1940) reminds that “You need meditation to define the problems of life, and you need meditation to seek the solution for them.” People need opportunities to meditate in order to search for the realization of their personality because if they are constantly giving away fragments of themselves in thoughtless intercourse they will never come to know their whole self. When one considers William Wordsworth it is possible to recognize that he was also a poet who has benefited himself from solitude; his poems are full of praise of solitude, in which he speaks of avoiding a great deal of conversation which he regards as mere rumor or buzz. Schenk (1979) states that when Wordsworth meditated in peace he did not

want to be disturbed since in those moments his soul needed “the company of a truly congenial friend, or better still solitude.” If from Wordsworth’s point of view stillness is the source of observation, for Dickinson, additionally, it was the source of her “ecstasy on living.”

Virginia Jackson (2005) remembers John Stuart Mill asserting that “Poetry is feeling confessing itself to itself, in moments of solitude.” (Mill, 1981) So, the social setting is favorably severed from poetic intention. Putting solitude into practice, Emily Dickinson developed the inclination of looking at the world with the exactness and details from which she molds beauty and meaning. Regarding the instant captions developed by Emily Dickinson, they demand stillness for reflection, so that she can get a clear view of the perceptual world. She was the one who could afford to be alone most of her lifetime and acquired a quality of personal dignity (“In stillness grows personal dignity” (Neilson, 1940) which this study describes as a strong condition of presence.

As the contemplation process is not mediated by a perception pattern, it aims to follow the poet’s perceptions but those perceptions will only be achieved by the apprehension of the perceptions of observed objects. Dickinson is the observer who wishes the perfect glimpse, the vicarious sensation, and the most faithful image; what’s more, she avoided the condition of being a passive woman and claims to apprehend the world from her perception. The result is the contemplation process which is one of her favorite approaches in order to reach her goal since in several of her poems she devotes the reflection process on the contemplated object. Dickinson tends to avoid feelings and allows perception to follow the contemplation process that flows according to inner experiments. Solitude may have contributed to her poetry writing, as Allen Tate (1932) affirms that “she has more to say than she can put down in any one poem.”

The Lassitudes of Contemplation
Beget a force
They are the spirit’s still vacation
That him refresh –
The Dreams consolidate in action –
What mettle fair (P 1592)

Appreciating her freedom in her private bubble, no one or anything might disturb her in her task of writing poems and letters. She develops an immediate reflection of mediated contemplation which displays an extraordinary scene or image. Avoiding any interference in her private bubble, displaying a sense of awareness and outstanding presence, and developing the contemplation process, she has the privilege to get the most authentic and beautiful captions of the spots she chooses to capture.

That circumstance made the difference with regards to the private bubble in which Emily Dickinson decided to live since it allowed her to live in a significant and ordered universe which came out to be an attitude of reverence. By being and staying still, Emily could enjoy the solitude of the moments that life gifted her without dissipating her privileges and opportunities to live and write. If we take Neilson's words "Above all, practice solitude", it is possible to recognize that that action does not appeal to Emily Dickinson's habits because she does not allow intrusion into her privacy or shuts the door to someone's face but she, as the poet as well as the person, gives herself a chance to be still and to know and understand her self.

Cynthia Griffin Wolff delimits the circumstances within the work of a writer, mentioning different spheres which might be led from the individual and situational principles to linguistic, aesthetic, and political ones. In other words, Wolff's procedure encourages the concentration on Dickinson's work at the same time as she stresses the necessity of moving away from personal facts about the author. Cynthia Wolff investigates Emily Dickinson as a meticulous wordsmith who is plying the trade of carpenters manipulating tools to build their attainments. Wolff concludes that the Dickinsonian work reflects the convergence of those factors and reveals a purpose to her method at work. Dickinson was a woman who grew up in a close–knit family and whose main job was to be the carpenter who worked hard from her private room.

Myself was formed – a Carpenter –
An unpretending time
My Plane – and I, together wrought
Before a Builder came –

To measure our attainments –
Had we the Art of Boards

Sufficiently developed – He'd hire us
At Halves –

My Tools took Human – Faces –
The Bench, where we had toiled –
Against the Man – persuaded –
We – Temples build – I said – (P 488)

Feeling as a cartenter, Dickinson built temples with sufficiently developed skills and used the right tools to work out words, sentences, and experience. According to Wolff "an author can do what the person cannot." Therefore, Emily Dickinson – the author, understood the anguished needs of her readers; amazed them with irresistible creations and images which at the same time benefited her own self. Writing poetry fulfilled her insight and her surrounding environment just as writing letters helped her to think of how powerful words are when they express feeling and experience. The withdrawal strategy helped Dickinson in the task of exploring the relationship through her life and poetry while mastering the rules for building her world – the bubble.

Dickinson received a certain confirmation that the outside world accepted her and the way she chose to live, and then she maintained her solitude. Louise Bogan (1960) in her essay "Emily Dickinson's mystical poet" informs that "this solitude was not harsh. Her love for her friends never diminished, nor her delight in their occasional presence; her family ties were strong; her daily round sustained her; and the joy she felt in the natural world – particularly in flowers and in children – continued."

Trying to approach closer the pure unmediated consciousness that existed in Dickinson's isolation from social restrictions – the visibility of someone with "a complete personality with prejudices, dislikes, fears and desires" (Mitchell, 2000) is visible and solitude was a main contributor. Restoring harm or regaining health might be a solitary process, but "the consolation that Dickinson brings to us lies in her very attempt to help and, most of all, in the rich potency of her words, which encourage our ability to see 'possibilities' once again." (Mackenzie, 2007) Solitude benefited Emily Dickinson's seeking for solutions for her questioning on the way of conceiving

the world because it encouraged her to keep going with a certain degree of ecstasy – her process of searching for the true meaning of living and writing.

2.2 Living and writing: ecstasy inside her bubble

Dickinson wrote poems and letters in the place she created for herself in order to spend her whole life there and to deal with powerful words she carefully selected aiming to develop meaningful verses. She spent most of her time in her upstairs bedroom writing, or in the kitchen baking gingerbread, or in the garden lost in reverie; Emily felt kinship with everything, especially things small and humble. Such conditions offered her intense ecstasy in the process of living and writing despite being kept from the public view as well as attached to the domestic environment of her room and garden.

Sometime in 1885 – one year after Emily Dickinson had suffered the first attack of kidney ailment and one year before her death – , demonstrating spiritual ecstasy which burned with bright joy when she was developing her strategy of writing poems, she wrote

> Take all away from me, but leave me Ecstasy,
> And I am richer then than all my Fellow Men –
> Ill it becometh me to dwell so wealthily
> When at my very Door are those possessing more,
> In abject poverty – (P 1640)

Nineteenth–century critics – even the sociable T. W. Higginson – were disappointed by wondering what the joys of a recluse's life could be. At Dickinson's own door, just out of her bubble, there were people who lived in miserable poverty; she, nevertheless, found her joy by living and writing poems and letters. From the evidence of the poem, Emily Dickinson found her personal pleasure, unlike other mortals, in her home, in corresponding with relatives and friends, in writing verses inside her bubble, and in the mysterious nature. This understanding concurs with what Archibald MacLeish already said in 1961:

> It is not true that her withdrawal into her father's house and into her own room in that house was a retreat from life. On the contrary it was an

> adventure into life – a penetration of the life she had elected to discover and explore – the vast and dangerous and often painful but always real – poignantly real – realer than any other – life of herself. Her business, she said, was circumference and circumference was the limit of experience, of her experience – the limit beyond which, you remember, that dawn bird disappeared when it turned Presence (Mac Leish, 1961 – p. 98–99).

Emily Dickinson's biography and poetry have been studied by scholars since her poems first appeared; nevertheless, studies dedicated to her poetry and life have recently been increased, especially in the last fifty years. Those studies are centered on the poems and letters of Emily Dickinson in order to understand her very private world. The appearance of *Poems by Emily Dickinson, First Series,* ed. by Mabel Loomis Todd and T. W. Higginson, in 1890, inspired the publication of many essays and books which focused on the particulars of Emily Dickinson's life.

Most of the criticism on Emily Dickinson has been centered on biography and textual analysis. The studies of George Frisbie Whicher[35] and Jay Leyda[36], for example, emphasize particulars which are external to Dickinson's poetry, even though the critics were really in search of information about her life. It was not until 1963 that relevant criticism started to appear when Richard Sewall published the first collection of critical essays on Emily Dickinson, which included the views of scholars from the twentieth century. Being a very dedicated scholar on Emily Dickinson, Richard Sewall published another book[37], in 1974, which focused on Emily Dickinson's readings and life.

Sewall emphasizes that Dickinson's poetry is not derived from her readings[38]; although some books may have illuminated certain aspects of her poetry, as for example, its subject, as well as some aspects of her life as, for example, the way she chose to live. He also suggests that Emily Dickinson wrote poetry as other poets from the nineteenth century had also written, yet Dickinson was more skillful in her approach to writing poems and letters because she worked deliberately with words which ended up in a compulsive shining joy.

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[35] Whicher, George Frisbie. *This was a Poet:* a Critical Biography of Emily Dickinson. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938.
[36] Leyda, Jay. *The Years and Hours of Emily Dickinson.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1960.
[37] Sewall, Richard. The *Life of Emily Dickinson.* New York: Farrar, 1974.
[38] I suggest that Emily Dickinson's poetry derives from her keen perception since it is not every common person who may come up with amazing and wonderful views. Besides, her instant captions on nature show a keen skill of apprenticeship.

Throughout her life, Dickinson centered her attention on the intensification of the poetry she wrote, not on matters of forms or established conventions; that contributed to her happiness. She recognized that “While my thought is undressed, I can make the distinction; but when I put them in the gown, they look alike and numb.”[39] The insistence on writing poetry which focuses on elements that belong to her domestic life had a share in the maintenance of her domesticity which offered such joy.

By maintaining the strategy of writing freely, Dickinson explores and selects the poetic language as a system of words in contextual relation with her circle of people and elements to which she is in daily contact. Domhnall Mitchell stresses on Dickinson’s attempt “to approach the general boundaries of her art is to see more clearly the extent and depth of the landscape behind them.” (Mitchell, 2000) Dickinson is deeply engaged in developing her strategy of writing original poetry in order to maintain her bubble. She is the poet who wrote verses to an audience who were strangers to her; however, Dickinson was aware that she would reach them somewhere or maybe someday. Her voice speaks so individually and immediately that those who deeply study her poems get involved and amazed by the verses she wrote and the kind of life she lived.

It seems clear to scholars who have studied Emily Dickinson so far that seclusion was a basic component she had chosen for her life. Even though they might think she avoided audience contact, Dickinson seemed to believe that an imaginary reader would discover her fortune, which might include every line she wrote on every piece of paper. Dickinson’s world was indeed an intensive world even though limited by her simple domestic imagery, truth and themes on which she focused. The way she chose to live and the approach she used to select her companions – which are elements of nature that belong to her environment – prevented the outside interference with the originality of her verses. That might be compared to a packaged procedure – in the same way that Dickinson did with the poems she wrote and were found after her death by her sister Lavinia: “tied up into packets with strings.” (Sewall, 1963)

[39] Letter to T. W. Higginson of 26 April 1862.

When Dickinson first wrote to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, in 1862, she had already made her choice of working on her own and following the patterns that she had chosen for her written production. Mrs. Gordon L. Ford – a friend of Emily Dickinson in her youth – suggested that "in spite of her seclusion, she was longing for poetic sympathy"[40] and that was what she was looking for in T. W. Higginson. In fact, Dickinson invested in Higginson as her interlocutor because she thought that if he might approve and support her writings, then she would keep on developing the poetry she elected whilst on her own. Even though she wanted to know if her poems breathed, she already knew they breathed; that certainty resulted in her ecstasy in living and joy in writing verses in the place she herself elected to live in.

2.3 The perfect place: the bubble

Emily Dickinson was connected to people and to the events that took place outside her world, but those connections were based on her strategy of writing verses and letters so that she seemed to feel the necessity to live in a private place – or at least – to organize her experience in such a way that it could not be interfered with by the outside world. The intensity with which she responded to that kind of life was the impulse that made the act of writing verses and letters her personal duty. By connecting the power to write and the wish to continue she maintained a particular fascination for living and writing that resulted in over fifteen hundred poems and over eleven hundred letters, which were responsible for her ecstasy or joy of living during her lifetime. Despite Dickinson's positive attitude towards living intensely, she also expected to have in mind that to be alive was the power she definitely needed.

> To be alive – is Power –
> Existence – in itself –
> Without a further function –
> Omnipotence – Enough –
>
> To be alive – and Will!
> 'Tis able as a God –

[40] *The Letters of Emily Dickinson,* ed. Mabel Loomis Todd (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2003), p. 108.

The Maker – of Ourselves – be What –

Such being Finitude! (P 677)

This world of hers – which for the present study is called the bubble – is something real and meaningful for her and it also represented the basis for what she wanted to proclaim to her audience. When such a bubble exists for her, it supports her as a poet and as a human being. Indeed, Emily Dickinson withdrew from the world in the circumstances that she could manage in the little town of Amherst or in the back yard of The Homestead. Thackrey (1954) concludes that "Few persons have such completely withdrawn from human society as she did" because few people are so strong when they have to keep their inner and outer forces under control.

After the 1860's, Dickinson withdrew completely from the outer world into the inner world of poetry. Anderson (1966) asserts that having reached full growth, Dickinson gradually realized her needs to develop a private world in order to revitalize her private experience which had sustained her alive and supported her strong relationship with close family, friends, and nature.

By persisting in protecting her private world, Dickinson became cleverly aware of her alienation from society. Charles Anderson (1966) affirms that Dickinson mastered her "outer world by renouncing it." She found herself in an enclosed world which was the best to be in order to be herself, since her world was limited to the radius of her bubble which could be physically named the backyard or the bedroom at The Homestead. By skipping friends, avoiding people approaching, and listening to people's conversation from the second floor, she established her seclusion which interrupted social contact and prevented interference in the bubble. In addition, in not publishing her poetry and persueing seclusion, she conceived the essential features for the ecstasy of which she was proud.

Although Dickinson's world might have been pledged to be an example of complete seclusion without being ordered to do things, she withdrew from the disorder of the outer world to experience the order of her own bubble. "Her disorder is her own." (Blackmur, 1956) Even though for nineteenth–century people the way she lived sounded eccentric, it was the perfect stage where human beings often wished to be: free from any rule or judgment. She was definitely unafraid of paying close attention to every circumstance and centered a close look at little and common

elements from nature, which at every moment were determinant for the process of writing. She seemed to be concerned with the possibility of being touched by the conventions and commands that society imposes and the impulses that people experience when interfered with by the outside world. Her withdrawal from society merely changed the terms of her loyalty from the outer to the inner world.

Dickinson might have concluded that her inner world was the only reality she could trust just as it was her own way of perceiving the process of contemplation and her concern with keeping the ecstasy by living and writing. Her private world gave her "courage to go her own way" (Anderson, 1966). Besides, it helped her to dedicate herself to create her absolute values towards truth and beauty. Dickinson wished to keep that bubble and she was indeed engaged on the task of avoiding anyone or anything to – in the words of Whicher (1938) – "puncture the shimmering bubble"[41] of authenticity and originality.

In spite of managing her withdrawal and linking her private world to the outside world, Dickinson kept looking for a meaningful life according to her individual needs, which she spontaneously retrieved from the outer world. Dickinson continued reading magazines, papers, and books and leaving her bedroom door open to hear conversation taking place downstairs. Being in search of subjects and reasons to live, she was an observer, that is, she aimed to reach the ideal focus from which she could get the best view without going outside her bubble, not allowing anyone, or even anything, to get into it or touch it. Anderson (1966) emphasizes that Dickinson's great talents are the skills of a highly original "sayer, not a seer" in the sense that her proclamations in poetry are much more powerful than the view or image she gets before conveying them into words.

If it is a fact that Dickinson was determined to search for truth and beauty, then she was a free spirit for whom living was a succession of intense experiences, and consequently, art was an endless exploration of meanings. Archibald MacLeish (1961) states that her business was circumference and "circumference was the limit of experience, of her experience." Therefore, the private bubble enables her to preserve hundreds of little poems – amounting to over seventeen hundred in all – of

[41] Whicher, George Frisbie. *This was a Poet:* a Critical Biography of Emily Dickinson. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938.

which no one in Amherst knew – not even other people in her father's house. A large number of poems was kept in her drawer for later and were found by her sister Lavinia when Dickinson died; the experience with the thousands of lines of poetry may have been gratifying for Dickinson, who was the only owner, the unique seer, and quite the only reader of most of them. That experience might have been responsible for, if not all, most of her complete ecstasy on life inside her bubble.

Besides being a free place for Dickinson, the bubble protected her from adherence and interference; Dickinson was free to judge what she wished to while nobody could judge her. Therefore, she was able to perfect her focus on the attempt at being loyal to beauty, to her questionings, and to her experience, which contributed to maintain her method of writing poems. Even though she reached satisfactory answers, her most effective verbal strategy was to exploit ambiguity and compress ideas, which matches with Anderson's (1966) statement that the very last letter she ever wrote was also her shortest. A few days before Dickinson died she addressed a letter to her Norcross cousins with just two words:

> LITTLE COUSINS, – Called Back.
>
> Emily [42]

After sending these two startling words to her cousins, on fifteenth of May, 1886, she fell asleep and did not wake up again to earthy sunshine and blue beloved air. It is suggested that Dickinson would keep down the outer and frightful world of possibilities to live intensely in her world of possibilities. Since she abandoned the fortress – which here is represented by the outer world, people, cultural and social interference – she was given the opportunity to live freely in the bubble, which was in some sense a kind of fortress. In her own fortress she deliberately preached for her audience by writing poems and letters to them, besides the privilege of being the only inhabitant and the only confidential doorkeeper.

The completeness of "her final withdrawal – first to the village, then to her home and garden, in the end even avoiding calls from intimate friends – was such as to make it the most talked–of aspect of her life and the springboard of many sensational legends" (Anderson, 1966). However, the completeness of her

[42] Letter to Norcross cousins of May 1886.

withdrawal seems to imply that she turned away from the outer world in order to follow her experiences freely which resulted in her impulse to write poems and letters.

Although Dickinson might have felt the necessity to organize her experience, the approach of writing verses pondered the management of language which was based on written communication; this event was undertaken by the approach of writing letters and poems. Highlighted by imagination, Dickinson formed her conception of human communication as someone incapable to understand the greatness of the universe and the complexity of man's experience within it. In addition, she depended upon imagination, devoted herself to creation, and preferred the world she created for herself to the objective world of observable facts. The manner in which she observed the changes of seasons and the manner she experienced things were part of her daily routine. These techniques evolved from the bad things of the external world which become a positive choice for her.

Dickinson relied on the attribute that everything that is observable is not always the pure image of visible things. From that perspective of looking at the world, nature may be especially conceived as a diminishing value or force of poetry; nevertheless, it motivated her to practice the kind of poetry to which she was sympathetic, resulting in the high standard of poetry that has become active and original until today.

> To see the Summer Sky
> Is Poetry, though never in a Book it lies –
> True Poems flee – (P 1472)

Desiring to stand far from the outside world – which everyone may think is full of knowledge and true meanings – Dickinson definitely refuses to take part in it and decides to keep within her bubble because she views people from the outer world as the ones who are not characterized by deep thought nor desires to get in touch with real world individuals, who are "without any thought". As she wanted to live intensely, being inside her bubble was substantial to her, even being all alone; she was alive and writing: that was the only strategy to carry out the goal which she had set for life.

The culmination of Dickinson's poetry and its non–publication guaranteed the maintenance of her bubble, since publishing would have put her in the outside world and would have placed her face to face with the superficial visible world. That fact would reduce her privileged presence condition besides subjecting her to live with people without thought; in the real world, not in the mind. In addition, she would be subjected to criticism what would puncture her bubble and destroy the network she crafted.

The bubble is a special place for Dickinson; she is the owner and being the owner enables her to set the rules for herself and for her environment, allowing her to be very selective about everything she wants to take in her world. Therefore, everything is carefully filtered and selected before being taken in by her, which, consequently, resulted in the production of poems of a high standard.

Since Dickinson wrote very original poetry, that feature is also maintained through the selected objects she elected as being primordial to her. Her domesticity, for example, is marked by a fondness for home life and household tasks in which she chooses little things to be the objects of her poetry. Likewise, Dickinson demonstrates her concern about the loss of objects which are very important to her and for her apprehension of perceptions.

> Perception of an object costs
> Precise the Object's loss –
> Perception in itself a Gain
> Replying to its Price –
>
> The Object Absolute – is nought –
> Perception sets it fair
> And then upbraids a Perfectness
> That situates so far - (P 1071)

Dickinson recalls some objects and actions, which imitate fairy tales so that they contribute to the development of her approach to knowing her own mind. They belong to the preservation of a girl's enchanted childhood, that is, someone who dressed in white, lived upstairs, offered ghostly appearances at social gatherings in the house, and walked quickly through the rooms, grouping to a set of eccentricities, which she was the only one who had the privilege to have. In addition, by avoiding

outer interference in her world, she sees the world passing by while she is herself preserved inside her bubble. That event may also contribute to her feelings of full power and ecstasy on living.

For a community of readers, Emily Dickinson is the very model of a retiring womanhood, strong in endurance and courage. For McClatchy “the poet’s bedroom was for Dickinson a refuge from the world’s business and a lens through which to study nature and the soul more intently.” She stayed in her room – where she always kept fresh flowers and pictures of her family – dressed in white “like a page on which the universe would inscribe its secrets” (McClatchy, 2004).

In the essay “Poetry Readers and Reading in the 1890s”, Willis Buckingham (1993) wrote that Emily Dickinson’s poetry is embedded in a female perception and experience. Buckingham stresses that Emily Dickinson is “capable of intense feeling for nature, able to discriminate among and tellingly tender, the various states of the human soul” (Buckingham, 1993). Using the precision of a woman genius, Dickinson’s poetry expresses a characteristically feminine sensitivity to human feelings which are vital for her survival. Mrs. Gordon L. Ford, a family friend, states that Emily Dickinson’s eyes “were open to nature’s sight and her ears to nature’s voices” (Todd, 2003). Mrs. Ford emphasizes that Dickinson was free to talk about what interested her.

Regarding her proclamations of perception, the combination of voices and ears converged to deep awareness of perception – as a matter of fact she was the one who wrote in one of her letters to Mr. T. W. Higginson: “The ear is the last face.”[43] The bubble was the ideal place from where she could perfectly hear to nature’s sound and safely keep her secrets just for herself. Rupert Allen codes it in the sense that “Throughout her life Emily Dickinson found that her Christian attitudes played off her allegiance to Mother Nature. But Mother Nature as Psyche is Emily Dickinson herself, so this is of greater significance to her than the patriarchal theology” (Allen, 2005). Such emphasis may be perceived in the poem

> Nature and God – I neither knew
>
> Yet Both so well knew me

[43] Letter to T. W. Higginson of 1877.

They startled, like Executors
Of My identity.

Yet Neither told – that I could learn –
My Secret as secure
As Herschel's private interest
Or Mercury's affair – (P 835)

Dickinson had a keen eye for nature, especially plants, gardening, and little animals. Her schooling and training included a lot of studies of Botanic and more subjects other than those that her surviving letters happen to mention. She even compiled a herbarium during her school days. Indeed, she was a gardener; she worked in the garden digging holes, smelling the different aromas, and listened to the garden visitors; these events were also part of her private bubble. While Wordsworth went out, looked at, and admired things, for Dickinson, these tasks were both labor and pleasure.

Nature – as something definitely present in her experience – then visits and haunts her as an unconscious existence. Dickinson, repeatedly, insists upon her need to control and to dominate the natural world since she is concerned with the poet's perception, as well as the flower described in a glowing controlled vision. It contains the tender details embedded in the poet's perception.

Glowing is her Bonnet,
Glowing is her Cheek,
Glowing is her Kirtle,
Yet she cannot speak.

Better as the Daisy
From the Summer hill
Vanish unrecorded
Save by tearful rill –

Save by loving sunrise
Looking for her face.
Save by feet unnumbered
Pausing at the place. (P 72)

It is the poet's perception that gives such human attributes as "Cheek", and "her face", the possibility to be applied to a flower, even though "she cannot speak". Such attribute might be conceived as a negative quality of natural objects. Yet, early in Dickinson's youth, she asked Mrs. Gordon L. Ford if it did not make her shiver to hear a great many people talk because, for her, they would be taking "all the clothes off their souls" (Todd, 2003). Metaphorically speaking, the flower "pausing at the place" is safe, not talking, not exposing and not revealing her records or numbers which might be related to her identity. Such exposition is only known within the private world.

Dickinson's fabulous details tend to draw the reader's attention to the powerfully dramatized instant caption and the technique the poet uses to manage views. Evoked by an overwhelming sensibility, those views transform the experience into great poetry like the pausing "Daisy" "From the Summer hill"; besides being safe, not exposing herself, not talking to her audience of her time, nor revealing her records.

While many people may judge Dickinson as the reclusive girl at Homestead, the spinster in white, or the Muse of Amherst, pondering and wondering what life she was living, Dickinson was watching every relevant matter and every person passing by and doing the opposite. Happiness was real and meaningful to her as she admitted it to Higginson during his first visit, "I find ecstasy in living; the mere sense of living is joy enough" (Todd, 2003). Those words imply her feelings about life – a true life in opposition to people from the outer world, who seemed to be happy but at the bottom of their hearts and real world they might not be. Dickinson was the one who said "Take all away from me, but leave me Ecstasy"(P 1640).

The bubble was the fairest home she knew to perfection and the home in which she personally chose to live. Therefore, Dickinson lived authentically and intensely in her "net bubble" that she herself spun wove. Benfey (2001) was right when he asserted that "Dickinson is one of a handful of American writers with a truly international reach." Even though it took her time to perfect her private bubble in order to find her "manse of mechlin and of Floss", she reached her goal as time passed by.

The fairest Home I ever knew
Was founded in an Hour
By Parties also that I knew
A spider and a Flower –
A manse of mechlin and of Floss (P 1423)

The recluse person who did not intend to publish, but was intensively concerned with the private exercise of – here are H. E. Childs' words – "employing a style marked by economy of expression and startling imagery"[44] was Emily Dickinson – the international known poet. She did not need to go further than the garden of The Homestead to see the world; the wider world came into Dickinson's home in Amherst. And now, two centuries later McClatchy can still preach that "Her life remains a puzzle, at once demurely conventional and powerfully estranged. And her poems remain a mystery, plain as a daisy and as cryptic as any heart." (McClatchy, 2004) Such particularities contributed to feature her life style and the webbing craft in her bubble. What is more, they prevented her from the risk of puncturing the bubble and, consequently, un–spinning her "manse".

[44] In *American Literature, (apud Anderson p. 364).*

3. APPREHENSION OF PERCEPTIONS

Dickinson was aware of responsibilities when setting the eccentricities which, as time passed, were also conceived by the family, relatives, and friends, as her own individual characteristics. She gradually worked hard to maintain the private conditions that she had created for herself. T. W. Higginson, the editor of *The Atlantic Monthly,* was the one who tried to advise Dickinson on poetry conventions. Nevertheless, he could not understand her because his kind of education stressed the conscious cultivation of abstractions, whereas Dickinson's abstractions and generalizations were particular to her individual voice: "I went to school, but in your manner of the phrase had no education."[45]

Despite the fact that Emily Dickinson and her sister Lavinia Dickinson had a lot of work to do in the house, Emily was lucky to come from a wealthy family so she could spend some time in the garden observing the world outside and mainly the changes in nature which were closely developed by observations with the eye. Dickinson tried to elaborate the process of perceiving what happened outside her room, to apprehend the images or captions which her perception got, and to develop the mimesis of her own meditation of what could be observed from the bubble.

In order to develop the apprehension process, she makes good use of words, represents what perception tries to apprehend, and tries to put into words the captions she makes. Indeed, words are very important to her because words are her companions and her empowered objects that express her captions. In one of Dickinson's first letters to T. W. Higginson, she wrote:

[45] Letter to T. W. Higginson of 26 April 1862.

> for several years my lexicon was my only companion. Then I found one more, but he was not contented I be his scholar, so he left the land. You ask of my companions. Hills, sir, and the sundown, and a dog large as myself, that my father bought me. They are better than beings because they know, but do not tell; and the noise in the pool at noon excels my piano[46] (Todd, 2003, p. 254).

Considering that the present study assumes the hypothesis that Dickinson lived in her private bubble it might sound easy to understand that Dickinson coined a large number of words out for her own purpose, since the selective words expressed her view of the world. As her companions were not human beings, but natural objects and words, she felt comfortable to write about them using the words which were powerful for her. Dickinson carried out this challenging strategy of expressing the mystery that these elements hide within themselves and this strategy is reflected in her poems and in the pattern she creates with vocabulary, grammar, and syntax – to what Cristanne Miller calls "grammatical experiments".[47] If the focus is to understand her perception of awareness and experience, attention must be paid to her grammatical experiments.

Grammatical experimental strategy supported her keen apprehension of perceptions and the close analyses to natural objects. Poem 688 shows examples of such experiments. Syntax of the first line "'Nature' is what we see – " , is quite uncommon and unconventional, even though the poem presents a regular succession of affirmative clauses such as "Nature is what we see – ", "Nature is what we hear –", "Nature is what we know – ". In the second, third, sixth, and seventh lines of the poem, the pattern does not follow the same model because it does not have any verb. In the last three lines of the poem, the sentences are juxtaposed negatively at least by the connector "Yet" and coordinate and subordinate clauses are mixed forms, which may be a mismatch from the regular standard pattern of sentences used by poets of her time.

Thomas W. Higginson advised Dickinson to correct spelling and perfect grammar; and indeed punctuation, but Dickinson's poetry, is not only related to a personal style, but to her exploration of language mainly in an attempt to create new meanings within words. The examples of capitalization in most nouns but not in verbs

[46] Letter to T. W. Higginson of 26 April 1862.
[47] Miller, Cristanne. Emily Dickinson, a poet's grammar. London: Harvard University Press, 1987.

or in some personal pronoun as “our”, but not in a possessive adjective, for example, show that her approach to punctuation did not follow the regular pattern.

Dickinson uses definite and indefinite pronouns which are mostly capitalized at the beginning of the lines. Every word in the beginning of a line is capitalized even if they are articles, prepositions, conjunctions, or nouns. Capitalization does not follow a regular order, since in the first line, for example, it occurs once; whereas in the other lines, it occurs three times. Despite this irregular pattern, Dickinson is conscious about the strategy that she chose for the poems and about the apprehension of perceptions in order to be aware of things that are part of her world. George Whicher (1938) reminds that Dickinson watched and fixed her mind on familiar things with an intensity of attention that “a soldier under fire is said to feel in the smallest inconsequential things about him.” She craved the touch of something familiar and tangible and wrote down her observations.

The ability to play with simple words pleased Dickinson intensely indeed; words helped her to organize the process of perception and her attempt to apprehending what nature is. She approached this strategy as a way of emphasizing her concept of language itself. So, the poet firstly arranged sight, by choosing the elements to exemplify it, such as “The Hill”, “the Afternoon”, “Squirrel”, “Eclipse”, and “the Bumble bee”; then she arranged hearing, by choosing elements such as “The Bobolink”, “the Sea”, “Thunder”, and “the Cricket”. Those elements were revival signs of how perceptive to nature the human beings should be.

Since her youth, Emily Dickinson was aware of the “annual revivalist meetings and charismatic preachers on saving souls” (Allen, 2005) but the regular invitations to join in God’s inns might have a share on Dickinson’s continuing wish of communing with nature.

> These are the Signs to Nature’s Inns –
> Her invitation broad
> To Whosoever famishing
> To taste her mystic Bread –
>
> These are the rites of Nature’s House –
> The Hospitality
> That opens with an equal width

To Beggar and to Bee

For Sureties of her staunch Estate
Her undecaying Cheer
The Purple in the East is set
And in the North, the Star – (P 1077)

Her experience of communion with nature shares the idea that Mother Nature does not praise or condemns; consequently, Mother Nature does not make distinction between the beggar and the Bee. Meanwhile the Congregational church ministers preached the need for reading the Bible and following what was evangelized in order to reach salvation. Certainly, Emily Dickinson chose to be at Mother Nature's side so she could freely apprehend what her heart mostly wished.

Combining visions and sound may represent a more satisfying concept of the elements of nature than the real world. Nevertheless, the knowledge that human beings have about nature is not the one true, since human beings are not aware of nature's power and are not aware of nature's manifestations reported by human perception. The unfamiliarity of men facing the mystery that lies beyond what they see and hear may establish a limit which makes them incapable to apprehend what nature really is and unaware of recognizing nature's simplicity; yet very powerful. Emily Dickinson tried to face such mystery and apprehend its simplicity despite employing all her efforts and much simplicity.

3.1 Dickinson's perception of awareness

Dickinson's motivation to live intensely comes from her concept about life and about the world around her, the instant captions of nature that capture her own awareness of it, and her perception of nature which was not to follow the real perception of admiration. Instant captions are characterized by an awareness of the present; so she is capable of apprehending nature, capturing the best of it and representing it in the poems she wrote.

Apprehending nature, Dickinson aimed at being connected to nature itself and to the elements of it which she elected to be important when writing poetry. The

nouns in the last lines of poem “Nature is what we see – “ (P 668), “Our Wisdom” and “Simplicity”, for example, are oppositely placed because nature is featured as the condition of being simple and lacking in pretension, while “Our Wisdom” by the good and true judgment that human beings think they have over it. The negative word “Nay” in the fourth and eighth lines refuses what she had proclaimed before, which were the two affirmative clauses defining nature. In addition, the use of several dashes in almost every line corresponds to the pauses which claim to soften the readers’ speed of reading so that they may rely on the play of the mind to what Cristanne Miller (1987) calls the “hooks on attention”.

In the poem “’Nature’ is what we see – “ Dickinson seems to define nature according to her own concept of it, but Anderson (1966) reminds that “The whole range of the world of eye and ear is brought to mind by the novel juxtaposition of things in her skillful playing with magnitudes.” Dickinson’s inner truth of nature can only be defined as “Heaven” and “Harmony” since it is intuitively in the mind.

Suzane Juhasz (1996), in the essay, “The Land of the spirit”, claims that Dickinson lived primarily in the mind therefore, the poet is powerless in her limited “wisdom” to understand the inner truth of nature and “Simplicity” is the final attribute of nature opposed to the multiplicity of the inner manifestations which may be reported by the senses. There is simultaneity between the poet’s perception and the readers’ general perception. Then the recognition that the visual framework of nature hides the essence leads the poet to capture instant captions which are original, meaningful, and perceptible for the reader.

The poem “Four Trees – upon a solitary Acre – ”(P742), is also a poem in which Dickinson develops the “grammatical experiments”[48] stated by Cristanne Miller (1987), especially those related to form and word class. As the poem does not follow the established literary pattern, there is no regular sequence of word sentences. The verb “Maintain” in the first stanza, for example, is the only word in the line as well as the verb “Unknown” in the last line of the poem which results in a lack of the transitiveness of the verb and its inflection.

[48] Quotations are mine even the expression was first used by Cristanne Miller.

The uninflected forms in Emily Dickinson's poems correspond to the poet's tendency to value the process and the continuation of it over the events. Cristanne Miller also points that the poet uses the verb "Maintain", which is a transitive verb, intransitively. "The Sun" plays the role of a direct object of the verb "Maintain" just as "The Sun" plays the role of subject for the verb "meets", which, in this case, is properly inflected. Since there is not a sequence of complete sentences following the pattern of subject, verb, object, and complement; the inversion is also noticeable – "have they" – for instance, presenting the unconventional pattern of verb followed by subject in affirmative clauses. The way she writes verses results from the way she apprehends her perception of the world, which deduces it into a conscious perception of awareness about what she really observes.

To the same level, punctuation for Emily Dickinson is regarded as a matter of personal feelings in order to express her feelings and experiences which represent her amazing perceptions. The language is compressed; not just by the fact that the verses are short and direct but they present few commas, are full of dashes, and some lines present just two words. These suggest that she has assured her awareness of perception even though her verses lack order or were a juxtaposed set of words, or were totally out of literary conventions.

The sentence "Four Trees – upon a solitary Acre" of poem 742 seems to be an example of one of Dickinson's goals to impart life into words aiming to offer a new dimension of her vision in order to follow her strategy of getting the fullness of her perception. Instead of writing the sentence based on the normal and expected context as: "I was walking and saw four trees", which would follow a normal sequence of sentences, the poet empowered outstanding features and life to the trees – which are four, not one, nor a bunch of – ; besides she over evaluated them so as to show superiority over the Acre. The symmetry of each tree, which, in the poem, is featured as not displaying a specific design, nor being in a proper order, nor being capable of any action – is maintained at a higher level than the Acre, which is a larger area possessing larger properties. She thus inverts the normal attributes of what is wider or bigger, stands the smaller in a more powerful position, and gets the amazing scene of the Trees over the Acre not the Acre displaying the trees.

Inverting the properties of small elements compared to larger ones demands a conscious idea of awareness. If the image should follow an orderly common view, the Acre would be the first element to be activated in the mind of human beings when watching a regular piece of land. Nevertheless, the poet does the opposite. Dickinson approves the originality of the four trees as a demanding feature and attributes greater importance to them even though they face the wide Acre area. Therefore, the demanding view calls the attention of readers in a sense that they feel the presence of these four trees that do not have a near neighbor – except God – nor much to offer – except attention to passers by or the shade to those who, by chance, may get for free. The view that the four trees activate into the readers' mind through the imperative declaration of the first line is assimilated by the poet, who is consciously aware of her style conquered by an unexpected caption of the scene.

The technique employed in the first line sends the readers backwards in their knowledge about regular meaningful views in order to force their participation in the visual experience. As the scene does not follow a regular succession of narrative events as, for example, "I was walking and saw four trees upon a solitary acre"; it suddenly imposes a presence condition for the four trees. Those trees will be the most important thing in the view and the highlighted topic of the poem. Likewise, every following verse of the poem is connected to the base first line of the poem, which is "Four trees".

The limits of Dickinson's imagination contrasted with the power of perception of that imagination. The ability to make explicit a view that is implicit and not perceptible to a normal human being passing by an acre, which is also unnoticeable and solitary, marks her perception of awareness. It is Dickinson's perception of knowing what she is doing and wondering at the views she gets that give an imperative standing power to the trees, featuring meaning and depriving the admiration of what would not be perceptible to common people.

Familiarity with a large group of trees would usually not attract people's attention especially if the trees are ordered, displayed within a pattern, and characterized by a varied multiple design. However, four of them, which do not follow a regular pattern to a group of trees in a huge Acre, surely call the attention. Dickinson's creative power is then associated to her awareness about what she

observes and the instant moments or captions which she wants to capture, that is, her perception of the four trees upon a solitary acre. Passers by would not be able to capture this view if it was expressed in traditional patterns.

Dickinson then grants relevance to the trees, organizes an artful arrangement for the language, selects the right lexicon, and sets the right view to get the most marvelous and unexpected demanding presence condition for them. Such condition of presence she also slowly built for herself in her poems and letters. During the nineteenth–century, when most women were limited by rules of etiquette and proper behavior, “Dickinson did not do what society expected of her. Instead, she quietly kept herself in the small town of Amherst, while engaging in her passion – poetry” (Herstek, 2003). Such attitude might have partially contributed to the perception of awareness, and afterward, presence.

3.2 Dickinson’s perception of presence

Dickinson analysis of the natural world is based on her perception and forces the readers to seek out implications and referential interpretations which might result in the readers’ having to follow her perceptions about nature. Readers, in this circumstance, are not passive agents when they read her poems, but they are active because they have to take part in the process of reflection in order to understand them and perceive the poet’s condition of awareness and presence.

Emily Dickinson is more absorbed by what she cannot see. The perception of presence is a characteristic that Dickinson works out extremely well in both her poems and letters. The poet is not alone in the development of that process despite her displaying just a few elements because “The revery alone will do, / If bees are few.”

> To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee,
> One clover, and a bee,
> And revery.
> The revery alone will do,
> If bees are few. (P 1755)

Imagination will assemble and combine the necessary features to capture nature even though there will be just a few elements to create the landscape such as one clover and a few bees. In his book “Poetry in the Classroom with reference to Emily Dickinson’s Poems”, José Lira (2004) reinforces the idea that poetry deals with words in an expressive way then the verses of poem 1755, for instance, stress “what is needed in making a prairie and at the same time suggests that so little is needed”. Reverie indeed refers to difference, devotion, and fancy that turn into coherent shapes when views are shaped by the power of imagination. Reverie may be connected to feelings and experiences which, at the same time, are related to the life of the creator or even a demanding condition of presence. The view of the prairie is then a vision of a natural imagery landscape which is characterized by the quality of someone who owns a condition of presence and is able to proclaim and to create views according to her perception.

By keeping that view of her natural world, Dickinson kept the distinction between the outer world and the inner world which is reflected in the way she perceives the reality of the external world. She makes the effort to catch a glimpse of supernatural beauty in order to reshape her experience; then she uses a controlled compressed language and develops her specific strategy of writing verses in order to capture impressive, unique, and outstanding captions.

Dickinson’s condition of presence is very important in the poems since they are mostly from her own and most intimately hers. Archibald MacLeish (1961) says that

> when a poet commits himself to the private world, to his own private inward world, to the world of his own emotions, his own glimpses, his own delights and dreads and fearful hopes and hopeless despairs, his voice, the voice in which he speaks of what he sees and hears and touches in that near and yet far distant country, is more pervasive of his poems and more important to their meaning than the voice in poems from the public world or the world in nature or any other world “outside” (MacLeish, 1961).

The poet of the private world is the actor on the stage for which he or she stands; so from her bubble, Dickinson adventured into life and penetrated into the discovery and exploration of her experience. The marvel of that little private world was the triumphant outstanding presence condition that Dickinson has held from the late nineteenth century until today.

David Porter (1985) asserts that Dickinson's poetic individuality in images experiments large assortment of variants, captions of scenes, and wide perception of nature. From her bubble, Dickinson could take advantage of her condition of being the only voice inside and could deliver her perceptions to the world, her audience, in the way which she desired to do. Another view that is delightfully unique despite the quite rare pattern, is the poem written in 1865, when Emily had reached her middle thirties.

Bee! I'm expecting you!
Was saying Yesterday
To Somebody you know
That you were due –

The Frogs got Home last Week –
Are settled, and at work –
Birds, mostly back –
The Clover warm and thick –

You'll get my Letter by
The seventeenth; Reply
Or better, be with me –
Yours, Fly. (P 1035)

The poem seems to be in the traditional pattern of a letter – even though it is the form of an informal one – and is divided into three stanzas with the regular pattern of four lines to each stanza, and shows and appeals to a condition of presence. The pattern of a letter is represented by the vocative "Bee!" serving as a salutation in the first line and by the complimentary close "Yours" at the end of the poem. Brantley considers this "tongue-in-cheek letter from the Butterfly to the Bee as spring yields to summer, Dickinson's account of seasonal change suggests that later is better" (Brantley, 2004). Some grammatical experiments show that the syntax pattern of word order – subject / verb / object ("I am expecting you", "The Frogs got Home last week –") follows the regular pattern. However, other verses are contracted in the sense that the subject is omitted as "Was saying Yesterday" or the subject (The Frogs) is far from the verb "are settled, and at work". The verb "are" is omitted in "Birds, mostly back – " and the verb "is" is also omitted in "The Clover warm and thick – ".

Regarding those examples, it is possible to perceive that punctuation is quite representative because the verses provide variants for it by using exclamation marks, commas, and semicolons. Despite the fact that capitalization does not follow a normal pattern, it shares a role in the poem, as in the capitalization of nouns, verbs, and adverbs within the lines. Partial rhyme may be identified in the last words of the first and last lines of each stanza of the poem (you/due), (week/thick), (by/fly). Those features did not go along with the literary convention patterns of her time, but Dickinson was aware of that and that enabled her to keep on and consequently it gave her the condition of being there by her own convention – the condition of presence.

Grammatical experiments provided new features for natural objects and allowed Dickinson to develop her perception of presence. Natural objects and especially domestic animals appeal to Dickinson in the process of perceiving what nature is. “Nature is no longer a friend, but often an inimical presence. Nature is a haunted house” (Bogan, 1960). When she begins to cast forward toward the feeling for the mystery and sacredness of the world step by step, she conceptualizes domestic animals as essential to nature and in poem 1035, she introduces the butterfly and the bee’s relationship within a specific society set in a definite place. The sociability and interaction of that relationship within their society is shown in the patterns of writing a letter that, consequently, characterizes the form and style of the poem.

“It is easy to assume that Emily Dickinson’s devotion to her family and home was merely a product of Victorian Society. Essential requirements of a woman in the 1800s were fostering and maintaining an economic and structured household” (Martin, 2007). However, as far as it is known, Emily Dickinson suspected that all elements in nature are fit into some kind of harmonious scheme, or at least they are related to each other. Nevertheless, the view of butterflies writing letters to bees does not seem to be a common pattern for the understanding of man in society. Dickinson selected the Bee to be the receiver and The Butterfly to be the sender, and what about the content of the letter? The main insightful view of frogs, which are already settled and started; Birds, which have returned home; and the Clover, which exposes delighted dense consistency are memorable views because of their originality.

The Butterfly foretells that the Bee will get the letter by the seventeenth. The seventeenth, at first sight seems to be a number chosen at random, but it might be presumably a number that is close to the numbers of the dates of the changing of the seasons, as seasons change around the twentieth of the month. It is suggestive that the day in which the bee is supposed to reach the place is near then The Bee would not have time to answer the letter, not even post it, so The Bee had better be with The Butterfly right away. That immediacy evokes the fact that The Bee's presence at the seventeenth must be a real and demanding event.

Relationship and similarities may be recognized between the letter from the Butterfly to the Bee and the book *Alice in Wonderland*, published by Lewis Carroll in 1865 – when Emily Dickinson had reached her thirties. In a specific part of Carroll's story, Alice gets involved in a trial among playing cards and the jury – which is composed of animals and birds – is supposed to give the verdict. At some point in the trial, the White Rabbit produces a paper – like a parchment – and suggests that it is a letter written by the prisoner – who is a Knave – to somebody. When the White Rabbit unfolds the paper he said "It isn't a letter after all: it's a set of verses" (Carroll, 2001). The letter didn't mention a definite addressee, since it was not addressed to a specific somebody, nor did it have a sender, for there was no name signed at the end.

Reading Dickinson's poem attentively, the pattern of a letter is suddenly recognizable. As the sender is The Butterfly and the addressee is The Bee, this feature is opposed to the letter of Alice's story, which did not mention the addressee or the sender, but it is also "a set of verses", as the White Rabbit's words suggest. In Dickinson's verses, the message triggers a nice – and at the same time ironic – invitation from The Butterfly, who is expecting the Bee's presence.

The letter of The Butterfly is a piece of writing which is written as a reminder to the readers to pay attention to the features that little things have around them. If attention is not paid to them, these features would usually be decreased in their value and would just become valuable to be admired when they are felt and perceived by true apprehension of perception. Dickinson wishes to call the attention of readers to the condition of presence; otherwise most common people would not even think they could relate to each other in that manner. Such attention may also be directed to the

poet, who also retains a condition of presence, perception, and apprehension of the world passing by.

Lewis Carroll describes other scenes in the book *Alice in Wonderland* which are delightful indeed and might show some similarities to Dickinson's verses. The scene described on page 138 of the book is a good example of a delightful view. The Hatter comes in with a teacup in one hand and a piece of bread and butter in the other to be questioned by the King. The Hatter immediately apologizes for bringing in the teacup and the food because he had not quite finished his tea when he had been sent for. Being questioned about when he had begun that tea, he and his friends queerly answer that it might be on the fourteenth, fifteenth or sixteenth, since they had been having tea together. Of course, the King immediately tells the jury to write down that information because that was something that demanded investigation. When the Hatter is asked to take off his hat, he answers that the hat is not his. Then the King presumes that the hat has been stolen and the jury – animals and birds – instantly make a memorandum of the fact.

Memorandum, according to The American Heritage Dictionary, is defined as "a short note written as a reminder". Then the scene of those animals writing down all the information on their slates is something magic and fabulous just as the memorandum that The Butterfly in Dickinson's poem wrote to The Bee. The scene marked by the Hatter with his unfinished tea, the hat which is not his, and the memorandum might be connected to the conception of awareness of reverie and imagination besides displaying a condition of presence that only poets like Dickinson and Carroll may expose.

There are always some unexpected happenings taking place in the story of Alice – such as the scene of the appearance and vanishing of a cat on page 77 of the book – and the descriptions are usually related to situations and events that common people would not imagine. Dickinson also writes verses which express unexpected events and relations because, in her condition of presence inside her bubble, she stands from an opposed position in order to apprehend what she would not capture otherwise. The way that Lewis Carroll describes the vanishing and appearing of the Cheshire Cat once again on page 101 of the book is gorgeous:

> 'How are you getting on?' said the Cat, as soon as there was mouth enough for it to speak with. Alice waited till the eyes appeared, and then nodded. 'It's no use speaking to it,' she thought, 'till its ears have come, or at least one of them.' In another minute the whole head appeared…(Carroll, 2001, p. 101).

If relations about casual conversations among animals are to be recalled, it would usually be connected to the Cat's whole body, not its characteristics coming out one by one as a process of image. In Dickinson's poem, The Butterfly describes the reasons for the demanding presence of the Bee by pointing at the elements which are essential for the Bee's arrival – Frogs, Birds, and Clover. As it is a letter; it contains the sender, the addressee, the beginning and the ending, which represent her way of elaborating her process of invitation.

The letter may show how close Dickinson can get to those elements of nature and how happy she is by the fact of being able to converse to them in the same way as they communicate to each other. Alice also talks freely and openly with the folks within her story; she even talks to her own body. On page 17 of the book, for example, Alice talks to her feet, which were getting too far off and she says that she will give them "a new pair of boots every Christmas", which does not sound like a normal thing to do. However, later she wonders how she can manage to send presents to her own feet: "They must go by the carrier," she thinks again and goes on planning the odd directions she will go to in order to do that. She speaks in such a spontaneous way that readers think it is funny, but they follow the fancy line of the story even imagining the real sequence of happenings.

The pattern of a letter in poem 1035, where The Butterfly delightfully invites The Bee and definitely demands her presence might seem to be a normal event of nature even though it might sound odd to some human beings. The power of the imagination of the poet allows her to step on the process of creation and maintain imagery, since Dickinson was familiar with that perception even when, at the age of fifteen, she wrote to her friend: "I have no flowers before me as you had to inspire you. But then you know I can imagine myself inspired by them, and perhaps that will do as well."[49] Lewis Carroll was born in 1832 – two years after Emily Dickinson – and he published *Alice in Wonderland* during his thirties; by that time, Emily Dickinson was also in her thirties and had written more than one thousand poems.

[49] Letter to Mrs. A. P. Strong of 04 August 1845.

In fact Emily Dickinson was very real and definitely felt that she was the owner of her private world and was able to deal with the peculiarities which she recognized for herself and made her happy. Therefore it is unavoidable to remember Borus's Words: "Imagine someone so shy you never see her, someone who guards her privacy so fiercely that some people believe she does not exist. Imagine someone who becomes more mysterious the more you know about her. Imagine Emily Dickinson" (Borus, 2005).

Within her bubble, Dickinson discovered the mysteries that nature could offer her; she was aware of the importance of being there admiring it, and decided to capture the moments that imagination could reach. Those essential features resulted in her self fulfillment, which enlarged her power to perceive the awareness of nature's beauty, and the development and maintenance of a dazzling condition of presence, not just for the nineteenth–century community but until the present day.

4. THE CONTEMPLATION PROCESS

Emily Dickinson did not have just one view of the objects on which she chose to focus, nor did she meditate on nature as a contingent or an end to her intention or perception. Her approach of attentively reflecting about everything, which was related to her private world, might have not been appropriately examined by the nineteenth–century literary people. The mysteries and doubts, which involved her, really intrigued her so that she wanted to solve them.

Attempting to better understand the world, she developed the contemplation process based on managing words that aimed to express her apprehensions. She writes about the world as she observed it; it is a learned conception of the world. If we look at the following poem, its simplicity is quite apparent.

A Bird came down the Walk –
He did not know I saw –
He bit an Angleworm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw,

And then he drank a Dew
From a convenient Grass –
And then hopped sidewise to the Wall
To let a Beetle pass –

He glanced with rapid eyes
That hurried all around –
They looked like frightened Beads, I thought –
He stirred his Velvet Head

Like one in danger, Cautious,
I offered him a Crumb
And he unrolled his feathers
And rowed him softer home –

Than Oars divide the Ocean,
Too silver for a seam –
Or Butterflies, off Banks of Noon
Leap, plashless as they swim. (P 328)

The fantasy of the friendship in the first line is very evident even if in the second line is casually decreased. Thereafter the life of nature follows with such spontaneous informality as it is participating in the process. The bird that ate a worm, the fellow, and even more, ate it raw, constitute an attribute of sequence of observed events. The bird came down, bit the worm, drank the dew, hopped sidewise, glanced with rapid eyes, hurried all around, unrolled his feathers, and rowed home. Such exercise in describing all the steps of actions of a fellow bird results from the exercise of the contemplation process that fills out the picture of nature which leads to good poems.

In an interview to Thomas Gardner (2006), Marilynne Robinson referred to the poem above and said that what Dickinson is doing is “reconceiving the world as something in the universe rather than thinking of herself as something in the world, and feeling liberated by moving away from an immediacy and towards a different kind of intellectual construct.”

Cristanne Miller (1987), who developed studies on how Emily Dickinson used vocabulary and managed grammar and punctuation in her poems, concludes that Dickinson’s vocabulary is very uncommon due to experiments with different forms and classes of words. Regarding word selection and the ability to use them, it seems to be agreed that her grammatical constructions are unusual and her punctuation shows variants that signal different purposes within different verses. Those liberties with vocabulary experimentations affect the conventional perception of things in a world that offers new possibilities of reference.

Another point stressed by Cristanne Miller is the tendency that Emily Dickinson has to value the process and its continuation over specific real events. Those events are manipulated with precision and skill, enabling the establishment of connections when readers are engaged in the process. Miller also suggests that "understanding requires the ability to draw connections" and in the case of Dickinson's poetry, this requirement seems to be supposedly active because there are interactions with the imaginary audience.

The intention of pondering about the mystery, especially involving nature, is visible to Dickinson by the way she uses simple words in the attempt to define nature. Allen Tate (1932) declared that "Great poetry needs no special features of difficulty to make it mysterious". Dickinson's verses call the readers to reflect which aims to develop the highest quality of views and high levels of contemplation and creative process; evidence of this can be perceived in the following poem, written in 1863

> Nature" is what we see –
> The Hill – the Afternoon –
> Squirrel – Eclipse – the Bumble bee –
> Nay – Nature is Heaven –
> Nature is what we hear –
> The Bobolink – the Sea –
> Thunder – the Cricket –
> Nay – Nature is Harmony –
> Nature is what we know –
> Yet have no art to say –
> So impotent Our Wisdom is
> To her Simplicity. (P 668)

As in many of Dickinson's finest poems on nature, this would not be different as Leiter's words may sound relevant because "no matter how great her joy in nature or how close she stands, Dickinson's speaker remains a stranger to the natural world" (Leiter, 2007). As a matter of fact, the contemplation process is not mediated by a perception pattern which aims to follow the observer's perception but by the apprehension of the perception of the observed element. Dickinson is the observer who wishes the perfect glimpse, the vicarious sensation, and the most faithful image. Not being a passive woman, she claims to apprehend the world from her perception;

consequently, the contemplation process is one of her favorite approaches in order to reach the perfect glimpse since she gave priority to the reflection process on the contemplated object in the majority of her poems.

Attempting to avoid feelings, Dickinson allows perception to follow the contemplation process which flows according to inner experiments. Allen Tate (1932) affirms that “she has more to say than she can put down in any one poem.” As Dickinson felt free in her private bubble, no one or anything might disturb her from the task of writing poems and letters. “The Lassitudes of Contemplation / Beget a force” (P 1592).

By developing an immediate reflection of mediated contemplation, Dickinson displays extraordinary scenes or images. Avoiding interference on her private bubble, displaying a sense of awareness and outstanding presence, and developing the contemplation process, Dickinson has the privilege to get the most authentic and beautiful captions of the spots she chooses to capture.

The experience that characterizes Dickinson’s poems carries out views that are delightful due to their uniqueness and particularity. Dickinson was determined to use poetry as means of coping and wondering if everything was so wonderful – one idea which is also reinforced by Gelpi (1965). In order to be different from the traditional pattern, Dickinson wrote with ambiguity and density and she also dealt with the Circumference, not with the Centre. Therefore, she could get the most out of her experience and, consequently, the contemplation process allowed her to get the fullness of her perceptions.

4.1 A stranger to the natural world

Contemplation, perception, reflection and conclusion are indeed the main stages which Dickinson follows in order to get the best apprehension of percepions. The poet stands as someone who is facing the marvelous and mysterious phenomenon which is nature and from this demanding place, she wonders and attempts to describe what nature really is, and adopts the reflective approach.

In poem 668, for example, Dickinson begins the contemplation process with the word “Nature”, which is written with inverted commas, in order to stress the phenomenon that she wants to define. The immediate definition that Dickinson expresses by the first line of the poem is “Nature is what we see – ”. The dash in the end of the line marks the first pause of the poem enabling readers to reflect about the first attempt to seek a definition. The second and the third lines extend connections to what the poet observes: “the Hill – the Afternoon – / – Squirrel – Eclipse – the Bumble bee –”.

The elements of nature enrolled in the group are separated by dashes displaying their singularity and uniqueness as visual features. The distinctive connections of “The Hill” to “The Afternoon” are distinguished for the readers too. “Squirrel”, “The Eclipse”, and “the Bumble bee” are connected to natural elements that may be found in the back yard or garden. Those elements indeed may be associated to the poet’s visual apprehension of what is observed and what is apprehended as part of the environment to which she is attached.

Nevertheless, when the poet is still engaged in the reflective process, the negative pronoun “Nay”, at the beginning of the fourth line suddenly accomplishes that her perception is not quite true. “Nature is Heaven – ” is a statement that goes beyond the images of what is essentially observed. And the process of contemplation and reflection goes on by the attempt to perceive what nature is: “Nature is what we hear – ”. In this reflective unfolding process, the poet once again uses dashes to emphasize her apprehension of what she observes. The elements presented by the sixth and seventh lines are connected to hearing: “The Bobolink – the Sea – / Thunder – the Cricket – ”; which are linked to sounds and proper to their nature. “The Bobolink” might be connected to its songs; “the Sea”, to the sound of waves; “Thunder”, to the usually scary noise; and “The cricket”, to the shrill chirping sound that this leaping insect makes.

If those natural elements are related to people’s perception upon hearing them, it seems evident that any common person is able to hear them when they face nature. However, the poet, who is someone really engaged in the process of defining nature while observing it, feels and apprehends the mysteries involved in the process and suddenly realizes that her conclusions are not true. Once again, using the

negative adverb “Nay”, she negates everything she had called out before and concludes that “Nature is Harmony –”.

If nature is harmony, its definition should enclose a pleasing combination of elements as a whole instead of defining isolated elements such as the bird, the hill, and thunder. The perception of nature – which here is conceived as wholeness – might include sound and visual aspects; however, that concept might be apprehended through feelings and experience, not just sounds and visions. At the end of the contemplation process, the poet states that “Nature is what we know –”. The dash at the end of the line requires extra time for reflection about the definition she just called for because, at this point, she might be wondering: do we really know nature? Are we aware of what we know about it? After all, she concludes that we are unable to describe nature since art is somewhat resourceless to describe nature’s immediacy.

Although it is very simple, art as well as language does not have sufficient resources and so the mystery of nature is indescribable. Dickinson uses abstractions from the visible and invisible so the views are in constant play, coupling back and forth, but always engaged in the definition process. Concluding that her perception of nature – which is neither isolated nor separated by sounds and visions - is the combination of all elements gathered into a wholesome completeness which human being are unable to describe.

The poem “’Nature’ is what we see –” exemplifies the way Dickinson tries intensely to come up with an appropriate definition of nature to which she was a stranger. Amy Herstek also agrees that “Dickinson constructed a world that marveled in the sunrise and springtime, and emphasized family and the great power of the imagination” (Herstek, 2003). She took that to the extreme because by the mid 1860s she did not just used to hide when visitors arrived or when she lowered cookies out of her bedroom window to the neighborhood children but she placed herself as a stranger – although she was so close to all of them. She posed herself as a stranger to nature in order to know it most and the contemplation process guided her in the achievement of that goal. The contemplation process is immediate, objective, and does not follow the regular pattern of poets from her time, because Dickinson was

the poet who followed her perception and her experience and this resulted in the most intimate instant captions human beings were able to catch.

4.2 Certainty and uncertainty about the natural world

Exercising imagination, Dickinson creates moments of intensive life, focuses on the good points of living creatures, and wishes to be the observer who is searching for the true things, even when dealing with the world of possibilities. She is the active agent who works on existing objects, makes good use of permanent processes of creation, and expects a demanding pleasure. Such employment of effort may generate moments of certainty as well as uncertainty about what is observed.

In order to provide evidence for this the poem of the Four Trees, which she wrote in 1863 may be analyzed in its wholeness.

Four Trees – upon a solitary Acre –
Without Design
Or Order, or Apparent Action –
Maintain –

The Sun – upon a Morning meets them –
The Wind –
No nearer Neighbor – have they –
But God –

The Acre gives them – Place –
They – Him – Attention of Passer by –
Of Shadow, or of Squirrel, haply –
Or Boy –

What Deed is Theirs unto the General Nature –
What Plan
They severally – retard – or further –
Unknown – (P 742)

“Four trees – upon a solitary Acre –” is the main caption Dickinson tries to characterize throughout the poem. It would sound much easier – or more common –

if the poet began the poem describing what someone would normally see in an acre followed by common elements such as trees, for instance. Rather, the focus of the poem is on the little view in nature which is “Four trees”. “Upon a solitary acre –”, besides being followed by dashes, which invites the reader to concentrate on the specific view of a group of trees, displays distinctive and prominent quality.

The trees – which are four – are not among their plant family, but they are “four” individual trees in an Acre which is isolated due to its huge area. In the second and third lines, the poet adds some features to those trees which do not have a specific frame nor are specifically arranged or displaying any performing pretense. However, the fourth line states that they “Maintain –”, they stand there living by themselves and performing some specific function which might make the difference.

The contemplation process in this poem does not follow the normal pattern to be developed by the perception of a common human being. Sharon Leiter is right when affirming that this “striking landscape poem, widely analyzed by Dickinson scholars, deals with the poles of certainty and uncertainty, order and disorder, design and randomness in the natural world” (Leiter, 2007).

Few human beings may contemplate four trees in an acre, especially trees that are isolated and standing by themselves. It is intended to solve the paradigm of perception that people generally have which is to have the traditional ordered pattern of things. Such pattern might include a wide row of trees, accompanied by hills to the back, animals on the ground or birds flying, the sun and the wind. Of course, by the poet’s approach, sentimentalism is avoided and the ability to follow the contemplation process in a straightforward pattern without interference from inner feelings prevails.

The concentration on the perception process continues in the second stanza, when there is the recalling for the elements which may compose the caption to be created. The poet disposes elements in specific positions and places them as precisely as the pieces in a chess game. Each piece of a chess game performs a specific function or stands for a determined attribute. Such function and attribute may be perceived in the poem. “The Sun – “, the first element the poet uses to compose the image, is followed by the dash with the purpose of emphasizing the process of creation and reflection. “The Sun” is connected to its attribute, which is to meet the

trees upon “a” morning – not every morning – since it is not every morning that human beings may enjoy the star that sustains life by its light and heat. “The Wind –” is also introduced, being possibly connected to movement – something alive. Nevertheless, the poet preferred not to qualify the wind; instead using a dash to allow readers to elaborate their perception of the wind in their mind.

When there is expectation of quietness from the four trees standing there, all alone, without any neighbors, the poet introduces “God”: the element which would not be expected to be introduced since it is conditioned to a superior level. Moreover, she poses God in a privileged position, provides Him with specific attributes and features Him as the supernal element connected to nature.

By the third stanza, the poet recalls the Acre again to focus on the interaction between “Acre” and “Four Trees”. Both elements perform specific roles and show specific attributes, since the Acre gives room to the trees and the trees, on the other hand, give the Acre the attention of passers by, shade, squirrel, or by change, the boy who may be represented here as human beings in general. It seems meaningful that without the trees, the Acre would not be pondered with the four elements – passers, shadows, squirrel, and boy – which by coincidence have the same number as the trees. As it seems to be – at least at first sight – a non–qualified caption, it turns to be a very orderly row of elements which share specific and interactive roles.

Finally, in the last stanza, the poet is amazed by the caption she was able to capture. Even though she gives few elements, their importance to the place and position for which they stand in relation to nature is certain. The poet then is unable to preview causes and consequences because she is uncertain to take a step or a move during the performing of the task – even going forward or backward as people do with pieces when they play chess.

By the marvelous caption Dickinson gets – despite the scarce elements – she is not confident to take any movement because she does not know in which direction to go. Therefore, the poet ends the poem with her (in)definitely “Unknown” followed by the dash which may allow the continuation of the reflection process in which readers may have been engaged. However, there is some certainty about Dickison’s search for beauty and meaning in nature besides seeking to see what is beyond what

her eyes regularly saw. That was what she arduously believed in and the reason for her life to be authentic with regards her beliefs and her detaching position concerning nature when facing it in order to solve its mystery.

5. THE PERCEPTION OF NATURE

Most of Emily Dickinson's effort on writing was focused upon nature and such dominion became a concern about the inherent meaning of the natural world and its relation to it. Engaged in the task of elaborating the process of perceiving what nature is, Dickinson wills to stand far from the outside world to live privately in her bubble where she wants to live intensely in order to be able to observe what for everyone is so common. Representing her contact within the view, she gets the fullness of perceptions and the tunes of nature, not just to herself, but also mainly to her readers.

> Touch lightly Nature's sweet Guitar
> Unless thou know'st the Tune
> Or every Bird will point at thee
> Because a Bard too soon – (P 1389)

Nature is not a general thing; its beauty is revealed by the combination of the apprehension of perceptions and its natural objects. William Wordsworth is still considered a prophet of nature, but his name is associated with the village and the lake where he settled, which were featured by the special features of that region. Schenk (1979) says that "there are two sides to Nature, we are told in *The Prelude,* emotion and calm, both of which satisfy deep human cravings". Wordsworth emphasizes the state of tranquility as a contribution to the act of contemplation which focused on preceding moments of vision in which he had seen nature.

Nature also fascinated Emily Dickinson; however, nature was a source of liberation. She was not a redoubtable walker nor spent at least four hours a day

sauntering through the woods and over the hills as Wordsworth did; Dickinson restricted herself to the range of her room, the conservatory, and her garden. In a warm climate, being able to go out and work in the garden was a source of liberation and harmony. Thoreau had also been fond of outdoor life and was also a redoubtable walker who traveled around carrying under his arms an old “music–book to press plants, and in his pocket his diary and pencil, a spyglass for birds, a microscope, jack–knife and twine” (Shenk, 1979).

Dickinson compiled a Herbarium during her school days and kept a conservatory at The Homestead for plants and flowers; however, it is known that Dickinson did not walk in her garden with all those equipments as Thoreau did. Dickinson carried garden tools to the conservatory and her garden – which, according to the picture bellow, is so lovely until today.

PICTURE 02 - Emily Dickinson’s garden – The Homestead, Amherst - picture taken by the author on May 07th, 2008

It is indispensable to mention that Dickinson's white dress - thought to be the poet' only garment in the late 1870s and early 1880s - had a pocket at the right side in which she kept her scraps of papers on which she wrote down her observations about the world. Those scraps of papers were later transformed into Dickinson's fascicles.

Nature is not a beneficent goodness for Dickinson nor does she worship nature as a solemn temple at the center of her observations. On the contrary, she gets the tunes of nature and develops her own perception of it by working as a craftsperson writing down in letters and poems how far her perceptions can reach. Having a good understanding of her genius's mind, making good use of imagination and attempting to develop her ability to unfold the contemplation process; she gets the best caption of nature and natural objects around her. Imagination, natural objects, and instant captions were important for Dickinson's artful language, the attempt to understand the mystery of nature, the apprehension of perceptions on nature's attributes, and the large number of poems which are at the readers' disposal.

5.1 Nature is alive

If nature is to be considered as an important element for the understanding of different processes in life, then powerful nuances about it assemble broadest precision. As in Emily Dickinson's poems nature may not constitute mimetic aspects, it seems to be coherent that there is not a description or a continuation process of natural environment in her poems in the same way as it is seen in Wordsworth's work of art.

If we take a close look at *The Prelude*, for example, we can identify that for Wordsworth there were times "when all things seemed to him to be alive." (Shenk, 1979) since he believed in the holiness of all living things. The materialization, the mimetic thickness, and the usage of metaphors are very rare. In fact, is nature alive? That questioning may not seem a concern about nature itself. For Dickinson, nature is not something ruled by itself just as she is certain that she is free from the misconception that everything is nature. Emily Dickinson deals with that dilemma

very interestingly, since changes in nature really captivated her. The changing seasons, for example, were a mystery to which Dickinson paid close attention because the seasons avoid stableness and retract to immortality.

Summer begins to have the look
Peruser of enchanting Book
Reluctantly but sure perceives
A gain upon the backward leaves –

Autumn begins to be inferred
By millinery of the cloud
Or deeper color in the shawl
That wraps the everlasting hill.

The eye begins its avarice
A meditation chastens speech
Some Dyer of a distant tree
Resumes his gaudy industry.

Conclusion is the course of all
At most to be perennial
And then elude stability
Recalls to immortality. (P 1682)

The change of the seasons was alive for Dickinson since she would be able to unfold visions in meditation by recalling a deep apprehension of perceptions, and search for immortality. Her joy was indeed complete, as she mentioned in a letter to Mrs. Strong before the middle of June

> Your joy would indeed be fell, could you sit as I, at my window, and hear the boundless birds, and every little while feel the breath of some new flower! Oh, do you love the spring, and isn't it brothers and sisters, and blessed, ministering spirits unto you and me, and us all?[50] (Todd, 2003, p. 52).

In her poem written in 1877, Dickinson was afraid to confront nature since she felt excluded by nature's inner secret, which is rendered with haunting effectiveness. Without specifying what everyone knows, she multiplies her awe by turning the poet speechless.

[50] Letter to Mrs. A. P. Strong of 1852 - Sabbath Day.

What mystery pervades a well!
The water lives so far –
A neighbor from another world
Residing in a jar

Whose limit none have ever seen,
But just his lid of glass –
Like looking every time you please
In an abyss's face!

The grass does not appear afraid,
I often wonder he
Can stand so close and look so bold
At what is awe to me.

Related somehow they may be,
The sedge stands next the sea –
Where he is floorless
And does no timidity betray

But nature is a stranger yet;
The ones that cite her most
Have never passed her haunted house,
Nor simplified her ghost.

To pity those that know her not
Is helped by the regret
That those who know her, know her less
The nearer her they get. (P 1400)

The well is so near and yet so far from man's comprehension; despite being so simple, yet it is an insoluble mystery. The conclusive metaphor leads to a final definition of the poet's relationship to external nature. There are the ones who assume that literal representation of nature is possible; however, it is also said there are presumably few poets who know nature since knowledge is predicated on the recognition that nature is a haunted house.

Emily Dickinson was close to certain Romantic poets, but there were very important insights which Romantics anticipated, recapitulated, or criticized. Emily

Dickinson covered most of her tracks, accomplished her affinities to her goals, and she was a genius who looked across the centuries whispering her message to the world. Admirers have explored some possibilities for enjoying her critically by talking about her in a substantially different way, so as to define her intellectual characteristics. If it is not mentioned that she was a genius, it has to be said that she owned a deep genial inspiration which was also alive. It could be better to call her an inspired poet than the autodidactic since the poet as well as her verses, nature, and herself were all alive.

5.2 Natural Objects and Imagination

Dickinson assesses her priorities when developing captions from the natural objects and firmly establishes her own poetic primacy because she asserts her ability to overcome the process of creation. Captures of natural elements result from imagination and apprehension of perception. As the power of poets depends upon the ability to overcome the uncertainties of the contemplation process, Dickinson emphasizes the necessity to define her own poetic views which connected her to the natural world. By linking perception to the instant captions of natural elements she felt satisfied.

Poets can establish their own circumference, as Anderson (1966) remarks about Dickinson's art: "this is why she elected to live in the world of perceptions, where she could be a maker and achieve immortality in her art". Only imagination and a keen perception can create the view of a Spider that gives function and importance to the web, causing fiery emotions to others and making it possible that instant captions of little trivial things may become marvelous events. Joanne Feit Diehl (1981) also mentions The Spider as an example of how little ones need to rely upon the external nature for support when taking into consideration the fact that the web is the characteristic of an artist.

A Spider sewed at Night
Without a Light
Upon an Arc of White.
If Ruff it was of Dame
Or Shroud of Gnome

Himself himself inform.

Of Immortality
His Strategy
Was Physiognomy. (P 1138)

As the spider sewed in the darkness of the night to develop the web, which is dependent upon its maker, to the same extend are the features of the artist. Dickinson textured infinite possibilities of views which display dependent graces of importance and recognition to their creator joining hands with the spider in the sense that the spider is deprived of a receptive audience and recognition like the web, which may be destroyed by someone at any moment. Leiter (2007) also agrees that this poem is one of Dickinson's most brilliant, condensed, and enigmatic vision of the "poet–Spider", working at night, as it is known she did, with only "the light" of her own inner vision. Like Dickinson, this spider sews, rather than weaves, as spiders are generally said to do.

Dickinson's instant captions may be derived from natural objects, as the spider; however, they also result from the combination of the elements of nature and the infinite possibilities of perception and experience which cooperate to the world of Circumference, such as the web boundaries of a spider web. "My business is to create", said the poet Blake; "My business is circumference", says the poet Emily Dickinson. A poem written four years later than the poem above, implies a warning to poets who might be tempted to offer their poems to a conforming public; the spider is the image of a poet at work; in a dark world, the lonely spider–artist works in bright circumference, with unperceived hands and private resources just as Dickinson works out her captions, which are carefully taken from her private bubble.

The Spider as an Artist
Has never been employed –
Though his surpassing Merit
Is freely certified

By every Broom and Bridget
Throughout a Christian Land –
Neglected Son of Genius
I take thee by the Hand – (P 1275)

Gelpi (1965) agrees that “Emily gladly sympathized with the spider–artist.” In isolation, unappreciated, and despite the most persistent efforts of conventions, Dickinson – like the spider – is free to create and, totally independently, does not have to follow any convention or predecessor. She desires to avoid influence from the outer world because she aims to get the ecstasy of immortality and the power to bear her private world which provides her proper environment for creation. Gelpi also emphasizes that

> She wrote neither as a visionary nor as a genius but as a craftsman making order out of the fragment of mutability. The only question was how durable one’s web was; and durability depended on how well one practiced one’s “Trade”. She could only trust with Thoreau and Keats that if the materials and the art were pure, the result could not be other than wonderful (Gelpi, 1965, p. 152).

Dickinson practiced the labor of skill so well that her poetry lasted her life time and it has lasted up to our contemporary days. Materials were pure; her art was dense and the result is a work of art that is appreciated until today. The need to pursue a constant reflexive and questioning experience informs Dickinson’s perception of living and how individuals learn by living. The direct contrast process of happiness and pain is essential for her to discover the definition of mysteries that intrigue her. The answers may be revealed just after she has stopped wondering what they might be; however, the period of wondering was what counted for her, because she found the ecstasy of living in it.

Keller (1980) recalls the words Dickinson expressed in one of her letters to Mrs. Holland, “The Crisis of the sorrow of so many years is all that tires me”[51] in order to show that Dickinson really believes that hell qualifies the human being and it gives her greater awareness of life since in her concept, hopelessness is good, dark is light and damnation is fulfilling. As she did not fear Christianity, she triggered poetry from her imaginative resource to her spiritual resource, aimed at observing nature in the outer world despite keeping herself inside her bubble. That strategy resulted in a creative source of poetry that, in some sense, is her image – the artist, who sewed at night.

The signs of doubt and uncertainty about nature may be embedded in danger, like the image of the poisoned honey and the hungry bee in poem 782. The poet

[51] Letter to Mrs. Holland of 1883 – three years before Dickinson’s death.

transforms the outer world into another kind of school where lessons, mysteries, and meanings are revealed through several possibilities of images. The image of the "finest Honey", the glorious element, or the outstanding individual may lie embedded in danger and pain while they face the experience of reality – the outside world.

There is an arid Pleasure –
As different from Joy –
As Frost is different from Dew –
Like element – are they –

Yet one – rejoices Flowers –
And one – the Flowers abhor –
The finest Honey – curdled –
Is worthless – to the Bee (P 782)

Sometimes reality is not easy to cope with and Dickinson was aware of the fact that, inside her bubble, her reality was different because she could live by her own rules in her world of possibilities. Dickinson and Keats show different versions of how to cope with the reality which they experience; while Keats felt that sorrow offered pleasure and release for imagination, Dickinson faced the impossibility of escaping sorrow, and used it to stimulate her work for creation. Art may create perceptual renewal and calm bliss whereas life may offer a distinct and essential experience.

In his book *Love Poetry Out Loud* Robert Rubin remarks that

> When I read poems to myself, I sought to listen for the voices of the poets who wrote them. These are acts of love. I invite you to read poems out loud to yourself. If they speak to you, try reading them to your lover, or to the person you wish to be your lover, or to your ex–lover, or to friends, or to anyone else (Rubin, 2007).

As she seeks listening voices, Dickinson wants to keep her own voice proclaiming beauty in the poems by the instant captions on nature. She prefers to remain in her private bubble living intensively and wishes to keep questioning and writing verses following her own writing conventions.

Dickinson's attempt to search for beauty and the apprehension of nature pushes her toward the mystery of nature because her experience of beauty is very intense. She wants to be a poet and in order to be one she turns toward an easy

acceptance of her life condition besides continuing to work and developing perception. Bradley (1967) asserts that Dickinson possessed the most acute awareness of sensory experience and psychological actualities since she expressed discoveries with frankness and intensity. “She remains incomparable because her originality sets her apart from all others, but her poems shed the unmistakable light of greatness.” As for Flowers and Bees, the poet has enough familiarities or priorities.

> Of Nature I shall have enough
> When I have entered these
> Entitled to a Bumble bee’s
> Familiarities. (P 1220)

Selecting the keen focus of her attention according to her substantial arrangement, she feels open to proceed to what deserves more attention, even within the problematic tension of both polarities: natural objects and imagination. Being a nature lover, Dickinson often brings something from the garden to study – a flower, a leaf, a mushroom, a clover, a dead bee. At all times of the day and at night, with the oil lamp, which she used to write at night on the table, the process of writing continued throughout her lifetime. Diehl (1981) affirms that Dickinson “redefines nature according to her priorities. The extent to which the exclusive self shapes images around its singular demands informs her distinctive use of language.” Dickinson exerts much effort and energy toward the definition of the views by affirming the power of language over the external objects she attentively selects to observe.

When the bonds between nature and imagination are cut, natural views achieve a peculiar condition of superiority because they no longer depend upon external reality; they adhere to life within imagination. Poem 986, “A Narrow Fellow in the Grass”, is an example of Dickinson’s priority on natural objects which no longer depends on external reality. Even though several people have never met “this Fellow”[52], Dickinson detaches it with as much positive attributes as her imagination can get.

As Dickinson deals with circumference, she tests the limits of the process even though she cannot solve the polarity completely. Paul de Man (1984) remarks

[52] Quotations are mine.

that: “The tension between the two polarities never ceases to be problematic”. When Dickinson is able to dissolve the ties that involve nature and imagination, she is able to create a peculiar condition or a natural view that does not rely on the external reality or on a possible audience, since “Her message is committed to hands I cannot see” (P 441).

As the range of meanings of captions has its limit in the external natural objects; their features will be amplified by the poet’s creativity. The precise, inner, and condensed language that Dickinson uses in the poems allows her to establish the limits and range of the process. Developing the skill on apprehension of perceptions, she controls the approach of instant captions and gets deeply concentrated on the acquired views despite not knowing who her audience will be. That circumstance is not relevant for her since that process of correspondence might certainly be achieved, with or without difficulties, in the same way that her letter to the world, which she is unable to know whose hands will get or will judge it.

> This is my letter to the World
> That never wrote to Me –
> The simple News that Nature told –
> With tender Majesty
>
> Her Message is committed
> To Hands I cannot see –
> For love of Her – Sweet – countrymen –
> Judge tenderly – of Me (P 441)

Such correspondence process sounds to be unilateral but it is not. Sharon Leiter reinforces that the World “did write to Emily Dickinson. Far from the unknown, neglected figure she makes herself out to be, she had numerous correspondents to whom she confided her poetry and who responded to it.” Leiter (2007) These correspondents included her sister–in–law, Susan Huntington Gilbert Dickinson – who commented on Dickinson’s writings regularly; T. W. Higginson, the eminent writer whom she engaged as her literary mentor in 1862; and the Springfield Republican editor, Samuel Bowles – who, if not wholly attuned to her work, was happy to read and publish some of her production.

It is quite conclusive that Dickinson was not alone in the process of correspondence in the same way that she was not alone in the development of the contemplation process of which natural objects and imagination are part. The ability to develop that process liberated Dickinson from ambiguity, which was one of the basic characteristics of poetry from Romanticism. Romantics developed abundant imagery which coincided with a large amount of natural objects, so the theme of imagination was connected to the theme of nature. Paul de Man (1984) affirms that "The image is essentially a kinetic process: it does not dwell in a static state where the two terms could be separated and reunited by analysis." Therefore, the combination of natural objects and imagination is possible if the source of nature and the poetic language are not reported.

The image is usually a self–reflection which originates material properties when "the structure of the image has become that of self–reflection. The poet is no longer contemplating a thing in nature, but the working of his own mind; the outside world is used as a pretext and a mirror, and it loses all its substance" (Paul de Man, 1984). Such production of the mind might be what Emily Dickinson calls the inlets and outlets.

> Such are the inlets of the mind –
> His outlets – would you see
> Ascend with me the eminence
> Of immortality – (P 1421)

The outlets are as important as the inlets; however, the outlets are more substantial because they carry meanings which are gathered during the working process in the mind. Keller (1980) outlines what William Carlos Williams thought of Emily Dickinson as "someone who wrote rebelliously and with authenticity" because her images are loaded with values and things that do not mean values.

The present study agrees with the evidence that Dickinson wrote with authenticity, but does not conform to Williams' assertion that she wrote rebelliously because the poetry she wrote results from the ecstasy of living in her private world, not from revolting against it. Otherwise she would not produce such amazing and delightful captions. Dickinson believes in the views of her poetry as her deliverance; therefore, she invokes views that describe natural objects – like The Bee, The

Flower, The Robin – in order to articulate the wish to convert the external world to her private imagination. Her meaningful captions attest the primacy of her isolated creation process, such as her views written in 1864.

> Because the Bee may blameless hum
> For Thee a Bee do I become
> List even unto Me.
> Because the Flowers unafraid
> May lift a look on thine, a Maid
> Always a Flower would be.
>
> Nor Robins, Robins need not hide
> When Thou upon their Crypts intrude
> So Wings bestow on Me
> Or Petals, or a Dower of Buzz
> That Bee to ride, or Flower of Furze
> I that way worship Thee. (P 869)

The image and the presence of the flower and the bee – which are introduced in the early poems of Dickinson – are images of the poet's duality: the flower may be the emblem of her desire to be delivered up to the domination of a Master, and the bee is the deceitful Master, who may be a casual lover. Such suggestion may agree with what Gelpi (1965) says, "Emily Dickinson could think of herself as the flower or the bee, as the poet possessed or the poet possessing." She sets the rules for imagination while being ruled by regulations she has established for herself. She selects the words with which she decides to work and is the Master as well as the Scholar.

The experiments with language – outlined by Cristanne Miller – match the assumption that the word becomes her main craft object because most of Dickinson's experiments in language aim at converting the word into a living thing. She also aims at appropriating the vocabulary of nature into her poetry creation – "That Bee to ride, or Flower of Furze / I that way worship Thee" (P 869).

By using the language of the world – which becomes the language of her poetry and is developed by her mind – Dickinson expresses the alternative origins of words "Because the Bee may blameless hum / For Thee a Bee do I become / List even unto Me." (P 869) Dickinson selects a specific word and by its natural world

intensifies the feature which surrounds the natural activity. Therefore, it is no surprise that Dickinson conceives the act of writing a poem as a highly charged event which is compared to a blameless Bee being hummed.

The effort of being a poet and the permanent moments of writing poems are stressed by Bowra (1961) as the main subjects for Dickinson. Involved in that process, she compares language, which strengthens the analogies between the poet – who is constantly confronting internal concepts – and Emily Dickinson, the person who faces natural objects. The Bee and the Flower may have affected her potentiality like the Robin did for William Blake. Bowra (1961) considered the Robin of William Blake a spiritual thing which was "not merely a visible bird, but the powers which a bird embodies and symbolizes." Dickinson also uses the bird Robin in many of her poems and it may also seem a free spirit; however, The Robin is a natural element which is embodied by power when captured in specific moments or places; meanwhile, bees may blameless buzz, flowers may lift a look at them, but Robins do not need to hide.

If nature is compared to the caption captured in poem 790, "Nature – The Gentlest Mother is,", the condition of immediate presence is something undeniable. Based on imagination, nature is something real and an omnipotent entity that deserves irrevocable and infinite attention. The condition of presence is unique because it is not simply the Mother who seems to be an occasional voice among the Aisles, but it is something that adheres to consciousness and achieves an identity beyond the merely natural source.

Everything that readers know about the timid prayer, which is incited by the minutest Cricket, is the substantial feature of the caption that Dickinson describes. Nature no longer follows the readers' expectations; instead, nature assumes properties that originate in the poet's mind, and consequently provides unusual sensation on readers' imaginable experience, with such power that readers become amazed by the views they experience.

> Nature – the Gentlest Mother is,
> Impatient of no Child –
> The feeblest – or the waywardest –
> Her Admonition mild –

In Forest – and the Hill –
By Traveller – be heard –
Restraining Rampant Squirrel –
Or too impetuous Bird –

How fair Her Conversation –
A Summer Afternoon –
Her Household – Her Assembly –
And when the Sun go down –

Her Voice among the Aisles
Incite the timid prayer
Of the minutest Cricket –
The most unworthy Flower –

When all the Children sleep –
She turns as long away
As will suffice to light Her lamps –
Then bending from the Sky –

With infinite Affection
And infiniter Care –
Her Golden finger on Her Lip –
Wills silence – Everywhere – (P 790)

The image of the gentlest mother refers to Dickinson's conception of both poetic inspiration and experience. Keller (1980) reinforces that the ability to act and sound like the gentlest mother transforms it into the voice of the poet who brands for an audience and evokes a positively charming human being who is charged by powerful features. Based on Dickinson's power, however, nature may mean more than just the golden finger willing silence; it incites the readers to a conversation beyond the natural process, which may remain invisible and unexperienced.

The image may reveal affection and care while the poet realizes the necessity to show the potentiality of a Summer Afternoon. Nature experiences the creative action of a gentle mother, then the force of language itself, which increases the powered caption of the moment. Although Dickinson conceives nature as "impatient

of no child", the poet describes its power and gentility in private terms, experiencing the intense pleasure of describing the actual strong attributes and attitudes.

The gentle experience offers Dickinson new light which glows inside her bubble and indulges the possibility of a Mother with no child capturing strong features by proper conversation. Therefore, the poet conceives the dialogue as something interactive, as it is the poet's and nature's interaction, although they result in new captions. The approach of recounting the dialogue and interaction between Mother and children depends on identifying the stages of its origins. Dickinson's captions are generally tied to conversational patterns which penetrate and act into each other just as she, for instance, controls the elements of nature – the Bird – the Hill, the Cricket – by absorbing mutual interchange of power and strength to get mutual control over perception and the element observed.

Nevertheless, Joanne Feit Diehl reminds that when Emily Dickinson represents a projection of herself, she internalizes the forces that surround her and assumes power, recognizes that each image contains the intimate and specific feature of the moment which this study coins as the instant captions. Those captions can be identified with life by the contemplation process and associated to the natural elements by labeling them.

> We introduce ourselves
> To Planets and to Flowers
> But with ourselves
> Have etiquettes
> Embarrassments
> And awes (P 1214)

Metaphors of "etiquettes" might be connected to life and nature which, by imagination, result in enjoyable moments. Dickinson's concept of privileged moments lies in the moment of inspiration – "Your thoughts don't have words everyday" (P 1452); then the artist is visited by another power: the word, which to such an extent is managed and crafted by the poet. By exercising the captions from their origins in the natural world; therefore, these views tell the readers what are Dickinson's values and how she conceives the act of writing poems – with such infrequency and, sometimes, incomprehension.

Your thoughts don't have words everyday
They come a single time
Like signal esoteric sips
Of the communion Wine
Which while you taste so native seems
So easy so to be
You cannot comprehend its price
Nor its infrequency (P 1452)

Concerning the natural world, the language that Emily Dickinson uses aims at describing the process that may allow her to pass beyond the limits and barriers of nature. She takes the Bee and the Flower, for instance, out of their natural contexts to reassign them later with the inner value that imparts life. Such inner and private identification of natural captions signifies a complete change of the natural world, whose reflexive identity works toward achieving a definite independence for the captions themselves. Definitely, these captions result from her private voice, are developed in her private bubble, and proclaim views which come from her experience.

Dickinson places her poems against the most powerful voices of her generation because she writes poems that slightly aim at proving the strength of her imagination against the obstinacy of life and the control of a contrasted nature. Bloom (1973) considers Dickinson as "one of the strongest poets of the second half of the nineteenth-century because she got the style which retains primacy over her precursors." Although Dickinson shares with Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, and Emerson a faith in the sovereignty of imagination and a belief in its power, she distrusts nature, questions its directness and superiority, and insists upon the primacy of experience and perception.

Emily Dickinson contends that nature cannot be trusted to answer her most persistent questions, such as, the reasons for suffering, the reasons for dying or living, and the reasons for mystery. The forms of her poems reflect their subjects at the same time as they challenge the intelligence of the readers and lead them to achieve startling definitions and views. Some critics say that Dickinson's poems reflect Emerson's views, since: "It is from Emerson that she learns the terms of the

struggle and what she needs to conquer – to write poems that win from nature the triumph of freedom for the imagination." Diehl (1981)

Albert Gelpi (1965), on the other hand, affirms that it was Benjamin Newton who taught Emily Dickinson what to read and what authors to admire; Newton introduced Dickinson to Emerson and gave her a copy of his *Poems*. In fact, through Emerson, Dickinson realized that the visionary faith in nature was "the vocation of the Poet" and the controlling image of poets as readers of the universe leads them to observe particularities, study the poets' relationship with the text, and find what are the new perceptions and experiences.

Dickinson's voice constructed the writer–reader relationship and this concept was acceptable to Buckingham (1993), who agrees that the nineteenth–century readers respond to Dickinson as "a friend and a correspondent who is passionate, bold, brilliant, attractive" whose love of presence evokes high feelings and emotions in them. The poet is also a careful reader because every fact in nature carries meaning in nature; therefore, in order to develop the process the poet is an essential element too. Besides, the production of poetry permitted Dickinson to escape from pain and external events because they seemed to be relieved in the design of her art which was produced inside the bubble. Questionings about artists regarding them as active seers, or assertive geniuses, or even skilled craftspeople, would speculate the interrelationship of the poet and the experience.

> The Martyr Poets – did not tell –
> But wrought their Pang in syllable –
> That when their mortal name be numb –
> Their mortal fate – encourage Some –
> The Martyr Painters – never spoke –
> Bequeathing – rather – to their Work –
> That when their conscious fingers cease –
> Some seek in Art – the Art of Peace – (P 544)

Possible answers to those interrogations about poets and experience would concern the notions of Dickinson's work which correspond to the opposing tendencies that governed the course of her life. Miller (1987) concludes that "all is in nature, and the force of the poet's imagination determines his success in hearing and reading the natural world". The ability to read, comprehend a text, or catch the instant

captions made by the poet are part of human capacity; however, the technique of repeating connections, the sequential presentations of reflections, and the relation of these reflective views to the contemplation process imply the establishment of connections which is reinforced by Miller's assertion: "Understanding requires the ability to draw connections" (Miller, 1987).

In Emerson's book *Experience* (1960), he envisaged that people usually "animate what they can see and, at the same time, they see only what they animate." If that is true, Dickinson's process of animating natural objects is a visual image that demands presence and a keen sense of apprehension of perception which are not shared by every human being. Poets are language–makers, since poets reside in visions and are visions themselves. Dickinson, on the other hand, works out her own answer as she asserts that nature is not a holy text ready to reveal everything if it is properly read, but the full knowledge of nature can never be achieved because the view is dominated by people's eyes.

Nature becomes an antagonist for Dickinson, that is, a deep mystery that keeps its power and withholds its secrets as it dazzles. No matter how well one individual reads or imagines how nature is, the text withdraws and guards its final lesson: departing from the natural world to depend exclusively upon the individual. Consequently, nature does not become a divine ground but a place which fails to protect itself as Dickinson aims to accommodate her dilemma of what she cannot see and continually wants to describe.

Who saw no sunrise cannot say
The Countenance 'twould be.
Who guess at seeing, guess at loss
Of the Ability.

The Emigrant of Light, it is
Afflicted for the Day.
The Blindness that beheld and blest –
And could not find its Eye. (P 1018)

Dickinson seeks to achieve the correspondence between nature and her vision of it; however, her apprehension of perception must understand their relationship. Martin (1967) emphasizes that if nature provides the characteristics of

simultaneous joy for Emily Dickinson; then ecstasy is also reflected in the poems. Dickinson isolated herself – first by circumstance – from the social community, then from the literary community, and so she preserved her private world intact. The poems compete for a space which is beyond the moment of nature; they provide a retrospective vision of life, that is, the freedom of evaluating nature after reflection. Based on imagination, the poet's procedure is to witness the moments of experience which potentially experience and view the natural elements in order to discover their meaning.

So the Eyes accost – and sunder
In an audience –
Stamped – occasionally – forever –
So may Countenance

Entertain – without addressing
Countenance of One
In a Neighboring Horizon –
Gone – as soon as known – (P 752)

In the same way that eyes approach nature and approval is achieved by the audience, they are also broken apart as soon as they are perceived. It is their secret, their strategy to keep mystery and to keep their space untouched so the secret of the images will be revealed only after life departs. Dickinson explores the power and states the potency of expansion for the eye since she cannot rely on a central view or on a single superficial image; but on circumference.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1960) asserts that the eyes of the observer are the gifts of the poets and they offer them imaginative freedom from the circumstances of life. Human mind provides consciousness that lends meaning to a powerless nature as the potency of expansion for the eye stated by Emerson. "The eye is the first circle; the horizon which it forms is the second; and throughout nature this primary figure is repeated without end. It is the highest emblem in the cipher of the world."

In Dickinson's poems, the observer is a spy who focuses inward, not towards nature. Dickinson – Emerson apprehends the same way – gets the origin of power in order to develop the contemplation process within her private bubble. Nevertheless, Dickinson personalizes the vision of immanent power that does not run through every

person and cannot be apprehended by anyone who observes it. The volcanic force is not associated with the universe of men, but with the isolated soul which animates every man.

A still – Volcano – Life –

That flickered in the night –
When it was dark enough to do
Without erasing sight –

A quiet – Earthquake Style –
Too subtle to suspect
By natures this side Naples –
The North cannot detect

The Solemn – Torrid – Symbol –
The lips that never lie –
Whose hissing Corals part – and shut –
And Cities – ooze away – (P 601)

Nature and Dickinson remain a mystery which is resistant to the power of masterful intelligence when the mediating experience of nature deceives more than it satisfies and Dickinson defines her ecstasy as living the steps to be ascended into her bubble. In there, the flames are self–generated and created by her power so she can get in and out through the action of writing poems. Diehl (1981) asserts that the power inundates still and mysteriously the single life which erupts is unable to retract, insisting on individuality and destruction.

Dickinson's poems display the wisdom of her strategy in order to achieve her desired goal: the power to get instant captures of nature. Her poems move less into the natural world than to a projected view of possibilities that lie beyond the outside world. Dismissing the outside world, Dickinson maintains the only truth on which she can rely, which is dependant upon what she observes and what she can apprehend from her perceptions. Her devotion to women writers' work and symbolism implies her ambition to create poetry that would express her priorities; however, her experiments with language are more radical because her writing is informed by a deep sense of freedom and inherent to a deep sense of discontinuity which is the gift and the compensation of the missing outside world. The most profound influence on

subsequent poets may have led to her rediscovery as a major poet, perhaps the most important in nineteenth–century America.

Breaking from the Romantic tradition in bold and original ways: in her willingness to confront the male tradition and to win a deeply original voice, Dickinson refuses to accept consolations not wholly her own. Diehl (1981) asserts that Dickinson's individual freedom and her willingness to take risks acknowledged and strengthened her powerful courage and this confirmed her boldness so that no women poet need ever again feel so alone.

Bode (1971) does emphasize that Dickinson writes about nature "so brilliantly that she is now ranked as one of America's great poets." Her poetry came out in bursts, her poems are short, many of them are based on a single image, and she does write about nature. At least for Dickinson, nature is not inspiration; it is something similar in such a way that it allows analogies. Her poems about nature are filled with feelings and instant captions that she took from her private close look at them. She sought to find herself by losing herself, by opening a particular relation to the universe as an experience of immediate imagery moments that go on while others come as the sun that rests and shines.

Rests at Night
The Sun from shining,
Nature – and some Men –
Rest at Noon – some Men –
While Nature
And the Sun – go – on – (P 714)

Dickinson's poems exercises the readers' imagination through living experiences and natural objects which may be borrowed for an indefinitely short instant, but may never be bought or repeated because they are unique.

Perhaps you'd like to buy a flower,
But I could never sell –
If you would like to *borrow,*
Until the Daffodil

Unties her yellow Bonnet
Beneath the village door,

Until the Bees, from Clover rows
Their Hock, and Sherry, draw,

Why, I will lend until just then,
But not an hour more! (P 134)

Enriching the appreciation of the familiar world of nature, which does not seem familiar to readers at first sight, Dickinson also awakened new instant captions and visions of that world. Such visions of the world of nature rise from an outlook not shared by all men but shared with the human beings who are setting a conventional scheme for life, and results in inspiration to get involved with the mysteries which are enclosed to nature.

In the introduction to the book *An Invitation to poetry* Robert Pinsky stresses that “readers can generally add the gesture of invitation, that is, readers are invited to taste something good and then offer it to other readers” (Pinsky, 2004). Indeed, Emily Dickinson’s life was based on invitations to perception, elaboration and perfection of the instant captions about nature and natural objects around her. The taste of that invitation brought her fulfillment and happiness in the place she decided to live: in her room, in her garden, in her private space: her private bubble.

5.3 Instant captions

Dickinson was able to manage a strong sense of awareness, displayed an outstanding presence condition from her private bubble, and wished to capture instant captions which were meaningful to her whether they were landscapes, objects, views, and so on. The Dickinsonian elements of nature reveal analogies that enlarge and alter Dickinson’s own vision of the observed objects and nature itself. Therefore, she seizes upon an object or the similarity of objects, elaborates the process of apprehension, and transforms them into unexpected captions just by using her perception, her experience, and the selective lexicon.

In the poem “Bee! I’m Expecting you!” (P1035), for example, Dickinson considers The Bee less an “unexpected common animal” than a “due someone”, because she is not concerned with the concept of truth and reality which may be

naughty in themselves, such as the Bee which is mostly referred to as an unpleasant insect because bees may sting when they approach human beings. The important feature is that, despite Bees and Human Beings generally do not get along very well; Bees get along very well with animals, birds, and greens. In fact, Dickinson is interested in her perception that "more than compensates for the sacrifice of the negligible phenomenal existence" (Gelpi, 1965). That special glimpse or caption of a common animal, like the Bee – which the poet introduces with positive and special attributes – makes the difference when readers read the poem.

Other animals also get noble features when are called to participate in Dickinson's environment. Charles Anderson (1966), in his book *Emily Dickinson's Poetry: Stairway of Surprise*, analyses another domestic animal and its friendly presence in Dickinson's poem.

> The Rat is the concisest Tenant.
> He pays no Rent.
> Repudiates the Obligation –
> On Schemes intent
>
> Balking our Wit
> To sound or circumvent –
> Hate cannot harm
> A Foe so reticent –
> Neither Decree prohibit him –
> Lawful as Equilibrium. (P 1356)

The Rat of the poem is a special being and Anderson (1966) reminds that the presence of a rat "in the house is denied as shamed or only admitted with a shriek of terror. Yet she accepts him as an integral part of nature" (Anderson, 1966). For Anderson, even though man repudiates the rat, the poet places it as being the one who repudiates civilization besides being as necessary as any other element of natural order.

The instant caption of the rat as a concise tenant highlights the good side of the animal referred to and confirms Emily Dickinson's idea that nature is something similar to inspiration in such a way that it allows analogies. Neither the Bee, nor the Rat in their real world inspires Dickinson but through them she is able to create

similarities to a whole negative concept into special, alluring, and bold attributes. The very instant caption of the welcome Rat who does not pay rent carries on a very positive attribute which highlights her domestic vocabulary. That same Rat might have inspired Elizabeth Spires to write the booklet *The Mouse of Amherst*, published seven years ago. Readers may get enchanted by the radiant words and visions of Emily – the poet – and Emmaline – the tenant Rat at the Homestead.

The strategy of subversion is constantly developed by Dickinson so the implications of her imagination present captions of overwhelming experiences and moments which are only available to people who remain open to nature and to nature's possibilities and experiences. Consequently, Dickinson's art may appeal to those people who may expect pleasure through views and images of unexpected light. Remembering Pinsky's words about art, they seem relevant in the sense of what poets, teachers, and readers in general have to say about art. "The authority of experience, knowledge, expertise cannot be replaced" (Pinsky, 2004). Such authority, Emily Dickinson developed extremely well.

Dickinson implied a tight selected community and the vision of a broad mind; therefore, Willis Buckingham (1993) may be right when he asserts that "Dickinson must be apprehended not comprehended." Her poetry is related to the conceptual terms and the vocabulary she uses to describe her views, private captions, and wide imaginative possibilities of thought, which she calls "circumference". "How do most people live without any thoughts? There are many people in the world, – you must have noticed them in the street, – how do they live? How do they get strength to put on their clothes in the morning?" [53] This is one of the strong remarkable statements Dickinson made to Mr. T. W. Higginson when he visited her. Joanne Feit Diehl states that Emily Dickinson applies the circumference to the core of her creative self and to the extent to which her poetry can carry her so the space which the poet explores is marked by imaginative limits and possibilities, since "circumference is the outer–most extent the imagination can reach" (Diehl, 1981).

Circumference was also Dickinson's most frequent metaphor for ecstasy and her way to get instant captions from nature.

[53] Dickinson's statement to T. W. Higginson during his first visit to Amherst.

> So from within the tightening circle – the circle tightening around herself by choice and despite choice, or, as Emerson said, "from temperament and from principle; with some unwillingness, too" - she negotiated with man, God, nature, and landscape to carry on the business of circumference (Gelpi, 1965, p. 175).

Gelpi defines circumference as the farthest boundary of human experience, "the Ultimate – of Wheels", which is possessed and also possesses the dare experience. Dickinson did not dare to go against the typical regulations of her time; instead she kept her experience for herself, wrote down poems on scraps of paper and left them safe within the drawer.

> When Bells stop ringing – Church – begins –
> The Positive – of Bells –
> When Cogs – stop – that's Circumference –
> The Ultimate – of Wheels. (P 633)

The reaction of the poet to circumferential experience placed her in contact with the world of experience so the views that Dickinson caught in order to write her poetry result in the wonderful panoramic views such as "Summer Hill", "Solitary Acre", "Learned Waters", "Retreating Mountain". In addition, the views are transformed into exceptional pictorial captions for the poet's own satisfaction not for the views of critics as most poets usually do.

> While beauty had a self–subsisting and purposive harmony which was adapted to our judgment and imagination and which made the beautiful a source of restful satisfaction and pleasure, sublimity pained the judgment and imagination by exceeding their grasp and thus forced the mind to open out and strain to apprehend the overpowering object (Gelpi, 1965, p.125).

Dickinson's power and personal sense of being an individual whose work was based on the range of possibilities led her to have in mind that human imagination was very important to search the true side of nature. If nature may be reflected by indifference to pleasure or pain within the human observer; from her bubble, Dickinson could work out a strategy of writing and collecting views or captions, being free from outer feelings and events.

Harold Bloom (1994) remarks that if a close look is taken back to Walt Whitman, from his solitary back yard to his overwhelming walking "I am afoot with my vision" as Walt Whitman refers to his journey and treading roads, then it is possible to conclude that his sublime is intense because he absorbs his own power and

visions. Not surprisingly, when T. W. Higginson questioned Dickinson about Walt Whitman, she answered: “You speak of Mr. Whitman. I never read his book, but was told that it was disgraceful” (Todd, 2003). Such affirmation may result from the fact that Whitman insisted upon identifying the poet as a brother, a friend, at least, an ordinary man. Cynthia Griffin Wolff also writes that “If he was thought disgraceful at first, by the mid–1860’s he had already begun to be called the ‘Good Gray Poet’” (Wolff, 1996).

As for Dickinson, the poet was a craftsperson. Dickinson celebrates her ability to write intensively in order to overcome doubts and to develop poetry based on personal and domestic objects, not in large impersonal ones. Keller (1980) reinforces that “being a woman gave her possession of an inner space, and to be a woman was to gain power by turning inward”. Emily Dickinson affirmed her personal existence as a human being whose creativity was dense, authentic and powerful. Being in the private bubble, she thought of herself as a responsible person who had the responsibility to be true “To be a Flower, is profound / Responsibility” (P 1058). She searched and afterwards she found means of fulfilling herself and satisfying her needs by her constant habit of writing poems. Nature then was one of her major themes for her poetry. As Dickinson’s experiences and perceptions assume intense forms in her bubble, they provide interesting elaborations to which she intensely dedicated herself since she preferred experience to the mind.

Experience is the Angled Road

Preferred against the Mind
By – Paradox – the Mind itself –
Presuming it to lead

Quite Opposite – How Complicate
The Discipline of Man –
Compelling Him to Choose Himself
His Preappointed Pain – (P. 910)

Albert Gelpi expands Keller’s assertion and reinforces that Dickinson’s basic cause was “comprehension: to know and to feel as intensely as possible. Glorious moments would come – and she would anticipate their coming; painful moments would come – and she would dread their approach” (Gelpi, 1965). The essence of

Dickinson's experience, with ecstasy at one end and pain at the other, faces the bottom of her heart and the despair of her mind. These feelings are balanced to reach the desirable equilibrium in order to apprehend nature, elaborate the process of perceiving what is around her and capture the very instant moments for the production of her poems.

If Dickinson thinks that "Experience is the Angled Road / Preferred against the Mind" (P 910), she must be in constant and careful examination of them so that views can be strengthened and preserved. David Porter (1985) may be right when he affirms that the close examination of Emily Dickinson's poems on nature evokes brilliant and alluring visions which may capture unique and meaningful moments. He emphasizes that the "recurrent mysteriousness of the changing seasons is one quality that engages the imagination, evading rational comprehension" (Porter, 1985).

Regarding the power that leads to individual imagination, it seems evident that the results of facing nature are surrounded by commemorative features that are important for the creation process. The Bee, for instance, serves other purposes than its own relationship among insects, birds, clover, and general objects. If common human beings – when they see those objects – may forget their real attributes and qualities, the evocative term for "The Bee" – with capital letter – becomes a chiding reminder that this element, besides being part of nature, is characterized by specific qualification and attributes.

External objects may serve as stimuli for Dickinson to impose responsibility on them even though some insects – like the Bee – may indicate the place and the time of the year to which they are relevant. Some of Emily Dickinson's poems assume the functions of invocations as they attempt to revive faded attributes in order to recall the readers' memories and to extend their momentary experiences within life. Those functions may grant a share of features in instant captions that might also represent the silence of nature or the things in nature that are imperceivable by human beings.

In the same way that Harold Bloom (1973) asserts that "Poetry is property", freedom is achieved when poets know who they are and the environment to which they belong. Dickinson did know her place and to what kind of world she belonged.

Her power was associated to her act of writing, which in some circumstances depended on the ability to create, to develop a kind of language that represented what was beyond her eyes, which were the eyes of an observer. In fact, her captions remain resistant to the threat of common visions themselves.

Maurice Bowra says that despite many differences, romantic poets like “Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats, agreed on one vital point: that the creative imagination is closely connected with a peculiar insight into an unseen order behind visible things.” (Bowra, 1961) That statement insisted passionately on imagination, but it also demanded that imagination should be related to truth and reality. Of course, such a state of mind was an admirable ambition, but not all poets were so fortunate in finding that their discontents were not cured by contact with nature or that poetic freedom would not be partaken of by the activity of a supernatural order.

Bloom (1973) sees the vital cycle of the poet as a misprision and considers Emily Dickinson as well as Walt Whitman original American poets because they both “express melancholy and anxiety”, while Dickinson gets the best caption of nature around her based on analogies. Those captions result from private insight, a keen perception, and a demanding awareness and presence condition even when captions are centered on particular objects.

Keller (1986) offers further explanation of Emily Dickinson’s creation stating that Dickinson creates freedom for herself within the form of her belief because she does not expect glory nor does she alienate from grace. That behavior results in individuals who do not have the necessity to have everything that everyone has or is supposed to have in order to be happy. Keller goes beyond that stating that “The wilder and more imaginative she is in expressing (or creating) herself, the freer she is, of course, within the tragic concept of man that binds her” (Keller, 1979).

Emily Dickinson was able to believe in and live her own life within the concept that there was liberty for her within the scope of her bubble; therefore, writing poetry was an escape from the system of Dickinson’s time and she developed poetry by improving her proclamations. Besides gaining freedom within her own form, Dickinson created new captions and views through the process of her writings

without having anyone to blame her. In fact, Dickinson's own art created her own reality – inside her own eccentric bubble – which was her eccentric family: to write poetry free and preserved from traditional conventions and from a crowd who would blame her.

> If nature smiles – the Mother must
> I'm sure, at many a whim
> Of Her eccentric Family –
> Is She so much to blame? (P 1085)

Anderson (1966) emphasizes that "Using the techniques scientists do, Dickinson investigates apparent exceptions in the natural order." Exceptions are unique moments or events that compose the eccentricities of nature so Dickinson wanted to focus on these exceptions, and these features are distinctive in her production. Nature is more than mere entertainment; therefore, she was alert to the possibilities of finding imperfections, exceptions, and ambiguities. Nevertheless, her own private world enabled her to ride freely in and out of her lexicon in order to get the ideal or appropriated vocabulary within meaning in order to capture the creative view or instant caption.

The essence of her poetic autonomy is not given freely onto herself as a poet, but it must be acquired, conquered by the skills of her imagination because in her captures of creativity, she separates herself from the outside forces. She – the poet – wants to distinguish the dichotomy between the poet and Emily Dickinson – the individual who lived in the Homestead. "When I state myself, as the representative of the verse, it does not mean me, but a supposed person."[54]

Emily Dickinson desires to release from nature the true captions and images which are hidden beyond what eyes may see. Then she calls for a voice and portrays her creative action as a process based on the relationship of power in order to develop instant captions from a variety of possibilities which she calls "Blossom of the Brain". Charles Anderson defines Emily Dickinson's truth in her poems on nature's process as the life–death paradox itself, in man as well as in nature. "It cannot be resolved by scientists, philosophers, or theologians, who can only give a name to what is essentially nameless. But the poet can hope to encompass it by making its

[54] Letter to T. W. Higginson of July 1862.

ambiguity concrete and hence acceptable as part of man's inescapable 'reality'" (Anderson, 1966).

The best caption depends upon the power of the triumphant imagination, which uses its force to capture the perfect image. The poet, thereafter, creates flowers which are unknown to the outside world. "The Flower of our Lord" is an example because it is formed by fancy, which is the active agent of the active imagination.

> This is a Blossom of the Brain –
> A small – italic Seed
> Lodged by Design or Happening
> The Spirit fructified –
>
> Shy as the Wind of his Chambers
> Swift as a Freshet's Tongue
> So of the Flower of the Soul
> Its process is unknown.
>
> When it is found, a few rejoice
> The Wise convey it Home
> Carefully cherishing the spot
> If other Flower become.
>
> When it is lost, that Day shall be
> The Funeral of God,
> Upon his Breast, a closing Soul
> The Flower of our Lord. (P 945)

By using the metaphor of the garden and the developing seed, Dickinson maintains a claim for the power of imagination and the developing contemplation process of the blossom's creation, which seems a mystery. Even though the work of art is the subject of the poem, the process of its flowering can be expressed metaphorically. The germ of the flower was a seed which was small and italic – probably originated from abroad – however, its process of becoming lately "The Flower of the Soul" and at least "The Flower of our Lord" is unknown and it becomes a puzzle or a riddle for the mind to solve. "Riddles are healthful food." [55] was Emily

[55] Letter to the Misses of early 1872.

Dickinson's affirmation in one of her letters to her cousins. Being aware that poets are still the only masters and the only craftspeople of their art, Emily Dickinson mastered her captions and developed them according to her personal insights. She lodged her seed and afterwards looked after its bloom.

In several of Dickinson's poems, she captures views in which the natural process is assumed by the ability of the poetic imagination to capture captions on alternative time and space. Those captions might be defined by her solitary consciousness that refuses the possibility of fading and losing since the internal adversary, for her, becomes her sole audience. She believes that her power will build poetry based on an overwhelming force that exists beyond the pursuit of certainty.

Dickinson's concept of the world – besides ecstasy – includes pain, which becomes the price one must pay for joy, that is, the compensatory sacrifice subsumes the possibility of happiness. "Sorrow almost resents love, it is so inflamed" [56] is one of Emily Dickinson's outbursts about irreparable loss in a letter sent to Mrs. Bowles after Mr. Bowles died. Paul de Man (1984) states that it is nature "the principle in which time finds itself preserved, without losing the movement of passing away which makes it real for those who are submitted to it." There is an attempt to grasp the conciliation of time and nature in Dickinson's language.

Living in her private bubble by herself and keeping busy at writing, Dickinson does not mention the time passing by so that when readers read her poems they have the idea that she wrote the poems all at once, whereas they might be poems written in her thirties, forties, or during the last days of her life. The same may be observed about the letters that she wrote. Although she dated most of them, the reader does not realize the process of evolution of time unless when the poet mentions some specific events in her private, closed, and small world. Paul de Man (1984) emphasizes that time is productive because it allows the language of reflection to constitute itself. Emily Dickinson's technique is to use the language of reflection, which is part of the process of her creation, for instance, in the description of the flower in her finest poem written in 1859 on the topic.

.....

[56] Letter to Mr. and Mrs. Bowles of January 1878.

Save by loving the sunrise
Looking for her face.
Save by feet unnumbered
Pausing at the place. (P 72)

Dickinson feels safe because she is in her place, which is the private bubble, and from there she can build her world reflecting and writing verses about instant captions taken from nature. “Four Trees – upon a solitary Acre –” (P742) highlights the technique of reflection and description of objects which were carefully selected. That amazing poem suggests the concern of the poet to avoid the sequence so that the poet is free from time and safe from the forces by which she feels strongly pressed.

Both poems 72 and 742 are primarily in the present tense and are also concluded in the present. That means that the Flower, which is saved by loving sunrise and feet unnumbered, pausing at the place, is connected to the four Trees, which are standing without design, without order, without action or neighbor; except God. The connection results in unique instant captions which are based on careful glimpses of the natural world that are triggers for Dickinson. She felt so impotent to write about the world that she was always wishing to apprehend the most of it.

In order to apprehend nature, Dickinson insists on the yearning of boldness which imparts the intensity of her experience more vividly. When she was reaching her forties, she wrote to T. W. Higginson in one of her letters: “Shortness to live has made me bold.”[57] She considered T. W. Higginson her Master; in most of her letters she called him that way, the one who might also be considered “the other”.

However, for Dickinson the “other” might be the father, the poet, the lover, and God; consequently, her precursors become unexpected presence. But Dickinson was independent upon such an image since the presence of a voice and a person was carried out. That voice is part of her creation process, which aims to protect and keep instant captions of what she observes in more experienced and more vividly exchanging roles, such as “The Acre gives them – Place / They – Him – Attention of Passer by –.“

[57] Letter to T. W. Higginson of August 1870

The instant captions taken from natural elements such as animals, flowers, and landscapes are shaped by a protective boundary; animals, like the bird, the bee, the fly, and the robin are domesticated; flowers, like the rose, the daisy, and the clover are highlighted by overwhelmed features; and landscapes, like sunsets, hills, mountains, trees, and prairies are counted by their uniqueness and unnoticeable features. Many of them are preserved, overpowered, and certified with human being's qualities. Their plot comes from the privileged ground of experience and perceptions which she preserves even when she keeps herself inside the bubble.

Her strategy relies on the attempt to establish new boundaries, the apprehension of awareness and the condition of presence, and the attempt to get the best vision, which must be free from personal conceptions. That strategy is also opened to possibilities which maintain her creative process very active over the chosen elements by concentrating on the elaboration of elements from nature in process and combining the projection of her own fears with her awareness of the inherent threat to life to which every human being is connected even if it is always in complete transformation.

Cristanne Miller remarks that "Dickinson recreates the full force of Emerson's perception that all nature, and thus all language, is in constant "flux" (Miller, 1987). The words that Dickinson chooses – in some of her sketches there are lists of words which she usually hesitated before choosing – define the successive act and its effect such as: "to pack the Bud" – "Adjust the Heat" – "Escape the prowling Bee" – which results in "to be a Flower".

There is evidence that using natural objects might be a defensive approach chosen by Emily Dickinson in order to force and assure the process of contemplation in which she is involved besides being an attitude that demands responsibility. Developing the contemplation process, she is the owner of the private bubble, from which she can center her views, expose her personal voice, and proclaim her own speech to which she was responsible. In his view of the process, Keller remarks that "Responsibility leads to her own flowering" (Keller, 1980).

> Bloom – is Result – to meet a Flower
> And casually glance
> Would scarcely cause one to suspect

The minor Circumstance

Assisting in the Bright Affair
So intricately done
Then offered as a Butterfly
To the Meridian –

To pack the Bud – oppose the Worm –
Obtain its right of Dew –
Adjust the Heat – elude the Wind –
Escape the prowling Bee

Great Nature not to disappoint
Awaiting Her that Day –
To be a Flower, is profound
Responsibility – (P 1058)

Keller (1980) also emphasizes that Emily Dickinson is a liberated woman who regards the essential of natural scenes in order to find out the relation between being a woman, being a believer, and being a poet. It seems clear to the reader that she found self–fulfillment just being in contact with natural objects such as the animals, for instance, in the yard of her house. Dickinson was conscious of her own doubts and duties, owned a world full of life which developed a strong definition for herself as a woman who always looked for creativity, without forgetting her responsibility ("To be a Flower, is profound / Responsibility –").

Even though there is the evidence of a difficulty in order to be engaged in the contemplation process and the offering of threat regarding the relationship between The Bee and The Flower, it is evident that Dickinson is the one who controls the situation. She learned from society that the Flower must learn and preserve responsibility, whereas The Bee in her poems may prowl without being judged or criticized. After compromise is established, the common relationship between the bee and the flower abolishes any convention. However, the responsibility of the Flower is tormented by the harsh awaiting moments which may substitute the freedom of Dickinson's personal anxiety and fear.

Then, she creates alternative captions of nature which are shaped by unexpected views, and gets rid of the pressure of her anxieties, and is allowed to live

in the life of possibilities and circumference. The garden for her is ever green, flowers do not fade, and the bright bee may always be observed and heard, as she wrote in the second poem of her wide compilation.

> There is another sky,
> Ever serene and fair,
> And there is another sunshine,
> Through it be darkness there;
> Never mind faded forests, Austin,
> Never mind silent fields –
> *Here* is a little forest,
> Whose leaf is ever green;
> Here is a brighter garden,
> Where not a frost has been;
> In its unfading flowers
> I hear the bright bee hum;
> Prithee, my brother,
> Into *my* garden come! (P 2)

Insisting upon the dominance of creative instant captions over the real open view of nature, Dickinson required power to assure her vision – “a Blossom of the Brain”. With this in mind, Joanne Feit Diehl (1981) remarks that: “Dickinson preserves the separation of self and the world necessary to her solipsistic defense.” Maintaining her independent holiness of the power of imagination, she asserts her ability to control the contemplation process, holds the visions under control such as poets wish, and believes in the extraordinary power of language that may be connected to its written form. As language is very powerful for Dickinson, the power of her words lies, at least partly, in her ability to give more meanings than readers can entirely understand; therefore she is able to offer such amazing captions to satisfy their desire to know and understand them, besides satisfying her private lively withdrawal into her bubble.

CONCLUSION

Emily Dickinson was someone who believed in words and took lexicon for granted as her permanent companion. By not publishing the verses that she wrote, she gained space for experimentation which enlarged her ability to produce original verses and some of the most surprising poetry in the English language and Literature. By writing letters, Dickinson maintained her communication with the world, although she had rarely been meeting people face to face. Most of all, that habit rewarded her the title of The Famous Letter Writer of the little town of Amherst during almost all the nineteen-century period that she was alive. Being the craftsperson at work, she wrote an amazing number of poems and an imprecise number of letters to her close audience.

Indeed Emily Dickinson was a great poet though critics from the nineteenth century did not recognize her as one. More precisely, she was the female someone who pursued a reclusive life keeping to her garden, to her room where she was engaged in writing poems, revising – and most of the times – perfecting them; an activity that brought her a great ecstasy in living. Writing was her free choice in the same way that her own way of living was, both activities provided her with personal and poetic achievement – though unknown and misunderstood to others.

Gaining the merit to live by her own purpose in her private bubble, Dickinson was able to enjoy the quietness for meditation and reflection which contributed to the development of the contemplation process. By staying still, she could enjoy the solitude of the moments which were totally hers without depriving her of the excitement of living and writing. Her solitude was significant to the way she lived and

communicated to her audience. Her daily involvement in her private bubble sustained her, provided her self fulfillment, and permitted her to write original poetry. The bubble then was the perfect scaffolding; a place where she herself could manage the inlets and outlets, enjoy the atmosphere of the natural moments she elected to be with, to be free from outside judgment so that she could feel and express her perception, develop the condition of presence that gave her the name The *Myth of Amherst*, and bring in just what was meaningful for her life. Finally, that positive event in her life was determinant for the development of the pure poetry she wrote, which was the most benefitial of all.

Being aware of the strategy she chooses to write her poems and about the approach of apprehending original perception, she catches the good things about the world. She is able to know that human beings are not aware of the power and manifestation of nature and then the mysteries of nature trigger her keen perceptions of nature's elements. By doing that, she not only develops the awareness about what she really observes, but about what is beyond that, that is, the mysteries which are not seen by the superficial observer. She develops the creative power which is associated with the awareness of what she observes in order to capture the instant captions that are present in her poetry.

The main beneficiaries of her private bubble were her poems, which turned her from a un–noticeable condition to a triumphant outstanding condition of presence which is held from the late nineteenth-century until today. Instead of disappearing, she evolved from her verses – which include poems and letters – and in that way she mastered life. Grammatical experiments provided new features for natural objects just as the conduction of her life in her private bubble helped her to build the image of *The Myth of Amherst* or the title of been among *the Belle of Amherst*. Being still in the private bubble provided Dickinson with perfect restrained moments through which she could reflect about the mysteries that intrigued her, and nature was one of these. Dickinson is the observer who intends to get the perfect glance, the true sensation, and the most original image, since she is an active someone who wishes to apprehend the world from her perception.

The pattern of Dickinson's contemplation process is characterized by reflection, objectiveness, and unconventional model. Consequently, she handles with

opposite extremes – certainty and uncertainty, order and disorder, the conventional and the unconventional – dealing with nature and natural objects. Such state of uncertainty enriches the contemplation process because uncertainty collaborates to get the true path of certainty; that circumstance was favorable for the poet – contrary to what most people thought. Then the beauty of nature is revealed by linking the apprehension of perceptions and its natural objects. But what most captivated Dickinson were the changes in nature, its mysteries that were not apparent to an observer who did not pay close attention to it. Meditating and reflecting on what she observed provided such joy and willingness to perceive the process of getting the true perception of nature.

The contemplation process is developed by assessing priorities, establishing poetic primacies to develop captions and performing the ability to overcome the process of creating what is regularly seen at the first sight. Dickinson composes possibilities of images which display dependent features of importance and are recognized as important elements of nature itself, such as the Spider, The Bee, and The clover. Facing the impossibility of escaping the limited world Dickinson was living, she used elements of her domesticity as stimuli to develop the work of creation. By developing the apprehension of perception, she gets deeply concentrated on the views she apprehends, controls the approach of capturing them, and her voice proclaims her message to her audience despite her not knowing who they will be.

Dickinson contends that nature cannot be trusted to answer her questionings, so she evokes views that describe natural objects, natural happenings, and natural landscapes using the power of imagination. Displaying such condition, nature becomes an antagonist for Dickinson and consequently a deep mystery which unfolds its secrets at the same time as it dazzles. Imagination plays an important role because the poet personalizes the scene which is not seen by regular observers. Therefore the Dickinsonian elements of nature expose analogies that enlarge the vision of natural objects and nature itself. Dickinson’s approach grasps upon an object, elaborates the process of apprehension by wide imaginative possibilities of thought, and transforms it into unexpected instant captions. Consequently, the poet becomes a craftsperson whose creativity is dense, personality is authentic and powerful, and actions are responsible.

Dickinson knew her place: the bubble and to what kind of world she belonged, so her captions remain defiant to the threat of common visions. Gaining freedom within her own conventions, Dickinson created views and captions through the process of her writings having nodody to judge or blame her. As a result, the essence of her poetic autonomy was acquired throughout her whole life and was conquered by the ability of imagination, creativity, and mastery of her personal life. She gets rids of anxieties that pressure life, is allowed to live within the range of possibilities and circumference, and creates alternative instant captions which have amazed readers for over hundred years. As the conclusion of this study combined the analyses of Emily Dickinson's poetic practices and her withdrawal, it resulted in a new positive and enriching characteristic about such an amazing writer and personage. Consequently, this study may also contribute to a better understanding of her concept of poetry as well as her way of living, enabling readers to feel more confident when they read her poems.

Studying Emily Dickinson's poetry, letters, and life was a gratifying exercise; the verses of her poems reflect on her boundless imagination, her letters show the vivid life that the little cast of daily characters assume in her little world, and her life presents features of an important and enigmatic figure of American society - particularly literature. The last five years of intense contact with the poems of Emily Dickinson, letters, and familiarity with additional aspects of her life stimulated my effort to go further into the process of establishing associations. The culmination of such excitement was reached when I visited The Homestead, The Evergreens, and the little town of Amherst. There I could feel that all my efforts and hours of dedication to studying Emily Dickinson had been rewarded.

Walking on the garden of The Homestead that inspired Dickinson to write poetry; listening to some of her poems and letting them come alive in my self; taking a quiet and slow tour at The Homestead – Dickinson's home – especially in her room where she polished her verses; imagining the long hours Dickinson spent facing the scenery of the nineteeth-century college town of Amherst and her brother's house, from the west window of her room; approaching her white dress at the Amherst History Museum; observing thoughtfully the front window of her bedroom from my bedroom at The Amherst Inn and feeling like the craftsperson at work; getting in touch with the special collections on Emily Dickinson at The Jones Library; visiting

her grave at West Cemetery; and having the sensation that Dickinson's eyes are still around in the twenty-first century Amherst are memories impossible to describe in words. Such feelings were - and still are - amazingly satisfying after the long hours of reading and repeating her poems aloud and reflecting on how Emily Dickinson could feel such ecstasy whilst living in her bubble.

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