EMILY DICKINSON INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

Bulletin

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 2 NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2007

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

ARIGATO TO THE EMILY DICKINSON SOCIETY OF JAPAN
OR, FOUND IN TRANSLATION

By Martha Nell Smith

I dreamt Japan long before I went there. Moss gardens, straw-mat rooms, wooden bridges arching in the moonlight, paper lanterns with the fire glowing inside. Whenever I paged through photography books of traditional Japan, I found myself gasping with appreciation. Three rocks, a gnarled pine tree, raked white sand: awe.
- Cathy Davidson, *36 Views of Mount Fuji: On Finding Myself in Japan*

Friends and acquaintances who had been to Japan told us that we would be astonished by the graciousness, hospitality, and genuine consideration of the Japanese people. From having met our Japanese colleagues at a number of Emily Dickinson International Society (EDIS) events over the years, such predictions certainly rang true, but we were nevertheless surprised that the courtesy of our Japanese hosts exceeded our very high expectations.

We arrived in Kyoto on Wednesday, August 1, and were greeted at the Palace Side Hotel, an intimate and comfortable abode across the street from the Imperial Palace and grounds, by a beautiful sign welcoming "Emily Dickinson in Japan: Like Fabrics of the East" conferees.

Standing in the lobby of the hotel, we were soon warmly greeted by local organizer Professor Hiroko Uno, President of the Emily Dickinson Society of Japan (EDSJ), who made us feel comfortably at home, even though we were many miles away from and more than 12 hours ahead of our usual routines.

The next evening, Thursday, August 2, the Board of EDSJ treated the Board of EDIS to a traditional Japanese dinner at a temple before the conference proper began. From the

Hiroko Uno, President, Emily Dickinson Society of Japan

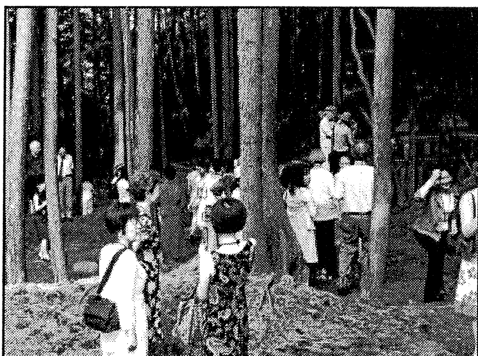
moment we removed our shoes to the after-dinner chat with some Japanese students (facilitated by Hiroko, who served as translator when necessary), the evening was lovely, with Japanese board members tutoring the European and American EDIS Board members on how to eat the numerous delectable dishes (from sashimi and whole fish to an array of vegetables and dessert). Tea, beer, and sake were all convivially consumed, as the smiles on the faces of outgoing EDIS President Gudrun Grabher and Professor Junko Kanazawa made clear.

But the most important food we consumed in Kyoto was the intellectual and poetic exchange between and among the scholars gathered for this several-days-long reflection on the writings of Emily Dickinson. Scholars known and new offered keen insights—Christopher Benfey launched this conference with several pleasantly provocative (and witty!) observations drawing on his experiences living in Japan, teaching at Mt. Holyoke, and walking these many years with Emily Dickinson. Sessions during the day ranged from Cross-Cultural Poetics to the difficulty of teaching Dickinson in any language to her relation to other American women poets and to music and aesthetics to her various roles in popular culture to the fabric of her texts in household and other Dickinsonian artifacts and in American-sponsored textbooks published in Japan post-World War II; a plenary on "Dickinson and Haiku" by Professor Katsuhiko Inada, Vice President of Hijiyama University, concluded this culturally and poetically-rich day.

The evening of Friday, August 3, we enjoyed a sumptuous conference banquet at the Heian Kaikan hotel, which was followed by a lecture on the way of tea by Bruce Seiichi Hamana, another distinguished

Japanese scholar. The meal itself was Kyoto cuisine, and we dined at large round tables, each equipped with round, rotating trays that accommodated food delivery, even as they added to the evening's fun. Before the lecture, Hiroko Uno sang, a wonderful treat in itself.

The morning of Saturday, August 4, we enjoyed a variety of presentations focusing on Dickinson's translation into Korean and Russian, reflections on her relationship to various conceptions of God, and her



Monks' Cemetery

enchanting encounters with the East. The midday plenary by Professor Toshikazu Niikura was a comparative analysis of Emily Brontë and Higuchi Ichiyo, brave and imaginative women writers on separate continents who nevertheless confronted similar issues.

On Saturday afternoon, many conferees took an excursion to the Urasenke School of the Way of Tea that included a traditional tea ceremony and the Miidera Temple, both of which concluded with a vegetarian supper at the Enryaku-ji Temple, while others charted various tours on their own around this beautiful city. A group that decided to explore Kyoto on their own took the Philosopher's Walk, toured three temples, two shrines, and ended up in a marvelous hole-in-the-wall restaurant that served delicious food delightfully. The EDIS folks spoke almost no Japanese and the restauranteurs spoke little English, but communication was nonetheless effectively managed through pointing, gesturing, and drawing (the most fun in that regard being the drawing of an octopus). Since this was one of the best meals ever enjoyed by the EDIS adventurers (delectable, the food was also beautifully arranged), they consulted their Fodor's and managed to say "Thank you" in Japanese—arigato!—which in turn made everyone at the bar burst into grins that were practically applause. As was the conference, that meal on the side was very friendly.

The morning of Sunday, August 5, featured sessions reflecting on Dickinson's spiritual practices and her codes of communication and cognition. As the conference had started with a rousing plenary, so "Like Fabrics of the East" concluded. Professor Rebecca Copeland gave an entertaining, highly informative talk on the language of dress in Japanese women's writing, a talk that complimented the furoshiki (square cloth for wrapping) that was offered as a beautiful souvenir for conferees. Having been treated to three days of remarkable presentations by scholars from ten different countries, the richly intellectual, powerfully emotional and spiritual gathering could not have enjoyed a better closing plenary than that offered by Professor Barton St. Armand, who mused upon Dickinson and the textures of mysticism.

For a conference that was, like the meals consumed throughout, delectable and beautifully arranged to optimize exchange between such a diverse gathering of scholars, ARIGATO is indeed more than in order, and especially to Hiroko Uno, our local organizer in Kyoto, and Mary Loeffelholz, our conference director.

Outside a Teahouse

Martha Nell Smith is Professor of English at the University of Maryland and Founder and Executive Editor of the Dickinson Electronic Archives. Author and coauthor of three books on Dickinson, she has just coedited the Blackwell Companion to Emily Dickinson *(Dec 2007) and a monograph,* Dickinson, A User's Guide *(June 2008).*

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 Paul Crumbley, President, EDIS, Utah State University, Dept. of English, 3200 Old Main Hill, Logan, UT, 84322-3200.

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 © 2007 by The Emily Dickinson International Society, Inc.** **The _Bulletin_ is indexed in the American Humanities Index and the MLA Bibliography.**

PLENARY A : A ROUTE OF EVANESCENCE DICKINSON AND JAPAN

Christopher Benfey, Mount Holyoke College (U.S.), introduced by Cristianne Miller

By Gary Stonum

Keynote talks typically come at the end of academic meetings, but in meditating upon the connections that link Emily Dickinson, Japanese culture, and New England intellectuals in Dickinson's time and afterwards Christopher Benfey proleptically established the key in which much of the conference was subsequently conducted. Among other items, he singled out as Dickinson-like Basho's most famous haiku, which several other speakers also went on to quote or comment on. In Allen Ginsberg's less than reverent translation: "Th'old pond—a frog jumps in. Kerplunk!"

Nominally proposing three categories within which to ponder Dickinson's Japanese connections–biographical, cultural, and interpretive— Benfey mainly noted the unexpected fit between Dickinson's verse and the milieu within which New England intellectuals, many of whom had direct or indirect experience of Japan, responded to her poems in the early years of the twentieth century. Biographically, Dickinson had little interest in Japan, unlike a number of her friends and acquaintances. For example, in what must surely have been the first time a Dickinson poem crossed the Pacific, on an 1896 visit to Hokkaido Mabel Loomis Todd used a sumi-brush to inscribe on a scroll "This is the land the sunset washes." Edward Morse (friend of the Todds and an architectural inspiration for their house in Amherst, the Dell) thought that the Japanese tea ceremony "with its wabi aesthetic of rustic poverty, 'has had an effect on the Japanese almost equal to that of Calvinistic doctrines on the early Puritans.'"

More important, those who came to have some contact with Japanese esthetics in the early years of the twentieth century found Dickinson's verse less idiosyncratic than did her first readers. Okakura Kakuzo, Ernest and Mary Fenollosa, and Percival Lowell all helped prepare the way. Moreover, the winds did not simply blow from east to west. As in his more general study, *The Great Wave*, Benfey insisted that Japan and New England mutually influenced one another. A striking example is D.T. Suzuki, the first major expositor to the West of Zen Buddhism, who nevertheless understood Zen according to the ideas of Emerson, the topic of his first publication. Okakura, author of the *Book of Tea*, was likewise a fervent Emersonian and at the same time a cross-cultural influence on such Japan-friendly Americans as Isabella Stewart Gardner, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Wallace Stevens.

In other words, thanks to winds blowing to and from Japan, American readers were more ready for Emily Dickinson's poetry by the 1920s than they would otherwise have been.

Gary Stonum, a former editor of the Emily Dickinson Journal and author of The Dickinson Sublime, teaches at Case Western Reserve University.

PURSUING HER IN TRANSITIONS
Translation and Receptions

Chair: Marilee Lindemann, University of Maryland-College Park (U.S.); Hyesook Soon, Sunkyunkwan University (Korea): Anna Chesnokova, Kyiv National Linguistic University(Ukraine), Tatiana Anikeeva, Far Eastern National University (Russia)

By Martha Nell Smith

On Saturday, August 4, Professor Marilee Lindemann (University of Maryland) chaired Pursuing Her In Her Transitions: Translation And Receptions. Hyesook Son delivered the delightfully informative "The Reception of Dickinson in Korea since 1950," through which the audience learned that Dickinson really has traveled very far from Amherst. The implantation of the American literary canon in Korea until the early 1990s reinforced the calcified dominant national and patriarchal ideology while the transhemispehric dialogues since then have had more positive effects on Korean academy and society. The canon debates in Korea since the 1990s owed the re-evaluations of the American literary canon by American feminist, Marxist, and multicultural critics since the 1960s. They helped Korean readers question the white, male, western legacy and exposed the artifactual nature of value judgments. Many women writers and poets introduced since 1980 especially helped to criticize the male dominance in Korean academia and to deconstruct the patriarchal nationalism of Korean society. For example, Emily Dickinson, who was largely accepted as a site for unchecked transference of Korean male desire until early 1990s, is now taken as a critique of the diminished or twisted gendered versions that constrained the full textual potential of women's creativity.

Dickinson is expected to answer the urgent Korean social and cultural questions, and her critique of given ideologies and redemptive imagination are regarded valuable to Korean academy which still has to solve the question of national identity and the legacy of east-Asian patriarchal tradition. Key to Soon's presentation was the revelation of how difficult gender issues and issues of sexuality are sometimes when one is translating between societies and cultures, and noting this led to a long, fruitful, educative and exciting discussion.

Tatiana Anikeeva's "Emily Dickinson's Letters to the Internet" was likewise rich in both new information and an exhilarating sense of just how deep and broad is Dickinson's reach, bringing together readers from many different backgrounds and diverse tastes. Anikeeva has researched the role of the Internet in making Dickinson's verse accessible to the Russian audience. Dickinson is a relative newcomer to the world of poetry available in Russian; the first, and for many years only, Russian translation of a substantial number of her poems was made in the 1970s, and it was only after perestroika that a greater number of Russian translators, both amateur and professional, began to publish translations of her verse. About one-third of Dickinson's poems have been translated into Russian and are available on the web. The internet has been crucial for distributing Dickinson's poetry in both Russia and Korea.

DICKINSON IN CROSS-CULTURAL POETICS

Rev. Niels Kjaer, Kridthojvaenge (Denmark): "Soren Kierkegaard, Emily Dickinson, and Haiku Poetry: 'The Moment' as a Cross-cultural Category"; Farnoosh Fathi, University of Houston (U.S.) "Dickinson and Japanese Women Writers"

By Gary Stonum

Rev. Kjaer addressed no less broad a topic than the links between Kierkegaard, Dickinson, and haiku. Navigating the difficulties presented by Kierkegaard's many voices, Kjaer presented him as a philosopher of the moment. Especially in *Either/Or* the moment of genuine Christian faith is a leap out of time, abandoning the temporality of past, present, and future. Dickinson represents the moment similarly in numerous poems, a claim which should not be too surprising given that both the poet and the philosopher are rooted in Western Christianity. Of more note is that the same pattern can be found in Japanese haiku. Kjaer, an official in a Danish haiku society, offered a brief history of the form.

Haiku has its origins in Zen teachings from China during the 7th century ACE. When Zen is taken up afterwards by the Japanese, the emphasis is on satori, personal enlightenment, which requires dispelling illusion and especially the illusions of language. Hence brief forms such as the haiku and the koan are favored, because discursive rationality is suspect. In these forms, enlightenment must come all of a sudden, in an all or nothing moment. Haiku offers snapshots of such moments.

The dichotomy of enlightenment/illusion finds a parallel in Kierkegaard's distinction between life and thought. Conflict between them is endemic to speculative philosophy, especially to the thought of Kierkegaard's *bete noire*, Hegel. To resolve this conflict one must both assume the guilt of existence and take responsibility for it, and this in turn requires God. One meets God only in the moment, the paradoxical time out of time in which Jesus is both God and man.

Zen and Kierkegaard are not the same, of course. The Zen Buddhist seeks a personal answer; Kierkegaard has Jesus.

Kjaer discussed Dickinson more briefly, endorsing the view of Sharon Cameron's *Lyric Time* that the poems serve as a refuge from temporality. They conjure moments when the truth can dazzle gradually.

Examining similarities between Dickinson's poems and several tanka by medievel Japanese women, Fathi argued that all these poets adopted compressed language in order to write a poetry of despair. All of them used expressions that transcend personal detail and occlude any autobiographical origins. Their esthetic is thus ascetic, yet at the same time it protects against the needed privacy.

Hence, reading Akazome Emon (?-1027) via "Safe Despair it is that raves" (Fr 1196), Fathi observed that despair in both poems raves. And in Mother of Michitsuna (10th century) a suffering of expression and expressiveness leaves no space for the suffering outside language. The compression in these poems is also notably tentative and impersonal. Via Dickinson's "This Chasm, Sweet, opon my life" (Fr1061), Fathi observed that repression can only make things worse but compression enables the "secret" of the poet's suffering to be both kept and told.

Similar features can be found in poems by Princess Shikishi (?-1201, where compression is read as a sharp response to despair

(In the discussion afterwards, it was noted that the reticence of the Japanese poets was partly a function of their positions at court and also of the cultural and poetic conventions of the time.)

WHY EMILY DICKINSON IS DIFFICULT TO TEACH IN ENGLISH

CHALLENGES TO TEACHING DICKINSON IN ANY LANGUAGE

Michael Yetman, Purdue University (U.S.), Jonnie Guerra, Cabrini College (U.S.); Gudrun Grabher, University of Innsbruck (Austria), and Masako Takeda, Osaka Shoin Women's University (Japan)

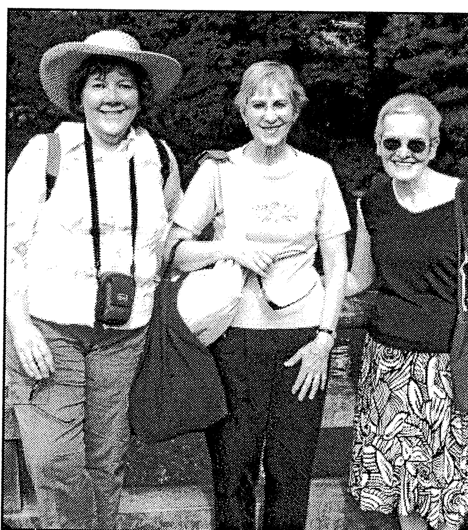
By Masako Takeda

Dickinson can present problems to native speakers of English in terms of language, grammar, syntax, cultural and historical nuance, intense idiosyncratic vision, and habit of figuration, to name but a few. For non-native speakers who read and teach Dickinson, the challenges must be even greater. With this in mind, Jonnie Guerra designed a roundtable to bring together interpreter-critics, both native and non-native speaking, to explore the strategies readers from various cultures have devised to meet these interpretative challenges. The conversation focused on three Dickinson poems selected by the co-facilitators.

Michael Yetman began the session with "I tried to think a lonelier Thing" (Fr570). Through detailed "explication de texte" of each line, important facets of Dickinson's difficulties were discussed. For example, "Some Polar Expiation" looks mysterious at first, but check the word "polar" used in another poem and see how coldness is related to loneliness. Also, "expiation" is a pun with "expedition," a topic of the period referred to in a Dickinson letter. The theme itself enhances its contents by comparing this poem with another (the Beauty-Truth poem with the identical two personages of kinship). Thus, acknowledging the difficulty, he showed a way to a more definitive interpretation.

Masako Takeda took up "A Sloop of Amber slips Away" (J1622/ Fr1599) to focus on three difficulties: syntactical, cultural, and figurative.

The four-line poem, seemingly simple, presents incredibly complicated grammatical ambiguities (according to her counting, there are 12 readings): one issue, for example, is whether "wrecks" is transitive or intransitive. This fact makes it hard for readers to visualize the image of a landscape described in the poem. Then the landscape about the setting sun can be interpreted as a metaphor of the passion and tragic glory of



At the Imperial Garden

Christ. This cultural background is an obstacle for Japanese students along with an association or a leap from the concrete to the spiritual.

In response to Takeda's praise of a visual interpretation by Grabher's students (a video tape at the Innsbruck conference), Gudrun Grabher told an anecdote on aural features: one of her students had referred to a Dickinson poem as "I heard a bus fly when I died." The poem Grabher chose was "There's a certain Slant of light (Fr320)." Some crucial words in the poem, "slant" and "heft" for example, are difficult for students to understand. As for syntax, we should note the unique phrase "there's." Even for a native speaker, reconstruction of the grammar is indispensable for the understanding of the poem. Taking those key words, such as "Heavenly Hurt," "the Meanings," "imperial" and "Air" into account, Grabher concludes the theme of the poems: Dickinson's obsession with death.

It is a matter of regret that Dickinson is becoming more and more difficult for present–day students, who are exposed to visual images and cellular phones and have little reading ability, to understand. However, the very difficulty and complexity of Dickinson invites us to read her to expand our mind. Emily Dickinson is a mirror where we read our personal experiences.

***Masako Takeda** is a professor of English and American Literature at Osaka Shoin Women's University. Her publications include* In Search of Emily Dickinson *(2005) and* Love Poetry of Emily Dickinson *(translation)(1988).*

Jane Eberwein, Kelly Sue Lynch, Rebecca Romney, Barbara Dana

DICKINSON AND OTHER AMERICAN WOMEN POETS

Chair: Georgiana Strickland, Lexington, Kentucky(U.S.); Panelists: Midori Asahina, Keio University (Japan); Paula Bernat Bennett, Emerita, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale (U.S.); Vivian Pollack, Washington University at St. Louis (U.S.)

By Georgiana Strickland

East and West intersected in interesting ways in this session dealing with Dickinson and other poets representing two differing cultures.

Midori Asahina opened the session by addressing three aspects of Dickinson's relationship with her fellow Amherst poet Helen Hunt Jackson. The first was her response to Jackson's Indian reform novel *Ramona* (1884). Dickinson's comment to Jackson, "Pity me. . . I have finished Ramona" (L976), noted Asahina, "highlights her tendency to take in whatever she encountered on her own terms." As background, Asahina examined traces of Dickinson's knowledge of the early New England Indian struggles through her occasional use of such terms as "tomahawk," "moccasin," scalping, and "masacre," and her only known meeting with an Indian as described in an 1880 letter to Thomas Wentworth Higginson (L653). These hints, said Asahina, reveal that Native Americans "had an ineradicable presence in the poet's inner landscape" but were for her largely "Tribes of Eclipse" rather than the wronged heroes whose condition Jackson sought to ameliorate.

A second facet of the relationship between the two poets, suggested Asahina, is revealed in a letter (L601a) in which Jackson praised Dickinson's bluebird poem, "Before you thought of spring" (Fr1484). Comparing Dickinson's poem with one of Jackson's own (beginning "The birds must know. Who wisely sings / Will sing as they"), Asahina noted that, while Jackson's bird sings to cheer "other men" with "weary feet," Dickinson's bird "shouts for joy to nobody / But his seraphic Self —." Asahina opined that Jackson may have lauded Dickinson's poem because she detected in the bird's "ecstatic"song "an analogy for the ideal state of the lyric poet." Yet Jackson's further statement—that because Dickinson's poem has deprived her of the pleasure of writing a bluebird poem herself, she is "inclined to envy, or perhaps hate you"—requires further elucidation. Was this merely "intimate teasing," or was Jackson genuinely irritated by Dickinson's "holding her 'seraphic self'" so aloof from the society to the improvement of which Jackson had dedicated herself?

A third epistolary exchange suggests another aspect of their relationship. In letter 937 (September 1884), Dickinson sent Jackson two poems: the last four lines of "Upon his Saddle sprung a Bird" (Fr1663) and "In other Motes" (Fr1664). Asahina compared these poetic insertions to "waka," a five-line poem inserted into a prose text and long dear to Japanese readers. The "convalescing Bird" of Poem1663 was sent as a message of sympathy for Jackson, who was convalescing from a badly broken leg, just as Dickinson was recovering from "Nervous prostration" at this time. In Poem1664, Asahina focused on the lines "The prism never held the Hues, / It only heard them play," suggesting that Dickinson here saw herself as the prism that "does not produce colors but rather separates them from the light that passes through it," while Jackson in her travel writings recreated the colors of the exotic American West. "Dickinson can at least enjoy the diverse landscapes and the sensuous beauty of nature that Jackson communicates."

Aya Yuhki, Reiko Nakagawa

These interchanges between Dickinson and Jackson, suggested Asahina, "surely reflect not only the intimacy but also the distance between them"–"Dickinson as reclusive, private poet and Jackson as an energetically wandering public figure."

In "Of Flowers, Silence, and Space," Paula Bennett introduced us to the influence of Yone Noguchi, a well-known Japanese poet and essayist who lived in the United States from 1893 to 1904. A "self-appointed" interpreter of the East to the West, Noguchi used his contemporary notoriety to promote the principles of Japanese literary aesthetics, particularly as embodied in Hokku (Haiku). Admired by a wide range of American and British literary figures, including Joaquin Miller, Gelett Burgess, Zona Gale, William Butler Yeats, Arthur Ransome, and British laureate Robert Bridges—who invited him to lecture on Japanese poetics at Magdalen College, Oxford— Noguchi was a major contributor to the emergence of modernism in the early twentieth century, in particular, to imagist poetry.

In a 1914 essay, Noguchi encapsulated his understanding of Japanese

literary aesthetics in the story of the sixteenth-century tea-master, Rikiu, and the morning-glory. In order to demonstrate to his lord, Prince Taiko, the morning-glory's beauty, the tea-master cut down all the morning-glories in his garden save a single specimen, "most winsome and delicate like a forgotten moonbeam," which he displayed in the alcove of his tea house for his master's pleasure. "It was," said Noguchi, "the heroic way." So, Noguchi argued, it was with poetry also, where an absence of words—that is, a poetics of silences – gives each word used immeasurable power. "Explanation is forbidden in the House of Poesy," he declared. "In the Abode of the Imagination, only the hints . . . are suffered to dwell."

"Coming at the end of a century in which Western writers, including poets, had become accustomed to filling page upon page with words . . . for Noguchi to assert the positive aesthetic value of emptiness was indeed to bring the East to the West," noted Bennett. "What [Noguchi] has to say about Hokku and about Japanese aesthetics," she concluded, fits "with sometimes uncanny precision, both Dickinson's verse and that of her early . . . modernist successors," including such important female successors as Adalaide Crapsey and Amy Lowell. No less important, this Eastward shift in poetic style created a niche into which Dickinson's verse, with its condensation and suggestive silences and spaces, could also fit as it came to public attention in the early modernist period.

Vivian Pollak concluded the session with "Writing Beyond the Master: Dickinson and the American Poetess Tradition," a fascinating glimpse into a web of personal and cultural intersections that produced the Dickinson who emerged as a public figure in the 1890s when her poems first came to public attention. One strand of this web, argued Pollak, reflected previous conceptions of American women's poetic tradition as exemplified by Emmaline Grangerford, a fictitious "poetess" in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, a writer of doleful elegies who died young. Dickinson's posthumous persona, suggested Pollak, was informed by the same cultural context that produced the gendered stereotype.

This stereotype was reinforced by Thomas Wentworth Higginson's introduction of Dickinson in his "Open Portfolio" essay and his preface to the 1890 edition of the poems. Higginson grouped Dickinson with "persons who wrote for the relief of their own minds," and emphasized her reclusive temperament. Other reviewers, including the decade's most influential, William Dean Howells, found her work powerful but favored her "mortuary pieces," which held "a fascination above any others in the book." Pollak noted that "the slippage between this endorsement and the view that Dickinson herself was morbid was inevitable. Thus 'strange' could mean not only powerful but out of control."

Another strand involved Mabel Loomis Todd and Austin Dickinson. Mabel first encountered Dickinson's poems when read to her by Susan Dickinson and found them "full of power," but was struck by the poet's reputation as the "Myth" of Amherst–again, said Pollak, the paradoxical mix of "strangeness" and "powerfulness." Later, as Dickinson's first editor, Mabel strove to present a more positive picture of the poet, perhaps attuned by her own erotic nature to Dickinson's erotic irregularities. Yet Austin (who by then was Mabel's lover) "feared publicity for the family and had 'a morbid horror' of any suggestion that his sister had suffered a 'love disappointment.'"

Pollak called attention to one notable moment in Austin and Mabel's relationship that brought together three strands of her argument. In 1884 Austin read aloud to Mabel and her husband, David Todd, an excerpt from *Huckleberry Finn* that included an account of Emmeline Grangerford's bathetic obituary verse.

Further connections helped Pollak weave a tighter fabric of intersecting threads, as she noted a letter from Howells to his friend Twain, both of whom had lost beloved daughters, in which Howells quotes Dickinson's "The sweeping up the heart" (Fr1108) and notes that her poems "express the awful despair of it." For Howells, Dickinson's acquaintance with grief was unquestioned, and he recognized that in voicing her own pain, Dickinson might voice the pain of others.

Pollak concluded by noting that, as our understanding of the poetess tradition has become more nuanced, generalizations about Dickinson's relation to the tradition "risk inaccuracy," yet "for 1890s readers, Dickinson was a continuer and a breaker of gendered literary tradition. In the paradoxical discourse of the time, her sincerity was strangely powerful."

Georgiana Strickland *is a retired university press editor and the former editor of the* Bulletin.

Musician in Kyoto

DICKINSON IN CONTEMPORARY POPULAR CULTURE

Chair: Cindy MacKenzie, University of Regina(Canada); Brad J. Ricca, Case Western Reserve University (U.S.): "SHE died at play. Emily Dickinson and Video Games"; Georgina Banita, University of Constance(Germany): "Poetry without Borders: Emily Dickinson and Game Design"; Stephanie A. Tingley, Youngstown State University(U.S.): "Emily among Us: Popular Representations of Dickinson's Image and Words in Contemporary Culture"

By Cindy MacKenzie

Brad Ricca, from Case Western Reserve University, and Stephanie Tingley, from Youngstown State University, entertained the audience with refreshingly new and genuinely witty explorations of popular conceptions of Emily Dickinson today. Also scheduled on the panel but regrettably unable to attend was Georgiana Banita.

Ricca's paper, "SHE died at play: Emily Dickinson and Video Games," examined the attempts of three top video game developers, Chris Hocking, Peter Molyneux, and Will Wright, to design games (demos only) based on popular images of Dickinson. While their attempts in three different games, "The Muse," "The Room," and "USB Emily Dickinson," reveal stereotypes and misconceptions about the poet, Ricca pointed out that they may nevertheless provide fruitful examples of other albeit unconventional ways of understanding her enigmatic work, especially in an educational setting. In his characteristically "interactive" speaking style, Ricca raised questions about stereotypes held by students. Emphasizing the idea that poetry is equated with play, Ricca argues that "video games are poetic" in that they, as Mark Wolf points out in *The Medium of the Video Game*, "toe the line between abstraction and representation" and that "we are given a surrogate character (player-character) through which we can participate in and alter the events in the game." Similarly, asserts Ricca, readers of poetry can alter the course of a "game of interpretation" in coming to a variety of "possibilities" of meaning, that most central characteristic in Dickinson's poetics. Drawing on a number of points raised in video game theory, Ricca provided many useful examples of how aspects of playing video games can serve as parallels for a metaphorical framework through which we can understand Dickinson's poems. The compelling and delightfully original arguments made in this paper emphasize how in teaching Dickinson, instructors should not only recognize the ludic proclivities of today's students and play them to their advantage, but ishould inject a playful attitude into the process of reading Dickinson's work .

Niels Kjaer, Eleanor Heginbotham, Cynthia Hallen

Tingley's paper, "Emily Among Us: Popular Representations of Dickinson's Image and Words in Contemporary Culture," looked at some of the ways in which the poet's image is used, bought, and sold in contemporary culture. By searching online images of the poet, including items for purchase on E-bay, My Space and You Tube, as well as the websites for EDIS, the Dickinson Electronic Archive, and the Emily Dickinson Museum, Tingley showed how we can read these texts from material culture. In addition, she contextualizes her findings in ideas about celebrity in American culture in the nineteenth century as well as today. Beginning with a summary of Dickinson's own attitudes toward celebrity and her apparent reluctance to embrace publication and fame, Tingley chose several items, including a doll, a t-shirt, sculpture and a poster, as well as MySpace and YouTube, to demonstrate how certain patterns emerge from them. She casts an analytical eye on the Museum's new poster designed by Penelope Dullaghan, a t-shirt from *Poets.org* sporting the poem, "Wild Nights, Wild Nights," an Emily "Chickerson" doll with wonky eyes and long chicken legs, YouTubers rapping poems, ukulele-wielding songsters spinning poems to the tune of "The Yellow Rose," and many more such interesting and amusing images. Ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous, the various images tend to emphasize the poet's eyes, her playful wit, her inscrutability, and even her eroticism. Tingley concluded that despite the diversity of the quality of the responses, all highlight a personal connection to the poet's words and to their power that enables them to reach across time, space, and cultural differences to connect to readers.

Judging by the enthusiastic response of the audience, we are certain that Tingley and Ricca will continue their exploration of these new perspectives in Dickinson studies that are so fitting in today's world of technologically savvy readers.

Cynthia MacKenzie *is a member of the EDIS board, editor of the* Concordance to the Letters, *and* Wider Than the Sky: Essays and Meditations on the Healing Power of Emily Dickinson *(Kent State UP), and professor at the University of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.*

THE FABRIC OF TEXTS

Chair: Mary Loeffelholz, Northeastern University (U.S.); Daria D'Arienzo, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections (U.S.): "In Her Own Hand: A Tour through Emily Dickinson's Literacy Legacy at Amherst College"; Martha Nell Smith, University of Maryland (U.S.): "Dickinson during the Post-World War II Occupation"; PaulCrumbley, Utah State University (U.S.): "'This—was my finallest Occasion—': Dickinson's Aesthetic of Intrisic Renown"

By Mary Loeffelholz

This session took conference attendees from Dickinson's material legacy as perserved in her home town of Amherst, through the close textual details of her writing in Fascicle 40, and finally into her circulation in the wider world. Daria D'Arienzo's paper, "In Her Own Hand," provided (in her own words) "A Visual Tour through Emily Dickinson's Literary Legacy at Amherst College"—a provocative survey of highlights of the Dickinson collections, including the famous daguerreotype of the young Dickinson, an intimate letter to Judge Otis Lord with pieces excised by an unknown censoring hand, and the manuscript of Dickinson's "outhouse poem," "Alone and in a Circumstance" (Fr1174), ornamented with a stamp and the name "Georges Sands" and the title of Sand's novel *Mauprat*.

Following this tour of the multiple ways in which Dickinson circulated and was circulated, publicly and privately, before and after her death, Paul Crumbley focused on a significant inflection point in Dickinson's relationship to her own writing: her abandonment of fascicle-making in the mid-1860s. Fascicle 40, he suggested—the last of Dickinson's handbound manuscript books—"reflect[s] a transitional phase of Dickinson's writing life," a phase encapsulated in the fascicle's "extended meditation on the public life of poems." Reading each folded sheet (or bifolium) of the fascicle as a partially independent set of poems, Crumbley identified the first bifolium as "concerned with reading, reception, and distribution," the second as rejecting the Christian consolations offered in "Contentment's quiet Suburb" (Fr 980). The third bifolium, in his reading, "replace[s] the security of 'Wealth' and 'Station' (Fr 983) with the risky circulation of flowers that symbolize poems; the fourth sheet sets that aspiration in wider temporal frameworks; the fifth returns to "the problem of reception," and the final sheet "opens with a speaker who again looks for meaning beyond acceptance or rejection in the present moment." Crumbley's reading of fascicle 40 located Dickinson in the process of revising her fundamental sense of what it meant to be a writer: here "Dickinson has accepted a form of fame that comes through absorption in the experiences of others, a process intrinsic to the meaning language itself acquires as it passes from one body to another through a process of endless re-writing."

Nobuko Shimomura, Yoshiko Akamatsu

Martha Nell Smith's paper on "Dickinson during the Post World War II Occupation" traced one of the (relatively late) routes through which Dickinson's writing became available to Japanese readers: a postwar paperback anthology, *American Poems*, edited by anonymous hands and distributed during the American occupation of Japan, that printed three Dickinson poems: "This is my Letter to the world," "My life closed twice before its close," and "The Bustle in a House." *American Poems* gave Dickinson the final place in a series of American poets that began with Philip Freneau and included no poets who survived into the twentieth century (and only one other woman, Louisa May Alcott). Smith invited the session's audience to consider what *American Poems* and its representation of Dickinson suggest about Japanese reading practices of United States literatures in the aftermath of World War II.

Mary Loeffelholz is a Professor of English at Northeastern University, the author of Dickinson and the Boundaries of Feminist Theory *(1991) and* From School to Salon: Reading Nineteenth-Century American Women's Poetry *(2004), and the editor, with Martha Nell Smith, of the* Blackwell Companion to Emily Dickinson *(2008).*

Elegant Serving

WORDS, MUSIC, AESTHETICS

Rebecca Romney, Brigham Young University(U.S.): "Word Weaving: Kennings in Emily Dickinson's Poems"; Nicole Panizza, Royal College of Music, London (England): "Emily Dickinson's Musicality"; Cynthia MacKenzie (Canada): "'Condensed Essences':Dickinson's Poetics and the Shakespearean Sonnets"

By Eleanor Elson Heginbotham

Writing to Susan, Emily Dickinson said, "Art has a 'Palate,' as well as an Easel" (L626, 1879). Her reference was to a restaurant, but the scope she suggests through her definition of art, is, of course, much broader than that. Perhaps she was playing with the many uses of the noun which has to do with "the sense of taste" and which, in some cases is synonymous with "relish," or with its homonym, "palette," the board on which the visual artist mixes her colors. Although so many of the papers at a conference named "Fabrics of the East" reflected Dickinson's aesthetics (and those of her readers), Session 2.2–"Words, Music, Aesthetics"–was the most specifically focused on exploring the materials, the values, and the effects of Dickinson's palate/palette and easels.

Serendipitously the three presenters and their papers led well into each other, building from Rebecca Romney's discussion of Dickinson's "Word-Weaving" through "Kennings" to graduate student/performer Nicole Panizza's contrast between two varieties of musical settings of Dickinson's words, and on to University of Regina Professor/EDIS Board Member Cynthia MacKenzie's discussion of "Dickinson's Poetics and Shakespearean Sonnets," in which she spoke of the subtlety of Dickinson's representation of her allusions to the Shakespearean sonnet sequence.

Demonstrating with overhead slides some of the 200 uses of "kennings" (an Indo-European poetic formula for compressed metaphors), Romney (a former student of Lexicon Project Director Cynthia Hallen) brought a new perspective to an old subject: Dickinson's proclivity for circumlocution. She distinguished between "genitive compounds" ("egg of forests" for "acorn" [Fr 55] or "Morning's Nest" for "Sunrise" [Fr346]) and "non-genitive compounds" (including "Noun-Noun," as in "Alabaster Chambers" for "tombs" [Fr124]; "Adjective-Noun," as in "silver fleeces" for "clouds" [Fr145]; and "Verbal Adjective-Noun," as in "wheeling King" for "the sun " [Fr246]). The product of Romney's complex and thorough data collection process, this new manner of describing Dickinson's word magic has possibilities for increasing awareness of the delights of the poet's use of euphemisms, riddles, and allusions.

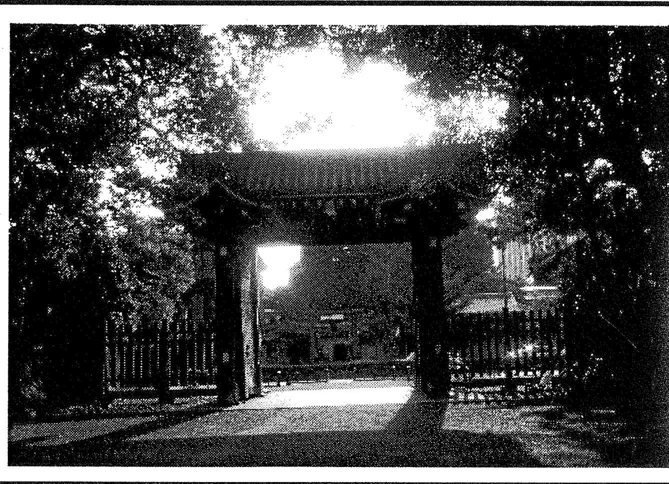


Photo by Barbara Dana

Romney called Dickinson's process "word-weaving," a phrase applicable to Panizza's exploration of how Dickinson's words have been woven into musical form. Panizza reviewed the well-known sources of Dickinson's "musicality": the poet's own skill as a pianist, her saturation in New England hymnody (Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley and others), and (though Panizza did not particularly stress this) the evidence within the poems of Dickinson's obvious knowledge of various musical instruments, including, of course, birdsong and the human voice ("Did I sing too loud?"). Using recorded piano samples generously in her presentation, Panizza, who is herself an accomplished accompanist and coach as well as a music doctoral candidate at the Royal Academy of Music, London, focused primarily on the interpretations of three (of the hundreds, as we know from the "Dickinson and Music" Conference in Amherst several years ago) composers who interpret Dickinson poems. On the one hand, said Panizza, are those such as Aaron Copland in his 1951 *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson* and Arthur Farwell (1926-1983), composers, who, said Panizza, "worked to serve the rhythmic and other musical imperatives encoded in the verse." She contrasted their settings to those of Leon Kirchner, whose "The Twilight Stood" (1989) "consciously worked against the 'given' music of Dickinson's poems." A particularly interesting feature of Panizza's presentation was her display of the actual musical notes on two pages, one (Farwell's) showing a much simpler melodic line than the thicket of complex chords in the Kirchner version, which, Panizza said, is the more satisfying for her musical tastes (Panizza's "palate" perhaps).

As she put it, Kirchner's work has "a frenetic, hysterial energy [that]

Words, continued on page 33

PLENARY B: DICKINSON AND HAIKU

Katshuiko Inada, Vice President, Hijiyama University (Japan), introducedby Michiko Iwata

By Michiko Iwata

There is nothing new in pointing out now that Emily Dickinson's poetry has some characteristics of haiku. It seems probable that when critics and scholars say Dickinson's poems have some characteristics of haiku, they first of all pay attention to the images in Dickinson's poems and admire their conciseness, preciseness or intensity. But haiku-like poems are rather rare in Dickinson's body of work . So when we consider the haiku qualities of Dickinson poems, we are obliged to examine the similes or the metaphors in her longer poems instead of taking up independent poems of about the same length as haiku.

Then what about the superb simile in the last two lines, "Diadems drop and Doges—surrender—/Soundless as Dots—on a Disc of Snow—" of the poem, "Safe in their Alabaster Chambers"? As we picture the scenery to ourselves, we notice that its function as a simile that should modify "Diadems drop and Doges surrender" disappears and a perfectly independent world of snow looms out of the context. It has an indescribable suggestiveness or after-effect, too, which even reminds us of a haiku by Basho: "A sick wild duck,/ Falling in the cold of night:/ Sleep on a journey." Although there is no mention of snow in this haiku, the sight of sick wild ducks falling to the ground somehow overlaps that scene where Diadems and Doges fall soundless as dots.

The serenity and the profundity of this mystic world of Eternity somehow remind us of Eternity is "A Bird came down the Walk" somehow remind us of another haiku by Basho: "The ancient pound—/ A frog jumps in,/The sound of the water." This haiku is commonly noted for its profound world of Zen Buddhism. Though Dickinson's lines from "Alabaster Chambers" and Basho's "The ancient pond" haiku are quite different from each other, because in the former the butterflies quietly leap in the upward direction, while in the latter a frog jumps into the water with a splash, both have profundity and suggestiveness whose essence is beauty. It must be admitted that not many of Dickinson's poems have this kind of similes or metaphors which allow the reader to read them as independent wholes. But once certain conditions are attached to the nature and the function of images, and the haiku qualities are defined in a certain way, Dickinson's poetry is open to a new approach of interpretation.

The general impression that the whole world of Dickinson's poetry gives to a Japanese reader is that her poetry is quite different from haiku. Dickinson was preoccupied with metaphysical problems; her poems have messages; she was fond of logic; she was never indifferent to human affairs; she profusely used overt personification. Moreover, haiku is too reduced a form and grows too completely out of its cultural background to be adaptable as a whole by Western languages. Indeed any attempt to see a relationship between haiku and Dickinson's poetry always seems in danger of ending up in failure. But haiku is a more complicated form of literature than may appear on the surface.

We will take "The ancient pond" by Basho for an example and see what haiku is.

1.It has a typical haiku form of five-seven-five syllables.
2. It has a season word in it.
3. It has a kireji (cutting word) at the end of the first line.
4. It has a noun ending.
5. It is an objective representation of nature.
6. It is suggestive and leaves an after-effect.
7. It has the element of wit and humor.

We will consider haiku and Dickinson's poetry by looking further into the historical and cultural background of haiku and try to make clear what is common and what is different between them.

The shortness of Dickinson's poetry is generally explained by her remarkable attahcment to frugality, economy, conciseness, and simplicity of words and expressions. Another reason may be found in the nature of her poetic world. It was spatial rather than temporal. It is because she was preoccupied with space rather than time that her poems were realistic rather than meditative, the expressions staccato rather than continuous, all contributing to the inevitable shortening of lines and stanzas.

The world of haiku, too, is spatial rather than temporal. When a haiku poet happens to see a beautiful natural object, he instantly goes into the heart of it and becomes one with nature forgetting the relationship between the subject and object.

We noted that the ancient pond haiku also has a so-called *kireji* cutting word. Kireji is a kind of poetical punctuation by which the poet expresses, or hints at, or emphasizes his mood and soul-state. In "The ancient pond," the poet strikes out the ancient pond, yet he does not go immediately on to the next line, but puts a half-period here. The reader, in whom the image of an ancient pond is evoked, wonders what will come next. It is easy to see, then, that the

Haiku, continued on page34

DICKINSON AND THE FACES OF GOD

Chair: Paul Crumbley, Utah State University (U.S.); Joan Kirkby, Macquarie University (Australia): "Emily Dickinson and the Faces of God;" Cynthia Hallen, Brigham Young University (U.S.): "Fabrics of Faith in Emily Dickinson's Personal Names;" Jed Deppman, Oberlin College (U.S.): "Strong Draughts of European Nihilism: Vattimo, Rorty, and Dickinson"

By Jed Deppman

Cynthia Hallen began with an overview of Dickinson's poetic uses of names of persons and personifications. While the majority of the poet's place names were from Europe, most of her "people" came from the Bible, especially if the category includes deities: 137 instances of "God," 75 of "Lord," etc. As a template to explore Dickinson's faith—in which, as Hallen puts it, "belief and doubt work together"—she then turned to Dan Michel's Middle English text *Remorse of Conscience*. Emphasizing both the interpretive subjectivity and personal significance of her argument, Hallen cited "Life—is what we make of it—" and several other poems as she offered twelve "articles of faith" concerning Dickinson, e.g. "I believe that Emily Dickinson had faith in God the Father and in the wonders of His creation."

By contrast, Jed Deppman positioned Dickinson as a participant in 19th-century processes of secularization and cast her as a constructive interlocutor for anti-essentialist strains of contemporary philosophy.

Drawing upon Richard Rorty's neo-pragmatism, especially his figure of the postmodern "liberal ironist" heroine, as well as Gianni Vattimo's contemporary hermeneutics of pensiero debole ("weak thought,") he argued that Dickinson's "conversational" poetry matches these philosophies to a great degree both semantically, because it approaches topics from the perspective of losing faith in absolutes and "doctrines," and formally, because it lyricizes language precisely in the interest of self-interpretation and self-creation. Deppman used readings of "He was my Host—He was my guest" and "A South Wind— has a pathos" to argue that Dickinson valued philosophical possibilities that Rorty and Vattimo did not consider, e.g. certain distinctions between intimate and public conversations and the descriptive powers of language games that lack vocabularies.

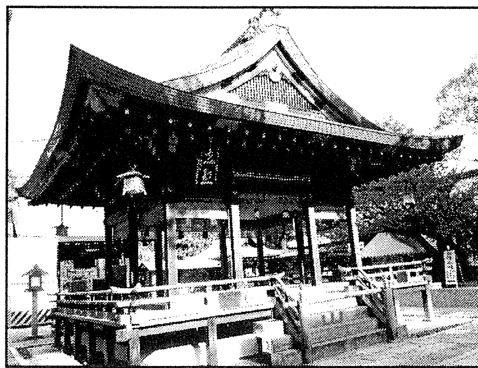


Photo by Barbara Dana

Joan Kirby was not able to attend the conference.

Jed Deppman directs the comparative literature program at Oberlin College. His book Trying to Think with Emily Dickinson *is forthcoming in 2008 from University of Massachusetts Press.*

DICKINSON'S ENCOUNTERS WITH THE EAST

Chair: Vivian Pollak, Washington University (U.S.); Cristanne Miller, University of Buffalo (U.S.): Hiroko Uno, Kobe College (Japan):

By Georgiana Strickland

In the Palace Side Hotel's elegant Legato room, two speakers, representing East and West, examined the ways in which Emily Dickinson—who never ventured far beyond her native Amherst—was nevertheless drawn to the exotic culture of the Far East and the lure of the sea voyage that took her there in imagination.

Cristanne Miller began her paper, entitled "1860: Emily Dickinson's Year at Sea," by noting that the opening of Japan to the West in the late 1850s very closely followed Dickinson's own most extended travel (to Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia in 1855) and closely preceded her most productive period of poetic output, the years from 1861 to 1865. Dickinson used foreign names and metaphors throughout her life, but in the poems of these years, Miller noted, she "used metaphors of travel or foreign words and names in more than half her poems," usually to focus not on "where one goes or what one sees" but on the traveler's perception of "foreignness" in contrast to the sense of "home."

Miller used the idea of "context tendency" to explore Dickinson's conception of foreignness. Basically, she explained, "this means that one can perceive the same object or stimulus differently when its context changes. Thus, travel can be traumatic or the occasion for joy, depending on the state of the speaker, and one can be as 'foreign' at home as abroad."

Miller focused on Dickinson's many tropes of the sea as an unknown, "psychological territory" to be explored. The 1860 poems in particular display a persistent fascination with travel to foreign lands, whether by the "little Arctic flower"

Encounters, continued on page 34

PLENARY C: EMILY DICKINSON'S SISTERS
EMILY BRONTË AND HIGUCHI ICHIYO

Toshikazu Niikura, Professor Emeritus, Meijigakuin University (Japan), introduced by Midori Asahina

By Midori Asahina

To all of us here from Japan, it is beyond doubt that without Prof.Toshikazu Niikura, we could not be gathered together in Kyoto , Japan. As one of the important founding members for the Emily Dickinson Society of Japan, Prof. Niikura has been a pioneer in Dickinson studies in Japan.

Prof.Niikura's lecture entitled "Emily Dickinson's Sisters: Emily Brontë and Higuchi Ichiyo" places Dickinson alongside great woman writers of both West and East. I hope the following excerpts will be of help to convey our appreciation for his marvelous lecture in which a great bridging of West and East has been accomplished in our common literary world. The whole essay will be published in the Emily Dickinson Society of Japan Newsletter *in 2008.*

Emily Dickinson had many sisters in the Western hemisphere. What about in the Eastern hemisphere? If she had any sister in Japan, Higushi Ichiyo (1872-1896) would be one. Ichiyo was born 24 years after the death of Emily Brontë, and survived Dickinson by 10 years. They had the affinity of mind: the deep sense of desolation. "Ichiyo" is her pen name signifying "a single leaf" that floats down the stream of life. The best place to find her true portrait is her diary which was published posthumously. At the age of 23, Ichiyo wrote:

> I lost my father six years ago. Since then I have been drifting on the rough waves of uncertainty. . . . Yesterday I lived above the clouds, and aloft from the worries of the world in a realm of moonbeams and flowering cherries. Today I live in the dirt. (28 Feb., 1874)[1]

She had to move from her quiet place to busy downtown to open a small shop in order to support her old mother and sister. Their flat was in the vicinity of the Licensed Pleasure Quarter called Yoshihara. At night, she heard the horrible sound of swarming mosquitoes and the roaring sounds of the wheels carrying people to and from the Quarter.

She was so depressed by her fate. There was no easy way out but continuing the precarious balance between living and writing. It is the same road that Emily Brontë had passed. Finally, Ichiyo crossed the Rubicon. She no longer cared about the taste of popular magazines in order to sell her stories. She wrote in late 1891: "If all my efforts come to naught—brushes, paper wasted for nothing— I am prepared to accept it as the will of heaven."

Her literary reputation now rests on a handful of short stories written in the last 14 months of her life. In one of them titled "Trouble Waters" ("Nigorie," 1895) we can detect the impressionistic style as is seen in her contemporary American naturalist, Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893). The girl in Ichiyo's story is named O-riki, which means "power"; she is born with many talents, but deprived of her potentiality in her society.

It is intriguing to compare another short story titled "The Dark Night" (Yamiyo, 1895) with *Wuthering Heights*. There is a certain affinity of themes and characters between the two. Both Heathcliff and Naosuke(the young homeless person) are orphans and social outcasts. Young Catherine sympathizes with her homeless boyfriend, ill-treated by her family. *Wuthering Heights* is no conventional love romance, nor myth as it is often assumed to be. Seen from Heathcliff's point of view, it is a story of revenge upon the ruling class who rejected him. Likewise, Naosuke joins hands with the recluse woman whose name is Ran, which literally means "craziness." She is another woman of power and, in fact, modeled on Ichiyo herself. When her father was dying, Ichiyo was engaged with his young friend, who after her father death broke off his engagement on account of her family downfall. Ichiyo put all her repressions in the revenge story. In this sense, Ichiyo is a Heathcliff revenging herself on her betrayer.

"The Dark Night" created a sensation among her young readers, yet her fame reached her freezing hands as she was dying of tuberculosis at the age of 24. Her last entry in the diary is this: "Why bother with such issues of blame or fame?" (22 July, 1896).

Dickinson, in one of her many moments of enlightenment, saw the vision of her lonely sisters. In Fr570, Dickinson states: "plucked at our Partition—/ As One should pry the Walls —/ Between Himself— and Horror's Twin—." Is *Horror's Twin* Emily Brontë who once wrote "I am the only being whose doom / No tongue would ask, no eye would mourn" (May 17, 1837)? Or Higuchi Ichiyo? Or, perhaps both? Those immortal geniuses were neglected in their lifetime, yet nevertheless weaved like a patient spider "Silver Ball / In [her] unperceived Hands—" (Fr513).

[1] All the quotations of Ichiyo's diary are from Robert Lyons, *In the Shade of Spring Leaves: The Life of Higuchi Ichiyo with Nine of Her Best Short Stories* (Yale UP, 1981).

***Midori Asahina** is a professor at Keio University, Tokyo, Japan. She was a visiting scholar at University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1990.*

DICKINSON AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Chair: Jonnie Guerra, Cabrini College (U.S.); Linda Freedman, King's College, London (England): "'Meadows of Majesty': Translation and Dickinson's Baptismal Imagery"; Kelly Sue Lynch, Palo Alto (U.S.): "Forging the Creative Spirit: Understanding Dickinson's Life and Texts from a Transpersonal Perspective"; Jane Donahue Eberwein, Oakland University (U.S.): "Earth's Confiding Time: Childhood Trust and Christian Nature"

By Jonnie Guerra

Although scheduled on the final morning of the conference, this session attracted a near-capacity crowd. No doubt those who gathered were intrigued by the cross-national, cross disciplinary make-up of the panel, which included emerging British scholar Linda Freedman, psychologist and poet Kelly Sue Lynch, and notable senior Early American literature/Emily Dickinson specialist Jane Donahue Eberwein.

Freedman opened her paper with the premise "that translation is the hallmark of Dickinson's baptism trope" and merges "physical and interpretative movement." She then explored the language and imagery of three poems in illustration of her thesis.

First, Freedman considered Dickinson's use of the cocoon in Fr1107 as a metaphoric replacement for the Biblical image of the veil. Just as the veil conveys "the impossibility of direct, revelation," so, Freedman interpreted, does the image of the "metamorphic caterpillar" represent "the baptismal dynamic of freedom and constraint" and suggest the rebirth of the female speaker as poet.

Next, Freedman discussed "I'm ceded—I've stopped being Their's" (Fr353), arguably Dickinson's most well-known baptism poem. Her provocative commentary focused on the second of the poem's two baptisms as "a figure for the speaker's new construction of identity" and "election to poetry" as well as on the speaker's paradoxical presentation of her second baptism as a death. Concluded Freedman, "The crown for which she reaches can be seen not only as the crown of election but also the crown of thorns."

Discussing Fr266, Freedman emphasized the point that Dickinson found "an analogue for her poetic self in Christ." Freedman directed the audience's attention primarily to the reference to Shylock and used her research into Shakespeare's sources to present an interesting speculation on the speaker's dramatic giving of herself in "Extatic Contract" in the poem's final lines.

Lynch employed her training as a psychologist and her background as a poet to discuss Dickinson's creative process. Of special interest to the audience was the excerpt Lynch shared from a 1994 letter from Carlton Lowenberg in which he encouraged her to engage in research on Dickinson from the perspective of psychology. As a transpersonal researcher, Lynch recognized the need to engage the poet "on a personal level . . . and in a holistic way . . . body, mind and soul" that involved reading and re-reading of Dickinson's poems and letters, study of relevant secondary sources, attendance at a performance of *The Belle of Amherst*, and a visit to Amherst and the Dickinson houses, including a nap beside the Homestead garden!

After establishing the context of her transpersonal perspective, Lynch read from her meditations on Fr930 and 962 which have come to hold special meaning for her as testimonies to Dickinson's creative process. Particularly compelling to Lynch were Dickinson's metaphors of light which imbue concrete experiences with metonymic significance.

Lynch concluded with summarizing her research process of "embodied knowing, embodied reading, and embodied writing." To Lynch, "Dickinson is a model of a transcending self-actualizing creative person" and an inspiring role model as both a poet and a strong woman. As a connection with the conference's Japanese location, Lynch mentioned her participation in the Japanese martial art of *Aikido* which she credits as a spiritual practice that led her to achieve a deepened understanding of Dickinson's creative process.

Eberwein's paper began with quotations from two letters Dickinson wrote to her Norcross cousins. In the first, Dickinson comments on George Eliot's death and speculates that Eliot was denied "the gift of belief . . . [by] having no childhood . . . [in which to develop] early trust" (L710). Much to the amusement of the audience, in the second, Dickinson asserts her belief that "the love of God may be taught not to seem like bears" (L230). Eberwein then presented the questions that her paper would ponder: Was Dickinson's childhood learning about God "'bear'-like or loving"? Was Dickinson's comment about Eliot "meant to draw a distinction . .. or to acknowledge a parallel between herself and another writer whose works reflect. . . unsettling spiritual energy"? Rather than focusing on Dickinson's failure to proclaim her faith publicly by joining the church during the Second Great Awakening Eberwein announced a contrary plan for her paper: to "seek evidence about the Christian formation provided in . . . [the Dickinson] home and its effects as seen in her writing . . . [in order to] conclude that [Dickinson's] trust [in God] developed early and was never wholly expunged."

Germane to her case was Eberwein's analysis of the differing child-rearing theories of Heman Humphrey in *Domestic Education*

(1840) and Horace Bushnell in *Views of Christian Nurture* (1847), which she compared and contrasted with that contained in John S. C. Abbott's *The Mother at Home* (1833), the work on raising children that Edward Dickinson presented to his wife. Eberwein pointed out that, although all three books agree about the centrality of the family's role in children's moral and spiritual formation and encourage parents to use loving and consistent discipline, Humphrey's text stresses the "Calvinist belief in human depravity" and the need for each individual to undergo conversion as part of Christian formation. In contrast to the revivalist culture Humphrey's theory supports, both Bushnell and Abbott (who Eberwein sees as having anticipated the thinking of the former) argue that domestic life during childhood plays a significant role in Christian nurture. Since the Bushnell/Abbott philosophy appears to have been employed within the Edward Dickinson household, it well might follow that daughter Emily felt "betrayed when confronted with demands for submission if she already felt herself a faithful Christian."

Eberwein presented additional evidence to support why a reevaluation of "familiar assumptions" about Dickinson's faith may be in order. She discussed how the differing approaches to Christian childrearing manifested themselves among Dickinson family relatives and in the Amherst environment, used poems and letters to demonstrate how Dickinson's life and writing reveal Abbott's ideas, and contemplated why, according to Bushnell, "religion would be especially attractive . . . to the sort of child we suppose Emily Dickinson to have been."

Eberwein asked the audience to consider "What went wrong, then, if anything?" Eberwein concluded that Dickinson's childhood trust "never quite forsook this poet and that she remained hopeful about God, even after defying her community's pressures toward a conversion she rejected as needless and that the community itself learned to do without."

Although there was little time left for discussion, the audience's energy and enthusiastic attention throughout spoke volumes about the exciting insights that were gained from the presentations of these three panelists.

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CODE, COMMUNICATION, COGNITION

Chair: Martha Nell Smith, University of Maryland-College Park (U.S.); James Guthrie, Wright State University (U.S.): "Lost in Transcription: Failed Communication in 'There's a Certain Slant of Light'"; Sabine Silke, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn (Germany): "'The Brain— is wider than the Sky—' or Re-Cognizing Emily Dickinson"; Yumiko S. Koizumi, Ibaraki University (Japan): "The Dickinson Code"

By Martha Nell Smith

As the conference drew to a close, Martha Nell Smith chaired Code, Communication, Cognition featuring three experienced Dickinson and poetry scholars. James Guthrie's, "Lost in Transcription: Failed Communication in 'There's a Certain Slant of Light'" employed a detailed close reading of the poem in manuscript—asking what if it's "Where it comes" rather than "When it comes"—to examine contagion, the advent of the use of needles for injection in Dickinson's day (in 1853 a syringe with a needle fine enough to pierce the skin was developed and first used), and how reading with such interpretations enriches our appreciation for Dickinson's embeddedness in her culture, as well as her scientific bent.

In "'The Brain—is wider than the Sky—' or: Re-Cognizing Emily Dickinson" Sabine Sielke delivered a thoughtful analysis that urged appreciation for multiplicity in interpretation, an opening up of critical work so that contradictory interpretations of Dickinson are not put in contest but are in real dialogue with one another. Noting the limits of perception, Sielke observed that a transmediation, perception itself is a new object of vision.

In "The Dickinson Code," Yumiko S. Koizumi began with a careful, deft close reading of a Japanese sand garden, and used the aesthetics of both appreciating and tending such a small apparently negligible spot to review and recommend new and embrace old methods of reading that slow us down so that we take in rather than project onto poems and their meanings. Remarking Dickinson's deliberate omission of final lines, inversion of nouns, and inversion of meter, Koizumi plumbed hidden meanings in Dickinson and the redemptive characteristics of such lines as "Water is taught by thirst."

From the cultivation of our medical histories to that of our disparate impassioned critical discourses to that of our gardens, these three papers were integrated through critique of the material facts (from Dickinson's manuscripts to the labor of gardener, readers, and writers) so integral to our making meaning.

PLENARY D : TWO VIEWS

Rebecca Copeland, Washington University St. Louis (U.S.), "An Unlined Robe of Splash-Patterned Silk—The Language of Dress in Japanese Women's Writing" and Barton Levi St. Armand, Brown University(U.S.), "Emily Dickinson and the Textures of Mysticism, West and East," introduced by Jane Donahue Eberwein

By Jane Donahue Eberwein

The fourth and last plenary session featured two speakers offering quite different perspectives on confluences of eastern and western cultures in relation to Emily Dickinson. This was a two-hour session, allowing for an interlude between talks so that each could be appreciated and discussed separately. Professor Naoki Onishi, vice president of the Emily Dickinson Society of Japan and professor of American literature at the International Christian University in Tokyo, introduced Professor Copeland, and Jane Donahue Eberwein of Oakland University introduced Professor St. Armand, each introduction referring warmly to personal acquaintance with the speakers and calling attention to professional experiences linking each of these American scholars to Japan.

Rebecca Copeland, herself born in Japan and now professor of Japanese language and literature at Washington University in St. Louis, began by disclaiming authoritative knowledge of Dickinson's poetry. Her talk on "An Unlined Robe of Splash-Patterned Silk–the Language of Dress in Japanese Women's Writing" had great pertinence to the conference's theme, "Like Fabrics of the East," as well as to issues of women's writing in its attentiveness to details of costume. Although westerners tend to associate kimono-wearing only with Japanese women and although women writers in Japan have often been faulted (like their counterparts elsewhere) for detailed attentiveness to clothing, Copeland argued that "the kimono functions as an important metaphorical layer over the language of the text," providing clues to status, wealth, feelings, and sexual availability.

This is true for male characters and authors as well as female ones, since Japanese men typically wore the kimono until the twentieth century. After providing a brief historical introduction to the kimono's design and uses, Copeland turned attention to women's use of this confining costume as a means of self-expression before showing how writers of both genders have treated this multi-layered dress as a rich source of imagery. She used poems from the eighth century *Many'ôshû* to show how the kimono sleeve becomes metonymic for a speaker's wife or a symbol for marital love. In Heian writings, she noted, poets described fabrics enveloping the body of the beloved and the person's hair and fragrances rather than face, eyes, or breasts. In Japan's most famous early novel, Prince Genji captures one of a woman's underrobes even as she escapes his grasp. In *Izutsu*, a medieval Noh play, a husband's abandoned garment provides comfort for his wife and possesses a sort of "sacral power."

Copeland devoted the last section of her presentation to close analysis of "Ikichi" (Lifeblood), an early twentieth century short story by Tamura Toshiko that conveys the feelings of its protagonist, Yûko, at two points during the day after her first sexual encounter. In the first of the story's two parts, Yûko is introduced with attention to the unlined violet kimono dangling on the floor. Details of costume establish season for the alert reader while suggesting the character's lassitude. When she stabs a goldfish with a needle from her kimono, it is important to note that the creature Yûko kills is one of the fish she has named for popular fabric designs. Other textual details associated with costume convey a sense of violence with respect to events of the night before. In the second part, when Yûko and Akiji watch an acrobatic display in the course of an afternoon outing, her response to the girl performer calls further attention to clothing as a subtle indicator of the protagonist's feelings about lost innocence.

Copeland called attention to issues of gazing and feeling oneself the object of gazes in relation to the larger issue of "the body... presented via its surrogate," with dress understood as reflecting boundaries between self and society, respectability and the forbidden. Close attention to fabrics both of clothing and consciousness in Japanese women's writings, then, challenges readers of their stories and poems (like Dickinson's) to pay attention to literal and metaphoric "seams," realizing that "the reading is in the seam itself and already visible on the surface." Questions and comments following her lively presentation dealt with issues of maskedness and the ways costume both obscures visual focus and makes glimpses of exposed body parts other than the face more appealing.

Barton Levi St. Armand began by dedicating his talk to the memory of the recently deceased scholar of American literature, Dr. Ken Akiyama of Sophia University, Tokyo. Choosing for his topic "Emily Dickinson and the Textures of Mysticism: West and East," he framed his reflections with reference to Rudyard Kipling's once-famous line, "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet," promising to use that verse passage "as a stimulus or perhaps even as an irritant to consider the idea of the different psychic textures of the fabrics of East and West." Likening those

psychic textures to material fabrics, he noted how his "personal phenomenology of textiles" associated the East with "smooth silks and colorful brocades" while picturing "the Western poet clothed in the starkness of her famous white cotton dress or garbed in the fictional tippet made of tulle." Some of these images come from Thomas Wentworth Higginson's description of Dickinson's garb at their first meeting, and St. Armand maintained that "there is really (and typically) something very complex about all this supposedly severe and unadorned Dickinsonian whiteness and plainness–something waled and patterned and pierced and quilted." Rather than let imagination drift freely through space, he reminded his audience of the poet's firm roots in nineteenth-century Amherst, declaring that "her poetry is above all a poetry of placement" in which "she practices a very Western kind of mysticism, one which is. . . inevitably haunted by the image of God as the ultimate maker of places both terrestrial and celestial." It is the grave which functions for her as a "liminal pipeline between the former polarities of home and heaven," a point he illustrated with respect to "The grave my little cottage is" (Fr1784) and "We pray—to Heaven—" (Fr 476) among other poems. Declaring Dickinson "no atheist," he argued that her writings show her already possessing "those Eternal Things themselves" that her more orthodox contemporaries anticipated in heaven.

St. Armand's placement of Dickinson within a Western mystical context prompted allusions to quite disparate expressions of Christianity: Mormonism as an "American mystery religion," Calvinism distilled into the one tenet of "the Perseverance of the Saints," a contemplative mystic marriage such as William James identified by the term "orison," and the Roman Catholic spiritualities of Saint John of the Cross and Saint Ignatius Loyola with their disciplined meditation on "the dark side of the soul's travails." Central to her mystical poetry was "her faith that redemption will be gained through a passage from this life through the grave to an ecstatic reunion in heaven as home."

A contrasting mystical path, marked by "complete abolition of self and place," expresses itself most fully in sacred writings associated with Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims as well as R. M. Bucke's westernized "cosmic consciousness" and William James's "transport." Finding traces of this in many Dickinson poems encourages readers to link the poet to Eastern spiritualities even though St. Armand suggests romantic convention as a more likely source. Discussing such poems of transport as "In many and reportless places" (Fr1404) and "There's A certain Slant of Light" (Fr320), he noted a tendency toward destabilization to which Dickinson typically responded by biblicizing her responses as in "No man saw awe, nor to his house" (Fr1342) and concluded that "Dickinson cannot banish a personal God from the reality of her mystical experience. She cannot follow the truth of Jamesean Transport to its ultimate implications, which might undermine the replaced Calvinism of her personal vision."

Monks' Cemetery

Closing the talk with an extended, witty comparison between Basho's haiku about the frog jumping unexpectedly into the pond and "His Mansion in the Pool" (Fr 1355), St. Armand demonstrated his conviction that Dickinson's imagination remained inherently Western in its assumptions about location and God. "As much as Dickinson may cherish surprise in other forms," he declared, "she does not want her fixed world of orison obliterated either by untoward Jamesean transports or Zen-like moments that take us out of a familiar, backyard world for which the personal God of a transvalued Calvinism remains as chief manager of props and ultimate stage director. East is East and West is West, and I think that Dickinson would prevent the meeting of such a twain with all her strength and all her heart." He confessed to having been prompted to this conclusion by the observation of a Japanese doctoral student at Brown who remarked on a poem by Wallace Stevens, "After all, we Japanese have been doing without God for three thousand years"–a condition entirely foreign to Emily Dickinson's experience. Questions raised in the few minutes available for discussion dealt chiefly with distinctions in Dickinson's writings between "space" and "place" but also ventured into the likeliest source for whatever knowledge she had of Mormonism.

***Jane Eberwein** recently retired as Distinguished Professor of English, emerita, from Oakland University. She is the author of* Dickinson:Strategies Of Limitation *and editor of* An Emily Dickinson Encyclopedia; *she is coediting a collection of critical essays on Dickinson's letters with Cindy MacKenzie.*

Unless otherwise noted, conference photos are courtesy of Georgiana Strickland.

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JANET HOLMES FORMATS DICKINSON

By Jonathan Morse and Janet Holmes

Jonathan Morse

As they are currently appearing in poetry journals, the pages of Janet Holmes' *The ms of my kin* look almost entirely blank. Floating in the emptiness of each page, however, are a few fragments of verse by Emily Dickinson.

Cézanne and Mallarmé began laying out playgrounds in the void like this one toward the end of the nineteenth century, and after that the generation that came of age with the Great War began playing there. In 1918, Kasimir Malevich painted the world's first monochrome abstraction and called it "White on White" (Selz 163). In 1923, Wallace Stevens built his Snow Man in the middle of "Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is." What that might have meant, as Lady Brett explained to Jake Barnes in 1926, at the end of Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, was, "It's sort of what we have instead of God" (245).

Eighty-plus years later, in the work of such contemporaries and near-contemporaries as John Cage and Charles Bernstein, that absence from the page has been morphed into something like a character in a comedy routine. Cage's piano composition *4′ 33″*, for example, asks us to spend four minutes and thirty-three seconds in what is conventionally called "silence." At the beginning of this composition, the pianist enters the stage to applause, takes his seat before the instrument, and sits. As we wait, and then wait and wait and wait, we find ourselves noticing that some sounds have been present all along in the air above the untouched keyboard. We are there ourselves, it turns out: breathing and coughing and shifting creakily in our seats, and then delightedly joining in with that music by applauding.

An addition to the ensemble is Charles Bernstein's poem "this poem intentionally left blank," which reads, in its entirety, "this poem intentionally left blank." Of course, we don't feel the poem's blankness, any more

1861.3 (192-199)

Transport

clad in

a trick

Does'nt — ***move —***

without

me —

Excerpt from The ms of my kin

than we hear Cage's silence. Cage's pianist's white tie and tails link him to a complicated universe of fully articulated social convention, and Bernstein's poem likewise comes to us readers from the fully articulated language of bureaucratic reassurance. Because printers prefer to work with multiples of sixteen pages, the texts we read often have blank pages at the end, and the authors of those some of those texts—tax forms, for instance, which entail prison time for misunderstanding—go out of their way to assure us that we don't have to read their void all the way down to the nothing it seems to be telling us. No; at the top of each otherwise blank page, or in the center, surrounded by white paper, words have been brought into the space to assure us, "This page intentionally left blank." To read that line is to be reassured that what looks like emptiness is really only a modest aversion of attention from the void. Just retrace the echo of the line about blankness and you'll find yourself safely back in the loquacity of language with something real to say.

But by changing just one word of the bureaucratese original ("page") and whiting out its initial capital letter and final period, Bernstein has set the bureaucrats' poem afloat in a new mode of whiteness. The blankness around "This page intentionally left blank" is still an official space set off by authority for its own purposes, but the blankness around "this poem intentionally left blank" has been taken over by language itself, just like the Tennessee of Wallace Stevens' "Anecdote of the Jar." Language has settled into the void, but that's not a problem; in fact, it has even laid out a welcome mat for us. We have the poem's permission to make ourselves at home and get acquainted with the sound of bureaucratese—not to mention the sound of bureaucratese turning into poetry.

On the other hand, we also have the poem's permission to linger on the threshold of silence with Mr. Bernstein, funny interior decorator. Like Whitman leaving the learn'd astronomer behind in his lecture room, Bernstein and Cage would be just as happy if we were to walk out on their educational demonstrations and head for the stars. However, the astral conditions aren't always favorable to that particular tour. Under the empty skies of the North Korea portrayed in Philippe Chancel's photographs, Bernstein and Cage wouldn't last a week. But one artist who probably does possess the survival skills, I suspect, is Emily Dickinson.

After all, a part of Dickinson's language is devoted to mapping the

kind of emptiness that hangs over killing fields a day after the firing squads have moved on to their next assignment. The view into Chancel's"Air Koryo Flight Attendant, Pyongyang," for example, is a view into a state of being that Dickinson named with two of the most complex words in her private vocabulary: *white* and *blank* (Chancel 31-32). The image itself is a kind of thought experiment aimed at redefining emptiness into something with positive existence, capable of filling a picture's defining frame with itself. The entire lower third of this picture's horizontal oblong, for a start, is a surface pushed toward us at every point as the featureless and barely shadowed vertical plane formed by a white counter with a white top. Above that barrier, the image's central third recedes a very short distance into the perspective zone by leading the eye to a narrow open area behind the counter. There, brought up hard against the rear wall, is a white storage unit with white drawers (all closed), white shelves (all empty), and another white counter. That too is empty, except for a chromed hot-water urn and a stack of twelve white saucers. Across the upper third of the picture, along the wall, run white-sashed windows framing a line of pale treetops against a colorless sky.

Precisely at the center of this composition sits the flight attendant. Visible from the waist up as she sits behind the counter, she is wearing a white blouse with white buttons, a red-and-white striped bow at her throat, and a red Kim Il Sung badge. Three more dots of cosmetic red punctuate the photograph's white blank: the urn's brand escutcheon and dispensing valve and the woman's lips. But the white quenches all. We understand only by inference that the woman has an individually recognizable face, because her head is tilted down toward her hands. If we could see her eyes, we might be able to know that she is looking toward her hands. Those body parts do show, half closed. They rest on the white countertop, holding open a white book.

Anatomies of a flight attendant on an airline that seldom flies, in a nearly empty airport which serves a nearly empty Potemkin metropolis, the hands in this image have functioned for the photographer primarily as a compositional element.[1] Within the covers of a picture book called *North Korea*, the woman's hands don't *do* anything. They have materialized on Philippe Chancel's page in the service of an artist's aesthetic impulse and the aestheticized tyranny which that impulse has helped us to realize. The entire construction— of the picture and of the society which, in delicate miniature, it depicts—is an image of blankness emerging into being out of stillness and white.

But now try to read your way into the void that separates the words in Janet Holmes'recomposition of Emily Dickinson, *The ms of my kin*.

The image on the previous page was published in a literary magazine, but the scholium in its upper right corner is the only part of the text that seems to ask to be called "literature." Written not by Emily Dickinson but by Janet Holmes, the monastic little notation directs us to pages in the Franklin edition that contain a consecutive selection of eight poems dated by Franklin to 1861: poems 192 through 199. The rest of the page (the first page of a three-page composition), is harder to attribute. The words are common dictionary words, but their aggregation into phrases certainly reminds us of some things we've read by Emily Dickinson, such as "the Swoon / God gives us Women" (Fr194, "Title divine is mine") or

> Victory comes late—
> And is held low to freezing lips—
> Too rapt with frost
> To take it— (Fr195)

But we have to supply those associations ourselves, from our own literary education. At the basic level of allusion, Holmes' *The ms of my kin* works the way the New York art market does: by commodifying knowingness into a consumer value. If you've guessed right about currency fluctuations this year, the art market will permit you to buy a Jeff Koons or a Damian Hirst, and then you will be qualified for adoration by *The New York Times*. Likewise, if you have the education to know what Franklin numbers are, *The ms of my kin* will permit you to read its words, and grant you a share in what will be taken as understanding. Like the letter in "The way I read a letter's this" (Fr700), "The ms of my kin" can be opened only after a ritual of initiation. For Dickinson in the nineteenth century, the social coding of the ritual originated in such forms as the etiquette governing correspondence, the norms defining the term "lady-like," and a notion of what would later come to be called cuteness. In the twenty-first century, Janet Holmes' revised Dickinson interacts with readers in ways that are equally rule-bound, with a reading ritual that encompasses academic knowingness and a scripture published by Harvard University Press. The fundamental similarity between Dickinson's way of reading a letter and Holmes' way of reading Dickinson is an idea of language as constrained by the multiple anthropologies of reading in a social system.

In Dickinson's case, that news from the society page comes as no surprise. The New England poet who got her meters from the grim hymns of Isaac Watts knew a closed society at first hand, and took its assumptions for her own. The author of "Shall I take thee, the poet said" (Fr1243) understood that some words speak the language of election and others don't. To shield her letters from the eyes of other people, she had other people address her envelopes, and to shield her significances she had a private vocabulary of *white, awe, circumfer-*

ence, Master, and about half a dozen other private terms: a praetorian lexicon to hold off other people's understanding. Of course, that lexicon grew out of the same social norms that bred the unknowing people who delivered Dickinson's letter, in due time, to the world we share with Janet Holmes. But to read Dickinson's words in Holmes' version, cut off from the social codes of their own literary history, is to see something like a quintessence of poetic language: a language that has become all form, and all wordless form at that.

The end of the sequence in the illustration above, for example, consists of a large blank with a single line of language forming its base: "how late– how late –" The words support the blank, even as the blank drives them down toward the bottom of the page. The blank has swallowed up or pushed away everything else, so that the cry "too late" expresses only an idea of that which is without recourse.

Which is to say that the Holmes of *The ms of my kin* is neither a writer of words nor a painter of voids, but an explorer of the boundaries of provisional significance which come briefly into being between a word and its surrounding nothingness. Just as Philippe Chancel's flight attendant mediates on the page between our free gaze in front of her and the closed and hidden society at her back, *The ms of my kin* mediates between us readers in our time and the lost world of Emily Dickinson lying just behind the surface of Holmes' page. On that page, what we see is a Hansel and Gretel trail of phonemes, "Soundless as Dots, / On a Disc of Snow" (Fr124F). If they constitute an image of a poem, it is a poem whose significance has been encoded at some other site. On its own terms, the significance of Janet Holmes' images is as secret as the *nomenklatura* of a closed society. On Dickinson's terms, however, each image extends the life-or-death choice between meaning and unmeaning from words into the silence around them.

But how are we to make our own way through the silence? How, for instance, are we to read the strange words of Holmes' beginning, *The ms of my kin?*

Janet Holmes

How, indeed?

It's a simple process, really, called "erasure": If you write out "The Poems of Emily Dickinson" and erase some of the letters very neatly and precisely, you can get to " The ms of m y kin"—the title of a book-length poetry project I recently completed. The manuscript of my kin, as it were; the manuscript of my family. It might also be said to be the manuscript of my kind.

The practice of erasure was most famously accomplished (and perhaps invented) by the British artist Tom Phillips in his book *A Humument* (an erasure of a Victorian novel titled *A Human Document*) and later, by the American poet Ronald Johnson, who erased Milton's *Paradise Lost* into a book called *Radi os*. In Phillips's books—he did more than one version of *A Humument*—the artist created paintings over each page of the novel, reserving only certain words that told a different story than did the original work. (A new character, called "Toge," emerged from the word "together," for example.) Johnson, a poet, simply removed the words he did not wish to use as if whiting them out—the remaining words stood in the same relationship to each other as they did in the original poem.

Following tradition, that's the method I used. The idea is that my poems would look identical to what you'd see in the Franklin Reading Edition of Dickinson if I were to go through it with white-out and preserve only the words you now see on the page. And in fact, in my typescripts of the poem (hmm, are they still called typescripts when electronic?), I actually type in the poem and then "color" the erased words white. They're there, but they don't show up when printed. (Confession: I only type in the first word of an entire blank line, so the vertical line spacings will be correct. It saves time.) I consulted with the designer of the reprint edition of *Radi os*, and he used the same techniques to create the Flood Editions paperback of Johnson's work released in 2005—the idea being that the "new" work could literally overlay the original. That my resulting Dickinson-derived poems resemble in appearance Charles Olson's open-field poems of the mid-twentieth century is a delicious coincidence: two New Englanders meeting fortuitously in a most unlikely place.

I began working on this project as the U.S. was entering into war with Iraq, during which time my own despair and anger threatened to shut down my creative process. Dickinson's vocabulary of fierce spiritual love in a time of war gave me words that kept that from happening, and the first lines she wrote in 1861 (according to Franklin)—"If it had no pencil / Would it try mine?" (Fr184)—gave me what seemed necessary permission. I would, indeed, try hers. She too was writing at the beginning of a devastating conflict, and I expected that her words from that time would work for mine as well. I decided to use her poems of 1861 and 1862 as my source texts.

My rules for the erasure were this:

- I must use at least one word from every poem.
- The words must be used in order.
- The placement of words on the page must reflect the omitted words.
- I would let various speakers emerge as the language dictated.

The poems take their individual titles from the year in which Dickinson wrote the originating poem(s), followed by a period and their number in my resulting sequence. The Franklin numbers of the originating poems follow, in parentheses. They

could be considered—I consider them—collaborations.

Restrictions, from the simplest rhyme and metrical schemes to the most complex repetitive forms (sestina, canzone), are an engine of poetry: a poet's task is to master the restrictions and still create a work of art. Lars von Trier's recent film *The Five Obstructions* beautifully illustrates how requiring an artist—in this case, the filmmaker Jørgen Leth—to work with restrictions, or obstructions, can reinvigorate his creativity; among the restrictions von Trier assigns to Leth are the creation of a film in which no shot is longer than twelve frames (half a second). In the twentieth century, the writers of the *Ouvroir de littérature potentielle* (Workshop for Potential Literature), or Oulipo, founded a group whose aim was "to invent (or reinvent) restrictions of a formal nature (*contraintes*) and propose them to enthusiasts interested in composing literature" (Mathews and Brotchie 38). An example of an Oulipian restriction is the lipogram, "a text that excludes one or more letters of the alphabet" (174), which restriction helped the novelist Georges Perec to create his novel *A Void*, which eschews the letter E.

In this spirit, the technique of erasure is yet another restriction. The poet is limited to the vocabulary of the chosen text, to the order of the words and their placement on the page. From my perspective, and why I refer to it as "collaboration," erasure allows a second set of poems to emerge from within the originals. It allows Dickinson's original word "Transport" (for example) to be read as designating a literal military vehicle while still retaining her original meaning, luminescent and now tinged with irony, underneath.

I couldn't have engaged in this process without a deep reverence for the work of Emily Dickinson. My intention was to share both her language and her tone in poems that reflect a substantially different war than the one that raged during her lifetime. In my ideal imaginary, a reader would feel compelled to go back to the original poems, and would experience some resonance between the originals and the erasures. I hope the layout of the poems, with Dickinson's originals floating, ghostly, behind them, encourages such reading.

As Jonathan Morse rightly infers, one who comes to the poems of *The ms of my kin* with no previous knowledge of Dickinson may feel she has entered a closed society, a private and perplexing world. I hope an introduction or author's note explaining the process of their creation will dispel such a sensation when the project is published as a complete book, but as the poems appear now in journals and online, such explanatory text is not always at hand. I think Dickinson might not be uncomfortable with such a situation. "All men say 'What' to me but I thought it a fashion," she once wrote her future editor, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, after all (L271). That quality, that verging upon the mysterious, is surely part of the fascination we have with her writings.

Jonathan Morse and Janet Holmes

Michael Kearns got this far, then e-mailed me (Jonathan) with a progress report. "After I read both portions," Michael wrote, "I found myself dizzily spinning between your rather theoretical approach and Janet's rather practical one. The experience was like looking at one of those designs that can be one of two things depending on how you view it (two face silhouettes or a vase?)." What Michael was asking Janet Holmes and me to do was to address the readers of the *Bulletin* in a common language. As I thought about that request, I found myself visualizing Michael's simile as an image of two faces looking at each other. Then I thought of Janet Holmes face to face with Emily Dickinson, a reenactor within sight of her original. Then I realized that Dickinson's own language might yield a diagnosis of Michael's vertigo. I headed for the concordance and looked up the word that Michael's image of the silhouettes called to mind. As I expected, it was almost not there. In the entire corpus of Dickinson's verse, the word "mirror" occurs only twice.[2]

Jon and I differ as to what Michael's talking about. Where Jon sees a mirror, I see a perdurable shifting between image and ground; the reader can never comfortably settle on a single perception. In an erasure, the image and ground are both provided by the source text, in this case Dickinson's poems of 1861 and 1862; the focus on certain language is provided by the poet who erases; the third party—the reader, and particularly a reader who knows the source text—experiences the vertigo resulting from a slight but definite earthquake.

Now, from Velazquez's Rokeby Venus to Tennyson's Lady of Shalott, from Helene Deutsch's formal association of narcissism with the feminine personality to Shakespeare's effeminate Richard II and delightedly posing Cleopatra, art and science down the ages have agreed that to be feminine is to have a special relationship with mirrors and their reflected selves. In "The Rape of the Lock," Pope caught that difference between the sexes when he wrote,
"The merchant from the Exchange returns in peace,/And the long labors of the toilet cease"
—a toilet in the early eighteenth century being a lady's dressing table, and the sense of the lines being that in Belinda's world the men work hard all day making money and the women work hard all day looking at themselves in the mirror. But Belinda's boudoir is not Emily Dickinson's world. When Emily Dickinson looks in search of herself, vision gives nothing back to her pleading gaze except an unreflecting surface covered with inscrutable symbols.

Writing at the beginning of the Civil War, Dickinson used not only the vocabulary of spiritual conflict common in the revival halls of the period, but the vocabulary of actual battle, evoking not just metaphorical perils but real ones. The palimpsest underneath the "erased" poem provides these two scenarios, and the erasure allows a contemporary reader to think of a third: the Iraq conflict, itself just beginning in 2003, when the erasure was (un)written. Whereas Alexander Pope may have imagined women entirely self-absorbed, Dickinson's poems (and, I hope, my erasures) give the lie to that one-dimensional stereotype.

Her New England heritage may have had something to do with that failure to make contact. When Samuel Gray Ward wrote of Dickinson, "She is the quintessence of that element we all have who are of Puritan descent *pur sang*. . . . We conversed with our own souls till we lost the art of communicating with other people" (Bingham 169), he was characterizing a kind of abstracted, third-person view of the self that Dickinson's poetry sometimes shares with the diaries of Samuel Sewall and Cotton Mather. Dickinson's "I" observes itself in the act, any act, and then analyzes its observation as if it were a discovery made in some other researcher's records. The clinician-poet of "The first day's night had come" (Fr423) follows a sequential protocol for describing an experience ("And so . . . And then . . . And tho") and concludes with a diagnosis: "Something's odd–within." Whatever the origins of this abstracted affect may be, Dickinson found the right pair of words to describe it. "Is it oblivion or absorption," she asked Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "when things pass from our minds?" (L342b).

Did Dickinson lose "the art of communicating with other people"—that inveterate letter-writer? I hardly can imagine her the solipsist she'd need to have been. To take an example, when she writes— from her pur sang *Puritan origins—"Mine—by the Right of the White Election!" she can't be said to be writing from a confessional and individual self, but from a kind of posture in which the poet stands in for the reader. (On the other hand, when the erasure reads "Mine—the Election!/ Mine/Mine//Mine/Mine//Mine—a steal!" there is presumably an individual self, though not the poet, speaking. To read it against a background of Puritan predestination only enhances, I hope, the pleasure it gives.)*

The ms of my kin offers us something like an answer to that question. Janet Holmes has erased some of Dickinson's words from the page so we can see through to what lies beneath, and what lies beneath turns out to be what Dickinson called "white" or "blank." From that there can be no reflection. In Dickinson's mirrorless universe there is only absorption in the blank, followed by oblivion: a reenactor's face (Janet Holmes') and a reader's face (yours, reader), looking in the direction of each other across an emptiness mapped by Emily Dickinson, for Emily Dickinson's eyes only.

Is what lies beneath blank, or infinite? Though Michael didn't know it when he wrote, the cover of my most recent book, F2F *(University of Notre Dame Press, 2006) is a version of the two-faces-or-chalice puzzle, and its title is a reference to the abbreviation for the term "face to face" used widely on the Internet. The world of readers and writers is often as abstracted and unbodied as that of digital messaging, though it can be just as intimate as face-to-face encounters. If I gaze at your face, reader, or at Dickinson's, who is to say I see across an emptiness? Perhaps it is only a temporarily invisible ground that gaze crosses, one capable of shifting everything suddenly into an unforeseen perspective.*

Notes

[1] Air Koryo is the national airline of North Korea. According to Wikipedia, it currently operates only five flights a week to China and one to Russia, with a second flight to Russia added seasonally.

[2] The two poems are "When we stand on the tops of things" (Fr343) and "I see thee clearer for the grave" (Fr1695).

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GWYNETH WALKER

"IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD"

By Maryanne Garbowsky

Words were Emily Dickinson's treasure, her resource. Shaping them into meaning, she dressed them "in the Gown" and sent them forth (Dickinson). That was in 1862. Today in the twenty-first century, composer Gwyneth Walker has given them notes, allowing them to soar.

I came to know Dr.Walker in a circuitous fashion: one of the programs of the Vermont Humanities Council was *Letters to the World*, a piano quartet based on a series of five Dickinson poems. The music was composed by Walker and the poems were read by poet Francette Cerulli. My interest piqued, I eventually made contact with Walker through a series of e-mails and was happy to learn that *Letters to the World* was not her only work based on Dickinson's poetry: it was her first. A second, *A Heart in Hiding*, based on love poems by the poet, was already completed and another, *Muse of Amherst*, was in progress.

But Dickinson was not the only writer who inspired Walker. She has worked with the poetry of e.e. cummings, Langston Hughes, Lucille Clifton, and May Swenson. A New Englander, she is especially partial to New England writers, which have included– in addition to Dickinson– Henry David Thoreau, John Greenleaf Whittier, and Jane Kenyon. As one can see, words have been a creative force in her long and distinguished career. This year on October 13 – 14, her sixtieth birthday will be celebrated with a two day "Festival of the Music of Gwyneth Walker" in Randolph, Vermont.

Born and raised in New England, Walker "was smitten by music" at the age of two when she heard her sister practicing the piano. She knew then that music was her first love, trying at this young age to play. Thus began her "life-long love affair" with music (Horowitz 2), which has involved her ever since. As a six-year old, she learned to write music, that is "how to put notes on a staff" (Weber 1), and even included her first grade friends in "Musical Mondays" (3). These would begin when her friends arrived at her house: "there would be a new composition for them to play. I would hand out the parts and the various instruments, coach everyone on playing their music, and off we went!" (3).

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College degrees followed, a BA from Brown University and MM and DMA Degrees in Music Composition from the Hartt School of Music in Hartford, Connecticut. She accepted a faculty position at Oberlin College Conservatory in Ohio, which she quickly realized was not for her. So began her career in musical composition. Walking away from academia was a "courageous" move (Horowitz 2), but one she has never regretted.

Working on commissioned pieces (to date she has more than 160 to her credit-Walker, Press Kit 2), Walker allows herself a two year time period between the signing of a contract and the finished composition. She works in a very structured way, composing each day from nine in the morning until three in the afternoon (Horowitz 4). With "time to let ideas percolate" (3), she begins with "words" "describing . . . the overall form and feel she's after" (3). Then the actual music begins, as she is seated at the piano, or at her desk, or even as "she walks up her road" (3). Neighbors sometimes see her walking "in the tempo of" a musical piece she is working on (3). One of her priorities is "to be a good craftsman" (Weber 2). She credits her good organizational skills to being an eleventh generation Quaker. "Quakers (and New Englanders) value a practical and organized lifestyle" (4).

For her first Dickinson composition, *Letters to the World*, Walker chose five poems: "This Is My Letter to the World," "A Light Exists in the Spring," "I'm Nobody," "Wild Nights," and "These are the Days When Birds Come Back." Since Walker was not sure the poet's words were "singable" (Walker, "Re") she composed the music inspired by the poems, but did not intend for them to be sung. Instead they were narrated. The poems were chosen for their "variety" as well as a particular "flow of thought" (Walker, "Re"), the first poem introducing the poet and the last marking a return and closure of the theme.

Despite concerns that some of Dickinson's poems might be difficult for listeners to understand, Walker decided–for her second Dickinson project– that the poet's love poems would provide "a wonderful source of lyrics" (Walker, "Re"). For *A Heart in Hiding: The Passionate Love Poems of Emily Dickinson*, she chose six poems: "T'is So Much Joy," "Forever at His Side to Walk," "A Kingdom's Worth of Bliss," "The

Moon is Distant from the Sun," "Wild Nights," and "I Held a Jewel in My Fingers." "T'is So Much Joy" is repeated at the end as a reprise.

Using similar criteria that guided her *Letters to the World* selection, Walker focused on the subject of love. Variety was also important, although it was variety in terms of "solo vs. ensemble singing," not of topic (Walker, "Re"). This time the words of the poems themselves would be set to music and alternately sung by a mezzo soprano and a chorus. "T'is So Much Joy," sung by the soprano, introduces the singer "and her emotions" (Walker, "Re") to the audience, and then "Forever at His Side to Walk" is sung by the chorus. "Wild Nights," one of Dickinson's most passionate love poems functions "as the climax of the work" (Walker, "Re"). Walker emphasizes that the poems were "carefully chosen to shape a multi-movement work into a cohesive set" (Walker, "Re").

Walker's work with Dickinson is not yet complete. Commissioned by the Holyoke, Massachusetts Civic Symphony, the *Muse of Amherst, The Poetry of Emily Dickinson for Narration and Orchestration* will have its world premiere May 4th, 2008, in Holyoke, Massachusetts, the home of Mount Holyoke where Dickinson attended college 1847–1848.

According to composer Hilary Tann, Walker's "great, great gift is in word setting" (Horowitz 2). She "sees things in the words most of us wouldn't see" (2). In her own words, Walker explains how she sets words to music: "When I put poetry to music, I focus on the central images in the poem. To me, poetry is not words. It is the images that the words create. And thus, with the musical setting, it is important that the images in the poetry translate into musical imagery."

In her settings of the poems of Emily Dickinson, Walker successfully portrays the many facets of the poet, from the poet's timidity to her boldness, her humor to her seriousness, her joy and passion to her sadness and regret. When I first contacted Walker, she reminded me that as a composer she wrote "music, the notes themselves" (Walker, "Re"). However, she has done more than just write notes. She has brought the poet to life, helping listeners to feel and sense the living presence of the poet. Since music is meant to be listened to, not simply described in words on the page, I urge readers to go to her website www.gwynethwalker.com to hear both *Letters to the World* and *A Heart in Hiding*. Better still, if at all possible, plan to attend the world premiere of *Muse of Amherst* on May 4th, 2008, in Holyoke, Massachusetts and hear for yourself the harmony of two souls brought together by a mutual love of words and sound.

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AMHERST HOUSE ROCK

EMILY DICKINSON—ZERO AT THE BONE AND PEDAGOGY

By Craig T. Fehrman

The Bulletin regularly reviews artists who set Dickinson to music. In the previous issue, for example, Daniel Craig reviews two albums (*Bulletin* 19.1 [2007]: 6), and both belong to a rich tradition of Dickinsonian music.[1] Indeed, with the exception of Poe, Dickinson's poetry has been set to music more (and, arguably, better) than any other American poet's. Dickinson was an accomplished musician herself (see Cooley), and music often meanders into her poetry, just as often in unexpected places. In her words, "Split the lark and you'll find the music" (Fr905).

Both albums reviewed by Craig also belong to "high" culture, with one even reworking the most celebrated Dickinsonian adaptor, Aaron Copland. In contrast to these heights—and in contrast the tradition I've just described—the eight songs of *Zero at the Bone* might seem rather "low," as the album unapologetically mixes Dickinson's lyrics with the trappings of rock and roll. Forget splitting larks—*Zero at the Bone* wants to split eardrums.

Of course, the only rock that Dickinson ever mentions is "The smitten rock that gushes" (Fr181). Not surprisingly, then, my first question

upon receiving *Zero at the Bone* was "Why rock out to Emily?" The album's creators answer this question in two booklets packaged with the CD, a "Companion" and a shorter "Teaching Materials." Sebastian Lockwood (a name so perfect for rock that it belongs in *Spinal Tap*) and Nanette Perrotte write, "Our intent has been for students to listen to the songs and hear the heat in Dickinson's lines. We want students to walk away singing hooks of 'Almost contented,' 'Given,' and 'Just felt the World go by.'"

To reach this goal, though, the product itself must deliver—and I don't mean the "Teaching Materials" (but more on them in a bit). In short, the songs are good but uneven. Often projects like this are haunted by lo-fi production values—and not of the charming White Stripes variety—but *Zero at the Bone* has a pleasing, professional mix. The guitars sound crisp, the levels balanced, and, most importantly, Perrotte's voice cuts through the mix. This emphasis and Perrotte's enunciation put the attention on Dickinson's poetry, not on the rock.

Rock, of course, is as inclusive a term as *poetry*, and the songs in *Zero at the Bone* reflect that scope. While Perrotte lists Queen, U2, and Alanis Morissette among her influences, the comparison I immediately drew was to early Heart. "Almost Contented," the album's first song, sounds like a swelling Heart tribute, complete with two- and three-part harmonies layered over the atmospherics of warm, distorted guitars. Though "Almost Contented" sounds more like top-40 radio circa 1977 than 2007, it is the cut that rocks the hardest, and thus it creates the most startling contrasts—for example, a brief staccato guitar fill juxtaposed to the words "Angle of a Landscape— / every time I wake."

Careful Dickinson readers will notice that her original lines read, "The Angle of a Landscape— / That every time I wake—" (Fr578). Lockwood and Perrotte take similar liberties throughout. They reorder and excerpt lines, elide antiquated words like *thee* and *'tis*, and skip Dickinson's most canonical poems in favor of those that radiate more of a rock vibe. No matter what the poem—and they often draw on four or five per song—Lockwood and Perrotte fashion Dickinson's lyrics according to rock's generic requirements. Thus, the final lines of Fr577 ("Almost—contented— / I—could be— / 'mong such unique / Society—") become the chorus of "Almost Contented":

> Almost—contented—I—could be
> Almost—contented—unique /
> Society
> Almost—contented—
> Almost—contented—
> Almost—contented—

Regardless of how this adaptation works in writing, it works, and works well, in song. Throughout *Zero at the Bone*, one always has the impression that Dickinson's lyrics are being handled by conscientious artists.

The music's quality, however, is less consistent. "Given" starts with a slow acoustic strum, but the arrangement soon breaks into a full-blown power-ballad (complete with cloying harmonies). Nevertheless, the instrumentation—especially the piano riffing at the song's end—remains excellent. In contrast, "One Alone" never gathers any momentum because of a repetitive bass line that keeps tripping up its tempo. "One Alone" also sounds more optimistic than what I expected of a Dickinson song (or a rock song, for that matter). Other tracks rely almost exclusively on spoken word lyrics, and this focus seems to deviate from Lockwood's and Perrotte's mission of using song to introduce poetry. While I appreciate the attempt to incorporate Dickinson's letters into "Master," its spoken-word dynamic bogs down the track; Perrotte is an excellent reader, but the reading seems out of place—a squandered opportunity for another song.

Indeed, songs like "Zero at the Bone" and "Stuns You by Degrees" leave one wanting more music, as they expand the album's range from rock to blues. The title track begins with refreshing minimalism, as Perrotte sings a bluesy melody over a sloppy, throbbing bass and the occasional synth fill. The results are superb, and Perrotte's voice comes alive on both ends of the register. "Stuns You by Degrees" contains the album's best music while successfully including experimental elements in a way that "Master" doesn't, as Perrotte layers Dickinson buzzwords (think *circumference, daisy, eternity*, and, of course, *death*) beneath captivating melodies.

In the "Companion" booklet, Lockwood and Perrotte write that they hope these keywords will prime new listeners with Dickinsonian themes. While this is one of several interesting observations in the two booklets, they seem cluttered and should probably be shortened and conflated. Before discussing the booklets further, though, I should note that Lockwood and Perrotte describe the booklets (and the CD itself) as an evolving process, a process they hope will become collaborative; such openness makes reviewing their work an odd but exciting prospect. So here, after one listener's thoughts, are one reader's thoughts.

Much of the "Companion" seems unwieldy. There is no table of contents, and random chronological chapters on "The 50s" and "The 60s" appear to be context for context's sake. While this text aims at students, its haphazard presentation and typos make it unlikely that a teacher would assign it directly to students. More promising is the "Teaching Materials" booklet, with an introduction, several pages of "Talking Points," and song lyrics side-by-side with Dickinson's poems.[2] Unfortunately, the quality of the "Talking Points" varies, and questions like "Why do you think she wore white and what did that symbolize in her time?" seem both trite and tangential to *Zero at the Bone*'s goals.

Questions like the one asking students to discuss "the use of musical 'hooks' and refrains" are much better. Where the first question is historical and contextual, the second is formal and aesthetic. And here, in this dichotomy, lies the project's pedagogical value. While writing this review, I found it helpful to compare the lyrics in the "Teaching Materials" booklet to the Dickinson ur-texts, and it is easy to see others doing the same. The booklet (and rock itself) presents formal categories that students already know; students who have never heard of common meter or epic catalogues know what the "Verse" or "Bridge" of a rock song should do. Because Lockwood and Perrotte have arranged their songs carefully and intentionally (such an ironic word in any discussion of formalism!), teachers at the secondary and tertiary levels might use this project as an example of and entry point to various methods of reading. When covering, say, *King Lear*, a teacher might point to differences between the Quarto and Folio text and use these differences to give an initiation in close reading. The same setup can make a comparison of *Zero at the Bone* and Dickinson not only fun but productive.

Here, Lockwood and Perrotte's project is at its best. This might come as a surprise. While the history of rock and roll often crops up in cultural studies curricula, to my knowledge MLA is not planning on publishing an *Approaches to Teaching Iron Maiden*. That said, *Zero at the Bone* can offer teachers a unique aide. For many teachers, the only spoonful of pop culture to help Dickinson go down is *The Belle of Amherst*. But while it offers a historical vantage, the music and arrangement of *Zero at the Bone* offer an opportunity to focus on formal qualities. For this reason, the album and the booklets grow stronger with less speaking and less context. Musically, this album will appeal more to fans of Emily Dickinson than of Bruce Dickinson, but because of its pedagogical potential the rock music of *Zero at the Bone* can (and should) find a place in the Dickinsonian musical tradition. If Lockwood and Perrotte have their way, perhaps students will someday imagine Dickinson as the lady in black.

To purhase Zero at the Bone, *contact Lockwood and Perrotte via their website (http://www.lumenarts.com). The album is $10, while the album with both booklets is $30.*

Notes

[1] *Bulletin* articles on recent adaptations include Adelaide Whitaker's review of the opera *Come to Me in Dreams* (*Bulletin* 16.2 [2004]: 27, 35) and the articles on "My Business is to Love": Emily Dickinson in Words and Music in the *Bulletin* 12.1 (2000): 1-3. See also Sebastian Lockwood's engaging piece about the project's early stages, in *Bulletin* 15.1 (2003): 7-9.

[2] Lockwood and Perrotte cite the Franklin version. Dickinson scholars need no reminder that the version can make all the difference—even for a song. Copland's famous orchestration, for example, is missing the final stanza from "I felt a funeral in my brain" because Johnson's edition was not yet available (Baker 22 n. 16).

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Emily Dickinson Lexicon Website Available Online

The Emily Dickinson Lexicon website has received the Albert J. Colton Fellowship for Projects of National or International Scope from the Utah Humanities Council. Through the fellowship, Dr. Hallen will speak about the Dickinson lexicon at the Pleasant Grove Library (March 13, 2008), at the Delta Public Library (March 20), and at the BYU library auditorium (March26). The award also enables us to expedite the proofing and revising of entries in the *Emily Dickinson Lexicon* and in Webster's 1844 dictionary.

The website allows users to access existing material while we revise the data. We invite all pat-rons to use the site and test its features. We invite scholars and translators to provide feedback at cynthia hallen @byu.edu during a one-year peer-review period.

Drafts of the Dickinson lexicon files A - Z are available for use. The Webster 1844 dictionary files A, G, J, K, N, O, Q, V, W, X, Y, and Z are also available, as well as partial drafts of other letters.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Barabara Kelly, Book Review Editor

Adams, Maureen. ***Shaggy Muses: The Dogs Who Inspired Virginia Woolf, Emily Dickinson, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Edith Wharton, and Emily Brönte.*** New York: Ballentine Books/Random House, 2007. 299 pp. Cloth, ISBN 978-0-345-48406-2, $24.95.

Mourning the death of her Golden Retriever, Adams turned to literature and poetry to help understand her grief and the intense emotional attachment that humans have for their dogs. She was struck by Dickinson's concise and bleak words in a letter to Thomas W. Higginson: "Carlo died— Would you instruct me now?" (L314). In addition to Dickinson's Newfoundland Carlo, Adams's research led her to the beloved dogs of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Emily Brontë, Edith Wharton, and Virginia Woolf. Not only did these dogs inspire their writer-owners but also they offered companionship, comfort, security, unqualified devotion, and an intimate relationship often not found among family and friends. Drawing from Dickinson's letters and poems, and contemporary anecdotes, Adams traces Dickinson's close relationship with Carlo, he of the "brown kisses," her "Shaggy Ally," her "mute Confederate" (97-139). To a friend she writes, "I talk of all these things with Carlo, and his eyes grow meaning, and his shaggy feet keep a slower pace." To another friend, she reportedly said that she expected her faithful old friend Carlo to be the first to greet her in heaven. Adams asserts, "What has never been recognized is the extent to which Emily also relied on Carlo to keep her grounded during the 'white heat' of inspiration." Adams's well researched, lucid, and charming short biographies of these five writers should appeal to lovers of literature and dogs alike.

Barnstone, Aliki. ***Changing Rapture: Emily Dickinson's Poetic Development.*** Lebanon, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 2006. 187 pp. Cloth, ISBN 978-1-58465-534-3, $45.00

In a cogent, clearly written study, Barnstone questions the view "that Dickinson wrote in a vacuum and never developed." The author explores four stages of development, stating, "as Dickinson's identity developed, so too did her poetry." In the first stage, the poet "externalizes her argument with Calvinism through satire." In the second, most prolific stage, Dickinson, unable to participate in a religious conversion, "appropriates the conversion experience and transforms it into poetic process." Identifying this stage as "self-conversion," the author offers close readings of "There's a certain Slant of light," "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain," and the second "Master Letter." In the third stage, "adventure of the self," Dickinson shifts her focus from Calvinism to Transcendentalism, sharing "affinities with [Emerson's] idealistic philosophy, even as she argues with it." Addressing the shift, Barnstone offers close readings of "This consciousness that is aware" and "I heard a Fly buzz—when I died—." In the fourth stage, "Dickinson stops copying her poems into fascicles, and copies them instead into letters. The line between letters and poems blurs." In this last beautifully written chapter, the author helps the reader appreciate the tragedy of the many lost and missing letters, the "immense implications" of "poems shut up in the prose," and the artistry of Dickinson's manuscripts. Included are notes, works cited, and an index.

Erkkila, Betsy. ***Mixed Bloods and Other Crosses: Rethinking American Literature from the Revolution to the Culture Wars.*** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2005. xii + 272 pp. Cloth, ISBN 978-0-8122-3844-0, $55.00; £36.00

Erkkila examines "the historical and psychological drama and trauma of blood and boundaries . . . territorial, sexual, racial, class, national, cultural, and aesthetic—in the Revolutionary period and the nineteenth century" and explores how "anxieties about blood, mixture, and crossing inform recent debates" about culture, politics, and literature. She discusses Thomas Jefferson, Abigail Adams, Phillis Wheatley, Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, C. L. R. James, and Herman Melville. In "Emily Dickinson and Class" (155-176), Erkkila resituates Dickinson "within " the social, political, and cultural struggles of her time," noting her "sense of social difference and the urge to define herself against and apart from the 'rough and uncultivated' multitude" and her "assumption of a natural social order of class and race." She concludes: "If on the level of language Dickinson might be celebrated as a kind of literary terrorist– a 'Loaded Gun' and dancing 'Bomb'–who blew up the social and symbolic orders of patriarchal language, it is also important to recognize that her poetic evolution

The *Bulletin* welcomes notices of all Dickinson-related books, including those published outside the U.S.
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was grounded in the privilege of her class position in a conservative Whig household whose elitist, anti-democratic values were at the very center of her work."

Kaufmann, Paola. ***The Sister: A Novel of Emily Dickinson.*** Translated by William Rolandson. New York: Rookery, 2007. 270 pp. Cloth, ISBN 978-1-58567-951-5, $24.95

In Argentinian Paula Kaufmann's posthumous novel, first published in Spanish as *La Hermana* (2003), Emily Dickinson's aging sister Lavinia provides a retrospective look at life in the Dickinson Homestead where "we always were a strange family." With emotionally inaccessible parents, "we had the certainty of being loved, but never the feeling of love," but "home was, and has always been, something sacred for the Dickinsons." Lavinia sometimes found Emily selfish, arrogant, pedantic, and impenetrable, but she shows how they were "the most united and yet the strangest sisters." She recalls maple sugaring-off parties with her brother Austin's best friend Joseph Lyman, Lavinia's one true love, but her youthful expectations fade. Mable Loomis Todd's arrival in Amherst marks the beginning of family dissention, leading to a detailed account of Lavinia's struggle with Todd over Dickinson's poems ("wild children raised in a wild garden") and Lavinia's resolve to devote her life to these "poor orphans." Her story culminates in a dramatically detailed courtroom drama over the possession of a piece of Dickinson land. Intent on regaining the land from Todd, Lavinia commits perjury and becomes a sad and lonely woman with doubts about her handling of the Dickinson legacy, knowing only that she fulfilled her duty. Kaufmann's tale is well researched and tenderly told from Lavinia's fresh and rarely heard voice and viewpoint.

MacMurray, Rose. ***Afternoons with Emily: A Novel.*** New York: Little, Brown, 2007. 472 pp. Cloth, ISBN 978-0316-01760-2, $24.99

Emily Dickinson's "best friend" Miranda Chase narrates the story of her life and her spirited relationship with Dickinson. In Boston, Miranda is the isolated child of a tubercular mother and a preoccupied academic father. Her tutor uses progressive educational methods to enhance her joy in learning. After her mother's death, Miranda and her father visit friends in tropical Barbados for a year, before her father begins teaching at Amherst College. Adjusting to life in Amherst, independent Miranda confronts a minister about religious "conversion." Hearing of this and sensing a kindred spirit, Dickinson invites 13-year-old Miranda to tea. MacMurray cleverly captures Dickinson's conversational intensity by capitalizing words Dickinson wishes to EMPHASIZE. About Dickinson, Miranda says, "her quicksilver mind challenged and delighted me, her observations stunned me, and her conversation educated me"; however, after many years of afternoon teas, she also found Dickinson detached, moody, self-involved, rude, demanding, needy, and selfish, leading to a crisis in their friendship. As Dickinson's life narrows, Miranda's life expands to include a fiancé lost to the Civil War and a vocation as an educational reformer. Rose MacMurray's posthumous novel resembles a nineteenth-century bildungsroman in the manner of George Eliot and Charlotte Brontë, blending historical research and imagination with lucid prose, and bringing Dickinson, her family, and the village of Amherst vibrantly alive.

Martin, Wendy. ***The Cambridge Introduction to Emily Dickinson.*** Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007. 148 pp. Cloth, ISBN 978-0-521-85670-6, $65.00; paper, ISBN 978-0-521-67270-2, $19.99.

Intended for advanced students and general readers, this clearly written introduction to Emily Dickinson is well organized into four chapters: Life, Context, Works, and Reception. Martin describes Dickinson ("wickedly funny, fiercely loyal, and bravely original . . . an example of eccentricity, autonomy, and rebellion"), as well as her family, friends, and community. Placing her within historical context, the author discusses Puritanism, the Great Awakenings, revivals, and Transcendentalism; national expansion and industrialization; abolition and women's rights; and the Civil War, stating, "Dickinson experienced the Civil War as the central event of her life that colored everything that followed." The third and longest chapter (40-109), in which Martin incorporates approximately 36 poems and 24 letters, may be provocative for deeply religious readers. Martin emphasizes the poet's blasphemous attitude toward God and religion, stating that finding heaven on earth, Dickinson transferred her devotion from God to worship of friends and nature. The author finds the poet's obsession with death not unusual in the nineteenth century, but "for Dickinson, the apparent finality of death is what gives meaning to life." The last chapter thoroughly covers the editing, publication history, and reception of Dickinson's work, and her legacy. Included are notes, a useful annotated guide to further reading, and an index.

Raymond, Claire. ***The Posthumous Voice in Women's Writing from Mary Shelley to Sylvia Plath.*** Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006. vii + 262 pp. ISBN 978-0-7546-5535-0, $99.95; £50.00.

Raymond's scholarly study explores the posthumous voice in Mary Shelley's *Mathilda*, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, Christina Rossetti's death lyrics, selected Emily Dickinson poems, and Sylvia Plath's "The Rabbit Catcher" and "Medusa."

The author distunguishes between the traditional elegy, in which the male mourns his dead friend, and the post-Oedipal feminine self-elegy, in which the dead speaker mourns herself. This appropriation and alteration of the traditional elegy allows women writers to claim canonicity, according to Raymond. She says, in the feminine self-elegy "identity has been abandoned in favor of an ontology in which one's origins and the gendered identity encoded into the idea of origins are dismantled, alienated before the longer gaze of a posthumous persistence." In "Emily Dickinson as the Unnamed, Buried Child" (127-167), Raymond discusses Dickinson poems Fr 344, 396, 448, 454, 479, 519, 644, 764, and 804. She suggests that "Dickinson's dead child-voiced poems take as their starting point a fatherless topos and from imagined posthumousness inaugurate a language whose self-reflexive trope, self-elegy, forms a symbolic discourse independent of the paternal metaphor, based on a recognition of gender as performed. Woman's exclusion from the tradition of elegy is critiqued by Dickinson's formal self-elegy."

Book Notes

Peter Parker of Telegraph Media Group Ltd. reports that individual pages of Emily Dickinson's 1839 herbarium can be viewed online. Start at the Harvard College Library website,www. hcl.Harvard.edu, and click "Hollis Catalog." In the new window, click "Expanded search," type in "Emily" and "Dickinson" and "Herbarium" and click "Search." In the results page, click "Internet Link" and scroll through 72 printable pages of the book.

New Directions Paperbook is re-issuing *My Emily Dickinson* by Susan Howe with a preface by Eliot Weinberger (ISBN 0-8112-1683-7, $14.95), to be published in November.

Book Review

Perriman, Wendy K. ***A Wounded Deer: The Effects of Incest on the Life and Poetry of Emily Dickinson.*** Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006. xxvi + 320 pp. Cloth, ISBN 1-84718-045-0, UK: £39.99, US: $79.99

Reviewed by Maryanne Garbowsky

Emily Dickinson'slife and poetry have gaps that mystify and provoke readers to suggest answers. One such theory provided by Wendy Perriman in her book *A Wounded Deer* is that Emily Dickinson may be the victim of incest. As startling and provocative as this sounds, the author presents thorough and extensive research based on primary sources, such as Dickinson's letters and poems, and on secondary sources ranging from literary scholars and critics through the literature of medical doctors, psychologists, and social workers. The result is a credible, well documented study.

Beginning with "The Evidence" in chapter one, Perriman follows the "The Incest Survivors'Aftereffects Checklist," developed by clinical social worker Sue Blume, and applies each symptom to the poet, referring to the life and letters of the poet and quoting from the poems to further demonstrate and amplify these aftereffects. Shockingly Dickinson exhibits "at least 33 aftereffects" from a checklist of 37, a finding "warranting further investigation" (x).

In "Family Dynamics," the subject of chapter two, Perriman discusses the interaction between family members and offers suggestions as to possible culpability. Included in this chapter are well done analyses of such significant poems as "In Winter in my Room" and "My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun—" to support her argument. In chapters three to five, the author outlines three stages of recovery for the poet, although total recovery would have been impossible for her during the nineteenth-century when the problem of incest was largely ignored, if even identified. Perriman suggests that the act of writing poetry, of telling the "story of her trauma" (170), and reading the work of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, another probable victim of incest—in appendix B, the author applies the checklist to Browning—helped Dickinson regain her health and reclaim a sense of wholeness.

At the end of her argument, the author includes an excursus, which enumerates other sources and authors with whom Dickinson would have been familiar who wrote either directly or indirectly about the subject of incest. From these, the poet may have learned how to deal with her own situation and how to use words to save herself. Perriman also includes a dictionary of selected words and their meanings that Dickinson would have found in her nineteenth-century lexicon and would help her to "Tell all the truth but tell it slant—."

A Wounded Deer is well worth reading: its argument is clear, cogent, and at times riveting. I recommend this book for the general reader who is curious about the nineteenth-century patriarchal world and its treatment and abuse of young girls and women. But I especially recommend it for those interested in Dickinson scholarship. From the outset, Perriman is aware that scholars may critique her thesis as being too limiting or "simplistic" (xi), but her hope is that the book will "open up fresh paths of investigation" (xi). Although we will never fully know the truth of the poet's life, this study offers readers a plausible suggestion of what may be at the core of Dickinson's "omitted center." According to Perriman, Dickinson's "potential incest history alters the way her poems are read" and provides "one of the missing themes at the heart of her writing" (240).

Selected Bibliography will appear in the May/June 2008 issue.

EDIS ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

By Paul Crumbley, EDIS Vice President

Approximately 21 members present

President Gudrun Grabher convened the meeting at 1:00 by welcoming all present and expressing her gratitude to EDIS Japan for being such wonderful hosts. She also extended a special thanks to Mary Loeffelholz, Martha Nell Smith, Vivian Pollak, and Cristanne Miller for their hard work putting together the program for the conference. Grabher took great pleasure in stating that the conference had broken even financially. She then announced that the Board had voted to change the By-Laws to expand the number of Member-at-Large seats from one to three. Grabher explained that this change would increase opportunities for members to serve on the Board and that the new members-at-large would actively solicit the participation of all members in the planning and coordination of EDIS activities. Grabher announced that the 2007 Graduate Fellowship was awarded to Karen Anderson, who is completing her dissertation at Cornell University. She noted that there would be no Scholar in Amherst for 2007 and encouraged members to apply for next year's award, which will be in honor of Suzanne Juhasz and Jane Eberwein. Grabher concluded her opening remarks by announcing EDIS would contribute $1,000 to the Dickinson Museum and $500 to the Jones Library.

Announcements and Actions taken:

· By-Laws changed to increase the number of Members-at-Large from one to three.

· EDIS breaks even financially with the Japan conference.

· Members-at-Large will communicate views of the general membership to the Board and request that members assist with society duties, such as organizing conference panels and planning meetings.

· Karen Anderson of Cornell University awarded the EDIS Graduate Fellowship for 2007.

· EDIS financial standing is sound with a checking account balance of $17,155.

·EDIS officers elected: Paul Crumbley, President; Martha Ackmann, Vice President; James Fraser, Treasurer; Barbara Kelly, Secretary.

· 2008 Annual Meeting to take place in Amherst from August 1 to 3. The meeting will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of EDIS and will introduce the first Dickinson Discussion Institute.

· 2009 Annual Meeting will take place in Regina, Saskatchewan from July 30 to August 2.

Paul Crumbley, in the absence of EDIS secretary Barbara Kelly, asked if there were any inaccuracies or omissions in the minutes from the 2006 Board meeting that took place on the University of Maryland campus. Martha Nell Smith pointed out that Erika Scheurer's name appeared as "Erica" instead of "Érika." Crumbley noted the error and said it would be corrected. Crumbley then asked for and received approval for the minutes.

In the absence of Jim Fraser, EDIS Treasurer, Crumbley provided a brief summary of the report prepared by Fraser. Crumbley reported that the EDIS checking account balance on July 1, 2006 was $20,665.00 and that on June 30, 2007 it stood at $17,155. This drop in the balance is not inconsistent with variations that take place annually and is therefore not a cause for great concern.

Due to Jonnie Guerra's early departure, Eleanor Heginbotham gave the Membership Committee report by stating that she and Guerra had discussed increasing EDIS membership with Johns Hopkins University Press and that Lisa Close at JHUP had agreed to assist with marketing. Close specifically recommended that the upcoming twentieth anniver-sary of EDIS be incorporated in a direct marketing effort. Georgiana Strickland announced that she had agreed to edit a new column in the Bulletin that would run stories by members about how they became involved with EDIS.

In the absence of Ellen Louise Hart, Grabher presented the Nominating Committee Report. Grabher announced that the Board had elected Crumbley President, Martha Ackmann Vice President, James Fraser Treasurer, and Barbara Kelly Secretary. Grabheralso further discussed the change in the number of Member-at-Large seats from one to three.

At this point, Grabher invited questions from the membership about EDIS activities. Vivian Pollak asked for clarification of membership dues and if the time of year when a membership was established made a difference in the benefits one received. Grabher and Cristanne Miller explained that the closer to the end of the year a person joined, the sooner s/he would receive a renewal request, but that this would not make a difference in receiving a year's membership or receiving the Bulletin or the Journal. Cynthia Hallen asked if there were any way to avoid having concurrent panels at conferences so attendees could be present for all sessions. Grabher explained that financial constraints and the length of conferences made concurrent sessions unavoidable. Grabher then reminded the membership that all were invited to send submissions to Jed Deppmanfor the EDIS sessions at the 2007 Modern Language Association conference and to Stephanie Tingley for the EDIS sessions at the American Literature Association conferences.

Crumbley reported on planning for the 2008 Annual Meeting that

will take place August 1-3 in Amherst. This meeting will mark the twentieth anniversary of the founding of EDIS and will be dedicated to the general theme of "Celebration." Crumbley mentioned that he and Cristanne Miller had moved forward with plans for the Emily Dickinson Discussion Institute that will take place on Friday, August 1. Miller then explained that poets Mark Doty, Elizabeth Willis, and Michael Ryan will appear as featured speakers. Miller mentioned that she and Crumbley will issue a general invitation to all members as well as a formal call for papers for those who need to be part of the official program in order to receive funds for travel. The Discussion Institute theme is "The Role of Narrative in the Poetry of Emily Dickinson." Crumbley then explained that the Annual Board Meeting will take place from 9:00 to 12:00 the morning of Saturday, August 2. The Members Meeting will then take place from 1:00 to 4:00 and will include the Annual Business Meeting plus an opportunity for past EDIS Presidents to recall high points of their terms in office. Following the presidents' reflections, the floor will be opened to a general discussion of future EDIS plans. Following the Members Meeting, between 4:00 and 6:30, all members will be invited to the premier of Alberto Mancini's exhibit of 29 paintings inspired by Dickinson poems. The exhibit will take place at the Marsh Gallery at Amherst College. Mancini will make a brief presentation with a reception to follow. A banquet will then take place in Louis Sebring Hall with poetry readings and an open mic to follow. Sunday, August 3, will begin with the Research Circle, perhaps include a yet to be specified entertainment, and conclude with lunch.

Grabher then surprised Hiroko Uno, the primary coordinator for EDIS Japan who had worked so hard with Grabher and the other organizers, by giving her a gift and thanking her on behalf of all EDIS members. Grabher spoke glowingly of the skill with which all the logistics had been managed and the extraordinary hospitality that made this conference special for all who attended. Uno tearfully accepted the gift and acknowledged that she was both happy that the conference had gone so well and relieved that it was over. All present applauded Uno for all she and her colleagues had done to make the conference a success.

Crumbley then surprised Grabher by giving her a gift and thanking her on behalf of EDIS for her leadership as President and for her own efforts to make the Japan conference such a success. Crumbley also surprised Mary Loeffelholz by giving her a gift on behalf of EDIS for her central role in organizing the conference program. Crumbley clearly stated that EDIS would continue to depend on the talents of Grabher and Loeffelholz even though Grabher would be stepping down as President and Loeffelholz would be leaving the Board. All present applauded Grabher and Loeffelholz for their many contributions to EDIS.

Grabher's last act as President was to introduce Crumbley as the next EDIS President. Crumbley noted his gratitude at receiving such an auspicious honor and stated that he would do all within his power to live up to the high standard set by his predecessors. Crumbley adjourned the Annual Business Meeting at 1:45.

MEMBERS' NEWS

CALL FOR PAPERS
EDIS AT ALA

The Emily Dickinson International Society will sponsor two sessions at the annual American Literature Association conference, to be held this year at the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero Center in San FranciscoMay 22-25 2008.

· *Dickinson's Letters*

We seek papers that explore Emily Dickinson's work as a prolific and inventive letter writer whose correspondence often blurred the boundaries between lyric and letter. Papers might consider Dickinson's role as a correspondent, one or more of her epistolary friendships, rhetorical patterns in the letters, manuscript study/editing, ways to use Dickinson's letters in the classroom, or other ways in which Dickinson presents herself as a woman of letters.

· *Dickinson and Place*

Ideas about place are central to Dickinson's life and work. Dickinson's self-identification with her birthplace as "the Belle of Amherst" and her proud claim that she sees "New-Englandly" tie her to her community and her region, of course, but there are many other ways in which the poet explores ideas about location—geographical, cultural, metaphorical, literary. We seek papers that consider the relationship between the poet and her place(s).

Please submit a 250-word proposal as an email attachment to Cindy Mackenzie (Cindy.Mackenzie@uregina.ca) and Stephanie Tingley (satingley@ysu.edu). Deadline: January 15, 2008.

REPORT FROM MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Newly elected Board members-at-large, Cindy MacKenzie (returning for a two-year term) and Barbara Dana (beginning a three-year-term) attended the annual EDIS meeting in Kyoto, Japan. Both members want to thank the membership for supporting their candidacy for the position. In representing all members of the Society, Barbara and Cindy hope that the membership at large will communicate any ideas, concerns, or projects to them so that they can bring them to the Board's attention. At the meeting, it was decided that

the Board and conference/meeting conveners will call on members to take an active part at conferences and meetings by taking on responsibilities such as registration, hosting, and distribution of materials. Feel free to contacts your members-at-large. MacKenzie can be reached at Cindy.MacKenzie@uregina.ca, and Dana at wolfkoda@mac.com

BULLETIN EDITORSHIP TO OPEN IN 2009

Michael Kearns intends to step down as Editor of the *Bulletin* after the May/June 2009 issue. The EDIS Board of Directors is now looking for someone else to take over this demanding but very rewarding task. The basic qualifications are that the candidate be a member of EDIS in good standing and a resident of the United States (to facilitate mailing). The editor also must have excellent writing skills, be familiar with Dickinson's biography and work, and be reasonably current with Dickinson scholarship. The position is unpaid, but all normal expenses are reimbursed. These expenses can include a modest stipend for an editorial assistant. The position carries with it membership on the EDIS Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors is looking for a candidate who would be prepared to assume full responsibility for editing the *Bulletin* in summer 2009. Ideally the candidate would be able to work with Michael Kearns on the May/June 2009 issue before taking over the editorship.

To apply, please send a resume and a letter of interest to Michael Kearns at the Department of English, University of Southern Indiana, 8600 University Blvd., Evansville, IN 47712. He will be happy to answer inquiries at mkearns@usi.edu.

AMHERST TO HOST 2008 ANNUAL MEETING

The 2008 Annual Meeting marks the 20th Anniversary of the founding of EDIS and will take place August 1-3, 2008 in Amherst, Massachusetts. The gathering's theme will be "Celebration" and will include the inauguration of the Dickinson Discussion Institute, a conversation with three contemporary American poets about a famous nineteenth-century one, the gala opening of a new art exhibit inspired by the poet and—of course—a birthday cake.

Friday, August 1, will feature the new Emily Dickinson Discussion Institute. The Institute has highlighted the word "discussion" in order to emphasize the anticipated give-and-take of the day's events. The morning will begin with presentations by poets Mark Doty, Elizabeth Willis and Michael Ryan on "The Role of Narrative in the Poetry of Emily Dickinson"—each followed by conversation with the audience.

Doty is the author of the forthcoming *Fire to Fire* (Harper Collins) and *The New York Times* bestseller *Dog Years*. http://markdoty.org. Willis teaches creative writing at Wesleyan University; her most recent book is *Meteoric Flowers* (Wesleyan UP) http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/willis/. Ryan teaches creative writing at the University of California—Irvine and is the author of *New and Selected Poems* (Houghton Mifflin 2004). http://www.faculty.uci.edu/scripts/UCIFacultyProfiles/english/facultyprofile.cfm?ID=2496. Ryan is also now writing a book on Dickinson and T. W. Higginson.

In the afternoon, participants will engage in discussion on "Narrative in Dickinson's Poetry" in either Critical or Poetry Workshops. This structure enables different kinds of engagement with the focus of the Institute. Critical workshops require the submission of an abstract and circulation of an essay prior to the Institute (see Call for Papers below); poetry workshops may be signed up for Friday morning, upon arrival at Alumni House on the campus of Amherst College. We welcome all members to hear what established poets have to say about the topic and to join in thinking through what it means to read Dickinson's poems and letters as examples of "narrative" and "lyric" writing, or hybrid combinations. Poems like "I started Early – Took my Dog" (Fr656), "In Winter in my Room" (Fr1742), "A narrow Fellow in the Grass" (Fr1096), "I play at Riches – to appease" (Fr856), and "Unto like Story – Trouble has enticed me –" (Fr300) may be viewed as poems that lend themselves to narrative readings.

On Saturday morning, August 2, annual meeting participants are invited to take in a tour of the Emily Dickinson Museum, including a new program offering: "The Grounds of Memory" audio tour. The self-guided tour of the Homestead and Evergreens grounds is narrated by former U.S. poet laureate Richard Wilbur.

The EDIS members' meeting will take place in the afternoon, including the business overview as well as reflections from past EDIS presidents on memorable moments in EDIS's 20-year history. All members are encouraged to participate in a general discussion of EDIS activities. EDIS President Paul Crumbley especially invites "fresh thoughts from the membership that will help EDIS better fulfill its mission of increasing appreciation and understanding of Dickinson's life and work."

Following the afternoon members' meeting, participants are invited to the gala opening of artist Alberto Mancini's exhibition of 29 paintings inspired by Dickinson poems: *Emily Dickinson Suite*: *"I'll tell you how the Sun rose –."* Mancini is from the town of Atina in southern Italy where his family has lived for generations. For the last several years, he has been reading Dickinson and has been in-

spired by "the epic" quality of her poetry. (The Mancini Web site is under construction but can be accessed at http://www.albertomancini.com). The exhibit, a reception and brief remarks by Mancini will take place in the Marsh Gallery at Amherst College. Concluding the Saturday events will be a banquet at Lewis Sebring Hall at Amherst College and an open mic poetry reading on the theme of celebration.

Activities will continue on Sunday, August 3 with EDIS's popular Research Circle. Held every year and led by EDIS Board Member Ellen Louise Hart, the Research Circle is an informal gathering that highlights the imaginative range of our collective contributions to the appreciation and enjoyment of Dickinson¹s poetry. This year features a discussion of recent creative pursuits concerning Dickinson's work, including meditation practices, and weaving for healing. All members are invited to talk; share resources, and exchange information on current research in process. The meeting will conclude with a box lunch and farewells at noon.

The town of Amherst offers a variety of accommodations. Partipants may check out the Amherst area Chamber of Commerce for lodging information.http://www.amherstarea.com/business/index.cfm/fa/showcategory/CategoryID/200.cfm.

A new Marriott Courtyard Inn also has just opened in the nearby town of Hadley, MA (Rt 9) http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/bdlhd-courtyard-amherst-hadley/. All annual meeting events will take place at the Emily Dickinson Museum and Amherst College.

Registration fees for the 2008 Annual Meeting will be posted on the EDIS website by January 1. Registration forms will be available on the website (EDIS website@umd.edu)by January 15. For more information, contact Paul Crumbley at paul.crumbley@usu.edu.Those wishing to participate in a critical workshop may submit an abstract of 250 words on the theme of "Narrative in Dickinson's Poetry" to Paul Crumbley (PCrumbley@english.usu.edu) or Cristanne Miller (ccmiller@buffalo.edu) by March 1. Each submitter whose proposal is accepted will be assigned to a workshop; the leader of that workshop will contact all members of her or his group with instructions and a deadline for circulating the papers. The final paper should be the length of a normal conference paper (8-10 pages). All papers will be circulated to members of a discussion group prior to the Institute so that the workshop itself will consist wholly of discussion. Critical Workshop leaders will include Karen Sanchez-Eppler and Benjamin Friedlander.

2009 ANNUAL MEETING IN SASKATCHEWAN

The 2009 Annual Meeting, "Emily Dickinson: Queen Without a Crown," will take place in Regina (the Queen City), Saskatchewan, Canada from July 31 to August 2. The program will focus on the teaching of Dickinson from several perspectives, demonstrated by award-winning instructors within our membership and including teaching Dickinson to children and using online resources.

Words, continued from page 10

sweeps away the extremely contained, pure, orderly surface of the work." His interpretation, she says, is "ferocious and cruel to everybody: poet, singer, pianist, audience." The force of this raw energy is Dickinson herself, concludes Panizza.

"The force of raw energy" could also be applied to the "Condensed Essences" (Higginson's phrase), the intense palette that Dickinson chose to express her allusions to the Shakespearean sonnets as Cynthia MacKenzie demonstrated. Although recent studies by Finnerty, Farr and Messmer, among others, have had much to say about Dickinson's indebtedness to Shakespeare's dramatic works, there has been little attention to the influence of the sonnet sequence on the evolution of her poetic method even though the sonnets were a "well-thumbed" part of the family's Charles Knight edition. Noting the particular appeal for Dickinson of the compression of the sonnet form, MacKenzie's exploration of the "essence" of a sonnet—not simply its conventional 14-line, iambic-pentameter structure, but the essential and original ways Shakespeare used it — demonstrates how Dickinson would have been indebted to many of its elements in the creation her own form of lyric self-expression. One hallmark of that structure is the sonnet's implicit "fault line," as Phyllis Levin, editor of the *Penguin Book of the Sonnet*, asserts, turning as it does, after the eight or twelfth line. Dickinson readers will resonate, too, with the dialogic possibilities raised by poet April Bernard's observation of the sonnet as "a brilliant way to have an argument with oneself."

MacKenzie pointed to Dickinson's "intensity," which she related to that of Shakespeare's wordplay, wordplay that must have been a large part of Dickinson's admiration of the Bard and which shows up in her use of such devices as alliteration, rhyme, and repetition. Along with pointing out a number of Shakespeare/Dickinson parallels such as the ambiguities of sexual desire, the sequencing effect of poems arranged in a fascicle, the sense of audience for the lyrics, and a "poetics that grows out of epistolary principles" as MacKenzie says— at the heart of her presentation was the "essential and highly original" ways that Dickinson transformed the sonnet form for her own uses. Indeed, MacKenzie hardly needed to point out the relevance to Dickinson's poetics of the fundamental underpinnings of Shakespeare's in that he "excels in a

form of verbal emphasis pointing up the conceptual oppositions of his verse. His mind operates consistently on the basis of antithesis carried by paired, pointedly antithetical words as well as by paired concepts." Applying such structural discussions to Dickinson's poems, MacKenzie made a convincing case for the deeply imbedded influence of the writer who taught Dickinson "more than anyone." As MacKenzie suggests, accomplishing what Shakespeare did (again in Vendler's words): making "the experience of reading a poem [into] the experience of pushing back the horizons of thought. . . . entwining in perpetual paradox, the brevity of love, temporal truth, and the fragile strength of art before its extinction." Such possibilities for reading Dickinson with Shakespearean poetics in mind were demonstrated in MacKenzie's reading of "I know that He exists" (Fr365), in which, "Dickinson reverses the sonnet's conventional movement from problem to resolution with its "final stanza that poses disturbing questions, not resolutions."

In the end, perhaps that is the hallmark of Dickinson's palate/palette easel: she ends by "posing disturbing questions, not resolutions." The implied paradox of Dickinson's "kennings," the complexity of the musical adaptations to which her work gives rise, and the revelations arrived at by looking closely at the compressed use of Shakespearean structures are essential to the Dickinson aesthetic, discussed on an early August day against a background of the "Fabrics of the East."

Eleanor Elson Heginbotham, *Professor Emerita, Concordia University Saint Paul, has served on the Board of EDIS. She is the author of* Reading the Fascicles of Emily Dickinson *(Ohio State U P 2003) and a number of articles on Dickinson and others. She is working toward co-editing a collection of essays on the many approaches toward reading the fascicles.*

Haiku, continued from page 11

thought-pause has produced a kind of suspension. It is not merely suspension that *kireji* creates, but an after-image.

Do we find in Dickinson's poems something equivalent to kireji that can produce the rhetorical after-image? Her use of the dash comes first to our mind. "The expressive suspension" that Dickinson's dash can produce functions exactly in the same way as *kireji*. That is to say, the dash checks the flow of meaning or logic in the poem, for example in the last two lines of "Safe in their Alabaster Chambers."

Another haiku element in the ancient pond is its season word "frog." The season word cannot be substituted with something else that merely vaguely expresses the seasonal sense because it sometimes has the function of producing a light satirical effect by mocking the classical connotation it carries. Dickinson, too, revolted against tradition and convention that surrounded her. Many of her poems tell us that the greatest concern to her was to doubt, deny, destroy and recreate in her own way that established order of things and ideas.

Admitting that Dickinson's poems have some characteristics of haiku, are they the better for it? The answer to this question may vary according to the estimation haiku receives. The modern haiku poets often combine words or images in unexpected ways, aiming at giving haiku that charm of the twentieth-century Western poetry which is derived from attaching an exclusive importance to the image. Early haiku also contains the element of salutation, serving as a means of communication where refined sympathy and appreciation are required of both sides.

Dickinson poems can function this way as well, for instance the one beginning"Perhaps they do not go so far/ As we who stay, suppose—/ Perhaps come closer, for the lapse/ Of she corporeal clothes." Here, the expression of condolence is a form of salutation. Haiku is salutation and a means of communication. Dickinson's poems are letters to the world. Through them, she has been sending salutations to us readers.

Michiko Iwata *is a Professor of English at Setsunan University and is also Director of The Emily Dickinson Society of Japan.*

Encounters, continued from page 12

that "puzzled came / To continents of summer... / And birds, of foreign tongue!" (Fr177), or by the spring flowers and creatures–described by Miller as "Eastern wanderers"—about whom Dickinson asked, "Whose multitudes are these? / The Children of whose Turbaned seas— / Or what Circassian Land!" (Fr 162). In other poems she follows explorers and wanderers as diverse as Pizarro and Moses. "For Dickinson," noted Miller, "travel may engender loss, and may never lead a Moses fully to the promised reward, but to leave, to wander, explore, escape, is a human necessity—if only to learn what home means." In some poems, too, travel may be seen as "the precondition for poetry."

In "Exultation is the going / Of an inland soul to sea—" (Fr143), in which "deep Eternity" undoubtedly alludes to death, Miller pointed out also the veiled allusion to the "Eternal East," "the ancient home of spirituality, " a culture so foreign that the traveler leaves "all sense of time behind—the prototypical description of Westerners' travel to the 'timeless' East."

In Dickinson's later poems, the Far East, in particular Japan, which had by then become more familiar to Americans through extended foreign commerce, is seen less as a mythic land than as a real and imaginable place from which travelersmay return to enlarge us through "all that they will tell." In 1860, however, concluded Miller, "American orientalism and her own

experience of travel combined with the stimulus of news about Japan to encourage a fearful but necessary experience of transport to stimulate Dickinson's extraordinary voyage into the development of her mature poetry."

Hiroko Uno concluded this panel with an Eastern perspective on "Emily Dickinson's Encounter with the East," in particular, on "what kind of 'Oriental Tale' Dickinson may have heard, what kind of 'Fabrics of the East' she may have seen," and "how those perceptions may have influenced her difficulty in accepting Christ.

Uno, author of *Emily Dickinson Visits Boston* (Kyoto, 1990), traced the poet's earliest knowledge of Eastern culture and artifacts to her visit to Boston's Chinese Museum in 1846, when she was fifteen. The museum displayed architectural features typical of Chinese temples and exhibited within it life-size wax figures representing various strata of Chinese society, particularly the Emperor and Empress, and Mandarins of various ranks. The figures were dressed in clothing styles appropriate to their stations made from what Uno described as the "fabulous and gorgeous 'Fabrics of the East'" that would have contrasted with the simple clothes Dickinson saw and wore in Amherst. The phrase (adopted as the title for our Kyoto conference) would later appear as an exotic metaphor in Dickinson's poem "His Mind like Fabrics of the East—" (Fr1471).

Uno offered an interpretation of that poem in which the "price" of comprehending God's "Mind" is simply the necessity to comprehend its worth, a task "More arduous" than gold. Said Uno, "Dickinson casts the 'Fabrics of the East' in wondrous, exotic, or mysterious hues, metaphorical 'fabric(ations)' conjuring comparisons to God's 'Mind.'" Another Dickinson poem, "Reportless Subjects, to the Quick" (Fr1118), speaks of an "Oriental Tale," "an-especially exotic and 'fabulous' thing which might be subtly connected with God's mind."

Other poems offer similar hints of Dickinson's appreciation of Eastern fabrics. In "A Shady friend—for Torrid days—" (Fr 306), she compares souls represented by muslin, broadcloth, and organdy and their fear of "the Vane a little to the East—." Uno concluded that "Dickinson often used the 'East' as a metaphor in conjunction with her characteristic problematizing of God as a distant and barely comprehensible realm that is never easy to find."

One further echo of Dickinson's visit to the Chinese Museum turns up in a letter the poet wrote to her friend Abiah Root (L13) shortly after that visit. She noted that two Chinese individuals had accompanied the exhibit, both former opium eaters who had left China in fear of being "unable to break the 'rigid chain of habit' in their own land" but had "now entirely overcome the practice." "There is something peculiarly interesting to me," she wrote, "in their self denial." Uno suggested that this story may have led Dickinson to take particular notice of a display case in the museum presenting information on China's three principal religions, especially Buddhism. The exhibit explained the concept of nirvana, or self-annihilation, sought by Buddha and his followers. "This interpretation of Buddhism, especially of annihilation, must have sounded very fabulous and mysterious to Dickinson," said Uno, perhaps because she herself was struggling with the question of whether or not to accept Christ. In the same letter to Abiah Root, she confesses, "I do not feel that I could give up all for Christ, were I called to die."

Uno concluded her talk by noting that Dickinson's exposure to Eastern artifacts and religion "resonated in her adult imagination. The East was not just 'fabulous' or 'exotic' butdeeply connected with her own religious conflicts of faith."

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

IN THIS ISSUE

1 Arigato to the Emily Dickinson Society of Japan BY MARTHA NELL SMITH
3 A Route of Evanescence: Dickinson and Japan BY GARY STONUM
3 Pursuing Her In Translations BY MARTHA NELL SMITH
4 Dickinson in Cross-Cultural Poetics BY GARY STONUM
5 Why Emily Dickinson is Difficult to Teach in English BY MASEKO TAKEDA
6 Dickinson and Other American Women Poets BY GEROGIANA STRICKLAND
8 Dickinson in Contemporary Popular Culture BY CINDY MACKENZIE
9 The Fabric of Texts BY MARY LOEFFELHOLZ
10 Words, Music, Aesthetics BY ELEANOR ELSON HEGINBOTHAM
11 Dickinson and Haiku BY MICHIKO IWATA
12 Dickinson and the Faces of God BY JED DEPPMAN
12 Dickinson's Encounters With the East BY GEORGIANA STRICKLAND
13 Emily Dickinson's Sisters BY MIDORI ASAHINA
14 Dickinson and Spiritual Practices BY JONNIE GUERRA
15 Code, Communication, Cognition BY MARTHA NELL SMITH
16 Two Views BY JANE DONAHUE EBERWEIN
18 This Page Intentionally Left Blank BY JONATHAN MORSE AND JANET HOLMES
23 Gwyneth Walker BY MARYANNE GARBOWSKY
24 Amherst House Rock BY CRAIG T. FEHRMAN
26 *Emily Dickinson Lexicon* Website Available Online
27 New Publications BY BARBARA KELLY
29 Review of Wendy K. Perriman, *A Wounded Deer* BY MARYANNE GARBOWSKY
30 EDIS Annual Business Meeting BY PAUL CRUMBLEY
31 Members' News
33 Article Continuations

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