

THE EMILY DICKINSON INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

Bulletin

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"The Only News I know / Is Bulletins all Day / From Immortality."



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Special thanks are due to volunteer photographers Nuala Ni Chonchúir, LeeAnn Gorthy, Sharon Hamilton, Emily Seelbinder, and Hiroko Uno. No effort was made to correlate images with the accounts of panel discussions.

The front cover shows images of, counter-clockwise, Nuala’s wine bottle and her photo of the Fondation des États-Unis; a lovely tree in the Parc Montsouris and two views of its resident swans, both photographed by LeeAnn; and Sharon’s breakfast. On the back, Nuala’s photograph of Clark Lunberry’s fly interposes between the light and LeeAnn’s tree.

Clark Lunberry’s Dickinson installation at the University of North Florida was featured in the Fall 2015 issue of the Bulletin. Anyone who missed his photo/essay got an eyeful of his work, both in the main meeting room and in the Parc, where swans marred the words he had carefully and painstakingly placed on the surface of the pond.

Additional conference session reports will appear in the Spring 2017 issue of the Bulletin.

The Assistant Editor for this issue is Allyson Weglar

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“The Angled Road Preferred against the Mind”: Experimental Dickinson

Scholars from sixteen countries convened in Paris in early summer to reflect on Emily Dickinson’s experiments with poetry and on other artists’ experiments with Dickinson. The events took place in the *Cité Universitaire Internationale*, a residential campus first established early in the century to bring together students from all over the world to encourage international understanding and cooperation. Participants were greeted upon arrival by artist Clark Lunberry’s installation *Writing on Air*, on the windows of the principle meeting room, with words and images from “I heard a fly buzz” (Fr591) and other passages engaging the vanishing point between writing and pure vision. Lunberry’s other installation, *Written on Water*, was in a pond in the adjacent Parc Montsouris, where it could be viewed by local residents and *flâneurs* enjoying the park’s refuge from the hot city streets.

The conference opened with introductions from host and organizer Antoine Cazé, of Université Paris-Diderot and member of the EDIS Board, as well as from EDIS President Martha Nell Smith and Emily Dickinson Museum Director Jane Wald, who discussed recent events in Amherst. Wald focused principally on the much-discussed archeological research taking place on the property, including not only restoration of the conservatory, the windows of which still exist, and reconstruction of the gardens, as cultivated by the poet, but also exploration of the foundations of the barn, for future restoration. Less visible but equally important improvements include expansion of the fire suppression system, improvement of drainage, and cataloguing of thousands of items in the house that have never been fully accounted.

Following the first round of panel discussions and a shimmering luncheon buffet, Christine Savinel, Professor of English and Anglo-Saxon Language and Literature at the Sorbonne Nouvelle, and author of *Poèmes d’Emily Dickinson, au rythme du manqué* (2009) and *Emily Dickinson et la grammaire du secret* (2009), delivered the first plenary session address, entitled “An Instinct of Dance: Dickinson’s Gesture Towards Unlikeness.” Professor Savinel opened with a quotation from Emerson’s “Self-Reliance,” “I am content with knowing, if only I could know.” To her, such words indicate what she calls his “dancing relation with knowledge”: knowledge is always a dance, never finding a place of rest. It is always in transition from one instability to another.

Dickinson’s Emersonian dancing, Savinel demonstrated, is what she refers to in “I cannot dance upon my Toes –” (Fr381): not having a knowledge of dance makes dance possible. Or in other words, antilogy – unstable contradiction of terms – becomes Dickinson’s mode of knowing. With a nod to Jed Deppman’s reading of “Of Death I try to think like this” (Fr1588), in which the “clutch” of understanding comes in the act of “leaping,” Savinel explained how Dickinsonian knowledge lies in or emerges through the destabilizing of assertion.

Accordingly, Dickinson’s poems spring and dance. The poem begins with its own point of origin, “inventing its own beginning,” and offers momentary points of balance, precariously achieved, that give way to instability. The voice of the poem is “hyper-consciousness of the poetic condition” – it dances along questions, not truths. The poems, as she described, become like certain

religious paintings, conveying the effect of something that “doesn’t look like itself” – of representing “Acres of Perhaps” (Fr725). In poems like, “Behind Me – dips Eternity –” (Fr743), for example, the represented “me” gives way to an ambivalent “between.” Dickinson expresses the very point at which knowledge slips into ignorance.

In a sense, Professor Savinel’s address posed the same problem as Clark Lunberry’s installation on the windows of the room in which she spoke: what is a vanishing point in poetry? Where does “R” (pronounced “air” in French) become air? Where does assertive knowledge give way to “Perhaps”? Again and again in the poems, images hold for scarcely a moment, or only in retrospect, as a lingering figuration of something no longer there, legible presence denied.



Graphically and syntactically, Dickinson represents the same unstable moment, the moment of the leap between figuration and disfiguration. Dashes, Savinel suggested, might mark moments of absence, or of evacuation of stable reference. Again and again in the poems Dickinson leaves “it” standing separately, antecedent never fully established, always rocking free of any temporary assignment of identity, always marking the dance along the margin of the perceptible.

In a sense, the material texts of the poems represent a kind of dance. Manuscript variants themselves, especially in final or penultimate lines, unsettle emerging meanings. As readers, we want sense to settle, at least in a sort of temporary, palliative order. We choose, we make a permanent variant; but the stability is ours. The poem dances.

With Lunberry’s images and Savinel’s words setting the tone, the panels proceeded, presenters returning again and again to the way poems leap over stable reference, or the way other artistic forms, based on Dickinson poems, foreground their position as insecure possibilities, as opposed to stable reproductions. Special performances of Dickinson – in dance, in song, in watercolor, on water – experimented along the angled roads of each artist’s unique understanding of her work. (See Emily Seelbinder’s story about the performance pieces on page 7 below).

Having opened with a provocative address by one of France’s leading literary critics of Anglophone literature, the conference closed with a conversation between a poet-translator and a composer. Claire Malroux has translated four collections of Dickinson’s poems and a volume of letters, in addition to her many other translations of Anglophone poets and award-winning poems of her own. Edith Canat de Chizy, a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts and the Institut de France, is the composer of numerous works for orchestra and chamber ensemble, including of Dickinson. Malroux and Canat de Chizy

have presented public conversations before and have been engaged more directly with one another’s work, so the presentation was a continuation of ideas shared previously in other forms, with other audiences.

(Since some people sitting toward the back of the room reported that they had trouble hearing, the following account is neither a summary nor a transcription, but something in between, retaining as much of the actual language of the comments as an imperfect, and imperfectly bilingual, stenographer could manage.)

Claire Malroux: *There is creativity in translation. Is translation creation or recreation? Or cloning? Translation is like alchemy – a shady form of transformation, close to metamorphosis, to magic.*

Malroux confessed that she was not exemplary as a translator. She began with Dickinson – the toughest – with no apprenticeship

Translation is a conversation between the poet and the translator. It’s like Virgil leading Dante. Translation requires innocence. No matter how long you work, you need to retain the “bedazzlement” of the first meeting.

She discussed “We met as Sparks” (Fr918), to describe the meeting between the poet and translator: “Diverging Flints / Sent various – scattered ways –” (It may be worth noting that the poem ends in a returning darkness, the “ethereal Spark” a memory recognized only by contrast with the present. Both flints begin and end in darkness, but the illumination of their encounter, in recognition and in memory, abolishes the dark.)

The translator has to counterpose empathy and analysis – has to lose Self in the Other; but nevertheless retain perspective and distance.

Dancing, too, Malroux said, recalling Christine Savinel, is at the heart of it. Translation

is a dance where one leads, but the other dances just as much (backwards? an audience member wondered).

The source gives, confers, conveys her power to the translator – “dowers.” The translation is a kind of eulogy, not as a detached commentary, but as a tombeau – a memorial erected in homage that defies or abnegates death of that which it commemorates.

Edith Canat de Chizy: Speaking through an efficient translator whom it did not seem altogether clear she needed, Canat de Chizy discussed the relation between music and poetry. Two poets, she said, were particularly important to her, Dickinson and the Russian Marina Tsvetaeva. She discovered Dickinson through the translations by Claire Malroux. What struck her was the way the poetry of Dickinson was essentially musical. She was drawn to set it for four reasons: its musicality; its elliptical quality; the importance of the imagination; and the relation to the Beyond.

Her first composition based on Dickinson was a purely instrumental piece called “Lands Away” (1999), inspired by “There is no Frigate like a Book” (Fr1286). Composed for cimbalum, a kind of dulcimer to be played in an orchestra, the composition used sound to represent the imagination in action, beyond the subject/object dialectic, expressing poetry in a raw state, the flood of creativity itself.

Her song cycle, *To Gather Paradise* (2001), did not reproduce texts of poems directly, but instead selected movements or portions of poems that went together and that suited her music. The cycle contains five extracts, or groups of extracts. She played a passage to demonstrate how her composition engages Dickinson’s sounds as a raw expressive medium, antecedent (though not unrelated) to her sense.

She also wrote a more conventional string quartet called *Alive* (2003), from Dick-

inson's "To be alive – is Power" (Fr876), which gives expression to her sense of Dickinson's energy, and she wrote the vocal pieces *Quatrains* (2005), for 12 voices, and *Heaven* (2007), for 12 voices and saxophone quartet. In both she sought to explore the dance between loneliness and death; between waiting for eternity and eternal waiting; between finitude and immensity.

In response to Canat de Chizy, Claire Malroux admitted that her first response to the idea of transforming Dickinson's poems into musical composition was "outrage" – "you can't just transpose poetry." But she has learned to admire the work of Edith Canat de Chizy, feeling that she "gets the essence" of the poems.

For both composer and translator, there remains an irreducible quality to the poem. Malroux pointed out that the imagination of the translator works on the language itself, not the meaning, and the language, Canat de Chizy reiterated, is made up of sense and phoneme. Phonemes are the raw material that Dickinson works with, and the translator, Malroux said, has to "reconcile sound and sense." But the sense is nevertheless "reconstituted by the music" into something different, a new configuration.

Canat de Chizy added that music expresses what words can no longer say – what lies beyond the poems. If, as Christine Savinel had argued two days earlier, the poems inevitably move toward what is not said, cannot be said, cannot be known, and if, as Clark Lumberry's installations suggest, words necessarily give way to the unspeakable until we can no longer "see to see," then music may give expression to the absence, the "Possibility," the "Acres of Perhaps" into which Dickinson's lines issue, just as dance gives visible form to the shift between poise and uncertainty that the poems enact.

Reports about specific panels appear on pages 8 to 19.

Dickinsonian Experiments in Sound

By Emily Seelbinder

I reckon – because I counted them all – that close to half of the EDIS 2016 panel sessions and at least three-quarters of the plenary and performance sessions ventured into sound worlds inhabited or inspired by Emily Dickinson. Our explorations began with a deep dive into "Dickinson's Rhythm and Meter": Rosemary Winslow called our attention to Dickinson's musical gaits, Cristanne Miller examined the "tension of sound and sense" in the poet's "radical enjambments." Adeline Chevrier-Bosseu choreographed "I cannot Dance upon my Toes," and Adalberto Müller demonstrated the difficulty and delight of preserving Dickinson's "Rhythm, Image and Thought" in translation.

On another panel during that first conference session, Katherine Robinson argued that Dickinson's imagery of birds and birdsong influenced the work of Ted Hughes. Subsequent panels also included forays in the sound worlds of other artists: Wendy Tronrud, for example, connected Dickinson's poetics to African American Spirituals, and Mathieu Duplay demonstrated how incorporating two Dickinson poems into *Harmonium*, an early symphonic choral work, launched John Adams' career as an opera composer.

Excerpts from *Harmonium* were among almost a dozen samples of Dickinson song settings shared by Georgiana Strickland in her discussion of "Dickinson on Record," a discography Strickland has compiled of some 350 recordings of music inspired by Dickinson's poems and letters. Those who attended both sessions in the auditorium of the *Collège Franco-Britannique* were thus able to hear Adams' work prior to Duplay's discussion of it.

Following Duplay on the panel entitled "Soundings," Samantha Landau, a classically trained singer as well as a Dickinson scholar,

shared some of her recent work on "Song and the Experiment of Transcendence." Nicole Panizza rounded out the session by exploring the possibility an electronic Dickinson song archive, a resource that would be a useful complement to Strickland's discography.

By Friday evening attendees were well prepared for a splendid performance by eight students in a drama workshop at the Université Paris-Diderot. Under the direction of Sophie Vasset, the students spent a year reading Dickinson, selecting poems for further exploration, and experimenting with ways to perform them. The result was a lively, well-paced show: fifteen poems recited individually and collectively, delivered in call and response, broken into pieces and reconstructed, danced and sung. The various performances were crisp and strong, movement from poem to poem was smooth and purposeful, and the performers' collective energy accelerated into a powerful conclusion. I came into the hall tired, wondering how I make it to the end. I left wishing I could stay to experience it all again.

The drama workshop was an excellent prelude to a performance panel the following morning, "In Other Motes, Of Other Myths: Emily Dickinson and the Responsive Body – Disruption, Interruption and Temporality." A distinctive feature of the performance piece that opened the panel was "projective mapping" – the use of recreated fragments of image, manuscript, and musical score" chosen and projected by VJ (video jockey) Suzie Hanna while pianist Nicole Panizza and vocalist Hannah Sanders performed selections of folk song and solo piano works from the collection Dickinson compiled for her study of the piano. The panelists had collaborated with Sally Bayley, who played a significant role in developing the program, but was unable to attend the conference, to craft

Seelbinder, cont.

a "live 'narrative' [that would] grow from a traditional reading of [Dickinson's] work into one that is largely edgy and experimental." It was all that and more, mesmerizing.

After the performance piece, Panizza, Sanders and Hanna joined the attendees "to create new, 'experimental readings' . . . with lyrics from various songs found in [the] piano bench [and] textural fragments [from] the envelope poems featured in [Bervin and Werner 's] *The Gorgeous Nothings*." Using strategies of "interruption and disruption," they elicited, at first, tentative experiments, then energetic, sometimes astounding re-imaginings of Dickinson's manuscripts and the few, fragmented artifacts of her training and experience as a musician.

Soprano Linda Mabbs took a more traditional approach in preparing the "Recital of Melodies" she performed brilliantly on Saturday evening with pianist Natasha Roqué Alsina. With only an hour between the end of a full day of sessions and the conference banquet, the recital could not venture far into the work of the more than 200 artists who have composed Dickinson songs. Mabbs, however, chose wisely and well: three selections each from Aaron Copland and John Duke, including their remarkably contrasting interpretations of "Heart! We will forget him!"; a gorgeous setting of "Nobody knows this little Rose –" by William Roy; André Previn's heartbreaking "As imperceptively as grief"; and four delightfully diverse settings of "Will there really be a 'Morning'?" by Previn, Richard Huntley, Ricky Ian Gordon, and Lori Laitman.

With the thunderous applause showered on Mabbs and Alsina at the end of their concert and the considerable interest demonstrated throughout the Paris conference in soundings of Dickinson's work, we should look forward to dwelling more fully and deeply at future EDIS gatherings in the possibilities of texts spoken, danced and sung into being.

Scholarship Circle

An increasing popular feature of EDIS meetings and conferences, the Scholarship Circle, which met on Sunday morning, found some twenty participants exchanging ideas about their work. Many of the scholarship circle members were indeed academic scholars, but among the geographically diverse assembly there was also a novelist, an arts administrator, an actress, a museum director, and a library section chief. The conversation showed how wide-ranging and creative the work on Dickinson currently is. One French scholar is studying the idea of movement in Dickinson, while another studies Dickinson and dance. A young Dickinsonian from Basel reminded the group of her already-heralded work on gender and space in Dickinson's metaphorical vocabulary, while an old editor from the US described a project involving prosody and ecology.

The actress has been working not only on a children's book deciding where Carlo slept, but also a play about a fictional trip Dickinson took to Boston to see Emerson. The museum director described not only her coordination of the forensic research taking place at the Dickinson Museum but also her progress on an edition of Martha Dickinson Bianchi's memoirs. An American teaching in Japan told about her work on Dickinson and song, while the library section chief described his continuing studies of New England performance culture, noting that minstrelsy was not unknown in Amherst. Young scholars gave accounts of their work on images of transportation, and on digitally archiving Dickinson; veterans told the group about developments in their work on prosody, on the early reception of the poems, on her reading of *Adam Bede*, and on Susan Gilbert Dickinson's letters. At the end of the session,



Photo Credit: LeeAnn Gorthey

people working on similar topics found each other, to suggest potentially helpful materials and to propose directions for further research.

Dickinson's Networks of Forces

By Alex Socarides

The panel on “Dickinson’s Network of Forces” was composed of Michelle Kohler, Grant Rosson, Cody Marrs, and Alexandra Socarides. These scholars came together to think in new and experimental ways about the different kinds of forces that exerted pressure on Dickinson’s poems. This panel moved between a diversity of forces – from the scientific to the interpersonal, from the historical to the scholarly – all the while thinking about how those macro-forces play out at the level of the individual Dickinson poem.

In “Time Constraints: Dickinson’s Clocked Poetics,” Michelle Kohler argued that the encroaching timekeeping environment and the technologies that shape it constrained Dickinson’s poetics (or, put less negatively, the paper considered the ways Dickinson interacted with this pressure). The simul-

taneous turn toward temporal order and artificial incrementalization on the one hand and toward temporal disorder on the other put complex pressure on Dickinson’s poetic form and contributed to her ways of thinking about meter, sonic repetition, rhyme, and sequence.

Cody Marrs, in “Dickinson and the Physics of Force,” considered the poet’s use of the word “force,” arguing that Dickinson incorporated scientific theories of “force” – from such sources as Michael Faraday’s electrical experiments, James Watt’s studies of heat and steam, and James Clerk Maxwell’s analyses of electromagnetic fields – into both the form and content of her poems. In ““Are not those your / Countrymen?”: or, Dickinson on Defense in the Higginson Letters,” Grant Rosson addressed Dickinson’s forceful defense of

her poetic arts as laid out in her letters to Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Already familiar with Higginson’s world through his published work, Dickinson used this familiarity to illustrate and defend her own quite different notions of space and place. Finally, Alexandra Socarides, in “Collaborative Dickinson,” talked about Dickinson in relation to the practices and poetics of literary collaboration that were central to many women poets’ creative processes in the nineteenth century. Noting that scholarship has generally resisted any notion of a collaborative Dickinson, Socarides asked what power the specter of collaboration yields and what happens when we open Dickinson up to this force. Going beyond Dickinson’s relationships to Higginson and Susan Gilbert Dickinson, Socarides explored a range of different kinds of collaborative relation.

Performance Panel 1

Chair: Adeline Chevrier-Bosseau

The first performance panel opened on Katherine Hazzard’s paper “Into the Metaphorstorm: Dickinson and Celan”; Hazzard explored how both Celan and Dickinson experiment with language in radical ways, in a paper blending academic study and Hazzard’s own poetic creativity – a beautiful way of “telling the truth slant”, shedding wholly original light on Dickinson and Celan’s work.

The second speaker was Tom Gardner, who read excerpts from his recently published *Poverty Creek Journal*. A lifelong runner, Gardner records his thoughts, feelings and impressions during forest and track runs, with Emily Dickinson poems cropping up regularly in his mind, and helping him make

sense and reflect on his own tragic loss and his own experience as a runner, a son and a brother.

The panel concluded on Elisabeth Frost and Cynthia Hogue’s paper, “A Dickinson Bestiary: A Chorograph,” which presented selec-



Photo Credit: Hiroki Uno

tions from an ongoing collaborative project between Frost and Hogue and visual artist Dianne Kornberg: combining Dickinson’s poems with its poetic echoes in Frost and Hogue’s own poetry and Dianne Kornberg’s interpretations of some of Dickinson’s animal poems, this unique presentation formed a rich and mesmerizing poetic web that captivated the audience.

The papers in this panel exemplified perfectly the kind of poetic germination that blossoms from Dickinsonian “italic seeds” planted in the mind of other artists, and how a poetic corpus is forever renewed and revitalized from its margins, which remain an endless source of inspiration, a space at play, a space of playing – the realm of imagination.

Dickinson’s Rhythm and Meter

By Christine Savinel

In “Emily Dickinson, the Lyric Poet as an Experimental Dancer,” Adeline Chevrier-Bosseau explored the theme of dance in Emily Dickinson’s poetry, mainly through a reading of “I cannot dance upon my Toes” (Fr381); she began by examining Dickinson’s actual “Ballet knowledge,” how classical ballet is represented in the poem. Chevrier-Bosseau’s point was that since Dickinson did not have any ballet training, and probably never saw a ballet performed onstage, dance for her is necessarily an abstraction, something to experiment with. While some elements of “I cannot dance upon my Toes” seem directly inspired from her indirect knowledge of the world of classical dance, the movement depicted in the poem is radically modern and experimental, and thus resembles Isadora Duncan’s or Martha Graham’s: pure movement, pure energy at work.

Cristanne Miller, addressing “Dickinson’s Radical Enjambments,” began by stating that although the most radical formal aspect

of Dickinson’s poetic is its compressed disjunctiveness, she uses extended and hypotactic syntax in many poems to create rhythms that are in dramatic syncopation with each other, at times entirely overcoming the metrical underbeat of the poem. Miller then talked about these elements of rhythm in the context of reading Dickinson’s work aloud, or what she calls “performing” the poems. Her paper demonstrated Dickinson’s characteristic use of enjambment in the context of a number of other hypotheses: in particular, that Dickinson sometimes arranged her sheets and fascicles by formal properties or repetitions rather than by thematic or historical/autobiographical clustering; that how we read poems aloud is a matter of learned cultural patterns; and that it is pedagogically useful to encourage students to “perform” poems out loud.

In the final paper, on “Emily Dickinson in Translation,” Adalberto Müller started with a question about translating Emily Dickinson: supposing that Emily Dickinson’s poetry is

based on three elements – rhythm, image and thought – how could it be possible to translate them all together? He proposed that Rhythm be defined here concisely as a form resulting from an engagement in the face of an event, a form that oscillates between repetitions and alternation. Image is to be considered as everything related to beings, facts or events presented in or by the poem (from bees or flowers to figures of speech). And Thought can be briefly defined as “what is at stake” in the poem, as ideas or feelings. Although they function simultaneously, each of these elements performs a different role in the machinery of the poem. Thus, if rhythm sustains the poem’s mood and atmosphere, image serves to “weld” concrete things to abstract ideas or thoughts. Müller then read some translations in German and French and Portuguese, observing that the translators tend to put thought in first place, abandoning image or rhythm. Therefore, translations may be a good starting point from which the reading of Dickinson’s works of poetry can be understood.



Photo Credits, counter-clockwise from left: Nuala Ni Chonchuir (two); Emily Seelbinder, LeeAnn Gorthey

Experience and Experiment 1

By Cécile Roudeau

The first paper, “Dickinson’s Senses of Experience,” by Jefferey Simons, considered the fifteen poems featuring the verb or noun “experience.” A close analysis of “I think I was enchanted” (Fr627), the one poem to assign the verb to its speaking subject, allowed Simons to explore experience as a continuum whose opposing ends – what experience “is” as distinguished from what it is “of” – shade into one another. No single sense, nor any one combination of senses, he showed, constitutes experience. Rather, varying combinations of them do. Reading “Experience is the Angled Road” (Fr899) and “I stepped from Plank to Plank” (Fr926), Simons then turned to some of the senses enmeshed in the act of experiencing, and concluded with two bold propositions: that hearing should be considered the decisive sense modality in Dickinson’s senses of poetry; and that a focus on experience (verb and noun) should invite us to investigate further the reciprocity of sense perception and cognition in Dickinson’s poetry.

The panel then moved from “experience” to “experiment.” If the goal of the conference was to insert Dickinson into the series of “radically experimental” American writers, Mary Loeffelholz begged to differ. Her paper, “Dickinson in Time of Experiment,” argued instead that the temporality of experiment in Dickinson’s work may in fact stand apart from the high modernist cultural field for innovation. One temporal dimension of “experiment” in her poetry is, she contends, the question of repeatability or replicability. What makes spring an “Experiment of Green” (Fr1356), for example, is the pleasurable gap between uncertainty (what triggers experiment) and replicability (one of the conditions thereof). What makes it worthwhile as an experiment is the amount of doubt that accompanies its ability to be shared. Here, experimental time is

horizontal and secular, unlike the vertical or messianic time of the “Apocalypse of green,” as suggested by Dickinson’s variant of the same poem. Dickinson introduces the vertical, veridical time of experiment in other poems, Loeffelholz argues. In “This Consciousness that is aware” (Fr817) for example, experiment as ultimate disclosure is by definition either unrepeatable, or only perfectly repeatable, which raises again the question of its shareability, since discovery, here, requires the radical isolation of the experimental object from the experimental subject. This fundamental question haunts Dickinson’s poetry. Testing as best she can the hypothesis that the grief of others is as profound as her own, the poet arrives at a contingent belief in the reality of herself and others, a form of human solidarity that solicits Christ himself into horizontal human time. However, such human time has darker undertones: speaking both as the object and the subject of a sadistic experiment motivated by doubt of the truth of the other, Dickinson’s “Scarlet Experiment” splits the lark (Fr905) and finds not so much the kernel of stable identity as something like a wave form of identity, propagated from the instigation of the wound. To grasp the time of experiment in Dickinson’s poems, the paper concludes, it may be wiser to change the coordinates of our analysis. Not unlike Wordsworth’s lyrical ballads, intent on incorporating the passions of men “with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature,” Dickinson’s views of experiment are best understood as the time of iterability not attached to innovation.

The panel concluded with the analysis of one specific iteration. In Dickinson’s poetry, Lingling Xiang argued, experiment is a bird, and not any bird: experiment is a robin, a bird emblematic of New England. Through a reading of some of the numerous poems

that feature the robin, the last paper foregrounded that bird’s deceptive simplicity: a transplant from the old World, yet also an emblem of New England, the robin destabilizes species and region; ambiguously gendered, the robin also functions as a locus of gender experiment for the poet and reader.

Taking up the notion of iterability at the heart of Loeffelholz’s paper, the discussion tested it as a paradoxical definition of the poem itself – based on repetition (verse) yet indexed on absolute singularity. Is one bound to “split” the poem, together with the lark (and the robin), to find the music? The split image, split identity, led us back to what Christine Savelle, in her keynote speech, called a “moment of unlikeness,” when the poem, in order to live, cannot merely look like itself but should open itself to uncertainty, to the “unknowns” or margins of uncertainty in its own fringes (variants). Such marginal instabilities of meaning should be part of an understanding of Dickinson’s volatile “economics of experience” (Xiang’s phrase) indexed on the plurality of senses (sensations/meanings) that, according to Simons, are the stuff of experience in Dickinson’s poetry.



Photo Credit: LeeAnn Gorthey

The Flood Subject: Experimenting with Immortality

By Páraic Finnerty

Naihao Lee’s presentation “Form of Life or Form-of-Life: The Infnitizing of Signification in Dickinson’s Poems” explored Dickinson’s innovative creation of poems that infinitize meaning, drawing attention to her representation of liminal positions, experiences, and events, especially those connected to transcendence and immanence, mortality and immortality, life and death. Expanding on the insights of other Dickinson scholars who see the conceptual and literary potential of the indeterminacy and indefiniteness of Dickinson’s writings, Lee underlined the ways in which her poems point to gaps and fault lines within conventional thinking about the nature of human existence and death by positioning the poems in the context of contemporary continental philosophy. Read in the light of Alain Badiou’s philosophy, Dickinson’s poems present the emergence of a “type of happening” or truth as something detected rather than established and linked to a certain type of force. In a similar way, Bernard Stiegler’s ideas offer a means of thinking about Dickinson’s poems that foreground the individual’s ability to produce community-creating meaning and forms of signification orientated towards the future. While these “transindividuation” processes converge toward the production of meaning and stability in shared signification, her poems also show that the formation of norma-

tive meaning and consistency of definition will tend, as Stiegler implies, towards its own inversion and an “infnitizing” of meaning. Lee then added into this conversation Giorgio Agamben’s elaboration of eternal life in his conception of form-of-life, the hyphenated term that highlights the unity or integrity of *zoe* and *bios*, natural life and political life, pure being and collective existence. Drawing the strands of his argument together, Lee demonstrated that Dickinson’s representations of life and an afterlife foreground the type of indeterminacy and excess of meaning that continually creates new and multiple connections and resists powerful forces which attempt to reduce potentiality and possibility.

Anne Ramirez’s paper, “‘And then I knew I heard’: Re-Searching Dickinson’s Immortal Experiments” offered a fresh perspective on Dickinson’s many poems about the mystery of death and immortality by showing that when viewed as a group these poems suggest that over the course of her writing career the poet oscillated spiritually and intellectually between religious doubt and certainty, and also constructed individual poems that present conflicting attitudes towards faith in an afterlife. Comparing poems that express belief with those that articulate doubt, Ramirez argued that the unknowability of the existence and na-

ture of an afterlife provided Dickinson with a space in which she could experiment with and inventively construct scenarios about what happens after death. Ramirez then focused on the levels of ambiguity and indeterminacy Dickinson created in individual poems about immortality by juxtaposing oppositional viewpoints, as in “This World is not Conclusion,” (Fr573). Dickinson’s more skeptical poems, such as “I Heard a Fly buzz when I died” (Fr591), might be opportunistically connected with other thematically similar poems that offered a more optimistic take on immortality, such as “I Heard as if I had no Ear” (Fr996). Both of these supernatural poems use the past tense and similar language and imagery to describe the aftermath of death. While the much-discussed, skeptical “I Heard” poem associates the experience of death with a loss of sense-perception and one’s location and surroundings, the under-interpreted, positive “I Heard” poem presents death as a reawakening of the senses, of hearing, sight, and consciousness and the awareness of a new mode of existence in a transitional location wherein time meets eternity. While noting the preference of scholars for a cynical and pessimistic Dickinson, Ramirez’s paper, like Lee’s, shows the nuances and complexities of Dickinson’s approach to that which is inexplicable and enigmatic.



Photo Credit: LeeAnn Gorthey

Meeting Apart: Encountering Other Writers (19th Century)

By Cristanne Miller

While many sessions at the conference dealt with Dickinson's nineteenth-century context in one way or another, this panel was dedicated to comparisons of Dickinson with a single other author. The authors themselves were quite different and there is no positive proof that Dickinson read either Walt Whitman or Henry James, but there are possible angles of connection among all three featured authors and Dickinson, and both James and Whitman published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, where she was likely to have read their work. The panel went in reverse chronological order – beginning with Mita Bose's paper, "Dickinson as Precursor of Henry James, the 'Master' of Twentieth-Century Modernism." Bose pointed out that, like Dickinson, James, who was 13 years Dickinson's junior, was at first relatively unknown (in fact unsuccessful) in the reception of his fiction. The

primary connection, however, that she saw between James' fiction and Dickinson's poetry was psychological: both were experts in tracing psychological process through nuance and precision in language – although James had a distinctly different notion of concision.

In "Radical Imaginaries: Crossing Over with Whitman and Dickinson" Betsy Erkkila focused not on ways that the two writers' works resemble each other but on what we learn by looking at the two in relation to each other and both in relation to the major events of their time. Reflecting in lively and sometimes humorous fashion on sexual, political, and more broadly cultural intersections of the two writers' works, as they both contrasted with each other and shared major points of focus, Erkkila used the results of her several years of work on both poets to highlight how bringing

the two together illuminates aspects of their writing.

Finally, in "Is this, frostier?": Emily Dickinson's Poetic Experimentation and William Wordsworth in America," Li-hsin Hsu rehearsed both the trajectory of Wordsworth's career and his reception in the United States. Wordsworth's poetry received mixed critical reviews; whereas Tennyson was considered more refined and was highly popular, Wordsworth was not so warmly received. During the 1850s, most American reception of Wordsworth emphasized his exuberant writing about nature, with its affirmative elements of spiritual presence. Dickinson engaged not in this cheerful aspect but rather his chillier relationship between humanity, nature, and divinity – as indicated in her revisions of the second stanza of "Safe in their alabaster chambers."

Experience & Experiment II

By Hiroki Uno

All the presentations of this panel were unique and experimental in approach. First of all, Paul Wise, in "Emily Dickinson's Fiery Transports," surprised us by showing images of mushrooms in religious pictures painted in the Middle Ages, and said Dickinson must have known "the lore surrounding species of sacred mushrooms aligned with mythology, etymology, and philology of the sacred." Since Dickinson read Thomas de Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, and since opium was widely available and used to treat various ailments in America as well as England in the 19th century, he suggested "it is not unlikely that Dickinson experimented with or sought relief, at least occasionally, from psychological or physical suffering by ingesting the tincture in some form." Wise pointed out that such awareness and experience are reflected in poems such as "This world is not conclusion," "I like to see it

lap the miles," and "The mushroom is the elf of plants."

The title of the second presentation, by Isabel Sobral Campos, was "Doom is the House without the Door": Dickinson's Experience of Matter." She referred to the thinking of the political theorist Jane Bennett set out in the latter's *Vibrant Matter*, in which she "seeks to elevate the 'shared materiality of all things' in an effort to ground our worldly being in a shared experience that cuts across the subject/object divide." Campos examined Emily Dickinson's poetry "in the context of such an approach to the nonhuman world of beings and things." She also referred to a Japanese philosopher Kitaro Nishida in her analysis of such poems as "Doom is the House without the Door."

The last speaker, Brunilda Kondi, the first EDIS member from Albania, delivered a talk

entitled "Encouraged to Experiment by Emily Dickinson." Brunilda studied Poetry Therapy at the University of Maryland as a Fulbright Visiting Scholar, and this spring semester ran her first project at her university in Albania: "Bringing Poetry 'Therapy' into Albanian Community – researching, observing, and selecting the best practices of using poetry reading and writing for empowerment." Instead of using the traditional approach to teaching poetry, she asked her students, "What is your immediate experience reading this poem?" Believing that there is healing power in Emily Dickinson's poetry, she has tried teaching it using "poetry therapy methods to encourage self-awareness and positive attitude for a better world." No doubt this method could be useful in other parts of the world besides Albania. There was regrettably little time for discussion following these three innovative, experimental papers.

"Four Trees": Dickinson's Experimental Landscapes

By Elizabeth Petrino

A late afternoon slot provided the presenters on the panel, "'Four Trees': Dickinson's Experimental Landscapes," a unique opportunity: they could contemplate the relationship between nature and metaphor in her work and benefit from having heard other papers at the conference. These papers focused on the relationship between environmentalism, landscape, nature, and metaphor.

Christa Holm Vogelius in "Landscape and the Local in Dickinson" explored the complex relationship between literary nationalism and regional or local images in Dickinson's poetry. Linking the writings of Thomas Wentworth Higginson and the paintings of Asher Durand, she contended that their works inscribed the nation within a transnational and global network. Highlighting America's "new felicities of dialect," an apt phrase drawn from one of Higginson's essays, Vogelius examined the connection between the local and national at work in Dickinson poetry. Her careful readings of "The Robin's my Criterion for Tune" (Fr256), "The Trees like Tassels – hit – and swung –" (Fr523), "How the old Mountains

drip with Sunset" (Fr327), and particularly "I've known a Heaven, like a Tent –" (Fr257), allowed listeners to speculate about how Dickinson employed images of nature to respond to the myth of a depopulated landscape in America, as represented by other writers and artists of the period.

Barbara Mossberg's "'This whole Experiment of Green': Eco Emily Dickinson" explored the poet's physicist way of seeing the landscape as intrinsic to vital experience of nature. Drawing on Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Persian poet Hafiz, and William Shakespeare, Mossberg suggested that Dickinson adopted an ecocritical perspective as a central part of her aesthetic project. Dickinson responded to Emerson's view in "The Poet" that the poet will act as "true land-lord" of nature in her poem "A little Madness in the Spring" (Fr1356). Mossberg sees poet, physicist, poem, and theory as inextricable in how Dickinson ponders earth as an on-going experiment that requires a new vision of "ownership" to be seen wholly: she aligns the poet with "the Clown – / Who ponders this tremendous scene." In drawing out connec-

tions to Emerson and Shakespeare, Mossberg argued that Dickinson acts as both artist and physicist who views earth as an "Experiment of Green," bursting with life and uniting the roles of poet and creator.

In "Dickinson's Metaphors Evoking Memories of 'Winter Afternoons,'" Yumiko Koizumi explored a link between Dickinson's poems and climatology: specifically, the quality of light and weather during several winters from 1848 to 1862, as recorded by Thomas Wentworth Higginson and in Dickinson's letters. In her reading of the lyric beginning "There's a certain Slant of light" (Fr 320), Koizumi posed a critical question – "Why does Emily Dickinson begin and end with natural landscape?" The answer lies in the personal and religious struggles that occurred during the winters when this poem and others were written. For Koizumi, Dickinson's use of metaphor and simile underscores a desire both to articulate the experience and keep its personal resonance at bay. Quoting the painter Andrew Wyeth, Koizumi emphasized the link between emotion and art.

Philosophical Boundaries

By Richard E. Brantley

In "'Slipping – is Crash's law': Emily Dickinson's Precarious Legalism," Cécile Roudeau added incident to James Guthrie's scholarly narrative by placing such relatively unfamiliar poems as "Crumbling is not an instant's Act" (Fr1010) in the context of lawyers' discourse. Whereas, after the 1840s, the rise of "legal formalism" made common-law rules appear self-contained, apolitical, inexorable, and mathematically reasoned, Dickinson's anti-formalism builds law "as it goes" (Dickinson's clause). Dickinson's adjudicating lyrics "sentence law itself" to "poetic experiment"

that "unseals [law's] borders" and "opens its substantives to the agency" of relational language. Though often "framed and traversed" by legal discourse, Dickinson's poetry can also diversify that idiom. Thus a father's daughter – or brother's sister – reimagines an American family's articulate livelihood.

In "Emily Dickinson: The Poet as Linguist," Saskia Ottschofski Brockmann and Susanne Riecker developed an at once analytical and interpretive approach to "There's a certain Slant of light" (Fr320). "The restrictive prop-

erties of grammar," on the one hand, and aesthetic flexibility, on the other, drive Dickinson's reader-participant. Linguistic "tools and mechanisms" (semantics, reference, syntax), in league with elucidation, yield fresh insight every time – for example: The experience described in the poem comes across as not just richly individualistic, but strangely interconnected. Or: Strenuously encompassing not just human microcosm, but natural macrocosm, the speaker changes fundamentally. Thus, just as Dickinson expresses the inexpressible, so her readers make the implicit explicit, parti-

cularly whenever analysis serves interpretation, and vice versa.

In “‘Love – thou art high –’: Dickinson, The Symposium, and the Ideal of Love,” Rachel Quastel explored how the poet collapses the distinction between philosophy and literature. Like Plato, for instance, in one of the “critical assertions” of his Academic Transcendentalism, the speaker of “I died for Beauty” (Fr448) discovers (like Keats in equally 19th-century Greek-philosophical mode) that “Beauty” and “Truth” are “One.” And Dickinson’s ideal of love in “Love – thou art high – ” (Fr452) is also more similar to, than different from, Plato’s. True, her ideal sounds less didactic

than his – and concrete enough to call the aptness of “ideal” love, in her case, into question. Nonetheless, Dickinson rejoices in Diotima’s breakthrough: Earthly love expresses all we know, and all we need to know, of truth, beauty, and God. Thus, just as Dickinson declares, “I will be Socrates” (L5), so she channels Plato.

In “Dickinson’s Poiesis and the Pragmatics of Poetry,” Daniel Fineman read “‘Morning’ means ‘milking’ to the Farmer” (Fr191) as a prime example of her ten “experiment” poems. For Dickinson, paradoxically, experimentation means “diametrically opposed to scientific practice.” If, to pursue reproducibility, scien-

tists frame hypotheses to license induction, then the poet, for her part, regards every moment as “beyond rational catalogue, deductive hypothesis, or iterative nomination.” And if the logical impetus and mathematical repercussion of the laboratory produce shut-up, hermetic prose, then the “singular multiplicity” of Dickinson’s vision – her syntactic, semantic, punctuation-bending, and para-textual deregulation – makes opened-up or porous, yet no less specified, poetry. Thus duplex words like “I,” “here,” and “now” – shifting between lexical definition and existential reference – tilt toward the latter among personae for whom “scripted and habitual expectations are constitutively inadequate.”

“To make me visible”: Experiences in Visual Dickinson

By Dan Manheim

In engaging three artists’ experimental adaptations of words, lines, and poems of Emily Dickinson, the panelists raised fundamental questions about translation and creativity. First, Marjorie Micucci discussed the work of US artist Roni Horn (see her essay in the Spring 2016 issue of the *Bulletin*). Horn reproduces complete Dickinson poems on aluminum bars, with letters in cast plastic. Micucci noted how casting the letters on four sides of the aluminum bars requires a physically active reading, as the observer reconstructs the meaning of the poem, reproducing the dynamic displacements in Dickinson’s language: the viewer performs the works as a kind of dance. Horn also uses sculpture to enact work by such authors as Blake, Kafka, Faulkner, and Turgenev, but she has said that Dickinson led her to understand herself and her work. She has taken many trips to Iceland, a place which she feels gives her an immediate experience of the world: “I never really knew why I went to Iceland until I read Emily Dickinson.”

Images of artist and poet Clark Lunberry’s installations at the *Cité Internationale Universitaire* appear throughout this section of the *Bulletin*. In “Writing on Air,” on the windows of

the main meeting room of the *Fondation des Etats-Unis*, Lunberry (see the Fall 2015 issue of the *Bulletin*) placed lines and images from “I heard a Fly buzz” (Fr591). He suggested that he was to some extent engaging Jacques Derida’s staring eye from *Memoirs of the Blind* (1993). Blinded by the act of looking at itself seeing, the solitary letter “r,” (pronounced “air” in French) reflects the absence that reproduces itself in self-perception. Other windows of the room raised the idea of seeing through reflections on the windows of Dickinson’s room; a blind student in one of Lunberry’s classes; the mutilation of one of Dickinson’s poems by her brother; and Dickinson’s own mutilation/revision of her poems on the pages of her manuscript. In one manuscript page, the word “Death” is struck through twice, the following word, “comes,” only once, as if the effort at denial has subsided. His other installation, “Writing on Water,” involved floating words on the pond in nearby Parc Montsouris. The original text, “Calme de l’Air / La Chambre,” was over the course of the conference edited down to “La Chambre” by the pond’s proprietary swans. Lunberry at first resented, but in the end reluctantly approved this severe editorial excision.

The last speaker, painter and engraver Claire Illouz, discussed her creative process in producing her limited edition art books. (See the Spring 2016 issue of the *Bulletin*.) She reads, thinks, and sketches. Then finding her work still far from the quality of the poem she wants to capture – or rather, from the new landscape that the reading of the poem has produced in her – she returns to read and to sketch again. In a reflection that might have served to describe adaptation of Dickinson’s poems into various other arts, Illouz said that just as Dickinson was always paradoxically conscious of the impossibility of translating Nature into words, she herself had to meet the impossibility of translating her own sensations into visual representations on paper. She addressed her representations of Dickinson’s “Presentiment – is that long shadow – ” (Fr487), evoked through space and darkness; “Of all the Sounds dispatched abroad” (Fr334), for which she had to find a “visual impression of the force of wind”; and “We grow accustomed to the Dark” (Fr428), printed in grey on black to frustrate reading until “Life” enters on white paper and “steps almost straight.” What, Illouz wondered, would Dickinson think?

Dickinson and Celebrity: The Angled Road of Literary Fame

By Paul Crumbley

Paul Crumbley introduced the three panelists and provided a brief overview of the papers, stating that within the broad category of Dickinson’s experiments with language, none have provoked greater curiosity and scholarly interest than her explorations of the literary life and the life of literature. He then explained that all three papers contemplate the ways Dickinson both intertwines and disentangles the lives and achievements of women writers whose work she held in the highest regard. All three do so by investigating Dickinson’s concern with the threat celebrity can pose to the achievement of enduring fame and examine how Dickinson’s understanding of the writer’s death plays an important role in shaping the nature of lasting fame. Most importantly, perhaps, the three papers collectively demonstrate that Dickinson thought deeply about the nature of literary celebrity as part of a larger experiment in living and writing that would most effectively serve the aims of literary art.

Petrino’s presentation, “‘I went to thank Her –’: Dickinson’s Cult of Literary Celebrity,” looked at the ways Dickinson’s attitude toward fame and literary artistry contrasts with the commercially driven views typical among editors and writers in her era. Inspired by the works of her British and continental female

contemporaries, including Elizabeth Barrett Browning, George Sand, and George Eliot, Dickinson ironized the apparent intimacy writers and readers shared, even while she participated in the desire to memorialize and pay tribute to famous authors. Readers imagined they had an intimate relationship with writers, who often conspired to portray a fictional intimacy with their readers. The celebrity culture that began to emerge in America in the mid-nineteenth century depended in good part on the semblance of reciprocity, and in this regard poems and letters helped to sustain the illusion that writers and readers were, as David Haven Blake has put it, “intimate stranger[s].” Petrino argued that these writers offered Dickinson a model of female creativity but also foregrounded the perils and promise of the notoriety that she craved. Dickinson ultimately undercut the fictional reciprocity between authors and their readers within the cult of literary celebrity, even as she reenacted a similar desire to physically connect with the departed poet as “her unmentioned Mourner” (L410).

Finnerty’s paper, “Dead Celebrities: Dickinson’s Poetic Fandom,” similarly positioned Dickinson and her writings in the context of nineteenth-century celebrity culture but did so with particular attention to posthumous celebrity. Finnerty began by focusing on the ways in which Dickinson represented her near obsession with the writers she most admired, such as George Eliot, Emily Brontë, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and how this attraction fueled her desire to possess objects associated with them, such as literary works, biographies, and photographs, as well as her creation of speakers who journey as virtual tourists to visit the literary sites (or shrines) associ-

ated with the Brontës and the Brownings. The second part of the paper considered the ways in which Dickinson re-deployed, undercut, and experimented with celebrity discourse in her representations of the dying, the dead, and the geography of the afterlife. Finnerty argued that Dickinson personified death as a mysterious celebrity-like figure (Fr166) that offered “strange fame” (Fr1398). In doing so, Dickinson illuminated her culture’s fascination with the dead and its construction of celebrities as absent-present, ghost-like figures who are intimately known, but never fully understood, and as otherworldly, transcendent individuals concomitantly associated with corporeality, spectacle, and commodity.

In the final paper, “‘Fame’s consummate Fee’: Dickinson’s Nameless Celebrity,” Crumbley argued that in requesting that Emily Brontë’s poem “No coward soul is mine” be read at her funeral Dickinson enlisted Brontë’s defiant declaration of immortality in her own equally defiant final statement on the relation of fame to enduring art. According to Crumbley, Dickinson previewed the logic behind this act four years earlier in an 1882 letter to Roberts Brothers editor Thomas Niles in which she refused his request for a “volume of poems” (L749b) and instead sent him “How happy is the little Stone” (Fr1570E), a poem that alludes to “the rock of immortality” and “atom” that appear in Brontë’s poem. These allusions informed Dickinson’s assertion that the fame she aspires to is based on lasting fusion with the elemental fabric of the universe, not immediate approval from the contemporary reading public. This more enduring fame is fundamentally experimental in as much as it requires the poet to hazard the loss of her name in exchange for continued life in the language of others. Crumbley pointed to the poem “To earn it by disdaining it” (Fr1445) as providing a blueprint of sorts for Dickinson’s paradoxical relationship to fame.



Photo Credit: Nuala Ni Chonchúir

Exploring Foreign Spaces

Eleanor Heginbotham

Discrepant as the titles of the superb papers on “Exploring Foreign Spaces” may sound, their authors echoed each other in demonstrating how far out upon circumference Emily Dickinson’s interest, intellect, spirit, and passion stretched.

First speaker Cindy MacKenzie’s grounding in Walter Benjamin’s seminal work, “The Task of the Translator,” prepared for her own discussion of Dickinson’s “magical, alchemical, and mystifying” translations of experience into prosody and also into the discussions of the two other panel participants. As she said, “the imaginative journey effected by the power of metaphor” – and metonymy, synecdoche, aporia, and catechesis – demonstrate that language itself is transcendental and transformational even as it embraces the impossibility of translation except through “the geometry of tangency,” a Benjamin expression which MacKenzie applied to such poems as “Exhilaration is the Breeze” that “leaves us in another place / Whose statement is not found” (Fr1157). Dickinson, said MacKenzie, is a translator: the poet translates, safeguarding the element of the unknown in ways that parallel what Benjamin’s theory purports to be the essential element of translation. Her “translation” of the Oriental Aesthetic is left undefined – hence the numerous references without determinate context – and especially of the pearl as a symbol of both the unknown and God (also undefinable, untranslatable, unknown). Her translation allows for continued possibility of interpretation over time. Benjamin states the same point similarly in terms of “good” translation that allows for renewed attempts to capture the meaning of the original text. “Estimate” may be the best word – and Dickinson uses it in “To Estimate the Pearl” – tangency and circumference are the only ways to approach its Truth and to come away with a trace of that meaning.

Jiang Ningkan and his Nanjing University dissertation student Xiaohong Fang likewise explored the effect of the Chinese people, culture, and calligraphy of her name translated on a card when Dickinson “came into contact with ‘exiles from the East.’” That was not the first nor the last of the poet’s “curiosity” and her “psychological and emotional” contacts with others: the Irish people in the household, the Circassian about whose exile plight Dickinson read in the *Republican*, and others. In a summer of heated discussions about immigrants, it was timely to hear Professor Jiang raise the issues of immigration that led to Edward Dickinson’s failure to win re-election to the Tenth Congressional District in 1854, to which Dickinson seems (slantwise) to refer in letters and poems. It was particularly interesting to hear the Chinese scholars’ reflect on the language of revolution (“Revolution in the Pod” [Fr1082]) versus the language of nationalism (“My country need not change her gown” [Fr1540]) that result in what Jiang and Xiaohong call Dickinson’s “ambivalence toward immigrants.”

Barbara Dana’s Emily Dickinson reflected not so much “ambivalence” as an open spirit. The author of books and dramatizations on both, Dana reflected on, mediated between, and embodied Dickinson and Joan of Arc, women separated by 400 years

and almost completely different contexts. They shared “confidence, courage . . . determination, mystery”; their heterodoxical behavior and statements were not at odds with their “strong personal relationship[s] to God” and their faith. Most important, said Dana, “Each listened to the promptings of her own heart and followed.” (See a redaction of her paper below, on page 27).

Actually, Dana’s presentation spanned 500 years because she, Dana the contemporary twenty-first century actress, became Emily Dickinson, the poet firmly anchored in Amherst in conversation with teen-aged warrior Joan of Arc, who, in Dana’s script, has appeared at the bottom of Dickinson’s garden steps. The two discuss death, the price of being true to one’s soul, and the question that explodes across cultural and temporal lines, “Is immortality true?” From theory through political reality to embodiment: the panel indeed went out upon circumference.



Photo Credit: Emily Seelbinder

Philosophical Experiments

By Faith Barrett

Panelists drew on the work of Levinas, Deleuze, and Guattari to consider the limits of analogy, the relationship between the lyric I and the other, and the rejection of representative experience in Dickinson’s poetics.

Shira Wolosky opened the session with “Enigma vs Metaphor: the edges of analogy.” Wolosky offers the following abstract: “The mismatches in what often appears in Dickinson to be a series of correlations, analogies, transfers, have long been recognized, reaching from her rhymes, meters and syntax to her sequences of images and other tropes. These breaks and slips in analogy often register her suspicion that the world, and the accounts to give it meaning, in fact fail to do so, so that experience verges into fragmentation and incoherence. However, in light of twentieth century theorizations such as emerge in Emmanuel Levinas, analogy itself has come under suspicion as imposing unities on differences that efface rather than acknowledge the world’s multiplicity. The undermining of analogy may then not signal disorientation (only) but also the possibility of re-orientation on terms that embrace differences rather than absorbing them as analogical cor-

relatives. This would mean a turn from both a phenomenology of consciousness as grasping objects into interior structures and towards an erasive consolidation; to an ethical recognition of what can never be so reduced.”

Kylan Rice presented “‘Light – enabling Light’: Dickinson and the Apparatus of the Poet’s I.” He sums up his intervention: “When Dickinson wrote to Thomas Wentworth Higginson ‘the sailor cannot see the North – but knows the needle can –’ she articulated a poetics of proxy further explored in works like ‘My Life Has Stood – a Loaded Gun,’ which seek to negotiate relationships between Same and Other, agent and apparatus. Dickinson suggests that the perceptive functionality for a lyric poet starts from Otherness; the ‘I’ needs an Other and their radical distance in order to speak, see, or experience. This Dickinsonian model for lyric poetry foreshadows Levinas’ notion that vision’s perceptivity depends on openness in space and in experience – in other words, on a being-set-apart and a proximity – in order to facilitate knowing. Dickinson’s poetry is a profoundly ethical labor that explores the dependent and co-participatory

nature of perception and truth, helping to unsettle ossified approaches toward authorship and lyric.”

Jasmin Duecker closed out the session with “‘A certain Slant’ – Deleuze, Dickinson and Experimentation.” Duecker offers the following abstract: “My paper suggests that Gilles Deleuze’s and Félix Guattari’s conception of ‘experimentation’ helps to bring out the ‘affective,’ ‘pragmatic’ and ‘experimental’ aspect of Dickinson’s poetics. Rather than grounding itself in abstract considerations of universalizable experiences, Dickinson’s poems often play precisely on the non-representative contiguity of their empirical basis. In order to transport this immediacy, they perform and present rather than re-present, and create rather than re-create the very affect in question by ‘reaching out of themselves’ and building their audience’s affect into their very theme. In this sense, Deleuze’s and Guattari’s conception of ‘experimentation’ presents a helpful approach in that, rather than presupposing a stable and timeless identity of a poem, supplants this alleged referential ‘vacuum’ with the concrete moment of its ‘actualization.’”



Photo Credit: LeeAnn Gorthey



Photo Credit: Hiroko Uno

Teaching, Learning, Listening: Resources and Strategies for Dickinson Studies in the Classroom and Beyond

By Nicole Panizza

When approaching the challenge (and reward) of coaxing Emily Dickinson into the classroom (and beyond), it can be argued that one is met with a juxtaposition of a rich bounty of possibility and a test of strategy – in equal measure. The three papers delivered in the Teaching, Learning, Listening panel provided the audience with a thought-provoking window into current Dickinson scholarship on educational practice.

Opening the panel session, Stephanie Tingley’s paper (Tingley *in absentia* but paper kindly presented by Jane Eberwein) entitled “Dickinson in Six Objects: A Teaching Experiment (Teaching Whitman and Dickinson in a digital age)” served as an entrée into the ways in which the work of these two American literary pioneers can be used in a classroom setting. Focusing on a study “through the lens of digital pedagogy,” Tingley posed questions (“How can we make good use of digital resources to help us be more effective learners and teachers?” “How do digital tools and resources change how we teach and learn?” and “What are the advantages and disadvantages?”) as a prelude to investigating the reading, inter-

preting and researching of both poets’ material.

Emily Seelbinder’s presentation, “The Figure of a Nut . . . But Meat within’: Experiments in Gathering” provided the audience with an entertaining yet critical offering of the power of interdisciplinary approaches to reading Emily Dickinson’s work. Seelbinder, in her course Dickinson and her Descendants, creates a space for students to explore and develop their own ideas around Dickinson’s material, in direct reference to complementary (and often contradictory) “readings” by scholars, writers, visual artists, composers, performers and dancers. Towards the end of each course, students gather all they have collected, carefully selecting the pieces that best represent their experience of Dickinson and her progeny, and assemble those pieces into a montage. During their final class meeting, the students present their work to each other, and provide “artist’s statements” that explain the rationale behind their assemblages. These also reflect Dickinson’s own aesthetic: that poetry is a living, breathing force in our lives, providing what she called “vital light.” In Seelbinder’s

own words “It’s certainly vital to me: my students’ reading of Dickinson informs my own continued reading of her work.”

Concluding the panel session was Georgie Strickland’s presentation, “Dickinson on Record: A Tool for Listening and Learning.” In reference to, and in extension of, the ever-burgeoning output by composers and performers inspired by her poetry, this discography project serves as a vital addition to existing Dickinson scholarship. Drawing on years of research and conversations with composers, performers and their families, Strickland has compiled a resource that champions the vital place that these musical works and recordings have in the continuation and growth of Dickinson scholarship. Sections include renowned settings by such composers as Copland and Adams, as well as sections highlighting non-vocal music works inspired by Dickinson’s poetry, popular music, jazz, radio broadcasts, film, ballet and connections between 20th/21st century music and Dickinson’s poetry and letters. One of Strickland’s hopes is that “this discography will call attention to the many fine songs that have suffered neglect.”



Photo Credit: Nuala Ni Chonchúir



Dickinson and the Language of Faith

By Jane Eberwein

This panel, dedicated to the memory of Roger Lundin, focused on Dickinson’s experimental approach to the language of faith that reached her through scripture, theology, pulpit rhetoric, and Romantic poetry.

In “Dickinson’s Experiments with the Language of Genesis,” Linda Freedman emphasized the verticality of diction and authority of tone in the King James Version of Genesis. Arguing that Dickinson “deliberately debunked” vertical language “through horizontal movements associated with poetic speech and action,” Freedman observed that “Dickinson knew that to create was not to control and God’s version of authorship was not her own.” Poems highlighted included “A word is dead, when it is said” (Fr278), used to exemplify Dickinson’s preference for the multiple possibilities of horizontal language, “Heaven – is what I cannot reach” (Fr310), exemplifying poems of re-definition, “Abraham to kill him” (Fr1331), in which the patriarch’s triumph is “rooted in linguistic subversion,” and “I felt a Funeral, in my Brain” (Fr340), which Freedman read as “a great fall poem” countering the verticality of the Adam and Eve story with “moments of arrest.”

Richard Brantley’s “Wielding Natural Methodism: Prospect’s Retrospection” situated Dickinson within the context of late-Romantic imagination, showing by reference to Wesley, Tennyson, Emerson, and Carlyle how Dickinson’s “philosophical, religious, and literary heritage keeps her senses sharp, her faith rowdy, and her poetic faith resilient.” Key poems considered were “Sweet skepticism of the Heart –” (Fr1438) and “The Bible is an antique Volume –” (Fr1577). Brantley tentatively identified the preacher of “Orpheus’s Sermon” as Charles Wadsworth, noting that “if Wadsworth’s sermons do not warble, they sing.” Dickin-

son’s religious-philosophical stance, then, reflects “Romantic Anglo-America’s poetic method – cum – faith” rather than pre-Modern or even post-Modern doubt.

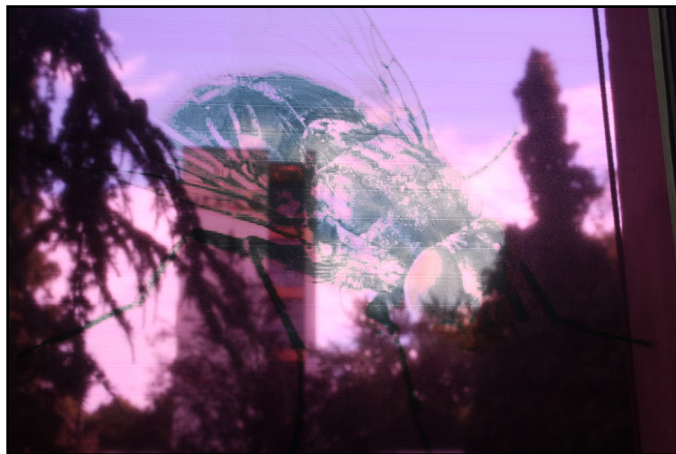
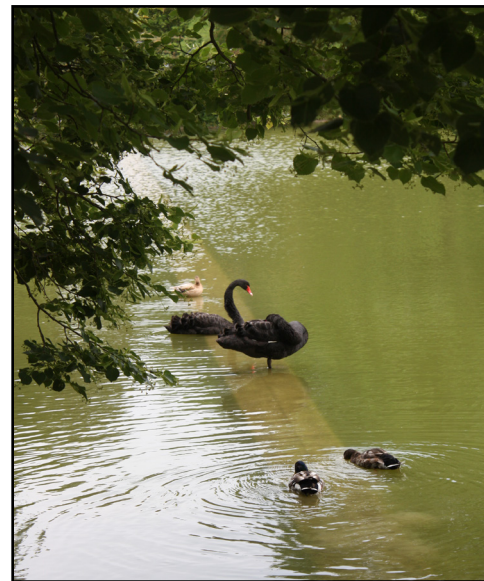
In “New England Legends of the Fall: Thanksgiving Day Sermons of Charles Wadsworth and Emily Dickinson,” Jennifer Leader focused on “A Solemn Thing Within the Soul” to show how Dickinson worked within the heritage of Thanksgiving Day sermons whose meditative reflections on harvest images exemplified life’s unpredictable brevity. Leader analyzed typological imagery from John Flavel’s *Husbandry Spiritualized*, Jonathan Edwards’s *Images of Divine Things*, and two versions of Charles Wadsworth’s “God’s Culture: A Thanksgiving Sermon” to contrast Flavel’s stress on the perilous condition of one’s spiritual state with Edwards’s and Wadsworth’s more confident reflection on God as, in Wadsworth’s words, “the great Husbandman” who harvests each soul at its moment of readiness. Leader differentiated between Wadsworth’s trustful depiction of the divine harvester and Dickinson’s reading of Him as inscrutably appraising. Placing the poem within its Thanksgiving context, she argued, demonstrates how the poet’s reworking of Wadsworth’s imagery shows that “it is not God’s existence but ‘His’ character and motives that are so often at the crux of Dickinson’s religious questioning.” She ended with reference to another Wadsworth Thanksgiving sermon, “Religious Glorying” (1857), to show how he used familiar New England tropes to critique the “self-pitying nostalgia of the Romantic poets.”

Discussion afterward raised questions about whether Dickinson’s strategy of turning vertical language toward the horizontal reflected gender politics or a widespread tendency of Romantic writing and explored imagery of coffins being lowered into the grave.



Photo Credits: Above, Hiroko Uno; below, Nuala Ni Chonchúir

EDIS IN PARIS



Counter-clockwise from top left: Sharon Hamilton's breakfast; Clark Lunberry's edited installation in the Parc Montsouris, by Sharon Hamilton; Lunberry's interposing fly, by Nuala Ní Chonchúir; the editing swans themselves, by Nuala Ní Chonchúir; and the curtain call of Linda Mabbs and Natasha Roqué-Alsina, by Nuala Ní Chonchúir.

EDIS IN PARIS



Counter-clockwise from top left: the many expressions of Emily Seelbinder, by Eleanor Heginbotham, LeeAnn Gorthey, Nuala Ní Chonchúir and LeeAnn Gorthey; EDIS President Martha Nell Smith and conference organizer Antoine Cazé, by Nuala Ní Chonchúir; members of the Paris Diderot Students' Drama Workshop at work, and relaxing after the performance, by Eleanor Heginbotham; Linda Mabbs, by Nuala Ní Chonchúir; and a quincunx of charismatic scholars, by Eleanor Heginbotham.

Visualizing Dickinson

Series Editor, Maryanne Garbowsky

A Chance Meeting with Artist Nancy Fitz-Rapalje

Every day we pass people on the street unaware that we may share something in common. Sometimes – serendipitously – our paths intersect and we discover an affinity. Such a meeting occurred in a small shop in a small town in Vermont. Quite by chance, my daughter ran into a friend who had served as a trustee at the art foundation where she worked. An introduction followed and within a short time, artist Nancy Fitz-Rapalje and I discovered our mutual admiration for the poet Emily Dickinson. When she extended an invitation to visit her studio, I readily accepted.

Her studio was different than what one might expect. It was neat and orderly, with a place for every material she might need to do her art. There were pencils, pens, brushes, markers, papers, all in their assigned places. On the wall hung some of her most recent work, a series based on tools. Small in size, they were precisely rendered as well as colorful. The room's one window let in bright natural light while also providing a view of the canal below, adding grace and calm to the already pleasant environment.

Not only was her workspace ordered, but so were her literary tastes. She had first encountered Dickinson when she was at boarding school in the 9th grade. "One of the requirements of the school was that we attend church on Sundays." When she objected, her advisor said "You are not Emily Dickinson." This was her first contact with the poet but certainly not her last. Dickinson became a country to be explored, not only in words but in visual imagery as well.

To the artist, the dearth of biographical detail empowered her "to paint [Dickinson] with my own colors, creating a personage somewhat to my desired outlines." Fitz-Rapalje's Emily is "a firm and stubborn character, determined to protect her cre-

ative self," a quality she hopes will carry through in her art.

In *Paper Works*, a series of six pieces, the artist addresses how the poems have been changed and altered by editors, forced into a new form more palatable to popular tastes rather than the form in which Dickinson herself had left them. With the *Paper Works* series, Fitz-Rapalje prompts us to consider Dickinson's feelings towards these alterations. Thus, she portrays the poet as reacting in "pain" to "the mutilations of some of her letters, the erasures of her written feelings for her sister-in-law . . . and the substitution of never-imagined words – her own being erased."

Even more disturbing were "the sentimental titles . . . the punctuation," all changed "to fit the poetic style at the time." This misreading and mishandling of the poet's own words became the catalyst for *Paper Works*: image after image of crumpled sheets of paper, pages with words cut out, the tossed and cast-aside pages that speak loudly of the poet's discontent and dissatisfaction as she sees what has been done to her work.

Using photographs of the original scraps as a springboard for the series, Fitz-Rapalje "jumped off an image." Each work appears on a black background, and as we look through the series, the crumpled pages pirouette, twist and turn in dance-like movements, creating sculptural poses highlighted by the contrasting light and dark. The sheets, several of which have writing on them, fold, open, and close, their contours paralleling the poet's concern for space and placement of words and marks on the page. Their contortions suggest the anger that "the ghost Dickinson" might have felt had she seen the "mutilated form or her written words." Agreeing with Su-



Photo Credit for all images: Fitz Acheson

Top, *Paper Work I*, representing "One Sister have I in the House" (Fr5), scribbled over to obliterate her feelings for Susan Dickinson, perhaps by Mabel Loomis Todd and/or Austin Dickinson. Above, *Paper Work II*, letter desiccated by a knife for the same purpose

san Howe's reading of Dickinson's poems as visual productions, the artist sees the scraps as "miniature canvases." Thus even

Visualizing Dickinson

the punctuation – such as the dash – is as meaningful a mark as the letters or words. To Fitz-Rapalje, Emily "is truly the dash."

The last in the series, "Paper Works VI," references the well-documented and widely-known Dickinson forgery that the Jones' Library purchased from Sotheby's Auction House for \$21,000. Created by master forger and convicted criminal Mark Hofmann, the poem was accepted for some time as



Paper Work VI, representing a poem made up by Mark Hofmann and forged to appear as if written by Dickinson – crushed and cut to ribbons.

Dickinson's own but was later proven to be a fraud. "Paper Works VI" depicts a page cut into eight strips that line up side by side. Some are straight while others curl and bend like graceful ballerinas as they bow. "The torn pages in the frame ARE the forged poem," or the artist's "rendition" of it, making the work even more meaningful.

In addition to the *Paper Works* series, the artist created several drawings based on certain poems: "In falling Timbers buried" (Fr447), "An awful Tempest mashed the air" (Fr224), and "The Soul selects her own Society" (Fr409). Rendered in graphite, black and white, no larger than 5" by

4", they are dark, brooding, and haunted. The drawing representing "The Soul selects her own Society –" has a small triangular island of white which sits near the center, reminding us of the persona's decision to "enisle" herself, "to let her inside needs rule her outer self." Thus, cut off from society and its demands, she decides who or what is important and lives within and by herself. The drawing visually and viscerally allows us to feel the solitude the persona has elected.

Another work, inspired by a photograph in Jen Bervin and Marta Werner's *The Gorgeous Nothings*, is a small oil painting of a pencil that the poet sent to the Bowles' family. A charming, delightful artifact, it pro-

voles us to think about the many words that poured from the tip of such a small implement. Perhaps it was just such a pencil that the poet carried in her pocket in case it was needed to catch the words as they flew by.

What about future plans? Will the artist continue her work with Dickinson? "I would like to do a larger series of drawings of her poems. My ideas become more and more abstract as I read some of the admired poems. Some of them draw their own pictures." As the artist lists these poems, she admits that rather than talk about the poems, "I become eager to pick up a drawing pencil." And so, with artist still thinking, we leave, eager to see what more will come from their creative partnership.

Judgment at Amherst

Mary Landis Hampson (1895-1988)

In this place – a public dining room – she defended Sister Sue and Martha, and leveled charges at Mabel and her academic daughters.

She was not just the keeper of the flame, as my colleague stamped her. Oh, she was that, no doubt (as I fully agreed at the time), but

she was something more, too. She was the torch that scorched truth to its essence, burning to an imagined crisp all liars, living or utterly

dead. Harriet Waterman, Alfred Leete Hampson, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, Sister Sue, Ned and Gib, Lavinia, Austin, Gib and the Squire – Davey

Todd and Millicent, too – always deciding, this one goes to pot and that one not. Like Jeanne d'Arc, set free from ordinary flames, set loose on

her orderly executioners and justifying captors. All this said and done in the time it takes to make and serve her a fresh turkey club at the Lord Jeff.

George Monteiro, Nov. 4, 1988

In the following two essays, while describing quite different ways of reading and understanding Emily Dickinson's work, the two authors, Ellen Harrington and Barbara Dana, both find themselves writing in imagined versions of the poet's voice. They both, moreover, at one stage take as a point of departure works of late-19th-century French Realist painting, one by Jules Adolphe Breton and one by Jules Bastien-Lepage, depicting female figures discerning distant spiritual voices. These essays thus represent two of the many ways of translating a reader's response to Dickinson's voice into another form.

Interior Emily

A Short Excursion through Archetype as a "Fix"

By Ellen Harrington

Opiate fixes? Not for me and presumably not for Emily . . . who did nonetheless express familiarity with the idea that "Narcotics cannot still the Tooth / That nibbles at the soul –" (J501) Philosophers, sages and scholars have put forward many names and ideas to tame that which nibbles at a soul.

Media platform fixes? Not for Emily but I am awash in a sea of media fixes. One shore finds me and the stroke of my ideas dragging in the wake of the slower talk and eye-contact world of yore, and on the other shore I am swamped by a riptide of binary code expression. I can usually catch my breath on the occasional isle of conversation or books between shores.

But fixes? Who does not long for a fix – a reprieve from circumstances or relief from long-term retrenchment resulting from a changed course. What could be a fix? Possibly something that lightens the spirit. Something that is true and free and does no harm. What did Emily do when faced with gaps of meaning that yawned into her armored circumference, a circumference being layers of influence from family and friends that encompass existence? A thread of truth for Emily's time and ours can be found through a timeless look at how people evolve and endure through self-discovery and self-expression.

I believe that from our individual circumferences, we can identify visual or auditory archetypes. Archetypes that function as portals to the Eternal or the Infinite, as Emily would say. And once we are in the presence of archetypes, they nudge us toward self-understanding.

An archetype symbolizes a typical character – a hero or mentor; an action – a birth or death; or a situation – a journey or a setting that is a common, recurring representation of a global pattern of human nature that evokes emotion. It triggers a feeling similar to our response to comfort food. It starts a conversation with yourself. It

may start you mulling as if someone asked a question like what reminds you of your value? Your uniqueness? Archetypes represent one aspect of our wholeness. We pick different images to reinforce our thinking about wholeness. Through our archetypes the Infinite speaks to us in our own language.

One path toward archetypes and self-discovery may be through journaling. As far as we know, Emily did not keep a journal or a diary, so labeled in the nomenclature of her Victorian age. After reading her poetry, some of it over and over, and reading her letters, I decided that I would write a journal as if I were she. I wanted to parse the provender of her words for evidence of archetypal patterns. I looked for proof or at least strong confirmation that the patterns connecting us are eternal – universal in feminine consciousness.

My idea of a journal grew and became a book – a journal dialogue between two modern, forward-thinking women, Emily and me, from our respective centuries. I let her declare reflective responsibility for her life. I gave her an urge to record her reflections in simple, declarative prose. I allowed her a more relaxed attitude compared to the spare intensity of the poetry in the midst of which she stood firm, if apart, from the neighborly conventions of the Amherst tribe. Half of the fictive journal written in her voice reveals many (usually real but occasionally embellished) details about Emily, the woman, the writer, and the cutting-edge thinker. The other half of the journal is memoir style in my voice. We talk back and forth about what concerns us.

Emily wrote:

The Infinite a sudden Guest
Had been assumed to be –
But how can that stupendous come
which never went away? (J1309)

What stupendousness guided Emily in her circumference? What guarded her spirit? Her mental health? What archetype might she have named, then acknowledged for its power, its energy, its vibes, as reality that could be invoked to help maintain ethical thinking and moral choices?

As I considered Emily and archetype, I was showered with butterflies, flowers, places, seasons, birds, bees, the sun, the wind, trees, people, insects which in turn she wove into words about heaven, love, death, heart and life. From this immersion in themes it seemed that Emily found her sustaining Infinite in seasons and the natural world. Perhaps her garden in particular. Perhaps in the fields and forests of her roaming.

"Here is a little forest, Whose leaf is ever green; Here is a brighter garden, Where not a frost has been; In its unfading flowers I hear the bright bee hum . . ." (J2) These lines adapted from a letter to her brother Austin show her early attachment to the natural world. It became a long standing attachment rooted deeply in her psyche. Her garden archetype was tended attentively by words as gently as the plots in her backyard and the pots shelved in her conservatory.

In one of the journal sections I wrote for Emily, she is contemplating a leaf.

"Look at a leaf – any leaf. Perhaps one greening as it curls from a cracked winter casing or a leaf that has been around, knows all there is to know about its sphere on plant or tree, or a leaf ready to be elsewhere, a dry carbon shard pushed off by the next generation forming behind. Any leaf. Compact little ovals edged by defensive small serrations, or spiky maple leaves or the lobular convolution of elms. Any leaf and I am calmed. I hold a life-cycle, a natural span, a journey whose staunch comfort never palls. My lungs slow. My shoulders ease. Composure spreads and smooths out worry. From seconds spent with a leaf,

I am returned useful, indeed, valued in my circumference.

In the seasons of all climes, thoughts of mortality mingle amid the cycle of regeneration, growth, decay and dormancy. Some dormancy continues to death.

All that is on earth for a sojourn as a recognizable entity – an insect, an animal, all manner of herbage, a human – returns the remnants of itself to reform in continuing creation. My eternal spirit notwithstanding – a corner of me cries not to molder in the dregs of decay. One of legions become earth. The record of my words in stacked small bundles will no doubt follow suit."

In close association to my interpretation of Emily's archetype, her own words appear to support my reasoning regarding Mother Nature as a possible archetype for her.

Through those old Grounds of memory,
The sauntering alone
Is a divine intemperance
A prudent man would shun. (J1753)

Strolling her grounds of memory, Emily became imprudent and shunned. She shunned the comfort of corporate, communal rote rehearsals that are such ideal hiding places. This route takes real courage and independence of thought. For me leaving the familiarity of those places is like standing on a hilltop with a cool breeze burning over me with the top layer of my skin removed. Exposure. This pushes revisions of thought and opinion to escape the scouring hilltop breeze. Emily resolutely contemplated her state of being, and left her depth of expression exhibited in writing. For those who have ears to hear. Bolstered by the support of her archetype, she channeled survival into poetry. She became a pioneer of the interior landscape.

Blossoms will run away,
Cakes reign but a Day,
But Memory like Melody
is pink Eternally. (J1578)

Nature images, ever present in Emily's writing, illustrate the bloomy Eternal of her archetype. An archetype reinforced by access points through memory. Archetypes function like a trellis from which wobbly tendrils of tender internal structure can emerge. For example, Emily engaged, consciously or not, with her archetypes as needed to assist with the drifting perspective inherent in isolation. We can let art or sound stand-in for all the places where old-style religion, politics, or community let us down. Internal structure grows stronger in proportion to decreasing dependence on externals.

The archetype of a solitary woman dropped into my consciousness in 1973 by way of a painting called *Song of the Lark* by Jules Breton. I did not recognize its value as an archetype at the time. I knew that I had stopped in front of that painting for a long time and its image was on the one postcard

I bought in the Museum store. Breton painted a young field worker in 1884, barefoot in dirt, who pauses to listen as larks wheel high in the dazzle of summer sunset sky. For more than



Print of *Song of the Lark*, by Jules Breton (1884), reproduced in black and white by The Perry Pictures, 1939.

40 years this image has impacted me equally from its postcard beginning, to its snapshot I took for better color, and to its sadly dull-colored poster form. Its presence reminds me whether I like it or not, to pause. To pay attention to what's around me. To make something from nothing. To remember that the external situation may not be the problem. I can change my relationship to it.

The reorienting or grounding effect of an archetype keeps one in the vicinity of Goodness – the solace of the Infinite. Glimpsing a connection to the Eternal or the Infinite through the portal of a poem, a piece of prose, a painting or music enriches and toughens movement in our own circumference. Collectively done, this could lead to a more gracious and inclusive society. A society eager for experiments with meaning conducted anew

with each generation. Which leads me to ponder about the core spirit of the current age.

So, a fix? The challenge, for anyone interested in an excursion with archetypes, involves discovery and acknowledgment of a personal archetype. Start with yourself is my counsel and embark on the process of this journey. Don't look too hard, no force is needed – just say to yourself, “hmmm . . . I wonder what my archetype is like” and wait for it to reveal itself. Like mine, it may be an image that has been around for years and just putting “archetype” into your vocabulary may lead to an ah-hah fairly immediately. The ah-hah is important. Meeting your archetype is like encountering a kindred spirit, maybe in a crowd, maybe in a museum, maybe in memory. If the meeting is not accompanied by breath catching of some degree, or a small need to linger, then pleasure is present but not an archetype. Start with one archetype, tap its internal salve and let the reality of its positive neural energy work on you.

In her circumference, Emily survived. I am not sure I would say that she flourished. She had the persistence and familiarity of routine to steady her amid grief and isolation. Even with the crown of wife denied, or an admiring bog, she managed to elude the lure of the opiates while shunning convention. She did not succumb to the group think of her era, was not concerned with what the neighbors might think. As long as greenery was at hand, she muddled along at the very time when a torrent of illness and loss tore through her household during her last years.

If I were to put words in Emily's mouth – and I gave her thousands in her fictive journal – I would say that through a nature archetype, she unearthed and admitted to her circumference an ensoulment that nourished her. It was an abiding Goodness beyond all contrived societal divisions. A taproot of Goodness held in common among self-aware citizens of the universe. Emily can have the last words:

Joy to have perished every step –
to Compass Paradise . . .

Till the infinite Aurora
in each other's eyes. (J788 & J925)

Ellen Harrington has an MFA from Hamline University and a deeply-rooted identification with Emily Dickinson. The “Leaf” paragraph is excerpted from her book “ROW WITH ME & EMILY D. – Two Modern Women – 120 Years Apart – Reflect on Identity, Isolation, Housekeeping, Death, Gardens and Awakening.” The book is in the process of finding a publishing home.

Warriors of Two Landscapes: Emily Dickinson and Joan of Arc

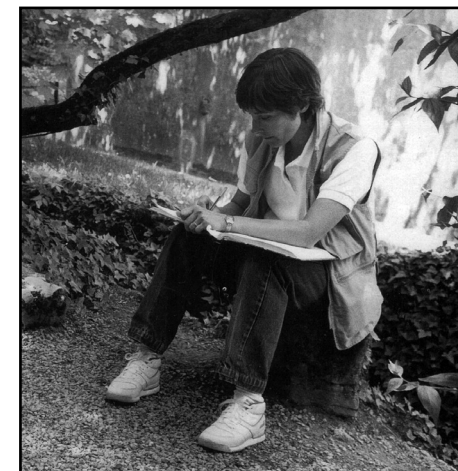
By Barbara Dana

I recently visited the Homestead, where I was surprised to see the following quote of Lavinia Dickinson on exhibit: “I have had a ‘Joan of Arc’ feeling about Emilie's (sic) poems from the first.” So have I, Vinnie!

One may not immediately think of Emily Dickinson and Joan of Arc as similar. Emily Dickinson lived in 19th-century New England and spent much of her time in her bedroom, writing poetry. Joan of Arc was an illiterate peasant girl, living in 15th century France, who at the age of sixteen left home to drive the English armies out of her country. Dickinson's mission took a different form, and like Joan of Arc, she pursued it to the end.

These two souls are ever with me. Even in the darkest times, when my mind is caught in some bleak nether region from which I feel I will never escape, I know they are there. Why of all the souls, in all of time, are these two my guardian angels? Is there a common thread?

Based on my historical novels *Young Joan* and *A Voice of her Own: Becoming Emily*



Barbara Dana in 1978: writing *Young Joan* in Joan's Garden.

Dickinson, along with portraying both women on stage, I will explore how the combination of scholarly research and the artist's sensory process offers answers to these questions – below the surface, “where the meanings are.”

To fight aloud, is very brave –
But gallanter, I know
Who charge within the bosom
The Cavalry of Wo – (Fr138)

Warriors each, one “fought aloud” – the other “within the bosom.”

Jeanne d'Arc was born in 1412 into a peasant family in the small village of Domrémy. Not literally part of France at the time, it was nonetheless invaded by the English. In the summer of her thirteenth year, Joan heard a voice in her garden. It spoke her name, nothing more. She believed the voice to be that of St. Michael. The voice was soon joined by the voices of St. Margaret and St. Catherine. They told her to be good and go to church. Over the next three years, the messages grew more complex. She was to drive the English out of France, end the war that had been ravaging her country for nearly a hundred years, and restore France's rightful king to the throne. Joan did exactly as her voices instructed. She left home at sixteen, drove the English out of France, turned the tide of the Hundred Years War and restored the rightful king to the throne. At nineteen she was captured by the Burgundians (French forces loyal to the enemy), sold to the English, tried for witchcraft and heresy, convicted, and burned at the stake. Roughly five hundred years later, she was canonized a saint.

My study of Joan of Arc came before my study of Emily Dickinson. My first destination was Domrémy. I slowly approached Joan's stone house, with its slanted roof and

small windows. Inside the ceiling was low, the floor, dirt. I imagined Joan as a child, sharing the crowded space with her parents, three brothers and a sister. Like the Dickinsons, hers was a closely bonded family.

In back of the house was the garden, where I sat one day, working on a chapter of *Young Joan*. “I was working in Father's garden,” I wrote, “when the church bell rang” – and at that exact moment the church bell rang! The hair stood up on my arms.

Mornings I watched the mist above the narrow river Meuse and the light on the fields where Joan sometimes looked after the sheep.

I spent time in her church. I went to the cities of her many battles and to Reims Cathedral, where Joan stood beside the Dauphin as he was crowned King. In Rouen, I climbed the winding stone steps in her prison tower to her tiny cell and the instruments of torture. The square in Rouen held echoes of her terrible death.

Back in New York, at the Metropolitan Museum, I sat in front of the glass case containing Joan's helmet. I pictured wearing it myself and thought it would probably fit. I spent hours in front of the painting by Jules Bastien-Lepage, where Joan stands in her garden, eyes wide in deep connection with the magnificently radiant figures of her saints behind her.

Joan excelled at spinning, so I spent a day studying how to spin. I can still feel the wool between my fingers, slightly greasy and, oddly, at the same time dry. It is said that she found a sword by divine direction, buried near a church. She never used it to kill or injure the enemy, but held it high as she led the French troops into battle. While in rehearsal for the play *Joan of Lorraine*, I made her



Joan of Arc, Jules Bastien-Lepage, 1879, www.metmuseum.org

sword out of two pieces of wood and carried it with me.

With Dickinson, my sensory study began at The Emily Dickinson Museum. Light filled, spacious and comfortable, with its beautiful lawn, large trees, shrubs, and colorful flowers – I could imagine why Emily might never have wanted to leave. I counted the long stone steps (five) going down to the garden. I wanted to visit her house by the cemetery on Pleasant St., but the Mobil gas station had disrespectfully made that impossible. I pondered how she might have felt as a child, living so close to the dead, especially at a time when consumption was claiming the lives of so many friends, neighbors and relatives.

One winter I rented a room in Amherst, taking only a pad, a pencil, my computer and my dog. For several days I wrote, ate, slept and walked with my dog. I wanted to experience a narrow life and to feel what it was like in Amherst in the snow. That spring at the Frost Library I spent time with her Latin book (“Due Monday – How mean” scrawled in a margin near the cartoon of the man with the large nose). I was reminded of my own days studying Latin in school. As I sat with a lock of Emily’s hair, I noticed how much it looked like my own hair as a child. We were

bonding. She was becoming more real.

My first clue to Dickinson’s spunk came when I saw a drawing of Carlo. This bear-like creature could not have been the close sixteen-year companion of a mere delicate hothouse flower! This dog’s owner was ready for a good time, well pleased with an enormous, shedding, drooling playmate. I spent days with a Newfoundland dog, getting to know its lumbering and gentle ways. I also learned how to make an herbarium. It was hard to start the pressing, as the flowers must die quickly.

Emily may have felt the same about the passing of “nature’s people,” as indicated in a letter to Katie Sweetser (L668): “I trust your garden was willing to die. I do not think that mine was – it perished with beautiful reluctance, like an evening star –” Perhaps most thrilling was making several fascicles when I acted in *The Belle of Amherst*, each hand sewn with love.

For me, the most valuable written information about these two women is contained in their own words, *The Letters of Emily Dickinson* and *The Trial of Jeanne d’Arc*. Here one senses their likeness of spirit: wit, depth, simplicity, intelligence, self-respect, courage, and most importantly, an ability to listen to the voice of her own heart. Each possessed determination, faith, a sense of humor, intuition, integrity, a strong personal relationship to God, the ability to be alone, the ability to hold a secret, close girlfriends, a lack of accommodation to men, a rebellion against the feminine role of the time, a love of nature, a love of animals (except, in Emily’s case, cats), a love of friends and family, and a way of telling the truth – “slant”! Both fathers were town leaders and each (to varying degrees) opposed his daughter’s work. Neither Emily nor Joan was rewarded for her achievements during her lifetime.

Their message was simple and profound. Listen to the voice within – and follow! When Thomas Wentworth Higginson responded to the small number of poems sent to him by Dickinson in the spring of 1862, his response was not encouraging. Her verse was “spasmodic,” “uncontrolled,” her rhymes wrong. He took for mistakes what she had done on purpose. Her rhymes were meant to be slant, her verse experimental. Did she let go of her voice to achieve the “success” she might have had by changing her verses – changing her very self? “Thank you for the surgery,” she responded (L261), and went about writing in her own way, binding her poems in her own hand, keeping her work safe – and true. She was not about to lose herself.

Neither was Joan. For three years she listened to the awe-inspiring, incomprehensible, and terrifying directions from her saints, and as they requested, told no one. Like Dickinson, she held fast to the wisdom of her heart. “You can cut my head off,” Joan told her inquisitors, “I still won’t tell you that.”

Both faced enormous challenges. Joan’s challenges, being “aloud,” are obvious. Emily’s, “being within,” are less so – but many: the expected role of women at the time, near blindness, recurrent respiratory illnesses, frailty, and painful emotional issues. It has always seemed to me as if her nerve endings were outside her skin. At a time when there was no understanding of things like anxiety, depression, panic attacks, or agoraphobia, no therapy and no medication, these conditions must have been nearly insupportable. She could not stop fighting “the cavalry of Wo,” in a struggle to make sense of herself, of loss, of death, of immortality. Deeply perceptive, intrinsically wise, in touch with other levels of existence, there was a level of mystery about Emily – as there was with Joan.

If I can stop one Heart from breaking
I shall not live in vain (Fr982)

It’s my feeling that Dickinson meant this literally. If Joan had her sword as her instrument of bringing aid to those in need, Dickinson had her pen. “She knew her pen must

serve as her chief instrument of healing,” Jane Donahue Eberwein states. Polly Longworth contends, “There is sufficient evidence that Dickinson came to sense herself as God’s instrument” (as Joan did), “that she recognized her extraordinary talent to be His Gift, and that she saw her vocation, her ordained part to be the passing on the transmission of His word, his received truth, to the human hearts surrounding her. This she did unendingly in her poems and in countless letters of condolence to friends.”¹

Joan’s mission to console is evident in her responses to her inquisitors throughout the trial. When asked why God had sent her His Angel, she answered, “It was to help the good people of Orleans.” When asked what the Angel told her she answered, “He told me to come to the help of the King of France.” When asked if she thought she was doing wrong in taking male attire she answered, “It seems to me that it would be to the good of France.” When asked why she leapt from her prison tower her response was clear: “I leapt to go to the aid of many good people in need.”²

Another parallel is outlined in Dickinson’s words, “Tell all the truth but tell it slant –” (Fr1263). In Dickinson’s letter to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, she tells him: “You asked how old I was? I made no verse – but one or two – until this winter – Sir” (L261). Compare this “slant” truth to Joan’s response when asked if she knew if she was in God’s grace: “If I am not, may God put me there; and if I am, may God so keep me there.”

One woman was devoted to the Church, the other was not. But as I lived with them – in them – a deeper truth became clear: They shared a deep personal connection to God.

Mine – by the Right of the White Election! (Fr411)

A Joan of Arc way of looking at things!

So exactly how did my artist’s process contribute to uncovering the many parallels in these two seemingly different warriors? I think it was this: As I sought to discover what it might have felt like to be each of them, the feeling was the same. I felt simple, strong, daring, sometimes scared, never false. I felt compassionate, I felt impish, I felt true. Most importantly, I found myself following the words of one of Dickinson’s most favorite of all authors: “To thine own self, be true.”

In the following conversation, Emily speaks to us from her garden.

Not two weeks ago I was sitting beneath Father’s Oak and wondering at all God’s beauty – the trees and the flowers, the birds, the little stone upon the steps to the garden. How wondrous is Life upon this earth! How can Heaven be any better? It don’t make sense. Straightway, my mind came to all the suffering on earth, the fight “to hold the senses on,” Life is grand and terrible! But what of Heaven? Is it peaceful? Can one take a careless nap? I had no answer. Then, all at once, quick

as a beetle’s eye, there – at the bottom of the garden steps – stood a girl. It was none other than Joan of Arc! I could tell by her armor and because her face was true.

J: Hello, Emily.

E: Joan! I have heard much of you from Vinnie. She speaks often of your great courage, not to mention your unfortunate sojourn with those so-called ‘learned men’ of Paris.

J: They would not let me sleep!

E: How mean.

J: They kept pestering me with questions! “When did you first hear your Voices? How did you know they were real?” I saw them with my own eyes! I lived by their direction! I knew them! They did not! They did not understand me!

E: A common occurrence with men.

J: Over and over! The same questions! “Why do you refuse to wear a dress? Do you not wish to obey the church?”

E: What did you say to that?

J: God must come first!

E: A point well taken.

J: Indeed!

E: When I was a girl, my friend told me she stopped believing in God because her minister said her cat wouldn’t go to Heaven. She should have stopped believing in her minister!

J: Well said.

E: May I ask you a question? I hesitate as you have been asked so many.

J: Pass over that.

E: Was your awful death worth the price of your soul?

J: Yes.

E: I thought as much. Tell me. Is immortality true?

She was gone before I got my answer.

Notes

¹Eberwein, Jane Donahue “Where – Omnipresence – fly?” Calvinism as Impetus to Spiritual Amplitude. *EDJ*, 24.2; Longworth, Polly, “The Might of Human Love: Emily Dickinson’s Letters of Healing,” in *Wider than the Sky: Essays and Meditations on the Healing Power of Emily Dickinson*. Cindy MacKenzie and Barbara Dana, eds. Kent State, 2007.

²*The Trial of Jeanne d’Arc*. Translated by W.P. Barrett. Gotham House, Inc., 1932.

Barbara Dana is an author and actor. Her most recent books are *A Voice of Her Own: Becoming Emily Dickinson* and *Wider than the Sky: Essays and Meditations on the Healing Power of Emily Dickinson*, co-edited with Cindy Mackenzie. She is currently appearing as Emily Dickinson in William Luce’s *The Belle of Amherst*, in Canada and throughout the US.

Renée Bergland, Book Review Editor

Cristanne Miller, ed.
Emily Dickinson's Poems as She Preserved Them. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press: Harvard University Press, 2016. 845pp.

Reviewed by Páraic Finnerty

One reality that all readers of Emily Dickinson must accept is that because her poems were left in manuscript form at the time of her death, there will never be certainty about the form in which her “letter to the World” (Fr519) should be delivered. Did the poet ever intend her message to travel outside the selected society with which she shared her writings during her lifetime? At this point in the early twenty-first century, Dickinson readers can read her poems in an array of different print editions, including two three-volume variorums and two reading editions, and also in manuscript reproductions, accessible through facsimile editions and online digital archives. Do we need a new print edition of Dickinson’s poems? Yes, I think we do. Despite Ralph W. Franklin’s meticulous dating and ordering of Dickinson’s poems; his detailing of line, page, stanza breaks, word divisions, and variant words; and his delineation of the transmission and the publishing history of each poem in his Variorum edition (1998), his Reading edition (1999) made no substantial use of these discoveries. Perhaps Franklin felt that a general reader was unprepared to tackle some of the complexities of Dickinson’s writing practice and her manuscript page.

In contrast, Cristanne Miller has produced an edition that suggests she trusts that Dickinson readers will be inspired by, interested in, and able to engage with some of the realities of Dickinson’s writings as part of their reading and interpretation of her work. To my mind, this valuable, timely, and wonderful piece of scholarship will make a lasting contribution to Dickinson studies. Perhaps more importantly, this edition offers all Dickinson readers, including general readers and students, new opportunities for appreciating her poems, the patterns of her practice as a writer, and the various physical and material states in which she preserved her work. Miller’s edition offers five significant improvements on previous editions:

First, rather than organizing Dickinson’s 1789 poems chronologically as previous editors have done, Miller assembles them in five groupings that privilege the poems Dickinson kept in her possession and the various states in which she retained them: “The Fascicles,” “Unbound Poems,” “Loose Poems,” “Poems Transcribed by Others,” and “Poems Not Retained.” These groupings underscore the general trajectory of Dickinson’s writing career and her overarching practice as a writer, as well as various anomalies and inconsistencies in her procedures. The poems in “The Fascicles” section suggest that from 1858 to 1865, Dickinson predominantly copied her poems onto folded sheets and stacked and bound these sheets into booklets, destroying earlier drafts and circulating relative-

ly few of these poems. Miller’s other groupings underline that after 1866, although Dickinson did copy some poems onto folded sheets without binding or stacking them (“Unbound Poems”), she usually wrote poems on individual sheets and even on scraps of paper, envelopes, drafts of letters, and wrapping paper, and retained drafts (“Loose Poems). During this later period, she circulated a greater portion of the poems she wrote in letters and appeared not to have always retained a copy herself (“Poems Not Retained”). Theories and statements about individual Dickinson poems or her innovations as a poet must on some level take into account these two separate periods and the specificity of her overriding writerly procedures in each.

Second, within the limits and standardization of print, Miller presents readers with Dickinson’s revisions, beginning in the early 1860s, to some of the manuscript poems she preserved, for example, her inclusion of alternative words and her cancellation and underlining of others. The edition makes apparent the extent of Dickinson’s alterations to the poems she placed on bound or unbound folded sheets, but also to other poems that remained as loose sheets. Owing to Miller’s editorial choices, a general reader now has the opportunity to read “All overgrown by cunning moss” (Fr146), a poem about a visit to Charlotte Brontë’s grave in Haworth, as it appears in fascicle 7: with five stanzas and “or” placed between stanzas 3 and 4. Whereas Johnson’s reading edition prints stanzas 1, 4,

and 5, emphasizing the poem’s assertion of this female writer’s transcendence of her earthly burial and entry into Heaven as “Brontë,” Franklin’s prints stanzas 1, 2, and 3, stressing the emptiness and loss the speaker experiences on visiting Brontë’s last resting place. Miller’s exhibition of the full poem and evocative “or” makes visible that the poem centers on an unresolvable tension between the despairing facts of death in the first three stanzas and the imagined triumph of literary and personal immortality in the final two. Such revision implies that Dickinson regarded the poems that she kept private as potentially open to adjustment and that a level of unfinishedness did not bother this working poet. The edition evidences the poet’s desire often to suspend finality and to keep possibilities open for alternative words, phrases, and punctuation. However, the lack of any such indeterminacy in the grouping “Poems Not Retained,” made up primarily of those poems that are extant because Dickinson’s correspondents preserved a copy, is indicative of the fact that when she circulated or went public with a poem, she produced, with very few exceptions, a fixed and finished poem.

Third, Miller’s edition is organized in such a way that readers are made aware at the bottom of the page or in an endnote the existence of variant versions of the poem Dickinson retained. This strategy is very important, for it brings to a reader’s attention which poems were circulated during Dickinson’s lifetime and which were probably never seen by any eyes but her own. While some of her most admired poems written prior to 1865, for example “My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun – ” (Fr764) and “I cannot live with You – ” (Fr706), remained confined to their place in the fascicles, others, such as “A Route of Evanescence” (Fr1489) and “How happy is the little stone” (Fr1570), dating from the late 1870s and early 1880s, were circulated in letters because Dick-

inson clearly thought these poems would impress some of her most significant correspondents.

Fourth, Miller provides readers with an edition that prioritizes those almost 1100 poems that Dickinson copied on folded sheets of paper, a preponderance of which she assembled into booklets. It is without doubt that this foregrounding of the poems she placed on individual sheets, bound or unbound, will inspire and facilitate new analysis, interpretation, and scholarship on thematic and other types of connections between these contiguous poems. Such fascicle scholarship, it is hoped, will continue in high standard set by the essays included in Paul Crumbley and Eleanor Elson Heginbotham’s collection *Dickinson’s Fascicles: A Spectrum of Possibilities* (2014).

Finally, the most important contribution Miller’s edition makes and that which differentiates it from other available editions is the clarifying annotations she provides. Miller’s notes show Dickinson engaging with, quoting from, and alluding to the Bible and Shakespeare, as well as to the works of contemporary writers such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Browning, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Alfred Tennyson. Miller makes a strong case for Dickinson as a far more allusive writer than had been previously thought and as a highly educated, voracious reader who had a keen interest in historical and contemporary events, local, national, and global locations, and natural and scientific phenomena. Not only will these notes prove invaluable for all readers of Dickinson, but some of the fascinating echoes Miller has identified point to new ways of thinking about individual poems. For example, in her note for “One need not be a chamber – to be Haunted,” Miller writes that the poem may evoke Harriet Beecher Stowe’s reflection in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1851-1852), “a human soul

is an awful ghostly, unquiet possession. . . . What a fool is he who locks his door to keep out spirits, who has in his own bosom a spirit he dares not meet alone.” Suddenly it becomes difficult to read the poem’s use of external Gothic effects to delineate the more horrific nature of internal terror without thinking of the specters of slavery and race.

Not seeking to mirror or replicate Dickinson’s manuscripts, Miller acknowledges other features of Dickinson’s manuscripts that cannot be rendered into print and points readers to the wonderful digitized and facsimile editions of Dickinson’s writings where they can view and judge as significant or incidental Dickinson’s shaping and placement of letters and words, and dashes that are long, short, high, and low, and slant in various directions. Miller’s edition uses, supplements, and corrects Franklin’s editorial work to offer readers a print version that highlights the order and material state of the poems she retained; the poems that remained private and those that were publicly disseminated in letters; and her common practice as a writer and that which remains baffling about her techniques. Miller’s edition will prove an essential resource for its intended audience and will create and open new lines of scholarly enquiry into the provocative order and disorder in which Dickinson’s preserved her poems, as well as into her engagement with her literary, cultural, and social milieu.

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The *Bulletin* welcomes notices of all Dickinson-related books, including those published outside the U.S.
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Jennifer L. Leader
Knowing, Seeing, Being: Jonathan Edwards, Emily Dickinson, Marianne Moore, and the American Typological Tradition. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016. 240pp.

Reviewed by Brandon Boudreault

Critical projects attempting to situate the life and writing of Emily Dickinson in the cultural, social, and intellectual spheres of her time have become increasingly important for contemporary scholarship's ability to metabolize new ways of understanding Dickinson's poetry. More importantly, though, these critical undertakings have allowed scholars to establish kindred relationships between Dickinson and writers, thinkers, and social topics from different time periods and aesthetic veins. Such is the case in Jennifer L. Leader's *Knowing, Seeing, Being: Jonathan Edwards, Emily Dickinson, Marianne Moore, and the American Typological Tradition*. The book is divided into three sections—one per author—with two chapters on Edwards but three each for Dickinson and Moore. Beginning with the eighteenth-century Calvinist theologian, Leader expertly develops the historical atmosphere and interpretive nuances of the hermeneutics of typology as it runs through Edwards. In the first of two chapters in the section on Edwards, Leader argues for a reconsideration of Edwards's "typological imagination" in relation to the "American literary heritage" (33).

In the opening chapters for both Dickinson and Moore, Leader lays out a brief, though detail-rich, introduction that establishes a connection between each poet and the typological tradition. Leader reminds us early in the first Dickinson chapter that her "consider-

ations of contemporaneous literature, science, and philosophy took place not in a primarily secular milieu but in an intensely religious one" (62). Through rigorous historical research, Leader reconstructs the relationships between the pastors Dickinson would have heard, the schoolbooks she would have read, the books found in the Dickinson library, and Dickinson's own love of science and nature. While Leader enters into already-occurring conversations about Dickinson's religious life, her research relies more heavily on the primary sources that surrounded Dickinson in nineteenth-century Amherst. With this deep historical research, presented in lucid prose spotted with fascinating particulars, Leader persuasively argues that it was the Reformed hermeneutic tradition post-Edwards along with Dickinson's "command of the literal, moral, and typological senses of interpretation that she gleaned from her Amherst upbringing and education, [that] continually fueled her religious imagination" (77).

The final two chapters of Dickinson's section contain intricate close readings that draw extensively on the same kind of robust historical research found in the previous chapters. Leader first explores the ways Dickinson critiqued and adopted different hermeneutical modes while simultaneously relying heavily "on the Reformed hermeneutic assumptions of knowing and seeing, revelation and perception" (106). After setting up a historical framework that situates Dickinson within the so-called "paper wars," Leader offers poems that show Dickinson contemplating the way language struggles to provide a faithful representation of nature. Leader meditates on Dickinson's focus poems for several paragraphs and sometimes pages, which allows for a greater meshing of her reading and argument, the historical context, and the poem. As one moves through

the close readings of Dickinson, though, there is a conspicuous absence: there is not a great deal said about the form of the poems. Leader does occasionally mention or briefly allude to a formal element such as the spatial play between the signifier and the signified in "Perception of an Object costs" ("likened to the gap between heaven and earth" [93]); however, she does not linger.

In the second chapter on Dickinson, Leader focuses on the role typological hermeneutics plays in Dickinson's understanding of the relationship between nature, spirituality, and the self. Here Leader relies on Emmanuel Levinas's notion of "the Other in the Same" to "examine Dickinson's considerations of how such an alienated identity might occupy the uncomfortable gap between the now and the not yet, between mortality and eternity" (109). Leader's readings here are more firmly grounded in the poems themselves, with less of a historical bent and a more philosophical context that draws on Emerson in addition to Levinas. One of Leader's most compelling claims in this chapter, and perhaps in the book itself, is that "[t]racing the typological threads in her poetry suggests ways in which Dickinson as poet avoids a number of uncomfortable either/or dichotomies" (125). Leader's work makes a convincing case for this possibility. Indeed, *Knowing, Seeing, Being* offers a rich historical recontextualization of Dickinson's poetry as well as new answers to age-old questions about Dickinson in her time and place.

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Michael C. Cohen
The Social Lives of Poems in Nineteenth-Century America. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. 296pp.

Reviewed by Claudia Stokes

We can chart the trends and fads of the literary academy by the changing fortunes of American poetry, as it rises and falls in critical esteem. The interpretive methods of New Criticism made poetry for decades a centerpiece of the classroom and the scholarly monograph, but the rise of poststructuralism and then New Historicism caused poetry to recede from view. However, after a quarter century of inattention and neglect, poetry is suddenly hot again, an ascent heralded by Michael Cohen's new book, which is a capacious and wide-ranging study of nineteenth-century American poetry.

At the center of Cohen's new study is an unspoken rebuttal of two longstanding disciplinary assumptions. First, Cohen takes implicit aim at the New Historicist perception of poetry as a socially aloof literary register, standing in aesthetic, formal isolation from contemporary social contexts and consumed in private, contemplative repose. As Cohen amply illustrates, poetry in the American nineteenth century was nothing of the sort, but it was instead an acutely social literary mode, both engineered to manufacture social encounters among readers and embroiled in innumerable social contexts. Second, Cohen also implicitly deflates the august status of poetry, which, thanks to modernism and the New Critics, was long associated with an intellectual elite and presumed to require expert knowledge. On the contrary, Cohen argues that nineteenth-century poems often assiduously evade categories of literariness and instead require different ways of reading than the literary methods of interpretation and appraisal

scholars typically employ. In particular, Cohen argues that nineteenth-century poems often require an attention to the sociability and relational uses of poetry in this era, as poems activated affiliation, sympathy, and networks. Poetry, he argues, was not so much read in the nineteenth century as it was used, employed by such diverse figures as lowly ballad-mongers, political activists, and academic folklorists to forge social interaction and, in effect, to function as a textual, verse equivalent of today's digital social network.

Cohen's study is composed of six chapters that examine some of the more topical expressions of poetry's sociability in the nineteenth century, among them the ballad, the abolitionist poem, and the postbellum minstrel song. Through highly-detailed, exactly-researched case studies, Cohen shows the centrality of poetry to American social and political life in the nineteenth century, as poems were exchanged, circulated, and collected as a proxy or pretext for other forms of social interaction. Amid the book's wide-ranging study of various forms and eras, two recurrent threads run throughout: the ballad and John Greenleaf Whittier. In the case of the ballad, Cohen ably demonstrates how this populist poetic form worked to forge connections among seemingly disparate readerships and communities, binding together, for instance, eighteenth-century British ballad collectors with nineteenth-century itinerant balladeers, rural Scots with African American choral groups, and poetry with newspapers. With its complex history and freighted associations, the ballad neatly encapsulates Cohen's larger argument about the capacity of poetry to participate in and generate social relations across time and space.

Cohen uses Whittier's varied literary career as the study's organizing frame,

beginning with Whittier's remembrances of the itinerant rural balladeers of his childhood and moving toward the late-life valedictory celebrations that signaled the close of a crucial chapter in American literary and political history. Along the way, Cohen examines Whittier's career as an abolitionist poet and a balladeer himself, gracefully using Whittier to give shape and order to a far-ranging study. The larger history of American poetic sociability, Cohen suggests, is evident in the career and literary corpus of this popular and often overlooked American poet.

Cohen is a careful, nimble writer inclined toward subtlety rather than overstatement. However, Cohen might have done well to include an epilogue examining the larger intellectual and literary implications of his fine study. What does it tell us that poetry in the nineteenth century was so unapologetically social? How does this study cause us to adjust our understanding of literary modes of reading, of elite lyric forms, or some of the assumptions of the literary academy? Can we apply some of Cohen's findings to other literary forms, such as the novel, which also forged social affiliations and sympathies? If Cohen's arguments are transferrable to other literary registers and genres, what does that tell us? These lingering questions aside, Michael Cohen's new book constitutes an important contribution to American literary studies and to the field of American poetry in particular.

Claudia Stokes is Professor of English at Trinity University. She is the author of *The Altar at Home: Sentimental Literature and Nineteenth-Century American Religion* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014) and *Writers in Retrospect: The Rise of American Literary History, 1875-1910* (University of North Carolina Press, 2006). She is currently writing a book about literary unoriginality.

Mark Noble
American Poetic Materialism from Whitman to Stevens. Cambridge University Press, 2014. 241pp.

Review by Keith Mikos

Even in physics,” writes Ralph Waldo Emerson, “the material is degraded before the spiritual.” Sharing in Emerson’s spiritualist vision, Walt Whitman likewise asserts, “The smallest sprout shows there is really no death.” These two authors are frequently read together as torchbearers for American romantic idealism, emanating axioms and absolutes, privileging orphic wisdom to mechanical (read: soulless) empirical verification.

In *American Poetic Materialism from Whitman to Stevens*, Mark Noble offers an alternative reading, one that recasts these two iconic authors not as unwavering idealists, but rather as materialists writing at a time when that school of thought underwent extensive revisions in direct response to major developments in atomic science. Adding analyses of George Santayana and Wallace Stevens, Noble works out a lineage of American writers who borrowed significantly from cutting-edge models of the atom to rethink the physical and mental composition of the person. Questions that had guided these writers now guide Noble’s reading of them: “How exactly does one link the motions of atomic particles to the patterns of thought that govern our apprehension of the world?” and “[W]hat sort of poem do we require for making the collisions of particles correspond to the collisions of personas – or for observing the mind’s correlation with its own materials?”

Noble’s response draws on disciplines like philosophy, history, and science to demonstrate just how influential atomist models of the universe were for

his chosen authors. In chapters dedicated to each primary figure, the book makes a number of compelling connections: Whitman with organic chemistry, Emerson with electromagnetism (the “Oversoul” reconceived as “electricity!”), Santayana with Lucretius, and Stevens with quantum mechanics, particle physics, and Heisenberg. Just as intriguing is Noble’s primary critical approach, a theoretical framing device he terms “aporetic materialism,” in which conceptual gaps that have traditionally separated materialism and idealism are taken as dialectically productive instead of deadlocked by inherent contradiction. In line with atomist theory, which holds materiality itself as fundamentally unstable, this approach allows Noble to think through a number of truly complex philosophical problems, for example how the “building blocks” of physical substance become conscious through combination, crossing from insensate bits of stuff into human experience.

Such impasses appear throughout the study, and poetry, a form that thrives more often than it suffers from paradox, thus becomes an elevated critical space, where writers frequently confront the aporias that emerge when the person is broken down into its smallest constitutive parts. Despite the difficulty of its topics, the book is lucidly written and thoroughly argued, successfully explaining the many contours of philosophical materialism while updating its critical vocabulary. Noble’s research will certainly contribute to the scholarship of these writers, particularly regarding the always stimulating exchange between science and the humanities, while instructing readers on the difficulty of today’s debates on materialism.

Indeed, Noble may have buried the lead by not putting “aporetic materialism” in the title. To me the work is somewhat misleading as it appears less interested in

“poetic” materialism and more in tracking how a few different poets fashioned materialist concepts that have been thus far under-acknowledged. That poetry will take a backseat to theory is signaled by the fact that the book doesn’t make a substantial assessment of a single stanza until chapter two, after about fifty pages of introducing and qualifying aporetic materialism.

While Noble persuasively demonstrates that these authors were conceptually invested in materialist thinking and the productive potential of its consequent aporias – which is enough to make those interested in the topics interested in the book – Dickinson scholars will likely expect more in the way of poetic analysis in a scholarly work that has “Whitman” and “Stevens” in the title. In short, this is a fantastic work of academic philosophy; it should be packaged as such.

Readers familiar with recent trends covering the literary appropriation of scientific concepts and the negotiations of scale in fiction – two topics readily recognized in Dickinson scholarship – will find Noble’s book insightful, creative, and useful (his analysis of Lucretius’s “swerving atoms” is notably rich). Considering her intense interest in science and things very small, her playful use of paradox, her juxtapositions of the physical world with spiritual belief, and the problems involved with her material manuscripts, we might even ask: how could this book not include Dickinson?

Keith Mikos teaches English at DePaul University. His teaching and research engages questions of technology and the transatlantic exchange, and the history of speculative philosophy. He is working on a book-length study of Dickinson that addresses textual materialism, science, and the question of scale.

PREFACE to *Emily Dickinson: a visão irônica do mundo* by Carlos Daghljan

By George Monteiro, a translation from the Portuguese

*Why Floods be served to Us – in Bowls –
I speculate no more –*

Emily Dickinson, *Poems* (1896)

Maturity is all.” I invoke this motto of wisdom to honor the author of this spot-on study of Emily Dickinson’s visionary poetry. Its publication in the years of his



Cover design for *Emily Dickinson: a visão irônica do mundo*, by Candido Portinari. Portinari (1903-1962) is considered one of Brazil’s greatest painters of the modern era. Among his many notable works are murals for the United Nations building (*Guerra e Paz*) and for the Hispanic Reading Room at the U.S. Library of Congress.

retirement from full time teaching testify to the author’s own approval of its contents, of his willingness to allow it, as Emily Dickinson ventured with her every poem, to make its own way in the world. And so, it will do so, and do so with great success.

Dickinson also wrote, without bravado or boast, that if “fame” were hers, she “could not escape” it. And, as the whole world knows, she did not. On the contrary, right from the outset, beginning with *Poems* (1890), she found her readers. And so needless was the book found to be, that her publishers followed it up the next year with a second volume and a third volume in 1896, as well as, in between, a two-volume selection of the poet’s sparkling, if often gnostic, letters.

There were nevertheless attacks on the poems for their unruly syntax and single-note regularity of structure and form from the conventional voices of authority on matters poetic (Thomas Bailey Aldrich of the *Atlantic Monthly* comes immediately to mind, as well as the British press at large). Of course, the poetry also had its powerful defenders, including, notably, William Dean Howells, widely regarded as the Dean of American Letters. And since then it’s been a rather steady, virtually uninterrupted climb, with scarcely more than a bump or two along the way toward the global preeminence she enjoys today.

Carlos Daghljan chose Emily Dickinson as the subject of what a latter-day countryman of Emily Dickinson’s might refer to as his second dissertation; characteristically he focused on irony in her poetry. (Those who know Carlos will not be surprised.) Since then he has delivered papers and published pieces that call attention to the unique virtues of Dickinson’s contributions to the world’s literature. He has been, as I, an American, like to call him, “Our Man in Brazil.” But of course he is more than that. I would be sadly remiss if I did not call attention to his on-going, long-standing bibliographic project devoted lovingly to the American poet of his predilection. He has quite simply taken as his task to search out on a widening basis translations of Dickinson poems into several other languages. By the way, if anyone knows of any Dickinson translations in an extra-terrestrial language, I’m sure it will delight Carlos to hear about them.

In the interim, the reader of this book will be richly rewarded when he takes up this insightful study of the ironic aspect of Emily Dickinson’s peerless poetry. He has earned the right to characterize his conclusion that “*a ironia, além de um modo de ver, era [para Emily Dickinson] um modo de ser.*” Irony as her preferred method and as the key to her *Weltanschauung* enabled this so-called Belle of Amherst to recognize, face, and encounter human experience as she found it.

Carlos Daghljan: 1938 – 2016

Daghljan, a well-known Brazilian scholar, died on Sept. 16, 2016. He would have been 79 on the first of November. Daghljan spent his career at the State University of São Paulo, and was a founding member of the Brazilian Association of University Professors of English. He published many articles and notes about Dickinson in his career, including two pieces for the old *Emily Dickinson Bulletin*, in the early 1970s, an essay in this publication in 1999, and a short article on translation in the *Emily Dickinson Journal* in 1997. Professor Monteiro’s profile, “Carlos Daghljan: Our Man in Brazil,” appeared in the May/June 2001 issue of the *Bulletin*, v13, #1.

New EDIS Board Member-at-Large

Sara Brock



Photo Credit: Waswa Mubanda

Sara Brock has been teaching English at Schreiber High School, in Port Washington, New York, since 2001.

She completed her doctorate at Teachers College, Columbia University, where she received the Walter Sindlinger Award for outstanding writing in the field of education. As an undergraduate, she studied English at Swarthmore.

Ms. Brock is a co-author of an academic book, *On Narrative Inquiry* (2011), and her poems have appeared in *English Journal*. She has also presented at several national conferences, including the Annual Convention of the National Council of Teachers of English.

At Schreiber, Ms. Brock has taught several electives for juniors and seniors – Creative Writing, World Literature, Expository Writing. Currently, in addition to standard ninth

and tenth grade English courses, she works with the STEPS alternative program, and helps juniors preparing for the Regents Exam.

Several years ago, in collaboration with a member of the art department, she introduced a new interdisciplinary elective, Art & Literature, and she received a Port Washington Education Foundation grant to produce a book that showcased their students' artwork and writing.

Recently, Thanhha Lai, a winner of the National Book Award for Young People's Literature, spent a full day in conversation with Ms. Brock's classes.

Prior to joining the faculty at Schreiber, Ms. Brock worked in book publishing and digital media. She also taught English in Santander, Spain. She lives in New York City with her husband and their nine-year-old daughter.

revisit them in one of our final lessons.) My fall-semester sophomores usually respond with enthusiasm to "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" One of our projects

(adapted from the Free Verse Project of the American Academy of Poets) invites students to create an outdoor, three-dimensional interpretation of a line from a poem, and share a snapshot of their creations. Over the years, students inspired by this poem have sent me photos of Dickinson's words scrawled in charcoal on tree trunks, finger painted on fish tanks, etched in chalk around stuffed-toy "public frogs" splayed on pavement under nighttime streetlights.

Of course, in my teaching, I have also appreciated the ways this poem – and so many others by Dickinson – presents opportunities to talk with students about slant rhyme, juxtaposition, metaphor,

extended metaphor, or simply introduce words unfamiliar to them, such as "abbey" or "bog."

I remain convinced that Dickinson can speak to teenagers, and not only to offer consolation in moments of despair; but also to stir them to alertness to their surroundings, to intensify their curiosity, to awaken the pleasure of wordplay.

In my spring semester tenth-grade course, students read "One need not be a chamber to be haunted." Year after year, the poem provokes a lively discussion of the complexity of our minds, and the fragility. This poem also illuminates later readings, such as *Macbeth* or "A Rose for Emily." In our conversations, students often return to the idea that "the Brain has corridors surpassing / Material place," or comment that some character is "overlooking a superior spectre / More near." Whenever I hear my students quote such phrases, I am reassured that they have at least become acquainted

– at least in some small, preliminary way – with Dickinson's voice and vision.

As a liaison to the Dickinson Society, I will be eager to expand my own awareness of the possibilities for Dickinson's poetry in the high school classroom, and hope to help invigorate the conversations about Dickinson among my colleagues working in secondary schools. As well as collaborating with teachers in my own school building, I routinely meet with teachers, teacher educators, and staff developers at conferences and workshops. Many of us – no matter how overwhelmed with the routine obligations to large classes, state standards, and testing-related mandates – would welcome any reacquaintance with the imaginative vitality of Dickinson's poems, and the ways they speak to the challenges, both private and public, that young people navigate today.

Reading and Teaching Dickinson in High Schools

By Sara Brock

When I was fifteen, my mother gave me *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* – probably the first volume of poetry to enter our home, and certainly the first book of poems I ever owned. From that day until college, I walked to and from school alone, on miles of middle-Massachusetts sidewalks, as they turned from leafy to icy to puddled, and pondered what it might mean to be "safe in . . . alabaster chambers" or "sweeping with many colored brooms." I was as engrossed as I was clueless. It was reading unfettered by school grounds, un-

trammled by teachers, unmentioned by peers.

Quirky, partial, naive, it was nonetheless a reading experience that stayed with me. I guarded a certain intimacy with a few cryptic fragments, appreciated the familiar wintry tones, and even more so, the moments when the slate-sky bleakness got interrupted by the surprise of a thistle or a spider, or gave way to speculations about the worlds unseen.

* * *

Several decades later, as high school English teacher, I remain convinced that Dickinson can speak to teenagers, and not only to offer consolation in moments of despair (so often the designated duty of poetry), but also to stir them to alertness to their surroundings (natural and social alike), to intensify their curiosity, to awaken the pleasure of wordplay. In almost every course I've ever designed, I've included Dickinson in a set of three or four poems that open and close the semester. (We read these poets in the first week and

2017 Dickinson Scholar Award

The Emily Dickinson International Society invites applications for the 2017 Dickinson Scholar Award, which supports new research on Dickinson. The project need not be devoted solely to Dickinson, but her work should be a substantial focus. The award of \$2,000 may be used for any expense incurred to advance the project. Preference will be given to applicants with completed PhDs who are in the early stages of their careers. To apply for the award, please submit: a cv, a cover letter, a 600-800 word project proposal, a brief bibliography, and a preliminary budget to ecr@email.unc.edu. Deadline for applications is January 15, 2017. Applicants will be notified of final decisions by March 1. For more information, see www.emilydickinsoninternationalsociety.org

2017 Dickinson Society Graduate Student Fellowship

The EDIS announces a fellowship award of \$1,000 in support of graduate student scholarship on Emily Dickinson. The project need not be devoted solely to Dickinson, but her work should be a substantial focus. The award may be used for any expense incurred to advance the project. Preference will be given to applicants in the dissertation stage or writing a work aimed at publication. To apply, please send a cv, a cover letter, a 600-800 word project description, a brief bibliography, and contact information for two references to Eliza Richards at ecr@email.unc.edu. Applications are due by January 15, 2017. Applicants will be notified of final decisions by March 1. For more information, see www.emilydickinsoninternationalsociety.org

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Membership in the Emily Dickinson International Society (EDIS) enables you to participate in the Society's meetings and conferences, to receive both of the Society's publications (the *Bulletin* and the *Emily Dickinson Journal*), and to help foster the goals of the Society.

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Members are invited to endow a named award. To do so involves a gift of \$1000 to the Society.

Willis Buckingham: 1938 – 2016



Willis John Buckingham, 77, passed away February 28, 2016. Buckingham was a professor of American literature in the Arizona State University Department of English from 1969 to 2000. He completed his undergraduate studies at Harvard University, studied at Union Seminary in NYC, obtained a master's degree in English at University of Wisconsin, Madison, and completed his PhD in English at University of Indiana Bloomington.

Buckingham's scholarly interests included nineteenth-century American poetry, and his publications included an annotated bibliography of Emily Dickinson as well as a documentary history of her reception in the 1890s.

Beloved by his colleagues and students, Buckingham was the gentlest and most sensitive of scholars. He was a curious traveler, a historian, and an epicurean, with a joyous way of savoring life's every detail. He was also an avid member of the Great Books discussion group of Tempe. He brought altruism and benevolence to all those he encountered in life. His sister, Jane Pfeifer, his daughter, Jocelyn Unger, his son, David Buckingham, and his former wife and lifelong friend, Debra Buckingham, survive him.

The singular word so many former students and colleague use to describe Buckingham is "kind." This ethic was sincerely at the core of his teaching and relationships with others, and it is how he will most be remembered.

This memorial to Willis Buckingham is reprinted from Accents on English 19:2 (Spring-Summer 2016), the newsletter of the Arizona State University English Department. EDIS members know Professor Buckingham best for Emily Dickinson: An Annotated Bibliography. Writings, Scholarship, Criticism, and Ana 1850-1968 (1970), and Emily Dickinson's Reception in the 1890s: A Documentary History (1989).

Dickinson on Video

At the first film festival sponsored by the Association of Research Libraries, Harvard Library took first place for Best Collections-Focused Film for Houghton Library's video on baking Emily Dickinson's original black cake. Heather Cole, Emilie Hardman, and Emily Walhout created the video as a way to document their attempt to authentically recreate Dickinson's cake recipe for her 185th birthday celebration last December.

– Leslie Morris, Curator of Modern Books, the Houghton Library

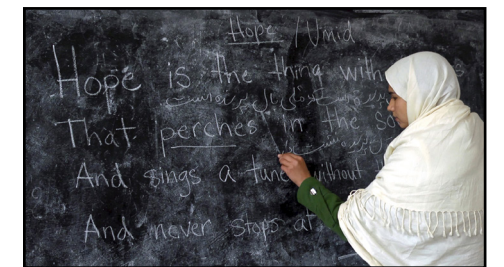
The video, *Baking with Emily Dickinson*, can be seen on *YouTube*, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMmJZG6-JCg>.

[youtube.com/watch?v=qMmJZG6-JCg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMmJZG6-JCg). The cake project will be featured on a future episode of NPR's *Fugitive Waves: The Kitchen Sisters* podcast.



Photo Credit: Kaitlin Buckley

Videographers and cake chefs Heather Cole, Emilie Hardman, and Emily Walhout at the Houghton Library.



from *KET Visions*, November 2016

A widely-circulated promotional image for *What Tomorrow Brings*, an episode of the PBS series *POV* about struggles to start a girls' school in a rural Afghan village, featured a student translating "'Hope' – is the thing with feathers" (Fr314) into Dari. Dickinson's hope reaches every corner of the earth.



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