"Calm is but a Wall
Of Unattempted Gauze
An instant's Push demolishes
A Questioning – dissolves"

Coming to Terms with a Changing Nineteenth-Century Society:

The Experiments of Emily Dickinson with Broadening the Horizon,

With a Look at those of William Wordsworth and Friedrich Nietzsche

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Quotation on title page: Emily Dickinson, poem 960 (J 928), lines 9-12.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

General Overview and Background

This thesis is concerned with the way in which Emily Dickinson's poetry responds to the numerous, unsettling developments that were changing the nineteenth-century society in which she lived. While it is still somewhat customary to consider Dickinson an isolated poet, dreamily dwelling in her "father's ground" (*Letters* 263) and oblivious to the affairs of the world, I will examine her as a poet whose work expresses a keen insight into, and awareness of, societal goings-on. Dickinson was born into a prominent New England family in 1830 and enjoyed a privileged upbringing. After her withdrawal from society at age 30 – which was made possible by her family's socio-economic status – she dedicated herself largely to writing poetry. Though often abstract, her work is firmly rooted in her mid-to-late nineteenth-century culture. For example, it is filled with terms from the discourses (economic, legal, medical) of the external world (Hagenbüchle 312) and deals extensively with problems and predicaments people may have faced as a result of the many developments that were so radically changing society. The cultural and historical awareness that both her poetry and her letters express may have been a result of the fact that many of her close friends and family, with whom she regularly conversed and corresponded by letter, were prominent members of the political and literary communities of Amherst and New England (Erkkila 12). Moreover, her reading of the *Springfield Republican* newspaper and the *Scribner's Monthly* journal kept her abreast of current events (Merideth 438). In my opinion, Dickinson's poetry so adeptly examines, and successfully explores what it means to live in, a society which has undergone extreme change as a result of the poet's "double" position. For example, her occupation of a simultaneously removed, marginal *and* highly informed, central position enabled her to

scrutinize society in a distanced, critical manner, yet comment on it with the insight of an insider.

Critics have previously discussed the way in which Dickinson's work is engaged with society. For example, Peter Stoneley and Robert Merideth have examined her speakers' awareness of economic developments (Stoneley 575-594, Merideth 435-452), Roger Lundin and Richard Brantley have studied their concern with the waning of religious belief and the advent of science, and quite a few articles have discussed the references in Dickinson's poetry to particular nineteenth-century inventions, such as photography (see Blackwood) and telegraphy (see Quinn). However, no attempt has been made, as far as I know, to present a more comprehensive picture, which involves a discussion of *several* aspects of nineteenth-century life, of the specific way in which Dickinson explores dealing with living in the changing society of the mid-to-late nineteenth-century. To present such a picture, therefore, this thesis will focus on three topics central to her poetry and related to her changing times: nineteenth-century materialism, the fashionable practice of travelling, and the poems which contain more abstract discussions of radical change and uncertainty. As Domhnall Mitchell has pointed out, the latter was an integral part of nineteenth-century life (75). Subsequently, to place her work as a whole in its nineteenth-century context, I will compare it to two important nineteenth-century works which share Dickinson's concerns and themes specific to this thesis to a striking degree: William Wordsworth's *The Prelude* and Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra.*

Content

I will now explain the relevance of the three areas of Dickinson's poetry mentioned above and set out the ways in which I look at these areas to answer my first main question:

"How does Dickinson's poetry deal with the theme of living in the changing society of the mid-to-late nineteenth century?" After this, I will elaborate on the relevance of the comparison this thesis makes between Dickinson's work and that of Wordsworth and Nietzsche and explain how this comparison answers my second and final research question: "How does Dickinson's poetry fit in with other nineteenth-century works that deal with the theme of living in the changing society of the mid-to-late nineteenth century?"

To examine the way in which Dickinson's poetry explores ways of dealing with the changes occurring in late nineteenth-century society, this thesis will first analyze some of Dickinson's poems on the emerging materialism of society. This was one of the things that was changing the hierarchical nineteenth-century society most radically, and also something which the poet may have been personally affected by. For example, the rise of the consumer society in the second half of the nineteenth century meant that material wealth was slowly becoming more important and valuable than inherited wealth and ascribed status – something which Dickinson's family had long enjoyed. As it was becoming possible to work one's way up through the acquisition of material wealth, Dickinson may have been anxious that her inherited wealth and status would end up being of little worth, as Erkkila and Peter Stoneley have suggested. In any case, her poetic personae frequently express their aversion to materialistic habits, are plagued by a similar sense of uncertainty regarding their socio-economic position, and are under the impression that their values, conceptions and ideas are no longer entirely valid in the changed society in which they live. Although Dickinson may certainly have been concerned with nineteenth-century materialism because it threatened her socio-economic position, she is perhaps also focused on it because, as her speakers frequently point out, materialistic values were beginning to supplant religious ones. Indeed, in the poems, the superficiality of the materialistic consumer society is often set off against the more traditional, spiritual values of the older, religion-oriented society.

In my discussion of this topic, I will expand on the analyses of Stoneley and Merideth regarding the views of Dickinson's speakers on materialism. According to these critics, Dickinson's speakers mainly condemn the democratizing materialism of society as it threatens the old hierarhical order to which they adhered. However, I will show that they do not only criticize the new, materialistic order because it has supplanted the old order. Rather, I will demonstrate that an important part of the speakers' criticism also stems from the fact that they are deeply disturbed by the fact that people have so easily and unquestioningly accepted the presence of the new – democratizing *and* non-religious – order, and unresistingly let its principles become theirs. This will show that Dickinson's speakers do not criticize the new order *per se*, but criticize the willingness of people to go along with particular ideologies. Moreover, though I pay attention, like Stoneley and Merideth, to how her personae are critical of the new, materialistic order which has rendered their conceptions and values invalid, I will also show that they are focused on coming to terms with this new order. They are able to do so by accepting it and allowing it a place in their outlook on the world – to some degree, that is, unlike the members of society they criticize. They do so by playing the double role of beggar – a role which is removed from, yet an intrinsic part of, the new materialistic society. As is evident, the discussion of the poems on materialism will show how Dickinson's work deals with the theme of coming to terms with the changes that were occurring in nineteenth-century society by creating personae who are content to adjust their conceptions and values in order to adapt to new circumstances.

After examining how Dickinson's speakers respond to the materialism of society, this thesis will focus on the way in which they react to another practice which was radically changing the character of society: the practice of travelling. The emerging materialism the poetry comments on created a consumer-class which, thanks to its newly-acquired wealth, was becoming increasingly leisure-oriented. One way in which people could spend their spare

time was by going on excursions made possible by the creation of a transcontinental railroad across the United States in 1869[1]. Recreational travel was seen as desirable, as it was thought to broaden one's mind and expand one's horizon. The amount of travel literature that appeared in the mid-to-late nineteenth century points to its widespread popularity. Travel was not only affecting the lives of consumers, however; a new, cosmopolitan literary culture was emerging in the second half of the nineteenth-century in which travel played a central role. With literary salons taking place in cultural centres such as London, Boston, and Paris, writers were expected to travel to these places to gain fame and inspiration. In fact, Dickinson was repeatedly urged to travel to Boston and benefit from its cultural advantages – which she consistently refused (Allen par. 21). Despite her resistance to the widespread practice of actual travel, though, her poetry is packed with imagery to do with travelling – just as her poetry which ostensibly criticizes materialism is saturated with economic language. Also, Dickinson's speakers frequently assert that travelling in the *mind*, by means of the imagination, is preferable to actual travelling. They claim that this is so because they consider the mind to be a far more spacious territory than the external world. As the speaker of poem 598 states, the mind contains more to explore than the world and, therefore, more possibilities for broadening one's horizon, because "The Brain - is wider than the Sky -" (1). The fact that they have an aversion to actual travelling yet engage in the practice of "sedentary travelling" shows that they are, again, in a position that is both within and outside of modern society.

Suzanne Juhasz has discussed the tendency of Dickinson's speakers to travel through what they call the "Undiscovered Continent" (p 814, 3) of the mind in detail. However, she considers this practice to be merely a consequence of Dickinson's introspective

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[1] That travelling was becoming increasingly widespread in the second half of the nineteenth century is made clear, for example, by a couplet in the epigraph of S.S. Colt's 1857 book *The Tourist's Guide through the Empire State: Embracing all Cities, Towns and Watering Places, by Hudson River and New York Central Route*, which exuberantly states that "Birds of every feather / Travel now-a-days" (v).

tendencies. Therefore, I would like to expand on her analyses by viewing this practice of Dickinson's speakers as a response to specific events in her times. Specifically, I will examine the way in which Dickinson's speakers react to the practice which was drastically altering the formerly "provincial" (Allen par. 14) character of nineteenth-century society by both distancing themselves from, and embracing, it. In doing so, I will pay special attention to the way in which they engage in their *personal* practice of travelling through the mind, yet with the goal of those who engaged in actual travelling: that of broadening the horizon. Examining the topic of travelling in Dickinson's poetry, therefore, will reveal another way in which Dickinson's personae adjust to the changes taking place in the nineteenth century by occupying a double position vis-à-vis these changes.

After this, I will examine a number of poems which do not directly refer to nineteenth-century events such as the rise of materialism or cosmopolitanism. Instead, these poems abstractly discuss the way in which Dickinson's personae react to change, newness and disruption – something they are also afflicted with in the poems on materialism and travelling. Specifically, these poems describe the way in which sudden change and disruption, and encounters with the new, forcefully broaden the horizons of the speakers. I wish to describe the process by which the horizons of Dickinson's speakers are broadened by means of a "model" which I have established. This model will be presented in the next section, in which I elaborate on some more specific aspects of the content of this thesis. Although critics have pointed out that Dickinson's poetry is informed by a typical nineteenth-century awareness of change and uncertainty (see Mitchell 75), as far as I know, no attempt has been made to present a concrete overview of the specific way in which her speakers deal with, and respond to, this sense of change and uncertainty by broadening their horizons. Analyzing this specific area of Dickinson's poetry, therefore, will show a third way in which Dickinson's personae

deal with the change and uncertainty they encountered as a result of their specific historical situation.

In analyzing the three areas of nineteenth-century materialism, cosmopolitanism, and the more abstract poems on change, uncertainty and disruption in Dickinson's poetry, I hope to show precisely and clearly how the poetry is informed by the poet's times, and wish to demonstrate how it deals with the theme of living in the changing society of the second half of the nineteenth century. To more firmly anchor her work in its nineteenth-century context this thesis will then answer the second research question of "How does Dickinson's poetry fit in with other nineteenth-century works that deal with the theme of living in the changing society of the mid-to-late nineteenth century?" To answer this question, I will compare Dickinson's poetry to Wordsworth's *The Prelude* and Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra.* In doing so, I will look at the way in which these works respond to the changes occurring in society by promoting the practice of broadening one's horizon – like Dickinson's personae do.

Dickinson's poetry (dating from roughly 1858 to 1886) will be compared to relevant sections of *The Prelude* to show that Wordsworth's work performs an early-Romantic version of Dickinson's experiments with dealing with change and disruption. The version of *The Prelude* that most scholars use was published posthumously in 1850, yet the autobiographical poem is considered to be early-Romantic as it differs only very slightly from the version published in 1805. Dickinson's work will also be compared to what is commonly seen as Nietzsche's last late-Romantic work *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, as this will anchor her work in a specific late-Romantic tradition stemming from early Romanticism. Indeed, the concerns, themes and tendencies shared by Nietzsche and Dickinson also appear in Wordsworth's work, in a somewhat diluted, less extreme from. Attempting to ground the work of these three writers in a specific tradition, and pointing to the fact that this tradition has altered over time,

develops the work of critics such as M.H. Abrams and Robert Baker which describes and

analyzes the development from early-Romantic to late-Romantic and (post)modernist

literature.

Theories and Concepts

An overview of the content of this thesis was set out in the previous section. In this

section, however, I will elaborate on some of the aspects that have been mentioned above.

First, I will present the "model" of the way in which Dickinson's speakers go about

broadening their horizon. In doing so, I will discuss the way in which I apply it in my

readings of Dickinson's poems. Next, I will elaborate on the comparison between Dickinson's

work and that of Wordsworth and Nietzsche.

Before I present the "model" I have made, I will explain why I use the phrase

"broadening the horizon." I use Gadamer's term "horizon" to talk about the way in which

Dickinson's personae go about gaining a fresh perspective or new outlook on the world

because, although Gadamer uses this term to talk about hermeneutics and gaining a "historical

horizon" with which to interpret past texts, I think it is a helpful term with which to analyze

the experiments of Dickinson's personae. According to Gadamer, "[t]he horizon is the range

of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point" (302). He

also writes that "[a] person who has an horizon knows the relative significance of everything

within this horizon, whether it is near or far, great or small" (302).

I will now present the outline of the "model" that this thesis wants to put forward,

making use of the way in which I interpret Gadamer's theory.[2] This thesis views the set of

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[2] For a graphic rendering of this model, see Appendix A. [2]

ideas, conceptions, and values of Dickinson's lyrical I as a specific space, and sees the horizon as the circumference of this space, bordering the persona's ideas, conceptions, and values[3]. This set of conceptions determines the way the persona views the world; what lies outside her horizon comprises what she cannot (yet) conceive of. In other words, as Gadamer suggests, her horizon provides her with a particular "vantage point" (302) from which to view, interpret and judge the world. In this model, the persona finds herself at the centre of her set of ideas and conceptions, able to see as far as the horizon. From this position, therefore, her range of vision includes everything that lies before this horizon (see Gadamer 302) and she is able to judge the "relative significance" of everything that she can see. Many of Dickinson's poems show that, occasionally, a new conception, idea or notion enters the persona's horizon – something which the poet very likely often encountered in the changing society she lived in. The persona cannot ignore this "object," as its presence ensures that the relations between her already-existing conceptions and ideas will change, or even that some will be rendered invalid. As a result of this disruption, the persona enters into a state of great uncertainty, as everything she relied upon has now changed. To return to some form of stability, therefore, this new conception, idea or notion must be incorporated into the persona's existing set of conceptions. As the borders of her horizon have been penetrated by something foreign which does not quite fit into the space her horizon borders, upon incorporation, the area of the set of conceptions of the persona broadens, and the circumference of her horizon becomes larger.

Using this "model" in my analyses of the poems I attempt to show how, living in a relative state of complacency, Dickinson's persona frequently undergoes experiences which

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[3] I talk about the broadening of the horizon in spatial terms because Dickinson's poems conceptualize this process as a spatial event. However, nowhere do any of her poems suggest that this is literally how Dickinson's persona conceives of the process – I simply wish to present this model in this particular manner using these terms to make the process easy to visualize.

shatter all her established conceptions. Most often, poems dealing with this topic describe how a sudden, disruptive experience befalls the persona, who is subsequently shocked out of her belief that the things she takes for granted are unchanging and everlasting. I will show how, by trying to alter her conceptions and values to fit her changed circumstances – that is, by broadening her horizon – she is exploring possible ways in which to deal with the radical change people in the nineteenth century were experiencing. I will also demonstrate how Dickinson's persona considers the broadening of one's horizon to be desirable, as it prevents her from living with what later prove to be false, ideological conceptions and values – something which she wants to avoid at all costs.

In my discussion of the way in which Dickinson's persona is focused on broadening her horizon, I will particularly focus on the moment in which she encounters something wholly new that she has never been forced to reckon with before, and the state of uncertainty and disorientation that occurs as a result. I will analyze this part of the process of the broadening of the horizon by means of the concept of the uncanny. In doing so, I will mainly focus on the double character of the concept, which Freud points to in his essay "The Uncanny." Before I explain how I consider the experiments of Dickinson's persona with broadening her horizon to be uncanny, I will explain what I understand the concept to mean. In his essay, Freud conducts a long, etymological analysis of the word *unheimlich*, which is usually translated as "uncanny." What he finds is that "among its different shades of meaning the word '*heimlich*' [literally, "homely" and, thus, familiar] exhibits one which is identical with its opposite '*unheimlich*' ["un-homely," or, unfamiliar]. What is *heimlich* thus comes to be *unheimlich*" (223). Following Freud, this thesis will consider the uncanny not as a sensation that is produced by something which is wholly new but, rather, as something which contains a trace of both the unfamiliar and the familiar.

In line with the previously given definition of "the uncanny," this thesis considers the process during which the horizon of Dickinson's persona is broadened to be uncanny because it involves the simultaneous presence of the familiar and the unfamiliar. For example, when a new conception or idea enters her established set of conceptions, the boundaries of the horizon bordering this set of conceptions are broadened, the horizon is moved outwards, as it were, and the space the persona occupied is transformed. During this transition, the presence of the new, broadened horizon of the persona and the memory of the old exist side-by-side, making this transition an uncanny one as both the familiar and the unfamiliar are present at the same time.

With the discussion of this topic, this thesis hopes to show that Dickinson's poetry is aware that disruptive events – such as the change from a hierarchical, religion-oriented society to a materialistically-oriented consumer society, perhaps – prevent people from viewing the world as they were wont to do. Moreover, it seems to be aware of the fact that having one's established notions about the world disproved may be highly unsettling. To counter this sense of uncertainty, though, the poetry explores the mechanisms of survival which one may employ in order to deal with being unhinged as a result of crisis or extreme change. One of these, as this thesis will attempt to show, is setting out to broaden one's horizons in order to adjust one's outlook on the world so that it accommodates or, at least, comes to terms with the presence of, the new status quo. This thesis will also show that, in writing poems that deal with this topic, Dickinson develops a specific kind of poetic self or persona who has a particular way of dealing with change and disruption. This is a self who does not shy away from uncertainty or crisis – as most people do, according to this persona – but embraces the disruption that sudden change causes in one's set of notions about the world.

Like Dickinson's poetry, *The Prelude* and *Thus Spake Zarathustra* are preoccupied with the Romantic practice of broadening the horizon. To put it differently, they are

concerned with discerning the unusual in the usual, conceiving of the previously unconceivable, and venturing out into the unknown to gain new knowledge. I consider these to be Romantic practices as, according to Tilottana Rajan, Romanticism is "a mode of consciousness that envisions the unreal and the possible across the barrier of the actual" (13). Not only are these works Romantic though; they are also engaged with their times. Indeed, all three works show an awareness of the fact that society was radically changing. For example, Wordsworth is mainly concerned with the fact that, due to the religious crisis of the nineteenth-century and the Enlightenment, the divine was no longer seen as responsible for the broadening of the horizon which provided a person with meaning and a poet with poetic material and inspiration. Unlike Dickinson and Nietzsche, such a development does not lead to despair in Wordsworth's work; rather, he is elated that he may now find the "sublime" experiences which broaden one's horizon and lead to inspiration in *nature*. In comparing the work of Dickinson and Wordsworth, I will show that Wordsworth's experiments are early-Romantic versions of the experiments of Dickinson's personae. This approach is informed by the ideas of Abrams and Baker that, whereas early-Romantic poets found transformative experiences in nature, later-Romantic poets, such as Dickinson, found such experiences in the self. I expand on their work by comparing the transformative experiences in the works of Wordsworth and Dickinson by means of the "model" set out above, together with the specific concepts of the (broadening of the) horizon and the uncanny.

Unlike Wordsworth, Dickinson and Nietzsche are deeply disturbed by the changes occurring in nineteenth-century society. For example, in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, the prophet-philosopher Zarathustra attempts to come to terms with the fact that people have easily accepted the loss of the religious order of the earlier nineteenth-century, and have become superficial and unthinking. In comparing *Zarathustra* with Dickinson's poetry, I will pay special attention to what I consider to be one of Zarathustra's main goals: providing his

audience with a new horizon or new way of looking at the world. I will also show that, like Dickinson, Zarathustra tries to pull his audiences out of their rigid ways of thinking by revealing that they think according to a particular ideology. Similarly to the comparison between Dickinson and Wordsworth, I will analyze Zarathustra's experiments of broadening his audience's outlook on the world by means of the concepts of the horizon and the uncanny. As *Zarathustra* is a late-Romantic work, this comparison will help to understand her poetry as late-Romantic poetry, and will show how she deserves to be properly seen as late-Romantic poet, deeply engaged with the concerns of many nineteenth-century poets and philosophers.

Critical Framework

To discuss the critical framework this thesis makes use of, I will give a brief overview of the history of relevant Dickinson criticism and subsequently position myself with respect to the critics' views.

During the 1970s and 1980s, feminist critics such as Jane Donahue Eberwein, Suzanne Juhasz and Gilbert and Gubar dispelled the myth instated by previous critics that Dickinson was merely an eccentric recluse by claiming that her withdrawal stemmed from a conscious decision made in order to protect her art from the vicissitudes of the marketplace. They argue that in withdrawing from society, Dickinson entered into the space of her mind, or, an "interiorized imaginative universe" (Stoneley 583) governed by its own rules and vocabulary. Withdrawing to the space of her mind – evident from the fact that her speakers talk about their mind as if it is a space – enabled her to engage, according to these critics, in extreme introspection and explore the self in an in-depth manner. In response to this criticism, which sometimes tended to see Dickinson as solipsistically bent on creating an entirely new form of poetry, untainted by literary convention, critics such as Paula Bernat Bennett and

Joanne Feit Diehl set out to prove that Dickinson's poetry was not as dazzlingly original or free from influence as some critics believed. They did so by pointing out that her work should be read as Romantic poetry, or as a part of a specific female literary tradition. Further, in the last ten or twenty years, drawing on a few articles appearing in the 1960s which went mostly unnoticed, critics have started viewing Dickinson more and more as not only engaged with the literary traditions of her time, but also with society in general. For example, recent critics such as Stoneley, Srikanth Reddy, Roland Hagenbüchle and Erkkila point to Dickinson's awareness of current events.

This thesis does not only draw on the work of the most recent critics, but also focuses on the concerns of somewhat older critics. For example, I want to make use of the more recent approach of seeing Dickinson as being engaged and aware of the goings-on in society and as working within a Romantic tradition, as well as use the slightly less current approach of considering Dickinson a poet who is mostly focused on interior explorations in order to obtain new knowledge about the self. My analysis of the way in which Dickinson's poetry comments on the values of the consumer society and cosmopolitan literary culture will show her awareness of societal developments, my comparison of Dickinson's work to that of Wordsworth and Nietzsche will help to show how her poetry is late-Romantic, and my discussion of the way in which Dickinson has her speakers cope with the uncertainty of their times by conducting experiments with broadening their mental horizons will show how their introspective practices – which I do consider to be informed by societal developments – enable them to obtain fresh perspectives and knowledge they would not have acquired otherwise.

In this thesis, I also view Dickinson as having a particular poetic project; namely, the project of creating a particular kind of self who develops a way of dealing with the change and disruption she faces. Although the kind of self Dickinson creates in her poetry is

concerned with the developments that were to lead to modernity, I consider this to be a late-Romantic self. From criticism which considers Dickinson to be a Romantic poet, and criticism on Romanticism in general, it becomes apparent that Dickinson's poetic self may be considered to be Romantic in a number of ways. First, like other Romantics, she is concerned with the position of the self in the world, and considers it the task of the poet to be discerning as a result of her exceptional position in the world. Second, the persona is affected by the turbulent events of her times, and expresses her concerns with these matters in the poetry. Third, like other Romantics, she is preoccupied with constantly gaining a fresh perspective, rethinking her established notions, and broadening her horizon. Although Dickinson's work features these Romantic characteristics, it is not able to react as positively to the changes occurring in society as Wordsworth's early-Romantic poetry is, for example. Indeed, her personae are deeply disturbed by the changes they have witnessed, and do not always find successful solutions to their nineteenth-century predicaments. That is, they do not *always* manage to broaden their horizons – which they do to adapt to their changed circumstances – to the extent that they wish to. According to Baker, being distraught by one's times, but failing to be able to do anything about it is characteristic of Modernist literature. Because Dickinson's work – and Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* – seem to be in between the two extremes of nihilistic Modernism and Wordsworth's optimistic early Romanticism, I consider their work to be late-Romantic. As was already mentioned, attempting to locate the late-Romantic works of Dickinson and Nietzsche and the early-Romantic poem of Wordsworth in a specific Romantic tradition, and pointing to the fact that this tradition has altered over time illustrates the work of critics such as Abrams and Baker.

For example, Baker points out that all three writers are concerned with pushing the boundaries of the known, and venturing into the unknown to gain new knowledge and experience, yet does not specifically link them. I will expand on his work, therefore, by

connecting the work of these three writers and through pointing out that they all respond to living in the changing nineteenth-century by promoting the practice of broadening the horizon. Also, I will show that, in describing this practice, all three writers use the concepts of space and the uncanny in a strikingly similar way. Analyzing the way in which they conduct experiments with the broadening of the horizon by means of Freud's concept of the uncanny, will show how the concept of the uncanny is a very helpful concept in analyzing Dickinson's poetry and other nineteenth-century works in a thorough and detailed manner. Moreover, it demonstrates another way in which the concept of the uncanny can be used. For example, in literary criticism this concept is usually used – and most often in older criticism – to analyze gothic or fantastic literature; however, in this thesis it proves to be a helpful concept with which to analyze literature dealing with transition, crisis and uncertainty in general. Besides this, I also look at the role of space in the work of Wordsworth, Dickinson and Nietzsche. I do so, because all three writers spatialize the broadening of the horizon. To make clear how they do so and how, in my opinion, the process of broadening the horizon, space, and the uncanny are related, in the work of all three writers, I draw on Heidegger's theories on space and dwelling in his 1951 essay "Building Dwelling Thinking." The fact that this set of concepts can be identified in their works in certain passages, may show, in an interesting way, how their works belong to a certain Romantic tradition which is concerned with gaining new knowledge and new experience.

Methodology

I analyze the works of Dickinson, Wordsworth and Nietzsche by giving close readings of their works, as well as by making use of scholarly criticism on their works. Besides this, I also apply general theories – such as those of Gadamer, Heidegger and Freud –

to the literature I analyze, in order to analyze it within a broader context. All Dickinson poems I examine are featured in the Ralph W. Franklin 1998 edition of the complete poems. I use this edition instead of Thomas H. Johnson's edition – which, to some years ago, was seen as the most reliable scholarly edition of Dickinson's poetry – because it more accurately transcribes the poems.[4] More and more critics have started to use this edition of Dickinson's poetry and it seems to be becoming the most reliable and accepted edition (see Miller). For convenience' sake, I will indicate Johnson's poem numbers in parentheses behind the number Franklin attributes to each of the poems. When I talk about Franklin's poem 36, for example, I will add "(J 54)" after the first mention of Franklin's number. I have analysed both early and late poems in order to give as complete as possible a picture as the limited scope of this thesis allows for. Also, I have tried to engage with Dickinson critics where possible, but could not find criticism on all the poems I analyze.

Although the concerns of her persona are often very similar to Dickinson's own concerns, in this thesis, I will try to make a clear distinction between Dickinson's speakers and Dickinson herself. This is because in many poems at least two voices are at play so self-consciously – that is, Dickinson sometimes seems to consciously criticize the kind of characters that she establishes in her poetry as the "I" – that although she has created both, she cannot directly and unambiguously be seen as the speaking I of her poems (Johnson 2). Also, although Dickinson's poems feature what seems to be a large variety of speakers, I will consider these lyrical I's as facets of the general persona that Dickinson wishes to create in her poetry. This approach coincides with Magdalena Zapedowska's idea that each Dickinson poem can be considered as an independent microcosm that is, at the same time, part of a larger macrocosm which is constituted by

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[4] Using Franklin's transcriptions does mean that "its" will sometimes be given as "it's" and words such as "should' will be abbreviated to "sh'd," according to the fashion of the times. Dickinson's misspellings are also included, which means that in poem 1420 (J 1380), for example, "Upon" is left as "Opon" (5).

Dickinson's entire body of poetry (382). According to Zapedowska, considering Dickinson's poetry as "one long poem," (Weisbuch, quoted in Zapedowska, 382) enables the reader to use more explicitly explained references and ideas in some poems to make sense of and contextualize similar, but more brief references, in other poems (382). According to this approach, I will consider the poems which abstractly refer to change and disruption and discuss the process of the broadening of the horizon, as referring to the numerous, unsettling developments occurring in society, even though they do not make overt references to societal events or developments. I do so because the speakers in such poems feel a strikingly similar unhingement to the speakers in the poems which more directly refer to nineteenth-century society.

Thesis Structure

The first chapter of this thesis examines the way in which Dickinson's speakers respond to a society which has fundamentally changed due to the rise of the consumer society and materialism. I will show that, while they seem to be perturbed by the new materialism and superficiality which they see around them, they cannot help being influenced by the very values and conceptions whose validity they question. To elaborate on the ambiguous position of Dickinson's speakers, I will draw on the theories of Walter Ong and W.E.B. Du Bois's concept of "double consciousness." Finally, I will show that they use their ambiguous position and resulting unique perspective to destabilize the central values and tenets of society's materialism. In doing so, they attempt to give the members of this society a new way of looking at the world.

The second chapter discusses the way in which Dickinson's personae comment on the materialistic consumer society through playing the role of beggar. Being located in a

position which is removed from, yet part of, a society in which the possession of money and material goods is exceedingly important, enables them to question and battle against dominant, materialistic currents of thought. This beggar-persona is especially disturbed by the fact that people are so willing to unquestioningly embrace the new "way of life," values and conceptions this new, materialistic society promotes. Through drawing on Althusser's theories on ideology, therefore, I will show how she responds to this by attempting to reveal that society's new conceptions and values may merely be determined by a desire to conform to others' ideological beliefs and habits. Moreover, I will show that, through occupying the ambiguous position of beggar, Dickinson's personae set out to free themselves, as much as possible, from ideological ways of thinking. Occupying such a position allows them to gain a perspective which others more firmly embedded in society would not as easily gain and, thus, broadens their horizon.

The third chapter discusses the way in which Dickinson' speakers respond to another new, widespread nineteenth-century practice: the practice of travelling. Similarly to the speakers in the poem on materialism, Dickinson's personae have an ambiguous attitude towards this. For example, though they criticize the practice of travelling, they are also fascinated by it. Indeed, in many poems Dickinson's speakers describe how they travel through the mind in order to broaden their horizon – the goal of many people who engaged in actual travelling. After looking at the way in which they engage in this practice of "sedentary travelling," I will examine the way in which this tendency of theirs is informed by the new, fashionable practice of actual travelling, which members of the consumer class and cosmopolitan writers were encouraged to engage in. In my discussion of this topic, I will engage in a debate with the theories of Juhasz and Michael Allen on travelling in Dickinson's poetry.

The fourth chapter expands on the way in which Dickinson's personae go about broadening their horizons. This chapter will analyze a number of poems which do not directly refer to nineteenth-century society, but which more abstractly discuss the consequences of living in a changed and changing society. These poems will be analyzed by means of the "model" presented in this introduction. I will show that, though often painful and dangerous, the complete rearranging of their set of ideas and conceptions this model describes is always desirable to Dickinson's speakers. This is because it provides them with a new horizon that is adapted to fit their new circumstances, which previously unsettled and disoriented them. This chapter will show, therefore, that Dickinson's speakers are of the opinion that broadening one's horizon may help one to deal with uncertainty, change and disruption – something which people very likely were forced to deal with, living in the mid-to-late nineteenth-century.

Finally, the fifth and sixth chapters compare the experiments of Dickinson's personae with subjecting themselves to uncanny experiences in order to broaden their horizons with those of Wordsworth's persona in *The Prelude* and those of Zarathustra in Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, respectively. These chapters will examine the way in which the works of these three writers react to living in a changed and changing society in a strikingly similar, Romantic, manner.

Chapter 1

Nineteenth-Century Materialism in Dickinson's Poetry: Exploring the Consequences of Living in a Changing Society

Dickinson lived in a society which was becoming increasingly materialistic. Although she does not make many direct references to the economic developments or historical events of the "Gilded Age" or "age of enterprise" in which she lived, her poetry does seem to respond to the numerous changes occurring during this money- and market-oriented period. For example, I agree with Mitchell that "it should be obvious that Dickinson's inclusion of terms drawn from economic [...] discourses show that she was aware of [the] impact [of the economic developments of her times]" (75-76). As was pointed out in the introduction, Dickinson may have been concerned with the impact of these developments because the increasing materialism and the fact that it was becoming possible for members of any class to acquire material wealth was threatening her privileged socio-economic position. Whether or not this is the case, she explores her thoughts on the emerging consumerism and materialism in her poetry by creating a persona who critically scrutinizes the changed society she lives in.

Despite her critical attitude towards the consumer society, this persona cannot help being influenced by the materialistic currents of thought circulating in society. This is, according to Dickinson's poems on the subject, one of the consequences of living in a changed society: it automatically alters one's ideas and opinions. I will demonstrate more specifically how Dickinson's poetry explores and reveals the consequences of living in a radically altered society by analyzing a number of poems that deal with this topic. Although most of the poems I analyze in this chapter deal specifically with the materialism that was emerging in society, I also discuss some poems that contain more abstract discussions of what it means to experience extreme, sudden change. In doing so, I wish to expand on Mitchell's

idea that Dickinson's poems often "typif[y] a consciousness that is aware of, and draws from, the element of chance and unpredictability that fluctuations in market forces brought to nineteenth-century life" (75). This will show how, although she does not always directly refer to societal developments and events, all her poems are saturated with a specific historical awareness or, feature a particular historical "consciousness," throughout.

<div align="center">

Section 1.1.

"'Tis sweet to know that stocks will stand / When we with Daisies lie -":

Criticizing the Values of the Marketplace Economy from Within

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In many poems, Dickinson criticizes the economic developments that led to the rise of a "marketplace economy," (Erkkila 16) and comments on the new values these developments gave rise to, by deploying specific economic language. According to Reddy, in his 2005 article "'All We Secure of Beauty Is Its Evanescences': The Ratio, the Rainbow, and Dickinson's Theory of Value," "Dickinson's writings on value […] could be said to deconstruct, or at least dismantle, these [societal and economic] paradigms of worth" precisely because they "mobiliz[e] the same language of economics and valuation [of the paradigms of worth that are criticized]" (67). Just as Dickinson uses the language of the very construct she criticizes, she sometimes also uses speakers who adhere to the values of the commerce-oriented society in order to criticize its values. A poem which seems to "dismantle" the values of this market-oriented economy by using an ambiguous speaker is poem 36 (J 54). In my analysis of this poem, I will show how Dickinson uses the speaker's assertions to both affirm and ridicule the values of the materialistic society. The poem goes as follows:

If I should die -

And you should live -

And time sh'd gurgle on -

And morn sh'd beam -

5   And noon should burn -

As it has usual done -

If Birds should build as early

And Bees as bustling go -

One might depart at option

10   From enterprise below!

'Tis sweet to know that stocks will stand

When we with Daisies lie -

That Commerce will continue -

And Trades as briskly fly -

15   It makes the parting tranquil

And keeps the soul serene -

That gentlemen so sprightly

Conduct the pleasing scene!

In lines 1-10, the speaker asserts that the possibility of dying and being separated from a loved one does not seem nearly as bad if one considers what is mentioned in lines 11-18, namely, that the thought that the economy will continue unchanged offers some consolation. These rather flippant assertions make the speaker seem superficial. Upon closer examination, however, it seems that her assertions are unreliable and actually ridicule the commerce-oriented society.

According to Greg Johnson, in his 1982 article "Emily Dickinson: Perception and the Poet's Quest," many of Dickinson's speakers make claims that are less than trustworthy (6). He comes to this conclusion after pointing out that the speakers of many poems obviously

contradict themselves. That we cannot trust this speaker's assertions or believe that her flippant attitude is all that there is to this poem becomes clear, in my opinion, not only because the speaker contradicts herself, as Johnson writes, but also because she gets lost in what Diehl, in a different context, calls, the "proliferation of language" ("Immanence" 7) that is often featured in Dickinson's poems. I will demonstrate this after commenting on lines 1-10.

In these lines, the speaker starts out by speculating that the world may stay as stable after her death as it always was during her lifetime. For example, she imagines that – "time [may] gurgle on […] As it has usual done." Reading the first six lines, one suspects that this seemingly sentimental poem may be about to suggest that somebody's death may not be so distressing or unsettling if the world stays stable for their loved ones. The tone changes in lines 7-10, however, when the speaker states that if she knew for certain that the world would stay as it always was – "If Birds should build as early / And Bees as bustling go -" – she may even decide to *choose* to die and leave the "enterprise below." In other words, in these lines the speaker starts to draw attention to her desire to remove herself from the commerciality of society – even though she is about to state that she adores this very commerciality.

Indeed, whereas just a few lines ago she found consolation in the thought that after her death – or anyone else's, perhaps – the world may stay unchanged and stable, in the second half of the poem she changes her tune and starts to talk about how "sweet" it is to know that "stocks," "Commerce" and "Trades" will continue after one's death. A striking contrast exists between "time," "morn" and "noon" (3-5) and "stocks," "Commerce" and "Trades," (11-14) as the former, in our experience, are unchanging, whereas the latter are highly unstable. The latter may have seemed especially unstable to Dickinson since, as Charles R. Anderson has pointed out, this poem "was composed in 1858 when business had not yet begun to recover from the crash the year before" (153). In other words, although the speaker herself seems to

be profoundly in favour of "stocks," "Commerce" and "Trades," a careful reading of this poem demonstrates a contradiction in her train of thought.

Moreover, it seems that the speaker starts talking about "stocks," "Commerce" and "Trades" simply by association, rather than out of a supreme trust in their value. For example, it is as if she unwittingly decided to phrase the sentiment "one may choose to depart from this world voluntarily" as "One might depart at option / From enterprise below!" (9-10) using economic terms ("option" and "enterprise"). That the speaker goes from unconsciously making a pun to literally talking about economics can be seen by the fact that one may read a double meaning into the economic terms used in lines 9-10, and by the fact that this no longer applies to those used in lines 11-14. For example, the words "option" and "enterprise" in lines 9-10 have specific secondary, economic meanings. Contrastively, this double meaning no longer exists in the words "stocks," "Commerce" and "Trades" in lines 11-14.

In other words, it is as if the speaker comes to the conclusion that the idea of the continuation of trade and commerce may be comforting only in mid-poem or mid-train of thought, solely due to the "proliferation of language" that she gets caught up in. This inconsistency in the train of thought of the speaker points to the fact that the poem contains a double layer of meaning. This is shown by the fact that, while the speaker seems quite superficial and enamoured of stocks and commerce, *another* voice in the poem may be pointing towards the uncertainty and instability of living in a commerce-oriented society. This voice contrasts, in Anderson's words, "the triviality of all 'enterprise below'" with "the sovereign business of the soul" (Anderson "Window" 152). According to Anderson, it is "the flippant reversal of values" (152) that becomes evident in these lines which makes the poem so effective in mocking the values of the materialistic society. Indeed, the idea that "the soul will find peace in heaven only by knowing that prosperity still smiles on the earth below, the permanent reassured by the transient" (152-153) is so ridiculous that the speaker's assertions

in favour of the market-oriented society cannot be trusted. As Anderson puts it, the delightfully flippant tone in which the speaker suggests this, "makes these lines sparkle" (152).

Like Anderson, Stoneley points out the humorous, entertaining quality of this poem. In his 2000 article, "'I - Pay - in Satin Cash -': Commerce, Gender, and Display in Emily Dickinson's Poetry," Stoneley is interested in the ways in which Dickinson deals with her anxiety regarding the future of her class position in her poetry. Rather disapprovingly, however, he writes that poem 36 "suggests a pleasurable interest in comic subversion more than terror over the loss of her old-style, almost feudal status" (582). Although it does make use of "comic subversion," in my opinion, this poem should not even be read – as Stoneley does – as dealing with Dickinson's fears over losing her class position. Rather, as Anderson suggests, the speaker in this poem seems to be lamenting the transition from a religion-oriented society to a society in which commerce has the highest priority. Moreover, although the tone of this poem does seem rather light, I believe it has a serious point to make. In my opinion, this poem demonstrates what the consequences are of living in a radically altered society: even if one is opposed to the values of the changed society in which one lives, one cannot criticize these values without taking recourse to the language of that which one wishes to criticize. Moreover, living in such a changed society, one cannot express total disdain for, or completely distance oneself from the new *mores*; instead, one is automatically influenced by the values and practices of the new society and must, therefore, necessarily adapt one's own values and ideas, taking those of the new order into account. For example, it is precisely through its celebration of economic developments that this poem criticizes these developments and the surface-oriented character of society. Indeed, the fact that the speaker so easily gets caught up in the language of this market-oriented society shows that it is wonderful to consider oneself to belong to such a growth- and progress-oriented society.

However, as the poem reveals, and Anderson's analyses suggest, it is easy to see through this discourse and notice that it has replaced the loftier, and previously firmly-established, discourse of religion and the afterlife. Through its use of economic language, therefore, the poem shows that the speaker is both enchanted and disenchanted by the market-oriented society she lives in. Similarly, the values of the new, materialistic society are commented on by a speaker whose assertions both applaud and condemn the values of this society.

Dickinson's speaker thus seems to be experiencing a similar predicament to that of Plato, which Walter Ong describes in his article "Writing is a Technology that Restructures Thought."[5] Ong mentions that Plato took a stance against writing and lists the philosopher's arguments against this activity. He then points out that "[o]ne weakness in Plato's position is that he put these misgivings about writing into writing" (298). The philosopher could not help doing so, according to Ong, because "once the word is technologized, there is no really effective way to criticize its condition without the aid of the technology you are criticizing" (298). Although Plato's well-known position obviously differs greatly from that of Dickinson's personae, their work deals with essentially the same issue: both are dealing with the idea that widespread, broadly accepted developments "restructure[…] thought" or "transform[…] consciousness" (Ong 301)[6]. Just as Plato was unable to criticize the written word without taking its presence into account and making use of it, for example, Dickinson's personae are unable to maintain and express their own thoughts vis-à-vis the world without taking recourse to the discourse and thought patterns of the changed world they wish to criticize. It is as if the mere – though widespread – presence of the materialistically-oriented

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[5] This article is based on his important 1982 work *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*.

[6] Of course, as Ong points out, "Plato […] was not at all fully aware of the unconscious forces at work in his psyche to produce his literary reaction, or overreaction, to a lingering, and by this time retardant, orality" (299). As for Dickinson, it is always difficult to determine what an author's precise goals or intentions are; however, in my opinion, it becomes clearly apparent from reading her poetry that her work is concerned with this issue.

society and its values and habits has altered the thoughts and ways of acting in, relating to and looking at the world of Dickinson's speakers.

Poem 36 shows, therefore, that one of the consequences of living in a changed society, the values of which one finds inadequate, is that it provides one with a double perspective, or, in Ong's terms, a "transform[ed] consciousness" (301). In poem 36, this "transform[ed] consciousness" manifests itself through the speaker's use of what Bakhtin would call "dialogic" language. This is "heteroglot" language which "represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present" (Bakhtin 291). This is, of course, precisely the kind of language we find in poem 36, where the discourses of the materialistic society and the older, religious order are used simultaneously. According to Crumbley, in his 1998 essay "Dickinson's Dialogic Voice," this dialogism in Dickinson's poetry is a mark of the modern quality of her work. However, since, in poem 36, it seems to stem from the speaker's position between two nineteenth-century societal paradigms, it seems to place the speaker firmly in her historical, nineteenth-century context. Rather than revealing her avant-garde tendencies, therefore, Dickinson's dialogism seems to show that her poetry was written during a period of transition in which dialogism is a logical result of her specific historical situation. Of course, Dickinson's persona *is* located in a time whose developments would lead to the advent of modernity and may be said to be reacting to – rather than unconsciously anticipating – modernity in that way.

The presence of multiple contradictory opinions is especially apparent in the lines in which the speaker's original train of thought becomes influenced by thoughts and images from the new marketplace economy. In Ong's terms, these lines might be said to quite literally show the way in which her "thought" is "restructured" by new developments. Moreover, the fact that economic language and imagery "infiltrate" the "old-fashioned,"

afterlife-oriented tone of the tone may suggest that the poem is performing, in a linguistic manner, the transition from a religion-oriented society to an economy-oriented society

Section 1.2.

"The Gem were best unknown -": Fantasies of Acquisition

Dickinson did not only live in a market-oriented society, but also in a society which was becoming increasingly consumer-oriented. This can perhaps best be seen in the developments occurring in advertising during her lifetime. For example, whereas in the forties and fifties of the nineteenth-century, advertisements served primarily to inform the readers of local newspapers of the price and availability of certain products (Norris 13), from the mid-sixties advertising began to appear in nationally-distributed monthly magazines (*Emergence of Advertising in America, 1850-1920*). As companies were now able to reach a wider audience, they became geared towards selling large quantities of their products. To be able to do so, they had to differentiate their products from similar competing products (Norris 18). As a result, products were prized for their "[s]tyle, elegance, comfort, and [...] luxury" and modernity (Norris 17) rather than for their "price and durability" (Norris 17) – unlike in the past. Specifically, from the sixties and seventies onwards, a large part of advertising pertained to beauty products, accessories, and male and female fashion. Perhaps such advertisements are a reflection of the fact that, as Stoneley points out, acquiring and displaying one's possessions was becoming increasingly important in the second half of the nineteenth century (Stoneley 577-578).

Perhaps it was as a result of this development that Dickinson wrote poems which comment on competitive consumer-behaviour and their display-oriented mentality. Like poem 36, such poems also feature speakers who occupy a somewhat double position. For example,

similarly to poem 36, poem 1131 (J 1108) comments on the values of the consumer society by means of a speaker who does not *wholly* oppose these values. Also, like poem 36, this speaker uses economic language to criticize the "counterfeit values" (Merideth 436) of what Merideth calls the "acquisitive society" (435). Doing so shows, according to Merideth, that Dickinson's poetry was part of the American Romantic tradition (437) as this was a "tradition of social criticism and oppositions" (Merideth 452). Unlike poem 36, however, poem 1131 comments on the "acquisitive society" in a more serious manner.

Whereas Reddy writes that Dickinson uses economic language in her poetry to deconstruct the paradigms of worth society adhered to, Vivian Pollak points out that she does so for less pragmatic, more personal purposes. In her 1973 article "'That Fine Prosperity': Economic Metaphors in Emily Dickinson's Poetry," Pollak writes that Dickinson uses economic metaphors – descriptions of economic situations – that are drawn from nineteenth-century public life in order to make her private experience more understandable to a public audience. According to Pollak, such economic terms are used to satirize the values of society and to work out a notion of subjective valuation (163-164). Although Dickinson often uses speakers who have the very values her work wishes to criticize, and could, in this manner, be seen as a "satirist," I think her poetry has a different purpose than satire, though; it more often sets out to *comment on* society and explore the question of what it means, for an individual, to live in a particular society, belonging to a particular group, in which one has particular habits, values and conceptions of the world. In my opinion, this is also the purpose of poem 36.

The speaker in poem 1131 both comments on the consumer society and works out a notion of subjective valuation. She does so through, as Pollak points out, using an economic description to mediate her more abstract thoughts about possession, materialism and worth in general. The poem goes as follows:

A Diamond on the Hand

> To Custom Common grown
>
> Subsides from it's significance
>
> The Gem were best unknown -
>
> Within a Seller's shrine
>
> How many sight and sigh
>
> And cannot, but are mad with fear
>
> That any other buy -

The second half of the poem quoted above includes a strikingly perceptive description of a familiar scene, in which people are described passing by a shop, longing to buy a piece of jewellery which exceeds their budget. Even though the people she describes do not buy nor own the commodity that they wish to have, they seem to imagine that they own it, as they are "mad with fear" that someone else will buy it and "take it" from them. Therefore, as Stoneley writes, this poem may be commenting on "the competitive nature of consumerist desire" (588). According to Stoneley, Dickinson is repelled by the fact that people wish to acquire material wealth from the "Shrine" of commodified culture, which they may subsequently display to others (588). The displayed wealth that this poem comments on is the "Diamond on the Hand" mentioned in the first line. Because of this line, Stoneley comes to the conclusion that Dickinson disapproved of "[t]he need for the woman to wear diamonds [which] is directly related to the hierarchy of display" (588). He then writes that this disapproval causes the speaker to distance herself from the "rabble" at the shop.

It seems plausible that Dickinson has her speaker express these rather condescending, elitist sentiments, in which the values of others are entirely disregarded and even scorned, due to her privileged class position. However, in this thesis I do not wish to examine the poems solely in terms of Dickinson's biographical details; I think it is more interesting to examine what kind of poetic persona emerges in her poems on materialism and the new, consumer-

oriented society. Accordingly, I will look at the way in which Dickinson's speaker in poem 1131 deals with living in a changed society, and being in a position in which she does not have, or, does not *want* to have, access to that which is considered to be important and valuable by its members.

Dickinson's speaker copes with her situation – in which she considers the values and habits of those around her to be inadequate – by developing a notion of subjective valuation. This notion is developed in the first half of the poem, in which the speaker's ideas of what is valuable are set out. In these first four lines, the speaker claims that it is better not to own the object one desires, for familiarity with an object decreases its worth. She suggests that, once one acquires the object one desires, one uses it for what it is commonly used for – for example, one starts wearing a diamond ring. In this way, one becomes so familiar with the object, that one no longer notices what made it special in the first place. To illustrate this general claim, the second half of the poem makes clear that the people in society, who always want to acquire that which they desire, are foolish for not realizing that the excitement they feel while they look at the object and *imagine* what it would be like to own it, is far more precious and long-lasting than the satisfaction of actually owning it. As the speaker says, "The Gem were best unknown - / Within a Seller's Shrine," (4-5) – otherwise "its significance" "Subsides" (3).

Although I agree with Stoneley that the speaker is obviously criticizing the members of the new appearance-oriented society for being so materialistically-oriented, I think that the speaker's position, though elitist in a way, is more complicated than Stoneley suggests. Indeed, like the speaker in poem 36, she does not seem to be entirely detached from the consumer-oriented society she describes. It is as if the speaker suggests in lines 1-4 that she *herself* has experienced the rush of gaining and the subsequent disappointment of owning an object she desired – such as the "Diamond on the Hand – and is now "warning" others not to

make the same mistakes she did. Indeed, how would she know that "The Gem were best unknown -" if it were not for having experienced this herself?[7] Juhasz suggests that, when Dickinson's speakers make use of aphorisms and general statements – such as "The Gem were best unknown" – they "make the private public without anybody knowing it" thus revealing and simultaneously masking or protecting personal experience (34-36). Following Juhasz, therefore, this poem could be said to feature a persona who wishes to distance herself from the consumer society she seems to have once belonged to by making claims so general that they do not seem to pertain to her own experience yet which are validated, at the same time, by their very generality.

In my opinion, therefore, this poem presents a speaker who seems to have experimented with belonging to the new consumer society, but who found its customs unfulfilling. As a result of her inability to fit in with this society, she creates her *own* customs. This involves deciding to relinquish her consumer habits and become a kind of permanent "window-shopper," always longing for something and never acquiring it. In fact, many of Dickinson's speakers do not place importance on the acquisition and possession of material wealth – as the consumer society does – but, rather, value imaginative fantasies of acquisition. As is evident, these speakers criticize and distance themselves from the acquisitive habits of the consumer society, yet are influenced by its habits. Indeed, their fantasies of acquisition are always geared at acquiring wealth at some time in the future. As the speaker says in poem 856 (J 801), for example, "I know not which, Desire, or Grant - / Be wholly beautiful -" (23-24).

Perhaps it can be said that, in the poems in which she prefers fantasizing about to acquiring an object, Dickinson's persona is performing what Freud calls "introversion" in his essay "On Narcissism." According to Freud, introversion consists of "the turning of the libido

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[7] In fact, several critics have pointed out that Dickinson is an "experiential" poet who relies on empirical evidence gained from experience, rather than trusting in received notions (see Benfey 5, Raab 293 and Brantley 19, for example).

on to unreal objects," (16) and occurs when a person "has, on the one hand, substituted for real objects imaginary ones from his memory, or has mixed the latter with the former; and on the other hand, he has renounced the initiation of motor activities for the attainment of his aims in connection with those objects" (4). Although I am not trying to psychologize Dickinson, it is quite interesting that Freud's words seem to apply to what she does in her poetry. Indeed, Dickinson's speakers often seem to prefer imaginary over real objects, as can be seen in poem 1131, and in the following statement from poem 1401 (J1315) so typical of Dickinson's speakers: "That is best which is not - Achieve it - / You efface the Sheen -" (3-4). Also, they do not enjoy physically pursuing these objects but, rather, ruminating over them in their imagination (and, so to speak, "renouncing the initiation of motor activities").

In my opinion, Dickinson's persona's preference for fantasy and the imagination – or, rather, her ability to make sure that her ideas of what is valuable differ from those of society – enables her to find an adequate way of living in a changed society, the values of which she does not (entirely) share. For example, despite the fact that she has no access to that which the materialistic society considers to be valuable, and is excluded from this society, her imagination provides her with a sense of wealth nonetheless. She takes recourse to her imagination and to her practice of creating her own values and sense of wealth because she does not consider the values of society to be adequate, valid or *real*. Of course Dickinson could not – and did not – take on such a view in her own life. However, she *was* able to explore the consequences of being located in a particular position in a changed society in her poetry – her writing of which seems to have been facilitated by her withdrawal. As Eberwein points out, Dickinson "took advantage of the author's privilege to adopt the voices of imagined characters and to enter vicariously into situations remoter from her own life" (95). As a result, "Dickinson's poems assert the ultimate and real value of an interior, mental, and

spiritual economy against the instability of the new marketplace economy of wages, prices, contracts, merchants, securities, stocks, and reversals" (Erkkila 17).

I agree with Erkkila's statement, because the speakers in many Dickinson's poems are concerned with making sure that their conceptions values are *their own*. Specifically, they want to create and establish their set of conceptions and values themselves, rather than going along with and casually accepting the values of society. I will show this by analyzing poem 785 (J 747), which shows how Dickinson's persona's practice of introversion helps her to establish her *own* values in a changed society. In this poem, the speaker states:

> It dropped so low - in my Regard -
>
> I heard it hit the Ground -
>
> And go to pieces on the Stones
>
> At bottom of my Mind -
>
>
> Yet blamed the Fate that flung it - *less*
>
> Than I denounced Myself,
>
> For entertaining Plated Wares
>
> Upon my Silver Shelf -

In this poem, the speaker elevates "Silver" objects as they have an intrinsic value which mere "Plated Wares" do not possess. This tendency of the speaker is conceptualised by the fact that the speaker is portrayed as literally having a "Shelf" in her imagination upon which she places those things which she considers to be somehow intrinsically valuable. In other words, it is as if she looks into her mind, and finds a spatial rendering of the set of principles and conceptions which she relies upon there. When one of these objects, which she thought extremely valuable, proves to be worthless to her, it "[drops] so low – in – [her] Regard –" that it literally falls off the shelf, "hit[s] the Ground – / And go[es] to pieces on the Stones / At

bottom of [her] Mind." The poem thus seems to suggest that that which is of no "real" value is bound to be regarded less highly with time – like the "Diamond" in poem 1131, perhaps.

It becomes clear that a change in the speaker's circumstances – brought about by "Fate" – causes her to view one thing whose value she trusted in as worthless. Rather than despairing, however, about the fact that she has placed such importance on something whose apparent intrinsic worth was so easily proved non-existent (see P 1131), she "denounce[s]" herself. This suggests that she will be more critical in future in selecting the objects she values or tenets she relies upon. This poem thus presents a speaker who turns inwards – or, practices introversion – to scrutinize her set of values and conceptions, and proceeds to weed out those values and conceptions which will not last unshaken by time and circumstance. It seems to suggest that Dickinson's persona is of the opinion that, though one has no control over one's "Fate," or historical situation, one may work to equip oneself for living in a changed society or changed circumstances by actively rethinking, re-creating and maintaining one's set of conceptions and values – just as in poem 1131. Doing so will destroy some of the things she relied upon, but it will also allow her to find out which values and conceptions will hold and be of use to her in her changed situation. This poem seems to describe precisely how, according to Gadamer, a person's horizon is shaped when one's circumstances radically change. According to Gadamer, "the horizon of the present is continually in the process of being formed because we are continually having to test all our prejudices" (Gadamer 306). In my opinion, this poem shows how "Fate," or, the speaker's historical situation, tests not the speaker's prejudices, though, but her values.

The fact that the speaker is so preoccupied with how change and disruption change, and force one to rethink, one's values is because she "typifies a consciousness that is aware of, and draws from, the element of chance and unpredictability that fluctuations in market forces brought to nineteenth-century life" (Mitchell 75). Perhaps Dickinson's concern with

questions of value that Mitchell points out was informed by a particular economic debate that was going on during her lifetime. In *Money, Language and Thought*, Marc Shell connected this debate to Edgar Allen Poe's short story "The Gold Bug" in a very interesting way but, as far as I know, it has not previously been linked to Dickinson's poetry. Paper money had been used in America since before 1686, but the value of coined and paper money was heavily debated from 1825 to 1875. At this time, the "gold bugs" wanted to make gold the sole currency, while the so-called paper money men viewed paper money as an appropriate symbol to represent value (Shell 5-6). Gold bullion was seen by the "gold bugs" to have some intrinsic value to it, whereas paper was seen to "[count] for nothing as a commodity" (Shell 6). In other words, the gold bugs did not like the idea of having to lend value to something which seemed to be of no worth whatsoever while, formerly, they could pay with something which had intrinsic value to it. The prospect of solely using paper money made them uncomfortable because it destabilized their conceptions of value, and meant that they had to reorganize them.

Poem 785, which was composed during the Civil War in 1863 when the paper money debate was particularly heated, seems to be concerned with the same issues around which the paper money debate revolved. However, it does not seem possible to position the speaker on one particular side of the debate. For example, like a "gold bug," the speaker is concerned with weeding out everything that is "Plated" and does not have the intrinsic value that "Silver" has. However, on the other hand, she seems to be weeding out the values and conceptions that will not hold up in her changed circumstances. Therefore, she seems to be trying her best to adjust to her new situation, rather than campaigning for a return to her old circumstances in which that which she used to value was still considered to have value.

Section 1.3.

"A Rich man - might not notice it -":

The Double Consciousness of Dickinson's Speakers

In the previous sections, it has been discussed how Dickinson creates a persona who deals with living in a changed, materialistic society whose values she finds inadequate by turning inwards and creating a notion of subjective valuation, and by commenting on and questioning the values of this society. She does so by using economic language, and a persona who seems to applaud, share or have shared the values she comments upon. It has been suggested that Dickinson criticizes this society in this manner, because living in a changed society where one does not quite fit in automatically provides one with a double perspective. In this section, I will more elaborately examine the way in which Dickinson's persona makes use of this double perspective, or, "double-consciousness," (Du Bois 3) to use W.E.B. du Bois's term in a somewhat different way. Other critics have also written about this phenomenon in Dickinson's poetry. For example, both Allen and Douglas Anderson have written about her "double perspective" (Allen par. 88) regarding her concern with the binary opposition of public versus private. Also, Joanne Dobson shows in her 1989 book *Dickinson and the Strategies of Reticence* that Dickinson suffers from a kind of "double consciousness" with respect to gender issues. Unlike these critics, however, I will look at the way in which Dickinson's speakers exhibit a double consciousness with respect to the materialistically-oriented society.

Du Bois coined the term "double consciousness" in 1903 to talk about the fact that African-Americans were unable to be fully self-conscious and create their own identity, as they were constantly forced to see themselves through American stereotypical notions which existed about black people. Race plays a relatively minor role in Dickinson's poetry –

although, recently, Erkkila, Bennett and Mitchell have written about racist attitudes in Dickinson's poetry and possible white supremacist notions Dickinson may have had – yet the concept of double consciousness seems to play an important role in Dickinson's poems on materialism and the consumer society[8]. In these poems, the concept is played out in the speakers' desire to create their own personal values and sense of wealth, and their simultaneous awareness of, and unavoidable participation in, value systems opposed to that of their own – like in poem 1131, for example. "[T]his sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others" (3), as du Bois puts it, which characterizes the concept of "double consciousness," is described in Dickinson's poem 209 (J 181). I will first give a brief analysis of this poem, and then explain the way in which it becomes apparent that the speaker suffers from a kind of double consciousness in this poem:

> I lost a World - the other day!
>
> Has Anybody found?
>
> You'll know it by the Row of Stars
>
> Around its forehead bound!
>
>
> A Rich man - might not notice it -
>
> Yet - to my frugal Eye,
>
> Of more Esteem than Ducats -
>
> Oh find it - Sir - for me!

In this poem, the speaker writes that she has lost a "World" which can be recognized by the "Row of Stars / Around its forehead bound." It is rather difficult to determine precisely what object the speaker is referring to. In my opinion, judging from the use of the word "Ducats" in

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[8] Bennett explores Dickinson's racism in her 2002 article "'The Negro never knew': Emily Dickinson and Racial Typology in the Nineteenth Century" and Erkkila provides some anecdotal knowledge about the racist attitudes of Dickinson and her family in her 1992 essay "Emily Dickinson and Class." Also, in an article of the same title, Mitchell makes some observations about racist attitudes in Dickinson's letters.

line 7, the speaker is referring to a Venetian ducat, as the reverse of such coins featured a standing figure of Christ within a mandorla – an almond-shaped figure – with a row of stars along the inner circumference (Lane and Mueller 177).[9] If this is the case, the "forehead" mentioned in the poem may be the forehead of Jesus. The speaker demonstrates the immense value this object has for her by stating that "A Rich man - might not notice it - / Yet - to my frugal Eye, / Of more Esteem than Ducats -" (5-7). With their required 24-carat, or, .999 fineness, Venetian ducats were extremely valuable and were also a widely accepted international standard of value. Unlike the Florentine florins which were in circulation at the same time as Venetian ducats, for example, all Venetian ducats were of equal legal value and weight (Lane and Mueller 177). Stating that the object she has lost is worth more than ducats, therefore, suggests that this is an exceedingly valuable object.

It may be the case that a "Rich man" in the new, materialistically-oriented society would "not notice" the speaker's ducat if he came across it because he has plenty of "Ducats," or, perhaps, if he is an American as Dickinson was, he would have no use for the ducat, it being a European coin. In any case, the speaker seems proud of the fact that she, though she seems "frugal" and deprived to others, has the preciseness of perception to discern objects of value where others do not. It is also possible that she scorns this rich man for the fact that he cannot conceive of the fact that she places more value on the ducat than the market places on it – something that is of "*more* Esteem than Ducats" (*italics mine*) is certainly invaluable, as ducats used to be the most highly esteemed coin. That she scorns the "Rich man" for not being able to do so becomes apparent in the last line of the poem in which the speaker sarcastically challenges him to retrieve the object she has lost. She knows that he will not be

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[9] For a picture of the Venetian ducat, see Appendix B.

able to find it, presumably because he is "Rich" and, consequently, overlooks objects that are not perceived as valuable in his value system.

Although it seems plausible enough that the speaker is criticizing materialistically-oriented people for not being able to consider something of little market value as valuable nonetheless, the speaker may also be talking about a more abstract notion of value. If the object the speaker has lost is indeed a Venetian ducat, for example, the "disappearance" of the coin that bears a picture of Christ may stand for the "disappearance" of Christ himself. If this is the case, the speaker may be criticizing the "Rich man" for not realizing that the disappearance of Christ, or, the waning of religious belief in general – one of the developments which greatly changed the character of nineteenth-century society – equals the disappearance or loss of something of great value – something of far more "Esteem than Ducats -."

Like poem 36, this poem comments on the materialism of society and the transition from a religion-oriented to a money-oriented society by using a speaker who occupies a double position. In the speaker's opinion, society is unable to think about value in ways that do not involve binary oppositions. This makes it impossible for her to use a term that describes value, such as "Rich," to describe someone who has the ability to discern the value of, and is in the possession of, objects which are conventionally not seen as valuable. Indeed, someone in the possession of much material wealth is considered to be rich in a society that considers material wealth the mark of richness, but someone who owns one small, seemingly insignificant and even undetectable object – such as the "World" in poem 209 – will be considered to be poor, despite her subjective perception of her condition. In consequence of society's established patterns of thought, the speaker is forced to describe herself, due to her tendency not to value material wealth, as "frugal," (6) even though, in this poem, the word has none of the negative qualities it has to the "Rich man" (5). More precisely, the word "frugal"

is not diametrically opposed to the word "Rich" in the speaker's mind, as her "frugality" consists of valuing a hugely valuable object which provides her with a great sense of richness. Moreover, the speaker considers herself to be – or, more precisely, to *have been*, now that she has lost this object – far "richer" than this "Rich man." This shows that she prizes herself for her ability to estimate the value of things far more discerningly than others: the "Rich man," though "Rich" would "not notice" this exceedingly valuable object if he were to come across it.

In this poem, therefore, the persona makes clear that she considers herself to be "Rich," though society would not consider her to be so. Also, she gives the word "frugality" a more positive connotation by linking it to the quality of being discerning rather than connecting it to stinginess. Since no other language than society's binary language is available to her, in many of Dickinson's poems on value the speaker sets out to attribute new meaning to the terms of binary oppositions whose meaning is already established, such as the words "frugal" or "Rich."[10] She does so in order to create new ways of thinking about the world: according to her poems, society has a very fixed and rigid way of ordering and conceiving of the world, yet, in her poems, new ways of seeing the world and its plurality are created. This takes place in poem 209 through the fact that the speaker's address to the "Rich man" is designed to make him aware of the fact that different conceptions of wealth exist besides the one he possesses. Dickinson's unusual use of language in this poem thus causes "inherited grounds [to] waver or collapse" (Baker 197). Since she must use society's language in order to dismantle society's "grounds" and state her *own* ideas, it can be said that she is "looking at [her]self through the eyes of others," as du Bois puts it. This is not entirely negative, however,

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[10] Professor Jeffrey Steele of the University of Madison, Wisconsin got me to think about the ways in which Dickinson experiments with language, especially with respect to Dickinson's technique of creating what he calls "switch-words," which are described here. Mitchell has also written about this tendency of Dickinson's poetry. According to Mitchell, when Dickinson uses words in this particular way, she "ironize[s] them, thus rejecting their predetermined significances" (230).

as approaching the "Rich man" in terms he is familiar with, yet using them in a different, subversive way, reveals to him the existence of an idea he had not previously conceived of and, thus, broadens his horizon[11].

Conclusion

This chapter shows that the persona Dickinson creates is someone who lives in a society which has gone from a religion-oriented society to a more materialistic one. As a result of living in a society which has undergone such a dramatic transition from one "order" to another, the persona acquires somewhat of a double perspective. For example, due to her early nineteenth-century aversion to materialism she distances herself from the materialistic values of those around her, yet cannot help – as is shown through her use of language – being fascinated and taken in by the materialism and consumerism around her. She uses her position both within and outside of society to play with the language of this materialistic society in such a way that she attributes new meaning to the central terms of their discourse. In doing so, she attempts to give them a new way of looking at the world.

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[11] Of course, the poem does not mention how the "Rich man" reacts to the speaker's speech. This is not the point, though: it is the intention of the text to introduce the non-habitual. The horizon that is broadened, therefore, is perhaps that of the reader.

Chapter 2

Nineteenth-Century Materialism in Dickinson's Poetry: Exposing its Ideological Flaws

in the Anti-Role of Beggar

This chapter will expand on the way in which Dickinson's personae are located in an ambiguous position from within which they attempt to destabilize the rigid ways of thinking of members of the consumer society. To do so, a number of poems will be examined in which they play the role of beggar. This is an ambiguous role, as the beggar-persona is located in a position on the margins of society while also being aware of the dominant currents of thought. Playing this ambiguous role allows her to perceive things about society which other people more firmly embedded within it would generally not be aware of. Like Romantic poet Wordsworth, therefore, Dickinson's beggar-speakers pride themselves on the fact that they are able to discern things of value "where, to the unwatchful eye, / No difference is." (*The Prelude* 2:299-302). Specifically, these poems set out to prove that someone who is located in a socio-economic position which is *seen to be* deprived, is actually highly privileged – just like the speaker in poem 209.

In this chapter, I will first show how the position of Dickinson's personae is a Romantic one and will subsequently examine the way in which their position enables them to challenge the ideas and values of the consumer society by analyzing poems 536 (J 406) and 1420 (J 1380). Next, I will show how, despite the fact that they criticize the consumer society, like in chapter 1, they also attempt to find a place for themselves within it. Finally, I will demonstrate that they use their ambiguous position both within and outside of society to expose the presence of hidden ideological currents of thought in the changed society.

Section 2.1.

"One's - Money - One's - the Mine -": Broadening the Horizon through

Valuing the Unconventional

According to Morse Peckham, the Romantic artist purposely othered herself in order to, on the one hand, comment on society, which makes sure that "one's behaviour does not emanate from oneself, but from culture, or society, or values, or beliefs: in short, from the not-self, from the other" (55) and, on the other, to maintain his or her "discontinuity of personality" (44). This Romantic characteristic appears in Dickinson's poetry, as she often "others" herself – or, makes her poetic persona an "other" – by portraying herself as a beggar, or, someone in an unconventional societal position, who is able to comment on, criticize, and analyze society. Peckham labels this Romantic practice of "othering" oneself "self-estrangement," something which offers the Romantic artist "the possibility of freedom" (44). Through performing the role of a beggar, while "actually" being part of the privileged class[12], Dickinson – and her personae – obtain the ability to move back and forward, as it were, between "the centre" and the "margins," commenting on the one with the perspective of the other in mind, and vice versa.

I will now examine the way in which the occupation of what is conventionally seen as a deprived, marginal or uncommon, and, therefore, invalid socio-economic position – namely, that of the beggar – influences the ideas and values of Dickinson's personae. I will also look

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[12] Of course Dickinson was not *really* a "beggar," which may lead one to wonder how she could possibly obtain the perspective of a beggar. Perhaps Dickinson's tendency to portray herself – or, the lyrical "I" – as a beggar reflects the fact that she may have been anxious that her privileged socio-economic position was about to become devoid of value, as the beggar's position is commonly seen to be. Also, it may reflect the fact that she felt deprived, as Joan Burbick suggests, due to nineteenth-century restrictions on female sexuality. Further, she may have portrayed herself as a (starving) beggar due to the fact that she may have been anorexic, as Heather Kirk Thomas suggests. Whether or not Dickinson herself was deprived, however, does not *really* matter in my opinion; what matters is that Dickinson's work earnestly attempts to question notions of privilege and deprivation. In my opinion, it is far more interesting to examine such questions than to spot biographical correspondences.

at the way in which occupying such a position is considered, by her speakers, to be positive.

First, I will analyze poem 536:

>Some - Work for Immortality -
>
>The Chiefer part, for Time -
>
>He - Compensates - immediately -
>
>The former - Checks - on Fame -
>
>
>Slow Gold - but Everlasting -
>
>The Bullion of Today -
>
>Contrasted with the Currency
>
>Of Immortality -
>
>
>A Beggar - Here and There -
>
>Is gifted to discern
>
>Beyond the Broker's insight -
>
>One's - Money - One's - the Mine -

This poem contrasts people who wish to achieve "The Bullion of Today -" (6) with those who, like the beggar, aspire towards the more spiritual wealth that "the Currency / Of Immortality -" (7-8) will provide. The concluding stanza indicates that those who live in material poverty are able to perceive how, according to the speaker, people who *do* possess material wealth lead an impoverished existence, as their wealth is only transitory. Unlike those who chase after material wealth, such as the "Broker," the beggar realizes that the "Mine" of immortality will provide him with spiritual riches – something which, to the beggar, seems far more valuable and long-lasting than material wealth. Therefore, the poem shows how it takes a person from outside a particular social position, or, someone with a

"foreign" perspective and, thus, "foreign" values to discover things about the people located within this social position, and their values. After all, it is a "*Beggar* - Here and There - / [Who] [i]s gifted to discern / Beyond the Broker's insight -" (9-11, *italics mine*). This is the case, because it is far more difficult to question and discerningly examine one's *own* habits than the habits of another. As Dickinson writes in one of her letters to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "The mind is so near itself it cannot see distinctly" (*Letters* 253).

Thanks to her somewhat removed position, the beggar is able to observe that that which the "Broker" values is only temporary and uncertain. Since the beggar has no access to that which the broker values, she decides that that which the broker values ("Money") is not valuable, and values the "Slow […] but Everlasting -" gold of "Immortality" instead. As Juhasz says, the speaker here adheres to the idea that "[l]oss in the present can buy a future without it" (129). Moreover, her deprivation at present is "compensated" for (Burbick 370) by the fact that she gains "insight" that the broker does not have. According to Leo Braudy, the degree of "compensation" the speaker acquires is very extreme. For example, Braudy calls the speaker of poem 536 "the show-off of eternity," as a result of "the innumerable ways she devised to humble herself in the world even as she asserted herself to posterity and to heaven" (quoted in Lundin 109). I agree with Braudy that the opinions expressed by the speaker of this poem *are* rather arrogant. However, I do not think the speaker is in an entirely favourable position, as she seems to have tricked herself into thinking that total deprivation is a good thing. As Pollak and Burbick have pointed out, the tendency of Dickinson's speakers to deprive themselves to an extreme degree can lead to great disappointment and can be extremely damaging to the self[13]. Moreover, a drawback of her position is that, though she determines not to focus on gaining one particular type of wealth (material wealth) as she

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[13] See Pollak's article "Thirst and Starvation in Emily Dickinson's Poetry" and Burbick's article "Emily Dickinson and the Economics of Desire."

considers it to be of no real value, she starts to focus on that which she considers to have real value: "Immortality." As many critics such as Lundin and Brantley have pointed out, however, Dickinson's speakers are not always entirely sure of the existence of "immortality" or heaven. It could be said, therefore, that poem 536 is suggesting that the speaker might be deceiving herself by believing she is better off than the "Broker."

Although the speaker's behaviour may certainly be read in a negative manner, however, the speaker is also to be admired. For example, as Eberwein points out, "[i]t was too easy [for Dickinson] to become obsessed with "Nows" [poem 690 (J 624), "Forever - is composed of Nows -"] rather than working for immortality […], preferring its "Slow Gold - but Everlasting -" to immediate rewards of temporal industry" (232). In other words, Eberwein finds the behaviour of the speaker in poem 536 admirable as "Work[ing] for Immortality -" is a difficult task which she sets herself to complete – a task which many others might shy away from. Indeed, read in this way, the decision of the beggar-persona to deal with occupying an uncertain socio-economic position by creating a highly personal conception of wealth (one that does not involve material but spiritual wealth) by placing so much importance on the afterlife, and by lending herself an imagined superior status, seems a brave, difficult and effective one.

In accordance with the method of Weisbuch and Zapedowska to see Dickinson's poetry as "one long poem" in which all poems somehow refer to each other, I would like to elaborate on my analysis of poem 536 by giving an analysis of poem 1420. This poem comments on the situation of materially-oriented figures such as the broker from a perspective which the "Beggar" in poem 536 might share. I will assume, therefore, that the opinions expressed in both poems belong to the beggar-persona Dickinson creates. In poem 1420, the speaker observes:

How much the present moment means

> To those who've nothing more -
>
> The Fop - the Carp - the Atheist -
>
> Stake an entire store
>
> Opon a moment's shallow Rim
>
> While their commuted Feet
>
> The Torrents of Eternity
>
> Do all but inundate -

In this poem, the speaker does not only oppose those who value material wealth to those who value spiritual wealth, like in poem 536. Here, she also criticizes people who pay too much attention to outward appearance ("the Fop"), those who have a tendency to complain peevishly ("the Carp") and those who have no sense of spirituality whatsoever ("the Atheist"). In other words, she criticizes these highly modern figures – the dandy and the atheist only emerged in consequence of modernity – for being superficial[14]. More particularly, it may be said that she criticizes the changes in society for leading to the emergence of a variety of disagreeable roles. These roles did not exist previously, in the old, religion-oriented society in which one's role was more fixed (Lundin 149). According to the speaker, these people are only preoccupied with their own (small) concerns, and seem not to be aware that something far larger than they could ever conceive of could shatter and annihilate all that which they value. As Eberwein puts it, this poem makes "a cosmic joke of the worldly person's circumscription" (78).

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[14] Lundin and Brantley show in detail how atheism was becoming a part of the "pre-Modern," late nineteenth-century society due to a decline in religious belief and the advent of science. Also, in *Inventing the Modern Artist: Art and Culture in Gilded Age America*, Sarah Burns shows how bohemian, appearance-oriented figures such as the dandy were a product of appearance- and surface-oriented modernity. She states that, because of the increasingly widespread practice of advertising, and improved technologies for reproducing visual images, "mediated versions of 'the man himself' (or the woman) were everywhere" and argues that "[t]hose representations introduced a huge audience to a vivid constellation of ideas about what an artist in fin-de-siècle America was – and was not – supposed to be" (4). Although Dickinson did not exactly live to see fin-de-siècle America, the developments that would lead to this period were already in full swing during her lifetime.

According to Dwight Eddins, who gives a Nietzschean reading of Dickinson's poetry in "Emily Dickinson and Nietzsche: The Rites of Dionysus," the speaker in this poem is aware of a Dionysian "boundlessness that makes a mockery of our human arrangements and value systems" (98). I agree with Eddins's reading, as the speaker shows that the values by which "The Fop - the Carp - the Atheist -" live are completely insignificant when one considers the bigger – or, simply, early nineteenth-century – picture. To put it in Nietzschean terms, the speaker is aware that the "Apollonian constructs" (Eddins 99) of these modern subjects are insubstantial and meaningless[15]. Indeed, it would most likely terrify or nauseate them – and completely shatter their view of the world and their place in life – to comprehend the Dionysian "boundlessness" the speaker encounters and become aware that they are merely standing on what is horrifyingly described as "a Moment's shallow Rim." Contrastively, the speaker's worldview and sense of place in the world seems to have been shattered in such a way already. She seems to hold onto an early nineteenth-century, "old-fashioned" *Weltanschauung* in which earthly life was oriented towards the afterlife, but which simply does not apply anymore to most members of society, who are now mainly preoccupied with appearance-oriented materialism. I agree with Hagenbüchle, therefore, who suggests that "we may interpret Dickinson's oeuvre as her defensive gesture against a momentous and in many ways disruptive development of nineteenth-century civilization: the breaking asunder of what was up to then a relatively unified discourse into different (sub-)discourses such as the

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[15] Eddins explains that, according to Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*, "the rationale of [the Apollonian] sphere [of existence] is the *principium individuationis*, by which we foster the illusions that we are entities separate from the rest of nature and that the horrors and chaos of existence can be rendered impotent by aesthetic and ethical constructs. This Apollonian world of order and individuality is […] a set of fictions and phantasms […]. We flee this truth […] by deeper and deeper immersion in our dreams of order and beauty. But the excess and boundlessness that characterize the ground of being constantly puncture this dream world and destroy its constructs, leaving the Apollonian in despair" (97). In other words, in poem 1420, the speaker sees through the "Apollonian constructs" or "anesthetic illusions" that the "Fop," the "Carp" and the "Atheist" have created for themselves. The way that Nietzsche, similarly to Dickinson, considered people in the late nineteenth-century to live accordingly to false or insubstantial values will be discussed in chapter 6.

theological, the political and the scientific discourse" (312). Indeed, this poem very clearly

describes a historical moment in which multiple discourses and currents of thought – those of

religion and materialism – exist side-by-side, yet are by no means unified.

Due to their superficial values and shallow preoccupation with "the present moment,"

the members of the increasingly modern society are blissfully unaware of the precarious

position that the speaker views every materialistically-oriented, modern human being to be in.

According to the speaker, due to their present-oriented outlook, modern people do not – and

cannot – conceive of the fact that there may be *more* to life. She is disconcerted by the fact

that, because the people around her are setting themselves superficial goals, and unthinkingly

and flippantly embracing the emerging modernity which is so radically changing the status

quo, they cannot conceive of the idea that everything they now hold onto may be taken from

them – a commonplace in her religion-informed outlook on the world. Or, as Eddins might

put it, she is disconcerted by the fact that such people live by a false sense of (Apollonian)

permanence that will, according to her, be shattered by the "Torrents of Eternity." The

preoccupation of the speaker with this event and, thus, with the older, solely religion-oriented

order, can be seen by the multitude of words hinting at this "inundation" by the "water" of

eternity in the second half of the poem[16]. For example, the word "Torrents" clearly refers to

water, as does the word "shallow," which seems to mean both "superficial" and "not deep."

Moreover, the word "rim" stems from the Old English *rima*, which was often used in the form

of *saerima*, which means "seashore" but can be translated literally as "rim of the sea." Like in

poem 36, therefore, the speaker gets caught up in the "proliferation of language" Diehl

describes. In this manner the poem shows, in my opinion, how one's use of language

exemplifies the perspective or "ideology" according to which one views the world, or, vice

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[16] Interestingly, in poem 750 (J 726), the speaker refers to "Immortality -" (8) – a term often used
interchangeably with "eternity" in Dickinson's poetry – as "that Great *Water* in the West -" (7 *italics mine*).

versa, how one's set of conceptions and values is determined and shaped by the discourse one uses. The poem seems to be pointing, therefore, to language as an ideological "institution" – very similarly to poem 209, in which the "Rich man" cannot conceive of the word "Rich" as having multiple meanings, due to his ideological position and unquestioning adherence to the values of the materialistic society.

Although the beggar-persona of poems 536 and 1420 may be seen to be desperately clinging onto an old-fashioned *Weltanschauung*, and upset by the fact that she has been forced to change her outlook on the world, in my opinion, she also attempts to counter the aimlessness and superficiality she identifies as characteristic of the changed society she lives in. She does so to attempt to find a way to successfully live in this changed, increasingly modern society. The fact that she seems to have adapted to living in this society is shown by the "anti-role" she chooses to play. For example, a beggar obviously does not share the values of the materialistically-oriented society, yet inherently belongs to this modern society: a society which prioritizes the gaining of material wealth and respects the materially rich must also have an "other" who is materially impoverished to set the more central members of this society off against. Dickinson's persona seems to be aware that, now that modernity has started to emerge and will not go away, she has to find a place for herself within modernity. In order to stay critical and maintain a perspective which distances her from the new customs and values she finds so inadequate, she chooses to play a role which is literally both within and outside of society. Playing this role enables her to gain a fresh perspective and broader horizon. For example, from within her marginalized position in which she *also* has an antagonistic relation to the more mainstream cultural and societal practices, she is able to make observations about society which most people would not conceive of. In other words, this poem seems to be engaging in the Romantic practice of "going beyond conventional models of knowing" (Baker 24). Moreover, playing this role enables her to adhere to her own

conceptions and values, while adapting her outlook on the world to "fit" modernity. This broadens her horizon because, as Gadamer states, one's horizon is broadened when one "transposes" (305) oneself into another's situation or position. In my opinion, this is what Dickinson herself is doing in this poem. For example, by portraying herself as beggar, she is "transposing" herself into another role, and seeing what it means, for the self, to live in that particular position, in those particular circumstances. Through transposing herself, and "[taking] advantage of the author's privilege to adopt the voices of imagined characters and to enter vicariously into situations remoter from her own life," (Eberwein 95) therefore, she gains knowledge which she would not have acquired otherwise and, in doing so, broadens her horizon. As this broadening of the horizon of the persona takes place in order for her to adapt to the changed society of the second half of the nineteenth century, it becomes evident, as Hagenbüchle's suggests, that "[i]t is through art [...] that Dickinson attempts to find a place in her culture" (320).

Section 2.2.

Criticism of Ideologies in the Poetry of Emily Dickinson

As can be seen in poems 536, 1420, 1131, and 209, Dickinson places her personae in marginalized positions, which enables them to scrutinize the dominant ideas of society. In doing so, they come to the conclusion that most people live their lives without critically examining or questioning their habits or outlook on the world. Because these people are embedded in society and its customs and values, they do not consider the possibility of rethinking that which they are used to – unlike Dickinson's personae, whose relative exclusion from society enables them to question its customs and values. In my opinion, it is one of the goals of Dickinson's poetry to shock people out of their unthinking habits by

revealing that most people's conceptions, values and ideas are determined merely by an unquestioning acceptance of, and the tendency to conform to, the ideologies of others.

Unlike Dickinson's speakers, the people with whom they are contrasted do not realize the fact that the things they take for granted may not be as straightforward from another perspective. In other words, they are solely focused on gaining much material wealth within the rigid, conventional and exclusionary framework of the materialistic nineteenth-century society – according to Dickinson's speakers, that is. In contrast, Dickinson's speakers are concerned with gaining spiritual, imaginative, non-material wealth. This personal, more private conception of wealth of theirs is not related to the market value of products. Dickinson's poems present a rather extreme or schematic view of society in that they always place the speaker in quite an extreme – though not uncomplicated – position, and society at the other end of the spectrum. In my opinion, Dickinson has her speakers take on such extreme positions with respect to society because she is trying to "think outside the box" with respect to value.

In my opinion, Dickinson wants to make clear that value is always determined subjectively, and wishes to reveal that people only value particular things – such as material wealth – and are reluctant to, or, simply *do not*, value other things merely out of a habit *not to* value other things. It could be said that Dickinson points out that people value things out of a particular "ideology," and do not see that others may value *other* things. For example, the people Dickinson's poetry describes – such as the "Rich man" in poem 209 – are unaware that their own values are rigidly established and exclusionary because, as Althusser points out, ideology is always "invisible" or not very clearly apparent to those within it. In my opinion, through showing, in many poems that deal with this topic, that value is always subjective, Dickinson writes poems in which her speakers reveal the presence of ideologies in society, especially with respect to value.

According to Althusser, "[i]t is necessary to be outside ideology […] to be able to say: I am in ideology (a quite exceptional case) or (the general case): I was in ideology" (18). Interestingly, Dickinson's speaker seems to say "I was in ideology" in poem 1131, in which she seems to allude to the fact that she was formerly a member of the consumer society, but has now relinquished those values and substituted them for others. Of course Dickinson's speakers, like the members of society with which they contrast themselves, have an ideology themselves. For example, their predilections to see certain things as valuable are always determined by their socioeconomic position and their imagination. This corresponds to Althusser's idea that one's "own" values and conceptions are always informed by the religious, cultural and economical communities one is surrounded by. According to Althusser, these communities, which he – rather radically – terms "Ideological State Apparatuses," all operate according to certain ideologies which their members share. Wishing to prevent themselves from being wholly influenced by one particular type of ideology – though Dickinson would not, of course, have talked about this in these terms – her personae express the notion often put forward in Romantic literature that it is somehow better to put together one's own set of ideas and values than to conform to others' ways of thinking. For example, as English Romantic poet Blake writes in *Jerusalem*, "I must Create a System or be enslav'd by another Man's" (chapter 1, plate 10). Indeed, Dickinson's personae seem to be intent on creating a "System" or method by which to approach the world. Part of this "method" is that they attempt to avoid being stuck in a certain way of thinking by distancing themselves from mainstream society and its main ideas, and trying to live as undeceived as possible. As was seen in poems 536 and 1420, for example, the speaker is glad that she knows that everything which is taken for granted is actually highly unstable, because this knowledge means she is not as "deluded" as she considers the "Broker," (P 460 11) "Fop," "Carp," and "Atheist" (P

1420 3) to be. In these two poems, the speakers would rather acquire horrifying knowledge than live under the ideological illusion that things are what they seem.

Although Dickinson's speakers are focused on creating their own "ideology" or "method" – and Dickinson herself seems to be focused on creating the type of persona who has the ability and agency to do so – a certain criticism of ideologies which make sure that possible exceptions to that ideology go unperceived also exists in Dickinson's poetry. For example, in poem 209, the "Rich man" cannot conceive of the fact that the speaker lives her life according to different values and conceptions than his own. It may perhaps be said, with respect to this area, that Dickinson seems to share the opinions of a range of modern thinkers, as Grabher (237) and Reddy (71) point out. For example, Emmanuel Levinas is worried about the fact that the West has long been governed by a reductive "economy of the same," and Derrida sees Western history as "based upon a motivated aversion to difference" (quoted in Baker 20). Like other Romantic writers (Baker 20), Dickinson seems to share their aversion to the fact that difference is commonly ignored and unperceived – though, of course, she goes about expressing this in a very different way. For example, her poetry is focused on locating its speakers in unusual positions in society, so that they are able to make observations that people would not ordinarily make or even think of making, due to their fixed, established habits of thought, as in poems 536 and 1420.

Just as I do not consider the presence of "dialogism" in her poetry to be indicative of her avant-garde qualities, however, I do not consider her work to be ahead of its times in that it expresses similar concerns to twentieth-century thinkers. Rather, I consider, with Margaret Dickie, Dickinson's concern with ideology and difference to be a Romantic one. According to Margaret Dickie, Dickinson's poetry is focused on such matters because she "shared with her fellow Romantics a suspicion of convention" (544). Like other Romantic writers, she creates a persona who does not care for "repeating familiar patterns of behaviour" (Dickie 544) just

because she is expected to do so. Rather, she sets out to question *others*' familiar patterns of behaviour and thought and live according to more unfamiliar patterns of behaviour herself. In doing so, she rethinks conventional notions of what is normal and habitual.

Conclusion

This chapter shows that Dickinson's personae comment on the materialistic consumer society through playing the anti-role of beggar. Being in this discerning position enables them to observe things about the changes that have recently occurred in society that other people would not be able to think of, being so embedded in the ideologies and values of the new societal structure. For one thing, they observe that people have become superficial and reluctant to maintain meaning in their lives, and are upset to note that people have unquestioningly consented to play the new roles that the increasingly modern society has created. Specifically, she is displeased with the fact that the unity which formerly existed has been supplanted by a more fragmented, less coherent societal structure. She reacts to this by playing a role that is intrinsically a part of the new, materialistic society – that of the beggar – yet very much outside of it. This enables her to adapt to living in the changed society around her, which she knows she must as it has become apparent that the old religion-oriented "order" will not return. However, her double position also allows her to be sufficiently removed from society so that she can question its values and ideas and avoid being swept along by its materialistic ideologies. Also, occupying a position in which she gains a perspective that others would not as easily gain, broadens her horizon.

Chapter 3

Nineteenth-Century Cosmopolitanism in Emily Dickinson's Poetry: Sedentary

Travelling vs. Actual Travelling

"he conceived a notion of space that allowed him to navigate across unknown seas, to visit uninhabited territories, and to establish relations with splendid beings without having to leave his study"

– A Hundred Years of Solitude, Gabriel García Márquez

This chapter expands on the notion expressed in the previous chapter that Dickinson's personae play a particular anti-role to explore their thoughts on the changes occurring in society, by examining poems in which they play not the anti-role of beggar, but that of traveller. This role is just as characteristic of the changing nineteenth-century society as that of the beggar. For example, in the second half of the nineteenth century the practice of travelling was becoming increasingly widespread, and people were encouraged to travel to broaden their horizons. Moreover, writers were expected to travel to the important literary centres to broaden their minds and gain inspiration and, with the books they wrote as a result, acquire fame and wealth. While Dickinson's personae are interested in broadening their horizons, and gaining imaginative wealth and poetic material, they express an aversion to actual travelling. To gain these things, nonetheless, though, they engage in a different kind of travelling: a "sedentary travelling" through the space of their minds.

In this chapter, I will first examine the way in which Dickinson's personae sometimes play the role of traveller and conceptualize the broadening of their horizon as travelling through the "landscape" of their mind. This will show how they have an ambiguous opinion

about the new, widespread practice of travelling. In discussing their practice of "sedentary

travelling," I will make use of Juhasz's discussions of the way in which Dickinson's speakers

use their imagination to explore what they refer to as the "Undiscovered Continent" (P 814, J

832, 3) of the mind. Subsequently, I will expand on her analyses by viewing the interior

explorations of Dickinson's personae as resulting directly from developments in Dickinson's

own times, rather than occurring merely as a result of Dickinson's insular imagination and

introspective tendencies.

Section 3.1.

"I cross till I am weary":

Broadening the Horizon through Sedentary Travelling

At the start of *The Undiscovered Continent: Dickinson and the Space of the Mind*,

Juhasz states that she "take[s] literally Dickinson's assessment of the mind as tangible space"

and is "concerned with how she defines the mind as a place in which to live and with what

happens to her, living there" (1).[17] According to Juhasz, it becomes evident that the lyrical I in

Dickinson's poems conceives of her mind as a space through the fact that she often describes

her mind as a house in which she dwells (14), envisions it as containing corridors and

chambers (16) and describes emotions – mental experience – in spatial terms (45)[18]. Juhasz

also writes that Dickinson's speakers often conceive of their minds as a far wider space than a

house and, when in such moods, describe their minds and mental experiences using not

domestic but geographic vocabulary (22) – something which O' Donnell also points out in his

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[17] Although Juhasz is of the opinion that the "I" of Dickinson's poems corresponds to the poet herself, I view the lyrical I to refer to the personae that Dickinson creates in her poetry.

[18] For example, in the much-discussed poem 466 (J 657), the speaker states "I dwell in Possibility - / A fairer *House* than Prose -," (1-2, *italics mine*) in poem 407B (J 670), the lyrical "I" claims that "The Brain has *Corridors* – surpassing / Material Place -" (3-4, *italics mine*) and in poem 515 (J 599), the emotion of "pain" is described as an "Abyss" (3).

1977 article "Zones of the Soul: Emily Dickinson's Geographical Imagery." According to Juhasz, this tendency of theirs shows that they consider the mind as a vast, almost limitless space. She also writes that it is because of their conviction that the mind surpasses everything in the external world that Dickinson's speakers frequently show that they do not consider travelling to be necessary: their mind is more than sufficient territory to explore. I will expand on Juhasz's discussion of the way in which Dickinson's poetic personae "travel" through the space of their minds while physically staying in one place by analyzing a number of poems which she does not discuss. In contrast to poem 785, the speakers in these poems engage in the practice of introversion to a far more extreme degree. For example, they do not simply turn inwards and "renounce […] the initiation of motor activities" (Freud 4) to ruminate on and imaginatively pursue imaginary objects but, in turning to their interior, find a whole *world* there for them to explore.

One poem in which the lyrical I states that she literally travels through her mind is poem 666 (J550):

I cross till I am weary

A Mountain - in my mind -

More Mountains - then a Sea -

More Seas - And then

A Desert - find -

And my Horizon blocks

With steady - drifting - Grains

Of unconjectured quantity -

As Asiatic Rains -

Nor this - defeat my Pace -

It hinder from the West

But as an Enemy's salute

One hurrying to Rest -

What merit had the Goal -

Except there intervene

Faint Doubt - and far Competitor -

To jeopardize the Gain?

At last - the Grace in sight -

I shout unto my feet -

I offer them the Whole of Heaven

The instant that we meet -

They strive - and yet delay -

They perish - Do we die -

Or is this Death's Experiment -

Reversed - in Victory?

In this poem, the speaker describes the journey she is undertaking through her mind. Among other things, she describes reaching a "Desert" where her "Horizon" is "block[ed]" by an inestimable amount of blinding grains of sand. This does not make her want to give up, though; instead, it motivates her to carry on. As Burbick points out, the "carefully planned asceticism" that the speaker exhibits here "not only validates the struggle but claims that the goal will increase in 'merit'" (369). Despite the fact that the speaker "knows" that her goal is

worthwhile because she has struggled to achieve it – something which Richard Sewall and Weisbuch also point out in connection with this poem (Sewall 458, Weisbuch 166) – her "feet" still "delay" when the goal is finally in sight. It is unclear whether, when her feet "perish," the speaker – that is, her mind or soul – reaches the goal, or whether both the feet and the speaker's consciousness "die" at this point. According to Weisbuch's reading of the poem, this is immaterial, as this "quest poem" expresses the notion that "[t]he greatest diligence is to push forward the quest in spite of the strong suspicion that it is endless and fruitless" (166). Weisbuch writes that, through suggesting that "[s]uccess is irrelevant," (166) this poem breaks with the early Romantic tradition of quest poems, in which the goal took precedence over the quest itself. Since, in poem 666, the quest is more important than the goal, Weisbuch states that this is a late-Romantic poem.

In my opinion, the goal of the speaker is to extend her horizon as far as possible. In language to do with travelling, she expresses how she forces her mind to venture out into unknown territory from where she will perceive things that she could not perceive formerly. The activity she is conceptualising, in my view, is the process in which the mind works to grasp new knowledge, alter its outlook on the world, or conceive of that which has not previously been conceived. Following Weisbuch, it may be said that, because she "perish[es]" before she reaches her ultimate goal, this poem expresses the late-Romantic knowledge that the broadening of one's horizon is something which is never completed.

According to Burbick, this poem "depicts the weariness of the mind confronted with 'Mountains,' 'Seas,' and a 'Desert' while continuing to search and scan the horizon for the desired" (Burbick 369). In my opinion, however, she is not looking for the object of her desire somewhere on the horizon; rather, the *horizon* is the object she desires. Indeed, she seems to be traversing the obstacles in the "landscape" of her mind in search of a new horizon, which is

further out and which she could not have seen from "behind" the "Mountains" and "Seas" she was formerly located behind.

Although we are never told whether the speaker reaches her goal, she is utterly preoccupied with finding out whether it is possible to reach it at all. This becomes evident from the fact that she asks the question "Do we die - / Or is this Death's Experiment - / Reversed - in Victory?" Here, she is asking whether, when our bodies can no longer sustain us, we are "Victor[ious]" and reach the place we were so desperately trying to reach in our minds. Of course, she will only find out the answer to this question when she dies. Because she is trying to solve what Paul de Man calls the "linguistic predicament" (930) of death – something many Romantic writers were preoccupied with, according to de Man and Baker – she cannot give us the outcome of her quest to broaden her horizon, but can only, in a late-Romantic fashion (Weisbuch 166) talk about the journey itself.

I would like to expand on Weisbuch's ideas by adding that, though the quest does indeed seem more important than the goal, what seems just as important is the attitude or mentality of the persona in this poem. This is a persona who ventures into the unknown in search of new knowledge, no matter what she may encounter – a task other people might shy away from, yet a task which, according to many of Dickinson's poems, it was necessary to take on while living in a changing society such as that of the second half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, as the poems on materialism show, one needs to broaden one's horizon – that is, adjust one's outlook to incorporate a new prevalent conception or habit, such as a widespread, materialistic current of thought – if one wants to accommodate to living a society which has accepted the presence of such conceptions or habits. In other words, according to the poetry, the persona in poem 666 is remarkable because she has found a way to cope with living in a society which was becoming increasingly modern, and has found an answer to the

demands modernity makes of its subjects: a flexibility of thought and a willingness to adapt to change – in other words, a penchant and a desire for constantly broadening one's horizon.

Although this persona seems to be what would become the "modern subject," I still consider her to be a persona that could only have been created within Romantic literature. For example, as Rajan writes in her 1980 book *Dark Interpreter: The Discourse of Romanticism*, Romanticism is "a mode of consciousness that envisions the unreal and the possible across the barrier of the actual" (13). This is precisely the "mode of consciousness" that the lyrical I in Dickinson's poems on travelling and broadening the horizon shares. Like in poem 666, in which the speaker broadens her horizon several times before "perish[ing]," poem 580 (J 534) shows how this "mode of consciousness" frequently has productive results:

We see - Comparatively -

The Thing so towering high

We could not grasp it's segment

Unaided - Yesterday -

This Morning's finer Verdict -

Makes scarcely worth the toil -

A furrow - Our Cordillera -

Our Apennine - a Knoll -

The speaker in this poem shows that what we struggle to fathom one day, we may comprehend effortlessly after having "toil[ed]" to "grasp" it. Finally "grasp[ing]" or overcoming the obstacle she faced, allows her to consider the "Cordillera" which thwarted her a mere "furrow" and the "Apennine" a "Knoll." While the speaker in poem 666 portrayed herself as some kind of explorer venturing through the unexplored territory of her mind, this speaker presents herself as a mountain climber, scaling the obstacles which stand in her way

and, in doing so, reaching (mental) heights she previously never imagined ascending to. Like poem 666, this poem shows quite literally that forcing one's mind to grapple with confounding thoughts and challenging conceptions – which is what the "Thing so towering high" seems to stand for – relocates or extends one's horizon. For example, after the speaker has ascended the seemingly unscalable mountain ranges she faced, she finds herself in a position in which she can already hardly conceive of the "Knoll[s]" and "furrow[s]" beneath her as high mountains. It is as if she has literally acquired a different horizon, which forces her to see the things around her in a different perspective, through her "travels" through the mind. To use Gadamer's statement in a slightly different context, it may be said that this poem shows how "[h]orizons change for a person who is moving" (304).

Section 3.2.

"I deem that I - with but a Crumb - Am Sovreign of them all –":

Travelling as Colonizing

Poems 666 and 580 are connected to Dickinson's times in that the speakers express typically Romantic opinions and perform typically Romantic actions, and seem, like the character of José Buendía that Márquez describes in the epigraph to this chapter, to travel through the mind in response to the changes occurring in society that would lead to modernity[19]. However, these speakers are mostly concerned with introspectively exploring their interior to "better" themselves, as Juhasz has written about. Other poems which make use of imagery to do with travelling, however, *are* more directly linked to specific

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[19] Márquez's novel *A Hundred Years of Solitude* starts out by describing how the gipsy Melquíades visits the isolated village in which Buendía lives to show the villagers all the "latest" inventions. In his solitary experiments with these inventions, such as the compass, the astrolabe and the sextant, Buendía unawarely "re-invents" modernity.

developments in Dickinson's times. Specifically, these poems seem to be what Baker calls

"metapoems" (211) – that is, poems *about* Dickinson's poetry – which comment on the place

of Dickinson's work and defend the manner in which she produces it, in the new literary

culture that was emerging in the nineteenth century. Such poems conceptualize the spatialized

mind of the lyrical I as a world – or, more precisely, and in keeping with the events of her

times, as a colony – from which to draw inspiration. In such poems, inspiration is

metaphorically described as "riches." These poems express Dickinson's ambiguous attitude

towards travelling, which writers in this new literary culture were expected to do[20]. An

example of such a poem is poem 748 (J 791):

> God gave a Loaf to every Bird -
>
> But just a Crumb - to Me -
>
> I dare not eat it - tho' I starve -
>
> My poignant luxury -
>
> To own it - touch it -
>
> Prove the feat - that made the Pellet mine -
>
> Too happy - for my Sparrow's chance -
>
> For Ampler Coveting -
>
> It might be Famine - all around -
>
> I could not miss an Ear -
>
> Such Plenty smiles upon my Board -
>
> My Garner shows so fair -

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[20] I share Douglas Anderson's suspicion "of readers who find Dickinson repeatedly writing poems about 'poems' and 'poetry,' (211) yet will show how this *does* seem to apply to poem 748 in the following paragraphs.

> I wonder how the Rich - may feel -
>
> An Indiaman - An Earl -
>
> I deem that I - with but a Crumb -
>
> Am Sovreign of them all -

In the first stanza, the speaker says that she possesses "But just a Crumb -" but that she "dare not eat it - tho' [she] starve[s] -" (3). Instead, she treasures the "poignant luxury -" it is "To own it - touch it - / Prove the feat - that made the Pellet mine -" (6). In other words, she feels proud to own something which belongs to her and no one else and decides, therefore, not to "eat" her possession but to keep it intact, and revel in her possession of it.

Perhaps her reluctance to consume her possession stands for the fact that Dickinson herself was reluctant to publish and, thus, "live off" her creativity. She would perhaps rather hoard, as one hoards "Pellet[s]" in a "Garner," the products of her imaginative gift. In my opinion, Dickinson is punning on the word "mine" in order to suggest that these "Pellet[s]" are not only *hers*, but also serve as more literal mines, which contain riches. This reading of the lyrical I as hoarder seems plausible when one considers the fact that Dickinson repeatedly refused her poet-friend Helen Hunt Jackson's adamant requests for her to publish. According to Crumbley, Dickinson did so to avoid becoming a part of the new literary culture in which writers circulated their work on the literary marketplace instead of amongst family and friends ("Textual Economies" 743).

In my opinion, poem 748 can be read not only as indicative of Dickinson's preference for privately enjoying rather than publishing her work, though, but also as pointing to the fact that she preferred her (persona's) practice of "sedentary travelling" in order to gain knowledge, inspiration and a broader horizon, to the fashionable activity of actually travelling with the same goal in mind. Before I examine the way in which this poem refers to the

practice of sedentary travelling, I will give a brief overview of the prevailing attitudes towards travel in the second half of the nineteenth century. Dickinson may have been aware of the fact that people were encouraged to travel for the reasons mentioned above due to the ideas of her friend and editor of the *Springfield Republican* newspaper, Samuel Bowles. For example, in his 1869 book *The Pacific Railroad-Open. How to Go: What to See. Guide for Travel to and through Western America*, Bowles sets out his views on travelling in strikingly similar terms and imagery to that of Dickinson. For example, he writes the following about the benefits of the Pacific Railroad: "[t]he vast regions that it brings, for the first time, into our familiar knowledge hold a new world of nature and of wealth, and are, full of delightful surprises for the lover of scenery, the student in science, the seeker of opportunity for power and for riches. It is the unrolling of a new map, the revelation of a new empire, the creation of a new civilization, the revolution of the world's haunts of pleasure and the world's homes of wealth" (5) Also, he states that, thanks to the creation of the Railroad, "we have here a world of nature, fresh and tempting, for the explorer" (6). Subsequently, he adds, with reference to the vast stretch of land the Railroad covers and the possibilities of building more railroads, that "[i]t will take us long to learn what there is on and in it; how long, indeed, to subjugate it to use and the ministries of civilization!" (7). Like Dickinson, therefore, Bowles views travelling as an activity which brings the previously unknown into "our familiar knowledge" and "unroll[s] a new map." It is as if he conceptualizes travelling as an activity which expands one's knowledge and broadens the map of the mind – similarly to Dickinson. Also, like the poet, he views travelling not merely as a leisure activity, but as the bold undertaking of an "explorer." Most strikingly, though, he talks about travelling and the constructing of new railroads which lead to the possibility of travel, in colonial terms. In the next paragraphs, I will examine how Dickinson's views on travelling in poem 748 seem to be informed by the

same thoughts that shaped those of Bowles. In doing so, I will pay particular attention to the fact that this poem makes use of colonial imagery.

For example, the speaker of poem 748 claims that she considers herself to be richer than an "Indiaman" and an "Earl," despite her few possessions. In my opinion, the word "Indiaman" refers to a type of merchant ship operating for the East India Company known as an "East Indiaman", which usually sailed from Europe to India or China to collect goods to sell for profit (Henderson 18). Similarly, the word "Earl" may either denote a rich person belonging to the English aristocracy, or, more interestingly, refer to any of the thirteen East Indiaman ships which bore the word "Earl" in their title, such as the "Earl of Abergavenny" or the "Earl of Mansfield" (Cotton 128). Incidentally, during the days of the British Empire, several Earls also held the position of Secretary of State for the Colonies, which may broaden the meaning of the term "Earl."[21] By comparing her state to that of an "Indiaman" and an "Earl," the speaker may be claiming that she is "richer," or, "holds more wealth" (in her "Garner" of "Pellet[s]" or poems, perhaps) than a merchant ship containing exotic, valuable goods retrieved from the European colonies as well as richer than an Earl in charge of managing the colonies.

It is difficult to determine what exactly Dickinson's views on colonization are from reading this poem. The speaker seems to be fascinated and taken in by the splendours she imagines are for the taking in such countries, however, she also seems to suggest that the wealth she finds in her *own* imagination surpasses any material wealth found in the colonies. According to Eberwein, this is so because her imagination provides her with "lasting satisfaction" (58). Indeed, thanks to her imagination the speaker does not need to actually travel to foreign countries to become rich: all the wealth she could possibly need, and with

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[21] The first two men who held the position of Colonial Secretary (created in 1768) were earls, however, the next earl to hold the position was the fourth Earl of Carnarvon in 1866, which is just after the date of composition both Johnson and Franklin attribute to the poem (1863).

which she fills her poetry, is already located in her own mind. Therefore, perhaps she is not only saying that she feels just as rich – and richer – than the "Indiaman" and the "Earl," but also that she has similar, but *better*, methods of gaining wealth. Indeed, the speaker, created by a New England woman whom Allen calls a "provincial" poet, unabashedly presents herself as their "Sovreign," and, thus, their ruler! Consequently, we can infer that, just as the English Queen sends its "Indiaman" out to bring back material wealth, the speaker confidently "sends" her imagination to "travel" through the world in her mind to retrieve imagined wealth – or, subject matter. It could be said, therefore, that the speaker "colonizes" and "manages" her own mind to such an extent that she forcibly yields wealth, or, inspiration, from her mind. Her "colonization" of her mind ensures that she considers its contents and the "products" that it yields – i.e. the poems – to be the most valuable objects she can conceive of. As is evident, the imagery of Dickinson's poem is very similar to that of Bowles' travel book. Both writers consider travelling to broaden the mind, and view it as a kind of colonial activity. The difference is, of course, that whereas Bowles applauds actual travelling, Dickinson engages in sedentary travelling – and considers this to be far more profitable.

Section 3.3.

Applauding and Condemning the New Cosmopolitan Literary Culture

Although poem 748 makes use of colonial imagery, in my opinion, it also comments indirectly on another kind of "travelling": namely, the travelling authors were expected to do to acquire inspiration and ideas for topics. I will demonstrate this, and explain the speaker's opinions on this matter, by expanding on Allen's ideas regarding the subject of travelling in Dickinson's poetry. According to Allen, Dickinson severely criticizes this new, cosmopolitan literary culture by determining to wholly distance herself from it. However, I will show that,

just as she uses her poems which feature the figure of the beggar both to criticize and applaud the changes that have occurred in society, she uses the figure of the traveller, and poems such as poem 748, to express both her aversion to and her fascination for the changed society in which she lives.

According to Allen, Dickinson's preference for remaining in one location, as expressed in her poetry, stemmed from a specific aversion to the cosmopolitan literary culture that was emerging in the late nineteenth century. This was a culture in which the world "was seen as a structured hierarchical system of places" and in which it was assumed that "[o]ne's art, one's style, one's flow of thought […] would profit from location in, or free access to, places high up in the hierarchy like Paris or London" (par. 14). For example, he points out that Dickinson's "preceptor" (*Letters* 256) Thomas Wentworth Higginson "was always brandishing before Emily Dickinson the cultural advantages of Boston" (par. 21). She paid no heed to his urgings, however, and remained, in Allen's opinion, voluntarily insular – so that she could present her art as something immortal and pure, uninfluenced by the demands of the marketplace (par. 21).

Although I find the fact that Allen links her withdrawal and reluctance to travel to the developments of her time very interesting, in my opinion, he still presents Dickinson as too insular. For example, he writes that the fact that both she and her speakers are reluctant to travel shows that they are focused on upholding an old-fashioned, aristocratic, "provincial" attitude. He even goes so far as to say that "Emily Dickinson's creative confidence was rooted in her immobility" (par. 23) and claims that this "central imaginative impulse" (par. 23) stemmed from an aversion to "the dominant and central patterns of social interaction of the age, with their heavy emphasis on centralization and mobility in the direction of the centers" (par. 23). In my opinion, however, Dickinson's poetry does not take on such an unambiguous

stance. Rather, Dickinson creates a persona who both distances herself from *and* is taken in by the developments in society to do with travelling.

For example, as can be seen in poem 748, she is fascinated by nineteenth-century colonialism – a practice instigated by those at the cultural, social and economic "centres." Moreover, she portrays herself as the "Sovreign" of those involved in this practice, thus placing herself at what seems to be a "higher" centre than even the British Queen or government. This shows, in my opinion, that she does not condemn "centralization" at all[22]. Similarly, as poems 748, 666 and 580 show, her poetry is steeped in imagery to do with journeying to exotic, foreign locations. Even though she is not interested in actually travelling, therefore, she is very much preoccupied with the concept of "travelling" nonetheless, and uses her imagination to do so. This "sedentary travelling" and staying in one place, which Allen reads as a "provincial" habit, nevertheless enables her to gain knowledge, inspiration and insight that other members of society who do engage in actual travelling could not possibly gain – according to the speakers. She engages in this kind of travelling because through not *actually* travelling, as was expected of writers, she could obtain more "riches" – which, in my opinion, stands for poetic material – than writers who actually *did* engage in the fashionable practice of travelling.

What Dickinson's persona seems to be doing in poems in which she distances herself from the practice of actual travelling through using travel imaginary to describe her *sedentary* travelling, therefore, is "exploring […] various guises that express both attraction and aversion to the modern world" (Stoneley 582). Stoneley's idea seems to apply to chapters 1 and 2 as well as to this chapter. For example, as was discussed in the previous chapters, Dickinson's persona criticizes the values of the new marketplace economy and materialistic

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[22] Of course, like the traveller-persona, the beggar-persona in Dickinson's poetry also engages in a kind of "centralization" in that she makes *her* position and *her* values more important than the dominant, more mainstream values.

consumer society through using economic language and speakers who share the very values she comments on. This shows that she is fascinated by, yet not wholly approving of society's materialism. To find her place in society nonetheless, she takes on the anti-role of beggar – a role which is simultaneously in, and outside of, society. Similarly, in this chapter it was shown that Dickinson's persona distances herself from the new practice of travelling precisely through using imagery to do with travelling and through playing the role of traveller. In my opinion, this shows that she is aware that travelling is now a widespread practice, yet does not find it wholly appealing. To come to terms with living in a society whose practices she finds inadequate, she creates her own, personal practice of travelling to engage in. According to the speaker, this practice broadens her horizon. In other words, the poems discussed in this chapter show, once more, how living in a changed society forces one to acquire a kind of double perspective, or, more precisely, forces one to adapt one's outlook to fit one's new circumstances. Even though the poems do not make overt references to the events of her times, in my opinion, their use of language and imagery shows that they respond to the developments and demands of her times. Therefore, unlike Juhasz, I do not consider the "affairs of the world [to be] jumping-off places for the leap into the complex tides of the mind" (53). Rather, I view the poems which deal with "the complex tides of the mind" to be thoroughly informed by societal developments and saturated with a historical awareness throughout.

Conclusion

This chapter shows, similarly to chapter 1, that Dickinson's speakers have an ambiguous attitude towards a new, widespread nineteenth-century practice – in this case, that of travelling. For example, though they are reluctant to take part in actually travelling to

foreign countries, they show their love of travelling by travelling through the world in their minds. In other words, they adapt to living in a society in which travel has become commonplace by creating their own, personal "method" of travelling. They engage in their – to them – superior practice of sedentary travelling with strikingly similar goals to people who actual travel the world. For example, they do so in order to broaden their horizons and gain poetic material. Indeed, many of Dickinson's poems can be read as "travel reports" of their interior journeys. Moreover, her speakers share the nineteenth-century idea that travelling is linked to colonizing. This is suggested by the fact that they view their imagination – through which they travel – as a kind of colony from which to extract (a sense of) wealth. Although these poems, like those on materialism, do not make direct references to the events of her times, their use of language shows that they are informed by, and connected with, the developments and discourses of her times. In this chapter, these are the discourses of "cosmopolitanism" and colonialism, another kind of "travelling."

Chapter 4

Dealing with Nineteenth-Century Change and Disruption:

Dickinson's Uncanny Experiments with Broadening the Horizon

In the previous chapters, I have tried to show how Dickinson creates a persona who is focused on constantly attempting to adapt to the changes occurring in society during her lifetime. In developing the flexibility of thought and willingness to change which is needed to broaden one's horizon, she seems to have found an adequate response to the demands the mid-to-late nineteenth-century society was making of its subjects. I have shown *why* Dickinson's personae are concentrated on broadening their horizon; to make the discussion of this topic more complete, however, in this chapter I will examine precisely *how* her speakers go about broadening their horizon. They do this in such a specific way, that I have developed a kind of "model" of the way in which this process works. While the outline of this model has been set out in the introduction to this thesis, in this chapter I will examine precisely how it applies to the poems themselves.[23] These poems feature a persona who lives in a relative state of complacency until she is forced to alter her horizon, due to an event which shatters her established outlook on the world. This disruptive event shocks her out of her belief that the things she takes for granted are unchanging and everlasting – like seems to have happened to the speaker in poem 1420, for example. In my opinion, the process of the broadening of the horizon in Dickinson's poetry can be seen as the consequence of living in a society in which the established order is suddenly disrupted and radically altered. Again, even though these poems do not make overt references to her times, in my opinion, their themes show that they are responding to the developments of her times.

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[23] For a graphic rendering of this model, see Appendix A

The central concept with which I analyze the experiments of Dickinson's personae with broadening their horizons is the concept of the uncanny. This concept has been discussed with respect to Dickinson's poetry in a few studies, most notably Daneen Wardrop's book *Emily Dickinson's Gothic: Goblin with a Gauge*[24]. As the title suggests, this book mainly focuses on Dickinson's "gothic" poems and focuses on the concept of the uncanny as it is figured in Dickinson's poems featuring the spectral, the terrifying, and gothic-style enclosed spaces. A distinguishing feature of Dickinson's uncanny poems, according to Wardrop, is that they make use of the concept of doubling. Doubling occurs in poems that deal with a split self, and occurs when the poems themselves have a double function, in that they both describe *and* perform what is going on within the text (Wardrop 41). Unlike Wardrop, I am mainly interested in looking at the way in which the poems which are not necessarily gothic or fantastic – genres to which the concept of the uncanny is often connected[25] – feature the concept of the uncanny. I will analyze such poems not by focusing on the metatextual doubling that Wardrop focuses on but, as was said in the introduction, will use Freud's idea of the double nature of the concept of the uncanny – in which something is uncanny when it contains both a *heimlich* ("homely," or familiar) and an *unheimlich* ("unhomely," or unfamiliar) element – to come to a different idea of how the concept of "the uncanny" can be applied to Dickinson's poetry.

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[24] Eberwein also talks about Dickinson's uncanny spaces in *Dickinson: Strategies of Limitation*, Claire Raymond talks about the haunting, uncanny quality of a number of Dickinson's poems in "Emily Dickinson as the Un-named, Buried Child" and Diehl talks about the uncanny relation between the reader and the poet in "The Ample Word: Immanence and Authority in Dickinson's Poetry." A number of other critics have occasionally referred to the uncanny quality of single Dickinson poems, but, as far as I am aware, no one has talked about this concept in great detail in relation to Dickinson's poetry besides Wardrop.

[25] To illustrate the workings of the concept of the uncanny, for example, Freud's 1925 essay "The Uncanny" features an analysis of E.T.A. Hoffmann's gothic tale "The Sandman" ["*Der Sandmann*"].

Section 4.1.

"Calm is but a Wall": Crossing Boundaries into the Unknown

One poem which describes the broadening of the horizon is poem 960 (J 928).

Although, like many of Dickinson's poems, this poem does not feature a speaker but is more

of a general poem, I believe its observations still pertain to the persona Dickinson creates in

her work:

> The Heart has narrow Banks
>
> It measures like the Sea
>
> In mighty - unremitting Bass
>
> And Blue monotony
>
> Till Hurricane bisect
>
> And as itself discerns
>
> It's insufficient Area
>
> The Heart convulsive learns
>
> That Calm is but a Wall
>
> Of Unattempted Gauze
>
> An instant's Push demolishes
>
> A Questioning - dissolves.

In this poem, the speaker starts by describing the limited space which the heart, with its

"narrow Banks" (1) occupies. "[L]ike the sea," she states, the space of the heart, the

"perimeters [of which] are confined, its beat regular," (Juhasz 21) is characterized by "Blue

Monotony," (4) until, one day a "Hurricane bisect[s]" (5) it. During the tumult of this division

and utter disruption of the heart's former space, the heart notices what the speaker terms its

"insufficient Area" (7). The heart's "Area" is "insufficient" because it does not have enough

"room" to hold or to be able to cope with the disturbance – metaphorically described as a

"Hurricane" – that enters and upsets it. Now that this new "object" has entered the heart's

consciousness, completely disrupting its configuration, it must accommodate it. The only way

it will be able to do so is by expanding its "Area" – something which it learns

"convulsive[ly]."

The word "convulsion" originally comes from the Latin *convellere* which means "to

tear up" or "tear loose." This may suggest that the "bisect[ion]" of the "Hurricane" caused the

heart to feel a sense of unhingement, or, of "being loose." This feeling of unhingement is

what causes the heart to reconsider its boundaries which formerly allowed it to perceive the

"Calm" it experienced as permanent, but has now made it aware of the terrifying idea that:

> Calm is but a Wall
>
> Of Unattempted Gauze
>
> An instant's Push demolishes
>
> A Questioning - dissolves (9-12).

In other words, the heart's realization that it is necessary to expand its dimensions teaches

"the self […] that it has been contained by the thinnest and most easily rent of walls," (Juhasz

21) a disturbing piece of knowledge for someone who believed to be surrounded by

permanent, "Monoton[ous]" "Calm" (which may refer to the stability of the early nineteenth

century). In his Nietzschean reading of this poem, Eddins writes that what happens when the

heart experiences this realization in the final four lines, is that "the insubstantial, illusory

nature of Apollonian constructs is revealed by an image of gauzy flimsiness" (Eddins 99). As

a result, a "Dionysian boundlessness" (Eddins 98) emerges, as in poem 1420. For example,

since the "Wall" with which it was surrounded, and which allowed it to judge its situation in

the world, has been proved non-existent, it seems logical to assume that, for the time being, the person whose heart it is, must live *without* boundaries or a horizon, as it were.

As a result, she struggles to regain a horizon and, with that, a much-needed new sense of stability. This becomes evident upon considering the etymology of the word "convulsion." For example, its Latin form *convellere* can be split into the prefix *com-* which means "together" and the verb *vellere*, meaning "to pluck" or "to pull violently." The word "convulsion" thus stems from a word denoting the activity of "pulling together, in a violent manner." Therefore, through stating that the heart "learns" to accept the presence of a new idea "convulsive[ly]," the poem may be suggesting that the heart is frantically trying to rejoin the two halves it has been split into in order to form a single, coherent space once more. This space which, in my opinion, metaphorically represents the heart's set of conceptions and values, or, way of looking at the world, will not resume its old character or tendency to view the things it is used to as stable. This is because it has acquired the knowledge that an "instant's Push" or a mere "Questioning" can completely overturn any feelings of stability. This means that, in forming its new horizon, it will have to take into account that change and disruption are a part of existence.

According to Juhasz, the new knowledge the heart acquires is dangerous as it is highly unsettling. However, she writes that "for all the danger involved […] there is a corresponding excitement" (22). This is because, in Juhasz's words, the heart is pleased to no longer experience the "sheer boredom" of the "Blue Monotony" which formerly characterized the heart's "consciousness." Moreover, it is glad to no longer live in the "quiescence of ignorance" which caused it not to think to "attempt" to "Push" or "Question" the wall of gauze surrounding it (Juhasz 21-22). I agree with Juhasz that the transition that the heart undergoes is seen to be positive, as many of Dickinson's poems – such as poem 1420, for example – put forward the notion that living with any kind of knowledge gleaned from

experience, however horrifying, is better than trusting in an idea that you assume to be correct because it has never been proved false.

As has been pointed out, at the end of the poem the heart's "insufficient Area" is being expanded by the new knowledge it has acquired. The fact that it is still unsettled by this new knowledge points to the fact that the heart still somewhat adheres to the beliefs it had "in" the former space. However, it also finds itself in a new, transformed space which is slowly incorporating this new piece of knowledge. In my opinion, the simultaneous presence of the old (in the "heart's" memory) and of the new space creates a sense of the uncanny in this poem. This uncanniness is not that which is produced by ghosts or the supernatural. Rather, the uncanny sensation that is brought about results from the mind's perception of an alterity within itself. This alterity is not a gothic version of the self (Wardrop 41), nor is it wholly the "uncanny guest in the self that is not the self" (Baker 30) that Baker talks about. Rather, it is the presence of a new outlook or perspective that did formerly not fit in with the self's established horizon. Indeed, the heart's experience is uncanny not because the heart is forced to reckon with something wholly new within the self, but because it is forced to adapt its old, familiar outlook so that it incorporates an unfamiliar presence. What seems to be described in this poem, therefore, is the fact that the heart now looks at the world from the same "location," (since it has not literally been moved, of course) yet the space or configurations of this location have altered radically. Through what may be called a kind of "sedentary travelling," therefore – which the speaker also practices in the poems discussed in chapter 3 – the heart extends its horizon and, as a result, acquires a broader "range of vision" (Gadamer 302).

As is evident, the horizon of the "Heart" is broadened in a very specific way. For example, the set of conceptions by which the heart defined its relation to the world is penetrated by an idea – or, disturbed by a "Hurricane" – which does not easily fit in with the

heart's already-established set of conceptions. This idea causes the heart's horizon – the "range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point" and that by which to judge "the relative significance of everything within this horizon" (Gadamer 302) – to be rendered invalid. Moreover, the set of conceptions which the horizon bordered is described to be "bisect[ed]." To regain a complete set of conceptions and ideas by which to re-establish her relation to the world, she must "make whole," or, expand this set of conceptions to accommodate the new knowledge she has acquired. In doing so, she will acquire a wider horizon, a broader "range of vision," and a new outlook on the world – one which will, in future, take into account the fact that change and instability is a part of existence. For a graphic rendering of the way in which I see this process, see Appendix C.

In my opinion, the theories of object relations theorist Christopher Bollas may be applied in analyzing the way in which Dickinson's characters go about broadening their horizons. In his essay "The Aesthetic Moment and the Search for Transformation," Bollas writes that when an unfamiliar object enters a person's consciousness, the person becomes rapt with this object and a "deep rapport between subject and object [occurs] and provides the person with the generative illusion of fitting with an object" (40). This fits in with the notion that once an idea or conception enters the consciousness of Dickinson's speaker, she will have to alter her set of conceptions, and broaden her horizon which bounds these conceptions, so that this new conception "fits" in it. Bollas also writes that "[s]uch moments [in which a new object enters someone's consciousness] feel familiar, uncanny, sacred, reverential, and outside cognitive coherence" (40). Moreover, he states that such a moment may also be an "aesthetic moment" (44) which "may occur when he [the subject] faces a formidable and confusing external object that establishes an internal confusion in the subject, providing him with an uncanny feeling of the aweful [*sic*] and the familiar, an experience where the aesthetic object seems to demand resolution into clarity but threatens the self with annihilation if the

subject seeks a word to speak it" (44-45). In other words, though the encountering of a new

object sometimes brings about a sense of unity between subject and object, it may also cause

some kind of disturbing crisis. This is precisely what seems to occur in poem 960, in which

the "Heart" is deeply unsettled by the intrusion of the unfamiliar "Hurricane."

That the self may be "threatened with annihilation" due to its encounter with a new,

unfamiliar object can be seen in poem 1262 (J 1291), which starts:

> Until the Desert knows
>
> That Water grows
>
> His Sands suffice
>
> But let him once suspect
>
> That Caspian fact
>
> Sahara dies (1-6)

Similarly to poem 960 which portrays an unsuspecting "Heart" shocked out of its

complacency, this poem starts by describing a "Desert" in a state of placidity, content with

being a desert. Once it suspects that it contains a body of water, however, which is described

as the Caspian Sea – an inland lake – "Sahara dies." In other words, once the idea of an object

completely opposite to its nature has entered the desert, it ceases to be a desert. If this poem is

metaphorically referring to the self rather than an actual desert, the apparently simplistic

statement in the first six lines takes on a disturbing quality. For example, this poem may be

suggesting that the encounter of the self with a new, unfamiliar object, may cause all the self's

conceptions of itself to be destroyed or rendered invalid. Such an encounter may hold the

ominous possibility of the "annihilation" (Bollas 45) of the self. The old self is "annihilated,"

according to Bollas, when it "seeks a word to speak it [the aesthetic object that has entered the

self's consciousness]" (45) because, through naming or speaking aloud the name of the new

object – which, the self knows, has become part of the self – this object actually *becomes* part

of the self, and the old self transforms or vanishes. This is shown in poem 1262 by the fact that as soon as the word "Caspian" is uttered and is understood to be part of the "Desert" "Sahara dies."

As is evident, Dickinson places her characters in extreme situations – situations in which they may be entirely destroyed – to acquire new knowledge about the consequences for the self of encountering disruption and change. This is something a number of critics have pointed out. For example, Zacharias Thundyil dedicates his article "Circumstance, Circumference, and Center: Immanence and Transcendence in Emily Dickinson's Poems of Extreme Situations" entirely to this topic and Deppman writes that the main purpose of many of Dickinson's poems "is not to invent or define an extreme experience but to deal with once it arrives, to knead it, battle it, alter it, realize it, or just survive it through thought" (94). Also, Baker somewhat more extravagantly states that Dickinson "explore[s] an exorbitant inwardness" in her poetry in order to turn herself "into [a] dazzling psychologist […] of extreme, unstable, disorienting states of thought and feeling" (195). I will now elaborate on the work of these critics by analyzing a poem in which Dickinson's character is located in an extreme situation with the goal of broadening their horizon – something which these critics do not discuss. An example of such a poem is poem 1423 (J 1425):

The inundation of the Spring

Enlarges every Soul -

It sweeps the - tenement - away

But leaves the Water whole -

In which the Soul at first estranged -

Seeks faintly for it's shore

But acclimated - pines no more

For that Peninsula -

In this poem, once again, a new object enters the speaker's consciousness. This process is metaphorically described as "The inundation of the Spring," the "Spring" being the new idea or "object" which radically changes the configuration of the speaker's consciousness. After this object has flooded the speaker's consciousness or soul, the soul is "enlarged," and the object is said to "sweep […] the - tenement - away / But leave […] the Water whole -." In other words, the soul is conceived of as inhabiting some kind of some kind of home or enclosure (a "tenement"), the *heimlich* area of which is expanded, or, more precisely, taken over by the "Water." As a result, "the soul at first estranged - / Seeks faintly for it's shore." Whereas the soul formerly occupied a familiar "tenement" it now finds itself in a much larger, disorienting space with (as of yet) invisible boundaries. In other words, it enters a "Dionysian" state in which it has a sense of not being able to rely on anything it formerly trusted in. This does not defeat the soul, however; indeed, in my opinion, this poem shows how the soul tries very hard to cross the boundaries which enclosed it. According to Baker, "a wrestling with the very limits [one] aim[s] to traverse and, in one way or another, to transform" (2) is a common theme in Romantic poetry.

As can be seen, the intrusion of a new object into the space in which the soul was at home does not simply enlarge the familiar space, but reconfigures it entirely so that the soul feels, as Dickinson writes in another poem, "Homeless at home" (P 1603, J 1573, 12). Although, eventually, the soul acclimatizes itself to its new situation and "pines no more / For that Peninsula –," (7-8) during the transitional process, it becomes confused, since the new object which has entered its consciousness has forced itself into the space which once it called its home and, through its presence, prevents this space from being its home[26]. Since both the

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[26] Because the "Soul" eventually adapts to its new situation, the "model" in Appendix A seems to apply.

unfamiliar and the memory of the familiar are present during this process, it can be said that this transition is an uncanny one.

While the soul formerly "lived" on a "Peninsula -," a small, closely bounded space, it now seems to consider the sea its home. This is suggested by the fact that it seems to be thrown into the middle of a large body of water, in which the "shore[s]" are not immediately apparent. In other words, now that she has acclimatized to her new domain, the soul's horizon seems to be entirely changed, and much broader. It may be said – as Dickinson often referred to Shakespeare in her work – that the soul has quite literally undergone a "sea-change" (*The Tempest* I.ii.452)[27]. This idea corresponds with Juhasz's reading of this poem, which involves the idea that in this poem Dickinson prioritizes mental experience which is traumatic but also leads to insight. According to Juhasz, insight is equal to a "change in the very boundaries which circumscribe and define the mind's space" (27). Similarly to Juhasz, Gadamer writes that "[i]nsight is more than the knowledge of this or that situation. It always involves an escape from something that had deceived us and held us captive" (356). That which the "Soul" has escaped from in this poem, in my opinion, is her limited existence.

Section 4.2.

Uncanny Spaces in Heidegger and Dickinson:

Creating New Horizons

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[27] In *The Tempest*, spirit of the air Ariel sings a song to Ferdinand to try to convince him that his father has drowned in the sea:

> Full fathoms five thy father lies
> Of his bones are coral made
> Those are pearls that were his eyes;
> Nothing of him that doth fade
> But doth suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange (I.ii. 447-453)

As can be seen from poem 1423, a sense of the uncanny is produced when the boundaries of one space are crossed or expanded, and a new space is occupied. When Dickinson's characters start to occupy a new space, this is a metaphoric description of what happens in the mind when one gains a new outlook on the world and a new horizon. Heidegger's etymological analyses in his essay "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" may be helpful to explain why a transition which involves the occupying of a different space can be paired with a sense of the uncanny. Heidegger defines "space" (the German word *raum*) as "a place cleared or freed for settlement and lodging" (149). For Heidegger, then, a sense of lodging, living and of home (i.e. of the *heimlich*) is implicated in the concept of "space." He comes to this conclusion after giving a lengthy etymological analysis of words connected to the word "freed," which is used in his definition of space as a "place cleared or *freed* for settlement and lodging" (*italics mine*). First, he discusses the origins of the verb "to live" (*wohnen*). This word stems from the Gothic word *wunian*, which originally meant "to remain in peace" (144). He then states that the German word for "peace" (*Friede*) originally means "to free" and writes that this, in turn, originally meant "to spare, or preserve from danger." Consequently, he claims that, etymologically speaking, to free something means to preserve it by bringing it back to its home, where it can live in peace. Therefore, Heidegger reasons, because of its link to the verb "to free," a space is a place in which you feel at home (*heimlich)* and at peace. Such a space, according to Heidegger, must be a bounded space, since he writes that "[a] boundary is not that at which something stops but […] the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing" (149). Since the h*eimlich* space one occupies is always bounded, that which lies beyond its boundaries must be *unheimlich*.

In her poetry, Dickinson subjects her characters to experiences and objects which, through their presence, transform the *heimlich* space the speakers or characters occupy into an *unheimlich* space. In other words, these experiences bring in that which formerly lay *beyond*

the boundaries of the familiar space, *into* this space. In poem 960, for example, the unfamiliar entity which enters the familiar domain is the "Hurricane" and in poem 1423, the "Spring" is the foreign object which renders the familiar home unfamiliar. Since, in such a situation, the unfamiliar is present within the familiar, a sense of the uncanny is produced. According to Heidegger, a space in which you feel at home is a space which has been opened up, "cleared" or "freed" (149) by *you yourself*. Therefore, when an unsettling experience which transforms or removes the familiar space you occupy merely *happens* to you – as in poems 960 and 1423 – the space which is created, or, which you are forced to occupy as a result of this transition, is bound to be an unfamiliar, *unheimlich* space. All Dickinson's speakers can do in such a case is to "convulsive[ly]" (P 960, 8) try to "acclimate" (P 1423, 7) themselves to the space they now occupy by searching for and establishing the boundaries of this space, for, as Heidegger writes, a familiar space is necessarily bounded. In other poems, however, Dickinson's personae broaden the space of their minds voluntarily – similarly to the speakers in the poems to do with sedentary travelling.

In such poems, a sense of the uncanny does not arise because they live through, or escape from, extreme unpleasantness not by adapting their "comfort zone" to fit their changed circumstances, but by purposely extending it. The way in which they do so can be seen in poem 551 (J 562):

Conjecturing a Climate

Of unsuspended Suns -

Adds poignancy to Winter -

The shivering Fancy turns

To a fictitious Country

To palliate a Cold -

> Not obviated of Degree -
>
> Nor eased - of Latitude -

In this poem, the speaker describes how, in winter, she engages in the activity of "Conjecturing a Climate / Of unsuspended Suns -" (1-2). As a result, she writes, her "Shivering Fancy turns / To a fictitious Country," (4-5) suggesting that the speaker travels through her imaginative world, to a "place" where "Summer" reigns (Dickinson's alternative word for "Country" in line 5). Despite this, the "Cold," (6) which the speaker is now able to ignore is "Not obviated of Degree – / Nor eased – of Latitude –" (7-8). In other words, the speaker physically stays in the same place, but now has access to two different spaces thanks to her imagination. It can be said, therefore, that the speaker "frees" (Heidegger 149) or liberates herself from the "Cold" she experiences through creating the bounded space of a "fictitious Country" in her imagination where she "feels at home." Even though this involves the crossing of an old space (the external world) into a new one (the "fictitious Country"), this is not an *uncanny* transition, because the new space she starts to occupy is a space of her own creation and, therefore, *heimlich*. Similarly to the poems discussed in chapter 3, therefore, the speaker gains access to something which formerly lay beyond her reach through a kind of "sedentary travelling" by means of the imagination. Although this poem seems to deal quite literally with the speaker's ability to imaginatively "transport" herself to a more pleasant place, in my opinion, it may also be read as a poem which shows how her tendency to turn to her interior lends her a mental resilience or strength which enables her to overcome adversity – as was seen in poem 785. Therefore, poems such as 785 and 551 seem to be expressions of Dickinson's intense preoccupation with the consequences for the human mind of its encounters with uncertainty, suffering and radical change – something which, according to Dickinson, the human mind often experienced, living in the changing nineteenth century.

Section 4.3.

Late-Romantically Reconfiguring the Horizon

to Gain New Knowledge and Experience

In the previous section, it was shown that a voluntarily broadening of the horizon prevents the uncanny sensation that Dickinson's speakers often experience as a result of radical change. However, to complete the discussion of the role the concept of the uncanny plays in the *involuntary* alteration of the horizon, I will discuss two poems in which an uncanny sensation is produced by the *loss* of an object and the resulting "shrinking" – rather than broadening – of one's outlook on the world. Although I agree with Reddy that the concepts of loss and evanescence are central to Dickinson's poetry (Reddy 67-68), the disappearance or loss of an object is not always valued as highly by Dickinson's speakers as he suggests, nor does evanescence or a sudden vanishing always bring about aesthetic beauty (Reddy 68). Rather, the disappearance or loss of an object may produce an uncanny sense of unhingement in Dickinson's speakers. Two poems which show this are (unfinished) poem 1144 (J 1119):

> Paradise is that old mansion
>
> Many owned before -
>
> Occupied by each an instant
>
> Then reversed the Door -
>
> Bliss is frugal of her Leases
>
> Adam taught her Thrift
>
> Bankrupt once through his excesses -

and poem 1401 (J 1376):

> Dreams are the subtle Dower

That make us rich an Hour -

Then fling us poor

Out of the purple Door

Into the Precinct raw

Possessed before -

According to Mitchell, "the introduction of the Edenic myth," (76) in poem 1144 shows that

the poem discusses the concept of bankruptcy with "a historical and theological depth" (76).

In doing so, the speaker is comforting herself by thinking that, as it befell Adam, too,

bankruptcy can be understood as part of an ordered pattern, rather than as a consequence of

the uncertain nineteenth-century developments on the stock market (Mitchell 76). Similarly,

poem 1401 also uses economic language to describe the speaker's attempts to ease the

thought of living in harsh reality or unpleasant circumstances.

Both poems talk about the presence and subsequent vanishing of a space which

provides them with joy and a metaphoric sense of wealth. In poem 1144, this space is

"Paradise," which the speaker describes as an "old mansion" that is "Occupied by each an

instant / Then reversed the door." In poem 1401, the space which the speaker occupies are her

"Dreams" which "make [her] rich an Hour," but inevitably "fling [her] poor […] / Into the

Precinct raw / Possessed before -." In my opinion, these poems show that situations in which

the speaker's horizon is reconfigured by means of loss instead of gain also produce a sense of

the uncanny in the speaker. This is because, similarly to the poems in which the speaker must

readjust her horizon in order to accommodate a new object, in these poems, the speaker is left

with the presence of her old horizon and, in contrast, the remembrance of the new. To put it

differently, she ends up disappointed that her dreams and fantasies of what reality might be like, turn out not to be true or permanent[28].

Interestingly, the uncanny is not only figured in these poems through the simultaneous presence of one thing and memory of another; it is also figured in a linguistic manner. For example, the fact that the speaker in poem 1401 re-enters specifically a "Precinct," a bounded space[29] which she "Possessed before," a by-gone transgression of limits into the unfamiliar is suggested. Because it is bounded, a "Precinct" is a *heimlich* space according to Heidegger, and any crossing of its boundaries must, therefore, be a crossing into the *unheimlich*, or, unfamiliar. In poem 1144, a sense of the uncanny is evoked by the fact that the words "Paradise" and "mansion" refer to both the familiar and the unfamiliar. For example, since it refers to some kind of luxurious home, the word "mansion" evokes a sense of the *heimlich*. However, the speaker also states that "Bliss is *frugal* of her Leases," (*italics mine*) which suggests that one hardly ever experiences the "Bliss" of "Paradise." Since once does not normally find oneself in "Paradise," therefore, this mansion is also a space of unfamiliarity – especially because one only occupies it for "an instant" before reverting to one's usual state. One thus has hardly any time to "make oneself at home" in this space, as it were. A further tension between the familiar and the unfamiliar is created by the fact that "Paradise" is termed an "*old* mansion" (*italics mine*). The fact that it is old and that many have owned it before (1-2) suggests that "Paradise" is a familiar space, yet the fact that everyone is inexorably turned out of what, for a moment, becomes their own house, without the possibility of re-entering simultaneously renders it a space of unfamiliarity and alienation.

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[28] Appendix D gives a visual rendering of the way in which the speakers' previously broadened horizons are shrunk.

[29] One of its definitions in *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary is*: "The area within the boundaries (real or imaginary) of a building or place."

While the poems discussed previously involve an uncanny transformation of the *heimlich* space, therefore, poems 1401 and 1144 involve an *unheimlich* reverting to the former *heimlich* space after having experienced the possibilities for delight and growth that the occupation of the new, wider spaces provided them with. These two "groups" of poems show that any transformation of the horizon – whether it involves an abrupt broadening or an unexpected shrinking – may produce an uncanny effect. Even though the transformation of the horizon is rarely pleasant, it does provide Dickinson's speakers with new ways of looking at the world, new knowledge and new experience which they would not have acquired if they had remained in their *heimlich* space without making an excursion into the *unheimlich*. The knowledge they acquire in both "types" of poems is that one can never trust in the stability of a situation: everything one trusts in is always susceptible to being radically altered. To deal with this nineteenth-century predicament, her speakers develop a kind of consciousness which expects and welcomes uncertainty, the *unheimlich*, and the unknown.

A poem which clearly shows this – and shows that approaching the world in this way may be exceedingly dangerous – is much-quoted poem 926 (J 875):

I stepped from Plank to Plank

A slow and cautious way

The Stars about my Head I felt

About my Feet the Sea -

I knew not but the next

Would be my final inch -

This gave me that precarious Gait

Some call Experience -

The speaker in this poem does not hesitate to put herself into perilous situations in order to gain new experience and knowledge. For example, she describes herself stepping "from Plank to Plank" (1) suspecting that "the next / would be [her] final inch -." Yi-Fu Tuan's etymological analyses of the word "experience" may help to explain why this insistent quest for extreme situations and precariousness is necessary for Dickinson's speakers to gain new experience. According to Tuan, "[e]xperience is the overcoming of perils. The word 'experience' shares a common root (*per*) with 'experiment,' 'expert,' and 'perilous.' To experience in the active sense requires that once venture forth into the unfamiliar and experiment with the elusive and the uncertain. To become an expert one must dare to confront the perils of the new" (9). In order words, experiencing "precariousness" (P 926, 7) is a prerequisite for experiencing anything at all; to experience is necessarily dangerous, disruptive and uncertain. As has been discussed in this chapter, Dickinson has her poetic personae conduct precarious, uncanny experiments with the space of the mind and the horizon. In my opinion, her personae perform such experiments in order to acquire new, "unexpected" knowledge – knowledge which they only obtain by daring to step outside the boundaries of their frame of reference and "venture forth" – even for an "inch" (P 926, 6) – to experience something new.

However difficult or painful the process they must undergo in order to learn this new knowledge or acquire this new experience is, they are not reluctant to undergo such trials. As Juhasz writes, although the experiences Dickinson describes in her poetry are frequently painful, they do bring her speakers insight (24) as well as new knowledge (52). Despite this, the experiments of Dickinson's speakers do not always end up favourably. For example, though the characters in poem 1423 and 551 successfully acclimatize themselves to their new situation and broaden their horizons, the characters in poems 960, 1144, and 1401 are left in a state of uncertainty or disappointment. In his 2005 book *The Extravagant: Crossings of*

Modern Poetry and Modern Philosophy, Baker analyzes only poems in which the "extravagant" – in its literal sense of "to wander outside of" – quest of Dickinson's speaker for disclosure and new knowledge "often leaves the speaker adrift in a space of widened and puzzled expectation" (207). The fact that, in his section on Dickinson, her poetry only seems to discuss encounters with the void or with nothingness leads him to conclude that her work is proleptic of Modernist literature. In my opinion, however, since the "extravagant" experiments of Dickinson's speakers often do, and only occasionally do not, end up favourably, the poetry is late-Romantic. According to Baker, "extravagant" adventures involve a crossing of limits, a turning towards the unforeseeable and a venturing into the unknown (Baker 2-13). He claims that, in Modernist literature, such adventures have a negative outcome while, in Romantic literature, the outcome of such quests is new knowledge and new experience. Although her speakers do not always remain unaffected and intact as a result of such experiments (see P 960, 1144, and 1401), nor always achieve the outcome they hope for (see P 666), they do often see their dangerous or unsettling experiments as having provided them with knowledge that they would not have gained otherwise. Because the experiments of Dickinson's personae with broadening the horizon have both positive and negative consequences, I see her work as being located between the early Romantic and more modern tradition. Since the speakers conduct such experiments with the expectation of acquiring new knowledge and new experience – rather than expecting that they will fail – I consider the poetry to be more Romantic than modern.

Conclusion

While the chapters on materialism and cosmopolitanism show that Dickinson's personae set out to constantly gain a fresh perspective and broaden their horizons to adapt to

living in a changed society, this chapter more specifically discusses the precise way in which they conceptualize the broadening of the horizon. Poems that deal with this topic describe how the speaker lives in a relative state of complacency, until she encounters an idea or event which completely alters her horizon and outlook on the world. This disruption produces a sense of the uncanny, which may be remedied by broadening the horizon to incorporate, and come to terms with, the new idea or event. As a result of their uncanny experiments, in which they venture across the boundaries of the established to encounter the new and the unknown, her personae develop a consciousness that expects, and is oriented towards, change, disruption and uncertainty. In developing the flexibility of thought and willingness to change which is needed to broaden one's horizon, they seem to have found an adequate response to the demands the mid-to-late nineteenth-century society was making of its subjects.

Chapter 5

Wordsworth's Uncanny Experiments in *The Prelude*

The previous chapter showed that Dickinson's speakers are focused on subjecting themselves to uncanny experiences in order to broaden their horizon. Another reason that Dickinson has her personae conduct such experiments is so that she can tell of the consequences for the human mind of encountering change and disruption in her poetry. Indeed, many of the poems feature a description of the results of these experiments. This part of her poetic project seems to be similar to that of Romantic poet Wordsworth. For example, both poets are intent on constantly subjecting themselves to uncanny – or, in Wordsworth's terms, "sublime" – experiences in order to broaden their minds and in order to tell of these experiences. In this chapter, I will look at the way in which this tendency of Dickinson's is figured in Wordsworth's *The Prelude*. In comparing their work, I will focus on the way in which the concept of the uncanny can be used to analyse passages in literature which have to do with a general expanding or crossing of limits which is absolutely central to the practice of broadening one's horizon. With my analyses, I wish to demonstrate that Wordsworth's experiments with an uncanny crossing of limits are an early-Romantic version of Dickinson's. I will show that this is the case because, while Wordsworth finds his transformative, uncanny experiences in nature, Dickinson's speakers subject themselves to such uncanny experiences in the self – something which later Romantic writers viewed as the site of inspiration and growth, in contrast to early-Romantic writers.

In *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature*, Abrams writes that the tendency to find inspiration and the possibility for growth in the natural world is typically Romantic. Poets in previous traditions located their source of inspiration in the divine, however, as a result of the religious crisis and the Enlightenment,

which placed importance on the rational individual subject, Romantic poets secularized inherited theological ideas and ways of thinking (Abrams 12). This meant that they started to view the "supernatural" in the "natural" rather than in the divine, and claimed that the natural awakened their own individual, imaginative creative powers. In other words, unlike Dickinson, early Romantic poets such as Wordsworth were not disturbed by the disappearance of the old order to which they adhered; rather, they instated something new to adhere to and around which to base their outlook on the world: nature. While Abrams concentrates on the way in which Romantic poets transformed tradition to find their place, Baker writes about the impulses that shaped the Romantic tradition and discusses the developments that led from Romanticism to Modernism in literature and thought. According to Baker, late-Romantic and more modern literature "of the extravagant" is characterized by the tendency to see the self rather than nature as possible source for inspiration and growth. Because Wordsworth uses nature and Dickinson uses the self with the goal of gaining poetic material and expanding the capacities of the self, Dickinson's poems which deal with the broadening of the horizon seem, according to Baker's theory, to be late-Romantic versions of Wordsworth's attempts to expand the capacities of the self.

Wordsworth attempts to expand the capacities of the self and gain inspiration by subjecting himself to what he terms the sublime. According to Baker, the concept of the sublime in Wordsworth involves "an unsettling of the subject brought about by an encounter with a forceful otherness, followed by a counterassertion of the subject based on a discovery of inner powers that might well have remained hidden were it not for this initially disruptive encounter" (Baker 48). Since sublime experiences involve a kind of transgression of the limits of the self, as Baker suggests they do, I associate the concept with the concept of the uncanny – something which Baker himself hints at when he writes that poetry dealing with the sublime discloses "moments of uncanny transport" (56). Consequently, I will to analyse a passage

from Wordsworth's autobiographical poem *The Prelude* which deals with the sublime, and what I identify as the broadening of the horizon, to explore the way in which this passage can be analysed by means of the concept of the uncanny. Several critics have analysed the role of the uncanny in Wordsworth's poetry, and I will draw on their analyses in my analysis of the passage from *The Prelude.*

In book 2 of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth describes the way in which he gains poetic material and writes poetry. At first, he writes – in some lines that have already been quoted – that the poet in him gains pleasure from: "difference / Perceived in things, where, to the unwatchful eye, / No difference is, and hence, from the same source, / Sublimer joy" (299-302). According to Douglas B. Wilson, the uncanny in Wordsworth's poetry "discloses interior depths beneath the surface of rational assumptions [and] transfigure[es] the commonplace" (94). According to Wilson's ideas, therefore, it may be said that the poet's practice of perceiving difference in the commonplace is, in itself, an uncanny one. Keeping this in mind, lines 299-302 seem to show that, like Dickinson's persona, the lyrical I of *The Prelude* delights in having a discerning mind, which he purposely subjects to other new and "different" things to awaken his creative powers and thus improve his poetry[30]. The way in which he draws inspiration from the natural world is shown in the lines immediately following the quoted lines, where he writes:

> […] for I would walk alone,
>
> Under the quiet stars, and at that time
>
> Have felt whate'er there is of power in sound
>
> To breathe an elevated mood, by form
>
> Or image unprofaned; and I would stand,

---

[30] Although the passages I will analyze testify to the fact that Wordsworth privileges difference, he is, of course, noted for what Hagenbüchle calls his "serene sense of continuity" (321). To nuance my discussion of Wordsworth I will go into this later.

> If the night blackened with a coming storm,
>
> Beneath some rock, listening to notes that are
>
> The ghostly language of the ancient earth,
>
> Or make their dim abode in distant winds (302-310)

This passage suggests that Wordsworth's poetic persona has the ability to make details and objects which other people generally do not perceive as things possessing a particular interest put him in an "elevated mood." This elevated mood results from the fact that perceiving difference "undo[es] the bondage of imprisoning habit" (Wilson 95). That which frees him from habitual methods of perception and provides him with material – for the poem which he is writing, in fact – is to be found in nature.

This passage shows that Wordsworth's persona enjoys the darker, more frightening side of the natural world, as he likes to be in nature when "the night blacken[s] with a coming storm," and even seems to delight in the "ghostly" as this, too, stimulates his poetic perception. The speaker's preference for the "ghostly" aspects of nature nicely indicates the way in which, according to Abrams, Romantic poets saw the supernatural in the natural. Moreover, I interpret the word as suggesting that the speaker draws inspiration from the uncanny, as one of the meanings of the word *unheimlich* Freud gives in his essay is "ghostly" or "haunted" (222, 240). In my opinion, the word "ghostly" is used in this "'border' situation between natural and supernatural" (Cosgrove 24) in the first place, because the speaker is describing his listening to sounds which, by nature, are "by form / Or image unprofaned," or, to put it differently, "disembodied" and, therefore, "ghostly." Further, the fact that these sounds are said to "*breathe* an elevated mood" (*italics mine*) also suggests their "ghostly" quality, as the word "ghost" stems from the Old English *gast*, which means "soul," "spirit,"

"life," or "*breath.*" The word "ghostly" is not only used to describe the "spectral"[31] quality of these sounds, however, but also seems to refer to a situation which uncannily involves hearing the ghostly traces of the former "language of the ancient earth" in the present. For example, the "disembodied" remnants of the "language" are heard in the form of "notes," rather than as a coherent tune. This may suggest that the speaker hears just snatches – or, *traces* – of the by-gone "language of the ancient earth."

The experience of being out in this "coming storm" is made even uncannier, in my opinion, by the suggestion that the "notes" heard "make their dim abode in distant winds" (310). As the word "abode" (from the Old English *bidan* meaning "to stay," "to live," "to dwell") denotes a place of residence or dwelling, line 310 could be read as suggesting that these "notes" feel "at home," or, *heimlich*, in "distant" and, thus, foreign or unfamiliar, winds. In other words, they are perceived – unconsciously, perhaps – as an uncanny phenomenon by the speaker because they are familiar with what, to him, is unfamiliar, and because they come from the past, but are audible in the present. This experience is not "uncanny," therefore, in that it chillingly produces a sense of uneasiness – an effect which is frequently identified as belonging to the uncanny. Rather, the uncanny is figured in a linguistic manner – as in Dickinson's poems 1144 and 1401, for example. Moreover, the speaker seems to delight in his uncanny experience, as it puts him in an "elevated mood" which lends him a sense of "visionary power" (311). As Cosgrove points out, in some of Wordsworth's poems which deal with the uncanny the speaker "rejoices in the vivid strangeness of an alien context and the imaginative possibilities it provides" (20).

Wordsworth's speaker goes on to describe the fact that he finds these uncanny "fleeting moods" (312) he sometimes experiences in nature to be "[o]f shadowy exultation"

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[31] Though this, of course, is the wrong word as its Latin ancestor, *spectrum*, denotes "appearance," "vision," or "apparition" and Wordsworth is describing precisely what he *cannot* see.

(313). He uses this oxymoronic phrase to suggest that they both terrify him and elevate or heighten his poetic perception. He then writes that he considers these moods "not profitless;"

> [...]   not for this,
>
> That they are kindred to our purer mind
>
> And intellectual life; but that the soul,
>
> Remembering how she felt, but what she felt
>
> Remembering not, retains an obscure sense
>
> Of possible sublimity, whereto
>
> With growing faculties she doth aspire,
>
> With faculties still growing, feeling still
>
> That whatsoever point they gain, they yet
>
> Have something to pursue (313-322)

In other words, the speaker subjects himself to experiences that will simultaneously frighten and elevate him, so that his soul, when he is writing about these uncanny experiences, remembers "how she felt, but what she felt / Remember[s] not." He wishes his soul to re-experience such things during the writing process because the capacity to re-live and the practice of re-experiencing – the famous practice of "emotion recollected in tranquility" (Wilson 94) – leads to "possible sublimity." This stands for a possible further poetic elevation and expansion of the capacities of the self, and results in a desire to undergo *more* uncanny or sublime experiences which will then allow him to re-experience the sensations they produced in him at first.

Therefore, experiencing the sublime – or, uncanny – experiences which lead to the sublime, helps one to remain able to find and desirous of finding and perceiving difference in the mundane and commonplace. This is why Wilson states that the concept of the uncanny has a "therapeutic" and "restorative" function: it lifts one out of complacency, sharpens one's

perception, awakens one's creative powers, and gives one the impulse to undergo more of such "extravagant" (Baker 2) experiences (Wilson 96). This is precisely the effect of the uncanny on Dickinson's speakers: through experiencing it, they develop a consciousness which is oriented towards change, disruption and difference rather than sameness and stability. Gaining such an outlook on the world equips and readies them for the out-of-the-ordinary experiences which form the subject matter of both poets' work.

Returning to *The Prelude*, it may be said that the past experiences that the poet's "soul" ruminates on in lines 313-322 are uncanny due to their simultaneous familiar and unfamiliar – or, "intermediate" as Brian Cosgrove puts it – character. The double quality of these experiences is augmented by the fact that they contain the possibility to be experienced doubly – something which causes the soul's faculties to "grow." It is, therefore, as if the soul's territory or "Area" (P 960, 7) is expanded as a result of the uncanny experiences it underwent in the natural world. Something similar happens in Dickinson's poem 960, in which the heart's territory is rent apart and then expanded as a result of an interior uncanny experience. Interestingly, whereas Dickinson uses natural terms to describe this inner experience in which the metaphoric natural phenomenon of a "Hurricane" races through the heart, in Wordsworth's poem actual natural phenomena fundamentally change the self. This accords with the theories of Baker and Abrams.

Just as many of Dickinson's poems describe mental events in spatial terms, in this passage, the soul's faculties are also described as spatial. For example, the soul is not only described as "growing" but as "pursu[ing]" something – probably the sublime, uncanny, or, "extravagant" feeling the experiencing of which enables one to tell of one's experiences. In my opinion, this means that the broadening of the soul's faculties is conceptualized – if I am permitted to read it in this way – as some kind of "sedentary travelling" into, or "pursu[ing]" of, the unknown in search of poetic material. Indeed, through recollecting his uncanny

experiences, Wordsworth's "soul" is able to "grow" and "pursue" the sublimity which is located beyond the capacities of, yet within, the self.

According to Yetman's ideas, the fact that both poets make use of this practice of "sedentary travelling" might indicate that they are writing in a Romantic tradition. For example, he writes that the "dramatization of self-consciousness" in Romantic poetry often involves "the landscape of poetic action […] being the mind of the poet" (129). There are important differences between the interior explorations of Wordsworth and Dickinson, though. As has been pointed out, Wordsworth finds the uncanny experiences that prompt his interior explorations in nature, whereas, in Dickinson's poetry, these take place entirely within the self. Also, according to Baker and Diehl, because Wordsworth views nature as responsible for the creative capabilities of the self, he is less prone to the solipsism sometimes found in the work of later Romantic poets (Baker 30, Diehl *Romantic* 40) such as Dickinson. As Baker says, because an external "alterity" (Baker 39) provides him with the sublime experiences which awaken his creative powers and provide him with poetic material, he is able to distance himself from that which broadens his faculties and provides him with new knowledge. Indeed, as Baker writes, the "initial unsettling of the subject [in Wordsworth's poetry is always] followed by a forceful recovery of the subject" (39). Contrastively, though her poetry is informed by developments in the external world, Dickinson is concerned with showing what happens in the mind as a result of being in particular circumstances. This means that her speakers take on a far more introverted, solipsistic position than Wordsworth's persona. As a result, Dickinson's speakers do not always have the luxury of being able to end up unaffected by or pleasantly reminiscing about these experiences and their consequences, as was shown in chapter 4.

Conclusion

This chapter shows that, like Dickinson's, Wordsworth's experiments with broadening the mind and gaining poetic material make use of the concepts of sedentary travelling, space, the uncanny, and the broadening of the horizon. Also, the work of both poets is influenced by the changes occurring in nineteenth-century society, yet Wordsworth has a more positive outlook on these developments than Dickinson. While Wordsworth has nature replace the older religion-oriented order, Dickinson relies on the self to find a solution to dealing with the changes that have occurred. Because of this, and because Wordsworth is reluctant to go to the extreme lengths that Dickinson goes to gain new knowledge and new experience, Wordsworth's experiments can be read as an early-Romantic version of those of Dickinson's personae.

Chapter 6

Nietzsche's Uncanny Experiments in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*

A few brief references to Nietzschean elements in Dickinson's poetry have already been made; now I would like to compare their work in slightly more detail. Since it is not possible to give an in-depth comparison in which justice is done to the complexity of both Nietzsche's and Dickinson's work in just a few pages and since they are very different figures, I will give a reading of a number of passages from Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* that seem to point to similarities between the position of Dickinson's poetic personae and that of Zarathustra himself. This analysis is intended to demonstrate the way in which Dickinson's concerns were similar to those of a slightly later nineteenth-century contemporary. Whereas the comparison between Dickinson and Wordsworth served as an illustration of the differences critics have pointed out between early-Romantic and late-Romantic poetry, I will read the passages in Nietzsche in which he is concerned with an uncanny crossing of limits and focused on the broadening of the horizon as a late-Romantic framework by which to understand Dickinson's late-Romantic experiments with the same topic.

Nietzsche's "Romanticism" is a much-debated topic in scholarly work on Nietzsche. Whereas some critics, such Adrian del Caro and Walter Kaufmann see Nietzsche as Romantic only in his early work, other critics such as Caroline Picart detect Romantic themes and concerns – such as a use of irony, an interest in the theme of transformation, and an increasing pessimism concerning modern society (Picart 273-274, 283) – even in his work after *Zarathustra*, the work that is usually considered to be "in between" Nietzsche's Romantic and post-Romantic period (Picart 274). Since *Zarathustra* is usually considered to be such an

"intermediate" work, in my opinion, it is legitimate to consider it, as I do, a late-Romantic work.

Similarly to Dickinson, in *Zarathustra* Nietzsche is focused on finding a way to deal with the unsettling events of the nineteenth century. Specifically, he is concerned with "the contemporary crisis in values in the wake of the collapse of the Christian worldview that assigned humanity a clear place in the world" (Magnus and Higgins "Works" 40). Like Dickinson, Nietzsche is concerned with the fact that, as a result, there appears to be no unity, and no order to which to adhere. Rather than thoroughly exploring the consequences for the individual of this religious crisis and fragmentation – or, more particularly, of crisis and uncertainty in general – introspectively, as Dickinson does, he offers a pragmatic solution: the much-discussed concept of the "transvaluation of all values." According to E.E. Sleinis in *Nietzsche's Revaluation of Values: A Study in Strategies*, this concept is to be understood as "the unearthing of the foundation of eternal, unchangeable values" (Sleins 91). Although the feasibility of this project has been questioned by some critics such as Sleinis and Ernest Joós, most critics emphasize the positive aspects of Nietzsche's advocating of such a project. For example, the idea that it is a harmful, anarchic enterprise has been disproved by critics such as Richard Schacht (161) and Baker, who writes that in Nietzsche, "the 'destructive' practice of smashing idols is dialectically linked to the 'constructive' practice of projecting transformative counterhorizons" (Baker 270).

It can be said that Dickinson engages in a similar, but less radical and less polemic practice in her poetry. For example, her speakers set out to shatter their established conceptions and values or, at least, welcome events which do so, in order to acquire new knowledge and experience and broaden their horizon. While this practice may be read negatively – as she puts herself in a great deal of danger which may bring about her destruction (see P 666) or a sense of disorientation and disappointment (see P 1144 and 1401)

– her speakers may also be seen as brave and their practices as necessary: unlike many others – and like Nietzsche – they attempt to discover adequate ways of responding to a modernity which was rapidly emerging.

Lawrence Lampert's statement that, in *Zarathustra*, "God no longer supplies a horizon to man's world" (Lampert 17) and Baker's idea that Nietzsche creates "counterhorizons" suggest that, like Dickinson, Nietzsche experiments with creating new horizons and, correspondingly, new outlooks on the world. Although it may seem reductive to analyse Nietzsche's work solely in terms of the horizon, rather than investigating the concepts of the Superman [*Übermensch*] or eternal return [*die ewige Wiederkunft das Gleichen*] central to *Zarathustra* in detail, it does seem possible to analyze this concept as it appears in *Zarathustra*. As in Dickinson's poetry, the concept of the horizon in *Zarathustra* seems to be connected to the concepts of ideology, the uncanny, and space. This particular reading may be informed by the content of this thesis and may not be a typical reading of Nietzsche; however, I believe the comparison between Dickinson's poetry and *Zarathustra* points to interesting parallels between the work of two (near) contemporary writers[32]. Moreover, it shows, once more, how Dickinson was engaged with and connected to her times.

Thus Spake Zarathustra, the book Nietzsche saw as his most important (Megill *Prophets* 61), tells the story of prophet-philosopher Zarathustra's task of exploring his ideas on the state of man and society in the present time of uncertainty, the forming of his ideas pertaining to the future of mankind – most notably, his ideas on the advent of the Superman – and his journey to find an audience for his teachings. In my opinion, one of Zarathustra's

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[32] I may be construed as cheerfully making the mistake in this section of deploying Nietzsche's "perspectivist" view – which is sometimes understood by critics to mean "that there is no single correct interpretation of any given things but rather a variety of correct interpretations, each of which can be considered valid within its own frame of reference" (Megill 204) – to validate my own interpretations of Nietzsche. However, I hope to "avoid the pitfall of making Nietzsche the victim of my own invention" (Joós 1) by making use of Nietzsche scholars to support my claims.

main goals is to provide his audience with a new horizon or new way of looking at the world. Indeed, numerous situations occur in the book when Zarathustra tries to incite the people he comes across, who almost invariably have a rigid way of looking at the world, to rethink their conceptions and values. In Part III, for example, Zarathustra looks back on his journey so far and writes that

> When I came unto men, then found I them resting on an old infatuation: all of them thought they had long known what was good and bad for men. An old wearisome business seemed to them all discourse about virtue; and he who wished to sleep well spake of 'good' and 'bad' ere retiring to rest. This somnolence did I disturb when I taught that *no one yet knoweth* what is good and bad: – unless it be the creating one!
>
> (137)

This passage shows that, as Sleinis states, "Nietzsche is opposed to the view that a static, unchanging set of moral rules must be obeyed by all persons, in all places, at all times" (17). Indeed, Zarathustra does not think very highly of those who automatically and unquestioningly divide the things they encounter into the values of "good" and "bad" simply out of habit. He writes that the creation of value – since "[v]aluing is creating" (Nietzsche 37) as he points out elsewhere – should be a process in which one is actively involved. According to Zarathustra, one should not simply appropriate values already established by others because it allows one to "sleep well" without having to consider the possibility that one's truths and values might be false. Like Dickinson's speakers, therefore, Zarathustra is concerned with pointing to the presence of habitual, ideological ways of thinking and presenting unusual, more personal ways of perceiving the world.

According to F.D. Luke, "[t]he supreme task [in *Zarathustra*] is the discovery of personal truths, of 'one's own' truth," (114) which has necessarily been created by the individual herself. Zarathustra makes clear that no absolute, objective notion of "truth" exists

by relating, for example, that "[m]uch that passed for good with one people was regarded with scorn and contempt by another: thus I found it" (36). However, he does not only wish to show that the notion of truth and the related notion of valuing are subjective; he also wishes to actually transform people's conceptions of truth and value. It is in this that he is far more forceful and pragmatic than Dickinson's personae. For example, in his speech to "The Virtuous" in Part II, he expresses his hope that they will "become weary of the old words which [they] have learned from the fools and liars" (63). These "old words" which, according to Zarathustra "The Virtuous" unquestioningly label as "good" are the words "reward," "retribution," "punishment," "righteous vengeance," and "unselfish" (63).

To uproot their conceptions of what is valuable, he overturns the meaning and value of the word "unselfish." While "The Virtuous" see this word as meaning "good" (63) he angrily claims that it is "good" when "*your* very Self be in your action" and exhorts them to "let that be *your* formula of virtue!" (63). In this passage, therefore, Zarathustra exposes his audience to a radically different conception of what is valuable: he claims that being self-ish is preferable to being unselfish, or, according to Zarathustra, self-denying. Also, by claiming that the word "unselfish" is "bad," he attributes a radically different meaning and value to a word which they conceived of as pertaining only to that which is "good." In shattering their perceptions of "good" as an unambiguous construct, Zarathustra is engaging in what Allan Megill calls the practice of creating a new language ("Aestheticist" 221). As is evident, the vocabulary of Zarathustra's language is identical to that of the language he appropriates, but has entirely different semantic denotations. Interestingly, Dickinson's speakers engage in a similar practice, as was discussed in chapter 1. In poem 209, for example, they attribute a new, subjective meaning and value to the words "rich" and "poor" in order to show that these terms relate to each other differently than the established dichotomy of "rich-poor" suggests.

Zarathustra's speech to "The Virtuous" reveals that the concepts a particular group considers to be valuable can lose their worth for those who reflect on them. This suggests that if "The Virtuous" ever question that which they value, or that which they consider to be permanent – as he encourages them to do – their existence may become highly uncertain. The section "Old and New Tables," in which Zarathustra discusses the disorienting effects of questioning and losing faith in one's conceptions and values, illustrates this. Here, he writes that an unquestioning adulation of "the good" – such as "The Virtuous engage in – teaches "man" "[f]alse shores and false securities" (150). He also states that once these "shores" and "securities" have been exposed as false – by his teachings – "man" will undergo "the great terror, the great outlook, the great sickness, the great nausea, the great sea-sickness" (150)[33]. As has already been pointed out, Dickinson is also preoccupied with the unsettling effects of undergoing a transitory experience. Moreover, both Nietzsche and Dickinson use imagery to do with water and the sea to make clear one's sense of disorientation and bewilderment as a result of a transition in which all one's seemingly stable foundations are demolished. Whereas Nietzsche refers to the effects of such a transition as "the great sea-sickness," for example, Dickinson describes the "soul" whose frame of reference and placid conception of the self has been radically altered as "Seek[ing] faintly for its shore" (P 1423, 6).

Similarly, both writers also use spatial imagery in describing the after-effects of an alteration of one's horizon. For example, Nietzsche's chilling phrase "the great outlook" suggests that, after the nauseating discovery that one's set of conceptions was false, one is left entirely without any boundaries or horizon from which to judge and view the world. According to Eddins, this may be described as a Dionysian "boundlessness that makes a mockery of our human arrangements" (98). Similarly, as has already been pointed out, the

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[33] It thus seems to be Zarathustra's goal to introduce new conceptions into people's established horizons which render their former horizons invalid, and after which they must seek to broaden their horizons to incorporate these new conceptions. Appendix C gives a visual rendering of the way in which I view this process.

reason that the soul in poem 1423 is so confused is that the clearly bounded "tenement" it formerly dwelled in has been washed away, which means that the soul finds itself in a "boundless" state, with no clearly apparent "shore[s]" to cling to or rest at. For a moment, Zarathustra's "man" and the "soul" of poem 1423 cannot see the world and, thus, have no place in it. Being outside the world leaves them without a "context" (Sleinis 69) – something without which one cannot appraise or value, according to Sleinis[34].

As is evident, rethinking one's values and conceptions may lead one to tread "a dangerous path that could lead us […] away from any solid foundation" (Sleins 67). An acceptance of a lack of foundations and meaning could lead one to nihilism, one of Nietzsche's main concerns[35]. As a result, Nietzsche's solution to the possibility of nihilism is not to "lament the absence of a world suited to our being" but, rather, to "invent one" (Megill *Prophets* 34). This is exemplified by the fact that one of Zarathustra's goals is to lay the foundations for a world which will be given a new significance with the advent of the Superman (Lampert 17). As Zarathustra states, "[t]he Superman *shall be* the meaning of the earth!" (Nietzsche 3). Only Zarathustra is able to pave the way for such an event, as, of all the people he encounters on his travels, he is the only one not reluctant to "break [old] values in pieces" (Nietzsche 78) and substitute them for new ones. Obviously, Nietzsche's approach is more pragmatic than Dickinson's: it is not her purpose to "allure many from the herd"

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[34] The word "context" comes from the Latin *contextus* which means "a joining together" and originally stems from *com* (together) + *textere* (to weave). To value what is in the world, therefore, one needs to be "joined to" the world. Although boundaries separate one from the surrounding space, they also demarcate a point of contact with that space, and thus "join" one to the world. Losing the boundaries one has established, therefore, quite literally alienates and unhinges one – an effect Dickinson's characters often experience after losing sight of the boundaries they formerly relied upon.

[35] Interestingly, Wordsworth's main concern is to prevent himself from falling into solipsism as a result of his encounters with difference, while Nietzsche is concerned that encountering too much difference will lead to nihilism. Both the early-Romantic poet and the late-Romantic philosopher, therefore, are concerned with losing touch with the world. It seems as if they – together with Dickinson – are concerned with finding out ways of remaining engaged with society, while being thoroughly disturbed by the consequences of living in a society which is increasingly modern.

(Nietzsche 11) and educate them with the goal of preparing mankind for a "new dawn." This is not to say, however, that Dickinson does not have a project; quite the opposite, in fact. For example, both Dickinson and Nietzsche are deeply concerned with broadening the horizon and rethinking one's conceptions and values so as not to get stuck in one particular way of thinking.

Interestingly, both writers use imagery to do with travelling in talking about these themes. For example, Zarathustra is concerned with broadening his own horizon and that of the audiences he encounters. Referring to his past audiences, he states "new stars did I make them see, along with new nights" (138). It is as if he has literally relocated their horizons in such a manner that they are now able to discern things they would not normally have perceived. The phrases "new stars" and "new nights," seem to suggest that this alteration of horizons involves some kind of transportation to a new place which provides his audiences with a fresh view. As Zarathustra puts it, he is concerned with "shift[ing] landmarks," (134) or, points which enable one to orientate oneself in the space in which one finds oneself. In other words, he is concerned with bringing in the previously unconceivable, or, unfamiliar, into people's familiar ideas and outlooks. In my view, this shows how he is concerned with making people experience the uncanny – a sensation which automatically forces you to question or reconsider your established notions. Of course, Zarathustra does not only attempt to make his audiences accept new horizons which contain new "landmarks," but also broadens his own horizon by travelling to new places which, thanks to their location, give him a different outlook on the world. This is precisely what Dickinson's speaker attempts to accomplish in poems 666 and 580.

Like Dickinson, Zarathustra accomplishes his personal goal of "aspiring to ever loftier summits of proud and astounding distinction" (Luke 108) by quite literally travelling to the summits of mountains to acquire new knowledge and a discerning perception. He describes

himself as a "wanderer and mountain-climber" (103) – as Dickinson's speaker does in poem

580 – and claims that "[m]y wild wisdom became pregnant on the lonesome mountains; on

the rough stones did she bear the youngest of her young" (55). Travelling to promontories

gives him the discerning insight and wisdom that, according to Nietzsche, a philosopher

should have (Warnock 47) because in such places he is located "beyond the world"

(Nietzsche 130). Being in such an "elevated" position enables him to overlook and "weigh

[…] the world," (Nietzsche 131) or, appraise and rethink that which is commonly valued.

Like Dickinson and Wordsworth, therefore, he is concerned with being in a discerning

position.

Also, like Dickinson's speakers, Zarathustra is focused on the benefits of being in

extreme circumstances. This is because they share the opinion that subjecting oneself to the

extreme and the extremely different is the only way in which one can broaden one's horizon

and stimulate the creation of new conceptions and values. Both Dickinson's speakers and

Zarathustra even go so far as to advocate the extreme act of utterly destroying oneself, one's

values or one's horizon in order to accomplish these goals. This shows that they are both

more extreme – and, thus, part of a later Romantic tradition – than Wordsworth, who is

reluctant to lose himself in his "extravagant" explorations. For example, Zarathustra is

"willing to risk all for the sake of the enhancement of humanity" (Magnus and Higgins

"Works" 40) and "seeketh to create [i.e. create values] beyond himself," even if he "thus

succumbeth" (Nietzsche 41). Similarly, Dickinson's speakers sometimes conduct experiments

with acquiring a horizon that lies beyond their present one, which may ultimately leave them

without one, as in poem 960, or cause their demise, as in poem 666. Often, though, their

precarious experiments do provide them with new knowledge and new experience. Her poetry

suggests, therefore, like Nietzsche's work, that the destruction of the foundations of one's

horizon, however unsettling this may be, proves worthwhile nonetheless. As the speaker chillingly says in poem 309 (J 238): "Kill your Balm - and it's Odors bless you -" (1).

Conclusion

This chapter shows that, like Dickinson's personae, Nietzsche's Zarathustra is deeply concerned with living in a society which has radically changed. As a result, to shock people out of their unquestioning, modern ways of thinking, he deconstructs the meaning of the binary oppositions they adhere to and reveals that they think according to particular ideological ways of thinking. Besides attempting to broaden the horizons of his audiences in a similar manner to Dickinson's speakers, he also sets out to broaden his own. He does so to make sure that his ideas, principles and ways of thinking are superior to those of most people in society. Like Dickinson's personae, the experiments of Zarathustra with broadening the horizon make use of the concepts of space, ideology, the uncanny and travelling.

General Conclusion

To examine the way in which Dickinson's poetry deals with the theme of living in the changing society of the second half of the nineteenth century, this thesis started by looking at the ways in which her speakers react to the transition from a religion-oriented to a materialistic society, and respond to the shift from a region-oriented to a more cosmopolitan culture. In poems dealing with both of these topics, the speakers both applaud and condemn the new currents of thought and practices that have emerged. This becomes evident through the fact that they comment on the new, modern developments through playing what Peckham calls an "anti-role" – such as that of the (sedentary) traveller or beggar – which is both intrinsically a part of, yet removed from, society. They decide to play such a role because this enables them to adapt to living in, and become a part of, the changed society which they encounter everywhere around them – something which they know they must do, as they are aware that the old orders to which they adhered will not return. From within their ambiguous position, though, they are still sufficiently removed from the changed society to be able to question its central concepts, values and ideas and avoid being wholly swept along by its ideologies and practices. Also, occupying such a position enables them to discerningly gain perspectives that others would not as easily gain and, thus, broadens their horizons.

Next, this thesis attempted to come to a broader idea of how Dickinson's poetry reacts to living in a changing society. After discussing the themes of the emerging materialism and cosmopolitanism, and the way in which Dickinson's speakers react to these nineteenth-century issues by broadening their horizon, therefore, this thesis examined the precise way in which they conceptualize the broadening of the horizon. The poems which were analyzed in this section describe how, living in a relative state of complacency, Dickinson's personae encounter an idea or event which enters their horizon and, subsequently, renders it, and their outlook on the world, invalid. This was something which, according to the poems on the

emergence of the new current of thought of materialism and the new practice of travelling, frequently occurred in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Indeed, as the poems show, these practices and their accompanying values have deeply affected the consciousness, habits, ideas and values of Dickinson's speakers. To regain a much-needed sense of stability after the uncanny, transformative experiences they undergo, the speakers must re-establish and broaden their horizon to incorporate, and come to terms with, the new idea or event. As a result of their uncanny experiments, in which they venture across the boundaries of the fixed and the established to encounter the new and the unknown, her personae develop a consciousness that expects, and is oriented towards, change, disruption and uncertainty rather than sameness and stability. In developing the flexibility of thought and willingness to change which is needed to broaden one's horizon, they thus seem to have found an adequate response to the demands the rapidly changing mid-to-late nineteenth-century society was making of its subjects. Indeed, the easiest way to come to terms with change is by embracing it. Dickinson's poetry shows, therefore, that one of the mechanisms of survival one may employ in a time of crisis, is to welcome the changes it brings along with it, or, to put it differently, to broaden one's horizon.

Subsequently, this thesis examined the way in which Dickinson's poetry and, specifically, her speakers' tendency to cope with change by broadening their horizons, fits in with other nineteenth-century works that deal with the theme of living in the changing society of the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Dickinson's poetry fits in a Romantic tradition of literature which responds to the changes occurring in nineteenth-century society through the practice of broadening the horizon. For example, Wordsworth's work is informed by the awareness that society is no longer a religion-oriented society, like that of Dickinson and Nietzsche. Wordsworth deals with this transition in a positive, early-Romantic fashion, by giving nature the role of the divine and viewing it as the site of poetic material and

transformative, uncanny experiences. In other words, though he has experienced the loss of religion, he successfully finds something else – nature – around which to base his outlook on the world. Contrastively, Dickinson and Nietzsche are more disturbed by the changes they see as resulting from the loss of religion and the onset of things such as materialism, unthinking, rigid habits of thought and superficiality. Unlike Wordsworth, they cannot envision the possibility of reverting to a single, unified order. Because they do attempt, like Wordsworth, to find a solution to living in the new, fragmented order, and do not veer into nihilism – that which Baker points to as characteristic of modern literature – suggests that their work on this topic is in between Romanticism and Modernism and, therefore, late-Romantic. The fact that all three writers operate within the same tradition is shown not only through the fact that all three engage in the practice of broadening the horizon in response to the changes occurring in society, but also through the fact that they talk about this process in imagery to do with (sedentary) traveling, space and the uncanny. This shows how the practice of Dickinson's speakers to broaden the horizon is typically (late-)Romantic, and how the specific way in which they engage in this practice may be applied to the works of other nineteenth-century writes concerned with broadening the horizon in response to the changes occurring in nineteenth-century society.
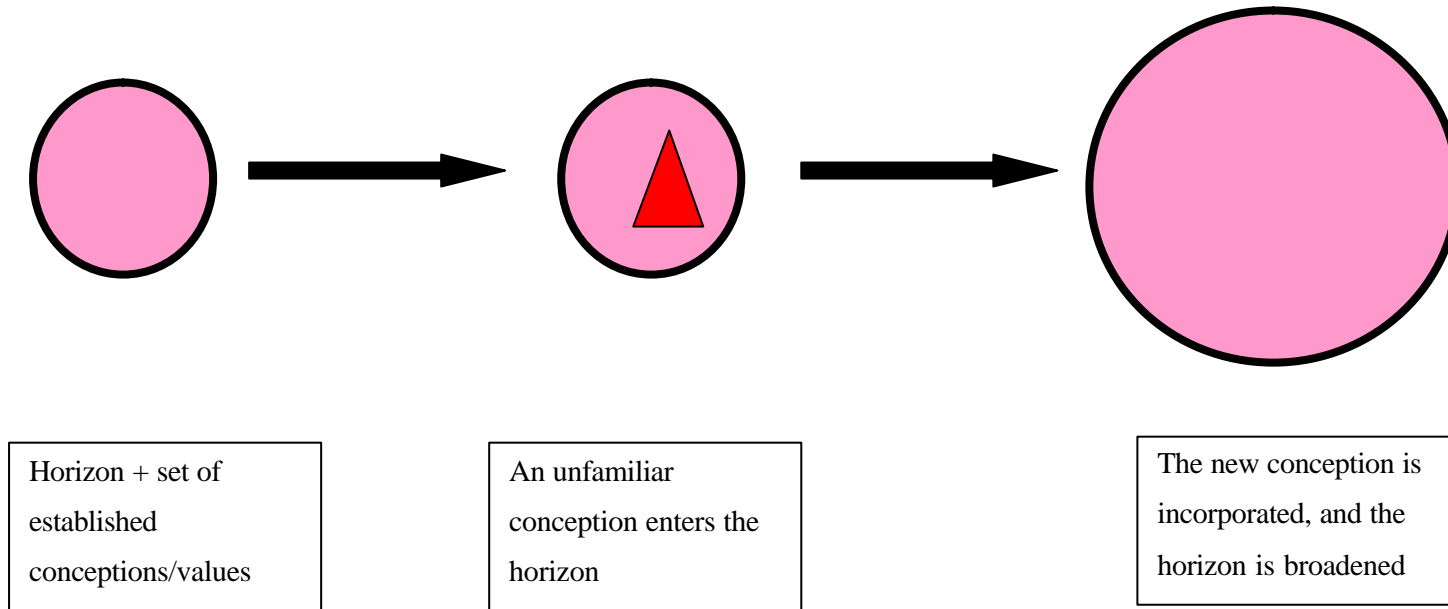
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Appendix A

Horizon + set of
established
conceptions/values

An unfamiliar
conception enters the
horizon

The new conception is
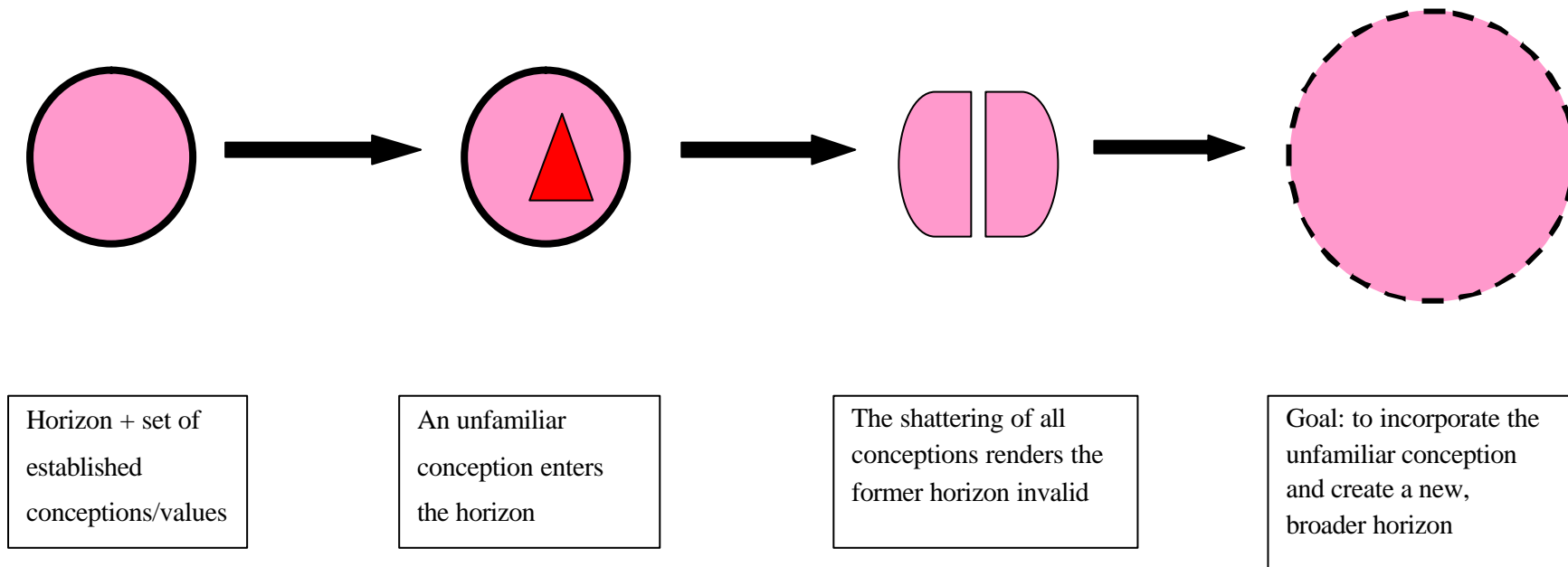incorporated, and the
horizon is broadened

Appendix B

Left: the obverse of a Venetian ducat.

Right: the reverse of the same coin, featuring the figure of Christ within the mandorla and row of stars.

Source: http://lakdiva.org/coins/venice/1570_1577_aloy-moce~i_ducat_au.html

Appendix C

| Horizon + set of established conceptions/values | An unfamiliar conception enters the horizon | The shattering of all conceptions renders the former horizon invalid | Goal: to incorporate the unfamiliar conception and create a new, broader horizon |

Appendix D

The speaker's "narrow" horizon + set of established conceptions/values, not mentioned in the poem. This is the "horizon" the speaker regains at the end of the poem.

The broadened horizon + set of established conceptions about the world. This is the horizon the speaker acquires in "Paradise" or her "Dreams."

The narrow horizon the speaker regains after her broader, richer outlook on the world has been proved to be false.