

Bulletin

VOLUME 16, NUMBER 2

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2004

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

EMILY DICKINSON
REALMS OF AMPLITUDE

By Gudrun Grabher

Even though Emily Dickinson herself admitted, in one of her poems, that she had "never seen, Volcanoes' -" (J 175), she was inspired not only by what "Travellers tell" (J 175) but by her own travelling mind to write about the "still - Volcano - Life -" (J 601). Hilo, on the Big Island of Hawaii, harboring a range of still active volcanoes and the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, thus became the site of the Fifth International Conference hosted by the Emily Dickinson International Society, from July 30 through August 1, 2004.

The Hilo Hawaiian Hotel, beautifully situated at the bay, provided not only ample space for the convention but an exotic environment of palm trees, rain forests, and gorgeous fauna and flora. It was therefore not only the long distance most participants had to travel that inspired them to arrive early in order to recover for the "serious" part of their Hawaiian trip but also the luring beauty of the setting that attracted most of us early and made us add a few days after the conference to take advantage of the local attractions, the outdoor swimming pool, the quaint restaurants serving delicious food, and, of course, the choice of beaches offering white, black, or green sand.

Even though somewhat fewer participants attended than at previous conferences, the spirit of Emily Dick-

inson topics and debates was certainly no less ample than before. Quite on the contrary, the more than eighty scholars from countries all over the world did full justice to the topic of the conference, "Realms of Amplitude," which had invited explorations of such diverse themes as Zen Emptiness in

scholarly highlight. The success was further guaranteed by the local organizer, Jonathan Morse, Professor of English at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and the financial manager, Jim Fraser, treasurer of EDIS.

The topic of the conference was meant to provoke papers on the aspect of amplitude as a theme in Dickinson's work and at the same time served as a metaphor to allude to the wide range of reader response to the poet's writings. The five realms of amplitude (the body, nature, the erotic, spirituality, and language) as well as the reader's relationship to Dickinson and her writings helped to structure the amplitude of this amplitude. Keynote lectures and panels were thus organized according to these rubrics.

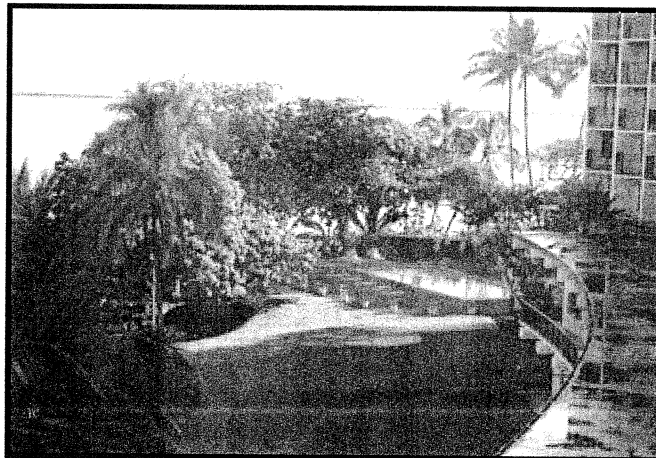


Photo by Cynthia MacKenzie

Dickinson's Language or Dickinson and Darwin or even Dickinson in Cyberspace.

The amplitude of scholarship that was brought together in Hilo was the result of the long-term endeavors and the academic expertise of Suzanne Juhasz, Professor of English at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and founding editor of *The Emily Dickinson Journal*, who served as the Director of this conference. Assisted in the development of the conception of the conference program by Vivian Pollak and Marianne Noble, she succeeded in making it a

On the first morning of the conference, plenary lecturer Cynthia Hogue offered her impressive "How to Read Dickinson (W)riting Nature," whereas Joanne Feit Diehl focused her intriguing plenary speech on the amplitude of the word with emphasis on immanence and authority, and Jane Eberwein placed the spiritual amplitude of Dickinson in the framework of Calvinism, beautifully combining her scholarly expertise with her wonderful sense of humor. The realms of nature, language, and spirituality thus covered, the second group of plenary speakers presented us with their views on the body, the erotic, and the poet-

reader relationship: Daneen Wardrop fascinated us with her perspective on clothes and fashioning in her paper on the amplitude of the body's body, Suzanne Juhasz convincingly argued for a clarifying definition of queer in Dickinson's erotic language, and Vivian Pollak finally brought before our eyes the ample realm of reader response, including, among others, Sylvia Plath as a Dickinson reader. All these brilliant and thought-provoking papers stimulated discussions. The papers presented in the various pan-



Photo by Hiroko Uno

els were no less informative and stimulating and opened up new perspectives and new emphases such as a look at Dickinson and Henry James, an investigation of Dickinson's suicide poems, or a comparative view on Dickinson and the poet Adelaide Crapsey. Additional highlights to the conference were provided by Margaret Freeman with her already traditional and always well received workshop on cognitive approaches to literature and translation running on Thursday before the official opening of the conference, and by the presentation of new directions in editing, focusing on the Dickinson Electronic Archives

Projects. With Martha Nell Smith unfortunately not present, Ellen Louise Hart presented the philosophy of the project and reported on the editing of the correspondence with Susan Dickinson for print and for electronic media, while Paul Crumbley concentrated on the editing of the correspondence with Helen Hunt Jackson.

As usual, the conference was preceded by the annual EDIS Board Meeting and closed with the EDIS business meeting. It was during the latter that the prospect was announced that for the next EDIS international conference in 2007 we may convene at yet another exotic and fascinating place. It was also during the business meeting that Jonnie Guerra, stepping down as President of EDIS, was amply thanked for her wonderful service to the society, first as Vice President for five years and then as President for another four years. She was presented with an Emily Dickinson doll that had been created by an artist. The incoming President, Gudrun Grabher, and the new Vice President, Paul Crumbley, were then welcomed by the audience.

A climax in many respects was the banquet on Friday night, which also provided the framework for presenting the EDIS Distinguished Service Award to Roland Hagenbüchle, Emeritus Professor of American Studies at the Catholic University of Eichstätt, Germany. Unfortunately, Professor Hagenbüchle was unable to attend the ceremony. Jonnie Guerra, Vice President for Academic Affairs at Cabrini College and President of EDIS, and Paul Crumbley, Associate Professor of English at Utah State University in

Logan, honored Roland Hagenbüchle's generous, ample, inspiring presence in ED scholarship as well as his mentoring spirit to so many of us. Gudrun Grabher, Professor of American Studies at the University of Innsbruck, Austria, then read Professor Hagenbüchle's message of thanks to an audience which embraced him as much more than merely a virtual presence that night. We all felt his spirit and yet would have wished to have him with us.

Dwelling in the "volcanoes" of ex-



Photo by James Fraser

citing scholarship everyone was eager to see the real volcanoes on the Big Island. The bus tour to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park on Saturday afternoon was followed by a lovely dinner at the inn in the park.

By Sunday afternoon people stayed, or left, all being inspired and delightfully exhausted.

Gudrun Grabher is Professor and Chair of the American Studies Department at the University of Innsbruck. Her fields of interest are American poetry, literature and philosophy, literature and the other arts, and cultural anthropology. She is currently EDIS President.

EDIS Bulletin (ISSN 1055-3932) is published twice yearly, May/June and November/December, by The Emily Dickinson International Society, Inc. Standard Mail non-profit postage is paid at Evansville, IN 47708. Membership in the Society is open to all persons with an interest in Emily Dickinson and her work; for further information, contact Gudrun Grabher, President, EDIS, Institut für Amerikastudien, University of Innsbruck, Innrain 52, A-6020 Innsbruck, Austria.

Annual dues are \$50.00 for regular members, \$30.00 for students, \$100.00 for contributing and institutional members (all of whom receive the *Bulletin* and *The Emily Dickinson Journal*), or \$20.00 for associate members (*Bulletin* only). Membership inquiries should be directed to James C. Fraser, 5208 Clinton Rd., Alexandria, VA 22312 USA. Membership applications and changes of address should be sent to The Emily Dickinson International Society, c/o Johns Hopkins University Press, P.O. Box 19966, Baltimore, MD 21211-0966 USA. Direct changes of address to jrnlcirc@mail.press.jhu.edu, 800-548-1784 (U.S. and Canada), or 410-516-6987; fax to 410-516-6968.

Address submissions and other communications for the *Bulletin* to Michael Kearns, mkearns@usi.edu or English Dept., Univ. of Southern Indiana, 8600 University Blvd., Evansville, IN 47712 USA. Submission deadlines are March 1 (spring issue), September 1 (fall issue). All articles become the property of the *Bulletin*. Back issues are available for \$5.00 each from the editor. Copyright © 2004 by The Emily Dickinson International Society, Inc. The *Bulletin* is indexed in the American Humanities Index and the MLA Bibliography.

THE EDIS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

The Presentation of the EDIS Distinguished Service Award to Roland Hagenbüchle began with introductory remarks from EDIS President Jonnie Guerra and followed with a formal tribute by Vice-President-Elect Paul Crumbley. President-Elect Gudrun Grabher then read Professor Hagenbüchle's remarks on receiving the award.

In 1992, the Emily Dickinson International Society established the Distinguished Service Award to support its goal "to promote, perpetuate, and enhance the study and appreciation of Emily Dickinson throughout the world." The award is intended to recognize individuals whose scholarship and service have made an outstanding and permanent contribution to Dickinson studies. To date, the award has been given three times: first to the late Richard Sewall at the 1992 conference in Washington, DC, then to Ralph Franklin at the 1999 conference at Dickinson's alma mater, Mount Holyoke College, and finally to the late Brita Lindberg-Seyersted at the 2001 conference in Trondheim, Norway.

This evening the Society is privileged to present the award for a fourth time to Roland Hagenbüchle, Professor emeritus of American studies at the Catholic University of Eichstätt, Germany. In a few minutes, the totality of Roland's contributions to Dickinson scholarship will be lauded, but I want to acknowledge my own indebtedness as a dissertation writer to his 1974 essay published in the *Emerson Society Quarterly*—"Precision and Indeterminacy in the Poetry of Emily Dickinson."

Roland Hagenbüchle's critical intelligence is truly magisterial, and his works about our poet are of lasting importance in Dickinson Studies. I can think of no one who better deserves the label of "humanist" than he does. Like anyone who knows Roland personally, I respect the scholar, and I

love the man. When the Emily Dickinson International Society was a fledgling organization, he became our champion, advocating our purposes and supporting our projects. He gave plenary addresses at the first two international conferences—both in Washington, DC and in Innsbruck, Austria; he served on the editorial board, published in the *Emily Dickinson Journal*, and also wrote for the bulletin; he identified European scholars whom the Society needed to recruit, most notably Gudrun Grabher; and he mentored and promoted several gen-

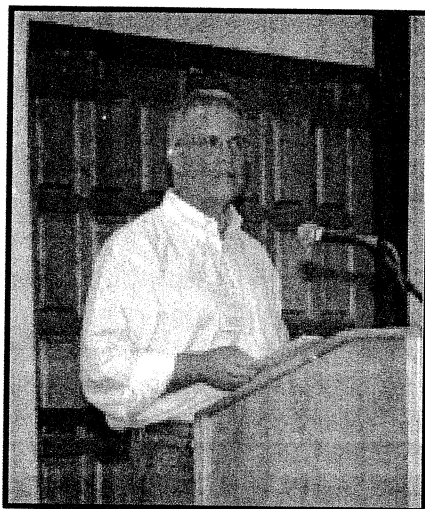


Photo by James Fraser

erations of Dickinson scholars including some in this room.

Unfortunately, illness prevents Roland from being with us in Hawaii, but he sends, and I quote, "ardent wishes to all the participants of this conference assembled in honor of our beloved poet. Dickinson knew her hour would come and fame would catch up with her. But she did not know when. We are fortunate to know, and we are overjoyed."

I want now to invite Paul Crumbley, EDIS board member, Vice President-elect of the Society, and Associate Professor of English at Utah State University to the podium. On behalf of the Board of Directors and the membership of the Society, Paul will give a

formal tribute to Roland.

[Crumbley's tribute follows]

Let me begin by saying how delighted I am to be part of this award presentation honoring Professor Roland Hagenbüchle. Roland has played a special role in my life, as he has in the lives of many Dickinson scholars, because he was eager to hear my ideas and treat me as a colleague at a time when such generosity was not in the least expected. I vividly recall an hour of animated discussion over lunch during the first EDIS International Conference in Washington D. C., at a time when I was struggling to complete my dissertation on Dickinson. Infected by his enthusiasm and buoyed by his support, I returned to my dissertation with renewed vigor, successfully defending it three months later. Three years after that, at the 1995 international conference held at Innsbruck, Roland invited me to join him and his wife Helen for four days at their home in the Swiss Alps. This was an extraordinary experience for me, one that gave me the confidence to move forward with my book on Dickinson and to participate in many European American Studies conferences.

I mention these personal encounters because my experience is representative, not exceptional. Those who know Roland best consistently marvel at his ability to anchor scholarship in a life built around human encounters. As Gudrun Grabher has noted when writing about Roland's scholarly persona, he "so firmly believes in human encounter as a major means of cultivating the self that I find the most adequate approach in picturing his 'self' [comes] through [my description of] our interactions" (*Bulletin* 8.2 [1996]: 1). It comes as no surprise, then, that Roland made a name for himself as an organizer of international conferences at his home campus in Eichstätt, Germany. Selecting topics as varied as poetry and epistemology, paradox, the self, and the

Award, continued on page 32

COGNITIVE APPROACHES TO LITERATURE AND TRANSLATION

EMILY DICKINSON'S LUXURY POEM

Panelists: Margaret Freeman, Los Angeles Valley College; Masako Takeda, Osaka Shoin Women's University;
David Tennant, Boston College

By David Tennant

Margaret Freeman led this workshop applying cognitive poetics to the translation of Emily Dickinson's "Luxury" poem (Fr819E). Masako Takeda discussed her translation of the poem into Japanese. David Tennant gave a brief response to Freeman's presentation and asked a question of Takeda's translation. Freeman briefly introduced cognitive poetics as a linguistic approach to literary studies. Cognitive poetics accounts for all the linguistic and grammatical elements of a poem as part of its meaning. Cognitive poetics views linguistic meaning as both conceptual and contextual in nature.

Workshop participants were asked questions about their understanding of the poem and any difficulties. Freeman helped the participants work

through a number of these difficulties by demonstrating the explanatory value of the cognitive approach. For instance, Freeman identified the implicit conceptual structures informing the poem's working metaphors. The word "banquet" (8) in Western culture evokes a semantic frame in the reader's mind which includes as part of its meaning an "abundance of food." This evocation allows Dickinson to subvert the conventional notion of MORE IS BETTER with the inversion that a "crumb" of "Consciousness" of the beloved constitutes a surplus of nourishment for the speaker. Freeman also showed that the lack of a present tense stanza between the future-conditional tense of stanza one and the past tense of stanza two is iconic for the absent presence of the

beloved.

The question posed to Takeda had to do with whether it was possible to achieve the ineffable quality, basically a surplus of meaning, inherent to the original. Takeda noted that the cognitive approach would have allowed her to translate more of the poem's complexities. It was agreed that cognitive poetics is useful for translation but needs a more comprehensive account of how phonology contributes to a poem's potential for evoking meaning.

David Tennant is a second year PhD student in English at Boston College, concentrating on the Early Modern period with a focus on Shakespeare's history plays. He is also interested in poetry and poetics at large, especially in the work of Emily Dickinson.

PLENARY I

Chair: Suzanne Juhasz, University of Colorado, Boulder; *panelists:* Cynthia Hogue, University of Arizona; Joanne Fejt Diehl, University of California at Davis; Jane Eberwein, Oakland University

By Lilach Lachman

This panel was proposed and chaired by Suzanne Juhasz to explore different approaches to Dickinson's various realms of amplitude. The discussion raised issues that were later taken up, from different angles, in the conference's subsequent sessions. Most notably, such issues included the question of the poet's re-writing of the phenomenological world, her interaction with her readers, and her deployment and extension of her cultural inheritance.

Although each panelist approached these questions according to her own focus, all three, in some way or other,

highlighted the fact that Dickinson's world was shaped by the experience of limits that may be said to have defined her relationship to whatever realm she explored: the natural world in relation to her aesthetics (Hogue), metaphysical thinking and language (Diehl), her religious inheritance (Eberwein). Through these aspects of her world and her work, Dickinson's spiritual search radically questioned both contemporary thinking and her own sense of self. But whereas such a search for an absolute notion (Nature, Unity, Being, Immanence, God) is traditionally accompanied by self-re-

nouncing, Dickinson's negative thought is linked to the minutest acts of individual perception coupled with the most self-constituting choices of language. The extremity of Dickinson's quest does not, therefore, result in her powerlessness, but on the contrary, it extends and amplifies her.

Cynthia Hogue's incisive paper, "How(e) to read Dickinson (w)riting Nature," focused on how the material and perceptual attention that Dickinson brings to her poems serves her engagement with the "places where humans could not impose meaning—transcendental or phenomenologi-



Photo by Claudia Schwarz

cal—on the world.” Joanne Feit Diehl’s argument highlighted the rhetorical construction of “immanence” and “authority” as means of the poet’s expression of power, and emphasized Dickinson’s intriguing ambivalence toward her own “verbal amplitude.” Finally, Jane Donahue Eberwein’s comprehensive presentation focused on the paradoxical role of Calvinism in prompting Dickinson to attend to gaps within her own religious tradition, enabling her to intuit connections to other ways of approaching the sacred.

“God asks nothing of the highest soul but attention.” Cynthia Hogue’s compelling opening quotation of the words of twentieth century naturalist and writer Loren Eiseley focussed us directly on a central tension inherent in the poetics of amplitude in Dickinson’s work. Hogue placed Dickinson’s perception of Nature in the context of Eiseley’s 1967 discussion of Thoreau in *The Star Thrower* and Susan Howe’s 1985 *My Emily Dickinson*.

The resonance between Howe and Dickinson lies, Hogue suggested, not only in the cultural roots they share but also in the kind of material and perceptual attention they bring to the poems. According to Howe’s conceptualization of the stops and starts in Dickinson manuscripts, Dickinson had an “unexplainable eye,” one that hesitated as she persisted in her contemplation of the world she could “see,” “hear,” and “observe.” Noting that Dickinson’s version of Nature was more domesticated and aestheticized than Thoreau’s, Hogue argued that Dick-

inson was nonetheless as clear-eyed as he when addressing the undomesticated otherness of the world.

Lending a few of Dickinson’s poems (Fr 778, Fr 763, Fr 578) her own poet’s ear and eye, Hogue examined the way literality and trope function in Dickinson’s poems about nature, analyzing how their considered confrontation “of Ought/ But Blank—and steady Wilderness” (Fr 693) functions at once literally and figuratively, as a highly condensed trope on Pain and Sorrow and War, and as the emptying out of meaning that some of the poems confront.

Particularly illuminating was Hogue’s reading of “amplitude,” which she perceived as a key to Dickinson’s

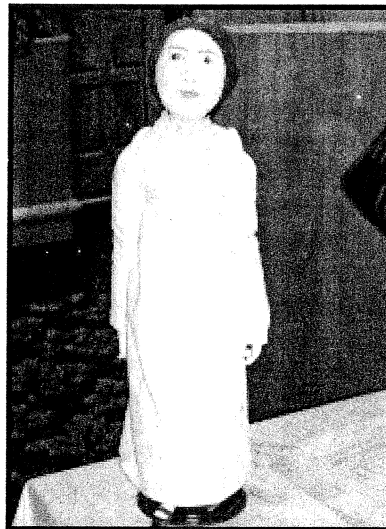


Photo by Claudia Schwarz

stoic poetics (the “Volcanic stoic of a few well-chosen words,” she calls her). Underlying Dickinson’s selective and restrictive art, Hogue claims, is the way in which her language materializes as perceived action within and upon space: “We might call the bedrock of her meaning Ample—the word carrying with it, in addition to the primary definition of plenitude, the sense not only of ‘spacious’, but also of ‘extended’: the sense of room or space fully sufficient for the use intended. No less space, but also no more: what will suffice, what will ‘do’ as we say. We can make it do.” No less striking is the keen perceptual attention that Hogue her-

self brought to the reading of Dickinson, thereby adding another historical layer to the resonance she finds between Dickinson and Howe. The references to the Iraq war in her paper, likewise, foregrounded her own “w(riter)’s” sensibility, in process and in relation to time, that she brings to Dickinson’s poetry.

Intersecting well with these emphases in Hogue’s presentation was Joanne Feit Diehl’s analysis of Dickinson’s deflected verbal techniques. Here, Diehl examined the poet’s control over her reader’s interpretation, as well as her manipulation of the reader’s conventional heuristic habits. Diehl opened her paper by considering the terms “immanence” and “authority”; based upon this, she then explored Dickinson’s construction of “a voice of magisterial presence” and observed “the anxieties that surround her poetics of consciousness.” Through a reading of four examples from the poems (“There came a Day—at Summer full,” Fr 325; “It would never be Common—more I said,” Fr 388; “I would not paint—a picture,” Fr 348; “Looking at Death, is Dying,” Fr 341), Diehl highlighted the tensions between Dickinson’s positing of a realm of verbal amplitude and her ambivalent approach toward such amplitude. In her discussion of Poem 388, for example, she offered an engaging demonstration of how, while “verbal mastery itself becomes the occasion for hesitation and doubt,” “the poem itself as performative act reaffirms the poet’s claim to her supposedly lost verbal power.” Diehl claimed that in Poem 341, Dickinson audaciously “posits the ability of language

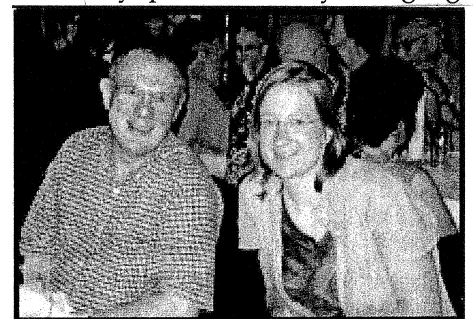


Photo by Diana Fraser

Plenary I, continued on page 33

SPIRITUALITY I

Chair: Barbara Kelly; panelists: Helen Koukoutsis, Macquire University; Siobhan Phillips, Yale University; Anne Ramirez, Neumann College

By Barbara Kelly

A small gathering of energetic first-time presenters and veteran Dickinson scholars gathered in the large, tropical Moku'ola II room for the only designated conference session on Dickinson's spirituality. Helen Koukoutsis's interest in Christian mysticism and Zen Buddhism was the springboard for her paper; Siobhan Phillips and Anne Ramirez each focused on a particular poem, looking closely at the poet's language from a Christian point of view.

In "The 'law of Flood': Zen Emptiness in Emily Dickinson's Language of Amplitude," veteran presenter Helen Koukoutsis linked Edward Dickinson's death in 1874 to Emily Dickinson's "law of Flood"—"a phrase [the poet] uses to suggest that enlightenment is born out of the experience of anguish." Her father's death and the consequent loss of part of herself led to her realizing that all things are interdependent. Koukoutsis said, "To be enlightened to this law means to abide by the nature of things as they rise and fade away endlessly. . . ." She suggested that after 1874, Dickinson's "language of amplitude" relates to the idea of emptiness in Zen Buddhism: "Zen emptiness is based on [the] Buddhist law of dependent co-origination . . . that all things are impermanent and ever changing and that no 'thing' ex-

ists independently; all things co-arise and co-cease." To support her argument, Koukoutsis examined "In many and reportless places" (Fr 1404) and the water imagery in "The inundation of the Spring" (Fr1423) and "Water make many Beds" (Fr1446). She concluded, "Through a language of amplitude Dickinson shows that the self is made up of ample and inseparable moments of joy, of life, of death. Like the awakening to the Buddhist law of dependent co-origination, the poet's realization of the 'law of Flood' indicates that these moments of ampleness are empty; life is empty without death, joy is empty without grief, the self is empty without the other. Emptiness in Zen is the ground from which we are constantly awakening. Our thoughts and feelings are transient and, like ourselves, emerge from and fade away into emptiness. Emily Dickinson's assertion is ultimately the same: 'Emerging from an Abyss, and reentering it — that is Life' (L1024)."

In "Emily Dickinson's Communion," Siobhan Phillips focused on one of 21 different senses of "Spirit" found in Dickinson's 1841 *Webster's Dictionary*: the "Spirit" in "A word made Flesh" (Fr1715); she also discussed the poem's Trinitarian religious context. Closely explicating the second and third stanzas, Phillips said, "Poem 1715 does not lament a word's inability to die; rather, it celebrates an eternal life that encompasses death, a breathing out and a

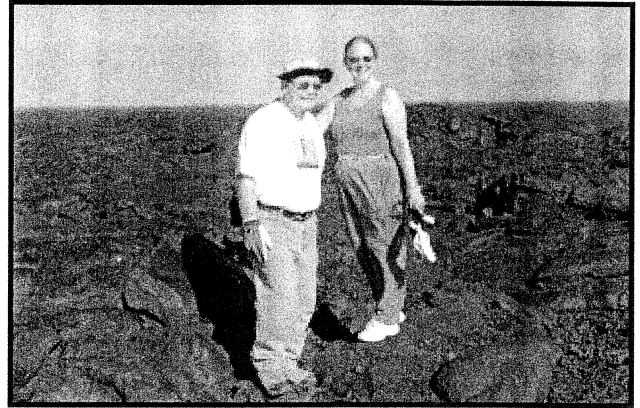


Photo by James Fraser

breathing in," a concept remindful of Koukoutsis's Zen readings. Phillips continued, "Loved philology does not overturn or reject the characteristics of a Trinitarian God that precede it [in the poem]. Rather, the consent of language manifests and realizes the true model of that tripartite power." She discussed the possible influence of Jonathan Edwards and the Andover theologian, Edwards A. Park, particularly their Trinitarian interpretations of the word *consent*. She said, "Typically, if Dickinson's Poem 1715 has absorbed Trinitarian rhetoric, she has used it for her own purposes: that is, to empower language. 'Loved philology' shows that the properties conventionally assigned to God in theological debates around her were the same properties that Dickinson ascribed to words: to her, language, like the Trinitarian godhead, is loved and loving at once, containing within *itself* an infinity of relationship." Phillips noted, "a model of Trinitarian divinity could find in a word's multiple meanings not division and discord but interrelation and creativity." She concluded, "Reading

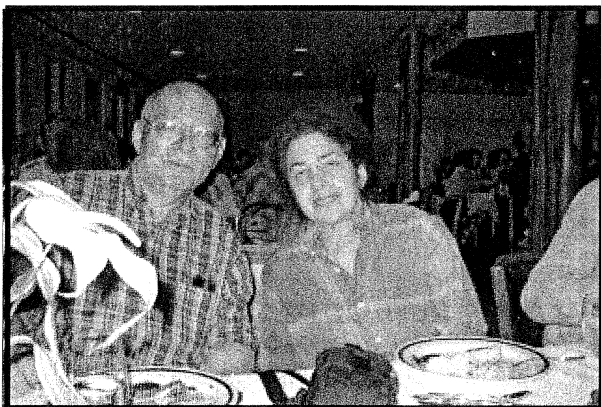


Photo by Hiroko Uno

Poem 1715 amid the echoes of its Trinitarian context deepens our understanding of the life Dickinson found in words; it also emphasizes once again the strength and importance of that animating eros that breathes through so much of her work."

In "Summoning the Sun: The Power of Dickinson's Faith," Anne Ramirez closely examined "My Faith is larger than the Hills - " (Fr489/ J766), suggesting that the speaker "seems to imply that the Divine Being (traditionally symbolized by the sun) needs humanity's response to his life-giving radiance and keeps watch over the world because of [the speaker's] persistent faith. Rather like the biblical Jacob with whom she elsewhere identifies, the poet will not let the Sun go without extending its blessing on a world that unwittingly owes its well-being to the

amplitude of her faith and/or art." Ramirez observed that it is the fourth stanza "that makes this indisputably more than a simple nature poem. How dare I stint my faith on which so vast a task depends, the speaker asks, lest the firmament, the heaven, the structure of the universe should fail or falter on account of me?" Ramirez explained, "The sun is the visible giver of light in whom everyone rejoices, but the poet is the hidden guide that shows the sun its way and thus holds the world together." The speaker "harbors a healthy skepticism about the Sun's dependability; help for the world comes not from the hills but from her whose faith is stronger than the hills." Having explored biblical echoes and parallels with other Dickinson poems, Ramirez concluded, "By playfully asserting the amplitude of her ability to sum-

mon forth the sun and keep the universe running smoothly, she may be symbolically claiming the power to call successfully upon the Deity to make his presence known."

After the presentations, the audience engaged the panelists in a probing and interactive discussion, noting how their varied papers differed from or complemented each other and suggesting further avenues of research. These well-researched and earnestly presented papers demonstrated the amplitude of Dickinson's spirituality and the power of her poetry to call forth various critical responses from careful readers.

Barbara Kelly is book review editor for the Bulletin and is the current secretary of EDIS.

LANGUAGE I

Chair: Gary Lee Stonum, Case Western Reserve University; *panelists:* Joanna Yin, University of Hawaii at Manoa; Michael L. Manson, American University; Marianne Noble, American University

By Gary Lee Stonum

Joanna Yin (University of Hawai'i at Manoa) in "Precision and Possibility: The Mathematics of Emily Dickinson" surveys some of the mathematical terms and metaphors Dickinson uses and also the advantages of using such terms to describe the structure of particular poems. An algebra of analogy or equation, for example, organizes such poems as "I dwell in possibility" and "To pile like thunder." The arithmetic of addition and subtraction can be seen in "A loss of something"; the geometry of circles and circumferences famously provides Dickinson with key metaphors; and calculus aids Dickinson's wrestling with the tenets of Calvinism.

Michael L. Manson (American Uni-

versity) in "A Fascinating Chill: Dickinson's Metrical Music" proposes



Photo by Hiroko Uno

nothing less than a new paradigm for Dickinson's prosody. Drawing on Derek Attridge, Manson argues that

like most metrical poetry in English Dickinson's is willy-nilly organized by two possibilities, stanzaic or stichic form. In the former, represented by "It ceased to hurt me," stressed syllables pair with unstressed to create feet, feet pair to create hemistiches, hemistiches pair to form lines, lines pair to form couplets, and couplets pair to create what Manson calls staves, which most often graphically appear as four lines of four beats each. In the latter the pairing mechanisms of stanzaic form are deliberately frustrated in various ways. Dickinson, usually a stanzaic poet, will sometimes write poems that (conspicuously, audibly) fall short of the sixteen-beat stave or she will place

Language I, continued on page 34

NATURE I

Chair: Erika Scheurer, University of St. Thomas; *panelists:* Elizabeth M. Mills, Davidson University; Brad Ricca, Case Western Reserve University; Kathleen Peterson, Harvard University

By Erika Scheurer

The speakers in this panel treated us listeners to three fascinating perspectives of the poet in connection to the natural world: fractal geometry, astronomy, and entomology.

Elizabeth Mills examined Dickinson's fascicles in connection to fractal geometry, which provides a mathematical model for many complex forms found in nature. A fractal is a rough geometric shape for which small parts often look similar to or exactly like the whole. Accompanying her talk with stunning Power Point pictures of natural fractals from Hawaii and points relative to Fascicle 31, Mills made a case for viewing the poet's seemingly chaotic fascicles as similar to natural fractals and thus material embodiments of Dickinson's aesthetic. Through this perspective, then, a poem is a fractal of a fascicle, a line is a fractal of a poem, a word is a fractal of a line, and a sound is a fractal of a word.

From the ever-shrinking world of fractals we moved to the stars, as Brad Ricca traced ideas of the subjective and relative nature of time in Dickinson's circumference poetry, connecting them to the astronomy of Denison Olmsted, the author of one of

her astronomy textbooks. Dickinson lived during a period of intense interest in astronomy, especially regarding the implications of the Copernican



Photo by Claudia Schwarz

theory for religious faith. Drawing on her biography, poetic subjects, and word choice, Ricca argued that Dickinson assimilated Olmsted's astronomical method, his "way of seeing." This is especially significant in connection to his use of circumference—not as an all-inclusive, absolute system of measurement, but as a series of interrelated individual systems.

Finally, Kathleen Peterson brought us back to Earth—to crickets, in particular—through her incisive reading

of Fr 895, "Further in Summer than the Birds—" Peterson noted how promiscuous Dickinson was with this poem, sending it off to many people and, in the case of Mabel Loomis Todd, even including an actual dead cricket with the manuscript. Discussing Dickinson's love of silence in connection to the poet's depiction of the sound of crickets in various versions of the poem, Peterson argued that the hum of insects becomes a form of silence for Dickinson, causing the individual to become lost in the collective. She concluded that Dickinson's liberal use of religious and political terminology in Fr 895 reveals a poetic imagination transcending selfhood to embrace nationhood.

In all, this panel raised provocative questions about Dickinson's intellectual and emotional connections to the natural world through three diverse perspectives.

Erika Scheurer, associate professor of English at the University of St. Thomas (St. Paul) is currently working on Dickinson's rhetorical education.

NEW DIRECTIONS I

Chair: James Fraser; *panelists:* Martha Ackmann, Mt. Holyoke College; Joan Kirkby, Macquarie University; April Gentry, Savannah State University

By James Fraser

Dickinson lived in a time of new intellectual thinking stimulated by discoveries in the natural sciences. The panelists in this session examined aspects of Dickinson's awareness, writing and reading in the context of her contemporary intel-

lectual environment. As Martha Ackmann states, "Dickinson often found that a poet's imagination—rather than science, nature or God—was the most powerful force in the universe."

Emily Dickinson would have

known much about the science of natural theology from her education at Mt Holyoke, states Martha Ackmann. Edward Hitchcock and Mary Lyon were practitioners of the popular early nineteenth-century view of science that argued

God's plan could be best understood by closely examining nature. The science of natural theology was first articulated in William Paley's landmark book, *Natural Theology*, published in 1802 and later in the *Bridgewater Treatises* (1833-1836). Dickinson's astronomy education is an example of the ways in which study of the sun, stars, and "heavens" was viewed through a theological lens. This education may have prompted in Dickinson a sense of proportion: she frequently compared the sky's magnificence to the vastness of God's creation, human emotion and imagination. In 1859, the science of natural theology was upended by Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Dickinson was aware of Darwin's revolutionary ideas and on two occasions mentioned him by suggesting that science—even Darwin—could not be used to explain all the world's mysteries.

In her paper entitled "We Thought Darwin Had Thrown 'the Redeemer' Away: Emily Dickinson and the Nineteenth Century Darwin Wars," Joan Kirkby examines Dickinson's writing in the context of the scientific/religious speculation and the "Darwin Wars" that characterized nineteenth century intellectual thought—from New England evolutionary theologians Edward Hitchcock, Alexander Winchell, Asa Gray and Minot Savage whose work Dickin-

son knew through contact or through her reading. New England periodicals the Dickinsons subscribed to published accounts of the latest scientific discoveries, with essays by or about big players in the "Darwin wars," including Abbott, Wallace, Huxley, and Darwin himself. Dickinson's local paper the *Hampshire and Franklin Express* considered anti-Darwinians to be against the spirit of learning and progress; the paper showed a sense of urbanity and exhilaration regarding the new developments



Photo by Jonathan Morse

of science. Other periodicals either attempted to balance the claims of naturalists and supernaturalists or found no alliance between the two possible. Kirkby concludes that Dickinson was deeply imbricated in her culture's dialogue between science and theology from the mid 1850s onwards, and like Darwin and Freud, was coming to terms with and finding beauty in transience and imperma-

nence, teaching us "The Fact that Earth is Heaven — / Whether Heaven is Heaven or not" (Fr1435).

April Gentry suggests Dickinson's reading of contemporary adventures and novels may reappear in her poems as an "imaginative reenactment" of her reading. In a 7 October 1863 letter to her cousins, the Norcross sisters, Dickinson confesses to reading a novel she refers to as the "South Sea rose" (L285). Johnson's footnote suggests she may have been reading Melville's *Typee*, an assertion that Gentry finds made all the more interesting by the letter's date—which coincides with the probable composition date of one of her own sea fantasies: "I Started Early—Took my Dog" (Fr656). Gentry explores connections between Dickinson's poem and Melville's novel, beginning with some fundamental parallels in narrative, imagery, and detail, and focuses on the poem's appropriation of *Typee*'s intersecting tropes of cannibalism and desire (particularly same-sex).

Dickinson's deployment of these tropes makes it possible to read Fr656 as the imaginative reenactment of *Typee* through a female protagonist, but also as an account of Dickinson's own experience with the novel as "vicarious travel."

James Fraser is a scientist, an appreciative reader of Emily Dickinson and Treasurer of the Emily Dickinson International Society residing in Alexandria, Virginia.

The Emily Dickinson International Society wishes to announce a fundraising campaign to name a future Scholar in Amherst award in honor of Richard B. Sewall, the first recipient of the Society's Distinguished Service Award in 1992. Sewall, who died in April 2003, won the National Book Award for his 1973 *Life of Emily Dickinson*, and both Sewall and the biography have had an enduring influence on Dickinson studies since.

Contributions should be made payable to EDIS and mailed to James Fraser, EDIS Treasurer, 5208 Clinton Road, Alexandria, VA 22312. Please specify that the money is intended for the Richard B. Sewall fund. Once the fund reaches \$2000, the Society will designate the next available Scholar in Amherst award with Sewall's name. Questions about the Richard B. Sewall fund should be addressed to Jonnie Guerra at jguerra@cabrini.edu.

DICKINSON AND MELVILLE

AMPLE (?) INTERSECTIONS

Chair: Michael Kearns, University of Southern Indiana; panelists: Per Serritslev Petersen, University of Aarhus, Denmark; Daniel Fineman, Occidental College; Lynn Langmade, San Francisco State University

By Per Serritslev Petersen

Aloha nui loa to the Hilo conference organizers and to Michael Kearns, who proposed and chaired the session on Dickinson and Melville. There proved to be quite a few ample intersections between our two writers.

Per Serritslev Petersen launched the session with a paper on the crisis of faith shared by Dickinson and Melville, negotiated through what was described as their unique poetico-philosophical oscillations or *ampliatudinizing*. In their articulation of this crisis, with its moments of acute scepticism and nihilism, they also shared crucial concepts and tropes like, for instance, madness and the whiteness/coldness of the cosmos. At the end of the day, however, both writers, despite temperamental and gender-related differences, would concur that "The abdication of Belief / Makes the Behavior small—/ Better an ignis fatuus / Than no illume at all" (Fr1581).

Daniel Fineman focused on the aesthetic argument in Dickinson and Melville in relation to Kant's *Critique of Judgment* and Schiller's "Of the Aesthetic Estimation of Magnitude" and their appeal to the aesthetic and the sublime. In both American writers, Fineman argued, there is an implicit rejection of Kant's and Schiller's triumphant humanism. In *Moby-Dick*, Pip's repetition of a conjugation from Murray's *Grammar* ("I look, you look, he looks...") suggests that language, not the individual, is the counterforce to nature/God. In Dickinson's "The Drop that

wrestles in the Sea—" (Fr255), the feminine drop challenges the masculine ocean in its largeness, surrendering her self in the question "Pleads 'me'?" to the objective case, thus identifying the self, as the epiphenomenon of language, with the impersonality of the personal pronoun. In both writers the "I" or cogito appears as a turbulent interstice between the roily



Photo by Claudia Schwartz

condition of being and language's rage for order (*à la* Wallace Stevens?).

Lynn Langmade started with Walter Benjamin's seminal question in "The Author as Producer," namely "What is the *attitude* of the work to the relations of production of its time?" How did Dickinson and Melville respond to the technological innovations of print production which came to constitute both the literary marketplace and authorship as such? Dickinson famously refused to publish her poems, opting to bypass what she called "the Auction / Of the mind of Man" (Fr788), while Melville, in a letter to Hawthorne, was agonizing over

the fact that he had to finish *Moby-Dick* although he knew that it was not marketable. Only by choosing to become writers with surplus economies—that is, writers without consumers—could they anticipate a literary marketplace with more congenial modes of expression.

Michael Kearns (University of Southern Indiana) also focused on the objective conditions of cultural production that Dickinson and Melville had to negotiate as writers. Referring to Pierre Bourdieu's distinction between economic, symbolic, cultural and other types of capital, Kearns hypothesized that Dickinson and Melville both insisted on earning symbolic capital as distinct from the economic capital associated with large-scale production, complete with mass-market publishing devices. Consequently, both writers refused to be marketed through *daguerreotyped* identities, believing that this kind of marketing would destroy their ability to accrue the symbolic capital they were entitled to. Hence, Melville's movement to self-publishing and Dickinson's practice of publishing with letters.

Per Serritslev Petersen is an Associate Professor at the University of Aarhus, Denmark. His most recent publications are "Jack London's Medusa of Truth" in Philosophy and Literature (2002) and an article on 9/11 and what the 9/11 Committee Report has called the "problem of imagination," accepted for publication by Orbis Litterarum.

LANGUAGE II

Chair: Paul Crumbley, Utah State University; *panelists:* Jed Deppman, Oberlin College; Deirdre Fagan, University of Miami; Mike Yetman, Purdue University

By Paul Crumbley

Members of this panel examined amplitude as a property of Dickinson's language that profoundly influences both our experience of the poetry and our sense of who the poet is. Presenters invited the audience to consider Dickinson's poems as mental scenes, to view her dash as "the all-inclusive unutterable word," and to consider her displacement of lexical meaning with the amplitude of lived experience.

In "Ampler than the Sky: Dickinson and the Movement of Thought," Jed Deppman presented Dickinson as a postmodern writer whose intellectual reach has been overlooked by scholarship preoccupied with the affective power of her language. Positioning Dickinson in the intellectual tradition descending from Immanuel Kant through Jean-Francois Lyotard, Deppman pointed to Dickinson's repeated use of a key mental scene "where reason conceives of something conceivable but hard to represent . . . and then demands an image . . . the imagination tries but fails to provide." Deppman argued that Dickinson's characteristic distrust of meta-narratives is consistent with her return to this mental scene, yielding a poetry that "can largely be seen as a series of attempts—imaginative, resourceful, desperate—to supply imagery for thoughts and experiences that defy the imagination."

Deppman examined Dickinson's youthful letters to Abiah Root and her later correspondence with Thomas Wentworth Higginson as support for his contention that Dickinson maintained a lifelong "fear . . . that her mind may not satisfy its own demands, and may not be able to understand itself or its products." Deppman then located Dickinson's fascination with the limits of mental power within a category of poems he termed "try to think" po-

ems. Poems like "Of Death I try to think like this" (Fr1588) and "I tried to think a lonelier Thing" (Fr570) proceed with the aim "not to invent or define a difficult experience or concept, but to knead it, knit it, battle it, alter it, survive it through thought." Deppman concluded that through her poetic "tries at thinking," Dickinson is a "Derridean bricoleuse" whose efforts are not at all idiosyncratic, but

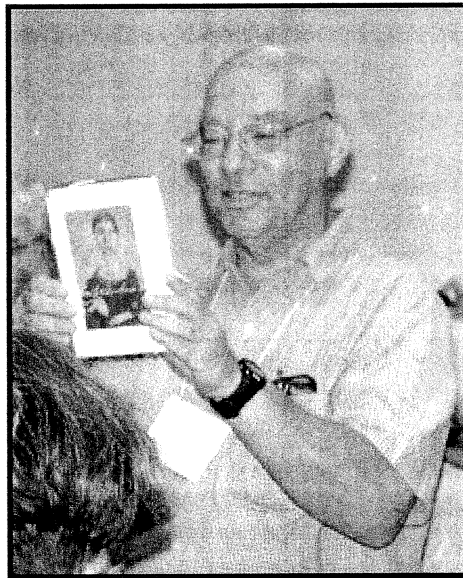


Photo by Claudia Schwarz

rather sharply focused engagements with "her culture's vocabularies."

Deirdre Fagan opened her presentation, "Strokes of Thought: Dickinson's Copious Dash," by stating that "every poet" may hope "to discover the one word that says it all, but for Emily Dickinson, the dash—invariably ambiguous, often inscrutable—comes close to the all-inclusive unutterable word." Fagan then observed that "there can be nothing slap-dash about the characteristic Dickinson stroke of thought: her dashes appear quite deliberate." However, she immediately questioned this initial assertion by noting that "when

one encounters Dickinson's copious dashes, one wonders how intentional the mark, at all times, could really be." Fagan suggested that the visual properties of the dash were of little significance: "While the dashes seem to have undeniable significance in much of Dickinson's work, how they appear on the page seems to have little." Rather than looking at manuscripts for insight into the dash, Fagan urged consideration of "where the dash appears," proposing that "in certain instances" the dash "is merely used as a moment of clarification, either for the writer or possibly for the reader; a place where rather than lifting her pen, Dickinson let it slide in contemplation and reflection."

Fagan presented a range of perspectives she considered useful in interpreting Dickinson's dash. She alluded to Steven Monte's concept of "embryonic words" in support of her view that while the "dash's capacity is limited, and its possibilities for meaning are forever obscured by its wordlessness," the dash retains its "potency . . . and becomes, cataclysmically and without words, emotion both expressed and unexpressed without language." Fagan then linked the dash to silence, pointing to Dickinson's similarity to the symbolist poets. In her conclusion, Fagan asserted that the dash: "may simply be a twitch of sorts, but if so, it is one she attempted many times to control, just as she sought to control everything else in her life." Fagan closed with the following caution: "But to suggest that [the dash] had the same sort of intentionality as her words is to make meaning where even Dickinson herself can be found speechless."

Mike Yetman began his discussion of amplitude in "Enough! Or too much." Emily Dickinson's Amplitudinous Art" by asking how Dickinson's use of the "'a' word," or its cognates, "can pro-

duces such arresting effects." Yetman's initial answer was to look at poems like "I had been hungry, all the Years" (Fr439) and "Ample make this Bed" (Fr804) as examples of poems in which "Dickinson directs attention to the qualifier by demonstrating its inadequacy as a descriptor, and by emphasizing instead the emotional and psychological expectations of the speaker." In these poems, the speakers' preliminary expectations are presented as at odds with actual experiences that demonstrate the inadequacy of both lexical meanings and the ability of speakers to adequately imagine encounters with amplitude.

Yetman then identified a "second cluster of lexical meanings for 'a' words" that he described as "more

ambitious" and in which "the noun 'amplitude' comes more into play." Poems like "Step lightly on this narrow Spot" (Fr1227) and "A Coffin—is a small Domain" (Fr890) represent many Dickinson poems in which she uses "overstatement," at times "shifting into hyperbolic overdrive," to create poems "more often constitutive of the state or condition they describe" than was the case with the first grouping of "a" word poems. Yetman concluded by looking particularly at Dickinson's association of amplitude with poems about heavenly bliss. Drawing attention to Dickinson's penchant for presenting "heaven-as-idealized-earth," Yetman proposed that "the most memorable and convincing quality of Bliss for Dickinson's per-

sona is that of self-empowering, often giddy elation," a quality constitutive of the amplitude discovered through poetic creation.

The session concluded with a lively discussion about the role of intentionality in interpreting the meaning of Dickinson poems in general and its particular application to her use of the dash.

Paul Crumbley is an associate professor of English and American Studies at Utah State University. Paul is the author of Inflections of the Pen: Dash and Voice in Emily Dickinson and Vice President of the Emily Dickinson International Society.

EROTICS I

Chair: Gudrun Grabher, University of Innsbruck; *panelists:* Kari Lokke, University of California at Davis; Lilach Lachman, Tel Aviv University; Linda Middleton, University of Hawaii at Manoa

By Kari Lokke

The three presentations comprised in the session entitled Erotics I were united by their exploration of the interpenetration of Eros and Thanatos, love and death, creation and destruction in the art of Emily Dickinson. The first two presentations, Kari Lokke's "Learning from Excess: Emily Dickinson and Bettine von Arnim's *Die G nderode*" and Lilach Lachman's "'Ample make this Bed': *Liebestod* in Bettine von Arnim and Emily Dickinson," written in dialogue with each other, examined the relations between Arnim's autobiographical tribute to her friend, the German Romantic poet Karoline von G nderode, and Dickinson's writings, with particular focus upon their respective stagings of the drama of *Liebestod*. Linda Middleton's "Under the Volcano: Dickinson's Alchemy of Rage and Power" explored the poet's channeling of potentially (self-)destructive rage into the power of her

poetry.

More than thirty years after G nderode stabbed herself in the heart, Bettine von Arnim gathered together the correspondence of their early years along with G nderode's poems, plays, philosophical dialogues and essays and wove them together into a lyrical epistolary novel published in 1840 and partially translated by Margaret Fuller in 1842 as part of the Bettine craze that swept American transcendentalist circles at the time. Having shared her copy of *Die G nderode* with Dickinson in 1850, Susan Gilbert later made it clear to Thomas Higginson that she considered the German novel a model of generic richness and emotional intensity for her proposed edition of Dickinson's poetry.

Noting the paucity of scholarship devoted to intertextual connections between *Die G nderode* and either the Gilbert-Dickinson

correspondence or Dickinson's poetry, Kari Lokke suggested that considerations of Arnim and G nderode as Dickinson's muses might yield new understandings of the relations between Eros and Thanatos in the representations of death so prominent in her poetry. Lokke then moved from a discussion of performances of violent death and split subjectivity in the works of G nderode to the transformation of these performances in Arnim's tribute to her beloved friend.

The effort to revivify her turns into its opposite when Bettine self-consciously reifies and canonizes G nderode as Symbolist poet. Arnim then replaces her in the role of quintessential Romantic poet and newly defined heroine of a lyrical novel whose unabashed idealism, passionate exuberance, refusal of conventional punctuation, lack of formal coherence, reader manipulation and generic m lange have

still unexplored resonances in the correspondence and poetry of Emily Dickinson.

Lilach Lachman's point of departure was the choice of both writers to make death and its threat to individuality the central shaping force of their works, a force that paradoxically confirms them as female subjects. Extending Lokke's meditations on the aforementioned connections between Arnim and Dickinson, she focused on Dickinson's critique of Romantic *Liebestod*. Through an intricate reading of "Ample make this Bed" (Fr804), Lachman demonstrated the manner in which the poem creates a seemingly conventional deathbed or matrimonial ritual that is reversed by the speaker's manipulation of her reader for subversive performative aims. Through the poem's imperatives that have the effect of a charm, the reader is compelled to engage actively in an eroticized ritual which can be read as a live burial of the Romantic personification of death.

In contrast, Lachman sees Arnim's concluding portrait of G nderode as a swan merging with the music of nature as akin to male Romantic eroticization of female death in an aesthetic code of beauty

and transcendence. Dickinson's performances of death (Fr479, Fr656, Fr431, Fr1649), then, represent neither submission to nor union with death for herself or her reader; rather these poems signal a complex, self-differentiating process that transports her female speaker into a sacred interior space that allows the emergence of a radical new poetic identity.



Photo by Claudia Schwarz

Similarly, Linda Middleton suggested that Dickinson's volcanic anger serves a powerfully creative as well as destructive function. Noting that Dickinson's psychobiographers have trained their analyses on a fearful, anxious Dickinson persona, labeling her psychotic (John Cody), Agoraphobic (Maryanne Grabowsky), bipolar (John

McDermott) or, Schizotypal (Steve Winhusen), Middleton instead emphasized Dickinson's rage at being a woman poet stranded in a cultural setting inimical to her gifts and power. Noting that Dickinson was diagnosed in 1884 as neurasthenic, the nineteenth-century term for hysteria when applied to upper class women, Middleton argued that the gender linked diagnosis of today would be Borderline Personality Disorder, which, like hysteria, and unlike the above mentioned twentieth century diagnoses, is associated with intense and uncontrollable anger that is often masked as anxiety. Through analysis of a series of poems and letters (Fr1743, Fr165, Fr 764, L271) Middleton then revealed Dickinson to be taken aback by the self-destructive power of her anger and her talent. Finally, by "splitting" her persona, as it would be termed in BPD parlance, Dickinson developed a psychic and poetic strategy capable of richly expressing the complexities of both love and rage, Eros and Thanatos in her art.

Kari Lokke is Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of California, Davis.

METER, SOUND STRUCTURE, AND LINE BREAKS

Panelists: Sandy Chung, University of California at Santa Cruz; Ellen Louise Hart, University of California at Santa Cruz; Margaret Freeman, Los Angeles Valley College

By Margaret Freeman

Sandy Chung opened the workshop with a brief description of four-beat verse with strong stress rests at the end of short lines, creating closure to the prosodic unit. The saliency of these closures, Chung argued, is created by the length of the preceding four beat line and is reinforced by rhyme. Using two poems selected for the workshop (Fr285/J673, *The love a child/life can*

show below; Fr381/J326, I cannot dance upon my toes), she then showed how Dickinson undermines the saliency of these closures by shortening the long line with rests and creating other departures from the "persistence" of the four beat form and regular rhyme.

Chung concluded with two questions: "First, if both persistence and

closure are undermined, what poetic form are we dealing with? Is it a non-traditional version of the familiar, accessible rhythmic form known as 4-beat verse, or something different? Second, does Dickinson's use of the visual line serve similarly to undermine, or transcend, the limits of this rhythmic form?"

Ellen Louise Hart followed by argu-

ing, against earlier critical distinctions between poems and letters, that Dickinson experimented with cadenced verse in her letters. In answering Chung's questions, Hart said that Dickinson explored and developed a rich relationship between cadenced and metered verse based on both aural and visual cues, such as capitalization, punctuation, and spaces between words. Dickinson's use of visual and aural cues is achieved by the ways in which she spaces and arranges words

on the manuscript page to suggest what could be called elocutionary word groups, in order to show emphasis that is significant for reading the poems out loud as well as creating meanings for readers.

Margaret Freeman responded to both papers by commenting on the necessity of considering these issues as part of the development of a theory of literature and invited workshop participants to focus on striking aspects of one of the two poems ("I cannot dance

upon my Toes"), whether in association of sound patterns, repetitions, placement of words at strategic points, and so on. This led to several participants identifying such elements in "opening up" the poem to prosodic and other aesthetic considerations.

Margaret Freeman, first president of EDIS, retired from teaching at Los Angeles Valley College in 2002 and is now residing in Heath, Massachusetts.

LANGUAGE III

Chair: Margaret Freeman, Los Angeles Valley College; *panelists:* David Tennant, Boston College; Erika Scheurer, University of St. Thomas; James Guthrie, Wright State University

By Margaret Freeman

The papers in this session addressed the concept of amplitude in Dickinson's language from three different aspects that complemented each other in their focus on Dickinson's poetic craft. David Tennant examined the notion of transport in an early version of the poem "It sifts from Leaden Sieves" (Fr291/J311). Taking a cognitive linguistic approach, Tennant showed how the various semantic frames widen and heighten the effect experienced by the reader through the evocation of polysemic frames for "Celestial," "Vail," and "Queen." Tennant also showed how various instances of linguistic and grammatical doubleness throughout the poem are analogical to indeterminate qualities of "snow." He concluded that the poem "proves not only to be richly evocative of meaning, but very much exemplary of Dickinson's poetics at large."

Focusing on two textbooks (Samual

Read Hall's *Lectures on Schoolkeeping* and Richard Green Parker's *Aids to English Composition*), Erika Scheurer explored the writing pedagogy practiced at Amherst Academy. In contrast to formalistic and rote learning, stu-



Photo by Claudia Schwarz

dents were encouraged to be creative and innovative in their compositions, drawing on their interests and experiences, using close observation and

analysis of everyday objects, and practicing private writing and informal writing to peers.

Finally, James Guthrie looked at a late letter addressed to Judge Otis Lord that revealed Dickinson at her most creative and artful in manipulating legal terms into sexual terms as she describes herself as an "involuntary bankrupt." Guthrie explored the historical context of voluntary and involuntary bankruptcy familiar to both Dickinson and the judge that would have given special resonance to the term. All in all, the three papers contributed to our understanding of the contextual nature of Dickinson's language from cognitive, educational, and historical perspectives.

Margaret Freeman, first president of EDIS, retired from teaching at Los Angeles Valley College in 2002 and now resides in Heath, Massachusetts.

NEW DIRECTIONS VI

Chair: Jonnie Guerra, Cabrini College; *panelists:* Rise Axelrod, University of California, Riverside; Steven Gould Axelrod, University of California, Riverside; Cheryl Langdell, Independent Scholar.

By Jonnie Guerra

This session was provocative in its exploration of the amplitude of connections between the poetry of Emily Dickinson and the poetry of two other Ameri-

can women poets—Adelaide Crapsey (1878-1914) and Mary Oliver (1935-).

As session participants learned, Crapsey, who is credited with stan-

dardizing the modern understanding of the cinquain form, was an enthusiastic reader of Dickinson as a school girl. Hearing selections of Crapsey's

poetry read during the session, the audience easily could recognize Dickinson as an influential precursor behind the work. Although Crapsey earned some recognition during her lifetime and following the posthumous publication of her poems, Crapsey and her work are not well-known today.

In contrast, Mary Oliver claims Edna St. Vincent Millay, not Emily Dickinson, as a major influence and has amassed an impressive record of achievements including the 1983 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for American Primitive, awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Poetry Society of America, fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, and prestigious teaching positions. Despite vast differences in the biographies and contexts of Dickinson and Oliver, session participants left believing that the two shared interesting commonalities that made a comparative study worthy of further investigation.

In their joint presentation, Rise and Steven Axelrod established Adelaide Crapsey "as one of Dickinson's first and strongest readers." They traced the origin of Crapsey's interest in Dickinson back to her days at Kemper Hall. As the editor of the school's literary monthly, *Kemper Hall Kodak*, Crapsey reprinted two of Dickinson's poems—"I never saw a moor" (Fr 80) and "He ate and drank the precious words" (Fr 1593). Both appeared originally in the 1890 collection of Dickinson poetry—the first of the three editions published by Mabel Loomis Todd and Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

Quoting from a review of Martha Dickinson's poetry that Crapsey published in the *Vassar Miscellany* in 1899, the Axelrods speculated that the qualities Crapsey praised in the niece's work expressed as well the characteristics she admired in Dickinson and aspired to herself: "epigrammatic brevity with a subtlety and suggestiveness astonishing in the narrow limits she allows herself." The Axelrods emphasized the similarities in

Dickinson's and Crapsey's poetic subjects—close observations of nature and "gender implications in the scenes and events" their works present. Just as important, according to the Axelrods, both poets "constructed imaginative spaces within the realm of language—spaces that served, like nature itself, as a source of pleasure and freedom and as a healing and redemptive retreat."

In the remainder of their talk, the Axelrods introduced the audience to representative poems from Crapsey's body of work and discussed these in the context of parallel poems from Dickinson's oeuvre. For example, they compared Crapsey's "Languor after Pain" with Dickinson's treatment of the aftermath of pain in "After great pain, a formal feeling comes—" (Fr 372). They showed how Crapsey in "November Night," like Dickinson in "There's a certain slant of light," portrays the impact of outward things on the inner world, creating "... internal difference—/Where the Meanings, are—" (Fr 320).

They presented imagistic resemblances: Crapsey's "mermaid in the sun's/Gold Floods" from the poem "Laurel in the Berkshires" as a vivid counterpart to Dickinson's "little tippler/Come staggering toward the sun" from "I taste a liquor never brewed" (Fr 207). Their selection of poems also demonstrated thematic links that were striking. Crapsey's "Amaze" called to mind a number of Dickinson poems dealing with estrangement from the self; Crapsey's "Song" was reminiscent of Dickinson's poems about the self-recognition that art can enable. The Axelrods indicated that while a thorough study of female affectional ties in Crapsey's life and work had not yet been initiated, such an approach might lead to an enriched understanding of her poetry as well as new connections between Crapsey and Dickinson.

Although originally scheduled to present a paper titled "Vesuvius at Home: Thirty Years Later," Cheri Langdell, inspired by Judith Farr's recently published book, *Emily Dickinson's Gardens*, decided to under-

take a new project on Dickinson and Mary Oliver. Her paper, "'Posies' and Poesy: Amplitude and Immanence in the Poetry of Emily Dickinson and Mary Oliver" explored the lifelong passion for flowers and gardening that the two writers share as well as their mutual use of flower symbols and metaphors throughout their poetry.

Langdell argued that, for Dickinson, "communion with nature connotes nearness to God in her poetry and heralds the global consciousness of today's ecological movement toward one earth and world peace." She concurred with Farr that flowers were so important to Dickinson and she was so knowledgeable about botany "that the key to a successful reading of an individual Dickinson lyric can depend on one's knowledge of the background and identity (and [Langdell] would submit symbolism) of a plant or flower ... to which the poet may familiarly allude" (Farr 9). Indeed, in Langdell's view, "Dickinson's cherished fragrant flowers brought her self-knowledge and a nearness to the divine, to consciousness of God or the Goddess in nature."

Langdell found the cosmologies and ontologies of the two writers to be key differences between them. Whereas Dickinson's poems portray her entry into immanence, Oliver's poems stop just short of transcendence, on what Oliver terms "the brink of prose." Even so, Langdell's preliminary exploration of the authors suggests that the relationship between the poets is one worth pursuing further. Those in attendance at the session hoped that Langdell will persevere in just such a pursuit.

Jonnie Guerra is Vice President for Academic Affairs and Professor of English at Cabrini College and an EDIS board member since 1992.

AMPLIFICATIONS

CONTEMPORARY POETS IN CONVERSATION WITH EMILY DICKINSON

Chair: Lesley Wheeler, Washington and Lee University; *panelists:* Janet McAdams, Kenyon College; Lesley Wheeler, Washington and Lee University; Tia Ballantine, University of Hawai'i-Mānoa

By Lesley Wheeler

This panel set out to investigate how Dickinson's notion of amplitude illuminates contemporary poetry. Writers with widely divergent backgrounds and strategies share Dickinson's attitudes towards language, sexuality, and the physical world. We sought to demonstrate Dickinson's persistent vitality by gathering a range of papers exploring affiliations among Dickinson and her successors in the United States and Ireland.

When one of the three original panelists dropped out, however, "Amplifications" opened to the local poetic scene in an energizing way. Janet McAdams had become interested in *Whetu Moana: Contemporary Polynesian Poems in English*, recently published by the University of Hawai'i Press (2003, edited by Albert Wendt, Reina Whaitiri, and Robert Sullivan). Suzanne Juhasz and Jonathan Morse put us in touch with a poet from the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa, Tia Ballantine, who drew on her expertise in this field to prepare fascinating comments with only a week's advance notice. As a result, this became a hybrid session, a panel yearning towards the workshop mode.

Janet McAdams began the session with a nuanced and provocative talk entitled "Land, Flesh, Spirit, Body: Dickinson in Conversation with Emerging Native Women Poets." McAdams discussed images of dissolution and permeability in the work of Linda Hogan (Chickasaw), Deborah Miranda (Esselen/Chumash), and Gladys Cardiff (Eastern Cherokee). Through references to water, milk, salt, and blood, these poets reveal that the world's body and the human body are literally, materially connected. McAdams then argued that certain moments in

Dickinson's work ally themselves with this indigenous relationship to the world, discussing "A Bird, came down the Walk—" in particular (Fr 359). With sharp wit, McAdams distinguished her approach from a spurious claim that "Dickinson is really an Indian," instead suggesting that "if one is attentive enough to the land and the belief system that emerges from it, the land will reclaim you." McAdams considered Dickinson in light of both eco-feminism and her previous scholarly research on Native American poetry. Her perspective was also inflected by her own poetic practice: her first book, *The Island of Lost Luggage* (2000), won the Native Writers Circle of the Americas Award and also the American Book Award.

In the panel's middle slot, Lesley Wheeler delivered a paper entitled "Trembling Emblems: Emily Dickinson and Medbh McGuckian." She examined the nature of Dickinson's power in McGuckian's imagination, approaching the question through two related terms: the conference trope of amplitude and the panel's related metaphor of amplification. Wheeler discussed three pieces written by McGuckian that engage Dickinson's work in an urgent way: a brief autobiographical essay entitled "Women Are Trousers" that quotes heavily from Dickinson, and two poems alluding to the Amherst poet, "The Most Emily of All" and "Two Heliotropes" (unpublished). In these works, Dickinson emerges as an emblem of amplitude, representing a painful surfeit of feeling, particularly erotic desire. McGuckian also amplifies Dickinson's work by carrying it forward to a new audience, extending its signal and, in addition, expanding and interpreting its meaning.

Wheeler also began the final seg-

ment of the session with brief comments on the process of amplification in two Hawai'iian-authored pieces from *Whetu Moana*: "What My Mother Said to Me" by Māhealani Kamauu and "The Petroglyphs at Olowalu" by Brandy Nālani McDougall. Tia Ballantine then guided us knowledgeably through the remainder of the panel, bringing her commitment to Hawaiian language and culture to the conversation. Ballantine, whose writing and drawings appear in *Midwest Quarterly*, *Poets Against the War*, and other publications, is earning a Ph.D. in Creative Writing at the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa. She spoke with insight about the relationship of Hawaiian poetry to history, focusing on "Māui Tosses the Hook" by Robert Sullivan (Maori), which she connected through stone imagery to Hawaiian and Maori thought, the Bible, and Dickinson's "After great pain, a formal feeling comes—" (Fr 372). At this point, everyone present wished for an ampler session—we ran out of time to hear Janet McAdams discuss how Hawaiian poets Kapulani Landgraf and Ku'ualoha Ho'omanawanui treat the break between human life and its roots in the natural world. The conversation spilled into the hallway and, eventually, onto the lava during that afternoon's visit to Kilauea. New ways of understanding the relationships among poets were clearly evolving during this session, as well as complex questions about poetic difficulty and the interaction between poetry and place.

Lesley Wheeler is Associate Professor of English at Washington and Lee University and author of The Poetics of Enclosure: American Women Poets from Dickinson to Dove.

NEW DIRECTIONS VII

Chair: Marianne Noble, American University; panelists: Judith Hawley, University of London; Philip Horne, University College, London; Robert Smith, Knox College

By Marianne Noble

This panel explored the links between Dickinson and Anna Seward, Henry James, and Elizabeth Stoddard.

Judith Hawley, of The University of London, began with her paper "Emily Dickinson, Bluestockings, and A Choice of Life," in which she offered an interpretation of the meaning of Major John Andre for Dickinson. His name appears both in the poem "The Manner of it's Death" (1863), and in a letter Dickinson wrote to Elizabeth Holland in 1872. In the letter, explaining that she cannot come for a visit, Dickinson pleads, "I shall still be mentioned when the children come? Some must seem a Traitor, not because it is, but it's Truth belie it. Andre had not died had he lived Today. Only Love can wound— Only Love assist the Wound. Worthier let us be of this Ample Creature." According to Hawley, in this reference, Major Andre is an emblem of the power of love to maintain a bond in the face of death.

Dickinson probably learned about Andre in an 1851 article in *Harper's*. Born in 1750, Major John Andre carried on the negotiations with Benedict Arnold that were supposed to yield up West Point to the British. The plot was discovered, and Andre was captured and hanged as a spy, sentenced by George Washington. Subsequently, Washington was criticized for acting unjustly in passing the sentence of death by the shameful means of hanging rather than allowing Andre to die like a gentleman by the bullet. That is what Dickinson's poem refers to when it says "The Manner of it's Death/ When Certain it must die—/'Tis deemed a privilege to choose—/'Twas Major Andre's Way."

Hawley went on to link Dickinson's interest in Andre to that of eighteenth century English poet Anna Seward, whose "Monody on the Unfortunate Major Andre" was published in 1781

and reprinted in the late nineteenth century in both English and American editions. While Seward used the love story as a way to address political issues of tyranny and injustice, Dickinson used Andre as an element in her private lexicon to symbolize abiding love.

Philip Horne of the University College, London, explored connections between Dickinson and Henry James in a paper entitled "'Where are our moral foundations?' Dickinson and Henry James." He began by listing their similarities: a writing style of obscurity and ambiguity; a relationship of "close distance" to New England culture; a pronounced influence by Ralph Waldo Emerson; and an interest in non-Church-going. Both were also wits; had important relationships to a "Master"; were interested in portraits of female isolation; and remained single, possibly because of unorthodox sexual identities.

Horne devoted his paper to interpreting Dickinson's remark in a letter of December 1879 to Thomas Wentworth Higginson in which Dickinson writes:

Of Poe, I know too little to think Hawthorne appalls, entices—Mrs Jackson soars to your estimate law fully as a Bird, but of Howells and James, one hesitates—Your relentless Music dooms as it redeems (L622)

After surveying what critics have made of these sentences, Horne proposed that in them Dickinson was hesitating to concur with Higginson's own criticisms of James. In part, Horne grounded his claim that Dickinson esteemed James in a letter she wrote to Elizabeth Holland. In it, Dickinson said, "I fear I must ask with Mr Wentworth, 'Where are our moral foundations?'" This quotation is from James's novel *The Europeans*, which

had been serialized in *The Atlantic* a year earlier, in July to October 1878. Observing that not only do the words of James' novel come readily to hand for Dickinson but that she expects similar familiarity from her friend, Horne concluded that Dickinson admired the novel, perhaps finding James's representation of the morally old-fashioned and traditional Mr. Wentworth relevant to her own life.

In "One and One are One: Emily Dickinson and Elizabeth Stoddard," Robert McClure Smith (Knox College) explored the parallels in attitude, upbringing and milieu between Dickinson and Elizabeth Stoddard. He argued that Dickinson does not seem strange when compared to the life and work of Stoddard. Both authors evince stylistic originality; admire the power in smallness; were born and raised in small Massachusetts towns; were readers of the Brontes; were conflicted towards Protestantism and resisted evangelical conversion at their one-year stays at female colleges; and had a sassy tone. More importantly, though, both wrote about women's subjectivity, embracing an iconoclastic female identity of self-as-artist. In this they resembled their mutual friend, Helen Hunt Jackson. All three opposed the movement for "woman's rights" but were inspired by the notion of "female genius." This commitment to genius did not inspire community; because they conceived of the female genius in romantic terms—as self-reliant, beyond circumference—they felt themselves necessarily beyond the sorority norm of their day. The friendships among the three of them were troubled, and—though Stoddard did not know Dickinson—she did not like Dickinson's work at all, finding it "unwholesome." The upshot of the connections between these three female authors, according

to Smith, is to encourage us to see Dickinson as part of a temporary community of writers who struggled with linguistic radicalism to define the position of the woman artist, to articulate

the nature of a woman's subjectivity.

Marianne Noble, Associate Professor of Literature at American University in Washington, DC., is the author of The Masoch-

istic Pleasures of Sentimental Literature (Princeton UP, 2000) and is currently working on a project about the quest for genuine human contact in nineteenth century women's literature.

EROTICS II

Chair: Martha Ackmann, Mt. Holyoke College; *panelists:* H. Jordan Landry, University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh; Helen Shoobridge, Macquarie University

By Martha Ackmann

Jordan Landry presented on Emily Dickinson's revision of the seduction novel and its representations of women. Dickinson co-opts numerous signs from the seduction novel such as jewels, treasure boxes, and missed assignations to encode two women as engaged in seduction. Dickinson casts one of the women as the female libertine or rake and the other as the abandoned woman. This duo allows Dickinson to pursue an extended meditation on the relationship between mourning and desire. She challenges the common images of seduced women as incapacitated by abandonment. Instead, loss in love initiates greater knowledge

and the persistence of desire.

Helen Shoobridge, in "The Periodical in the Attic: Contextualizing Dickinson's Vision of an Amplitude Beyond the Bounds of Marriage," discussed one example of the results of the Dickinson Periodicals Project. The project studies the nineteenth-century periodicals to which the Dickinsons subscribed and it explores the poet's thorough engagement with the public debates of her time. The paper claimed that Dickinson was both constrained and enabled by nineteenth-century discourses on gender and sexuality. It revealed remarkable parallels between the 1858 article "Single Life Among Us" as well as

an 1859 lesbian gothic fiction by Rose Terry (later Cooke) and Dickinson's poems such as "She rose to His Requirement" (Fr857) and "Rearrange a Wife's affection" and one of the Master Letters. The conclusion was that gender was a highly contested field in the periodicals and that this provided diverse cultural contexts for Dickinson's queer and multiple eroticisms.

Martha Ackmann is a member of the board of the Emily Dickinson International Society. She teaches in the Women's Studies Program at Mount Holyoke College where she directs a fall seminar on Dickinson taught at the Homestead.

PLENARY II

Chair: Gary Stonum, Case Western Reserve University; *panelists:* Daneen Wardrop, Michigan State University; Suzanne Juhasz, University of Colorado, Boulder; Vivian Pollak, Washington University

By Gary Lee Stonum

As much as any of the conference's papers, Daneen Wardrop's "The Body's Body: Dickinson's Fashioning and Amplitude" takes flight from the theme of amplitude, with nearly equal interest in texts and in textiles. Acknowledging that Dickinson's fear of the body is often noted, at the expense of her interest in its sumptuousness, Wardrop demonstrates that the letters display ample interest in the body's public visage, clothing and fashion. For example, a concern for fashion provides a bond between Emily and Sue that conspicuously includes the hap-

less Austin.

Wardrop focuses on two items of clothing much discussed in the surviving correspondence, the basque (a bodice or blouse) and gaiters (coverings for the shoe that are attached to it and may extend upwards). She also provides context from the history of dress for what may be Dickinson's best known poetic reference for clothing. The tippet worn by the speaker in "Because I could not stop for death" is an item fashionable in the early 1800s but by 1850 declining in status and approaching what prostitutes might wear

in later decades. Worse, that it is made of tulle and not fur makes the garment both risqué and déclassé.

Re-examining what several previous scholars have characterized as Dickinson's poetry of masochism, Suzanne Juhasz, in "The Amplitude of Queer Desire in Dickinson's Erotic Language" celebrates its edginess and argues that an apparently somber thematics of dominance and submission can be read as fostering exuberance and excess. Juhasz's concern is with language more than sexuality, with how Dickinson's way with lan-



Photo by Claudia Schwarz

guage resembles queer theory's often gleefully disruptive way with gender fixity and stable or normative sexuality. Juhasz glances at several poems in the course of her argument, but focuses primarily on "He fumbles at your soul" and "I would not paint a picture." The assaults on the "you" in the former poem she generally characterizes as a positive pleasure/pain, but she also acknowledges that the scalping of the soul in one of its variant lines gives pause to any overly cheerful reading.

In "Dickinson and the Reader"

Vivian Pollak divides her attention between considering how Dickinson regarded the audience for her poems and how one member of that future audience, Sylvia Plath, regarded her poetic rivals and predecessors, especially Emily Dickinson. The link between the two is what Pollak calls "poetic pedagogy," the manner in which poets instruct their readers or are instructed by their influences.

Dickinson did not share Whitman's concern for fostering the great audiences he believed great poets needed, or at least she avoided coaching those among whom she circulated poems or those later generations who would become her public. Plath, however, paid a great deal of attention to other women poets, including Dickinson. Reading Dickinson in 1953, hence encountering the poetry in more conventional format than the Johnson edition was soon to make possible, Plath some-

times regarded her as among the safely dead predecessors, but at various points in her life accorded Dickinson more attention, imitating her in several poems she sent to her mother. Plath's attitude was complicated by her mother's high regard for Dickinson's poetry, which on first encounter seemed to her a "new bible."

Gary Lee Stonum is a member of the board of the Emily Dickinson International Society and editor of the Emily Dickinson Journal.



Photo by Claudia Schwarz

SPIRITUALITY II

Moderator: Eleanor Heginbotham, Concordia University; *panelists:* Emily Seelbinder, Queens University of Charlotte; Neil Scheurich, University of Kentucky College of Medicine; Faith Barrett, Lawrence University

By Eleanor Heginbotham

Although the printed program called the session "Language" (and indeed what sessions on Dickinson are not language related?), the Sunday morning presentations by Emily Seelbinder, Neil Scheurich, and Faith Barrett actually focused on what Scheurich called "Dickinson's spiritual experience." Serendipitously, the papers moved from the source of that spiritual experience (Dickinson's Bible) to her lifelong spiritual/psychological condition as it affected her creativity and then to the complex ways that creativity reacted to the losses inflicted by the Civil War America in which Dickinson lived.

Taking her title from a letter tran-

scribed by Joseph Lyman about her Bible: "Arid, Infinitely Wise & Merry," Seelbinder waded into the deep waters of Dickinson's "use — or abuse" of the gift from her father in 1844 by looking particularly at "Of tribulation, these are They" (J325, Fr328). What especially intrigued Seelbinder in this "paraphrase of Revelations 7" so much that it propelled her to the Houghton to see Dickinson's well-marked and "mutilated" volume for herself, was the word "anle," so spelled in two different copies of the poem and noted by the poet herself, perhaps as a mark of "Dickinson's rebellious spirituality." In her saga of searching for the source of this spell-

ing, Seelbinder shared her exultation of discovering in the Houghton's volume (as in the concordance of that period) a New Testament passage, where Peter touches the lame man on his "a-n-C-l-e-b-o-n-e-s." Acknowledging the potential depth of the subject she had time only to sample (Dickinson and her Bible), Seelbinder ended with Dickinson's own words: "has any one fathomed that sea?" No, said Seelbinder, "we're not yet in — even up to our ankles."

If Seelbinder privileged the "merry" Dickinson, Scheurich turned to "the relation of suffering to spirituality and creativity." From his stance as an M.D. interested in treatment-resistant mood

disorders, Scheurich postulated that Dickinson's "work suggests a spirituality that, grounded in the human agony of loss, consists of the tension between the mind's hope and transcendence on the one hand and the physical world's inscrutability and limitation on the other." Drawing on some 20 different Dickinson poems and on the work of a variety of philosophers and clinicians — from Nietzsche to the President's Council on Bioethics — Scheurich's presentation invited Dickinsonians to consider "how would [Dickinson's] achievement have been affected, if at all" by "anodynes" or "narcotics" (her words, of course) such as those prescribed today to ease psychological suffering? Cautioning against sentimentalizing the value of such suffering in the creative process, Scheurich nevertheless concluded in the paper he called "Suffering and Spirituality: Emily Dickinson's Ample Mental Health" that Dickinson "remains a great example for her courage and delicacy of understanding" that, like the "Brave Bobolink" deprived of his tree, perhaps "Music [poetry] be His [her] / Only Anodyne —" (J755, Fr766).

Suffering brought about by war was the subject of Barrett's "Drums Off the Phantom Battlements: Dickinson's Civil War Elegies." Considering two poems about the death of Frazer Stearns and two Civil War elegies, Barrett placed the four poems of 1862 and 1863 and the famous letter to the Norcross cousins about "Frazer's murder" in a period of "a life-shattering personal crisis." In Barrett's read-

ing the texts may be read both as reflecting Dickinson's "skepticism about ideological narratives which conflate death on the battlefield with Christian martyrdom" and also as reflecting "the strength of her engagement" with Civil War ideologies. "Recollection and repetition were, said Barrett, part of Dickinson's linguistic strategy for dealing with the pain that, like the minie ball, wounds the survivors. While the



Photo by Claudia Schwarz

poems may be read, said Barrett, as "endors[ing] the view that the Civil War is a Holy War," such orthodoxy is undercut by references to the unfair time-bound political conditions in which the war was waged (excluding those like Austin who could pay for surrogates, for example) and the "absence of any divine presence" in the

afterlife described in the poems.

Barrett's conclusion seemed to at least one listener to be as relevant to our time as to the poet: "Dickinson weighs the loss of the individual in collective narratives which attribute spiritual meaning to Civil War deaths; however, she also testifies to the enduring power of those narratives — 'tunes' which are played 'over and over' in our culture — to reassure the living about the meaning of those deaths, . . . [and] she calls on those who do not fight to examine the hypocrisy and complacency inherent in their own tacit endorsement of the war."

In fact, as Dickinson continually reminds us and certainly as all three presentations made clear, Dickinson's letters to the world are addressed to our own world, one in which biblical literalism (even as in the spelling of a key word) is debated, in which medical ethics lead us to debate the power of personality changing prescriptions, especially for artists, and in which even as this report is written politicians and citizens are weighing competing rhetorical stances about those who arrange and those who fight in wars of our century.

Eleanor Elson Heginbotham, Professor Emerita of Concordia University Saint Paul, has been a member of EDIS since its beginning. Her book, Reading the Fascicles of Emily Dickinson: Dwelling in Possibilities, was published in 2002 by Ohio State University Press.

NEW DIRECTIONS VIII

Chair: Michael Kearns, University of Southern Indiana; *panelists:* Melissa White, University of Virginia; Midori Kajino Asahina, Keio University, Japan; Stephanie Tingley, Youngstown State University

By Stephanie Tingley

All three presenters for this session, chaired by *EDIS Bulletin* editor Michael Kearns, offered fresh information or new insights into Emily Dickinson's correspondence with three of her most trusted epistolary friends—the

Norcross cousins, T. W. Higginson, and Elizabeth Holland.

First to speak was Melissa White, a graduate student at University of Virginia. Her paper, titled "Correspondence and Audience: A New Copy of

an Old Letter," focused on a soon-to-be-published new copy of Letter 785, which was sent to Dickinson's Norcross cousins. She reviewed the textual and print history of this copy (owned by Professor Jerome McGann),

which contains new, never-before-published material, and offered insights into how the restoration of once-excised materials alters the reading of this document. White went on to comment on some of the broader implications of this manuscript for helping scholars understand more about Dickinson's early audiences. This version of Letter 785 also raises intriguing questions about the Norcross sisters' editing, copying, and excising of treasured words they received from Emily Dickinson.

Midori Kajino Asahina, from Keio University, Japan, followed with a densely argued and beautifully written paper: "The Grounds are ample—almost travel—to me': Reading Dickinson's Correspondence with Higginson." She began by reminding her listeners of the importance of Higginson's work as a literary naturalist (work he shared with Emerson and Thoreau), and then followed with a detailed discussion of poetic echoes of Thoreau's essay "Wild Apples" that resonate through Dickinson's poetry. Asahina concluded her presentation with a focus on the complexities of Dickinson's relationship with Higginson. The poet both struck self-denigrating poses with her mentor and insisted upon the integrity of her own

poetic processes.

Stephanie Tingley, from Youngstown State University, offered some observations about how the process of editing over one hundred letters Dickinson sent to Josiah and Eliza-



Photo by Claudia Schwarz

beth Holland (most to Elizabeth) has altered and "amplified" her reading of these materials. Her paper, "Re-Reading Dickinson's Correspondence with

the Hollands for the Dickinson Electronic Archive," demonstrated, through close analysis of one letter (L 432, sent late January 1875), some of the ways in which thinking about presenting Dickinson's correspondence for the web changes what readers notice. Hypertext links, for example, can provide rich connections and contexts that will be able to tie a single piece of Dickinson's correspondence to others in the same set, to other parts of her correspondence, and to her poetry. New patterns and fresh insights emerge when re-reading with an editor's eye, and, inevitably, new interpretations.

The session ended with a lively discussion of some of the connections among the three papers. Listeners were especially interested in the ways in which these three papers offered new ways to think about familiar texts.

Stephanie A. Tingley is a Professor of English at Youngstown State University, where she teaches American literature, American Studies, and film courses. She is a contributing editor for the Dickinson Electronic Archives and has an ongoing interest in Dickinson's correspondence, particularly with her women friends.

NEW DIRECTIONS X

Chair: Georgiana Strickland; *panelists:* Connie Ann Kirk, Independent Scholar; Marty Rhodes Figley, Independent Scholar; Wayne Pierce, Kingswood-Oxford School; Barbara Adams Pierce, Independent Scholar

By Georgiana Strickland

On a brightening Sunday morning, with the remnants of a hurricane receding and lush tropical foliage beckoning from outside our windows, three delightful presentations offered a small but enthusiastic audience new insights into Emily Dickinson's life and poetry.

Marty Figley, author of seven children's books, began the session by exploring one of Dickinson's most vital relationships in a paper entitled "Brown kisses' and 'Shaggy Feet':

How Carlo Illuminates Dickinson for Children." Given to Dickinson as a puppy by her father in winter 1849-1850, Carlo was to be for the next sixteen years what Figley described as the poet's "protector, confidant, and guide to the outside world," her "most stalwart friend." Figley's research suggests that Carlo was either a Newfoundland, a Saint Bernard, or a cross between these two very large breeds, both noted historically for their value as rescuers and as guards for children.

With her sister away at boarding school for a year, the young poet was experiencing loneliness, and this may have been in Edward's thoughts in presenting his daughter with a dog.

The name Carlo was probably influenced by a dog who appears in *Jane Eyre*, which Dickinson had read shortly before she received her puppy. Brontë's Carlo is a romantic figure, suggested Figley, and "by far the most appealing male in the story." Dickinson's Carlo bears resemblance

also to the dogs Carlo and Tray in Ik Marvell's *Reveries of a Bachelor*, which Dickinson read and admired in 1850.

Carlo is a frequent presence in Dickinson's letters and poems. She described him to correspondents as her "shaggy ally," "large as myself," who offered her "brown kisses" (LL280, 261, 213). At a typical (for the breed) adult weight of 150 pounds, with large paws, frequent shedding, and excessive salivation, he was, noted Figley, "certainly the physical presence in her life most likely to bring daily dishevelment to his owner"—a picture at odds with the frequent portrayal of the poet as "a timid, childlike woman dressed in pristine white, who stayed locked away in her house, . . . a delicate specimen who shunned messy physical contact."

Figley concluded that Dickinson's interactions with Carlo show her as a warm, loving woman who "named him, romanticized him, confided in him, drew strength from him, played with him, cared for him, and grieved acutely when she lost him."

Connie Ann Kirk's paper, "The Ample Life of Thomas Gilbert (Gib) Dickinson, Age 8," an excerpt from her forthcoming book *Emily Dickinson and Children*, was read in Kirk's absence by Georgiana Strickland. In contrast to previous biographies, which focus on Gilbert's death and its effect on the Dickinson family, Kirk traces the brief life of the poet's younger nephew, mainly through Gib's own words and those of his family and contemporaries. Using unpublished family papers, especially those of his mother, Susan, and his sister, Martha, Kirk describes Gib's birth on August 1, 1875, his sister's initial response to his arrival, and his eventual role as her and brother Ned's "pet and plaything . . . this willful, long lashed, sensitive, sweet creature . . . beguiling us by his wiles."

Tender quotations from Susan's journal reveal Gib's growing love of music, his sensitivity to language, his ability to turn punishment into fun, his interactions with playmates, and

his budding imagination. Kirk reported, for example, the indignant reaction of Austin and Aunt Emily when Gib was reprimanded by his teacher for regaling his classmates with tales of an imaginary white calf who lived at the Evergreens. An outraged Emily declared that "the white calf was grazing up in her attic at that very moment! . . . Only let them ask her about it!"

Among the most revealing items Kirk has uncovered are Gib's own "papers"—letters and school compositions that indicate his growing sense of self and his increasing sensitivity to the feelings of others. Letters to Gib from teachers and others further amplify our picture of the young boy on



Photo by Jim Fraser

whom the poet and her family lavished a large measure of love.

Kirk ended with the familiar story of Gib's tragic death from typhoid at age eight and its profound impact on the entire family, especially on his aunt, who immortalized him in letters and poems. Kirk concludes that "Gilbert Dickinson's eight short years on the planet were ample enough to affect a family, friends, and community, and even more importantly for us—a poet of great magnitude."

The panel concluded with a newly composed addition to the large corpus of Dickinson musical settings. Composer Wayne Pierce, playing flute and tenor drum, and soprano Barbara Adams Pierce performed "The fascinating chill . . ." his settings of three Dickinson poems that employ musical terms and metaphors. In his remarks, Wayne Pierce explained de-

tails of the compositional and instrumental techniques used.

The opening work, "Her 'last Poems'" (J312/Fr600), Dickinson's tribute to Elizabeth Barrett Browning, begins with a haunting melody on the flute, built on the notes E-B-B and E-D, motifs repeated several times in a free-floating dialogue between flute and voice. Highlighted by the composer are such words as "Flute," "Gushed," and "Bubbled," beautifully word painted in both instruments. The reverence of the third stanza is rendered in a slow, hymnlike passage, made more sensuous by the flute's lowest register. To reflect the solemnity of Barrett Browning's final resting place in Italy, the piece ends quietly with flute and voice in eternal harmony.

The second setting, "Inconceivably solemn!" (J582/Fr414), with its vibrant images of flags and a parading band, opens with a brief rattle on the drum. The singer then enters, alternately singing and using "sung-speech," the absence of pitch enhancing the drum's varied but rhythmic cadences. The overall effect is reminiscent of the works of Charles Ives. The final lines, "the

fine Ear / Winces with delight / Are Drums too near," is anticipated in an accelerating, crescendoing drum roll, followed by the whispered words "Inconceivably solemn!" Interestingly, by some programming fluke (or perhaps divine intervention), the climax of the drum roll coincided with the high point of Faith Barrett's paper "Drums of the Phantom Battlements: Dickinson's Civil War Elegies" being read in the adjoining room, where the audience could clearly appreciate the extraordinary conjunction.

Wayne Pierce introduced the concluding work, "The fascinating chill that Music leaves" (J1480/Fr1511), with an explanation of the unusual flute techniques employed: harmonic or "overblown" notes, which produce an eerie, piercing tone of uncertain pitch, and "multiphonic" notes, in which a ghostly second tritone is heard

New Directions X, cont. on page 35

SPACE AND TIME

Chair: Robert Smith, Knox College; *panelists:* Gudrun Grabher, University of Innsbruck, Austria; Claudia Schwarz, University of Innsbruck, Austria

By Robert Smith

This session featured two papers by scholars from the University of Innsbruck: Gudrun Grabher's "Time Feels so vast: The Amplitude of Moments in Dickinson's Poetry" and Claudia Schwarz's "Emily Unlimited: A Cyber-Generation's Approach to Space in Dickinson."

Gudrun Grabher's philosophical approach to Dickinson and temporality (which made significant interesting detours through Heidegger, Levinas and Kant's treatment of Being and Time) focused on the poet's appreciation of time as a marker of current existence as opposed to a hereafter which Dickinson was more frequently inclined to conjecture as the absence of temporality. For the poet, subjective consciousness always has at least itself as object and thus her poetry implies that such consciousness is inextricably and necessarily timebound. Moreover, Dickinson continuously emphasizes that it is by the amplitude of the moment that we measure the meaning of our lives and that the Now can be treasured and celebrated for perpetual epiphanies perhaps even superseding the deferred promise of eternity.

For Grabher, a poem which espe-

cially foregrounds the complex (or janus-faced) nature of time in Dickinson is "A clock stopped" (J 287). Unlike many of Dickinson's death-inflected poems, this poem is not narrated from a subjective perspective but rather presents an objective description of death constructed around the metaphor of the stopped clock, with a specific reference to Swiss watchmakers in this case directly engaging notions of artificial time-measurement. Grabher discussed in her paper how the introduction of mechanisms of artificial time-measurement simultaneously modified our sense of natural time while, paradoxically, raising our time consciousness. Providing a close reading of this and other similarly inflected Dickinson poems, Grabher made a strong case for such time consciousness being a significant and recurring philosophical concern for Dickinson in her poetic oeuvre.

Claudia Schwarz's presentation focused on the theme of space in Dickinson's poetry and, more particularly, on possible provocative intersections between Dickinson's conception of space and contemporary theoretical discussions of cyberspace. Provocatively, Schwarz suggested that Dickinson in her poetry anticipates the conceptual space of cyberspace

and, at times, seems eerily comfortable with notions of hypereality. Schwarz's discussion of Dickinson's conception of space and how it connects to our own developing understanding of virtual realities focused in some detail on manifestations of bodiless communication (be it in Dickinson or on the Internet) and its inevitable implications for fluid identity representation and ultimately, insubstantiality.

In Schwarz's presentation, the "nowHere" of space thus engaged the situated withdrawal of "I'm Nobody, who are you?" amid an array of contextual references to Baudrillard, Virilio and Perry Barlow's cyberspace manifesto. However, since Schwarz's presentation deliberately melded form and content in a bravura Powerpoint presentation that fused text and image meaningfully, a mere reporter cannot begin to do the complexity of her presentation justice on the printed page. Schwarz's presentation was most definitely a case of "you really had to be there."

Robert Smith is an associate professor of English at Knox College. He is the author of Seductions of Emily Dickinson.

LANGUAGE VI

Chair: Joan Kirkby, Macquarie University, Australia; *panelists:* Cynthia MacKenzie, University of Regina, Canada; Craig Love, University of Toronto; Kathleen Parks Lasar, University of St. Thomas

By Joan Kirkby

Each of the papers in this session examined the techniques by which Dickinson's deviously concise texts "swell the Horizons" of their boundaries, to borrow a phrase from Cynthia Mackenzie's paper. In "'Horizons swelled within my vest': Dickinson's 'Synaesthetic Semiotics,'" Mackenzie examines

Dickinson's deployment of synaesthesia as a rhetorical device, the physicality of the language that reverberates in such a way that even when the meaning is not immediately available, the poem has an "affective impact" and the reader's own boundaries are enlarged. Mackenzie argues that by "leaving out," Dickinson keeps

us "guessing," thus making "ample room for the reader: Rhetorically, this is compassionate writing." She also discusses how key words resonate throughout the canon, setting up rhizomatic connections which extend the possibilities of meaning. In developing this distinctive concept of synaesthetic semiotics, Mackenzie builds

on the work of Barthes, Heginbotham, Hagenbüchle, Porter, and Ladin to understand the dynamics of Dickinson's poetics, the "oracular lodestones" that are her extraordinary poems.

In "Awes and Ends and Dickinson's Poetry," Craig Love engages with David Porter, who reads Dickinson's "canon of odds and ends" as a manifestation of the poet's inability to "effect finality." Love argues instead that it is not that Dickinson was unable to draw conclusions, but that she strongly doubts that such conclusions can or should be drawn. She exploited not knowing and suggests that we only discover by not finding. Love demonstrates that Dickinson returns consistently to the idea that we only discover through exploration, a process which precludes ending, being certain (which means essentially not having to think),

and which may be possible only outside of the public sphere. Dickinson's poetics demonstrate the pleasures of intellection and an unwillingness to effect finality.

In "The Multi-vocality in Emily Dickinson's 'Suicide Poetry,'" Kathleen Parks LaSar argues that Dickinson's suicide poetry represents an invitation to a conversation about a controversial cultural phenomenon. Noting that Dickinson was the first American poet to write on suicide, Parks LaSar draws on the work of Bakhtin to demonstrate the dialogic framework of Dickinson's suicide poetry. Parks LaSar's approach foregrounds "the interdependent relationship between the psychosocial dynamics of culture and suicidality" and argues that Dickinson's suicide poetry has been inappropriately pathologised, whereas it should be seen as a contribution (a "living dia-

logue" in Bakhtin's words) to a broader cultural debate including an examination of "how gender specific psychosocial expectations may drive one to suicide." The paper also includes a discussion of suicide as represented in the nineteenth century popular press and suicide as a nineteenth century trope for exploring the positionality of women. The conclusion cites Higgonet's view that "an individual's death by suicide compels a social inquiry (reading) of the individual's life" and that "a suicide's life and death become a significant text for a community to read, analyze, and discuss."

Joan Kirkby, associate professor and Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Critical and Cultural Studies at Macquarie University, is writing a book on Emily Dickinson and the 19th-Century Darwin Wars and working on the Dickinson Periodicals Project with Dr. Helen Shoobridge.

AMPLITUDES AND NEW DIRECTIONS IN EDITING THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE DICKINSON ELECTRONIC ARCHIVES PROJECT

Chair: Ellen Louise Hart, University of California at Santa Cruz; *panelists:* Paul Crumbley, Utah State University; Stephanie Tingley, Youngstown State University; Melissa White; Ellen Louise Hart

By Ellen Louise Hart

This session took the form of a roundtable discussion by members of the Dickinson Editing Collective who are preparing individual correspondences for electronic publication. I began with the words of project director Martha Nell Smith concerning working methods that go against the grain of most scholarly editing by defying certain "truisms": "that an author's work is best circulated when normalized through a single, 'most authoritative' scholarly edition; that scholarly editions subsequent to such an edition are 'corrections' and supplant what has come before; that editors working on a single edition must agree with one another [and] that in any disagreement . . . one

party is 'better than' all others." Roundtable participants responded to a list of concerns set out by Smith that direct our editorial practices: "authority, literariness, authenticity, sociology, access, reproductivity, original/originary texts/moments, editorial responsibilities, authorship, intention."

Paul Crumbley, working with the correspondence to Helen Hunt Jackson, began with an "interesting problem," recounting his process of attempting to order and arrange penciled draft fragments of an 1885 letter to Helen Hunt Jackson, piecing together a text and discovering that the Amherst manuscripts appear in a very dif-

ferent form than that presented as L976 by Thomas Johnson.

Next, Stephanie Tingley, examining an 1875 letter to Elizabeth Holland (L432), identified the kinds of questions she poses to herself and asks of the text as she arranges lines on the screen, and creates links--with other documents to Holland and to other correspondents, and with other sources, in one instance proposing linking to a photo image of Edward Dickinson's grave since Holland had "plucked" a "Clover" from the grave and enclosed it in the letter. Tingley's work models a process of exploring new strategies of editing for electronic media that imagines the diverse needs of readers, research-

ers, teachers, and students.

Melissa White talked about a recently discovered transcription by Louise and Frances Norcross that fills in some gaps, cuts marked by ellipses in previous publications, in a letter sent to her cousins on the occasion of Dickinson's mother's death (L785). The Norcrosses are famous for providing Mabel Loomis Todd, in the early 1890s, with excerpted letters, and refusing to display manuscripts in their possession. White is editing those transcripts. She also noted her work with textual scholar Jerome McGann on the Dante Gabriel Rossetti Electronic Archive, at the University of Virginia; McGann participated in the inception of the Dickinson Editing Collective in 1992 during the first EDIS international conference.

I spoke last, celebrating the near completion of one phase of work, with Smith, on the correspondence to Susan Huntington Dickinson—more than three hundred documents. First, I focused on design. A document in a correspondence is presented as an individual electronic edition, and the layout of each screen foregrounds the manuscript image, which appears side by side with a print translation, and is accompanied by notes describing physical features of the manuscript; its approximate date; previous publications history; linked documents; information on people, events, and literary references. Second, I emphasized access: readers and researchers—for the first time—will be able to view manuscript images of letters and letter-poems; they will be able to

work with materials that until now have only been available to scholars granted permission to handle restricted collections, who can afford the time and money to travel to libraries.

Bringing these materials to a world-wide audience is the culmination of the DEA's philosophy, set out by Smith: "the more pairs of critical eyes we can turn on the primary evidence the broader, deeper, and richer our discussions and our understandings will become."

Ellen Louise Hart serves on the board of EDIS, teaches for the Writing Program at the University of California, Santa Cruz, is an Associate Editor for the Dickinson Electronic Archives, and is currently working on a study of Dickinson's prosody and her visual line.

WRAP-UP SESSION

Chair: Gudrun Grabher; *panelists:* Joanne Feit Diehl, Jane Eberwein, Cynthia Hogue, Suzanne Juhasz, Vivian Pollak, Daneen Wardrop

By Cindy Mackenzie

At the conclusion of the conference on Sunday, incoming President, Gudrun Grabher chaired a distinguished panel of Dickinson scholars who were featured plenary speakers and who provided the conference participants with a summary of their impressions and insights into the panels they attended.

First, JoAnn Feit Diehl enthusiastically remarked how each panelist, demonstrating a range of depth of insight and knowledge, indeed, a "critical amplitude," asked for a revisionist theory of Dickinson's poetry from subjects as far-ranging as ED's use of synaesthesia to speculations about Emily's dog, Carlo. This revisionist approach, Feit Diehl adds, serves a pragmatic purpose: to read more acutely and to urge us to re-align our relationship to Dickinson's poems.

Jane Eberwein focussed her attention on the topic of Dickinson's spiritu-



Photo by Claudia Schwarz

ality, noting that the papers paid less attention than in the past to the way in which Dickinson worked against the Church and the understanding of a Puritan God by developing an interrelationality of the poet's link with

other writers and belief systems. This approach, she added, allows us to see

Dickinson's embeddedness in her own time, as in the paper on her spiritual crisis during the Civil War, but also in ours, as in a paper on Dickinson's religious sense and Zen.

Cynthia Hogue reported briefly on the role of Dickinson to Nature, remarking that she was inspired by the panels in that they caused her to rethink the subject of the relation of the human body to the earth's body and to consider the affirmation of Dickinson's being "in the world."

Suzanne Juhasz remarked on the amplitudinous perspectives on Dickinson's erotics in papers on the subject that considered such ideas as the intertextual relationship between

Wrap-up, continued on page 35

"I READ A POEM" MARATHON AT THE HOMESTEAD

By Ellen Louise Hart

This spring the Emily Dickinson Museum, which includes the two side by side Dickinson houses, the Homestead and the Evergreens, conducted a week of activities, March 28-April 3, honoring the museum's first full season of operation and welcoming in National Poetry Month. The "Celebration of History and Poetry," "A little Madness in the Spring," "A little Madness in the Spring," included "A Community Marathon Reading of Emily Dickinson's Poems": "Can I expound the skies?" For the first time the Homestead hosted a marathon reading of the 1,789 poems in Ralph Franklin's "Reading Edition." The event might also have been called "A Feast of Poems," since it took place in the Homestead's dining room, now removed from the museum tour and used for talks and gatherings.

Leaning against a wall of the dining room, waiting to be restored to its rightful place, and serving as backdrop for the reading, was the gate to the Dickinson family burial plot, "Edward Dickinson" and "1858" cast in the iron. Located this winter in an antique store in southern Vermont, having been stolen from the cemetery more than twenty years ago, the gate lent a certain clairvoyant effect to the hours of reading and pleased people who had seen news stories of its chance discovery and return.

Spread over four days, the reading lasted for twenty-seven hours and involved nearly as many groups of readers, from the Amherst area and beyond. The poems were divided into sections of about sixty-five, and each hour was assigned to a specific group of people, usually eight to ten, who read the work in numerical, chronological order, sitting in a semi-circle and facing an audience that varied in size throughout the day. Readers earned "I READ A POEM" buttons at the end of their hour. Participants represented a diverse range of organi-

zations, among them students, faculty, staff, and alumni from the Five Colleges (Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, Smith, UMass); a Dickinson study group, a writing group, Learning in Retirement, the New Directions School; the Amherst Woman's Club, the Jones Library of Amherst, the National Yiddish Book Center, the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. At the end of each hour audience members were invited to add their voices. "Expounders," museum guides and other volunteers, greeted participants, distributed reading texts, offered cups of water.

One group that came especially prepared was a class of 4th graders from the Cambridge Friends School; students read their block of poems, with many reciting stanzas from memory. Museum staff and guides began the reading, with Co-Director Jane Wald reading the first poem; Daria D'Arienzo, with Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, where so many of the manuscript poems reside, read the one thousandth poem (by chance!); and I had the honor of reading the last poem as EDIS members took the final hour.

Beautifully organized, highlighting the power of Dickinson's appeal as well as the chemistry that forms among people as they read poetry out loud and to each other, the marathon was exciting, demanding, revealing—awesome in the Dickinsonian as well as the currently popular sense of the word. In a note of instructions mailed out to participants, Museum Co-Director Cindy Dickinson added: "It will be an adventure!" And it was.

Reflecting on their experiences, readers told me the marathon had offered new ways of hearing the poems. Writer Marta McDowell, who travelled from New Jersey with her husband Kirke to attend the opening of Gilbert's nursery in the Evergreens, arrived at the

marathon by accident, and listened: "To hear the poems is quite a different experience from my usual silent reading. The words breathe. The cadences surface. And each reader brought a personal voice to the poetry. The place almost vibrated. If I were religious, I'd call the event a liturgy. If I were superstitious, I'd call it a seance. But since I spend my time buried in things historical, I think I'd call it Victorian. One feels that Austin and Susan, Vinnie and Emily, and David and Mabel would have enjoyed the theatrical aspect of the whole thing."

Georgiana Strickland of Lexington, Kentucky, former editor of the *EDIS Bulletin*, commented: "To me it was especially wonderful to get back into the poetry with such concentration and to rediscover poems I hadn't read in years." And from Gerry Barbeau, of Agawam, Massachusetts, a retired elementary school teacher who characterizes Dickinson in classroom visits: "It befell me to read Poem 1251:

Look back on Time, with kindly
eyes-

He doubtless did his best -
How softly sinks that trembling
Sun in Human Nature's West

I was not familiar with the poem, but have read and meditated upon it several times since my reading."

Their mission statement notes that the Emily Dickinson Museum "is dedicated to educating diverse audiences about Emily Dickinson's life, family, creative work, times, and enduring relevance." The spirit of the marathon was testimony to that enduring relevance.

Ellen Louise Hart serves on the board of EDIS; teaches for the Writing Program at the University of California, Santa Cruz; is an Associate Editor for the Dickinson Electronic Archives; and is currently working on a study of Dickinson's prosody and her visual line.

OPERA REVIEW

COME TO ME IN DREAMS

By *Adelaide Whitaker*

Paens to Life and Hope soared this week (June 9-13, 2004) in The Ohio Theatre at Playhouse Square Center, lifting the audience with them to lofty heights of appreciation, gratitude and inspiration.

The Cleveland Opera was celebrating the 75th anniversary of Anne Frank's birth! Only a young girl when she expired in a WWII German concentration camp, Anne left the world a diary in which the horrors of hiding in an attic to avoid the SS were recorded with an innocent child's optimism for a happy future. The teenaged heroine's spirit permeated the double bill: *Come to me in Dreams* and *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

A review of the second half of the program will be noted first, as a longer discussion of the first part is merited by its inclusion of a poem by Emily Dickinson.

Following intermission, a period piece presented by Cleveland Opera and produced by The Encompass New Opera Theatre took the stage. It is a one act, one person opera and is supported by a small orchestra. *The Diary of Anne Frank* was composed in Russia circa 1969 by Grigori Frid. A production of it there received no kudos from the Russian communist government, despite the fact that the Holocaust had also claimed the lives of almost four million Russian POWs.

Censors judged Frid's score to smack of capitalist decadence, perhaps because its music was greatly influenced by Post-Romantic Arnold Schoenberg's atonal style. Compositional techniques which alternate colors, increase rhythmic and contrapuntal complexity and also fragment the melodic flow produce dissident sounds and angular lines. Frid's utilization of these ideas results in a sort of declamative recitatif that actually enhances the dramatic content of the text.

Such vocal lines are not for a timid

soprano! Dunja Pechstein, creator of the role in New York, admirably maneuvered its tortuous path with the same seeming ease with which she climbed a multilevel stage set. The recent production in New York by The Encompass Theatre was directed by its Founding Artistic Director, Nancy Rhodes. Under the capable baton of Sybille Werner, the ensemble performance was excellent.

The first piece, *Come To Me in Dreams*, is a brilliantly conceived new form for the opera stage. David Bamberger, the company's Founder and now Director Emeritus, moulded a comprehensive drama from a potpourri of art songs culled from the song repertoire of Lori Laitman. Ms. Laitman is an American composer whose work is already acknowledged to be among the best and most beautiful in contemporary music literature.

In a recent interview, Mr. Bamberger explained his directing role at Cleveland Opera: "I impose my own dramatic form upon the material." In this capacity, he shaped a stagework from Laitman's three song cycles: *The Years*, poems by Sara Teasdale; *Holocaust 1944*, poems written by poets whose lives were scorched by the Holocaust; and *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, poems created by the children in the Terezin concentration facility. Emily Dickinson's "Wild Nights" is the unlikely keystone in the work's structure and Christina Rossetti's "Echo" provides the denouement.

Art songs are, in and of themselves, a definitive musical genre. The music is composed upon poetry that dictates the emotion, shape, rhythmic and spatial patterns, all of which are interwoven in a logical fashion. Each song is a total achievement. Lori Laitman's innate melodic wellspring is directly inspired by the words of the poet. Her individual word and phrase settings

are contoured to every aspect of the poem in a freely associative construction allowed by contemporary compositional rules. Two specific examples are illustrated by abrupt relocation of tonal centers in a non-traditional, confrontive way and the moveable barline which frees expressive punctuation by changing the meter from measure to measure. Emily Dickinson experimented with these elements many years ago! Music is always the last of the arts to implement new artistic aesthetics.

I was particularly curious to ascertain how a dramatic impulse that would thrust one wholly formed artwork forward to another, and then another, etc. could be established. David Bamberger had thought out a scenario which proved satisfying to all questions, albeit not within a conventional definition of opera. Character development, usually a requisite demand in an operatic libretto, is not an issue in this piece. All of the characters are created by Bamberger to sing the songs which he (with Laitman's concurrence) has arranged in an order to serve his own dramatic purpose.

Each of the three singing characters is accompanied by a mood-setting instrumental voice. A silent character is the recipient of the information provided by the other three. Themes of Love, Death, Sacrifice and Redemption fill the songs sung by The Survivor, his dead wife and lost daughter. Resurrecting these memories to a conscious level by telling them to his living child ultimately allows the man to recommence moving through his life. The part of The Survivor was superbly sung by Sanford Sylvan. His gorgeous mellow baritone voice caressed the songs which at once expressed intolerable pain and deep love. Sylvan's double bass accompanist,

Opera Review, continued on page 35

NEW PUBLICATIONS

By Barbara Kelly, Book Review Editor

Baym, Nina. *American Women of Letters and the Nineteenth-Century Sciences: Styles of Affiliation*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2002. 265 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-8135-2984-0, \$60.00; paper, ISBN 0-8135-2985-9, \$22.00.

Baym's award-winning book examines the lives and works of Almira Phelps, Sarah Hale, Catharine Esther Beecher, Susan Fenimore Cooper, Elizabeth Cary Agassiz, Emma Willard, Maria Mitchell, Mary Baker Eddy, Sarah Orne Jewett, and Emily Dickinson, among others. Dickinson's choice not to publish in the public sphere distinguishes her from these nineteenth-century women writers "who entered the print arena on behalf of science." In her chapter on Dickinson (133-51), Baym argues against the view that Dickinson's poetry of science demonstrates her attempt to reconcile religious faith with the "destabilizing implications of scientific findings." Instead, Dickinson "affiliates with science against religion" and "relentlessly pries apart the synthesis of science and faith" promoted by the Amherst College community. Especially illuminating are Baym's descriptions of Edward Hitchcock, Mary Lyons, and the intellectual milieu they represented. Though the author only briefly discusses particular Dickinson poems, she has identified 270 poems containing scientific language, listing many of them in categories for further study. Additional chapters examine "science in women's novels, writing by and about women doctors, and the scientific claims advanced by women's spiritualist movements." This informative volume is clearly written and a pleasure to read, highly recommended for both scholarly and general readers.

Bloom, Harold. *The Best Poems of the English Language: From Chaucer Through Frost*. New York: HarperCollins, 2004. 972 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-06-054041-9, \$34.95.

This door-stopper anthology chronologically presents 108 poets born before 1900, mostly men, from Chaucer to Hart Crane. Emily Dickinson is one of eleven poets included. An introductory essay, "The Art of Reading Poetry" (1-29), discusses the characteristics of great poetry. Bloom's five-page introduction to Dickinson is followed by 23 poems, about half of which are not often found in anthologies. He believes Dickinson wrote poems of "the greatest aesthetic and intellectual eminence"; he counts at least one third of her 1,789 poems "of permanent aesthetic value." She is "so cognitively original that she challenges William Blake in that regard," and her strongest lyrics recall "the swiftness and compression of Shakespeare's mind." He considers Whitman and Dickinson "the two greatest and most original of American poets," concluding, "I remain a bewildered idolator, struggling to understand her enigmatic sublimities." He ranks Dickinson with Emerson, Whitman, and Henry James as "our highest national achievement in thought and the arts." Given the late twentieth-century debates about the nature of the literary canon, the title of this book is likely to generate debate; however, Bloom's lifelong enthusiasm for poetry is contagious. This volume will provide years of good reading for its intended general audience.

Dillon, Elizabeth Maddock. *The Gender of Freedom: Fictions of Liberalism and the Literary Public Sphere*. Stanford, California: Stanford Univer-

sity Press, 2004. 310 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-8047-2941-7, \$49.50.

Dillon traces the development of liberal political theory in relation to gender from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries in the United States, arguing that women have been "integral to liberalism since its inception." She examines the literary public sphere as "a social space that links the public and private and mediates between the two." Her study includes discussions of Anne Hutchinson, the Antinomian controversy, John Winthrop, the Puritan conversion narratives, gender and marriage in John Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and in the works of Charles Brockden Brown and Hannah Webster Foster, mother-child relationships in the work of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Lydia Maria Child, and four infanticide narratives. Her final chapter, "Coda: Queering Marriage" (237-54), explores Dickinson's "poetic treatment of the relationship between marriage and entitlement" with a discussion of "I'm 'wife' - I've finished that -" (J199, Fr225), "Rearrange a 'wife's' affection!" (J1737, Fr267), "Title divine - is mine!" (J1072, Fr194), and "Morning / might come / by Accident -" (L912). Dillon asserts, Dickinson "splits apart the private and public faces of marriage, asking us to see the public function of marriage as unratified by any specific form of private activity." Informed by John Locke, Adam Smith, Rousseau, de Tocqueville, and Jürgen Habermas, among others, Dillon's work is formidable; Americanist scholars and sophisticated readers of gender studies may find this carefully crafted study worthy of attention.

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.

Fuss, Diana. *The Sense of an Interior: Four Writers and the Rooms that Shaped Them.* New York: Routledge, 2004. 270 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-415-96990-5, \$35.00.

Celebrating “the place where writing happens,” Fuss brings alive Emily Dickinson’s Amherst Homestead, Sigmund Freud’s Viennese apartment house, Helen Keller’s Connecticut home, and Marcel Proust’s Parisian bedroom. The author contends, “A writer’s domestic interior opens a window onto both author and text.” She suggests reading her book as a biography of place *and* person, though it can also be read as literary criticism, architectural history, or cultural theory. She is interested in the ways that interiors shape imagination. In the chapter on Dickinson (22-69), Fuss examines the Homestead’s front door, the parlor, the poet’s bedroom, and the cupola, culling the poems and letters for language that supports her discussion. She rejects the perception of Dickinson as agoraphobic or her room as a domestic coffin or Gothic prison; instead she finds the poet’s bedroom spacious and airy, a “panoptic center” from which she could view the hills, the Evergreens, and the activities of the neighborhood and street. This well-designed volume offers more than 50 photographs and drawings, including floor plans of the domestic spaces that Fuss clearly describes. Although all four writers contended with disabilities, Fuss concludes that their surroundings inspired them, that even the most banal or inconsequential objects – “an open door, a broken relic, a warm hand, or a crumbly teacake can be the stuff of great literature.”

Grasso, Linda M. *The Artistry of Anger: Black and White Women’s Literature in America, 1820-1860.* Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2002. 249 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-8078-2682-0, \$49.95; paper, ISBN 0-8078-5348-8, \$18.95.

To demonstrate how anger can generate artistic expression and how it can

also be used as a new organizing framework to analyze women’s literature, Grasso focuses on the works of Lydia Maria Child, Maria W. Stewart, Fanny Fern, and Harriet Wilson, whose works express social injustice and personal discontent. She argues, because antebellum cultural constraints did not allow for free expression of anger, women invented pseudonyms or sophisticated literary techniques that encoded their anger, creating socially acceptable means of communicating in a patriarchal society. She identifies Emily Dickinson as “an especially gifted masker who assumed a variety of disguises in both her life and her poetry.” Although Dickinson is mentioned briefly in only four separate instances, Grasso’s well researched and organized study advocating anger as a “mode of inquiry” may stimulate scholars to revisit Dickinson’s poems and letters as well as Adrienne Rich’s “Vesuvius at Home: The Power of Emily Dickinson,” in which Rich analyzes the “images, codes, metaphors, strategies, [and] points of stress” in the poet’s work, adding, “The woman who feels herself to be Vesuvius at home has need of a mask, at least, of innocuousness and of containment.”

Kirk, Connie Ann. *Emily Dickinson: A Biography.* Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 2004. 177 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-313-32206-6, \$29.95.

Part of a series designed for high school students and public libraries, Kirk’s slim but substantive volume would also serve undergraduates and the general reader wanting an up-to-date overview of Dickinson scholarship. Drawing from primary and secondary sources, Kirk’s clear text includes well-known and unexpected biographical details, as well as the author’s personal conjectures and caveats regarding the mythology and distortions that have grown around the poet’s life and texts. Conservative in her approach, Kirk says, “There is, so far no definitive documentary evidence that pins down anyone in particular as the poet’s love

interest during the 1860s.” She reminds readers, “. . . it is the poems themselves, and the letters, that are her true gift to all.” Informed by the latest scholarship, Kirk’s last three chapters – “‘Fluid Text’ and the Problem of Editing,” “Myths, Mysteries, and Controversies,” and “‘An Amethyst Remembrance’: Dickinson’s Reception and Legacy” – are particularly useful. The author concludes, “No other writer . . . has managed to encapsulate so much depth of feeling and layers of meaning into so little a space with so few words.” Reader friendly, this volume includes a chronology of the poet’s life set among historical and cultural events (1620-2004); five pages of black-and-white family photographs; a Norcross and Dickinson family tree; a list of poems published in the poet’s lifetime; selected sources of Dickinson’s own reading; locations of major holdings of Dickinson material; a bibliography including three web sites; and an index.

Van Vliet, Eugenia R. *Dinner with Famous Women: From Cleopatra to Indira Gandhi.* New York: iUniverse Star, 2001, 2004. 438pp. Paper, ISBN 0-595-29729-3, \$28.95.

Van Vliet’s bright and imaginative collection of stories, menus, and recipes from famous and less familiar women reflects a wide-range of careers and cultures. Arranged in chronological order, from Queen Hatshepsut, the first female pharaoh of Egypt to Indira Gandhi, the first female prime minister of India, the 44 entries include Helen of Troy, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Charlotte Brontë, Queen Victoria, Emily Dickinson, Sarah Bernhardt, Lillie Langtry, Annie Oakley, Emma Goldman, Maria Curie, Gertrude Stein, Mata Hari, Agatha Christie, Mary Pickford, Golda Meir, Frida Kahlo, Josephine Baker, and Carmen Miranda, among others such as Irish-born Anne Bonny, “the most notorious female pirate of the eighteenth century.” Each woman speaks for herself offering facts and anecdotes about her life and the foods available during her

era. All recipes are adapted for modern kitchens. Dickinson's "Amherst Dinner" consists of bean and bacon soup, corn bread, pork chops baked in cream, wild rice, acorn squash with cranberries and apples, and peach brown betty. Noticeably missing is the poet's black cake recipe. Intended for those who wish to add "the sustenance of historical knowledge" to their culinary practice, this volume is enriched with interesting historical facts (the reason Elizabeth I had blackened teeth), whimsical anecdotes (Queen Elizabeth nibbling on a hot dog at Eleanor Roosevelt's Hyde Park barbecue), and delightful descriptions (Pearl S. Buck's memory of eating pickled thousand-year-old eggs and Alice B. Toklas's fish dinner looking like "one of Picasso's paintings").

Whitaker, Rick. *The First Time I Met Frank O'Hara: Reading Gay American Writers.* New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2003. 231 pp. Cloth, ISBN 1-56858-272-2, \$20.00.

Not intending to be academic or comprehensive, Whitaker responds to writers and books he has loved, exploring gay American literature from the nineteenth century, when writers had to encode their homosexual identity, through the present day assimilation of gay writers into the mainstream. Included are Thoreau, Whitman, Melville, Dickinson, Gertrude Stein, Hart Crane, Gore Vidal, and Frank O'Hara, among more than a dozen other less well-known writers. Whitaker says these writers share "a gay sensibility" of "incisive wit, reckless energy, irony, resourcefulness, ambition, tenderness, ambivalence, [and] continual surprise." His essay on Dickinson (59-72) focuses on the poet's passionate letters to Sue Gilbert Dickinson, suggesting that the letters have the spirit of twelfth-century Provençal troubadour lyric poetry and that the poet "followed directly in the path of medieval philosophers, the spiritual fathers of the troubadour poets." Entertaining and accessible but lacking notes or an index, Whitaker's

book is part biography, part literary criticism, and part personal memoir, revealing his spiritual search for meaning and his love of reading.

Book Review

Farr, Judith, with Louise Carter. *The Gardens of Emily Dickinson.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2004. xv + 351 pp. Cloth, ISBN 0-674-01293-3, \$26.95.

Reviewed by Sheila Coghill

Analyzing the plurality of gardens in Emily Dickinson's life and poetry, Judith Farr gives readers an invaluable context in which to understand Dickinson's creative genius and illuminates an important layer of her artistic temperament. Farr observes, "Although Dickinson's fascination with botany has long been acknowledged, the extensive role played by flowers in her art as in her life has not been deeply considered." Making extensive use of poems and letters, Farr gives us insights into Dickinson's other vocation. It may surprise some readers to learn that "during her lifetime, Emily Dickinson was known more widely as a gardener, perhaps, than as a poet."

In the first chapter, "Gardening in Eden," utilizing poems and letters, Farr traces Dickinson's gardens, both on North Pleasant street where she lived until she was 25 in a house that "possessed not only a spacious garden but a fruit orchard and a stand of pines" and at the Homestead, "remembered for its 'long beds' of roses and flourishing seasonal plantings." These gardens were vital connections to friends and family for Dickinson.

In "The Woodland Garden," these sensibilities are extended and given even more depth. As a touchstone enlarging Dickinson's poetic vocabulary, her love of small and humble wild flowers is contextualized beyond the Romantic sensibility of the time. Farr states that Dickinson "like a botanist 'knew her chemistries' but, like Ruskin's poet, always approached her

flowers as quasi-human presences [and] would address [field] flowers with subtle understanding of corolla, calyx, and stamen." Cultivated flowers were a source of connection and poetic inspiration, but wildflowers provided Dickinson a proximity to Eden before popular hybridization came into vogue.

Farr also gives a detailed discussion of Dickinson's Herbarium, noting that, "the first flower pressed . . . was the Jasminum or jasmine, the tropical flower that would come to mean passion to [Dickinson] as a woman," and on page 46, "Dickinson pressed eight kinds of pansy violets together with a spray of trumpet creeper and prickly cucumber." Besides the daisy, Dickinson had a particular fondness for violets (she was buried with small bouquets of violets and heliotrope) not just because they heralded spring, but their smallness mirrored her sense of self, an integral presence in the landscape, however unassuming. As Farr says, "to appreciate the degree of Dickinson's fondness for wildflowers, it is enough to cite ["It bloomed and dropt, a Single Noon—" Fr843] wherein not the rose or the elegant Liliun but the field flower Hemerocallis . . . becomes the metaphor of all nature."

In the third chapter, "The Enclosed Garden," Farr emphasizes Dickinson's "need to be in the presence of flowers . . . and the fact that they constituted major subject matter for her poems and letters"; she also explores Dickinson's practice of sending poems in letters, often pinning them with flowers. More intriguing, Farr discusses "the contents of Emily Dickinson's conservatory [that] may tell us much about her sensibility." Her "bravery" as an "amateur horticulturalist" is illustrated in her attempts to grow what Joseph Breck described in *The New Book of Flowers* as the "concept of the 'double flower or hybrid.'" Breck "warned readers of Emily Dickinson's day to avoid growing hybrids that def[ie]d classification and be[came] 'monsters' . . . though he did not condemn all hybrids." One example was "the double garden lily. . . one of Dickinson's favorite flowers."

Farr also explores the other common and "tropical" flowers Dickinson grew in her conservatory: the double narcissus, carnations, hyacinths, baskets of gardenias, oleander "tied with black velvet" [and sent] to friends in deep winter, fuchsias, and jasmine which "made...atmosphere for the dwelling of her imagination."

Worth noting here is another welcome and delightful element of the book, the illustrations. Whether you are a gardener or not, the illustrations create the visual appeal of color and depth that flowers naturally have. From the cover and title page design to the nineteenth-century botanical illustrations and paintings, Farr includes a range of well-chosen images to underscore Dickinson's detailed acquaintance with the language and tradition of flowers and her departure from their conventional uses. The visual appeal is immediate starting with the cover design by Marianne Perlak which employs a photograph by Rosamund Purcell of an orange garden lily, evoking, as mentioned above, one of Dickinson's favorite flowers; it is set on a field of green with "Bloom-is Result" in Dickinson's handwriting at the bottom. Included among the book's 36 illustrations in black and white as well as color is Mabel Loomis Todd's Indian Pipes which she painted for Emily Dickinson in 1882, and which became the cover design for the first edition of Dickinson's poems she edited with Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

Also included are Mary Cassatt's Lydia Crocheting in the Garden at Marly and Eastman Johnson's Hollyhocks, along with illustrations from gardening books and magazines Dickinson knew or was familiar with such as "Dandelion" from *Flowers of America* by Gabriella F. (Eddy) White, 1876; "Double Narcissus" (Narcissus poeticus) from *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, 1797; and Clarissa Munger Badger's "Fringed Gentian" from *Wild Flowers of America*, 1859. To underscore the pervasiveness of flowers as emotionally and spiritually emblematic in nineteenth-century culture, and as particularly inspiring for Dickinson's

poetry, Farr offers thorough discussions of Dickinson's knowledge of popular flower dictionaries and the nineteenth-century "language of flowers," garden magazines, paintings with flowers, and writers and essayists who used flower imagery.

Farr captures this breadth as well as the insight it offers into the paradox of Dickinson's double-consciousness when she states that Dickinson's "attraction to exotic flowers and her affection for the woodland kind...reveal two aspects of her personality and character, each carefully guarded from danger of extinction: the quest for vivid, even dangerous experience, represented (ironically) by the sequestered plants of her conservatory, and the pursuit of good sense and duty, emblemized by woodland flowers." Treating numerous poems and letters, Farr reveals the textured floral landscape of Dickinson's imagination. Synthesizing their importance in understanding Dickinson's work, Farr argues:

Such poems, like "Of Death I try to think like this," [Fr1588], reveal the degree to which the idea of flowers and gardens met Dickinson's requirements and needs as a poet. The garden was a sustained and exquisite intellectual construct capable of deeply moving the heart. If flowers gave her a lifelong occupation, they also provided images and symbols whose traditional importance she could reconstruct and embellish. Flowers were "Nature's sentinels" (Fr 912). As a poet, she imbued them with original aesthetic significance.

Thus, the illustrations in this book provide the reader with an invaluable visual cue to the poet's eye as well as its transformation into art.

In the fourth chapter, "The 'Garden in the Brain,'" Farr observes that "Dickinson was perhaps most fully a member of the community by her disciplined commitment to gardening." In addition, "The neighbors and

friends to whom [Dickinson] sent wildflowers...or bouquets made up from her garden or conservatory recalled either the complex artistry of her arrangements or their casual flair"... Men as well as women, both the sick and the well, received the poet's extraordinary boxes of carefully chosen blooms. Many who knew that she wrote poems fancied a likeness between their intricacy and originality and the beauty and freshness of her floral arrangements." Farr notes, "the concentration and brevity of Dickinson's poems appeared similar to her habit of giving a single, solitary bloom." Dickinson herself saw flowers, plants, gardens and nature as integral to connecting her to the community and world around her as well as to her poetic process and product—signified by the observation that "Bloom-is Result—" (Fr 1038).

Drawing parallels between Dickinson's subversion of formal poetic conventions and "avoiding the formalities of belief" and social conventions of the time, Farr explores the interconnectedness of flowers and poetry for Dickinson and observes how in one of her most "enigmatic poems [Dickinson] describes what she calls 'the Flower of the Soul' [This is a Blossom of the Brain—, F1112]. [And] to attempt to parse the meaning of this poem is to realize how closely she could, when she chose, relate flowers with words and words with the Word."

The fifth chapter, "Gardening With Emily Dickinson" by Louise Carter, provides further information, albeit occasionally "speculative," on the plants and flowers grown by Emily Dickinson in both her garden and her conservatory, together with advice on how to grow them. While we have extensive details in Dickinson's letters regarding her interest in flowers, "with a few exceptions, she did not use botanical names, and there is sometimes uncertainty about which plants she grew and wrote about. [Also,] some plants have been reclassified." However, Carter does a masterful and convincing job of listing and discussing the annuals, perennials, biennials, wood-

land plants, and shrub roses that Dickinson most likely grew and cultivated.

In her Epilogue, Farr analyzes Dickinson's poetic use of seasons, the vagaries of weather, botanical language, her knowledge of painterly conventions, and theological themes. And "while Emily Dickinson might have chosen an aesthetic avocation other than gardening . . . it brought her as close as possible to earth, to nature in all its radical power and beauty," and "to art . . . Dickinson owed her identity. But perhaps only her experience of the garden could truly tempt her to believe in the reality of 'perennial bloom' and a 'Certain June,' or that in eternity 'No Desert Noon,' 'No fear of frost to come' (Fr230) would ever exist to trouble her."

This book provides an accessible and much needed scholarly exploration of Dickinson's love of flowers and gardens. As Farr says in her introduction: "So important were flowers to Emily Dickinson, so knowledgeable was she about botany, that the key to a successful reading of an individual Dickinson lyric can depend on one's knowledge of the background and identity of a plant or flower or of weather and climactic conditions to which the poet may familiarly allude."

Sheila Coghill is a professor and Chair of the Department of English at Minnesota State University Moorhead. She is co-editor of several anthologies in the University of Iowa Press Visiting Series: Visiting Emily Dickinson: Poems Inspired by the Life and Work of Emily Dickinson and Visiting Walt: Poems Inspired by the Life and Work of Walt Whitman. Her next anthology, Visiting Frost: Poems Inspired by the Life and Work of Robert Frost, will be published in 2005. She is also a Master Gardener.

Award, continued from page 3

unfolding of America's national identity, Roland hosted leading scholars from a broad range of disciplines.

Professor Hagenbüchle established the broad academic credentials essen-

tial to an international life of public scholarship early in his career. He received his doctorate from the University of Zürich in 1967, writing a thesis titled "The Fall of Man and the Freedom of Choice in Milton's Paradise Lost." After studying at Cambridge and Yale, Roland completed his "Habilitation" at Zürich in 1975, publishing this work in 1988 as *Emily Dickinson: Wagnis der Selbstbegegnung (The Risks of Self-Encounter)*. Widely reviewed as one of the "most brilliant Dickinson studies published in Europe" (Grabher 1), this book announced Roland's emergence as a major Dickinson scholar.

During the years that followed, Roland jointly edited a number of important works, including *Poetic Knowledge: Circumference and Centre* in 1980, *American Transcendentalism* in 1983, *American Poetry between Tradition and Modernism, 1865-1914* in 1984, *Poetry and Epistemology: Turning Points in the History of Poetic Knowledge* in 1986, and *Poetry and the Fine Arts* in 1989. Engaged as he was in these projects, Roland never lost sight of his interest in Dickinson. Many of us here came to know Roland through his English essays on Dickinson, like "Precision and Indeterminacy in the Poetry of Emily Dickinson" from 1974, "Sign and Process: The Concept of Language in Emerson and Dickinson" from 1979, and "Dickinson's Poetic Covenant," the address he delivered in 1992 at the first EDIS international conference and later published in the *Emily Dickinson Journal*. All of us are of course grateful for his contribution to the *Emily Dickinson Handbook*, an essential research tool that he co-edited with Gudrun Grabher and Cristanne, published in 1997.

I want to conclude my brief review of Professor Hagenbüchle's career by letting him speak for himself in the words of his 1988 book, *Emily Dickinson: Wagnis der Selbstbegegnung*:

Dickinson, in her work, repeatedly draws attention to the psychological and existential perils

attending the encounter of consciousness with itself. The poet's calculated risk sets her apart from the Transcendentalists whose worldview is based on the confident premise of continuity and analogy. What the Dickinsonian self eventually meets is "Awe," the realm of the numinous: the "fascinosum et tremendum" as Rudolf Otto has explored it. (iii)

Such Otherness manifests itself in her poetry through deeply ambivalent images: Death, God, the mythic You, both King and demonic Vampire - reifications of psychic and (on another level) of divine forces that both threaten, attract, and seduce her into the realm of the infinite. It is in her poetic Kingdom that Dickinson creates what, to her, New England's prosaic culture lacks: life's full potential. She manages to recover this loss (as she experiences it) through the self-transcendent movement of Eros, repealing death's icy No - and this movement is the movement of language. (vi)

With these words, Roland Hagenbüchle tells us that Dickinson served as a model for his own life of scholarship, a life dedicated to the ceaseless motion of language generated through encounters with the Other, both within and without the self. I can think of no one more deserving of this award than Roland Hagenbüchle.

The framed award the Society will present to Roland is being designed and hand calligraphied by artist Mary Lawler of South Hadley, Massachusetts. It reads as follows: "The Emily Dickinson International Society presents the Distinguished Service Award to Roland Hagenbüchle in recognition of his impressive scholarly accomplishment in opening new vistas of possibility for Dickinson scholars around the world and of his importance as a generous mentor to Dickinsonians throughout his career."

Also included will be the complete

text of a poem he selected, "Behind Me—dips Eternity—" When I recall Roland's 1992 plenary address, later published in the *Emily Dickinson Journal*, under the title "Dickinson's Poetic Covenant," I can understand his choice. The poem represents exactly why Roland said in his talk that he viewed "the image of Emily Dickinson as a spinster trapped in a garret" as "totally ludicrous." In his memorable words, "Is it not amazing that the same woman who deliberately withdrew from social life had the courage to pioneer into realms we all shy back from: our mortality and the divine gift in us. To have embodied in her verse America's Westering Spirit in a deeper sense than any other nineteenth-century poet is Dickinson's crowning achievement."

Gudrun Grabher, EDIS board member, President-elect of the Society, and Chair and Professor of American Studies at the University of Innsbruck in Austria, was asked by Roland Hagenbüchle to deliver some remarks in his absence.

[Gudrun Grabher reads Roland's remarks]

Prof. Jonnie Guerra, The Distinguished President of the International Emily Dickinson Society; The Members of the Board of Directors; Ladies and Gentlemen:

I regret to inform you that I cannot be here with you today to accept the treasured Award in person. I have been ill since late December and—despite my eager 'yes'—do not feel up to the long and strenuous journey. Sad to say, I will have to forego the pleasure of seeing the cherished faces again that I last had the privilege to meet during the memorable conference at Innsbruck. My wife Helen asks a warm remembrance of all those she was favored to know and become friends with over the years.

"Myself—the term between—" is the title of an essay that was written for the occasion and deals with what I consider the fulcrum of Dickinson's

poetic existence. Unable to present it here, I would like—however briefly—to draw your attention to the simple if intriguing fact that many of Dickinson's poems begin innocently enough as homely analogies or metaphors which suddenly expand into dazzling symbols, opening up vast spaces of possibility: infinity, eternity, immortality. Broad concepts that she manages to wield in ways unsurpassed in poetic writing, making us acutely aware that the lives we normally lead are a degraded version of the real thing: our ownmost true potential.

To our everyday world of petty materialism Dickinson opposes a richly symbolic universe. Against the male fantasy of aggressive dominance she sets the liberating power of poetic imagination. From single vision she saves us through her "compound vision." In boldly joining the known to the unknown, the here and now to the beyond and here-after, she adds a "sovereign" dimension to existence, lacking which life appears weightless and stale. "That we are of the sky—as she wryly puts it—is Dickinson's "pierless bridge," a faith always threatened by doubt and despair but one that she stubbornly upholds to the last. She never ceased to wrestle with the angel art, her daimonion: consecration and torment in one, a presence both feared and desired—the cause of all her anguish and her ecstasy.

That the *angelus artis* is at the same time the *angelus mortis* and that the poet's wrestling with the angel art is a fight to the death, no attentive reader of her poems will seriously doubt. Hence the thanato-erotic anxiety that pervades all of her life and work. In order to outmatch "the bisecting messenger," death, she pits eros against thanatos, forcing the mighty angel to bless her: "Poetry—/ Or Love—the two coeval come." It is Dickinson's deep strategy to transmute pain into power and to reverse life's ineluctable depletion through austere self-discipline into "sumptuous destitution."

The poet thus succeeds in keeping mortality and loss at a distance. Through her art she masters both. Whether Dickinson could have survived without the resources of her creative genius is a question I dare not approach.

"That we are of the sky," "Finite" yet "Furnished—with the infinite," remains the utmost provocation of her "competeless" art. It is the clarion call that rings through the entire oeuvre and will continue to be heard and felt by countless lovers of her poetry across the world. We feel impoverished by her riches—yet enriched in our poverty through the shining example of her life and work. Unable to express what I feel, let me end where I began: Thank you Emily Dickinson for your priceless gift! Thank you ladies and gentlemen, thank you all.

Plenary I, continued from page 5

to overcome the distinctions we inevitably draw when we refer to human experience." In conclusion, Diehl attributed Dickinson's rhetoric of immanence and authority to the poet's "self-perceived crisis of the separation between the writerly self and the natural world."

Jane Donahue Eberwein opened her admirably informative paper on Calvinism ironically, by reminding us, at this conference that was taking place at Hilo in Hawaii, that "Dickinson probably knew these Sandwich Islands chiefly as mission country." From a contemporary cultural perception of the missionaries who worked there, Eberwein moved on to the belief-system that suffused American culture in Dickinson's time. Her argument both localized and extended the discussion of Dickinson's spiritual amplitude by historically anchoring it in her church background.

The cavernous divide that Calvinism draws between God's omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence and unconverted man's nothingness (which, as Eberwein notes, is its distinguishing feature among Chris-

tian theologies) she proposed as a key to the “hyperbolic size contrasts” found in Dickinson’s poetry. Eberwein illuminated the tension between Dickinson’s Calvinist vocabulary and her exploration of “gaps within her Calvinist tradition.” On the one hand, her vocabulary shows a “decided preference for positively inflected words like ‘immortality’ and ‘heaven’ over negative terminology,” and, as Eberwein noted, “grace” and “glory” constitute “the defining elements of her religious sensibility.” On the other hand, Dickinson’s awareness of her mortal condition prompted her to sense “connections to other ways of approaching the sacred.”

Some of the gaps she explores are tracked by Eberwein to religious or philosophical positions recognized within Dickinson’s culture as threats to Calvinist dominance; these include a “Unitarian emphasis on Christ’s humanity, Transcendental openness to sudden ecstatic apprehensions of creative energy, even Catholic liturgical beauty and supplication of the Madonna. Tendencies toward paganism and witchcraft also make themselves felt in her writings.” This dynamic between the dominance of established Calvinism and its undercurrents led Eberwein to raise the important distinction between “religion” and “spirituality,” although such a distinction emerged after Dickinson’s time; she noted that Dickinson “clearly had much in common with those whose response to a higher power is personal rather than institutional and allows for private ritual.” Eberwein went on to argue that evidence of spiritual amplitude in Dickinson’s letters and poems allows us to link her to non-Christian traditions such as Judaism, Zen, Shinto, and even the Polynesian practices (actively combated in her day by Protestant missionaries in Hawaii). The value that Dickinson places on the life of the spirit, her inclination toward silence and contemplation, her preference for a simple way of life, and her cultivation of tendencies like reverence, gratitude, and trust (traditionally associ-

ated with spirituality) are indispensable aspects of her world. Finally, calling attention to Dickinson’s interesting use of the word “omnipresence” in “We pray – to Heaven” (Fr 476)—a poem that “bespeaks an amplitude congruent with her Calvinist heritage yet not restricted to any narrow system,” Eberwein concluded that “though there is only one religious tradition to which we can trace Dickinson’s roots, there is no limit to connections we can intuit with other spiritualities.”

The discussion following the presentations posed the question of whether the role of power in Dickinson’s poetics conflicts with her spiritual amplitude. Although the panelists themselves did not directly address this question, their views on it may be gleaned from their papers. In different ways, all three papers demonstrated that the force of spirituality in Dickinson is linked to her most profound choices of language, to the centrality of her interaction with the reader, and to her dialogic thinking. Spirituality is accordingly shown to be connected to her encounter with emptiness, to her displacement of “immanence” from metaphysics to language, and to her tendency to fill the gaps in her religious inheritance

Rather than accepting the limitation of established systems, or conversely, engaging in magnifying the self, the underlying absence (of a definite exteriority of being, of immanence, of God) that Dickinson encounters in the world has been interpreted in her work as the ever-changing space of our experience. By exploring the limitations of the limitless, Dickinson’s doubts about the absoluteness of religion and of systems lead to an experience that is both interior and sovereign. But what is remarkable is that such an experience, for which the collapse of certainties is an explosive reality, nevertheless discloses its own intrinsic finitude, its openness to its addressees, and its dependence on its future readers.

Lilach Lachman is a poet and scholar

who lives in Israel. She currently works on a book that focuses on the poetics of witnessing of the Israeli poet Avot Yeshurun.

Language I, continued from page 7

enjambments or caesurae in places that disrupt paired units. One example is “After great pain.”

One implication of the new paradigm is seeing Dickinson as one of many poets at the time who were experimenting with conventional meters and seeking new variants on or frustrations of stanzaic form. Another is that ear and eye work together; the experiments with visual form many have seen in Dickinson’s manuscripts may extend rather than stand in contrast to her metrical art.

Marianne Noble (American University) in “‘He fumbles at your Soul’: The Amplitude of the Shakespearean Connection,” proposes generally that *Hamlet* is a more powerful presence in Dickinson’s work than previously recognized and specifically that the Player’s speech in Act 2 is a source for “He fumble at your Soul,” Dickinson’s lyric a redaction of the speech in much the same way that “Lay this laurel” epitomizes a much longer Higginson poem. Identifying Shakespeare as a source is important because images in Dickinson that might otherwise seem discordant take on a new coherence once we can recognize in the original the explanatory connective tissue that Dickinson has excised. The connection of the hammers of blacksmithing and thunderbolts is explicit and detailed in the original, as is the link of the blacksmith’s hammers to those in a piano. It is, moreover, a “player” who pauses before laying full music on in Dickinson.

Gary Lee Stonum is a member of the board of the Emily Dickinson International Society and editor of the Emily Dickinson Journal.

New Directions X, cont. from page 22

quaveringly over the primary tone. Together, flute and voice offer lovely, wandering melodic inter-twinings and antiphonal responses. The setting indeed produced in its hearers the "fascinating chill" suggested by Dickinson's deification of music. The three settings were superbly performed. We can only hope to hear them again and to enjoy additional songs from this fine composer / instrumentalist/singer team.

Georgiana Strickland is the former editor of the Bulletin.

Wrap-up, continued from page 25

women, female masculinity as an important agent in women's relationships, anger as an erotic agent in Dickinson's life, and the theme of love and death. Vivian Pollak celebrated the fact that EDIS conferences allow members the opportunity for informal yet invaluable conversation.

Daneen Wardrop emphasized how impressed she is by the sense of camaraderie and community within EDIS conferences stating that although each scholar or member is individual, there is also a very palpable sense of community. In the panels she attended on the topic of body as metaphor, the presenters explored what can happen as a result of a revisionary perspective that raises questions such as: is God inside or outside the body?; does God end at the body?; how useful are dichotomies?; how much in Emily Dickinson is ironic and how much in earnest?; and finally, how much is she "bodied forth" in contemporary culture? At the end of the session, several members asked questions and made suggestions for future scholarship projects and meetings.

Cindy MacKenzie is a member of the EDIS Board and author of A Concordance to the Letters of Emily Dickinson. She teaches English in Regina, Saskatchewan Canada.

Opera Review, continued from page 27

Maximilian Dimoff, intertwined a similarly beautiful sound as The Survivor's alter-ego. Acting skills here matched the caliber of Sylvan's singing; a fiercely focused energy literally directed the action. In an affective performance, Fenlon Lamb (mezzo-soprano) sang the role of The Survivor's wife. Together, with the Cleveland Opera's Music Director Judith Ryder at the piano, they told the intimate love story of a husband and wife caught in "hell on earth." The third character is the dead child who sings poetry by children who perished in death camps. Megan Tillman (soprano) sustained an appropriately child-like mien that contrasted with exquisitely haunting sounds of Paul Cohen's saxophone. Sarah Renea Rucker, the silent actor who portrayed The Survivor's living child, charmed the audience as she frolicked with the spirit of Life itself.

Of special interest to The Emily Dickinson Society is the use of Dickinson's "Wild Nights" in this unusual venue. Lori Laitman's cabaret-style song is alluringly seductive and passionate. Clearly, its surface meaning describes the heights and depths of human emotion which find a peaceful haven afforded by mutual love. However, the parameters of implication expand greatly in the context of the opera. Positioned in the center of the drama, other kinds of fiery scenes are conjured by the symbol of Nazi Germany's cabarets. The only relief for victims from this consuming evil is a trusting Faith in a greater power than mankind's. It seems an appropriate reflection also upon Emily Dickinson's poem.

Come to me in Dreams will undoubtedly be performed many times. The poets' messages are universal; the composer's music unsurpassed. David Bamberger leaves a worthy legacy as he exits Cleveland Opera.

Adelaide Whitaker, D.M.A., is a painter, singer and researcher. Dr. Whitaker commissions art songs, including some that are composed on Dickinson's poetry.

Announcement

Birth Day Reading: On Friday, Dec. 10, at 6 p.m. Canio's Books (290 Main Street, Sag Harbor, NY 11963) will celebrate Emily Dickinson's birthday. Poet and biographer Vince Clemente will present a brief biography and appreciation of Emily Dickinson. An open reading will follow at which participants are invited to read a poem by Dickinson and an original work inspired by the Belle of Amherst. Light refreshments will be served including gingerbread baked according to one of Dickinson's recipes. Please call the shop (631/725-4926) to register to read.

Call for Papers

American Literature Association Conference, May 26-29, 2005, Boston, MA. Deadline for Proposals: January 10, 2005. For further information on the conference, see the website: www.americanliterature.org

Two panels are sponsored by the Emily Dickinson International Society.

Panel 1: Emily Dickinson's Reading. This panel will address Dickinson's responses to literary and non-literary works she was reading. Papers might address: her reading of periodicals; her responses to particular authors and texts; her discussions of particular books; her theories (spoken or unspoken) of the value and pleasures of reading.

Panel 2. Open Topic.

Conference Issue Notes

1. No report was available for the New Directions V session.
2. Papers for New Directions III, IV, and IX were blended with other sessions.
3. Photos are not associated with specific session reports but are intended to give a visual sense of the conference.
4. Minutes of the annual business meeting will appear in the upcoming issue.

Emily Dickinson International Society

President: Gudrun Grabher

Vice-President: Paul Crumbley

Secretary: Barbara Kelly

Treasurer: James C. Fraser

Board Members:

Martha Ackmann Paul Crumbley

Cindy Dickinson Jonnie Guerra

Ellen Louise Hart

Suzanne Juhasz Mary Loeffelholz

Cindy MacKenzie Cristanne Miller

Marianne Noble Vivian Pollak

Martha Nell Smith

Membership: Erika Scheurer

Journal Editors: Gary Lee Stonum, Cristanne Miller

Bulletin Editor: Michael Kearns

For more information, see the EDIS Website:
<http://www.cwru.edu/affil/edis/edisindex.html>

2004 CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

EDIS gratefully acknowledges the generous financial contributions of the following members in support of our programs.

Paul Beckley Marilyn Berg-Callander

Mary Elizabeth Kromer Bernhard

Marisa Bulgheroni Jack Capps

Constance Cervone Carolyn L. Cooley

Donna Dreyer Cindy Dickinson

Robert Eberwein Judith Farr

David H. Forsyth Susette R. Graham

Eleanor Heginbotham Robie Hubley

Connie Kirk Roger Lundin

Marianne Noble Donald Oresman

JoAnn Orr Domenica Paterno

Carol Pippen Vivian R. Pollak

Candace E. Ridington

Georgiana W. Strickland Richard Tryon

Hiroko Uno Laura Wyman

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 Emily Dickinson: Realms of Amplitude BY GUDRUN GRABHER
- 3 EDIS Distinguished Service Award
- 4 Cognitive Approaches to Literature and Translation BY DAVID TENNANT
- 4 Plenary I BY LILACH LACHMAN
- 6 Spirituality I BY BARBARA KELLY
- 7 Language I BY GARY LEE STONUM
- 8 Nature I BY ERIKA SCHEURER
- 8 New Directions I BY JAMES FRASER
- 9 Fundraising Campaign Announced
- 10 Dickinson and Melville: Ample Intersections BY PER SERRITSLEV PETERSEN
- 11 Language II BY PAUL CRUMBLEY
- 12 Erotics I BY KARI LOKKE
- 13 Meter, Sound Structure, and Line Breaks BY MARGARET FREEMAN
- 14 Language III BY MARGARET FREEMAN
- 14 New Directions VI BY JONNIE GUERRA
- 16 Amplifications: Contemporary Poets in Conversation with Emily Dickinson BY LESLEY WHEELER
- 17 New Directions VII BY MARIANNE NOBLE
- 18 Erotics II BY MARTHA ACKMANN
- 18 Plenary II BY GARY LEE STONUM
- 19 Spirituality II BY ELEANOR HEGINBOTHAM
- 20 New Directions VIII BY STEPHANIE TINGLEY
- 21 New Directions X BY GEORGIANA STRICKLAND
- 23 Space and Time BY ROBERT SMITH
- 23 Language VI BY JOAN KIRBY
- 24 Amplitudes and New Directions in Editing BY ELLEN LOUISE HART
- 25 Wrap-Up Session BY CINDY MACKENZIE
- 26 "I Read a Poem": Marathon at the Homestead BY ELLEN LOUISE HART
- 27 Opera Review: *Come to Me in Dreams* BY ADELAIDE WHITAKER
- 28 New Publications BY BARBARA KELLY
- 30 Review of Judith Farr, *The Gardens of Emily Dickinson* BY SHEILA COGHILL
- 32 Article continuations
- 35 Announcement and Call for Papers
- 36 Conference Issue Notes

Dickinson poems are reprinted by permission of the publishers and the Trustees of Amherst College from the following volumes: *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, Thomas H. Johnson, ed., Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Copyright © 1951, 1955, 1979, 1983 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College; *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Variorum Edition*, Ralph W. Franklin, ed., Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Copyright © 1998 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College; *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Reading Edition*, Ralph W. Franklin, ed., Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Copyright © 1998, 1999 by The President and Fellows of Harvard College; *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, Thomas H. Johnson, ed., Copyright © 1929, 1935 by Martha Dickinson Bianchi, Copyright © renewed 1957, 1963 by Mary L. Hampson: Little, Brown and Co., Boston. Dickinson letters are reprinted by permission of the publisher from *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, Thomas H. Johnson, ed., Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Copyright © 1958, 1986 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

EDIS Bulletin

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

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

EVANSVILLE, IN
PERMIT NO. 2054