

Bulletin

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MAY/JUNE 2004

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

EMILY DICKINSON: REALMS OF AMPLITUDE JULY 30-AUGUST 1, 2004 HILO, HAWAII

Aloha. You are invited to attend EDIS's fifth international conference, "Emily Dickinson: Realms of Amplitude," in Hilo on the Big Island of Hawaii from July 30 through August 1, 2004. Amid a beautiful bayside setting of tropical flowers, palms, and banyan trees, we will explore the amplitude that Dickinson reveals in her writings.

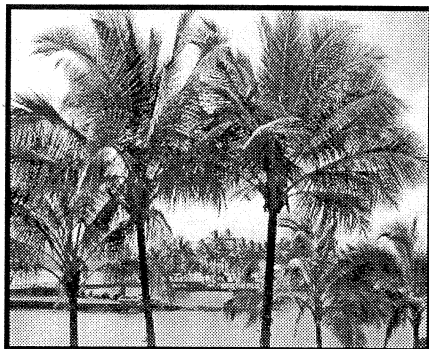


Photo by Jonathan Morse

Thirty miles away is Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, an extraordinary zone of rain forests, black rock, white steam, and the lava that the poet envisioned as "hissing corals." For a full description of the conference see the Preliminary Schedule in this issue.

HOTEL

Meetings, meals, and lodging will be in the Hilo Hawaiian Hotel, situated

on Hilo Bay and framed by the backdrop of Mauna Kea. Approximately two miles from Hilo Airport, the hotel offers a swimming pool, a lawn going down to the water's edge, and attractive walks along Banyan Drive and through Liliuokalani Gardens. Within a short drive there are several beach parks and beautiful Rainbow Falls, too. The hotel's tour desk can supply information about recreation on the Big Island, including ecotourism, Hawaiian cultural tourism, and non-strenuous activities. Special conference rates are \$85 (plus tax) for a garden view; \$102 for deluxe ocean view (plus tax). The hotel's Website is <http://www.castlesresorts.com/HHH>. Telephone: (808) 935-9361 / Fax: (808) 969-6472. The hotel's address is: Hilo Hawaiian Hotel, 71 Banyan Drive, Hilo, HI 96720, USA. For the conference discount mention your affiliation with EDIS.

TRAVEL

From North America and a number of locations in Asia, many airlines offer direct flights to Honolulu International Airport (HNL) on the island of Oahu. From there, Aloha Airlines and Hawaiian Airlines connect to Hilo (ITO). By jet, on an Aloha B737 or a Hawaiian B717, the flight takes about forty-five minutes. Interline baggage transfer is automatic. It is also possible to fly directly from the

mainland United States to Kailua-Kona (KOA), on the Big Island's west side, and drive to Hilo from there. This spectacular drive takes two to three hours. There is little public transportation on the Big Island. Automobile rental is not expensive if you make your reservation through the airline, and parking at the Hilo Hawaiian

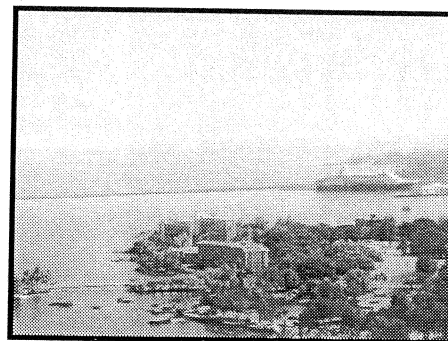


Photo by Jonathan Morse

Hotel is free. Hilo also has cabs to get you from the airport to the hotel.

REGISTRATION

Conference registration is \$120 for current EDIS members and \$150 for non-members or those who register after May 29. (You must be an EDIS member to participate in the conference program.) Dinner at the Volcano House costs \$20 and should be paid

Conference, continued on page 21

**A preliminary conference schedule appears on pages 10-12, and a registration form on page 23. Register now!
The deadline is May 29.**

A CONVERSATION WITH CLAIRE MALROUX, CONTEMPORARY FRENCH TRANSLATOR OF EMILY DICKINSON

By Elizabeth Brunazzi

For the first time in the history of the Poet to Poet series, I am featuring a poet who is a translator. Claire Malroux received the French Grand Prix National de Traduction in 1995 and is herself the author of eight collections of poetry. Recent volumes include *Soleil de Jadis* (Paris: Editions Castor Astral, 1998), an autobiographical, narrative poem devoted to the memory of her father, who died in 1945 following deportation from France during the Occupation, and *Suspens* (Paris: Editions Castor Astral, 2001). *Soleil de Jadis* was translated into English by Marilyn Hacker and published under the title *A Long Gone Sun* (Sheep Meadow Press, 2000).

Jonnie Guerra, *Series Editor*

I first met French translator Claire Malroux in Paris on March 13, 2001, and again in June, 2002. Her reputation as the premier French translator of Emily Dickinson would alone have made her an alluring subject for an interview. She also has translated the poetry of Emily Brontë, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Nobel laureate Derek Walcott, and writes original poetry in her native French.

My interview with Malroux inspired a reevaluation and valuable reflection on the role and importance of the contemporary translator in the transmission of culture, particularly under the pressures of an ever-chang-

ing international cultural horizon. Personally, I was struck by the extraordinary combination of seriousness, amounting to a sacred calling, a vocation, in Malroux's description of her work and profession, with an equally exceptional discretion and modesty about her accomplishments and point of view.

Malroux's early academic and intellectual background is that of a classicist, in Greek and Latin. As we spoke, and she elaborated on her approach to translation, her emphasis on acute attention to language rather than the author displayed the rigorous, disciplined respect for textual values that is a distinguishing feature of classical training. As she discussed the particularities of her translations of individual authors, a certain privilege given to the persistence of the classical within the modern emerged. She came to value a "prosaicness, a rhetoric at once modern and classical" in Dickinson's poetry. Malroux also associates this stylistic vein in Dickinson with the "oscillation between free verse and, at once, quite sculptural style" in the work of Derek Walcott, whom she qualifies as both kindred with Dickinson and "one of the greatest living contemporary poets."

Not that the choice of an author for translation is an impersonal one. Malroux speaks of her first engagement with Dickinson in 1983 as "love at first sight," "an encounter with the un-

canny," and the discovery of a "personal affinity." She responded especially to the "metaphysical and temperamental restlessness Dickinson's poetry expresses." For Malroux at the time, the meeting led to "a good marriage" with "the nun of Amherst."

As in all marriages, the post-nuptial phase represented an evolution in Malroux's response to Dickinson: "After the marriage, reason took the lead," and the translator began to discover a "prosaic lyricism characteristic of modernity." Malroux's description of the Dickinsonian "voice" is incisive: "Using a spontaneous voice apparently independent of any lyrical calculation, she adopts a rhetoric based on the processes of reasoning that shades off into abstraction." She sums up the "metaphysical" character of Dickinson's poetry, thus: "The play of oppositions and inversions is the essential aspect of Dickinson's irony."

This "prosaic, neutral, flat" style challenges the translator who would render Dickinson into French, which according to Malroux is inimical to such a style "characterized by adverbs and demonstrative pronouns." Malroux detects with a certain relish a "destructive or deconstructive element," a "dynamiting of all values" in this aspect Dickinson's work.

One of Malroux's favorite examples of the stylistic challenges of translat-

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ing Dickinson's poetry into French is the Dickinson poem Fr 1784; her translation follows:

The grave my little cottage is,
Where "keeping house"
for thee
I make my parlor orderly
And lay the marble tea.

For two divided, briefly
A cycle, it may be,
Till everlasting life unite
In strong society.

La tombe est mon petit cottage,
C'est là que je t'invite
Et sers le goûter de marbre
Dans le salon bien rangé.

Pour deux divisé brièvement,
Le temps d'un cycle peut-être,
Avant que par la vie éternelle
Notre union soit scellée.

(Trans. Claire Malroux, *Poèmes*, #1743 [Paris: Belin, 1989])

Malroux's solutions to the problems of translating Dickinson into French using syntactical shifts are evident in the first, third and fourth lines of the first stanza of this poem, and again in the first, third and fourth lines of the second stanza. She also preserves the rhythm of Dickinson's original by employing a linguistically predictable shift from the substantive, noun-headed phrase "Keeping house for thee" to "je t'invite"; the semantic transformation of the Anglo-American "parlor" to the French "goûter," which refers to both the activity and hour of serving afternoon tea rather than the place; and by adding the phrase "le temps" in the second line of the second stanza.

Quatrains

The most recent addition to Malroux's translations of Dickinson, *Quatrains et autres poèmes brefs*, was published by the celebrated editor Gallimard in 2000, in a bilingual, English-French edition. Malroux describes with the

precision of a musician the care required to preserve Dickinson's rhythm between the second and fourth verses of her "quatrains." I suspect that in

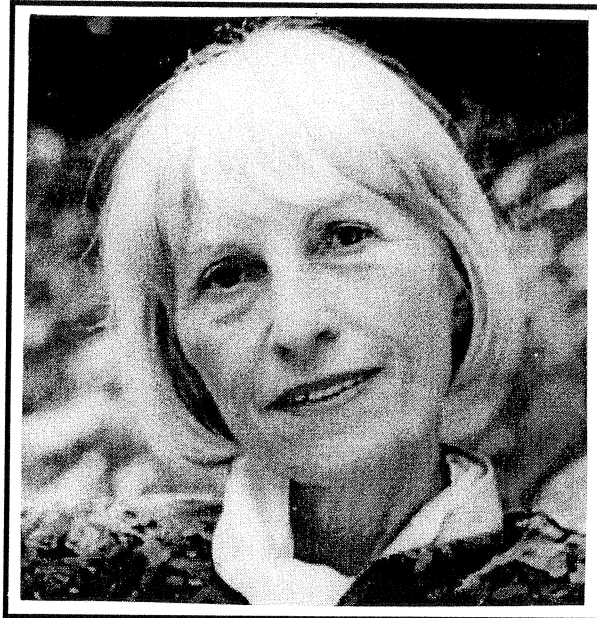


Photo Courtesy of Pascal Robin

Claire Malroux

these most minimal of poems, in which rhyme is no longer a consideration, lie the greatest surprises and triumphs of Malroux's translating skills:

Soft as the massacre of Suns
By Evening's sabres slain.
(Fr 1146)

Sourd comme le massacre de Soleils
Occis par les sabres du Soir.
(Trans. Claire Malroux, *Quatrains et autres poèmes brefs*, #103. Paris: Gallimard 2000)

Malroux's tact as a translator is particularly appreciable in such a short poem, in her choice of the French "sourd" (literally "deaf," and by extension, "muffled" or "voiceless") for the English "soft"; and in both the syntactic inversion and choice of diction represented by the French "Occis" (like "slain" a now outdated term that has fallen into disuse) for the English "slain."

Malroux's remarks indicate that her "marriage" with Dickinson is the

touchstone and matrix for all of her subsequent literary "liaisons." When she started working on Emily Brontë, she discovered similar poetic processes operating in the earlier, post-Romantic writer, novelist and poet; she then established a powerful link between the post-Romanticism of Brontë and the modernism of Dickinson. As Malroux points out, it is well known that the "nun of Amherst" was deeply concerned with both Emily and Charlotte Brontë and that she wrote a poetic tribute to Charlotte Brontë on the occasion of the British writer's death. For the particular purpose of discovering further the reading and cultural universe of Dickinson, Malroux translated a selection of poems by Elizabeth Barrett Browning. It is not difficult to detect in Malroux a certain claim to feminine preeminence in translating the sen-

sibilities of these beacon women writers of the late English Romantic and early modernist periods.

Malroux's career as a translator is not confined, however, to the feminine (and certainly not feminist) canon. She is also a translator, for example, of Wallace Stevens and Derek Walcott. Stevens's poetry is distinguished, according to Malroux, by a "delicate beauty difficult to render in French"; and a "rarefied aestheticism" which she also links with the poetry of Dickinson through a common "strategy of ambiguity." She cites Stevens's poem "The Emperor of Ice Cream" as the best example of the way Stevens continues Dickinson's stylistic strategies. She also points out that Walcott has dubbed Emily Dickinson the greatest of American poets because she is familiar with "terror."

According to Malroux, the translator is preeminently an interpreter, a "carrier" or transmitter of cultural change and evolution. The "ideal" translator is one who ensures that a great poet speaks across cultural, linguistic, and rhetorical frontiers; who maintains "transparency"; and who

Poet, continued on page 22

"OPEN THE DOOR, THEY ARE WAITING FOR ME" ¹

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE EVERGREENS NURSERY

By Connie Ann Kirk

This spring Emily Dickinson pilgrims and general visitors alike have their first opportunity to see a section of the Dickinson family living quarters that has been off limits to most people for over 120 years—the nursery on the second floor of The Evergreens.² The room was originally part of a small rental cottage that stood on the property before Edward Dickinson incorporated it into the Italianate villa he built as a wedding gift for his son and daughter-in-law in 1856. The room is approximately 13' square with an angled 9-1/2' ceiling and straw matting covering the floor. It has two exterior windows facing west, so it is darkened much of the day. A single interior window on the east wall provides some additional light from another window directly across the narrow hallway as well as the opportunity to check on a sleeping baby without disturbing him/her. There is one closet along the back corner of the north wall. The walls are covered with blue on blue floral wallpaper with gold and daisy trim. The ceiling, casings, and doors are painted white.

In her unpublished memoir, Martha Dickinson Bianchi recalls the nursery being used for guests when the house was full of visitors, which suggests the room may have been used for that purpose before the couple had children (Bianchi). The couple often entertained visiting speakers and dignitaries to Amherst College before and after they started their family. Child relatives, such as Anna and Clara Newman, who lived in The Evergreens after they were orphaned as wards of their uncle Edward Dickinson, may have spent time in the room as well.

It is probable that the poet's niece and both nephews all slept in the nursery when they were small. The nursery's proximity to the nurse's quarters made it easy for her to care for a new baby. Born in 1861, the oldest child, Ned, was known to have been a

frequent crier as an infant who tested the nerves and skills of several nurses the Dickinsons employed in the couple's first months of parenthood (Habegger 431-35). Martha, born in 1866, later described the children of the house playing in the hallway outside the nursery, imagining the hall with its windows and doors as a train with compartments (Bianchi).

After the poet's youngest nephew, Gilbert, died in 1883 from typhoid fever believed to have been contracted while playing in muddy water at Amherst Common, stories circulated around town about the depth of his mother's grief. It was said that Susan Dickinson closed the nursery door and rarely if ever entered the room again or allowed anything inside it to be changed. The nursery was the boy's room at the time of his death, though the story has been traditionally told (though not definitely documented) that Gilbert died in his parents' bedroom downstairs.

By her own account in a letter to Elizabeth Holland, Aunt Emily joined the family in a vigil at Gilbert's bedside. Whether the story of Susan Dickinson's wishes to keep the nursery sealed off after Gib's death is true or is instead long-accepted hearsay remains an open question. Mary Hampson claimed, presumably from information she received from Martha Dickinson Bianchi, that Ned Dickinson occasionally slept in Gilbert's bed after the boy's death (Bernhard 31). In the early 1980s, Hampson showed scholar Mary Elizabeth Kromer Bernhard one of Martha's French gowns hanging in Gilbert's closet (31).

In an 1895 inventory of The Evergreens written in Susan's hand close to the time of Austin's death, she notes the nursery contents as a mahogany bed and bureau, a washstand, and a rocking chair. A 1923 inventory written by Martha Dickinson Bianchi does

not include the nursery in its listing at all. Other reports indicate that Gilbert's clothes still occupied the bureau drawers, and toys lay about the floor late in the twentieth century (Longworth and Farmer 22). By the time the Martha Dickinson Bianchi Trust inventoried the contents of the nursery after Mary Hampson's death, items that post-dated Gilbert's death had been placed in the room. Whether Ned or anyone else occasionally slept in the room or Martha perhaps used it to store clothes, it appears that, after the family lived there, the room was only used as extra storage space.

Over the years since Gilbert's death, several people have seen the nursery. These include anyone allowed in by Susan and Austin Dickinson, Martha Bianchi, and Alfred and Mary Hampson, as well as later on those involved with the Bianchi Trust—curators, caretakers, Dickinson scholars and students, and board members. Because of its relative inaccessibility for well over a century, however, the legend of the nursery as a room preserved in time has grown into another of the mysteries about the poet and her family that remained concealed from view behind the "hedge."

Though opening the nursery door does not quite reveal the fixed snapshot in time that the legend causes many visitors to expect, it still makes a powerful and emotional impact. Because of its northwest exposure, the room's pictures are still vibrant with color. The blue wallpaper did not suffer the damage of soot and light exposure to the degree that is evident downstairs. Though time has certainly taken its toll, overall, the room has a brighter, fresher, and newer feel to it than the rest of the house—it lives up to its reputation as the room least used and last used by the youngest member of the poet's family.³

Most people who see the nursery with its toys and furnishings are moved

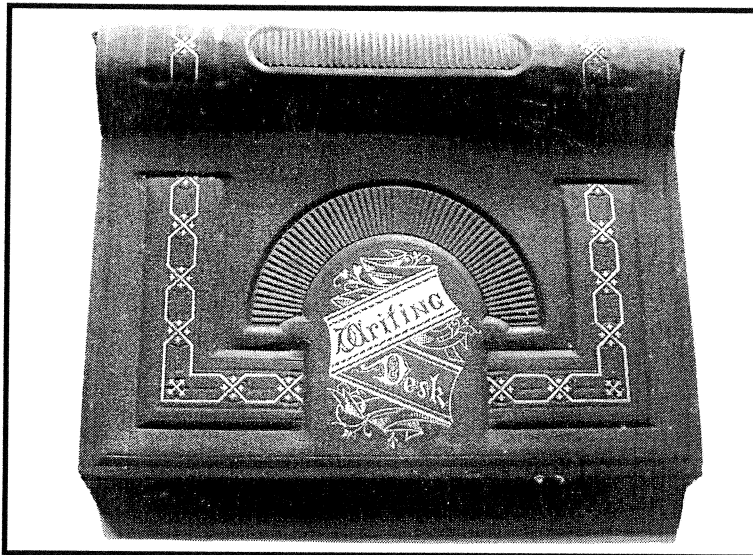
by the sadness of a life cut short. The family's grief is palpable. It is evident that the room's integrity as Gib's nursery, whether at Susan's request or not, has been essentially honored for well over a century, both by people involved with the house and also, strangely, by a passage of time that appears to have been more forgiving to this area of the house than the rest.

The room, like the rest of The Evergreens, is a restoration in progress. Due to a recent successful fundraising campaign that made the back ell of the house safe to walk up to and work in, the nursery is now more available to scholars. Research is in its early stages. Among the most intriguing aspects of the room in addition to its toys, pictures, and other furnishings are the 95 color and black-and-white clippings that have been pasted to the nursery, closet, and hallway doors. Tracing these children's illustrations of birds, animals, children, and other scenes to their original sources in nineteenth-century books, cards, and periodicals will require a significant amount of time and patience. Waiting as a reward

for that effort may be more titles of Dickinson family reading material or other glimpses into the poet's family life and working milieu. Likely sources for clippings include *St. Nicholas Magazine* and *The Youth's Companion*, two popular nineteenth-century children's periodicals that Austin and Susan subscribed to for their children. Gilbert subscribed to the latter.

Research is needed on other nursery furnishings, such as the toys and clothing described in a previous article to this one,⁴ furniture, pictures on the wall, and Gilbert's school work and other belongings, to unlock the stories they have to tell about family life in the Dickinson households. For example, the rocking horse may have been a Christmas gift to Gilbert in 1881. In a January 15, 1882 letter to the boy, cousin Elizabeth (Lizzie) Smith of

Geneva, New York, writes: "By the by, Gib, where and how is the horse that Santa Claus brought you not so very long ago. I have never heard very much about him, but very likely he is out on the race track at this very minute" (Smith). Gilbert's velvet suit, in which he was photographed in a Little Lord Fauntleroy look, unlocks yet another bit of history. Writing from Grand Rapids, Michigan on October 28, 1881(?) to her younger brother, Martha writes: "Cousin Belle's [Belle Gilbert Fuller] wedding went off beautifully & we all wished you could have been there in your velvet suit"



A Boy's Writing Desk

(Dickinson, Martha). The letter suggests that the suit may have been purchased for Gilbert for the purpose of attending the wedding. Instead, Gilbert stayed home in Amherst due to a bad cough, probably whooping cough (a common ailment in those days).

Framed pictures from the nursery include illustrations of cats and a scene from Charles Dickens's *Pickwick Papers*, among others. (Though Gilbert is known to have had several mischievous adventures with cats that his Aunt Emily enjoyed, it is Ned's name that appears inside several of the family's Charles Dickens novels.) Gilbert's kindergarten schoolwork survives and includes intricately woven paper baskets, origami, bamboo bead necklaces, and embroidered pic-

tures and designs on paper. The school crafts required a sure eye, steady hand, and well-developed fine motor skills unusual for American children of Gilbert's age today.

Among the various belongings are several small slates. On one of these, remarkably, a chalk drawing of a locomotive remains. The child's sketch looks much like the Tiger train engine from the toys collection. The chalk drawing speaks to an observer as a fleeting moment frozen in time, a tracing of a short life that could have been very easily erased from history were the young artist's aunt not one of the most revered poets of the English language.

Other than the slate, rocking horse, and velvet suit, certainly one of the most important objects from The Evergreens collection is Gilbert Dickinson's writing desk. To writers and literary scholars, the desk will have special meaning since it contains the only known surviving writing instruments of anyone in Emily Dickinson's family (none of the poet's pens or pencils has been known to survive).

The writing desk was one of dozens of premium gifts given by *The Youth's Companion* as a marketing tool in the late nineteenth century for increasing subscriptions. The desk was offered to current subscribers who brought one new subscriber to the company. The publisher also sold the writing desk outright for 95 cents plus 25 cents postage. The Dickinsons' copy of the *The Youth's Companion* premium catalog for 1882 contains the following description:

This cut [diagram] shows the desk open ready for writing, and also closed. Size, when open, 9 x 14 1/2", when closed, 7 x 9". It has compartments for paper and envelopes, ink bottle, pens, pen-holders and pencils. The outside is beautifully decorated in gold. We give with this desk one quire paper, one pack envelopes,

six pens, one pen-holder, one lead pencil, and one Cushman's patent ink eraser and extractor and pencil eraser. (433)

Inside his writing desk in The Evergreens as Gilbert left it are the following items:

- small glass ink bottle with a cork and brass top
- Tower brand ink pen and tip
- four graphite pencils of various thicknesses, lengths, and wear
- short and well-used orange crayon(?)
- perforated paper with a small American flag embroidered on it
- little leather wallet
- small notebook with slate pages and a pencil in side loop
- 2 printed tickets
- 1882 Indian head penny with hole and ribbon

Like the slate with the train drawing still scratched upon it, some pages in the slate notebook still contain handwritten markings, including multiplication tables and the names "Mama," "Many," and "Gilbert." The printed tickets read, "Grand Show! Animals and Refreshments. June 21. Come All! T. G. Dickinson."

Besides the striking fact that these are the closest examples scholars may ever have of Dickinson-related writing instruments (pencils perhaps similar to what the poet may have used in her later years, e.g.), the writing desk is a miniature time capsule in itself of a late nineteenth-century New England boy's interests and activities. The desk's contents humanize the poet's nephew, bringing to mind boxes of various kinds and shapes owned by children all over the world who store away their own tiny treasures.

In addition to reminding visitors of a sad event in the poet's family, The Evergreens nursery, with its riding horse, velocipede, and other toys, serves as a reminder that lively children played around both houses and grounds while the poet was alive and

working at home. So far, no concrete evidence suggests that the poet visited her niece and nephews in the nursery (neither the Rosenbaum nor the MacKenzie concordance even contains the word). The fact that the poet was in the house, combined with her general delight in the children's goings on, makes it possible that at one time she stood in the room that visitors experience for the first time this spring. Probably the more frequent case was that the children went to see her at the Homestead amid her own daily routines—baking, gardening, etc.—as most children do with adults today; these are the only documented references to the children in the poet's presence.

With the opening of The Evergreens nursery, visitors can now experience a counterpoint in The Evergreens to the poet's bedroom in the Homestead when considering the family's history and its impact on this great American poet and her work. Keeping in mind the profound effect that Gib's early death had on the poet Emily Dickinson, perhaps it is fitting that the intimate spaces of their two bedrooms anchor the emotional and sometimes tangled thread between the two houses.

Notes

1. Emily Dickinson quoting Gilbert Dickinson on his deathbed in her letter to Elizabeth Holland, late 1883. The letter is #873 in Thomas Johnson's and Theodora Ward's edition of *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*.

2. The author would like to acknowledge the following people for their assistance in research for this article: Betty Bernhard, independent scholar and museum guide; Mark Brown, Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts at Brown University; John Kirk, for his valuable research assistance at The Evergreens; Jane Wald, Assistant Director of the Emily Dickinson Museum (who also helped with editing).

3. Research into the various decorative finishes at The Evergreens continues.

4. See Kirk's "'To stay behind - with just the Toys': Gilbert Dickinson's 'Living' Treasures in the Evergreens," *Emily Dickinson International Society Bulletin*, Vol.

15, No. 2, November/December, 2003.

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The Youth's Companion Premium Catalog, 1882.

Connie Ann Kirk is writing Emily Dickinson and Children under contract with University Press of New England. She is a frequent contributor to the Bulletin.

REALIZING POSSIBILITIES

SEAN VERNON'S MUSIC AND EMILY DICKINSON'S WORDS

By Nancy List Pridgen

Vernon, Sean. *This and My Heart*. CD, 49:12 min. Hadley, MA: Turnstone Music, 2003.

Driving from Massachusetts to Upstate New York after the 2002 EDIS conference on "Dickinson in Song," my husband and I were listening to a CD we had bought at the conference—*Wider Than the Sky*, Sean Vernon's first collection of Dickinson's poems set to folk-type music. In the midst of Vermont's mountains that evening, we witnessed a spectacular sunset as Vernon sang, "This is the land the sunset washes." It was an almost mystical experience. This week I have had the pleasure of hearing for the first time Vernon's second CD of Dickinson's poems, *This and My Heart*. I now find myself, when reading one of the poems Vernon has set to music, hearing Vernon's voice and music in the stereo of my imagination.

Listening to the various classical settings of Dickinson's poems over the years, I have appreciated the beauty of the music but have often come away with frustration. The music often seems to overwhelm the words, rendering it difficult to concentrate on Dickinson's meaning. With poetry like Dickinson's, meaning insists on primacy.

Vernon's choice of folk music keeps the focus on the words. Since the early 1960s, fans of commercial folk music by artists such as Bob Dylan and Gordon Lightfoot have studied lyrics on the liner notes of albums and listened intently to the sung words. This album focuses on words, but like Dylan's and Lightfoot's productions, it does not slight the music. The album offers a full cast of supporting musicians supplying vocals and music played on piano, acoustic and electric guitars, percussion, bass, piano, bagpipes, mandolin, fiddle, and organ. Of special interest to EDIS members, Dan Lombardo, former curator of

Dickinson manuscripts at the Jones Library in Amherst, plays drums and percussion throughout. Vernon not only has taken the time to study each poem before putting it to music, but he also has provided liner notes that suggest his interpretation of what Dickinson is trying to communicate.

When Dickinson writes to T.W. Higginson the first time, she sends several poems, asking the editor if her "verse" is "alive," and in her second letter tells him she sings because she is afraid. Several of her poems also contain the phrase "Ising." Perhaps Dickinson herself sang some of her poems. We know she used the rhythm of various hymns for the meter of some of her verse. We also know that she played quaint, original pieces at the piano (Sewall 407). She may well have been delighted with Vernon's work. His clear voice and charming melodies enhance Dickinson's words. Each setting creates an atmosphere suggesting the mood of the poem.

In rendering "It's all I have to bring today" and "Will there really be a morning?" Vernon reflects Dickinson's childlike earnestness in his music and voice. In "Will there really be a morning?" for example, the listener hears primarily just a piano and the vocal, in contrast to the more complex orchestration Vernon employs on several other songs on the album.

The most surprising song was "If I can keep one heart from breaking," which has been considered one of Dickinson's lesser poems. Yet as a folk song, it somehow gains stature, coming across as more substantial in this musical setting. Perhaps this is because song lyrics as a whole do not contain as much substance as poetry as a whole contains. When heard as a song, the words in this poem seem comparable to the lyrics of other folk songs, and it fares better. Additionally, the music provides a context in

which the words come alive.

Two of the settings—"Much madness" and "I dwell in possibility" (which Vernon calls "Gathering Paradise")—really stand out. The music fits nicely with the words and the mood of each poem. As a poem, "I dwell in possibility" leaves the reader with a sense of expansiveness as he or she explores the myriad alternatives life has to offer. Vernon's music captures this feeling.

Though Vernon's rendition of "Much madness" has two awkward moments, it is successful overall. One problem is the forced rhyme Vernon makes with "eye" and "majority," which he pronounces with a stressed long "I" sound. The other is the extended musical gap between "majority" and the rest of the sentence, "in this, as all, prevails." This pause interrupts the natural grammatical flow of the sentence and thus interferes with the sentence's meaning. Still, Vernon has coupled quite suitable music with the poem. Particularly effective is the haunting sound of the background vocal, which brings to mind the feeling of impending doom. This is a feeling that often seems to accompany the awareness that someone in authority is judging an incident on a superficial level and assigning blame unjustly.

Unlike his treatment of the other poems on the album, Vernon reads "I cannot live with you" as a poem against a background of music. In his reading he avoids over-dramatizing the sadness of the poem, instead capturing Dickinson's matter-of-fact tone of poignant simplicity. The recitation works.

Vernon sets the poem "To fight aloud is very brave" to music reminiscent of a military march, effectively reflecting the political and military imagery Dickinson uses. The poem compares the internal battle of a soul's fight for survival with a battle in a war. Vernon's musical setting underscores the poet's

use of images and diction to raise a personal loss to almost epic proportions. He links the personal subject matter with the poem's imagery by concluding the song with what sounds like a funeral march played on bagpipes. This music conjures up a vision of a Civil War battlefield.

Vernon's music catches the tone of playful joy in Dickinson's "Nature rarer uses yellow" and "A drop fell on the apple tree." In the latter poem, he also starts out with single notes played softly on the piano, spaced closer together, reminiscent of individual raindrops. From there the song builds in intensity during the storm proper, and concludes in a joyful tone with the sun shining while the "birds jocosely" sing. Just before and just after this song, we hear sounds of thunder in the distance. This sound effect, subtle and not at all overwhelming, assists in establishing the mood of the poem.

While Vernon uses some of the Todd-edited changes in Dickinson's words (such as "what a wave must be" rather than "what a billow be"), this comes across as only a minor

problem. Copyright considerations have probably come into play in Vernon's choosing the older, more edited text. To his credit, Vernon has included a liner note recommending that the listener consult Franklin's 1999 readers' edition of the poems to read authoritative versions of the poems.

Vernon's music and voice offer a splendid match for Dickinson's verse. His work has done much to make Dickinson's poetry accessible to the less experienced reader. His songs of Dickinson's poetry make me wish I were still in a high school English classroom. High school students will relate to the songs and gain from them a better understanding of Dickinson's poetry. Public school teachers need to be made aware of the availability of this album, as well as Vernon's earlier album of Dickinson poems, *Wider Than the Sky*. Vernon has commented to me in an email that *This and My Heart* will probably be his last Dickinson project because he has other musical directions to explore. I hope he reconsiders.

(Inquiries about this CD should be addressed to Turnstone Music, Box 31,

Hadley, MA 01035 or emailed to turnstone@crocket.com.)

Works Consulted

Dickinson, Emily. *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*. Ed. Thomas H. Johnson and Theodora Ward. 3 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958. 1 vol. edition, 1996.

The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Variorum Edition. Ed. Ralph W. Franklin. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998. 3 vols.

Sewall, Richard B. *The Life of Emily Dickinson*. 2 vols. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974. Paperback Reprint Edition, September, 1984.

Vernon, Sean. Email to author. 1 March 2003.

Nancy List Pridgen is a retired high school English teacher. She lives in San Antonio, Texas, with her husband Bill, also an avid Dickinson reader. Since retiring, Nancy has enjoyed working as a volunteer, teaching Dickinson's poems to upper elementary students.

2004 SCHOLAR IN AMHERST AWARD COMPETITION

The Emily Dickinson International Society invites applications for the Scholar in Amherst Program. The program supports research on Emily Dickinson at institutions such as the Frost Library of Amherst College, the Jones Public Library, the Mount Holyoke College Archives, the Dickinson Homestead, the Evergreens, and the Amherst Historical Society. The award is a \$2,000 fellowship to be used for expenses related to that research, such as travel, accommodations, or a rental car. A minimum stay of one week in Amherst is required. Recipients also may use the fellowship to initiate a lengthier stay in the area. Preference will be given to persons with completed PhDs who are in the early stages of their careers.

For 2004, the Scholar in Amherst

Award will be named as a memorial for renowned Dickinson scholar Brita Lindberg-Seyersted, who died in 2002. Professor Lindberg-Seyersted was emeritus Professor of American Literature at the University of Oslo and author of *The Voice of the Poet: Aspects of Style in the Poetry of Emily Dickinson*, originally published in 1968 by Harvard University Press. She was herself a "scholar in Amherst," having spent time at Smith College in nearby Northampton to do research for her pathbreaking study of Dickinson's poetic language. In 2001, the Society honored Brita Lindberg-Seyersted with its Distinguished Service award. She was both the first woman and the first European scholar to be its recipient. The 2004 award was made possible by generous donations

from members of the Board of Directors and other EDIS friends.

To apply for the 2004 Lindberg-Seyersted Scholar in Amherst Award, please send three copies of a curriculum vitae, letter of introduction (written by the applicant), a two-page project proposal, and a brief bibliography by October 15, 2004, to Vivian R. Pollak, Chair, Scholar in Amherst Selection Committee, Department of English, Washington University, St. Louis, MO 63130 USA or to vrpollak@artsci.wustl.edu. Inquiries also may be addressed to Marianne Noble, Literature Department, American University, Washington, DC 20016 USA or to mnoble@american.edu. Recommendation letters are not accepted as part of the application packet.

THE MAGIC PRISON

Reviewed by Ethan Tarasov

An enthusiastic audience was treated to a performance of *The Magic Prison*, a featured event of the Small Press Book Fair held in New York over the weekend of March 27-28. The history of this theatrical piece, a pastiche of Emily Dickinson's poetry and letters, woven together with the published reminiscences of Thomas Wentworth Higginson, is of some interest. The script was adapted from a short movie of the same title, directed and produced by the Academy Award nominated creator of educational films, John Barnes, in 1968, and released by Encyclopedia Britannica films. Barnes co-wrote the film with Archibald MacLeish, who admired Dickinson—he comments on her directly in his poem "In and Come In," and delivered a paper touching on her place as a modern poet for the 200th Anniversary celebration of the founding of the town of Amherst, in 1959.

The two performers, Dee Pelletier and Ezra Barnes, both Amherst College graduates, transcribed the film's script, made their own revisions, and presented the resulting work in an informal, but finely wrought, reading. Ezra (John's son) is both an actor and Artistic Director of Connecticut's Shakespeare on the Sound theatre festival. Ms. Pelletier is a noted New York stage and television actress.

In a piece such as this, with the poet's words "cut and pasted" (in Ezra Barnes' phrase), one can only hope that Dickinson is allowed to speak for herself, unencumbered by any superimposed agenda—political, editorial, or academic. In this, *The Magic Prison* succeeds. The only agenda here is Higginson's own attempt, through the recounting of his long, primarily epistolary relationship with Dickinson, to explain his reactions, or lack of them, to both her work and her person. His narrative, published at some length in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1891, demonstrates that he did not fully grasp the magnitude of

Dickinson's literary achievement. In this failure he enjoyed good company; the task of catching up to her genius fell largely to later generations. Yet in his own way, and from early on in their acquaintance, he did recognize there was something very special about Dickinson and her work. In *The Magic Prison*, which loosely follows the *Atlantic* article, his role is limited to that described in his story: a bemused, privileged recipient of dozens of Dickinson letters and poems, accorded the label "preceptor" by her, even though he acknowledged that the title had no real basis in the correspondence and conversations which passed between them.

Mr. Barnes portrayed Higginson with humor and intelligence, adopting an affable, mildly pompous manner that seemed very true to the persona we encounter in Higginson's article. He succeeded in creating a gentle foil to the dazzle of Dickinson's literary expression, which comprised the majority of the work.

One is always struck by a paradox when one listens to Dickinson's words, as opposed to reading them. On the one hand, much of her work is so intellectually daunting, with its syntactical complexity, elusive meanings, and profoundly original view of everything, that one cannot even begin to process it while listening. So a natural reaction is to want to stop and turn to the written page, to begin to grasp at all that is there. On the other hand, it is apparent that there is a special quality of beauty to her words that is only fully revealed in the hearing. The sound in one's mind, as the eye scans from the page, is not equivalent to the experience of hearing her words modulated by a skilled voice, sensitive to the poet's rhymes and off-rhymes, internal nuances of sound, and syncopated cadences. In short, there is great music to be gleaned from her work. Ms. Pelletier demonstrated she had absorbed these lessons well, and thus was able to

convey the specifically aural beauty of the prose and the poetry with refined authority. In listening to her performance, one appreciated Dickinson's comment, as quoted by Higginson: "If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know *that* is poetry."

No abridgement or adaptation of Dickinson can do justice to her work, and the very context of public performance may be contrary to her authorial intent. Any editing of her words, even in a well-intentioned attempt to introduce her work to new audiences, is a legitimate target for criticism. But one can always return to the variorum texts, or even the manuscript facsimiles, to purify one's soul. In the meantime, if an audience finds itself adjusting its collective scalp after hearing her words, then the adapter-performers must have done more than a little right. One can only hope Mr. Barnes and Ms. Pelletier will present and preserve this work for others to enjoy.

Ethan Tarasov is a physician practicing in New Jersey, devoted to the study of Dickinson and her work, and enjoys observing how both percolate through our contemporary culture.

CLERIH EW

By Norbert Hirschhorn

T. Wentworth Higginson

discovered Dickinson.

When appalled by the view,

helped bury her too.

Norbert Hirschhorn, a physician and published poet, has also written essays on the health and history of Emily Dickinson, on Mary Todd Lincoln, and on the poisoning of Abraham Lincoln by medicinal mercury.

REALMS OF AMPLITUDE

Hilo Hawaiian Hotel, Hawaii

CONFERENCE

THURSDAY, JULY 29

4:00-5:30

WORKSHOP: COGNITIVE APPROACHES TO LITERATURE AND TRANSLATION: EMILY DICKINSON'S LUXURY POEM

Chair: Connie Ann Kirk (Author/Independent Scholar)

Margaret Freeman (Independent Scholar), "A Cognitive Reading of F819 (J815): 'The Luxury to apprehend'"
Masako Takeda (Osaka Shoin Women's College), "On Translating F819 (J815), 'The Luxury to apprehend,' into Japanese"

David Tennant (Boston College), "A Response"

FRIDAY JULY 30

9-10: 45 Sessions

Plenary I:

Chair: Suzanne Juhasz (University of Colorado, Boulder)

Cynthia Hogue (University of Arizona), on Amplitude and Nature;
Joanne Feit Diehl (University of California at Davis), on Amplitude and Language;
Jane Eberwein (Oakland University), on Amplitude and Spirituality

11-12:30 Sessions

Spirituality I

Chair: Barbara Kelly (Independent Scholar)

Helen Koukoutsis (Macquarie University), "The 'law of Flood': Zen Emptiness in Emily Dickinson's Language of Amplitude"

Siobhan Phillips, (Yale University), "Emily Dickinson's Communion"

Anne Ramirez (Newmann College), "Summoning the Sun: The Power of Dickinson's Faith"

Language I

Chair: Gary Lee Stonum (Case Western Reserve University)

Joanna Yin (University of Hawaii at

Manoa), "Precision and Possibility: The Mathematics of Emily Dickinson"

Michael L. Manson (American University), "A Fascinating Chill: Dickinson's Metrical Music"

Marianne Noble (American University), "Dickinson and the Amplitude of Bricolage"

Nature I

Chair: Erika Scheurer (University of St. Thomas)

Elizabeth M. Mills (Davidson University), "Dickinson's Fractal Vision: Maxim Absolute and More"

Brad Ricca (Case Western Reserve University), "Dickinson's Night-Time"

Natalya Bezrebra (Kyiv National Linguistic University, Ukraine), "Dickinson's Understanding of Immortal Human Values through Patterns of Nature"

New Directions I

Chair: James Fraser (MDA/SE/POET)
Martha Ackmann (Mt. Holyoke College), "Dickinson, Darwin, and the Science of Natural Theology"

Joan Kirkby (Macquarie University), "Dickinson and the Nineteenth-Century Darwin Wars"

April Gentry (Savannah State University), "Dickinson in Polynesia: The Politics of Dickinson's Vicarious Travel"

Buffet Lunch

2-3:15 Sessions

New Directions II

"Dickinson and Melville: Ample (?) Intersections"

Chair: Michael Kearns (University of Southern Indiana)

Per Serritslev Petersen (University of Aarhus, Denmark), "Negotiating Versions of Modernity and Christianity: Emily Dickinson's Poetico-Philosophical Amplitudes in relation to Herman Melville's Epistemologi-

cal Skepticism"

Daniel Fineman (Occidental College), "The Drop and the Sea: the Poetics of Size in Dickinson and Melville"

Lynn Langmade (San Francisco State University), "Surplus Economies: Crisis and Recovery in the Literary Relations of Production of Emily Dickinson and Herman Melville"

Michael, Kearns, "Textual Bodies and their Creators: The Cases of Dickinson and Melville"

Language II

Chair: Paul Crumbley (Utah State University)

Jed Deppman (Oberlin College), "Ampler than the Sky: Dickinson and the Movement of Thought"

Deirdre Fagan (Miami University), "Amplitude and the Dash: The Physical Manifestation of Thought"

Elizabeth Hewitt (Ohio State University), "Dickinson's Choices and the Economy of Selection"

Erotics I

Chair: Gudrun Grabher (University of Innsbruck)

Kari Lokke (University of California at Davis), "Learning Through Excess: Emily Dickinson and Bettine von Arnim's *Die Gunderode*"

Lilach Lachman (Tel Aviv University), "*Liebsted* in Bettine von Arnim and Emily Dickinson"

Magdalena Zapedowska (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Poland), "Privilege of Want: Metaphysical Desire as a Realm of Amplitude"

New Directions III

"Structure, Sound, and Language in Dickinson's Poetry"

Chair: Martha Nell Smith (University of Maryland)

Ellen Louise Hart (University of California at Santa Cruz) and Sandy Chung (University of California at Santa Cruz), "A Dialogue on Sound Structures in Dickinson's Poems"

Aife Murray (Independent Scholar),

SCHEDULE

July 30-August 1, 2004

"She is Singing the Air—American Vernacular Bedding Dickinson's Ear" Margaret Freeman (Independent Scholar), Respondent

3:30-4:45 Sessions

Language III

Chair: Margaret Freeman (Independent Scholar)

David Tennant (Boston College), "Achieving Amplitude Through Transport: A Cognitive Approach to Dickinson's Poetry"

Erika Scheurer (University of St. Thomas), "The Education of a Poet: Learning to Write with Amplitude"

James Guthrie (Wright State University), "Exceeding Legal and Linguistic Limits: Dickinson as *Ainvoluntary @Bankrupt*"

New Directions IV

"Emily Dickinson and the Liberal Imagination"

Chair: Betsy Erkilli (Northwestern University)

Coleman Hutchison (Northwestern University), "Liberty, Slavery, and Dickinson's 'Duties of the Wind'"

Jonathan Arac (Columbia University), "The Conservatism of the Liberal Imagination"

Donald Pease (Dartmouth College), "Richard Chase's Dickinson; or, Trilling Lyricized"

New Directions V

Chair: Jonnie Guerra (Cabrini College)

Rise and Stephen Axelrod (University of California at Riverside), "Emily Dickinson and Adelaide Crapsey: Natural and Imaginative Spaces"

Linda L. Fraser (California State University at Fullerton), "Beekeepers' Aesthetics: Emily Dickinson's Gift to Sylvia Plath"

Roselli Simonari (University of Studies of Macerata, Italy), "Moving Along Dickinson's Wor(l)d: Martha Graham's Letter to the World"

6:30 p.m. Reception and Banquet

Presentation of the EDIS Distinguished

Service Award to Emeritus Professor Roland Hagenbüchle, Catholic University of Eichstätt (in absentia)

After-dinner address: Donald Swanson, Scientist in Charge, the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory

SATURDAY JULY 31

8:30-9:45 Sessions

Body and Language

Chair: Cynthia MacKenzie (University of Regina, Canada)

Cheryl Langdell (Independent Scholar), "Vesuvius at Home: Thirty years Later"

Linda Middleton (University of Hawaii at Manoa), "Under the Volcano: Dickinson's Alchemy of Rage and Power"

Kathleen Parks Lasar (University of St. Thomas), "The Multivocality in Emily Dickinson's Suicide Poetry"

"Amplifications: Contemporary Poets in Conversation with Emily Dickinson"

Chair: Leslie Wheeler (Washington and Lee University)

Janet McAdams (Kenyon College), "Land, Flesh, Spirit, Body: Dickinson in Conversation with Emerging Native Women Poets"

Lesley Wheeler (Washington and Lee University), "'Immoderate Things': Emily Dickinson and Medbh McGuckian"

Jennifer Clarvoe (Kenyon College), "'The Outer from the Inner': Where the Meanings Are in Dickinson, McHugh, and McMichael"

New Directions VI

Chair: Marianne Noble (American University)

Judith Hawley (University of London), "Emily Dickinson, Bluestockings, and a Choice of Life"

Philip Horne (University College, London), "'Where Are Our Moral Foundations?': Emily Dickinson and Henry James"

Robert Smith (Knox College), "'One and One are One': Emily Dickinson and Elizabeth Stoddard"

Elissa David (George Washington University), "Emily Dickinson and Herman Melville in the White World"

Erotics II

Chair: Martha Ackmann (Mt. Holyoke College)

H. Jordan Landry (University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh), "The Lesbian as Libertine: Seduction Narratives and Female Masculinity in Emily Dickinson"

Helen Shoobridge (Macquarie University), "The Periodical in the Attic: Contextualizing Dickinson's Vision of an Amplitude Beyond the Bounds of Marriage"

Sylvia Mikkelsen (University of Aarhus, Denmark), "What's Love Got to Do With It?—The Locus of Spirituality in Dickinson's Aesthetics of the Erotic"

10-12 Plenary II

Chair: Mary Loeffelholz (Northwestern University)

Daneen Wardrop (Michigan State University) on Amplitude and the Body; Suzanne Juhasz (University of Colorado, Boulder), on Amplitude and Erotics; Vivian Pollak (Washington University), on Amplitude and the Reader

Buffet Lunch

Trip to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park with Hawaiian dinner at the Volcano House Hotel

SUNDAY AUG 1

8:30-9:45 Sessions

Language IV

"Lyric Amplitudes and Lyric Historicity"

Chair: Shirley Samuels (Cornell University)

Virginia Jackson (New York University)

sity), "Dickinson's Nightingales"
 Eliza Richards (Boston University),
 "'Bulletins from Immortality':
 Dickinson, The *Atlantic Monthly*, and
 Civil War Poetry"
 Faith Barrett (Lawrence University),
 "'Drums of the Phantom Battlements':
 Dickinson's Civil War Elegies"

Spirituality II

Chair: Eleanor Heginbotham
 (Concordia University)
 Arben Bushgjakaj (Luigj Gurakuqi
 University of Shkodra, Al-
 bania), "The Quest for Spiritu-
 al Fulfillment: Old Testa-
 ment Portraits in
 Dickinson's Poetry"
 Emily Seelbinder (Queens
 University of Charlotte),
 "Arid, Wise & Merry:
 Dickinson's Bible"
 Neil Scheurich (University
 of Kentucky College of Medi-
 cine), "Suffering and Spiritu-
 ality: Dickinson's Ample
 Mental Health"

New Directions VII

Chair: Michael Kearns (Uni-
 versity of Southern Indiana)
 Melissa White (University of Virginia),
 "Correspondence and Audience: A
 New Copy of an Old Letter"
 Midori Kajino Asaina (Keio Univer-
 sity, Japan), "'The Grounds are
 ample—almost travel—to me': Read-
 ing Dickinson's Correspondence with
 Higginson"
 Stephanie Tingley (Youngstown State
 University), "Re-Reading Dickinson's
 Correspondence with the Hollands
 for the Dickinson Electronic Archives"

New Directions VIII

Chair: Georgiana Strickland (Independ-
 ent Scholar)
 Connie Ann Kirk (Author/Independ-
 ent Scholar), "The Ample Life of
 Thomas Gilbert (Gib) Dickinson, Age
 8"
 Marty Rhodes Figley (Independent
 Scholar), "'Brown kisses' and 'shaggy
 feet': How Carlo Illuminates Emily
 Dickinson for Children."

Wayne Pierce (Kingswood-Oxford
 School) and Barbara Adams Pierce (pri-
 vate voice instructor), "'The Fascinat-
 ing Chill': Three Settings of Poems by
 Emily Dickinson for Voice, Flute, and
 Tenor Drum"

10-11:15 Sessions

Language V: Space and Time

Chair: Robert Smith (Knox College)
 Gudrun Grabher (University of
 Innsbruck, Austria), "Time Feels so

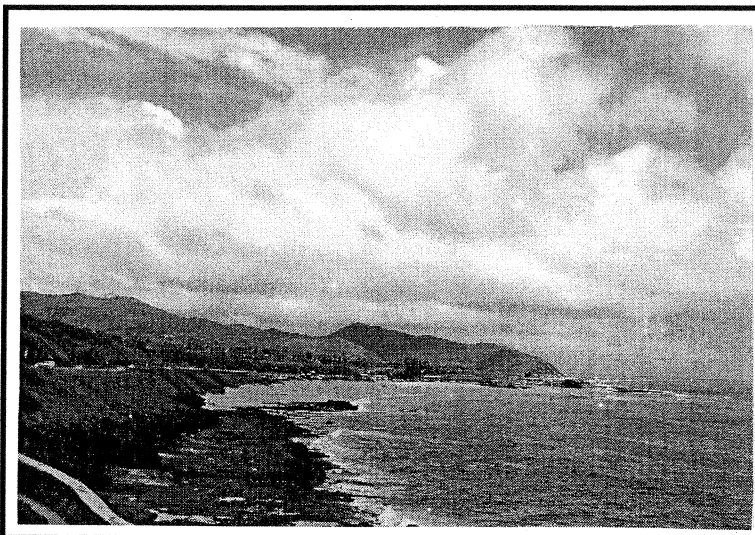


Photo by Jonathan Morse

vast': The Amplitude of Moments in
 Dickinson's Poetry"
 Claudia Schwartz (University of
 Innsbruck, Austria), "Emily Unlimited:
 A Cyber-Generation's Approach to
 Space in Dickinson"
 Inna Redka (Ukraine), "Virtual Space
 and Cognitive Metaphors in Emily
 Dickinson's Poetry"

Nature II

Chair: Jonathon Morse (University of
 Hawaii at Manoa)
 Anna Chesnokova (Kyiv National Lin-
 guistic University, Ukraine), "From
 Transcendentalism to Dickinson: Im-
 agery Evolution, and Amplitude of Na-
 ture Vision"
 Kathleen Peterson (Harvard Univer-
 sity), "Surround Sound: Dickinson and
 the Hearable"
 Mike Yetman (Purdue University),
 "'Enough! Or too much': Dickinson's

Amplitudinous Art"

Language VI

Chair: Joan Kirkby (Macquarie Uni-
 versity, Australia)
 Donna Servais (Winona State Univer-
 sity), "Dickinson's Palette: An Ampli-
 tude of Colors"
 Cynthia MacKenzie (University of
 Regina, Canada), "Dickinson's Syn-
 aesthetic Semiotics"
 Craig Love (University of Toronto),
 "Awe and Ends in Dickinson's Po-
 etry"

New Directions IX

"Amplitudes and New
 Directions in Editing; or,
 the Philosophy of the
 Dickinson Electronic
 Archives Projects"

Chair: Ellen Louise Hart
 (University of California at
 Santa Cruz)
 Martha Nell Smith (Univer-
 sity of Maryland), on the
 philosophy of the Project
 Lara Vetter (Dickinson Elec-
 tronic Archives) on the work
 of a general editor, markup
 specialist

Mary Loeffelholz (North-
 eastern University), on editing the cor-
 respondence with Thomas W.
 Higginson
 Paul Crumbley (Utah State Univer-
 sity), on editing the correspondence
 with Helen Hunt Jackson
 Ellen Louise Hart (University of Cali-
 fornia at Santa Cruz), on editing the
 correspondence with Susan Dickin-
 son for print and for electronic media

11:30-12:15

Wrap Up

Chair: Gudrun Grabher (University of
 Innsbruck)
 Joanne Feit Diehl, Jane Eberwein,
 Cynthia Hogue, Suzanne Juhasz,
 Vivian Pollak, Daneen Wardrop

**12:30-1:30: box lunch & business
 meeting**

THE BELLE OF AMHERST'S COMING OUT PARTY

A REVIEW OF MADELEINE OLNEK'S WILD NIGHTS WITH EMILY

By Kathy Thomas

There is a myth about Emily Dickinson, which some would call repressive, that tells the tale of a reclusive spinster who whiled away her time writing sweet poems. But there came a day when it was time to break her free of the daguerreotype in which she had been entrapped for so very long. The living, breathing woman needed a romp. So, the forces of culture and time took a holiday from gender management for a brief time and Emily stepped out of the unflattering, two dimensional image and onto the stage. Myths are wonderful but the vigor of human life is a far more intoxicating liquor. This play, *Wild Nights with Emily*, asks you to open your heart to Emily's electrifying humanity.

How did this play begin? To understand the play's inspiration we must start with the playwright. After reading the poems of Emily Dickinson, and researching Emily's life, Madeleine Olnek saw some discrepancies between what she had read and the history she had taken for granted. Madeleine questioned how Emily Dickinson would be perceived today if "history" had not spoken first. The result of this questioning is a boisterous play that explores Emily Dickinson's life through multiple layers of time. Through Madeleine's composition we see the current perception of Emily Dickinson's life juxtaposed with the vibrant life she may well have shared with her life-long friend, confidante, and perhaps lover, Susan Dickinson, her sister-in-law. The play introduces a whirl of characters who jump back and forth from a ridiculous

present to a rather rambunctious and unwieldy past. The text relies upon the poems and letters passed from Emily to Susan, historical records, gossip, songs, and period dances.

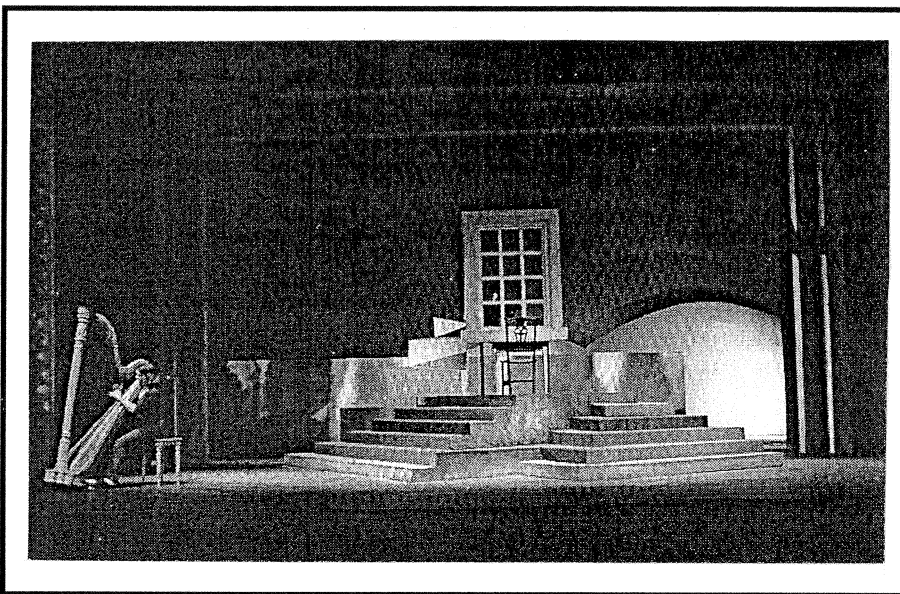
John Schmor, a professor in the Theatre Arts Department of the University of Oregon, read the play and was drawn to the possibilities. Schmor wanted to do a compassionate comedy that featured women as central characters, each of a different vitality and intelli-

thologies are created to hide or forget the evidence of feeling lives, this play also inspired me 'to go to the poems and letters' and to re-read Emily Dickinson, a pleasure and instruction I hope our production may invite you to pursue. Go to her poems and her letters to Susan. Their love through Dickinson's writings can change your sense of self, of history, of world."

When you choose a play which portrays an alternate and controversial

view of a well-known person's life, questions must arise.

Schmor reacted to these questions by explaining his renewed appreciation of Dickinson's poetry: "Because Dickinson's poems come alive in a new way—in fact any effort to re-imagine Dickinson outside of the 'Belle of Amherst' myth, I think, is a good thing for really read-



ing and enjoying her poetry." If we allow ourselves to endow Emily with the passion and complexity that her life and writings demand, then her poems will speak to us as never before. We can reinscribe her poems with the vitality that a hundred years of scholarship have drained away. They are erotic, comedic, and volcanic. In rereading her poetry, you find you do not miss the legend that reduced Emily Dickinson to a sorrowful lady of delicate letters. Rather you will find a passion barely tethered to the page.

Our own selfish appreciation of Dickinson's poetry is not the only reason for considering this possibility. Without question, Susan and Emily

gence that most comedy does not provide. He also wanted a variety of theatrical entertainments, so he championed *Wild Nights* throughout the Department and people began to smile. A design team was assembled. A play with amazing gusto was about to be brought to life.

When asked why he chose this play, Schmor replied, "I chose to direct Madeleine Olnek's prismatic play chiefly because it is a loving comedy with good strong roles for young women to play. But I also chose this play because it tells a story I had never heard, a history I find both inspiring and heart-breaking. As important and awful as it is to learn through this play how individuals can warp 'history,' and my-

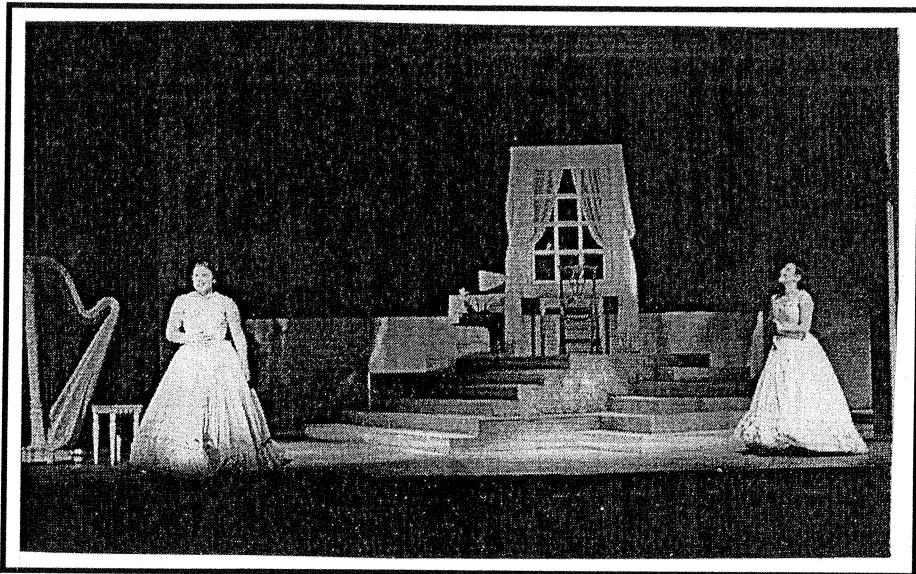


Photo by Rachel Steck

cherished each other. History should acknowledge that fact. *Wild Nights with Emily* accepts the possibility that Susan and Emily were lovers. In doing so, the play disrupts the popular view of Dickinson. The examination of that possibility would be intriguing on its own, but the consideration of that view, whether we accept it or not, frees Emily. She becomes human and her life personal. We must get to know her before we can form an opinion. Susan was Emily's chosen reader, confidante, and eulogist, and Emily gave her heart to Susan, through gifts of poems and letters. The nature of their correspondence is not simply affectionate but also often passionate, humorous, and fierce. Schmor explains further: "The love between these two women is remarkably inspiring and is, in fact, part of the content of many poems by Dickinson. Such stories rarely get told in our popular histories. If the play makes an imaginative leap without perfect historical proof, at least it does so to honor Dickinson's art and Susan's importance to it."

Theatre concerns itself with the "truth." Where is the truth in this story? Is there historical evidence that this was a consummated lesbian relationship? The answer is no. It would be impossible to provide evidence one way or the other, but it was the text of the letters and poems that prompted the inquiry. History is a game very

often stacked against lesbian reality. In the first important years of publication and biographies, Susan's part in Emily's life was ignored or trivialized. *Wild Nights with Emily* takes a small step toward righting that wrong. As for the truth, Schmor says, "It's a new view and I believe it is easily closer to 'the truth' than the popular mythology about Dickinson." We should not mistake the play for one intended to portray historical accuracy, however. *Wild Nights with Emily* is a comedy, so it has some wonderfully ludicrous situations that have nothing to do with

historical accuracy. The fiery zest of the play lies in Emily Dickinson's letters and poems which are accurately quoted.

While Mary Jungels, the set designer, fussed over her drawings, Harmony Arnold researched the costume needs, and Rachel Steck began her lighting plots, a rousing discussion ensued—interwoven with research, poetry readings, rehearsals, and all the frustrating details of modern theatre. They talked about the play, about history, about the poetry, and about the reception of the play within the community. Kathy Thomas, as dramaturg, provided research for each aspect of the discussion. Soon collaborative inspiration became innovation and innovation became joy. Through the dedication of the production team, the cast and crew, *Wild Nights with Emily* became a vibrant comedy-drama—vibrant because it had the audacity to re-imagine the life and love of Emily Dickinson.

The set is a vivid design by Mary Jungels. She explains her insights in this way: "The set reflected the pastiche effect of Emily's poetry after her death in 1880 in which realities were constantly transformed. Each age acted as a lens disseminating its circumference in the same way as the set transforms from the simple sepia-toned



Photo by Rachel Steck

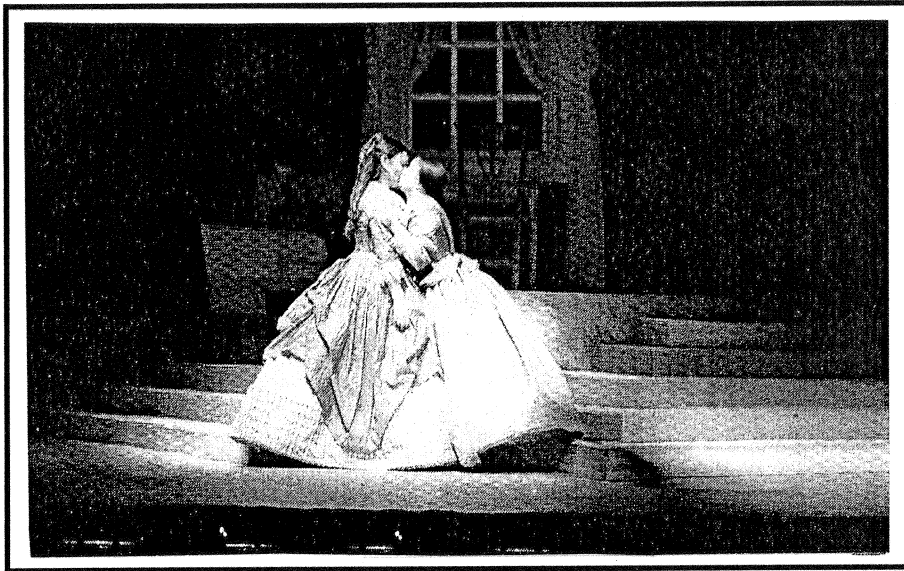


Photo by Rachel Steck

world of Amherst in the mid 1800s, to the dreamlike depths of color, in the landscapes of life."

Harmony Arnold explains her innovative approach to the design: "When asked to design costumes for Madeleine Olnek's play, *Wild Nights with Emily*, I knew it would be of importance to travel to Amherst and visit the homes of Susan and Emily Dickinson. While visiting the home of Emily Dickinson, I took note of the importance of her writing and her love of flowers. The two influences of flowers and poetry became my primary sources for my concept. *Wild Nights with Emily* speaks directly of the relationship between the Dickinson family and Mabel Todd. I wanted Emily's text to be apparent throughout the play to help the audience remember that it is what has been documented which needs to be reexamined. I chose to transfer Emily's poems addressed to Susan onto the costumes of Emily and Susan only, while being more playful with the other characters. For example, I used a cut and paste approach to cover the bustle of Mrs. Todd's dress with pieces of Emily's writing which had been changed for publishing purposes, and letter type of the time on others to show their place in history in general terms. Floral patterns and plaids were used in my designs throughout in respect of Emily's love of her garden, and histo-

ricity of plaids within the period. Subdued colors were used for most basic characters on stage, while Emily and Susan were in vibrant hues of lavender and pink showing their passion."

Rachel Steck, lighting designer, reflects on her role in the production: "From the moment I read the script, I knew that this was a project I wanted to be a part of. I have worked with the director and costume designer before and I knew that we would find interesting ways to incorporate the historicity of Dickinson's poems along with classic theatrical conventions to create a tension between our cultural memo-

ries of Dickinson and this fresh, vibrant picture of Dickinson. I was quickly able to take my cue from the costume designer, as she incorporated classic nineteenth century lines with modern textures and colors framed with Dickinson's text. I too, was then inspired to create classic stage pictures with a twist. We used footlights, popular in eighteenth century theater, along with side lights (a modern way to sculpt moving bodies) to add and emphasize textures, lines, and colors. For me, this project was very much about taking from past theatrical conventions and using them in new and/or modern ways. From the lighting instruments to color choices, and the actual cueing of the show, I mixed and matched theatrical conventions, but always with a twist."

When the production was complete and the play set to open it became clear that above all, *Wild Nights With Emily* is an entertainment—both modern in its comedy and beautiful in its lyric fragments from Dickinson's genius. Jana Schmieding, who played Emily, best expressed what *Wild Nights* meant to the cast and crew: "The joy I felt spouting romantic and investigative poetry to the audience in *Wild Nights* was a general security that I've never felt in performance. Somehow, last

Belle, continued on page 22

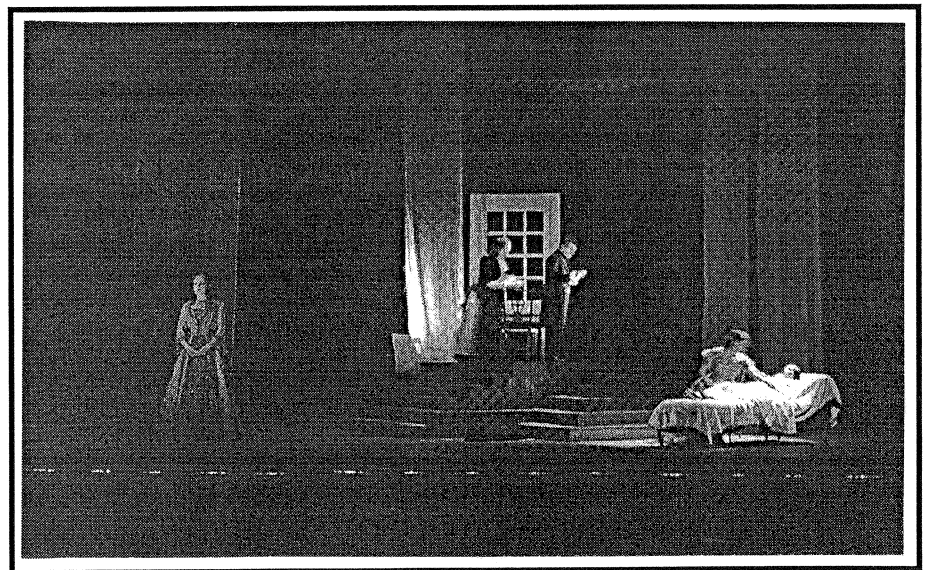


Photo by Rachel Steck

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Barbara Kelly, Book Review Editor

Habegger, Alfred. "Some Problems in Reading Emily Dickinson." *Journal of English Language and Literature* 51 (2003). Tokyo: Nikon Univ. Twenty-five-page offprint available at Amherst College's Frost Library and the Jones Library in Amherst.

Habegger argues that some of Dickinson's more private and difficult poems can be understood better by noticing their dates and appreciating their autobiographical context. To demonstrate this he discusses Dickinson's first Master Letter and five poems: "For this—accepted Breath—" (J195), "Two swimmers wrestled on the spar—" (J201), "This is my letter to the World" (J441), "Title divine—is mine!" (J1072), and "Through what transports of Patience" (J1153). He provides a narrative thread linking these works and defines the uniqueness of each poem. According to Habegger, "For this—accepted Breath—" stands as one of Dickinson's most private compositions" and "'Through what transports of Patience' is one of [the poet's] bitterest works . . . exemplary of her veiled personal art." This cogent essay offers some material not included in the author's 2001 biography of Dickinson.

Hecht, Jennifer Michael. *Doubt: A History: The Great Doubters and Their Legacy of Innovation from Socrates and Jesus to Thomas Jefferson and Emily Dickinson.* New York: Harper Collins/Harper San Francisco, 2003. 551 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-06-009772-8, \$27.95.

Hecht's comprehensive history of doubt from 600 B.C. to the present encompasses a wide range of famous

and less well-known doubters from the ancient Greeks and Hebrews to skeptics of the present day. Included are discussions of Jesus; medieval Islam, Judaism, and Christianity; the European Renaissance, Reformation, and Inquisition; the rise of Zen in Japan and the nontheistic religions in India, China, and Japan; the scientific revolution, Newton, Galileo, Spinoza, Robespierre, Thomas Paine, and Thomas Jefferson; nineteenth-century atheism, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and Friedrich Nietzsche. Although Emily Dickinson is given a prominent place in Hecht's title, the author's discussion of the poet is limited to three pages (425-27). She says, "If Keats was the great doubting poet of the first half of the [nineteenth] century, Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) took the prize for the second half. She, too, was a Cheshire Cat of a doubter, welcoming ambiguity, playful, but exquisitely serious." Hecht calls "Good night, because we must" (J114) "one of doubt's best." Errors and typographical flaws occur in this book; nevertheless, it provides a broad and enriching look at the relationship between belief and doubt that should interest both scholars and general readers.

Herstek, Amy Paulson. *Emily Dickinson; Solitary and Celebrated Poet.* Historical American Biographies Series. Berkeley Heights, New Jersey: Enslow, 2003. 128 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-7660-1977-2, \$20.95.

Designed for readers age 11 and up, this well-researched, clearly written, and discreetly presented biography of Dickinson has a user-friendly format. Included are subtitles within the eight chapters; black and white photo-

graphs of Amherst, Dickinson, her family and friends, and excerpts from the letters and poems—each carefully placed to complement the text; and boxed inserts of additional information about people and topics mentioned: Catherine Maria Sedgwick, Lydia Maria Child, Jane Eyre, The Whig Party, the Hudson River School, and transcendentalism. Comprehensive for its intended audience, the book contains a chronology of events; chapter notes that reference not only Jay Leyda, Richard B. Sewall, and Thomas H. Johnson but also the recent work of R. W. Franklin and Albert Habegger; a glossary with a dozen words from *abolitionist* and *aubade* to *simile* and *trope*; a list of age-appropriate further reading; three internet addresses (The Homestead, Dickinson Electronic Archives, and the Dickinson poems at Bartleby.com); and an index. For young scholars, this unbiased and respectful biography is a fine introduction to Dickinson.

Landis, J. D. *The Taking.* New York: Random House/Ballantine Books, 2003. 384 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-345-45006-X, \$24.95.

The novel's title refers to a real historical event, the "taking" and deliberate drowning of several villages near Amherst in 1938 to create Quabbin Reservoir (18 miles long with double the storage capacity of Lake Erie) as a source of water to be pumped 67 miles east to Boston. This intricately plotted novel, with lyrically overwrought prose and gothic and surrealistic overtones, focuses on a 17-year-old Mt. Holyoke student, Sarianna Renway, who moves to the doomed, soon-to-be-flooded village of Greenwich to tutor a minister's son. Living with the minister and his

The *Bulletin* welcomes notices of all Dickinson-related books, including those published outside the U.S.

Send information to Barbara Kelly, 444 Washington Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94301, U.S.A.

E-mail: barbarakelly@psualum.com.

troubled wife, Una, Sarianna becomes involved in a triangle of passions and a widening circle of confusing family relationships. Her obsession with Dickinson and her poetry would seem appealing to Dickinsonians, but Sarianna's constant gratuitous references to "Emily" quickly become distracting and annoying. While the author has made an earnest effort to create a unique novel of love and loss, magic and mystery, his characters and events require a willed suspension of disbelief that becomes tedious and tries the patience of even the most tolerant reader. Though disappointing, this eerie and mystifying novel might provoke lively discussions in a reading group.

Schmandt, Coralee. *The Poet: A Testament to Emily Dickinson*. Boston: Urban Press, 2003. 100 pp. Paper, ISBN 0-9628429, \$16.95.

Schmandt maintains that the study of etymology was important to Dickinson and her creative process and is equally important to the reader who wishes to better understand Dickinson's word-centered poetry. The author offers detailed and lucid explications of Dickinson's poems, especially those that demonstrate the poet's passion for the power and capacity of words. Citing Dickinson's worksheets as evidence of her philological work, Schmandt regards her as "a self-conscious poet who recognized and actively pursued her vocation." She cites "This was a Poet – It is That / Distills amazing sense / From ordinary Meanings" (J448) as Dickinson's definition of the poet. The author compares Dickinson, who had a heightened perception of words, with Emerson ("her poetry of 'terrible simplicity,' though in appearance 'simple and economical,' probes 'profound depths'") and with Thoreau because, like him, she chose to live "deliberately." Although this slim volume lacks page numbers, a table of contents, preface, and index, its six chapters have notes referencing Emerson, Thoreau, Thomas De Quincey, Paul

Valéry, and others. This clearly written, accessible book should interest anyone interested in the role etymology played in Dickinson's poetic creation.

Smith, Martha Nell. "Computing: What's American Literary Study Got to Do with IT?" *American Literature* 74.4 (2002): 833-57.

Smith explains the advantages of using computer resources in literary work, citing benefits in four areas. First, technology tools have a democratizing effect, making previously inaccessible primary materials available to more scholars. Second, these tools allow new ways of organizing and structuring information, not only indexing and cataloging but also new search and retrieval facilities and often access to audio and video aids. Third, humanities computing requires collaborative work, promoting a new model of scholarship. Fourth, computer encoding of texts encourages a healthy self-consciousness about accepting established viewpoints as unquestionable fact. Smith convincingly supports her points with examples from her experience as an active scholar-participant in the Dickinson Electronic Archives and as director of the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities. She concludes, "The new media, and the new critical technologies they produce, require that we scrutinize anew how our items of knowledge come into being, who makes them, and for what purposes."

Book Reviews

Pollak, Vivian R., ed. *A Historical Guide to Emily Dickinson*. Oxford University Press, 2004. 303 pages. Illustrated. Cloth, ISBN 0-19-515134-8, \$50.00; Paper, ISBN 0-19-515135-6, \$19.95

Reviewed by Marcy L. Tanter

Those of us who have studied Emily Dickinson for a long time can forget how unapproachable and difficult she was to understand at first. Those of us who were introduced to her in the 1980s and 90s were fortunate to have a variety

of newly emerging scholarship that offered fresh perspectives and questions after years of some truths, many theories, and quite a few accepted mythologies. This volume, part of the Oxford University Press series *Historical Guides to American Authors*, will complement research undertaken by both students and new readers of Dickinson's work as it synthesizes some old ideas and delineates important aspects of her work.

This collection of original essays encapsulates what Dan Lombardo has called "macro-environments" typically used to establish the historical context of Dickinson's work (*EDIS Bulletin* 12.1: 24) making it useful for students new to her. The opening biographical essay by Vivian R. Pollak and Marianne Noble provides a quirky overview of Dickinson, explaining various aspects of her family life, her life as a poet and possibly as a lover. Pollak and Noble set up the historical context for examining Dickinson and, despite their own biases, cover the major issues and people of Dickinson's life. An overview of the many biographical approaches to Dickinson might have been a useful addition to the essay as well as a qualification for the statement that "Dickinson did have one documented love affair that was significantly mutual and physical" (49). Pollak and Noble situate Dickinson firmly as an important touchstone for American women's poetry and make a strong case for placing her within an historical context.

The critical essays in the volume do not simply rehash old ideas even though their topics are not completely new. The first essay is a fine piece from Jane Eberwein in which she explores Dickinson's reaction to the changing religious climate of her time. Starting with the prominent Calvinism into which Dickinson was born, Eberwein traces the influence of religion on Dickinson's life and poetry. She demonstrates the paradoxes Dickinson created in her poetry—paradoxes that reflect her own inner struggles with God, death, and orga-

nized religion. This essay is particularly useful, especially for a student who seeks to understand how Dickinson could accept God and at the same time fight Him. Shira Wolosky and Betsy Erkkila examine Dickinson's relationships to the Civil War and politics respectively. Their topics are significant for anyone coming to Dickinson's poetry for the first time; Wolosky delves into how the war appears in both poems and letters, while Erkkila makes it apparent that politics and political language were natural themes for Dickinson's writing.

The penultimate essay in the collection, "Dickinson in Context" by Cheryl Walker, seeks to discuss Dickinson's place among nineteenth-century American women poets. Walker presents an overview of work done in this area by herself and others, followed by a comparison of Dickinson to two of her contemporaries, Rose Terry and Maria Lowell. She notes that Dickinson read many American women writers of her era and might have been influenced by them, but ultimately Walker allies Dickinson more with twentieth-century poets rather than firmly seating her in the nineteenth century. A discussion of other contemporary women poets Dickinson encountered on a regular basis might have allowed for a fuller appreciation of her "historical context." With little reference to those women and to scholarship published within the past ten years, students might need further guidance with this topic.

The final critical essay of this collection is a discussion by Cristanne Miller of the aural of Dickinson's poetry. She suggests some worthy topics for further study, such as the identity of Dickinson's intended audience, the extent to which she admired fellow American writers and the degree to which the aural/oral and visual elements of the poems interact.

The collection ends with an illustrated chronology and a brief bibliographic essay by Jonathan Morse. Overall, this collection will be useful to students as they embark on the arduous yet rewarding task of beginning to

understand Emily Dickinson. These essays offer perspectives that encourage thought, demand close reading, and highlight important scholarship.

Marcy L. Tanter is assistant professor of English at Tarleton State University, Stephenville, Texas.

Weinstein, Debra. *Apprentice to the Flower Poet Z.* New York: Random House, 2004. 242 pp. Cloth, ISBN 1-4000-6155-5, \$23.95.

Reviewed by Ellen Louise Hart

"This is the story of how I came to momentary prominence in the world of poetry and, through a series of misunderstandings, destroyed my good name and became a nobody" (3). So begins the narrative of the young poet Annabelle Goldsmith who turns straw into gold for her mentor/tormentor, the celebrity poet Z., but whose true inspiration comes from another "Nobody"—Emily Dickinson.

Annabelle is a former Long Island community college student on scholarship who becomes the undergraduate assistant and "apprentice" to the Chair of a New York University's Creative Writing Program. Z., soon to be appointed chancellor of the Society for the Preservation of American Poetry, has produced a series of poetry volumes with "flower" in the title, including *The Amazing Journey of the Singular Flower*, *The Flower Dream Diaries*, *The Flower Daughter Poems*, and *Flowers of Fate*.

In this satire of academia and creative writing programs, Weinstein takes to a ludicrous extreme the drama of the idealistic, worshipful underling giving her life's blood for the continuing success of the egomaniacal, utterly self-absorbed star. Z. runs Annabelle into the ground with errands: shopping for the ink for Z.'s fountain pen; purchasing gifts for her illicit lover; proofreading Z.'s daughter's poems; completing the research for her talks, books, course syllabi, and poems; typing the poems; and, eventually, writing

Z.'s poems for her. Additionally, she sets her assistant up to spy on her rival, another celebrity poet, Braun Brown.

To push a theme of prostitution even further, the young poet's lover, Harry Banks, frees himself from the memory of his own subservience to a tor/mentor by demanding that Annabelle act out various sex scenes, borrowed from the fantasies of Harry's favorite writer, James Joyce, while he bangs out a diatribe against the mentor, now deceased. There is a lot of typing in this story, which Weinstein sets in the early 1980s, before the typewriter gave way to the computer.

Meanwhile, Z. has no time to read her "apprentice's" seven-line poem about Emily Dickinson, "Mask of the Poet." Annabelle worries that no one will catch the allusion to *A Masque of Poets* where, in 1878, Dickinson published "Success is counted sweetest" anonymously. "It was the only poem she would ever see published in a book in her lifetime" (48). Annabelle holds that Dickinson believed Higginson and "delayed to publish," to her great disadvantage and lifelong regret. In this way Weinstein's character identifies with a poet she sees as having had a mentor who gave her poor advice.

An aspect of Dickinson's life central to the novel is sex. One of Annabelle's teachers admires Dickinson for writing "Wild Nights!"—"one of the most erotic poems of the nineteenth century" (119). A young woman struggling with her sexual identity announces, "I think Emily Dickinson was a lesbian." Asked for evidence, she replies: "Her letters to her sister-in-law, Sue. When they stopped being close, Dickinson's writing suffered" (147). During a sexual situation with Harry, Annabelle wonders what Dickinson wrote in those letters (161). But issues raised in these pages from sexuality to Dickinson's legacy for contemporary women poets, the topic of Z.'s latest book (which Annabelle is researching), are veins that neither go very far nor run very deep.

Exchanges over Dickinson's poetry do shed light on both Z.'s hypocrisy and Annabelle's insight. Z. confides

that when she was in college Dickinson was “out of fashion” and that she’d never spent time getting to know much about her. “You wouldn’t regret it,” Annabelle replies (39). Lines from poems and details of Dickinson’s biography provide sardonic commentary on unfolding events. Z. sees herself writing in a “white heat”; the instruction Annabelle receives is as fake as jewelry made from paste, except when Z. repeats her apprentice’s observations:

“Perhaps you could use that phrase, ‘we play at paste,’ as a metaphor for the creative artist, a way of describing what poets do.”
That was my metaphor. (64)

“Annabelle, do *you* think Emily Dickinson was a feminine woman?”
“No, I think she wore that white dress as a kind of costume, but underneath, she was without gender.” (101)

Some of this novel is very witty. Especially funny are scenes of workshops and tutorials led by poetry gurus, where a poem can only be met with praise, or the other extreme: the writer is told that the poem “never should have been written.” Annabelle helpfully rewrites one classmate’s poem, crossing out more than half of the lines of Meg Cross’s “Cross,” the lead poem in *Double Crossed*. A class critiques the “vivid and affecting” poem, “Coffee top, table top, telephone, toothpaste!” One version of this repeating line uses dashes in a move described as “the downtown poet taking on Emily Dickinson” (98).

But as the story progresses, Weinstein’s relentless portrayal of Z.’s brutal narcissism gets grimmer, and in the end her family crisis becomes a sordid mess. Furthermore, the story of women as jealous, vicious rivals trying to destroy each other’s careers is really not that funny when women are in such need of mentoring. The success of the satire wavers as Weinstein describes Annabelle’s dilemmas: unable to write more poems, unable to complete course work, and up against divorced parents battling with each other, unsympathetic to their daughter’s aspirations or economics. There are poignant

aspects of mother-daughter relationships set out here, with Z. as both “poetry mother” and biological mother, but these issues are barely explored. The only bond that survives unbroken or unscarred between women in the novel is between Annabelle and her “foremother,” Dickinson.

As the novel ends, Weinstein tries to have things both ways. After delivering a poem naming names, Annabelle learns a lesson about cruelty; yet, overall, she is not deterred from her “tell all” revenge plot. Weinstein celebrates Dickinson, yet pokes fun at her art: “after [Annabelle’s] great pain” comes “A Formal Feeling,” the title of a concluding chapter depicting a formal occasion where Annabelle takes action. She stands up for herself with Z., yet appears to be following her in some of the same nasty footsteps. Readers are left with a muddled, unsatisfying resolution and a closing device that is no surprise.

For Dickinsonians, however, there is still pleasure to be found in Weinstein’s view of Dickinson’s power. One of the best lines comes midway through the book, and belongs to Annabelle’s “poetry father,” her community college teacher who does read her Dickinson poem, and tells her in a letter: “The young poet’s identification with the cryptic Dickinson is the mystery of poetry itself” (109).

On a final note, after finishing *Apprentice to the Flower Poet Z.*, I turned to another academic satire—Carol Shields’ *Swann* (1985), a novel in which territorial poetry scholars fight over a poet’s image while striving to enhance their own reputations. Here, too, Dickinson plays a role: “There are those who have gone so far as to call [Mary Swann] the Emily Dickinson of Upper Canada” (129). *Swann*—probing, provocative, comic, and wise—is a novel I can recommend wholeheartedly.

Ellen Louise Hart teaches writing at the University of California at Santa Cruz, is an associate editor of the Dickinson Electronic

Archives and co-editor, with Martha Nell Smith, of Open Me Carefully: Emily Dickinson’s Intimate Letters to Susan Huntington Dickinson.

Book Notes

• *Revised paperback edition (Dec. 2003): Roger Lundin. Emily Dickinson and the Art of Belief.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans. ISBN 0-8028-0157-9, \$24.00. See *EDIS Bulletin* 10.2 (1998) for review.

• *Correction:* In Dorothy Oberhaus’s review of Eleanor Elson Heginbotham’s *Reading the Fascicles of Emily Dickinson: Dwelling in Possibilities* (*Bulletin* 15.2, 2003), the fourth sentence should read: “According to Heginbotham, Dickinson scholars have ‘ignored,’ ‘belittled,’ and ‘scorned’ these early studies, but I must qualify this: judging from the response to my 1995 book about the fascicles, there are also many Dickinson scholars as well as other literary scholars and general readers who are keenly interested in the forty fascicles and therefore warmly welcome studies of the aesthetic principles underlying them.”

Selected Bibliography

Articles appearing in the *Emily Dickinson Journal* are not included.

• Collis, Stephen. “Archival Tactics and the Poet-Scholar: Susan Howe and Charles Olson.” *West Coast Line* 36.2 (2002): 60-77. [Collis analyzes the scholarly prose of poets Susan Howe (*My Emily Dickinson*) and Charles Olson (*Call Me Ishmael*), claiming the work of these “canabalistic poet-scholars” deserves close literary attention as they “seek to absorb the ‘power’ of their predecessor, by ‘consuming’ them textually, by fusing text on text, as a way of ‘girding’ themselves for the poetic endeavor.”]

- Frank, Bernhard. "Dickinson's 'Twas here my summer paused.'" *Explicator* 61.4 (2003): 206-07. [Bernhard explains this poem about winter and death in the context of Greek mythology, suggesting that the "Tropic Bride" might be Persephone bound for Hades "with a one-way ticket."]
- Fuss, Diana. "Corpse Poem." *Critical Inquiry* 30.1 (2003): 1-30. [Fuss defines, describes, and compares the often overlooked nineteenth-century and modern corpse poems, poems spoken from the point of view of the deceased. Focusing on the comic, religious, political, historical, and literary corpse poems of various poets (Thomas Hardy, Randall Jarrell, Richard Wright, H. D., Dan Pagis, Sylvia Plath, and Dickinson among others), Fuss discusses the "cantankerous cadavers" and "amiable dead" in more than a dozen Dickinson poems.]
- Gardner, Thomas. "Jorie Graham: The Art of Poetry LXXXV." *Paris Review* 45.165 (2003): 52-97. [Gardner interviews Jorie Graham about her interest in Emily Dickinson, the creative process, the role of poetry in society, and Graham's newest collection of poetry, *Never*.]
- Grivil, Richard. "The Escape from 'Locksley Hall.'" *Symbiosis: A Journal of Anglo-American Literary Relations* 7.1 (2003): 56-75. [Grivil focuses on Dickinson's poetic debt to Tennyson in J28 ("a babel of echoes in under fifty syllables"), J312 (where her "lineation camouflages [and] disguises her artful theft"), and J465 ("significant borrowing" from Keats, the Brownings, and Tennyson). Grivil claims Tennyson's "The Princess," "In Memoriam," and "Maud" "more than any other contemporary works inspired [Dickinson's] fascicle experiments."]
- Maas, David F. "Reflections on Self-Reflexiveness in Literature." *ETC.: A Review of General Semantics* 60.3 (2003): 313-22. [Identifying self-reflexiveness as that which distinguishes human beings from animals, Maas explores self-reflexive human behavior in the works of Stephen Crane, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, T. S. Eliot, Saul Bellow, and Victor Frank. Examining "After great pain, a formal feeling comes –," "Pain – has an Element of Blank –," and "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain," the author calls Dickinson "one of the most self-reflexive poets in American literature, providing insights into the processes of pain, shock, death, suffering, despair, and cynicism."]
- Phillips, Kyra, and Miles O'Brien. "Meet Ann Landers Replacement." CNN 2 Sept. 2003 (Transcript #090211CN.V85). [Interview with the new advice columnist for *The Chicago Tribune*, Amy Dickinson, who says she is a relative of Emily Dickinson.]
- Shane, Scott. "Peace, at Long Last, for a Poet; End in Sight for Feud Involving the Family of Emily Dickinson." *Baltimore Sun* 17 Aug. 2003: 3F. [Author discusses "the war between the houses" and the "ribbon-tying" ceremony that brings the houses together as the new Emily Dickinson Museum.]
- Swyerski, Ann. "Dickinson's Enchantment: The Barrett Browning Fascicles." *Symbiosis: A Journal of Anglo-American Literary Relations* 7.1 (2003): 76-98. [Swyerski studies three elegies (J312, 363, 593) Dickinson wrote for Elizabeth Barrett Browning and the fascicles (26, 29, 31) in which they appear. She concludes that the poems read within the context of the fascicles reveal "a complex relationship hitherto unsuspected" and "the extent of Dickinson's anxiety and her successful strategies to come to terms with her precursor."]

MEMBERS' NEWS

Conference Workshop

This workshop is another in the series started at the first EDIS conference in Washington, 1992, and continued at Innsbruck (1995) and Trondheim (2001), on cognitive approaches to literature and translation, with special application to Emily Dickinson's poetry. The application of cognitive linguistics to the analysis of literature has become prevalent in recent years, as evidenced by many journal articles and books, including Peter Stockwell's *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction* (Routledge 2002) and Joanna Gavins and Gerard Steen's *Cognitive Poetics in Practice* (Routledge 2003). The precepts of cognitive lin-

guistics are especially congenial to literary studies, since they are based on a theory of meaning as a dynamic construction that arises from the way discourse communities develop shared meanings. They provide a comprehensive and unified account of many of the strategies familiar to literary critics, such as metaphor, metonymy, point of view, perspective, and foregrounding. Margaret Freeman has published several articles on cognitive approaches to Emily Dickinson's poetry. (See the Dickinson Scholar's Registry on the EDIS website for a bibliography (<http://www.cwr.u.edu/affil/edis/edisindex.html>), or contact Margaret at freemamh@lavc.edu.)

In this workshop, we will focus on

one poem, "The luxury to apprehend" (F819/J815), which caused some discussion as to the ambiguities of its meaning on the Circumference internet discussion list in July 2002. Margaret Freeman will present an analysis of the poem based on a cognitive linguistics approach, and Masako Takeda will discuss her initial translation of the poem into Japanese and then its subsequent revision based on Freeman's analysis. David Tennant, a doctoral student in cognitive science at Boston University, whose M.A. thesis was on Dickinson, will respond to the two presentations from the perspective of cognitive science, and then we will open up the floor for general discussion. Translators of Dickinson's poems into

other languages in addition to Japanese are encouraged to participate, as is anyone interested in learning about a newer approach to interpretations of Dickinson's poetry. Connie Ann Kirk, author and Dickinson scholar, has

Dickinson in Ukraine: Traditional and New Perspectives

The last year has brought great inspiration and plenty of new ideas in Ukrainian research on Dickinson's poetry. In Kyiv National Linguistic University, the cognitive approach to poetry analysis remains dominant, and, with the kind support of Rector Professor Galik Artemchuk, Associate Professor Anna Chesnokova is researching the transcendental influence on Dickinson's verse. In June 2003 at the twenty-third PALA (Poetics and Linguistic Association) conference in Istanbul she presented "Emily Dickinson: Inner and/or Outer? Where is the Boundary?" a study of Dickinson's "boundary" concepts and the semantics of the poet's "I vs.

kindly agreed to chair the workshop and moderate the discussion.

If you are interested in learning more about cognitive linguistics and how it can illuminate readings of Dickinson's poetry, in exploring how Dickinson's

the world" metaphors. Chesnokova is especially grateful to Margaret Freeman who supported her with the presentation as well as gave numerous helpful guidelines for further work.

Post-graduate students are investigating the poet's verse from various angles. Next academic year Inna Redka, English Lexicology and Stylistics Department, is planning to start her research on synaesthesia in Dickinson.

As a result of the 2003 lecture stay of Professor Willie van Peer (Munich Ludwig Maximilian University), the Kyiv cognitive school of poetic interpretation has broadened to include empirical analysis. Ksenia Shabanova is doing her graduate research on colour patterning in Dickinson and its reception by Ukrainian children. The basic hypotheses as well as the tentative strategy of the work were presented in July

poetry can be translated into other languages, or simply in finding out more about Dickinson's Luxury poem, arrange to arrive at the conference in Hilo in time to catch this workshop. We look forward to seeing you there!

2003 at the international seminar "Intercultural Reading" in Munich.

In March 2004 at the international conference "American Studies: Urgent Problems" in Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University, Dickinson figured centrally in presentations by Anna Chesnokova (five senses in the poet's verse), Nataliya Bezrebra (the explicit and implicit in her poetics), and Nataliya Pyatak (the gender peculiarities of Dickinson and Frost).

More and more people are investigating Dickinson's poetic vision from all possible angles. While preserving its traditions, Kyiv National Linguistic University is open to these new approaches. One sign of this encouraging trend is the acceptance of Anna Chesnokova, Inna Redka, and Nataliya Bezrebra for the 2004 International EDIS conference.

"Emily Dickinson's World" Weekend

A weekend devoted to "Emily Dickinson's World" will once again be offered by the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst, October 8-10, 2004. New to this ninth weekend of private tours, lectures, poetry, and music are a visit to the just-opened second floor of The Evergreens, and a Victorian tea in the newly restored home of Mabel Loomis Todd.

Keynotespeaker Cynthia Dickinson, Director of the Emily Dickinson Mu-

seum, will present "Emily Dickinson: An Introduction to Her Life, Her Work, and the Museum that Bears Her Name" following Friday evening's wine and cheese reception and dinner at the Lord Jeffrey Inn.

On Saturday, guests will visit The Homestead and The Evergreens, tour other historic sites by coach, and visit the poet's grave. At the Loomis Todd house they will view paintings by Loomis Todd displayed in their original settings.

Doris Abramson, noted oral interpreter of Emily Dickinson's poetry,

will read selections from Dickinson's works that evening, and New England tenor Peter Shea and friends will perform Dickinson poems set to music.

On Sunday morning, Harrison Gregg will discuss Dickinson's calling as a poet: "I Fit for Them: The Sober Labor of Emily Dickinson."

The cost of the Emily Dickinson's World weekend, \$325, includes two nights lodging, four meals, and all admissions. To request a brochure, contact Unitar@crocker.com or 413-253-2848, ext. 1.

Conference, cont. from page 1

for with your registration. Tickets for the reception, banquet, and Volcano House dinner are available for non-registered guests.

MEALS

Buffet lunches will be served at the hotel on Friday and Saturday. A box

lunch will be served on Sunday. The reception and banquet will be in the hotel on Friday night. These meals are included in your registration fee. The Hawaiian buffet dinner will take place on Saturday at the Volcano House Hotel, directly following the volcano tour. This meal costs \$20 and is not included in the registration fee. It is included on the registration form.

INFORMATION

Visit the Conference web site at <http://www.cwru.edu/affil/edis/edisindex.html> for more details. You may also contact Suzanne Juhasz, Conference Director: juhasz@buffmail.colorado.edu or 303-442-4965.

Poet, continued from page 3

disappears to the extent possible in favor of the original poet's voice. The image that Malroux employs to describe her ideal of "transparency" is meditative, that of a contemplative mind: "A pool of water that sways but continues to reflect the other as faithfully as possible; and that allows the reflection of the poet to recompose itself in the mind of the reader." Malroux's method for getting there, for attempting to preserve such a "faithful reflection," requires that the translator focus on the medium, the language itself rather than on the author in a more personalized or intrusive way.

As thus described, translation is a paradoxical undertaking. The transmission of cross-cultural imagination requires both "transparency" and self-effacement, a refusal to adapt, modernize, or rewrite a significant original, but then just as surely an artistic parity between translation and the original which makes the translator an equal partner in the intentionalities of a great poet. As practiced by Malroux, translation entails an intuitive attraction, a vocation, exceptional craftsmanship, and a creative activity which is an art in its own right. It is not surprising that Malroux also writes original poetry, nor that she has begun to attract the attention of American poets for translation of her French originals into English. Let us hope that such matches will continue to be made.

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Malroux, Claire. *Une ane en incandescence*. Jose Corti, 1998.

Elizabeth Brunazzi received her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Princeton University in 1988. She cur-

rently teaches in the General Studies Program at New York University. Her articles have appeared in Lettres modernes, The Languages of Joyce (a collection of essays selected by the International James Joyce Symposium in Venice, 1988), The James Joyce Quarterly, and Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature. She is co-editor with Jeanine Parisier Plottel of a collection of essays, Culture and Daily Life in Occupied France (Contemporary French Civilization, 1999). Her poetry, in bilingual, English and French versions, has most recently appeared in Le Nouveau Recueil (Champ Vallon, 2001).

Belle, continued from page 15

night, for the first time I understood Emily and her quiet seduction. Remembering back to the beginning phases of dissecting her verse, her language, it was so obscure or strange; seemingly unnatural. She was very easy to inspect (though I would not paint her poems as easy) for she herself was a master of examination as well as a patron of curiosity. If I know nothing else about Emily Dickinson's true person, I understand her as both challenging and eager for challenge, two traits we may both share. When I discovered that, I knew I wanted to give my audience the gift of questions as they left the theatre. That and a tingling sensation in their stomachs similar to the one felt after a first kiss."

Wild Nights with Emily opened on the University of Oregon's Robinson Theatre Stage on February 27 and ran through March 13, 2004. The play was well received and the reviews were very positive. The cast included Jana Schmieding as Emily Dickinson; Alexis Papedo as Susan Gilbert Dickinson and Mattie Dickinson; Sarah Turnquist as Mabel Loomis Todd; Blythe Daniels as Amherst Gossip, Maggie, Shakespeare Society Matron; Emily Peterson as Mt. Holyoke Psychologist, Tour Guide, and Lavinia Dickinson; Chris Hirsh as Austin Dickinson and Samuel Bowles; Steve Wehmeier as an ophthalmologist, Judge Otis Lord, and Wedding Minister; Ian Armstrong as Abby Farley, Thomas Higginson, and Charles Wadsworth. Our musicians were Ruth Ames on fiddle

and Amanda Casperson on harp and piano. The original song "My Husband" was composed by Jeremy Jennings.

The production team was headed by John Schmor, Director, with Walter Kennedy as Choreographer, Mary Jungels as Set Designer, Harmony Arnold as Costume Designer, Rachel Kinsman Steck as Lighting Designer, Craig Manville as Sound Designer, Jamie Cannon as Stage Manager, Kathy Thomas as Dramaturg, and Janet Rose as Technical Director.

Kathy Thomas will graduate from the University of Oregon this spring with a BS in Theatre Arts. She will enter the university's graduate school in the fall. Kathy thanks the director and the production staff for their contributions to this article.

MLA Program Announced

There will be two EDIS sessions at the 2004 MLA Annual conference: "Dickinson and Biography" and "Dickinson and the Emersonian Tradition."

Cristanne Miller will chair the biography session, with papers from Vivan Pollak ("Biography Teaches Us First: The Example of Emily Dickinson"), Ingrid Satelmajer ("Fracturing a Master Narrative, Reconstructing 'Sister Sue'"), and Amanda Gailey ("How Anthologists Made Dickinson into a Tolerable Woman Writer").

Paul Crumbley will chair the Emerson session, with papers from Fred White ("Emersonian Self-Reliance as Dickinson Nightmare Scenarios"), Jennifer Leader ("We are molested equally / By immortality": Dickinson, Emerson and Double Consciousness"), and Tom Allen ("Emily Dickinson's Ordinary Language").

Error

The November/December 2003 *Bulletin* was mistakenly numbered on the first page as Volume 15, Number 1; it should have been Volume 15, Number 2. Profuse apologies from the editor.

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All participants on the program must be EDIS members.

Registration Fees

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There will be a guided bus trip to the Big Island's famous Volcanoes National Park Saturday afternoon, July 31, with a Hawaiian buffet dinner and entertainment at the park's hotel, Volcano House. The cost of dinner is not included in the registration fee, but may be paid now or at the conference.

Volcano House dinner: __ at \$20: \$ _____

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Emily Dickinson International Society
 c/o Dr. Michael Kearns
 Prof. and Chair of English
 Univ. of Southern Indiana
 8600 University Blvd.
 Evansville, IN 47712
 mkearns@usi.edu

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