



Cognitive Poetics and the Philosophy of Eternity in Emily Dickinson's Poetry

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ABSTRACT: This paper investigates Emily Dickinson's poetic depiction of eternity through the interdisciplinary lens of cognitive poetics, emphasizing the roles of conceptual metaphor, image schemas, deixis, and embodiment. Through close readings of four representative poems, the study argues that Dickinson conceptualizes eternity not as a static metaphysical category but as a cognitively enacted. Rather than articulating theological dogma, Dickinson expresses eternity as an embodied, perceptual, and imaginative experience. In this regard, through the interaction of cognitive poetic, this paper aims to analyze Conceptual metaphors such as death as a journey or eternity as an eternal present; Image schemas like journey, container, and balance further facilitate this translation of the metaphysical into the imaginable bodily experiences. Deictic expressions that immerse the reader in a cognitive state of ontological fluidity and epistemic uncertainty. And, Embodied cognition, particularly in poems like "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain," enacts metaphysical disorientation through kinesthetic and tactile simulations. Hence, by using cognitive poetics to analyze Dickinson's poetry, the paper makes three main points: first, that cognitive literary theory is a strong tool for understanding 19th-century lyric poetry; second, that Dickinson's thoughts on eternity are more about experiencing timelessness than just thinking about it; and third, that poetry can act as a framework for exploring philosophical ideas, where language and structure represent and express deep experiences. Thus, the paper concludes Dickinson not merely as a poet of death or doubt, but as a cognitive artisan of the infinite, whose work reveals how eternity is imaginatively constructed and sensorially felt.

Keywords: Cognitive Poetic, Language, Philosophy, Emily Dickinson, Eternity, 19th-century lyric poetry.

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1. Introduction

Eternity has always played a major role in discussions about philosophy, religion and literature. In the tradition of Plato, Boethius and Augustine, scholars typically viewed eternity as a state free from change, wear and tear and time itself (Wilberding). Unlike them, modern writers like Henri Bergson stress that time is experienced differently, explaining that it includes quantifiable elements, everyday time and how time is lived (*durée*) (Dainton). Because of the difference between their views, these philosophies reflect ancient argument about the relationship between what is and what we experience. Dickinson does not accept eternity as a given concept, but expresses it as an observation and feeling through words, imagery and unusual descriptions.

Cognitive poetics offers an interdisciplinary framework to explore such philosophies. Tsur explains that by considering theories from linguistics, psychology and philosophy, cognitive poetics studies how readers mentally form the meaning of literary texts. According to both Peter Stockwell and Reuven Tsur, this approach establishes critical ground such as embodied cognition, conceptual metaphor, deixis, and image schemas to explain how language helps people understand abstract entities. It points out that what a text means is actively formed when its features interact with a person's mind and senses and not by the text

itself.

In this regard, Emily Dickinson's poetry entails philosophical ideas that can be explored through cognitive poetic analysis. For instance, dashes and enjambment in the poems, often disrupt order in time and let readers' minds wander when reading her poetry. These breaks in narrative do not just address content; they actually bring to life what eternity means by representing its separation from time. Hence, Dickinson's poetry reflects on eternity by showing her mental process as a poet (Camp).

Further, her poems bring together emotion, space, time and spirituality to give a sense of metaphysical meaning. For instance, her poem *I heard a Fly buzz – when I died* – articulates metaphysical metaphor of death that eloquently echoed with eternity, time, and philosophy. She often uses words that refer to the present moment and surrounding space to place readers in an unclear time and place (Hoeveler, Schuster, and Jensen). Since deictic language switches frequently, the universe begins to feel flexible and time can be stretched. The writing style in her poems demonstrate the strategy as she talks about a metaphoric reality that cannot be fully grasped. As a result, the readers are put into a state where they are hanged between certain and uncertain; what happens today or tomorrow or where life is headed. Hence, in her poems, the idea of eternity isn't just an idea; but a reality in the way the poems are built (Alqaryouti and Sadeq).

Pertaining to Emily Dickinson and the philosophy of eternity, the study aims to analyze her poems about eternity by using cognitive poetics. It includes four seminal poems; *Because I Could not Stop for Death*, *I heard a Fly buzz – when I died* –, *This World is not Conclusion*, and *I felt a Funeral, in my Brain*. For this, the analytical part focuses on cognitive poetic, specifically, on conceptual metaphor, image schemas, deixis and embodiment to elucidate eternal ideas through vivid expressions in her poetry. Apart from primary intends, the analysis applies the primary methods of cognitive literary studies to nineteenth-century American poetry which has been rarely explored in this manner. The study also opens up a new way of interpreting the way Dickinson poetry, instead, she just sticks to religious or Romantic styles. In addition, it offers insights for philosophical poetics by noting that literature takes part in exploring metaphysical issues, rather than just holding philosophical thought. Dickinson's poems do not tell us about eternity but allow us to feel it through the woven forms of her poems.

2. Theoretical Overview of the Main Concepts

Unlike formalist and historicist theories which narrowly focus on either the structure of texts or the history around them, however, cognitive poetics focuses on the way we mentally build meaning using perception, mental metaphors, physical experiences, and emotions (Wallis). By studying Emily Dickinson's poetry, especially her poetry about eternity, cognitive poetics provides a framework to explore both the content and the process by which readers experience metaphysical thoughts through her poetic.

The focus of cognitive poetics is embodied cognition, the idea that thought depends upon the body's involvement with things around it (Louwerse and Van Peer 423). It is argued that even abstract themes such as time, death, and eternity are experienced in life using bodily analogies and not just through ideas alone. According to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* (2003), our understanding of abstract notions is guided through metaphor, whereby experiences we can see and touch shape our ideas of abstractions. For example, days are described as "long," and people commonly say they are "running out of time" or "waiting for the future." Many of Emily Dickinson's poems show this type of metaphorical connection. Death is expressed as a process of travelling in Dickinson's *Because I Could not Stop for Death* –, revealing eternity as a journey carried out by a familiar mode of movement.

Peter Stockwell continues this idea further by explaining cognitive poetics as "understanding how we read literature by looking at perception and understanding linked to language and cognition" (2). Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner created conceptual integration theory (also known as blending theory), a model that explains how readers connect different mental spaces to form new ideas. It matters the most in

Dickinson's work, since she mixes daily experiences with universal themes. Conceptual blending allows the poem to mix memories of life with thoughts about the spirit, calling on readers to reorganize their view of time. By mixing the spiritual and the everyday, as well as the abstract develops a rich blend that makes new understandings of eternity and philosophy. Further, Tsur argues that poetic language makes thinking more intense by breaking usual patterns of expression. He further explains that in poems about eternity, absence, silence, and ambiguity make it possible for readers to turn their attention to the curiosity. Hence, by promoting creative imagination over fixed rules, Dickinson's poems fit a way of understanding reading as joining minds.

Hence, cognitive poetics offers a theoretical and practical way to examine poetry for making abstract thoughts more concrete. This paper uses cognitive poetics as a framework to Dickinson's poetry on the philosophy of eternity by focusing on metaphorical thinking, mixing ideas, schematized images, and stylistic strangeness. Her poems do talk about bodily metaphors and mental spatial concepts, disrupt our thinking, and invite readers to become engaged with the eternal philosophy. So, cognitive poetics brings us closer to fully understanding poetry and values the connection between the form of the poem and a reader's thoughts.

3. Methodology

This study uses the approach of cognitive poetics to analyze the idea of eternity in Emily Dickinson's poems. This approach was developed mainly by Peter Stockwell, George Lakoff, and Mark Johnson and is useful for understanding Dickinson's metaphysical thoughts. Her recurring attention to abstract ideas like death, time, and eternity encourages an approach that looks at how abstract themes are represented and also how readers can come close to the inexpressible. So, this paper uses cognitive poetics as a framework to Dickinson's poetry on the philosophy of eternity by focusing on metaphorical thinking, mixing ideas, schematized images, and stylistic strangeness. Further, the paper concentrates on four Dickinson poems, with each analyzed with a different cognitive poetic approach. Moreover, each poem is analyzed through a distinct but connected to the cognitive poetic theories; conceptual metaphor, images schemas, deixis, and embodiment. By grounding cognitive poetic as primary theory, the analytical part focuses on conceptual metaphor in *Because I could not stop for Death*; images schemas in *I heard a Fly buzz – when I died –*; deixis in *This World is not Conclusion*; and embodiment in *I felt a Funeral, in my Brain*.

4. Discussion and Analysis

4.1. Conceptual Metaphor in *Because I Could not Stop for Death* (479)

Emily Dickinson's *Because I Could not Stop for Death* is an example of how metaphor can manifest major existential questions. With cognitive poetics which explores how comparisons are used in language to organize our thoughts about life and death, the poem can be read as variations of conceptual metaphors that relate death and eternity. Dickinson's frequent use of metaphors such as Death is a person, Life is a journey, the Grave is a house, Immortality is a person and Eternity is a place which help readers unfold the puzzle of these abstract concepts by relating them to tangible experiences of daily life.

The poem opens with:

"Because I could not stop for Death –/ He kindly stopped for me –" (1-2).

Dickinson represents Death as a person who politely stays behind and is considered a friend, someone with whom people interact closely. She draws upon the customs of polite society and courtesies to ease the typical anxiety we have about death. It encourages the readers to rethink death as something that happens in a natural process, not as a dramatic or violent end. Being mentioned that the deaths happen gently makes the situation seem appropriate and fitting, like part of the usual process in people's lives. This leads into the poem's main meditation on eternity which is made easier to understand through vivid experience.

By using Journey as a metaphor, Dickinson sets up the meeting between the boy and Death as carefully planned:

“The Carriage held but just Ourselves –/And Immortality/ We slowly drove – He knew no haste” (3–5).

Carriage ride is used as the literal source which relates to the emotional journey of transformation we all undergo. With death behind her, the speaker waits for each transition as he moves through a familiar schoolyard, grain fields and watches the sunset. By adding “immortality” to the poem, Dickinson integrates the ideas of death and eternal life, portraying them as basically the same. Thus, using this metaphor, death is seen as a process of transition rather than happening all at once. Her metaphor blends time and our understanding of death, so readers see it as just another stage in life, not something hard to comprehend.

Furthermore, Dickinson imagines eternal life as a person called ‘immortality’ which makes it feel alive and company for the soul. According to this, the idea of eternity appears in Dickinson’s life as the thing that accompanies the soul into its journey beyond life. Both death and the speaker share their existence with eternal life, that is, immortality, until it begins to occupy them as soon as they are separated from life. This technique demonstrates significant metaphysical thoughts with human experience, allowing readers to feel eternity as an entity they can understand and relate to.

She forms a personal view of death by picturing the grave in diverse ways:

“We paused before a House that seemed/ A Swelling of the Ground –/ The Roof was scarcely visible –/ The Cornice – in the Ground –” (17-20)

Dickinson takes ideas from traditional homes to describe the grave as comforting and enclosed and not just empty space. It implies that death is located in a certain way close to life, suggesting an ongoing thread between them. It fits with cultural ideas that consider death as coming back to where we belong or where we rest peacefully. The roof and cornice details in architecture represent protection and comfort, except that they are hidden in the section below, pointing towards the enigma and some aspects we don’t fully grasp about death. Importantly, she uses the words “that seemed” to make readers reconsider the metaphor, asking them what it might mean. The uncertainty around the house reflects the same theme in the poem which is about life being short and what could happen next. Hence, this metaphorizes death as a change, not as total loss and it reflects ideas from domestic life and the ground we live on.

In the end, the poem sums up its core conceptual metaphor:

“I first surmised the Horses’ Heads/ Were toward Eternity –” (23-24)

Eternity is often understood in cognitive poetics as a location or destination which is described as a ‘place’. The word “surmised” here is significant, since the idea of eternity comes from carefully interpreting the physical travel. People’s minds construct eternity into a concept by using metaphors which, according to Raymond Gibbs, fits with the idea that metaphors represent typical ways humans think rather than just added skillful language (Kravets). Their movement, stated as “toward Eternity,” represents the single, irreversible journey of death when someone dies. Stepping ahead, depicts the way things will happen, as the speaker gives up on “labor and leisure” and accepts what’s coming next.

Thus, Dickinson's poem, *Because I Could not Stop for Death*, establishes a connection between language, philosophy, and the world we inhabit. Through the use of conceptual metaphors, Dickinson transforms the unfamiliar and frightening experience of death into a comprehensible and relatable concept. Her use of metaphors transforms death from a shock to a peaceful journey into the endless, yet familiar realm of eternity.

4.2 Image Schema in *I heard a Fly buzz - when I died* - (591)

Cognitive poetics and especially the theory of image schemas, provide a helpful way to see how a poem structures its reader’s understanding of death (Pagán Cánovas). Due to these schemas rooted in our physiology, abstracts like eternity, God and death are understood and discussed with words (Lakoff and Johnson). In *I heard a Fly buzz—when I died—*, Dickinson creates a powerful thought that goes against the usual religious notion of a dying soul going to heaven. In her poem, death becomes an experience in which the mind breaks apart and perceptions are confused. She uses Container, Force, Balance, Blockage, Center–

periphery, and Separation as schemas to change how death is presented, moving away from a peaceful journey to something confusing and unsuccessful.

First, the room and the feelings it creates in the poem allow the primary discussion of death through the lens of the “container” schema. This schema, as mentioned by Mark Johnson, points out that our view of space and experience is largely based on boundaries, enclosures and differences between inside and outside (Johnson 21). In the poem, “The Stillness in the Room” (2) sets up the anticipation schema right away. The room represents both the idea and the link between life and death. Further, she entangles that, whether the “King” is God, Death or Eternity, the figure is meant to be present in the room. She uses a common structure to help readers make sense of the intangible experience of death. Thus, the setting of the poem turns into a powerful crucible, because it is restricted in space but full of existential issues, bringing the eternal and the temporary together under one roof.

The image in the lines “Was like the Stillness in the Air -/Between the Heaves of Storm -” (3-4) makes the spatial stillness more noticeable. The poem keeps the tension suspended for a short while “between” lines, creating a moment when everything hangs in the balance before it all comes apart. Death is not shown as a separation but as a temporary stop, a balance before change, making the nature of what happens next more mysterious.

The seemingly equal parts of the weaved detail are suddenly upset by the entrance of “a fly....” When the verb “interposed” occurs, it gives the “blockage” schema, which brings in ideas of interruption, obstruction, and deflection. When the fly gets involved, the metaphysical revelation about the “King” is blocked. This feeling does not only exist in the main character’s mind but also in the entire world as a whole. Instead of having an epiphany or feeling any divine presence, the speaker comes across a buzzing fly, a symbol of decay and attention-seeking. The “stumbling buzz” instead of solemn silence introduces disturbing sounds and interrupts what comes next.

The poem reaches its height of chaos as it ends with: “Between the light - and me -/And then the Windows failed - and then/I could not see to see -” (14-16). Here, image schemas are more strongly layered. These lines demand the need for a separation between the light and the speaker (“me”). Light has often been seen as a sign of divine truth or of eternal life. The fly, placed “between,” ends up mediating and also making things more difficult. There is a lack of unity which results people feel alienated; a luminous connection from life to death turns into a missed link and a disappointment. Thus, this image means something much bigger, according to cognitive studies, than just being poetic. Because the fly is linked to death and ruin, it means that the we do not come closer to light in his journey, but moves further apart from it. Because of the distraction of a fly, the perceiver is unable to discern divine reality, even when cosmic forces are nowhere involved. Being cognitive, windows act as ways for connections—between our inner selves and external spaces or forces. A failure to communicate is what ruptures this connection. The speaker’s attention is focused on one area and blocked from any other areas. Dickinson worsens it: I cannot see or even realize that I cannot see. Losing cognitive and spiritual order is the true meaning of dementia, not just failing the senses. Especially in the last part of the poem, Dickinson expresses that she is highly skeptical about these ideas. Instead of seeing the anticipated periphery (light, divine ideas, understanding death), she is claiming to be misunderstood. Hence, the poem comes to an end when no clear vision can be found. By relying on and consequently dismantling image schemas, Dickinson stops the reader from feeling comfortable. Due to the dragon’s force, the container becomes a grave, we lose our force and balance, the link never develops and the periphery gives way to shadows. We end up with a feeling of interruption, unclarity and confusion.

Thus, through this poem, Dickinson proposes a radical perspective on what happens after death. She presents death not as a cheerful reunion with God, but as an area where characteristically religious images and thoughts do not work. Eternity cannot be reached through revelation, but through tearing something down. According to this cognitive poetic reading, our concepts which come from bodily experiences, can either be highlighted or resisted as we try to explain experiences as complex as dying. The poem’s final gesture, “I could not see to see—” (16) is not just the end of perception, but the end of understanding, the

moment when metaphor and meaning fail. Cognitive poetics reveals that Dickinson uses the powers of thought to turn against itself to show the doubt we face on the brink of death.

4.3 Deixis in *This World is not Conclusion* (373)

In this poem, Dickinson questions and challenges what we know and what we can experience through our senses. By using the concept of deixis from cognitive poetics, the poem helps language go beyond its usual role: it shows how language locates, shifts, and reorganizes our experiences of time, place, self, and other perspectives. Deixis, traditionally understood as linguistic elements that anchor meaning in context (e.g., pronouns, demonstratives, adverbs) (Fu and Le), in Dickinson's poetry reimagined as a philosophical and poetic notion. From a deictic viewpoint, the poem's exploration of the unknowable shows up not only as its main topic but also as a mental process that takes the reader through stages of visibility and obscurity of knowing and wondering.

4.3.1 Spatial deixis

"This" as a demonstrative helps readers enter the same perceptual space and experience what is happening right now. For cognitive poetics, such spatial deixis positions both the speaker's and reader's mental perspectives close to one another in space (Levinson 62; Stockwell 132). The word "beyond" creates an idea of a faraway and mysterious space that represents spatial and existential separation from us. This way of viewing space between "this" and "beyond" shapes the main argument in the poem. Describing what people go through leads away from any theorizing about life after death or more profound meaning. Essentially, this blending of perspectives is not fixed, and it pushes readers to participate by matching their expectations to the world the text creates, which at once settles and withholds the poem's meaning. So, through spatial deixis, Dickinson both maps a poetic milieu and creates a barrier between the known and the unknown, leaving unknown things outside the poem's reach.

4.3.2 Personal deixis

Personal deixis, in addition to spatial deixis, plays a crucial role in guiding the reader's understanding of the poem. Dickinson's use of "Philosophy, don't know—" (line 6) is an example of elliptical second-person deixis. The "don't" verb here is followed by "you," hiding that word, so Philosophy acts as an interlocutor. From the standpoint of cognitive poetics, the poem changes where abstract thinking is located: it brings reason into everyday talk, takes away its power, and allows the poem's feelings to affect it.

Besides, the phrase "Men have borne" (line 10) uses "Men" as a pointer, asking us to understand ideas together. The reader understands the referent as a symbolic group that represents what people have aimed for throughout history. As a result of this move to collective deixis, readers become part of the ongoing search for spiritual answers. Hence, the poem reminds us that chasing truth is as much about feeling and sacrifice as it is about thinking.

Furthermore, the poet transforms the noun faith into a personal, active subject when he states that faith "slips and laughs and rallies" (line 13). Because of this device, readers are prompted to consider Faith as an actual person, not just a religion, and they see her as wavering, prone to mistakes, and responding emotionally. "Faith" is personified in the poem, yet ends up giving poor advice since it wonders how or where to go "And asks a Vane" (line 16). In this interaction, deixis is expressed: "Faith" refers to the external object of the vane, which also has a place in the poem. The vane, which measures the way of the wind, represents the difficulty of knowing where we are going and what is certain. Dickinson uses person deixis to make the instability of spiritual knowledge real and easy to understand.

4.3.3 Temporal deixis

While the poem lacks strong time-related adverbs, it explores time in unconventional ways. In particular, the phrase "Contempt of Generations" (line 11) helps indicate a specific time frame. This name (in Latin) refers to extended history and how things have occurred again and again. Looking at it from a cognitive angle, this term shows how the poem reaches out across the ages, putting the speaker's experience in the company of others' efforts. Dickinson carefully shapes a time that moves in a non-linear way. Invoking

“Generations” indicates something that never fully ends; a repeatable cycle that shows the endless quality of the eternal.

Because of the continuous push of time, the poem becomes more complex and diverse. It suggests that we need to see our reasoning as a constantly changing effort, where questions go unanswered and conclusions are always put off. Leaving out specific years in the world, in fact, increases the sense of shifting times, prompting readers to use a few but significant clues. With this technique, temporal deixis supports the poem’s goal: going past what is visible and into an infinite, yet tough-to-define, area of philosophical thought.

4.3.4 Discourse deixis

As Dickinson expresses “Plucks at a twig of Evidence” (15), she is making a metaphor that highlights the process of reading and understanding. It functions as a type of discourse deictic: it takes the form of a small part and suggests a larger, unnamed context. Using the image of “plucking” suggests that, despite being active, a person still misses most of what the truth has to offer since only a small aspect can be recovered.

She underscores that the poem’s words do not represent the sole truth. It does not try to bring about resolution; instead, the poem works through the struggle involved in representing lived experience. There is not enough solid evidence; explanations are open to different views, and what is known is not final. The reader ends up like “Faith,” following directions that cannot be fully trusted. So, in other words, discourse deixis shows the central problem of the poem: that eternity remains a long-sought goal that is ultimately beyond grasp. Figurative language allows us to infer, imagine, or sense its meaning.

Through deixis in personal, spatial, temporal, and discursive aspects, Dickinson manages her thoughts on metaphysical questions in the poem *This World is not Conclusion*. The poem achieves this by having ‘spatial deixis’ pair what is known with what is unknown, ‘personal deixis’ shift our perspective in the quest for knowledge, ‘temporal deixis’ extend its vision across all time, and ‘discourse deixis’ highlight how human understanding is reduced to pieces and is not complete. Dickinson employs deixis to engage in acts of philosophical thinking. They undermine the linear meaning of words, involve readers in how they read and feel, and reflect the limits of words to express truth. By doing this, deixis in Dickinson’s poem becomes the central way in which the poem meets its theme of eternity. Dickinson’s use of deixis creates a curious and ‘discovered’ poetic world that we experience through her words.

4.4 Embodiment in *I felt a Funeral, in my Brain, (340)*

Dickinson dramatizes how the mind breaks down, using rhythms, sensory images, and movements to recreate this experience as something actually done by the body. The speaker’s decay into mental illness happens through tangible listening and vision elements, which make their inner world clearer. Because cognition and corporeality are integrated in this poem, the poem demonstrates how the mind is embodied and reflects on the idea of eternity through direct sensory experience.

She sets out to describe cognition through bodily experiences by expressing, *I felt a Funeral, in my Brain*. Applying the term “funeral” to the word “brain” hints at absorbing societal and ritual practices, while at the same time the two concepts become closely linked inside the mind and body. According to Mark Johnson, “meaning is based on bodily patterns” (20), and this is what Dickinson does in this poem; she brings a mental idea to life through bodily sensations

“Mourners to and fro / Kept treading—treading” (2-3) makes use of movement-focused repetition to continue with the poem’s body focus. The heavy steps of people attending a funeral create an impression on the body as well as on the ears, like the example of “balance,” “motion,” and “force” introduced by George Lakoff. Because of the repeated practice, it mimics the forceful pressure we feel from our unwanted thoughts. The mourning is inside her mind, walking roads of sorrow through her thoughts. The movement brings out an inner rhythm that makes us feel it personally through movement. So, we act on our ideas, and our emotions influence our actions.

In the second stanza, the poet uses a similar pattern: “A Service, like a Drum - /Kept beating - beating - till I

thought/My mind was going numb -" (5-7). Using the image of the drum, the poem brings the sense of touch into the scene, more than just accentuating the auditory noise. She repeats "beating" to reflect the structure of rituals and the heartbeat, so problems within the mind also occur in the body. Zunshine, in *Getting Inside Your Head*, states that "sensory detail makes thinking concrete within texts" (34); in Dickinson's poems, these details manifest the collapse of one's mind with the stress of sound, imagery, and pace. At the end of this stanza, when the speaker says, "My mind was going numb," the experience of numbness links mental fatigue with being unable to move. The cognitive-affective state is shown by changes in the Despite feeling numb, a person remains engaged.

This idea intensifies even more in the lines that say, "And then I heard them lift a box/And creak across my soul." The Box makes many readers imagine a coffin, moving attention away from the pressurized sound to the way it takes up space in the poem. Rather than just imagining it, "The Box" is lifted, allowing it to creak, which brings sound and movement into our mental inner experiences. The match shows an illustration of what Lakoff and Johnson called conceptual metaphors based on the body, specifically using the "container" and "path" concepts (46). The soul, which is usually thought of as immaterial, is now seen as a space through which objects can move and touch.

The metaphors are especially rich in "With those same Boots of Lead, again," which ties together kinesthetic, auditory, and tactile meanings. "Again" in the line shows these boots returning, not just in time but also as a pain that goes through the speaker again and again. Reuven Tsur points out that poetry frequently makes events feel real by resembling them in our bodies (Bergen), and Dickinson does so herself with metaphors of movement, stickiness, and palpable effect (77). The sorrow is not from the past, but it comes to life in the weight, rhythm, and sound of the music.

In the third stanza, the drama inside the poet's body reaches a point of dizzying disorientation with the world around him. With this line, "Then Space - began to toll" (12), the abstract idea of time is represented as sensation. Space, which we can't touch, becomes a vivid sound in a cathedral. With this verb, time, meaning, and sound can be added to the understanding of space. According to Fauconnier and Turner's idea, metaphors mix disparate domains, such as acoustics and geometry, time, and space, to make a new meaningful whole (18). She articulates the unfamiliar concepts of metaphysics into the normal senses by making readers imagine space as an audible and tangible mist.

The lines "As all the Heavens were a Bell, / And Being, but an Ear" establish the foundations of the metaphor. This emergence, everything in the cosmos turns into something to be listened to, and existence only responds. Hearing is what distinguishes "being" rather than rational thinking or being in control. The metaphor links identity to experience, which corresponds with Johnson's suggestion that "center-periphery" and "source-target" orientations guide our formation of meanings (25). In this sense, Dickinson's metaphysical vision is not that of an abstract eternity but a deeply embodied one: the heavens toll, the self-listens, and identity dissolves in sensory overload.

The distance widens when she expresses, "And I and Silence, a kind of kind, alone, / Were torn to pieces here—" (13-15). The speaker expresses being part of a "strange race" to illustrate her sense of otherness, as well as her focus on feeling "wrecked" and "solitary" in relation to her physical state. When we refer to something as wrecked, it signifies a significant physical disturbance and loss. "Solitary" gives the speaker spatial isolation, making it clear they are both out of touch with themselves and the outside world. As a result, the poem mixes feelings of disorientation with sensations in the body to make it about an existential crisis. Dickinson's diction reflects a feeling of mental dislocation by evoking physical postures: the person is not just gone; they are isolated, drifting, and hear silence more than they hear anything. Furthermore, in architecture, a "plank" means both the physical building piece and the idea of balance, steadiness, and a straight line. The breakage messes up the way we think and the way we stand. As explained by Lakoff and Johnson, the concepts of "up-down" and "support" are close to our experience of the body, and the collapse of the plank represents the loss of balance on both conceptual and physical levels (Lakoff and Johnson 29).

It is executed in the syntax by the lines "And I dropped down and down—/And hit a world at every plunge" (18-19). The constant collisions with "a world" in every drop make clear the negative effect cognitive

decline has on the body. Feeling the world means coming into physical contact with it. Looking at it with cognitive poetics, this happens by relating mental confusion to forces causing gravity, as in the sensation of your body falling through the air. The sequence uses a rhythm connected to the sensations experienced when falling, which pulls readers inside the speaker's experience of vertigo.

"And finished knowing—then—" (20) means that not only is the body now dead, but the mind is unable to comprehend anything else. "Knowing" is marked by a fall from innocence, so it stops at that event. Gibbs points out that understanding happens by way of bodily actions, and Dickinson's closing lines prove this true: when our minds try to grasp something, our bodies must be healthy (Gibbs 53). Knowing comes to an end as soon as the body drops. So, in the poem, eternity isn't just an afterlife or something transcendent; it's the event of sensing total understanding through the process of collapsing, sinking, and silence.

Thus, Dickinson's poem *I felt a Funeral, in my Brain* depicts mental breakdowns as if they happen to the body by using sensory details, spatial expressions, and body-related language. She imagines that eternity is felt through the senses, such as when we hear a tolling bell, see a body falling, or feel too much sound at once.

5. Conclusions

This paper was aimed to explore that how Emily Dickinson's poetry uses ideas about eternity as conceptual metaphors, image schemas, deixis, and embodiment in cognitive poetics. Through analyzing her poems, the paper reveals her reflections on death, being immortal, and the afterlife are based on her own bodily and sensory experiences.

Conceptual metaphor is a significant entity which Dickinson uses to change what is difficult to describe into an imaginable form in these poems. Emily Dickinson compares death in *Because I Could not Stop for Death* to a polite carriage driver, and this describes eternity through experiences we can usually only see in life. Further, the use of image schemas such as journey, container, balance, and verticality relate Dickinson's personal experiences to her thoughts on the metaphysical. Using the journey or container idea, experience through more basic feelings the meaning of switching life stages or a mind under duress. They guide the way readers interpret schemas, and they also link Dickinson's philosophical approach to the structures that support human thought. Moreover, Dickinson articulates deixis to manifest the self in different places, times, and conversations. Her poem challenges what we think we know about the present by disrupting its time frame and asks readers to cross between the visible and the spiritual environments. Apart from deixis, she uses embodiment as the main way to describe eternity in her poetry. She prefers to examine metaphysical questions by describing the body's experiences, boundaries, and physical state rather than using traditional concepts or philosophical reasoning. Since bodily death contrasts with metaphysical infinity, the poems become profound and rooted in thought.

Thus, Dickinson's poetry demonstrates the conception of eternity is not fixed but shaped by metaphor, spatial thought, change in perspective, and awareness of the body. It points out that Dickinson did not create her poems by genius alone but also by trying to understand and explain the difficult truths of life. This means that approaching the idea of eternity is about personal understanding, as it is intellectually deep, sensitive, and leaves a lasting, enigmatic effect.

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