

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

Poet to Poet**Sandra Gilbert and Emily Dickinson**

By Stephanie A. Tingley

Sandra M. Gilbert, currently a professor of English at the University of California, Davis, has made significant contributions to Dickinson studies as teacher-scholar, feminist literary critic, and poet. Dickinson's experiences and literary works often become, for Gilbert, a paradigm for the tribulations and triumphs of any woman artist who attempts to create despite the restrictions and resistances she encounters in a patriarchal system.

When Gilbert's subject is Emily Dickinson, whether she is writing literary criticism or poetry about her nineteenth-century predecessor, she stresses the connections between Dickinson's life and texts and the ways in which Dickinson's spirit enriches her own life, links Gilbert made explicit in her tribute to Dickinson as both literary foremother and inspiration at the opening session of the October 1992 EDIS International Conference in Washington, D.C.

Those who read or write about Emily Dickinson probably know Sandra Gilbert best as the co-author, with Susan Gubar, of *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* or as co-editor, again with Gubar, of *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women: The Tradition in English*.

Madwoman is an original and influential work of feminist literary criticism that explores connections between the lives and works of nineteenth-century British and American women writers and key sources and metaphors for female creativity. The book's final two chapters focus on women poets and what the

authors call the "aesthetics of renunciation," a strategy, they claim, that women poets developed to counter social constraints and aesthetic pre-judgments by those who condemned their verse or their writing of it.



Photo by Terence McCarthy

Madwoman's final chapter uses Dickinson as a case study to help answer the question posed by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own*: "Who shall measure the heat and violence of the poet's heart when caught and tangled in a woman's body?" Gilbert and Gubar argue that Dickinson demonstrates, in innumerable poems and letters, that she was well aware of the "interdependence of self-dramatization, self-creation, and literary creation" (585) and that her life itself "became a

kind of novel or narrative poem in which...[she] enacted and eventually resolved both her anxieties about her art and her anger at female subordination" (583). Among Dickinson's favorite roles, they explain, were those of child, powerless female, rebellious adolescent, woman in white, and spider-artist.

Gilbert has continued to publish criticism about Emily Dickinson and to focus on the connections among gender, creativity, and the position of the woman poet. She argues also for what she calls Dickinson's deliberate "self-mythologizing," as in the introductory essay for a 1979 collection of essays titled *Shakespeare's Sisters: Feminist Essays on Women Poets*, also co-authored with Gubar, and even more recently in the essays "The Wayward Nun beneath the Hill: Emily Dickinson and the Mysteries of Womanhood" and "The American Sexual Poetics of Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson." As Gilbert argues in "The Wayward Nun," "Drama, domesticity, and Dickinson seem to have become inseparable." What continues to fascinate Gilbert as both critic and poet is Dickinson's use of domestic contexts and details as metaphors for creative expression.

In her poetry as well as her literary criticism, Gilbert explores the resonances of the poet/cook metaphor and the influence of Emily Dickinson on her own life and work. She is the author of three volumes of poetry: *In the Fourth World* (1979), *Emily's Bread* (1984), and *Blood Pressure* (1988). I want to focus briefly on the second of these, *Emily's Bread*, because it is the volume most explicitly

connected with Dickinson studies. The poems in *Emily's Bread* successfully forge links between Gilbert's experience and the poet's because, despite significant differences in time, place, and cultural context, she shares Dickinson's gender, genre, and commitment to a poetic vocation.

Emily's Bread begins with two epigraphs that link Emily Dickinson and Emily Brontë, women poets Gilbert regards as essential foremothers and muses for her own writing. Both epigraphs are anecdotes that celebrate the poets' skills at bread baking. The first is an excerpt from Winifred Gerin's biography of Emily Brontë that highlights her reputation "as a baker of excellent bread," a talent which the biographer claims "won her far more respect than her reputed 'learning.'" Gerin adds that while she kneaded the dough, Emily Brontë often read and wrote, frequently on small bits of scrap paper.

Emily Dickinson, too, was praised for her bread baking and shared Brontë's habit of composing verses on small bits of paper as she worked in her kitchen. And, as many of you know, her bread won a prize at the 1857 Amherst Cattle Show. Gilbert reprints a comment Thomas Wentworth Higginson made to his wife in a letter about Emily Dickinson: "She makes all the bread for her father only likes hers & says '& people must have puddings' this *very* dreamily, as if they were comets—so she makes them."

Gilbert's skillful juxtaposition of these anecdotes invites readers to link the two nineteenth-century women poets and the ways in which both associate domesticity with creativity, a connection Gilbert's own poems in *Emily's Bread* explore.

A number of the poems in this volume develop the idea of house and home, especially the kitchen, as the core of many women's worlds and as the center or "heart" of domesticity. Other poems, which she labels "daguerreotypes," are portraits of Victorian women in roles such as governess, wet nurse, and lace maker, while poems grouped under the label "Still Lives" employ metaphors drawn from the plastic arts to comment on women's roles, including one titled "Still Life: Woman Cooking," in which the speaker, a contemporary woman, cooks

dinner and wonders, "What is that song the brook trout sing / as they crackle in the pan?" (65). Clearly Gilbert's project in the poems collected in *Emily's Bread* is to link her own life and work as woman and writer to various kinds of female predecessors.

The volume's title poem introduces the "Daguerreotypes" section. Here Gilbert's speaker contrasts popular, stereotypical images of Dickinson with the real woman and talented poet she has come to know through her sympathetic rereading and reinterpretation of Dickinson's life and work. She chastises those who attempt to co-opt Dickinson's person and poetry, objecting to such insensitivity as violent violations. Gilbert probes behind the myth of the "half-cracked" woman in white. She begins:

Inside the prize-winning blue-ribbon
loaf of bread,
there is Emily, dressed in white,
veiled in unspeakable words,
not yet writing letters to the world.

She works to reconstruct the physical, cultural, and psychological contexts and constraints of the poet's life as an unmarried, middle-class, mid-Victorian American woman by focusing on the parallels she sees between bread baking and poetry writing. To Gilbert, both activities serve as outlets for poetic talent and creativity. The bread becomes a metaphor for Dickinson's art, and the act of baking a metaphor for the artist's creative processes, for Dickinson is transformed into

the alchemist of flour, poetess of
butter,
stirring like a new metaphor in every
bubble

as the loaf begins to grow.
Prosaic magic, how it swells,
like life, expanding, browning
at the edges, hardening.

Emily picks up her pen, begins to
scribble. [35]

Gilbert's dense, often cryptic poetic lines pay tribute to the sheer vitality and originality of Dickinson's language by echoing her lush word choices, enigmatic imagery, and tendency to juxtapose opposites. In "Emily's Bread," as in many of Gilbert's poems, the words strain

against the boundaries imposed by line length and regular rhythm.

The last section of *Emily's Bread*, titled "The Emily Dickinson Black Cake Walk," includes a number of poems that pay tribute to women artists, both mythical creative women such as Scheherazade, Daphne, and Psyche, and Gilbert's own speaker, a contemporary woman who responds with great sensitivity to Brahms' First Symphony and puzzles over words' denotations and connotations, in the poem "In the Forest of Symbols."

It is in the volume's final poem, "The Emily Dickinson Black Cake Walk," however, that Gilbert best synthesizes her ideas about Dickinson, women artists, and the creative process. Gilbert admitted in her speech at the 1992 EDIS conference that this is the poem she believes best captures the ways in which Dickinson has inspired her as both critic and poet. The poem explores the tensions between freedom and constraint, speech and silence—issues crucial to Gilbert's feminist literary criticism as well as her poetry.

Gilbert preserves the integrity of Dickinson's lyric voice by beginning this tribute with two passages from Dickinson's *Letters*. The care with which she juxtaposes Dickinson's voice with her own, rather than paraphrasing or co-opting it, as well as the vehemence with which she protects and defends Dickinson's integrity, suggest how significant Dickinson's life and work have been to her. Dickinson serves as both a venerated foremother and a source of sustenance and inspiration. Gilbert's speaker celebrates the sense of connection she feels with Dickinson when she writes [102]:

Black cake, black Uncle Emily cake,
I tunnel among your grains of darkness
fierce as a mouse: your riches
are all my purpose, your currants and
death's eye raisins
wrinkling and thickening blackness,
and the single almond of light she
buried
somewhere under layers of shadow....

Certainly Dickinson's dense lyrics and letters, like her famed black cake, can nourish and sustain those who read her

and write about her. Dickinson's own celebration of poetry's ability to forge connections among women, its capacity to nourish and sustain both writer and readers, is the subject of Poem 883:

The Poets light but Lamps—
Themselves—go out—
The Wicks they stimulate—
If vital Light
Inhere as do the Suns—

Each Age a Lens
Disseminating their
Circumference—

To borrow Dickinson's metaphor, Sandra Gilbert's writing about Dickinson, in both poetry and prose, functions as a lens through which readers can sharpen and focus their own appreciation for Dickinson's genius. As Adrienne Rich, another contemporary woman poet who writes regularly and well about Dickinson, puts it, Sandra Gilbert allows Emily Dickinson to "have it out at last...on [her] own premises."

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The Emily Dickinson Black Cake Walk

1866: *Ned...inherits his Uncle Emily's ardor for the lie. My flowers are near and foreign, and I have but to cross the floor to stand in the Spice Isles....*

1883: *Your sweet beneficence of Bulbs I return as Flowers, with a bit of the swarthy Cake baked only in Domingo....*

—The Letters of Emily Dickinson

Black cake, black night cake, black
thick cake out of which Emily
leaps in bubbles of bitter sweetness—
lucid or dark balloons of Emily,
Emilie, Uncle Emily,
Dickinson, Nobody—
black Emily Dickinson cake,

how does your sugar grow?
What is the garden, where
is the furrow, whose
are the pods of heat and shadow?
How did black bulbs dissolve their iron,
leaves their silence, bees their drone of sunset honey
into the oven that cooked you firm?

Black cake, black Uncle Emily cake,
I tunnel among your grains of darkness
fierce as a mouse: your riches
are all my purpose, your currants and death's eye raisins
wrinkling and thickening blackness,
and the single almond of light she buried
somewhere under layers of shadow....

One day I too will be Uncle Sandra:
iambic and terse, I'll hobble the tough sidewalks,
the alleys that moan *go on, go on*.
O when I reach those late-night streets,
when acorns and twigs
litter my path like sentences
the oaks no longer choose to say,

I want that cake in my wallet.
I want to nibble as I hobble.
I want to smile and nibble
that infinite black cake,

and lean

on Uncle Emily's salt-white
ice-bright sugar cane.

The Joy of Words: Thomas John Carlisle

By Margaret H. Freeman

During her lifetime, Emily Dickinson counted several clergymen among her closest and dearest friends. This affinity with men (and now women) of the cloth has continued to the present day: many clergy think highly of her poetry and her thinking on the major issues of life, death, and immortality.

Long before he came to know Dickinson's poetry, Thomas John Carlisle (1913-1992), for many years the minister of Stone Street Presbyterian Church in Watertown, New York, and also a poet in his own right, was showing signs of a poetic as well as spiritual affinity with the poet he was, in his own words, to become "enamored with."

Before the age of seven, Carlisle was writing poems and binding them into what he called "paper back books." At the ripe age of twelve, he was invited to recite his poem "Save Old Ironsides" at the national convention of the Children of the American Revolution in Washington, D. C. The second stanza has three variants for the third line (though they are written, in the copy I have seen, into the stanza itself): "She has served the God of freedom/She has flown the flag of freedom/She has felt the throb of freedom." His alternates, in their probing of both the sound and the sense of the line, uncannily echo Dickinson's practice.

Introduced to Dickinson's poetry by Samuel Allen at Williams College, Carlisle describes his first encounter with the poet in an article he wrote for a college publication: "Last February while making one of those four hour connections for which the Troy railroad station is famed, I opened a volume of Emily Dickinson for the first time. I forgot all about the bustle around me and the dreariness of the hours, so intensely interested did I become in her poems....I was thrilled with the realization of discovery, and felt like saying 'Where have you been all my life?'"



The first student at Williams to receive academic credit for creative writing, Carlisle there began what would be a lifetime's devotion to the poet by writing articles and poems with Dickinson as their subject. His 1937 Union College thesis for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity on "The Theology of American Poets from Whitman" included a chapter on Dickinson, "a mystic voice of unexcelled beauty."

Although he and Richard Sewall shared the same alma mater, they did not actually meet until 1975. A friendship ensued that lasted until Carlisle's death in 1992. "He was," Sewall wrote in a recent letter, "a great admirer of ED...and kept up with all the work being done on her. I venture to say that she figured largely in many of his sermons."

One of his four sons testifies to the lifelong relation between Carlisle's faith and his poetry: "Emily's poetry influenced [his] pastoral care of church members. One terminally ill member quoted ED's #1078 ["The Bustle in a House"] with remorse at ED's apparent 'dismissal

of life's last/betrayal—love's retirement —.' In comforting this long-time friend, he took her commentary on ED's poem and framed his own poetic response—sharing it with her on his next visit, and later reading it at her funeral."

Carlisle was apparently fond of pointing out to his sons that in spite of the frequency of the word "death" in Dickinson's poems, "life" and "heaven" rank higher in the *Concordance*. He admired her "brilliant intuitions" and "unorthodox approach" to the truths of religion. In the words of his son, his statement that "she wanted fiercely to know the unknowable" is "a mirror of [his] own quest....As ED questioned God and life, so [Carlisle's] poetry challenges readers to see God in unlikely places and to understand God in unaccustomed metaphors. For Emily was 'fond of God.'"

Over the course of his long career, Carlisle matched Dickinson's output, with over 1,500 poems in more than 150 publications and twelve books of poetry, many of which went into several printings. He is best known for his poems that encapsulate the gist of biblical texts and are short, like Dickinson's, characterized by a similar epigrammatic quality, terse and witty, as the following commentary on Jonah's "Negotiation with a Higher Power" shows:

I will demonstrate
my immediate
obedience
providing You comply
with my demand
for a more satisfying
assignment.

You! Jonah! (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1968) is the funniest of Carlisle's volumes, though all are marked with a wry humor.

Although some of Carlisle's work shows uncertain control, he wields a certain mastery over tone and rhythm, as shown in the iambic pentameter lines of

The Playfulness of Emily Dickinson

Indebted to Richard Sewall's phrasing in his letter: "So many people come to me with the puzzled look and the furrowed brow, I find myself saying, often, 'Relax! Don't you see? She's *playing* with you?'"

Just Pretending

The puzzled look, the furrowed brow
they bring to her discourse,
deny the passion, pith, and puck
of her essential source.
Penchant for play pervades her lines,
a devilish desire
to bring us to the verge of truth
pretending she's a liar.

Galactic Inference

They miss the mischief of her words,
the puckish imagery.
Their puzzled look and furrowed brow
deny identity
of one whose passion, penchant, core
subscribed hypothesis
that play provides the inference
of galaxies of grace.

variant to last three lines:

took full account of play
as offering inference of truth
achieved no other way.

Magical Mixture

We search her words meticulous
for what she might have meant
but miss the inference of truth,
the *magical extent
circumferenced by her genuine
genius for playing tricks
with lexicon. Her face keeps straight
while truth and humor mix.

*infinite

Captivated

How ample is the space she gives
to speculation's play.
Her words attack our gravity,
lead *artfully astray
until we stumble on the path
and tumble in the gin
and +tangled in her wit and craft
we're ready to begin.

*cunningly

+captive to / captured by

Equivocality

Equivocality achieves
while sober truth drones on.
The literal validity
inspires the heart like stone
while sporting in the stratosphere
we crack the cosmic code
and with *a heaven full of words
+the galaxies explode.

*an amplitude/an infinance

+new earths, new heavens
abundantly appear.

"Requiem" (*Journey with Job*):

And all recalls us to the death we die:
the sonics of the bee's frustrated buzz
upon the pane which will not let him by,
the spider's lustrous filaments, the blue
and shattered egg no longer in the nest,
no longer viable, the broken best
of Wedgwood and majolica, the new
we welcome and discard, the obsolete
which animates no obsequies, the crude,
the crass, the twisted, and the incom-
plete,
the mouths that never find a full day's
food,
the boils and unjust turmoils known
in Uz,
and one lying in state who is not I.

An editor once told Carlisle that some
of his poems "express more scholarship
than a long article can sometimes do." I
find that true for his most recent books,

*Eye and After: Old Testament Women in
Portrait* (1984), and *Beginning with
Mary: Women of the Gospels in Portrait*
(1986), both published by Eerdmans. They
reflect Carlisle's longtime commitment
to women's issues in their exploration of
the women who hover in the background
of the biblical texts.

Included in the selection of his best
poems entitled *Invisible Harvest* (Eerd-
mans, 1987) is a group of twelve poems
on Dickinson under the title "The Woman
with the Perfect Word." One poem, "Emily
Dickinson and Her 'Burglar, Banker, Fa-
ther,'" reflects a penchant for "the choice
of the ambiguous word and...a preference
for open-endedness" that Carlisle felt he
shared with the poet:

Because her world averred that God
was super super *man*

she teased *Him* for the arrogance
of patriarchal plan
secure in art of metaphor
to puncture pierce impale
errors of partiality
so slanted to the male

Richard Wilbur wrote to Carlisle on
reading *Invisible Harvest*: "Thank you
for real poems, well-turned, about the
things that matter....You catch the tune
of Emily Dickinson better than anyone I
can think of." To encourage more poems
about Dickinson, Carlisle had, from 1988,
offered a monetary prize through the
Poetry Society of Georgia. So far, how-
ever, no one has matched his own ability
to catch Dickinson's "tune."

As Sewall notes, "His efforts to cap-
ture her in his poems were uneven; but,
at least once, he hit a home run: the poem

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“Big my Secret”: Emily Dickinson and *The Piano*

By Joan Kirkby

Despite a setting vastly different from Emily Dickinson’s New England, the Australian/New Zealand film *The Piano* is informed in many ways by the presence of the American poet.

The film, set in an expatriate British community in a wild and remote area of New Zealand in the late nineteenth century, revolves around Ada McGrath, a Scottish woman who does not speak, though we hear her voice on the soundtrack. Ada and her nine-year-old daughter, Flora, are landed on a deserted beach, to be met by the man to whom her father has arranged her marriage. The husband’s refusal to move Ada’s piano—her one means of expression—from the beach to their home in the interior sets in train an extraordinary series of events.

The Piano won three Academy Awards—for Holly Hunter as Best Actress, Anna Pacquin as Best Supporting Actress, and Jane Campion, the film’s creator, for Best Original Screenplay. Many thought it should have won as Best Picture.

Principal among the ways in which Dickinson influences *The Piano* are the character and situation of Ada, “one of God’s difficult daughters—Yet, one can feel *him* in her, frightening like a storm.”¹ Not only is Ada “Zero at the bone,” as Campion has agreed,² but the dark severity of her costume is eerily reminiscent of Dickinson’s dress in the one known daguerreotype of her.

Moreover, the original musical score composed by Michael Nyman (which Holly Hunter said at the Academy Awards ceremony “really gave me a veritable instruction manual for a way into Ada McGrath”) includes two haunting piano solos that make up half of the soundtrack, both of which have as their titles lines from Dickinson’s poems. “Big My Secret” is a line from Poem 1737, “Rearrange a ‘Wife’s’ affection!” which explores the pain and ultimately triumphant

power of female sexuality. The film’s theme melody, “The Heart Asks Pleasure First,” is from Poem 536 and re-



Holly Hunter as Ada and Anna Pacquin as Flora in Jane Campion’s film *The Piano*

minds us of the heart’s healthy impulse for pleasure which, if thwarted, seeks “Excuse from Pain”—in anodynes, in sleep, and ultimately in death.³ As in Dickinson’s poem, it suggests that the alternative to love is death. The romantic impulse is, in Campion’s epigraph, “a heroic path that generally ends dangerously” (FS 7).

A sense of election marks Ada’s chosen path: for Ada, as for Dickinson, “Awe is the first Hand that is held to us....though there is no Course, there is Boundlessness” (L 871). Ada journeys literally and metaphorically “To the Edge of the Earth,” “A Wild and Distant Shore” (the titles of tracks 1 and 3 of the soundtrack), and her sense of boundlessness leads her, like Dickinson, to turn her back on “the times, customs, graces, politics, or opinion of men” (Emerson, “The Poet”) in favor of the “Finite Infinity” of “A soul admitted to itself—” (P 1695).

Ada’s election of silence is a refusal of the Father’s word, a refusal of soul-defining convention and confinement in the roles and “dimity convictions” of the “plush” gentlewomen of her day (P 401). Dickinson’s rendition of the life Ada

gives up is explored in many of her poems of gender (see 154, 187, 273, 443, 732). The ultimate denial for Ada, as for Dickinson, would be like that of the woman in Poem 105: “To hang our head—ostensibly/And subsequent, to find/That such was not the posture/Of our immortal mind.”

Ada’s “strong opinion” (which Flora translates from her sign language) that “most people speak rubbish and it’s not worth the listen” (FS 57) is reminiscent of Dickinson’s distaste for “the stale inflation of the minor News” (L 521), which was the conventional lot of women.

Ada, like Dickinson, is aware of the power of her will, “so strange and strong” (FS 115): “I have not spoken since I was six years old. My father says it is a dark talent and the day I take it into my head to stop breathing will be my last” (FS 9). There is no doubt that Ada has adopted silence as a mode of power, much as Dickinson refused to publish if her words were to be regularized.

At the end of the film, when the central drama of integration has been completed, Ada is learning to speak, but she still maintains and affirms her eccentricity: “I teach piano now in Nelson. George has fashioned me a metal fingertip; I am quite the town freak, which satisfies” (FS 122). Who cannot think here of the self-dramatization of all the Dickinsons—Emily in her white dress, Austin in his wide-brimmed planter’s hat. Even as Dickinson, with her poetic talent, did not feel secluded—“Alone, I cannot be—/For Hosts—do visit me” (P 298)—so Ada does not “think myself silent, that is, because of my piano” (FS 9).

In interviews about the genesis of the script, Jane Campion speaks of her “great debt to the spirit of Emily Brontë,” “but also Emily Dickinson,” referring specifically to “Much Madness is divinest Sense” (435) and “Big my Secret but it’s *Ban-daged*” (from P 1737):

In a way Dickinson led such a secret

life, and my main character, Ada, does as well. She is secretive not because she closeted herself in a room, but because she won't speak.

I found reading Emily Dickinson's poems incredibly moving....She's so bold, feminine and yet demure, and I was very excited about the admission of femininity....Another quote which really affected me was "Big my Secret but it's *Bandaged*—." I admire Dickinson and Brontë, the sensibility they bring to their work and to the world. Both were recluses and they held their sensibility at some cost to themselves. [CP 6-7]

Campion's view of Ada is further reminiscent of Dickinson:

I always saw her as someone who had very powerfully removed herself from life. She chose not to speak....There is no sense of herself as a handicapped person, however. It's almost as though she treats the world as if it were handicapped....I saw in Ada and her daughter, Flora, the way women may have dramatized their lives. [CP 7]

The main psychic drama of *The Piano* also has much in common with the contours of Dickinson's life, namely, the working out of a tenable relation with the patriarchal world of the fathers, both the law and the language of the father. Ada must contend with a father who has the godlike power to marry her to "a man I've not yet met" at the far reaches of the earth, even as Emily had to contend with a father whose "Heart was pure and terrible and I think no other like it exists" (L 418), as well as a brother who regarded her as an equal until the age of womanhood, when he assumed the father's privilege over her in terms of feminine propriety and deportment, undoubtedly provoking some of her poems of violent masculinity, such as "He fumbles at your Soul/As Players at the Keys" (P 315).⁴

Throughout *The Piano* there is a sense of violation of the feminine: the early image of paternal coercion and perhaps incest in the view of a little girl on a small, reluctant pony which the father is pulling; Ada and Flora manhandled onto the deserted beach by the sailors in New Zealand; the dark-suited husband's tyranny over her, as well as that of the neighbor, George Baines. The potential for de-

pendency and violation, as well as the oppressive conservatism of colonial domestic routine, is intensely realized. The physical settings were chosen to heighten the complex, frightening quality: "I was after the vivid, subconscious imagery of the bush, its dark, inner world," says Campion (FS 139).

There is something almost uncanny about the way Campion's story manifests itself as a classic tale of psychic integration, in particular the heroine's struggle to integrate positive masculine energy into the psyche—to replace the tyrannical, possibly abusive, father and the conventional ego-bound husband with a positive masculine figure, to counteract the stultifying hold of the patriarchal world.

George Baines, the neighbor who rescues the piano and eventually becomes Ada's lover, functions as an ambivalent animus figure, initially threatening. But as the erotic bargaining between them ensues, Ada emerges equal to the contest, and the film suggests a positive resolution to the conflict. Ada is returned to sociality and language while maintaining her sense of election and her own interior space, the vision of an inland sea (FS 122). Ada's devoted attention to the power of her inner world, her lengthy and painful process of self-education, has enabled her to transform her life into "a rich, unending inner adventure, full of creative possibilities."⁵

The film contains numerous other motifs of individuation stories: the Bluebeard theme, suggesting the danger of a confrontation with a negative animus figure—here associated with the husband and the *pakeha* (European) community; the threatening appeal of watery depths, suggesting the risk of engulfment in the unconscious; the presence of a small but supernaturally powerful girl as both guide and manifestation of the newly emerging self; the "beauty and the beast" theme, in which a "prince" appears initially as a monster or a beast who is redeemed by the love of a woman, a process symbolizing the manner in which the animus becomes conscious, turning the animus into an invaluable inner companion instead of one possessing her.⁶

Joseph Henderson argues that this

theme "may indicate the need to find the answer to a personal father fixation" or, for a woman, "to accept the unpredictable element of her natural creative spirit."⁷ This is the very constellation of images and motifs that Martin Bickman, Joanne Dobson, and Albert Gelpi have identified in Dickinson's poetry.⁸

Both Jane Campion and Emily Dickinson are working with very powerful cultural material. Dickinson's presence in *The Piano* reminds us how much a part of our heritage she is.

Notes

1. Jane Campion, *The Piano* (London: Bloomsbury, 1993), 110. Subsequently cited as FS (filmscript).

2. Milo Bilbrough, "Jane Campion, *The Piano*," *Cinema Papers* 93 (May 1993): 7.

3. Michael Nyman, *The Piano: Original Music from the Film by Jane Campion* (Virgin Records, Ltd., 1993). All tracks published by Chester Music, Ltd.

4. See also Poem 348, with its tantalizing lines "I thought if I could only live/Till that first Shout got by—/Not all Pianos in the Woods/Had power to mangle me—."

5. Marie Louise von Franz, "The Process of Individuation," *Man and His Symbols*, ed. Carl Jung (London: Picador, 1983), 209. That Ada might similarly represent an anima figure to Baines is corroborated by Harvey Keitel's view of him: "He's nowhere, looking for a place to be, and he finds it through his ability to suffer, through his ability to go on a journey to find what he needs" (FS 143).

6. Franz, "Process of Individuation," 206.

7. Joseph Henderson, "Ancient Myths and Modern Man," *Man and His Symbols*, 131-32.

8. Martin Bickman, *American Romantic Psychology* (Spring 1988): 117-47. Joanne A. Dobson, "Oh, Susie, it is dangerous": Emily Dickinson and the Archetype," *Feminist Critics Read Emily Dickinson*, ed. Suzanne Juhasz (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1983), 80-97; Albert Gelpi, "Emily Dickinson and the Deerslayer: The Dilemma of the Woman Poet in America," *Jungian Literary Criticism*, ed. Richard P. Sugg (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1992), 103-17.

Joan Kirkby is associate professor in American and Australian literature at Macquarie University in Sydney. Her book Emily Dickinson was published in 1991; she is currently working on a project on Dickinson's reading and completing a psychoanalytic study of Australian literature.

Editing Emily Dickinson

A Report to the Society

By Ellen Louise Hart and Martha Nell Smith

This report was first delivered at the EDIS Annual Meeting in Amherst, August 1993.

Even after a century of having her works available in various print translations, editing Emily Dickinson's writings is one of the most exciting fields of critical inquiry. Ralph Franklin is preparing a new variorum, and Sharon Cameron, Jeanne Holland, Susan Howe, Jerome McGann, William Shurr, Lewis Turco, Marta Werner, Ellen Louise Hart, and Martha Nell Smith are all pursuing or have completed significant projects that speak to the editing of Dickinson's writings in some way, shape, or form. Polly Longworth has made a vital contribution to the field with her speculations about the two new Dickinson documents acquired by Amherst College in 1992. A Dickinson Editorial Collective was formed in October 1992 to discuss and share information pertaining to myriad questions about and issues of editing.

In various voices and different ways, each and all of the above are concerned with and writing about the status of poetry and of letters in Dickinson's literary production and the identities of Dickinson poems, letters, and letter-poems.

Is the "Johnson-Dickinson" poem with which we are all familiar, surrounded by so much white space and topped by a number, characteristic of Dickinson's literary production? What is the identity of her poems? What are the identities of her literary writings? Identity: distinguishing characters or traits, the personality of an entity. Many people have been pursuing these questions about the literary and specifically poetic identities of Dickinson's writings. But who decides what makes a Dickinson poem, what counts as literature in the Dickinson canon, and how that literature should be presented to her vast and varied audiences?

Why do we, Hart and Smith, believe

that the Dickinson materials need to be reedited? From the beginning, Dickinson's writings have been edited according to what might be called the ideology of the book—i.e., according to beliefs about what books a poet would produce or what kinds of books should be produced in the name of a poet.

Thus the three volumes of *Poems by Emily Dickinson* published in the 1890s were divided into the four subjects—Life, Love, Time and Eternity, and Nature—standard for nineteenth-century poetry anthologies. And after two volumes of poems in 1890 and 1891, a separate volume of letters was published in 1894, implying a rather rigid generic distinction that Dickinson herself did not necessarily draw.

That rigid genre distinction has persisted in the editing of Dickinson, so that we have the three-volume *Poems of Emily Dickinson* and the three-volume *Letters of Emily Dickinson*, both edited by Thomas H. Johnson.

Yet, as her niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, realized, Dickinson herself often produced what Susan Dickinson called "letter-poems," epistolary lyric writings in which letters and poems were constitutive parts of one another. And we believe that when Dickinson sent out at least one-third of her poems in letters, she was "publishing" poems in her correspondences and that her writings should therefore be edited to feature the "books" of poems, letters, and letter-poems "published" to Susan, to Thomas Higginson, Samuel Bowles, Elizabeth Holland, the Norcross cousins, and so on.

As it now stands, books of Dickinson's writings have been made to reproduce the conventions of literature (continuously reinforced by the cataloging practices of the print industry) instead of to reproduce Dickinson's creative, challenging, and experimental minglings of genres.

Both Dickinson and her sister-in-law

Susan drew sharp distinctions between the often synonymously used terms *publish* and *print*. When Dickinson informed Higginson that her poetic production was not conventional, she did not say, "I had told you I did not *publish*"; she said, "I had told you I did not *print*" (L 316) [emphasis added].

Also, when she smiles at Higginson's conjecture that she delays "to publish," quotation marks make it plain that she uses his words when she utters the more commonplace term for works produced in the literary marketplace instead of her more precise "to print" (L 265).

Writing in 1891 to William Hayes Ward, superintending editor of the *Independent*, Susan corrected herself:

...I recognize fully all Miss Emily's lack of rhyme and rhythm, but have learned to accept it for the bold thought, and everything else so unusual about her.

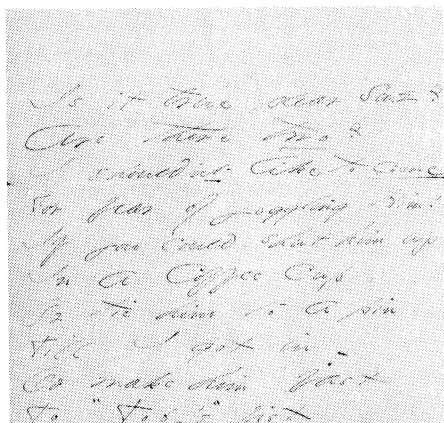
I think if you do not feel that your own literary taste is compromised by it, I would rather the three verses of the "Martyrs" ["Through the Straight Pass / of Suffering" (F 36, P 792)] should be published if any. I shall not be annoyed if you decide not to publish at all. I should have said *printed*. [Lowell Autograph, Houghton Library]

We agree with Susan that Dickinson's unusual poetic techniques reflect her "bold thought" and believe that her texts should be edited to reproduce these eye-opening, mind-opening literary maneuvers.

Besides reorganizing the reproduction of Dickinson's materials to reflect her methods of production and distribution, reproductions can now present more of her manuscript art than has previously been translated into print—dashes can be angled up or down or arched in ways that mimic her characteristic variations, lineation can reproduce her unusual ways of breaking poetic units, and her calligraphic orthography can be translated

into print so that “y’s” and “g’s” underline the syllables preceding them when Dickinson emphasized expression that way, and nontranslatables like the wave-mimicking “S’s” in “The Sea said ‘Come’ to the Brook” can be photographically reproduced, as they are in Franklin’s edition of *The Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson*. (Susan Howe discusses this poem in the last chapter of *The Birthmark: Unsettling the Wilderness in American Literary History*.)

Thomas Johnson does not represent these features, and there are other kinds of errors in his presentation, errors that include mistakes in transcription and biases in his editorial apparatus. In the first twenty-three letters to Susan Dickinson, we have discovered more than a dozen instances in at least ten letters in which the wrong word has been transcribed.



Poem 218/Letter 232 (HB 140). Reproduced by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

This is also true of the later materials. In the letter-poem “Is it true, dear Sue?” written after the birth of nephew Ned, the oft-quoted line “If I could shut him up / In a Coffee Cup” (P 218, L 232) is in fact something that Dickinson never wrote. (Johnson mistranscribes this in both *Poems* and *Letters*, even though he reproduces a photograph of the manuscript following page 582 of *Letters*.) Noting this error is especially important because “If I could shut him up” has been cited to suggest that Dickinson was jealous of Sue’s attentions as a new mother to Ned and wanted to bundle him away for a while so that she could visit her beloved sister-in-law. But the line Dickinson wrote is “If *you* could shut him up,” and she is

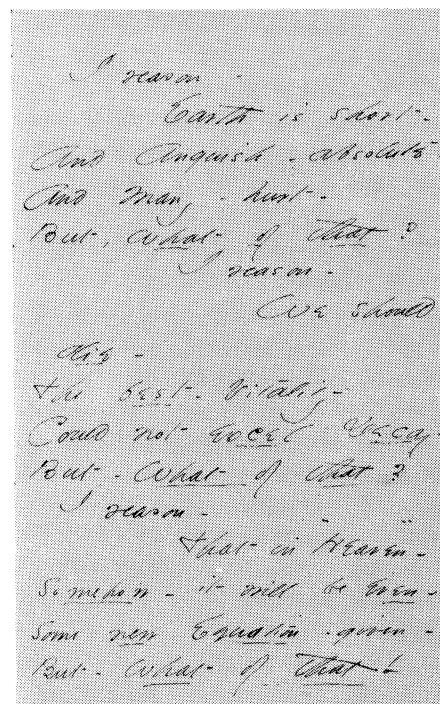
clearly concerned that Ned not be joggled or disturbed. In other words, Aunt Emily’s concern is for nephew Ned’s comfort and safety.

The problem of reinscribing mistranscriptions includes misrepresenting margins, indentations, and spacing. One especially obvious example of how this limits understanding of Dickinson’s poetic project is Johnson’s misleading transcription of the version of “I reason—” (P 301) sent to Susan. Though he represents this as a three-stanza poem, Dickinson’s formulation staggers placement of words on sixteen lines so that this poem *without stanzaic division* and the more conventionally formulated twelve-line, three-stanza “I reason—Earth is short,” bound into the fascicle Franklin has numbered 20, critique one another. The lyric sent to Susan, with its underlinings and dramatic placement of the solitary syllable “die—” on a line by itself, seems biting sarcasm, while the tone of the more traditionally arranged lyric is much more muted.

To examine these documents and try to determine just how Dickinson intended this poem to appear in print (concluding, therefore, what her final authorial intention was for its reproduction) would at best meet with uneasy, editorially presumptive resolutions. But to peruse these documents to learn what they disclose of Dickinson’s poetic mind at work meets with much happier results. To us, these variants suggest that both the line and the stanza were forms that Dickinson kept in mind as she shaped her poems.

The version of “I reason—” sent to Susan employs odd linear arrangements and refuses four-line divisions to disrupt the reassurances offered by reliable trimeter and tetrameter lines and regularized stanzaic form. The existence of the two forms, each of which suggests different nuances of meaning, therefore leaving a single definitive text indeterminate, makes the poem more, not less, exciting to the general reader, and more, not less, interesting to the literary scholar. Offering itself in various manifestations, the lyric is more fascinating poetically, for scrutinized intertextually each version engages the reader in many more ways than either might alone.

These matters of mistranscription are especially important because not only has a vast body of literary criticism been produced depending on the accuracy of the Johnson transcriptions, but now a volume of poetry has been produced and all of the “new poems” have been taken from Johnson’s edition of the letters (William H. Shurr, “Preface,” *New Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ix). When notions of style of indention and separation of poetic lines from prose letters are predicated on mistaken transcriptions, can we say that the techniques are Dickinson’s?



Poem 301 (H 274). Reproduced by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

In *Rowing in Eden: Rereading Emily Dickinson* (Univ. of Texas Press, 1992), in our dissertations and articles, and in the *Heath Anthology of American Literature*, we have previously represented and discussed eight of the poems presented in the Shurr edition as possibly being Dickinson poems. Yet in one instance that Hart discusses in a 1990 article and in the anthology, her speculation about a poem says that it is three stanzas long while Shurr shows it as one stanza; and in an instance discussed by Smith in both her dissertation and her book, her speculation is that a poem is one stanza while Shurr

The Lowenberg Collection: The University of Nebraska-Lincoln

by Kathleen Johnson

Carlton Lowenberg is a remarkable collector and bibliographer. He is the former director of a "Books for Asia" program that sent nearly seventeen million books to schools and libraries in countries from Afghanistan to Sri Lanka. He is known to many of us as a passionate and witty pursuer of Dickinson material. Operating from his home in California, he managed to assemble the finest Dickinson research collection outside of New England. Recently placed at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, the collection is in the midst of being processed. The following is the first detailed summary of the collection available to scholars.

Daniel Lombardo, Series Editor

For ten years, Carlton Lowenberg and his wife Territa collected books and other materials by and about Emily Dickinson. The goal of their collecting was to acquire materials not only by Dickinson but also associated with her, her family, her region, and her era, as well as all evidence of interest in Dickinson.

As Mr. Lowenberg stated in a 1987 letter to a prospective buyer of his collection: "There are over 11,000 pieces (by piece is meant every volume of books, every issue or volume of journals, clipping, letter, separate photograph, clue card, which makes appraisal possible) in the collection. Of the 11,000, 8,000 are core items, many of which are unique, many undocumented. There are no Emily Dickinson manuscripts for the simple reason none have surfaced in recent years."

Thus, the collection came to include a variety of materials. The Lowenbergs attempted to collect all editions of Dickinson's works, including separately published books, and all appearances of any Dickinson poem in an anthology or magazine.

They also collected various editions of works by people associated with the Dickinsons, such as Noah Webster, T.W. Higginson, Mabel Loomis Todd, Helen

Hunt Jackson, and Martha Dickinson Bianchi. Included in the collection is Webster's two-volume *An American Dictionary of the English Language* from 1828, as well as many editions of works, such as *Ramona*, by Helen Hunt Jackson.

Although no Dickinson manuscripts are in the collection, a number of manuscript items, such as business ledgers and autograph albums, are. At least one photograph album of college men is also included.

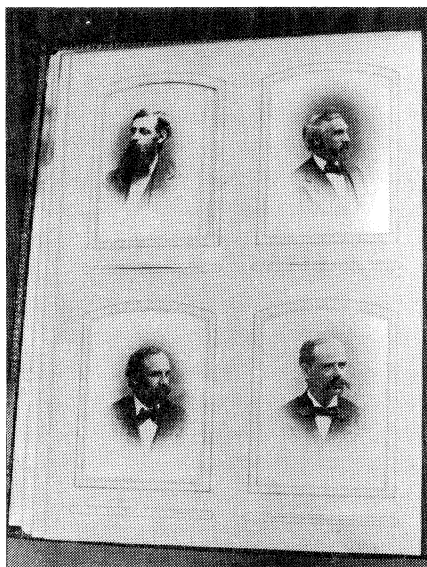


Photo album, Amherst College, class of 1878. Clockwise from upper left: Professors Esty, Harris, Root, and Neill.

Another feature is a collection of textbooks used during Dickinson's lifetime. This was a special interest of Mr. Lowenberg that resulted in his monograph *Emily Dickinson's Textbooks*.

Many local histories of Amherst and other towns and counties in the region are part of the collection, as are books describing various churches and colleges and several published genealogies of families from the area. A few books containing grave marker inscriptions provide a fascinating glimpse of the past.

Long runs of periodicals to which the Dickinson family subscribed, as well as a

number of current single issues of periodicals with articles about Dickinson and many clippings of works by or about Dickinson, also are part of the collection.

The Lowenbergs also purchased many nineteenth-century books on law, agriculture, botany, mineralogy, geology, morals, arithmetic, geography, Christianity, history, astronomy, and anatomy and physiology, to name only a few of the topics covered.

A few theses about Dickinson are included in the collection. Over a dozen framed photographs of people associated with Dickinson, including a few of T.W. Higginson, also are part of the collection. There is even an Emily Dickinson t-shirt in one box.

A very special part of the collection pertains to musical settings of Emily Dickinson's poems. A number of musical scores are included, as well as several dozen cassette recordings of settings. Mr. Lowenberg's correspondence with composers forms an interesting sidelight. A variety of hymnbooks and songbooks from the nineteenth century round out the musical portion of the collection. Mr. Lowenberg's *Musicians Wrestle Everywhere: Emily Dickinson and Music*, an outgrowth of this collection, was published in 1992.

In addition to the items mentioned above, Mr. Lowenberg's correspondence with book dealers and others also forms part of the collection.

The collection came to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries through the auspices of Cliff Hillegass, founder of *Cliff's Notes*. Mr. Hillegass is a friend of Mr. Lowenberg.

The Lowenberg Collection, which arrived in 200 boxes in 1992, is still being processed. Catalog records for the books are being added to the UNL Libraries' online catalog. Although bibliographic records for many of the books already exist through OCLC, a shared cataloging bibliographic utility with 30,000,000

Continued on page 13

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Barbara Kelly, Book Review Editor

Recent and Forthcoming

[Information from publishers' catalogs]

Finch, Annie. *The Ghost of Meter: Culture and Prosody in American Free Verse.* Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1994. 178 pages. ISBN 0-472-10405-5, \$34.50.

Finch explores the connections between meter and meaning in poetry, focusing on that of Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, Stephen Crane, and T.S. Eliot. Interested in both the literary and the cultural connotations of metrical patterns, Finch traces the evolution of poetic meter from ancient times to the present. She concludes by applying her theory of "metrical code" to readings of contemporary poems by Audre Lorde, Anne Sexton, and Charles Wright. Her theory draws upon the work of Roland Barthes, the Russian formalists, and feminist literary critics.

Little, Geraldine Clinton. *Out of Darkness: Is Recognition of Value?* Lanham, Md: Univ. Press of America, 1993. 110 pages. ISBN 0-8191-8907-3, \$28.50.

Little writes about the lives, work, and posthumous fame of Emily Dickinson, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Thomas Traherne, John Donne, and Edward Taylor. These five major poets continued to write although their creativity remained unrecognized during their lifetimes. Little concludes her book with comments from contemporary poets on the creative impulse in themselves and others.

Masako Takeda and Gregory Farmer, "The Evergreens: The Other Dickinson House." *Massachusetts Review* 34, no. 4 (Winter 1993): 545-64.

Reprinted as a booklet that includes five handsome color photos by Jerome Liebling. Available for \$5.50 (including postage) from: Massachusetts Review, Memorial Hall, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003 U.S.A.

Book Note: Joan Kirkby's book *Emily Dickinson*, released by Macmillan in the United Kingdom in 1991, is now available in the U.S., issued by St. Martin's Press (ISBN 0-312-09953-3) for \$11.95. See review in Fall 1991 *Bulletin*.

Review

Joseph Duchac. *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: An Annotated Guide to Commentary Published in English, 1978-1989.* New York: G.K. Hall, 1993. 534 pages. ISBN 0-8161-7352-4, \$55.00.

Reviewed by Daniel Lombardo

When Joseph Duchac's earlier annotated guide to Dickinson's poetry was published in 1979 it was not given much notice. However, the volume, which covered 1890 to 1977, proved to be an invaluable resource for the Dickinson scholar's reference shelf. The present volume extends through 1989 and effectively takes us through the first century of Dickinson criticism.

Duchac's stated goal is to enable students, teachers, scholars, or general readers to locate all published discussion of individual poems. Sources omitted are dissertations, theses, and works not in English. The poems are arranged alphabetically by first line, followed by a chronology of commentaries. Duchac summarizes and/or quotes each commentary in brief. This provides the researcher with a reasonable guide, but necessarily excludes much.

For example, for the poem "I measure every grief I meet" (561), Duchac has chosen two sentences from Christopher Benfey's *Emily Dickinson and the Problem of Others* (Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1984): "My grief is just as much a mystery to me as their grief. This is one argument against 'analogy,' that my relation to my grief is not necessarily privileged." This passage is significant, yet Benfey's discussion of the poem's biblical references deserves some mention: "The first line is memorable, and the peculiar

aptness of the conjunction of 'measure' and 'meet' depends, I think, on a biblical echo. Behind the line lies the injunction from the Sermon on the Mount, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again' (Matt. 7:1-2)." Benfey concludes that "Jesus' words touch on reciprocity, and reciprocity is at the heart of this poem" (p. 89).

That none of this, which Benfey considers at "the heart" of the poem, appears in Duchac's summary results, of course, from the subjective nature of the editing as well as from space considerations. This serves to emphasize the point that, as Duchac intended, most will want to read the commentary in the original source in full.

In an ideal literary world, the two volumes would appear as one, saving the reader from having to locate two citations for "Grief is a mouse" (793) in the first volume and three others in the second. A more serious hindrance for many is the fact that the first volume is out of print, an unfortunate fate for books of this caliber.

Duchac's brief introduction includes cogent points about the percentage of Dickinson poems that remain without published commentary (15 percent, as opposed to more than 25 percent when the first volume was published) and about recent trends in criticism (the "gendrification" of Dickinson studies and the effect of the publication of Ralph W. Franklin's *The Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson*). The volume ends with a useful thirty-five page bibliography.

This annotated guide to commentary and its predecessor are a rare achievement. We can only hope for a rebirth of the earlier volume and wide distribution and a long published life for the present one.

Daniel Lombardo is curator of Special Collections at the Jones Library, Amherst, Massachusetts.

Homage to Brita Lindberg-Seyersted

By Roland Hagenbüchle

This article, the fourth in a series on leading Dickinson scholars, is by Roland Hagenbüchle, professor of American Literature at the Catholic University of Eichstätt, Bavaria. He is the author of books on John Milton and Emily Dickinson and of numerous articles on English and American literature. He has edited several collections of essays focusing on paradox in Western thought, poetics and poetic knowledge, and tradition and modernism in American poetry.

Benjamin Lease, Series Editor

Conrad Aiken's early essays on Emily Dickinson, along with studies by Chase, Tate, and Whicher, inaugurated Dickinson scholarship and helped to create an intense interest in her oeuvre on both sides of the Atlantic.

But it was left to Charles Anderson (relying on Johnson's painstaking editions of the poems and letters) to offer in 1960 the first full-fledged study of what is—with the sole exception of Gerard Manley Hopkins—unquestionably the greatest nineteenth-century poet in the English language. Anderson focused on Dickinson's themes and motifs but, apart from some scattered remarks on her "wile of words" (etymology, category shift, metrical counterpoint, suspended rhyme), he had relatively little to say about the poet's verbal art.

Eight years later, Professor Brita Lindberg-Seyersted of the Department of British and American Studies at the University of Oslo filled the gap with her widely acclaimed *The Voice of the Poet: Aspects of Style in the Poetry of Emily Dickinson*. Her superbly documented book was a spectacular advance in Dickinson scholarship and made a tremendous impression on the scholarly world. From then on, nobody who seriously wanted to study Dickinson's poetry could bypass this study.

It may therefore be in order to remind ourselves briefly of the salient insights of Lindberg-Seyersted's seminal study. In



an astoundingly comprehensive manner, her analysis is conducted on the levels of vocabulary, syntax, grammar, imagery, and meter.

To begin with, she highlights the element of "colloquialness" in Dickinson's poetic language, emphasizing its dialogic quality: we overhear a variously modulated voice speaking to a second person. One of the book's most important findings is the opposition between different registers: the native, monosyllabic (concrete and homely) Anglo-Saxon register versus the polysyllabic (abstract and elevated) Latinate register, a fact noted before but never thoroughly analyzed.

Among the metrical and prosodic innovations, Lindberg-Seyersted examines the poet's unorthodox line arrangement and her preference for off-rhymes that reach a maximum in the *annus mirabilis* 1862. She also notes Dickinson's increasing tendency toward ellipsis as well as her use of non-finite pronominal and verbal forms (such as "be" or "ourself"). These forms, she suggests, may be understood as expressing a universal present and as emphasizing the timelessness and general validity of poetic truth.

On the graphemic level, Lindberg-Seyersted agrees with Thomas H. Johnson and Richard Sewall that capitalization and the use of the dash are highly conscious but impressionistic methods of stressing individual words and arranging rhythmical units—a view first advanced in Lindberg-Seyersted's cogently argued monograph *Emily Dickinson's Punctuation* (1965).

Among the *trouvailles* of Lindberg-Seyersted's *Voice of the Poet* we may point out her thorough exemplification and shrewd interpretation of Dickinson's use of "slantness," but three other features discussed in this study also deserve special mention: Dickinson's increasing tendency toward abstraction, her predilection for paradox, and her frequent use of the suffix of negation as documented by the many coinages with "-less" (a formation representing the largest group of neologisms in Dickinson's work). The poet shares this feature with Keats, and Lindberg-Seyersted approvingly quotes Teut A. Riese's suggestion that this may be her method of expressing the transcendence of limits (a point more fully elaborated later by Sharon Cameron).

Glancing at Professor Lindberg-Seyersted's scholarly corpus, one is amazed at the breadth of her interests. It is impossible to give here an adequate impression of the scope of her publications, ranging from African American women writers such as Paule Marshall and Alice Walker (*Black and Female: Essays on Writings by Black Women in the Diaspora*) to writers such as Bernard Malamud and—last but not least—the seminal figure of Ford Madox Ford, to whose literary friendships with Stephen Crane, Henry James, and Ezra Pound Brita Lindberg-Seyersted has devoted several individual studies.

Despite the remarkable variety of her scholarship, the following research interests appear to stand out: a predilection for close stylistic analysis, a concern with the larger sociocultural context, an ongoing

interest in the subject of Anglo-American contacts, and an emphatic concern with gender studies. Her latest project (approaching completion) deals with Sylvia Plath: *The Magic of the Word: Style and Language in Sylvia Plath's Poetry*.

Still, it is gratifying to note that in spite of Lindberg-Seyersted's wide-ranging interests, Emily Dickinson has kept a special place in her heart. One of her recent works (drawing on feminist critics such as Sandra M. Gilbert and Suzanne Juhasz) is "Gender and Women's Literature." Based on a comparison between Sylvia Plath and Emily Dickinson and dealing with the specific artistic qualities of women writers, this brief but astutely balanced essay should be required reading for students of poetry.

From our vantage point in reviewing twentieth-century Dickinson scholarship, we may without exaggeration conclude that, along with her other scholarly work, Professor Lindberg-Seyersted's *The Voice of the Poet* belongs with that class of rare studies that may be elaborated by subsequent critics but—in terms of scholarly achievement—can never be surpassed.

Without Brita Lindberg-Seyersted's admirable contribution, Dickinson studies today would lack one of its most vital components.

Carlisle, continued from page 5

that ends with the triumphant line 'Demure as dynamite.'...That alone should assure him of immortality" (from *Invisible Harvest*):

Emily Dickinson

The daffodil she sent to me
arrived a century late.
The calling card she smuggled in
lies on my hallway plate
while through my residence resounds
the tiptoe of delight:
the woman with the perfect word
demure as dynamite.

Carlisle said he "could not live without poetry." I, for one, am grateful that he didn't.

Acknowledgments

Material for this article was gathered from Thomas John Carlisle's works as mentioned in the text, personal correspondence, and an unpublished autobiography. I am grateful to

Further Note on the Dickinson Daguerreotype

By Mary Elizabeth Kromer Bernhard

The initial publication in the last *EDIS Bulletin* of a reversed image of Emily Dickinson (reversed from the daguerreotype at Amherst College) is noteworthy. I first analyzed the probable reversal of the Dickinson daguerreotype in my article "A Response to 'Eyes Be Blind, Heart Be Still'" (*New England Quarterly* 55, no. 1 [March 1982]).

Since then, I have traced the provenance of the daguerreotype in my review of *The World of Emily Dickinson* by Polly Longworth (*New England Quarterly* 64, no. 2 [June 1991]).

The earliest form of photography, dating from 1839, the daguerreotype process has been frequently misunderstood. Portraiture dominated daguerreotypy, and a silver-plated copper sheet exposed in a camera became the daguerreotype.

his sons, the Reverend David Carlisle and the Reverend Jonathan Carlisle, for their help in the preparation of this article and for their permission to quote from the poetry.

Margaret Freeman is professor of English at Los Angeles Valley College. She is currently working on a cognitive linguistic analysis of Dickinson's poetry.

Editing ED, continued from page 8

claims it is two. When "poems" are so made by different editors, who decides: 1) what counts as part of the poem; 2) where the poem ends and where it begins; 3) who counts as author of the poem; 4) what characteristics constitute the poem's identity?

These various editorial questions are intriguing issues of interpretation and critical understanding first raised by the Dickinson manuscripts themselves: What are the genres of her literatures? Are the terms "poems" and "letters" sufficient to describe her literary productions, or, as Susan Dickinson realized, too limited? Since Dickinson indicated generic distinctions and connotations with maneuvers such as spacing, can any of us speak to these issues if we do not base our work

In the traditional daguerreotype process, the image was later reversed, as in a mirror. Techniques for re-reversing the image, such as the use of a "reversing prism," were devised at an early time. Such sophisticated methods must not have been used in the case of the daguerrotypes of Emily Dickinson and Emily Norcross Dickinson, especially if they were taken by a rural daguerreotypist.

In the reversed version of the famous daguerreotype, as shown in the *Bulletin*, Dickinson's pose appears more natural than in the original. It is probable that even Lavinia and Austin Dickinson would have had less objection to this version than to the original. In any case, this photograph will undoubtedly become the "standard" Emily Dickinson.

on study of the manuscripts?

Martha Nell Smith is associate professor and associate director of graduate studies at the University of Maryland at College Park. Ellen Louise Hart is a Ph.D. student at the University of California, Santa Cruz, completing a dissertation on editing Dickinson. They are co-editing The Book of Emily and Susan Dickinson, an edition of the correspondence between the two sisters-in-law.

Lowenberg Collection, from page 10

records, it will be necessary to provide "original cataloging" for a large number of the books, for which no OCLC bibliographic records exist. This will take time. Work on organizing the clippings, the "clue cards," and the musical and manuscript materials is also taking place.

For further information, please contact Kathleen Johnson, University Libraries, 203A Love Library, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68588-0410; or via Internet: kathyj@unllib.unl.edu.

Kathleen Johnson is associate professor and in Central Reference Services in the University Libraries, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She is in charge of collection development in English and American literature.

MEMBERS' NEWS

Conference '95: "Emily Dickinson Abroad"

Plans are progressing for the EDIS Second International Conference, to be held in Innsbruck, Austria, August 4-6, 1995, under the general title "Emily Dickinson Abroad."

Conference chairman Margaret Dickie and EDIS president Vivian Pollak report that invitations have gone out to a number of speakers and acceptances are beginning to come in.

Abstracts of papers are also coming in for sessions on the four principal topics: "Editing Dickinson," "Gender Issues," "Dickinson in Historical and Cultural Context," and "Dickinson Abroad." Papers will also be welcomed on intertextuality and teaching. Additional proposals will be accepted through the end of May. They should be addressed to: Dr. Margaret Dickie, Department of English,

Park Hall 254, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602 U.S.A.

Further plans will be announced at the 1994 EDIS Annual Meeting (see below). Additional information will appear in the fall issue of the *Bulletin*.

We hope many of you are making plans to attend the conference, which is expected to draw participants from throughout the world.

Los Angeles Chapter Inaugurated

By Margaret Freeman

On December 10, 1993, Emily Dickinson's birthday, approximately thirty Dickinsonians and Elderhostel members met to inaugurate EDISLA—the Society's new Los Angeles chapter—with a performance of Robert Chauls's *Songs of Great Men and Death* by Eli Gunnell, tenor, with the composer at the piano. A reception followed, featuring sherry and Dickinson's black cake.

At the chapter's second meeting, held on March 24, 1994, at the Book Grinders in Van Nuys, Cristanne Miller discussed the recently published book *Comic Power in Emily Dickinson*, which she coauthored with Suzanne Juhasz and Martha Nell Smith, and Japanese scholar Masako Takeda talked about her year of research in Amherst and her article on Austin Dickinson's home, the Evergreens, published in the *Massachusetts Review* (see page 11). Both signed copies of their works.

The twenty-five people in attendance were then treated to an abbreviated version of the Japanese tea ceremony, with Masako officiating with her "traveling tea kit."

We plan to hold regular meetings of the chapter and to encourage more people to discover Dickinson's poetry and to join the Society. For further information, contact Margaret Freeman at 1300 Greenleaf Canyon Road, Topanga, CA 90290.

1994 Annual Meeting

The 1994 EDIS Annual Meeting will be held at 10:30 A.M. on Sunday, June 5, at the Bahia Resort Hotel, San Diego, in conjunction with the meeting of the American Literature Association.

Further plans for our 1995 conference in Innsbruck, Austria, will be unveiled, and results of elections for the EDIS Board, including the Member-at-Large seat, will be announced. This is also a chance for members to meet one another and exchange views on the activities of the Society.

We urge all members who can to attend.

ALA Dickinson Sessions

Two sessions of Dickinson papers will be held at the 1994 meeting of the American Literature Association at the Bahia Resort Hotel in San Diego, June 2-5. The first, "Emily Dickinson and Audience," will be on Friday, June 3, from 5:30 to 6:50. Marilee Lindemann will chair the session, with papers by Gudrun Grabher, Willis Buckingham, and Margaret Freeman.

The second session, on Saturday, June 4, from 1:00 to 2:20, will focus on "Emily Dickinson's Letters." Ellen Louise Hart is chair. Presenters will be Susan Rieke, Paul Crumbley, and Erika Scheurer.

For registration information, contact Alfred Bendixen, Department of English, California State University, 5151 State University Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90032-8110, or call 213-343-4140.

Amherst Events

Homestead Hours

For those members planning a trip to New England this year, Carol Birtwistle, curator of the Emily Dickinson Homestead, invites you to tour the building and explore the town of Amherst.

Selected rooms of the Homestead are open for tours from 1:30 p.m. through 3:45 p.m., Wednesdays through Saturdays from early May through October, and Wednesdays and Saturdays only in early spring and late fall.

Admission is \$3.00 per person. Reservations are advised, as tour size is limited. Call 413-542-8161 or write well in advance to: The Emily Dickinson Homestead, 280 Main St., Amherst, MA 01002.

Dickinson Weekend

For several years now the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst has sponsored "Emily Dickinson's World," a weekend in mid-May (near the time of the poet's death) with a full schedule of lectures, exhibits, plays, a dinner, and tours to Dickinson sites, including a candlelight walk to the poet's grave. Participants stay in B & B accommodations provided by members of the UU Society.

The 1995 weekend will be held from May 12 to 14, with a cost of approximately \$175.00. The event usually sells out early. Interested members should write for a brochure to the Unitarian Universalist Society, 121 North Pleasant Street, Amherst MA 01002, or call the coordinator, Helene Lambert, at 413-549-1134.

News from the Emily Dickinson Center, Denmark

By Niels Kjær

A new church play, *Alting har tid* (For Everything There Is a Season) was recently performed in several Danish churches. Using Ecclesiastes 3.1ff as a framework, the play is a collage I arranged that illuminates human life by means of Biblical passages, poems, hymns, and other music as diverse as that of John Dowland and Heitor Villa-Lobos.

The selections include eleven poems by Emily Dickinson read and sung by Agnethe Bjørn and Randi Winther Henriksen. The musical settings are by classical guitarist Martin Strange, who also performed as accompanist.

In keeping with the Biblical invocation of the variousness of life, the Dickinson poems range from "To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee" and "A little Madness in the Spring," to "Wild Nights—Wild Nights!" to "I felt a Funeral in my Brain" and "I shall know why—when Time is over."

For me personally, a highlight of 1993 was a visit to California in October



Photo by Leif Hansen

Randi Winther Henriksen and Agnethe Bjørn perform in *Alting har tid* in Sanderum Church, Odense, Denmark.

with my two daughters, a compensation

for missing the EDIS conference in 1992. We stayed a few days with Margaret Freeman in Topanga and, thanks to Margaret, had an unforgettable experience. On October 20 we visited Los Angeles Valley College, and I had the privilege of speaking about Emily Dickinson in Denmark.

My Emily Dickinson collection, until recently located in Lyø, has been transferred to the International People's College, which operates under the auspices of the Danish Ministry of Culture. The IPC offers interdisciplinary and creative subjects taught in English by an international faculty to students from all parts of the world. The college is situated close to Elsinore, home of Shakespeare's Hamlet. Those interested in taking part should write to the IPC, Montebello Allé 1, 3000 Helsingør, Denmark. My own address remains Lyø, 5600 Faaborg, Denmark.

The Reverend Niels Kjær is director of the Emily Dickinson Center in Lyø, Denmark.

Notes & Queries

The editor offers apologies to sculptor **Lesley Dill** for the misspellings of her first name that appeared in the last issue.

Harvard University Press, in its "**Big Spring Sail**" [sic], is offering special prices on two Dickinson works: Thomas Johnson's three-volume variorum edition of the poems, and Ralph Franklin's two-volume edition of the fascicles (*The Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson*).

The Johnson edition (\$85.00) is on sale for \$68.00; the Franklin edition (\$145.00) is on sale for \$116.00. Shipping in the U.S. and Canada is \$4.75 per order, more elsewhere. Sale prices are good through June 30.

To order, you must have a sale catalog. To receive one, call (in the U.S. and Canada) 1-800-448-2242. From other countries, write for a catalog to: Mar-

keting Manager, Harvard University Press, 79 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138 U.S.A. Orders can be faxed to the number shown in the catalog. All orders must be prepaid (credit card or check in U.S. dollars).

Norbert Hirschhorn, author of "A Bandaged Secret" (reviewed, Spring 1992 *Bulletin*) has discovered three new Dickinson family letters, two written by Edward Dickinson to Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner, and one by Lavinia Dickinson to Jeanie Bates Greenough in November 1890, the day before the first publication of Emily Dickinson's poetry. Details will appear in the fall 1994 issue.

Two members have reported receiving copies of the November/December 1993 issue of the *Bulletin* with **missing pages**. If you received such a copy, please write the editor to receive a complete copy.

Amherst Museum Seeks Art Materials

Amherst College's Mead Art Museum is in the initial stages of planning an exhibit of contemporary artworks that derive their visual imagery from Emily Dickinson. Sources of inspiration for the works might include the Emily Dickinson daguerreotype, her poetry or letters, facets of her life, or other aspects.

The museum staff requests assistance from EDIS members in locating artists whose work we might consider for inclusion. We are also considering the possibility of showing commercial objects whose imagery is based on the daguerreotype. Suggestions of specific examples will be gratefully received.

Please forward information to Susan Danly, Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Amherst, MA 01002 or fax to 413-542-2117. Artists should send slides or photographs and a resume.

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Editor's Note: I am delighted to announce the appointment of Barbara Kelly as book review editor of the *Bulletin*, beginning with this issue. Many of you will remember Barbara as bibliographer and indexer for *Dickinson Studies*. With the cessation of that periodical, she now turns her energies and research skills to keeping *Bulletin* readers informed of new Dickinson publications and arranging for reviews.

Barbara has taught English and art history. She has degrees in English literature from Pennsylvania State University and from San Jose State University, where her longtime interest in Dickinson led to her work for *Dickinson Studies*.

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Bulletin readers are urged to send information about new Dickinson publications to Barbara at 444 Washington

Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94301, or call her at 415-321-8146.

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Annual dues are \$35.00 for regular members (includes subscription to the *Bulletin* and *The Emily Dickinson Journal*), \$15.00 for special members (the *Bulletin* only), and \$50.00 for contributing members. Membership inquiries and changes of address should be sent to Eleanor Heginbotham, 8502 Wilkesboro Lane, Potomac, MD 20854, U.S.A. Membership applications should be sent to Martha Nell Smith, Department of English, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, U.S.A.

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