Whitman and Dickinson

M. Jimmie Killingsworth, Daneen Wardrop

American Literary Scholarship, 1998, pp. 61-85 (Article)

Published by Duke University Press

4 Whitman and Dickinson

M. Jimmie Killingsworth and Daneen Wardrop

Scholarship in Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson reached a high-water mark with the appearance, for the first time, of encyclopedias for both authors. Further highlights in Whitman scholarship included the first volume of journalism in the ongoing *Collected Writings,* a large number of comparative studies, and a book and several articles treating him in light of women's studies. It was a signal year for reference and resource materials in Dickinson scholarship, especially with the publication of a variorum three-volume edition of her poems, a new volume of letters, and a handbook. Professor Killingsworth prepared the Whitman portion of this chapter, and Professor Wardrop the Dickinson portion.

i Walt Whitman

a. Bibliography and Editing Ed Folsom continues to provide an updated annotated Whitman bibliography (*WWQR* 15: 133–38, 194–99; 16: 43–50, 109–32), which in its thoroughness even includes entries for every article in the new Whitman encyclopedia. The plethora of detail in this resource can at times decrease its usability.

The first volume of the long-awaited edition of Whitman's *Journalism* (Peter Lang), ed. Herbert Bergman, Douglas A. Noverr, and Edward J. Recchia, covers the years from 1834 till 1846. A second volume is promised for next year, with at least one further volume planned for the near future. The preface and introduction of the current volume establish the biographical context for Whitman's career as a journalist, and the writings themselves reveal the depth of his involvement in that profession. As the editors tell us, by the time he published the first edition of *Leaves* in 1855, "Whitman, at the age of thirty-six, had edited eight newspapers, co-edited one paper, and helped edit another; and he had contributed to

over twenty other journals." Critics who see Whitman primarily as a political poet will find in this volume a great deal to justify their emphasis, at least insofar as the "foreground" of *Leaves* is concerned. In all of this work Whitman delved deeply into local and national politics and understood journalism itself in terms of sociopolitical power, arguing that Americans of his day were "a newspaper-ruled people." Editor Whitman contends that "the penny press is the same as the common schools among seminaries of education. They carry light and knowledge in among those who most need it." In his many articles on education we see how Whitman's career moved easily from teaching to local journalism—and later to universalizing poetry—his intellect always seeking a broader audience for the "light and knowledge" he accrued. Though the journalism shows gleamings of the rhetorical techniques that he would refine in his poems, such as direct address of the audience ("I" to "you") and the use of enumerative catalogs of urban scenes, the future poet's references to creative literature and other art forms are relatively few. Political and social issues predominate in these early writings. The volume is well edited, the preface and introduction admirably detailing the methods of textual editing employed. However, the editors could have been more explicit about principles of selection. Too many questions remain about how much, if anything, is left out. Also, the seeming contradictions of the texts are not always resolved by the notes, even though they offer a wealth of information to identify the key names, places, and events to which Whitman refers. Despite omissions and weaknesses, this volume makes a strong contribution to Whitman studies.

A few Whitman manuscripts were published for the first time this year. In "Walt Whitman's Working Notes for the First Edition of *Leaves of Grass*" (*WWQR* 16: 90–95) Ed Folsom edits and comments on a single-page manuscript preserved in the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas. On one side is a "proto-version of the poem that would eventually become 'Song of Myself,' " a list of images hinting that Whitman divided the poem into five large sections, thus contributing to critical discussion of its overall structure. On the other side is a preliminary list of the 12 poems of 1855, all untitled in the first edition, but here given working titles for the sake of arrangement, the most interesting of which is "Slaves," shorthand for the poem now known as "I Sing the Body Electric." In " 'Missing Me One Place Search Another': Three Previously Unpublished Walt Whitman Notebooks" (*WWQR* 15: 147–

60) Charles Green publishes the edited texts of three short notebooks from the late 1870s with ample notes and commentary.

A new edition of the much-loved *Walt Whitman: The Measure of His Song* (Holy Cow! Press), ed. Jim Perelman et al., collects 108 verse and prose responses to Walt Whitman written not by academic critics but by other poets. The editors retain most items from the earlier edition (1981)—including outstanding pieces by D. H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, William Carlos Williams, Langston Hughes, Pablo Neruda, Federico García Lorca, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Allen Ginsberg, Denise Levertov, Louis Simpson, Galway Kinnell, June Jordan, and Robert Bly—along with 22 new items by such writers as Willa Cather, Adrienne Rich, Sharon Olds, Marge Piercy, Chou Ping, Sherman Alexie, Garrett Hongo, and Rudolfo Anaya. The book includes a 700-item bibliography by Ed Folsom, as well as Folsom's insightful introductory essay "Talking Back to Walt Whitman." The new version of the essay takes note of the "growing diversity" of responses to Whitman, an increasing number of them from women, Latin Americans and Chicanos, African Americans, Native Americans, and Asians. The essay and the intriguing writings collected in this book show clearly that "backtalk to Whitman" is a phenomenon to be reckoned with in modern poetry and poetics.

b. Books Whitman studies benefit from the publication of two important reference books, both of which help us to manage the wealth of scholarly materials now available. Joann P. Krieg's *A Whitman Chronology* (Iowa) supplies a readable and reliable day-to-day account of key actions and actors in Whitman's life. Drawing on the copious biographical works as well as published letters and manuscripts, this volume provides a helpful starting point or a reliable quick reference for students of Whitman biography.

For the study of specialized topics in the life and works, we now have another good point of departure: *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia* (Garland), ed. J. R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings. The 760 entries range over a truly impressive variety of topics, including each edition of *Leaves of Grass;* each of the major poems and many of the prose works; people, places, and events from the poet's biography; matters of poetic form (such as "Prosody," "Epic Structure," and "Catalogues"); influences on Whitman and people whom he influenced; historical topics and themes; and criticism and major approaches to the study of Whitman's works. Each entry contains a selective bibliography. General features

include a brief chronology of Whitman's life, a Whitman family genealogy, photographs, and an excellent index that directs readers to topics contained within alphabetical entries but not given entries of their own (such as Marietta Alboni, who is discussed under "Opera"; or "New Criticism," which falls under "Trends in Whitman Scholarship"; or "homosexuality," which perhaps ought to have its own entry but is covered in entries on individual poems and other topics such as "Comradeship"). The contributors include many new voices in Whitman studies as well as some of the most prominent, such as Harold Aspiz, Roger Asselineau, Betsy Erkkila, Ed Folsom, Jerome Loving, Robert K. Martin, James E. Miller Jr., Joel Myerson, David S. Reynolds, and M. Wynn Thomas. Many entries take on a particular authority in being produced by scholars who have written books on the topic: to name a few, Arthur Golden on "Whitman's Blue Book," Ivan Marki on the 1855 edition of *Leaves,* Walter Grünzweig on the reception of Whitman in Germany, Guiyou Huang on the Chinese reception, Robert Leigh Davis on Whitman's "Civil War Nursing," Martin Klammer on "Slavery and Abolitionism," Luke Mancuso on "Reconstruction," and Sherry Ceniza's several entries on Whitman and women.

Some unevenness in the writing is to be expected in a project with so many contributors, but to the editors' credit, the quality in this volume is evenly good. The contributions are readable and up-to-date, emphasizing scholarly consensus on important issues. The entries on individual poems are especially helpful, each beginning with a publication history, followed by a summary of the main themes and technical innovations, with comments on the poems' historical contexts as well as references to the best-known interpretations. Some of these—notably Mark Bauerlein on "Out of the Cradle" and James Miller on "Song of Myself"—offer wonderfully condensed critical readings, the perfect starting point for readers new to the poems. Other entries do the same for key themes—Aspiz on "Death" and Folsom on "Democracy," for example—and theoretical and formal topics, such as Robert Johnstone on "Poetic Theory" and James Perrin Warren on "Style and Technique(s)." The entries typically summarize existing scholarship, though a few appear to be based on unpublished work, such as Susan Day Dean's "Quakers and Quakerism" and Lorelei Cederstrom's "Whitman's Reception in Canada"; and some deal with topics that point toward innovative directions in interpretation—Steven Olson's "Space," for example, or Terry Mulcaire's "Technology." Other authoritative entries serve as invaluable

aids to scholarship generally, notably Donald Kummings on "Bibliographies" and Alice L. Birney on "Whitman Collectors and Collections." In all, *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia* represents a major accomplishment in contemporary literary scholarship, a reference tool of great value and a strong record of—and tribute to—Whitman research.

The one book of criticism that appeared this year, Sherry Ceniza's *Walt Whitman and 19th-Century Women Reformers* (Alabama), takes a historical approach to Whitman and women, a topic long overdue for treatment in a book-length study (and by a female author). Ceniza uses previous writings on Whitman's politics (such as the work of Erkkila, Folsom, and Thomas) and sexuality and sexual politics (Aspiz, Killingsworth, Lynch, and Martin), but she goes far beyond any of these in her treatment of Whitman's historically bound views on women's roles and women's rights. The method is ingenious, placing Whitman's own writings on women adjacent to those of 19th-century American women writers who knew his work, and whose work he knew—writers largely ignored or dismissed by earlier scholars—tracing the interplay of reception and influence with great skill and insight. After a chapter that examines the formative influence of Whitman's mother through the study of her letters to Whitman, Ceniza offers chapters on three key women reformers, Abby Hills Price, Paulina Wright Davis, and Ernestine L. Rose, then concludes with a chapter that surveys responses of 19th-century women to the 1860 edition of *Leaves.* She states that, while Whitman may have sentimentalized motherhood and other aspects of female life in some of his writings, he generally presents us with a challenging and at times radical view of womanhood, centering on the concept of the "empowered mother." Ceniza walks a fine line in this revisionist study of the poet, gracefully rewriting a male-dominated tradition of interpretation while never stooping to the facile method of criticizing the poet or his critics out of their historical contexts. The extensive research and subtle interpretations of Whitman's interactions with the "strong" women who were also among his earliest readers make this work especially stimulating.

c. Articles and Chapters In other ways too this was the year of the woman in Whitman scholarship. Three articles productively apply women's studies approaches to Whitman's life and work. In "Walt Whitman and the Quaker Woman" (*WWQR* 16: 1–22) Christina Davey argues that a fuller understanding of the Quaker ideal of womanhood,

and especially motherhood, helps to resolve some of the confusion or frustration that many critics (including me) have felt over Whitman's seemingly inconsistent portrayal of womanhood in his poems and such prose writings as *Democratic Vistas.* Especially convincing are Davey's claims that, in light of Quaker values, passivity is not necessarily the polar opposite of activity and that the sexually and politically energetic female figures of Whitman's verse are not so hard to reconcile with the figures of pacific mothers, if we apply Quaker models rather than such sentimental models as the Cult of True Womanhood.

Articles by Daneen Wardrop and Beth Jensen also offer extensions and revisions of older readings by applying French feminist theory, especially that of Julia Kristeva, whose applicability to Whitman's poems has been noticed but never fully developed (see, for example, my 1989 book, *Whitman's Poetry of the Body*). Wardrop's "Whitman as Furtive Mother: The Supplementary Jouissance of the 'Ambushed Womb' in 'Song of Myself' " (*TSLL* 40: 142–57) starts with a bundle of contemporaneous observations, including John Burroughs's representation of the poet as a "mother man," Whitman's own claim that his poems have hidden meanings that "few, very few" can understand and "oftenest women," and his well-known remark that there "is something in my nature furtive like an old hen." From these hints, Wardrop launches into an insightful reading of "Song of Myself" as a poem that "encodes the process of gestation," with the world of the poem passing "through" the speaker and the "spread" of his own body. Pregnancy offers a major organizing principle for the poem, and the images of insemination, gestation, and delivery, along with the transgressing of gender in the portrayal of the speaker as a "mother man," provide the energy by which the poet tests the limits of what Kristeva calls the "Symbolic" realm of language and law, reaching for the level of the Kristevan "Semiotic," the primeval "language" of the unconscious body as well as the level of mysticism, which Hélène Cixous associates with the jouissance and power of the pregnant woman.

In " 'The Low and Delicious Word Death': The Acquisition of Language in 'Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking' " (*Intertexts* 2: 131–43) Beth Jensen reads another of Whitman's best-known poems as a kind of allegory for Kristevan theory, this time focusing on the shattering of the "M/other-child dyad" at the moment that the child becomes a conscious subject and enters the realm of the Symbolic, associated with the father, culture, and identity. The 1860 version of "Out of the Cradle Endlessly

Rocking," according to Jensen, represents a turning point in Whitman's poetic career, a time when he became conscious of his practice in the 1855 and 1856 poems of permitting the "disruptive power of the Semiotic" to guide his poetic composition. From 1860 on, it is as if the Symbolic reclaims control of the wild profusion that brought forth the formal and thematic effects of the early poems in a process that parallels and re-enacts the child's entry into subjecthood during the period of language acquisition.

Kristeva's theory also figures prominently in Eric Murphy Selinger's chapter on Whitman in *What Is This Then Between Us? Traditions of Love in American Poetry* (Cornell). Selinger's complex and allusive argument—at times hard to follow, distracting in the many references to writers and philosophers from different periods, all crowded into close paragraphs—boils down to an understanding of Whitman as a poet whose primary lover is his reader, the "you" of his poems, on whom the poet bestows his hope, his trust, his ideals, and the best of his knowledge. In this view, the earliest and greatest poems of *Leaves of Grass* make it a "therapeutic book" that fits Kristeva's concept of "countertransference love, the love of analyst for patient." No biographical or historicist reading fully accounts for this phenomenon, according to Selinger, nor is it fully comprehended by either early readers, who welcomed the poet's embrace, or by later critics like Kerry Larson and Tenney Nathanson (here misidentified as "Terry") who treat Whitman's claims to be present to the reader with deconstructive skepticism. Though Selinger's reading of Whitman lacks focus, his framing of questions on the topic of love, like his contextualizing of Whitman's treatment of love within the large intertext of American poetry (in which the highly interesting response of Adrienne Rich to the earlier masculine poet is particularly noteworthy), is useful and intriguing overall.

Several other writers also take up the idea of *Leaves of Grass* as a text with socially and politically edifying aims. In "No Wasted Words: Whitman's Original Energy" (*NCS* 12: 7–63) Joe Amato argues that Whitman's poems are founded on the principle of language as "a source of renewable creative energy" and that certain poems (notably "Song of the Rolling Earth" and "This Compost") are best read in light of mid-19th-century scientific theories of energy. Drawing on Foucault's historicizing views from *The Order of Things* in a detailed historical argument of his own, Amato traces what he sees as Whitman's attempt, among other things, to "reforge the link between natural processes and word process-

ing in terms of those latent and active energies . . . that infiltrate, for him, the relationship between words, spoken and unspoken, and things." But Whitman also realized that natural processes, as well as social processes, tend to absorb as well as release energy. In sum, then, poetry for him was a "struggle to articulate the irrevocable motion of natural processes while simultaneously recuperating the transformative vitalities of a troubled nation."

Writing from the perspective of ecocriticism, Daniel J. Philippon argues in " 'I Only Seek to Put You in Rapport': Message and Method in Walt Whitman's *Specimen Days,*" pp. 179–93 in *Reading the Earth,* that in the "nature notes" of this major prose work Whitman's aim is not merely to describe the objects of nature in the spectatorial fashion of a travel writer or scientific essayist but rather to "encourage engagement with the non-human world," and that "the writing of *Specimen Days* was itself a functional tool for Whitman, a form of therapy to help him recover from the devastating series of physical and emotional difficulties he faced in the decade following the Civil War." In using this approach Whitman introduced methods and values that would inform the "back-to-nature movement" that first appeared in the late 19th century. However, he had to overcome the philosophical and formal problems of writing about an object (nature) that he considered largely beyond the limits of language, a problem he solved with a special rhetoric employing appeals to spontaneity, intimacy, and immediacy, and structuring the text as "a series of discontinuous fragments" that "emphasize the ongoing, organic process of sensory perception."

Turning from nature to culture, Ed Cutler's "Passage to Modernity: *Leaves of Grass* and the 1853 Crystal Palace Exhibition in New York" (*WWQR* 16: 65–89) shows how Whitman borrowed not only the modernist ideology of the famous exhibition—urging his readers to respond with him to the challenge of modern science and industry and to seek its empowerment, an attitude he questioned in his later writings but never entirely abandoned—but also something of its form, a preference for metonymic association over metaphorical transformation. In *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America* (Harvard) Richard Rorty also sees Whitman as a socially therapeutic writer, whose message for present-day Americans brings him into register with the pragmatism of John Dewey. Rorty holds that Whitman and Dewey (despite their differences in tone and perspective: "Whitman's image of democracy was of lovers embracing. Dewey's was of a town meeting.")

were among the chief creators of a "civic religion" that by means of a "thoroughgoing secularism" created an activist spirit of critical but patriotic leftist thought. This spirit has been undermined by the generational experience of the Vietnam War and has led to the replacement of the Old Left by a "retrospective and spectatorial" left more concerned with the culture wars than with (in Rorty's view) the more substantive issues of labor, economics, and civil rights. Whitman scholars will be put off by some of the broad claims of these lectures and amused if not embarrassed by some of the observations ("Whitman's hopes . . . began to be realized only in the youth culture of the 1960s. Whitman would have been delighted by rock-and-roll, drugs, and the kind of casual, friendly copulation which is insouciant about the homosexual-heterosexual distinction"). But there is much else to recommend the arguments of this major philosopher, especially in the connection of Whitman to pragmatism, a connection that deserves fuller treatment and that appears briefly in a book focused primarily on rhetoric and composition in America: Hephzibah Roskelly and Kate Ronald's *Reason to Believe: Romanticism, Pragmatism, and the Teaching of Writing* (SUNY).

The political dimension emerges again in new works on Whitman and the Civil War, a topic that has received considerable attention in the last few years. In "Caresser of Life: Walt Whitman and the Civil War" (*WWQR* 15: 67–86) Jerome Loving illuminates one of the more obscure periods of the poet's life, the first two years of the war, during which Whitman retreated to Brooklyn and, as Loving shows, immersed himself in work as a local journalist. This article anticipates Loving's forthcoming biography, *Walt Whitman: The Song of Himself* (Calif., 1999). M. Wynn Thomas reads Whitman in "the great tradition of weather diarists" in "Weathering the Storm: Whitman and the Civil War" (*WWQR* 15: 87–109). In a subtle argument based on the premise that "what we blithely call 'the weather' is in fact a complex socio-scientific construct," Thomas shows how Whitman drew upon the changing concept of weather in his day—capitalizing on the "crossover from the real science of his time to the older, prescientific modes of thinking"—to create a vocabulary for capturing in language the agonizing progression of the war from its first muddy battles to the assassination of President Lincoln. The rhetorical and conceptual functions that Thomas identifies for the weather in Whitman's prose works and poetry (notably "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd") are far-ranging and fascinating: "The weather as a mnemonic device, designed to fix the inner meaning

of an event in national memory; the weather employed as a symbolic means of creating a climate of sympathy in the civilian world for the conditions of living and dying at the front as in the hospitals; the weather as somehow mysteriously sympathizing with the Union cause, and signifying, in its own terms, the uniqueness of a democratic society; the weather as symbolically legitimizing and consecrating the Northern effort through portents; the weather as a means of turning a socio-political struggle into a cosmically significant conflict, and in the process 'naturalizing' Northern, democratic society."

Other writers take up the perennially engaging issue of sexuality and identity in Whitman's poems. In "The Canon in the Closet: Matthiessen's Whitman, Whitman's Matthiessen" (*AL* 70: 799–832) Jay Grossman reevaluates F. O. Matthiessen's treatment of Whitman in his influential 1941 study *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* in light of remarks that Matthiessen made in private letters to his homosexual lover, Russell Cheney. Matthiessen never mentions "Calamus" in *American Renaissance,* and he tends to favor the restraint, "maturity," and "heteronormativity" more apparent in Thoreau's writing than in Whitman's. By contrast, "Matthiessen's private version of Whitman"—in which the poet becomes "the primary proponent for both bodily restraint and bodily indulgence—an advocate for temperance when he claims the sanctity of the body and for open sexual expression when he insists upon the equal validity of the claims of the body and the soul"—finds no place in his public writing. Moreover, Matthiessen's "identitarian" approach to homosexuality differs strongly from that of his correspondent Cheney, an older man with a view of sexuality more typical of the 19th century, one perhaps ironically more in line with Whitman's own understanding. This subtle article, with its glimpse into the living history of gay discourses, shows us the complexity of the topic, which though widely treated may not yet be thoroughly comprehended. In "Whitman, Sexuality, and Poetic Authority" (*Raritan* 17, iv: 98–119) Mark Maslan adds to the complexity of the picture by demonstrating how Whitman consistently associates male homosexual desire with poetic inspiration, both of which, in Maslan's view, "involve an invasion of the body and a suspension of his agency"; moreover, the poet secures cultural authority (rather than defying it in the manner of contemporary theorists of sexuality) by repudiating "heterosexual individualism"—an "effort supported by the beliefs and conventions of his literary culture—beliefs and conventions he doesn't reject so much as

he does extend and perpetuate them." By contrast, Eric R. Gray's "Sexual Anxiety and Whitman's 'O Hot-Cheek'd and Blushing' " (*ATQ* 12: 5–26) offers a more reductive reading, arguing that the famous lines omitted from later versions of "The Sleepers" enact the Oedipal fantasies of "classical" dreams of sexual anxiety as interpreted by unreconstructed Freudian psychoanalysis.

Numerous essays consider Whitman in relation to other writers. A special issue of *Modern Language Studies* (28, ii), ed. Geoffrey Sill, ponders Whitman's commonalities with another icon of American culture, Benjamin Franklin. In his introduction, "Three Protestant Dissenters: Defoe, Franklin, Whitman" (pp. 1–11), Sill briefly places Whitman in the "benevolist tradition" and in the tradition of public engagement that runs from Defoe to Franklin. In another contribution, "Walt Whitman: Benjamin Franklin's Representative Man" (pp. 29–39), David S. Reynolds offers a paragraph for each of the famous 13 virtues that Franklin outlines in his *Autobiography,* showing how Whitman as a man and writer exemplified these ideals of character. Reynolds admits, as does Sill, that the connection is sometimes a stretch, notably on the virtues of "Chastity" and "Humility." In "Managing the Public: Strategic Publication in Franklin and Whitman" (pp. 55–67) Michael Drexler surveys the problems that Whitman and Franklin faced at different stages of the development of "print culture" in attempting different versions of mass communication. And in "The Loafer and the Loaf-Buyer: Whitman, Franklin, and Urban Space" (pp. 42–53) Joseph Murphy contrasts the Philadelphia of Franklin with the Philadelphia that Whitman knew. None of these articles much advances our understanding of Whitman's life or works. The same is true of two brief articles that compare and contrast Whitman to other American writers: Victor M. Depta's "Dickinson and Whitman: Circumference and Leaf" (*CentR* 42: 85–88), which more or less argues that the author's students are justified in preferring Dickinson over Whitman; and David B. Baldwin's "Whitman and Cooper" (*James Fenimore Cooper Society Newsletter* 9, i: 4–6), which surveys Whitman's remarks on Cooper made to Horace Traubel and traces a few thematic similarities.

One article included in the special *MLS* issue, "Placing the Impalpable: Walt Whitman and Elias Hicks" (*MLS* 28, ii: 69–86) by Glenn N. Cummings, makes a stronger contribution by adding to the growing number of studies that explore the Quaker influence in Whitman's life and work. Cummings convincingly argues that we need to acknowledge

an important distinction in the history of Quakerism that often goes unnoticed in Whitman studies, the difference between Hicksite Quakerism and other strains. Whitman's connection to a famous African American contemporary is demonstrated in Joann P. Krieg's "Whitman and Sojourner Truth" (*WWQR* 16: 32–36). Krieg presents evidence from an 1881 letter to Whitman from Elisa Leggett that Truth had heard Whitman's poems read and much admired them, but she can find no indication of Whitman's response. The influence of Whitman on the 20th-century American poet William Bronk is much clearer. In *The "Winter Mind": William Bronk and American Letters* (Fairleigh Dickinson) Burt Kimmelman shows how Bronk was drawn to what he perceived as Whitman's "dynamic and nurturing" notion of beauty (87) and his exuberant treatment of desire as central to the poetic enterprise.

British writers are the subject of two interesting influence studies. In "Martin Tupper, Walt Whitman, and the Early Reviews of *Leaves of Grass*" (*WWQR* 16: 23–31) Matt Cohen takes up the work of a contemporaneous writer with whom Whitman was frequently (and often humorously) compared. From 1856 to 1860, eight reviews of Whitman allude to Martin Farquhar Tupper, a religious and politically conservative poet who actually had little in common with Whitman except for his use of free verse and his display of what reviewers perceived as a florid egotism. Cohen establishes that Whitman was familiar with Tupper's work before he wrote *Leaves of Grass* and may have borrowed certain techniques. This fact, as Cohen smartly notes, suggests a "curious irony": "that Whitman's famous formal innovations, now seemingly the inevitable poetics of a democratic bard, may have been shaped by the success of an aristocratic aspiring poet laureate" from the Old World. Whitman's influence on a British poet of the next generation, Gerard Manley Hopkins, receives brief treatment in Keith Sagar's "Hopkins and the Religion of the Diamond Body" (*CQ* 27: 15–44). In many ways Hopkins sought to eradicate the qualities he held in common with Whitman, above all his deep sympathy for nature and physical existence—a great tragedy, in Sagar's view, since Hopkins falls into the hubris that marks the condition of modern humanity, the self-conscious pride that alienates people from nature, from nonhuman life forms, and ultimately from their very selves (seeking after God, but hopelessly stuck in earthly existence). By contrast, Whitman's "exaltation of self is always qualified by his comedy . . . and balanced by an equally exaggerated humility."

Whitman's celebration of the soul as an immanent and palpable

presence brings him into line with other mystics in various religious traditions. The theme of "awakening" in *Leaves of Grass* connects the poet to Rumi, "Turkey's unofficial national saint," argues Judith Yarnall in "Whitman's *Tekke*" (*SWR* 83: 329–47). The ancient religions of India, which have proved a fruitful ground for comparative studies in Whitman scholarship, have yet to be exhausted, as O. P. Malhotra demonstrates in "Walt Whitman and Sri Aurobindo: The Mystics," pp. 11–18 in *Indian Views on American Literature* (Prestige). In "Whitman's 'Shadowy Dwarf': A Source in Hindu Mythology" (*WWQR* 15: 185–87) Nathaniel H. Preston traces an allusion in *Democratic Vistas* to the story of Vamana, an avatar of Vishnu. In answer to critics who have treated Hindu readings of Whitman with skepticism on the grounds that Whitman's writings do not reveal overt familiarity with Hindu culture, Preston justly claims that his evidence proves that the poet "had a deeper acquaintance with [Indian religion] than most critics allow, and . . . used it both as a source of ideas and as a means to add an air of exoticism to his poems."

The political Whitman also figures in this year's comparative studies. In "Whitman and Lebanon's Adonis" (*WWQR* 15: 180–84) Roger Asselineau and Ed Folsom show how "talking back to Whitman" forms one strategy for the social and political critique of modern urban America in the work of the contemporary poet Ali Ahmed Said, who writes under the pen name of Adonis. A similar pattern emerges in the work of "the 'National' poet of the Dominican Republic," as Christopher Conway demonstrates in "Of Subjects and Cowboys: Frontier and History in Pedro Mir's 'Countersong to Walt Whitman'" (*WWQR* 15: 161–71). According to Conway, "Mir's representation of Whitman exalts the democratic potential of the U.S. and damns its imperial excesses through a retelling of U.S. history from the colonial period to the twentieth century." In "A Newer Realm of Poetry: Whitman and Ai Qing," Guiyou Huang compares the work of Whitman with that of Ai, who as a pioneering modernist in Chinese poetry published translations of Whitman's poems in his magazine the *Poetry Journal.* Though lacking Whitman's "inflating ego," Ai shared with the American poet a recognition of poetry's ideological function as "a catalyst to emotional and physical forces" as well as a willingness to experiment with form and a strong sense of "sympathy, freedom, and dedication to the common people." M. Wynn Thomas argues in "Walt Whitman and Risorgimento Nationalism," pp. 345–67 in *Literature of Region and Nation,* ed. Winni-

fred M. Bogaards (Univ. of Brunswick in St. John), that Whitman's poetry surprisingly reproduces the central ambivalences of this 19th-century European concept of nationalism. In the same volume Maria Clara B. Paro's essay "Walt Whitman's Brazilian Readers" (pp. 368–80) considers the Brazilian reception of Whitman as poet and person in 20th-century periodicals and translations.

ii Emily Dickinson

a. Editing and Reference Whether millennial sweep or coincidence, this is a year of reckoning for Dickinson studies—consolidation, considered review, amalgamation. For primary resources and reference works, the recent scholarship is extraordinary. The appearance of R. W. Franklin's three-volume *Poems of Emily Dickinson: Variorum Edition* (Belknap) forms further opportunities to test the critical milieu already both invigorated and wracked by questions concerning the constitution of the Dickinson text. Many such contemporary inquiries began with or were intensified by Franklin's *The Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson* (1991), which provided for the first time facsimiles of the holograph versions of Dickinson's poems contained in fascicles and sets. Though the variorum edition does not include facsimiles, it does provide the most thorough presentation to date of each poem, thereby eclipsing the formerly standard scholarly edition, Thomas Johnson's *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1955), which Franklin acknowledges "has been essential to Dickinson scholarship for over forty years." Franklin's edition is most valuable for providing all known versions of any one poem, including fascicle versions. While the same or similar information sometimes is provided in the Johnson edition, it is usually marginal and never affords the advantage of the Franklin edition in setting out all versions at once, equally, on the page. The principal contribution of the variorum, then, is perspective. Franklin states his purpose as moving in the recent direction of "increasing fidelity to what Dickinson wrote," and the volumes as a whole stay true to that purpose. He chooses the traditional format of retaining the line divisions expected in quatrains and other standard poetic forms, but he specifies in notes directly following each poem the line divisions by page, as Dickinson wrote them. Franklin also redates poems, adds several poems, and omits several that he sees as belonging properly with another work. The edition contains useful appendices indicating fascicle and set transcriptions, poems published in Dickin-

son's lifetime, recipients of letters in which poems were included, and more. For some time there may be disagreement about using the new Franklin numbers to identify Dickinson poems, but it is hard to imagine that the Franklin variorum will not be the standard edition for at least the next 40 years.

This year also features *Open Me Carefully: Emily Dickinson's Intimate Letters to Susan Huntington Dickinson* (Paris Press), ed. Ellen Louise Hart and Martha Nell Smith. This edition of letters provides an antidote to the Dickinson popularly perceived as lilting, ineffable, reclusive, and victimized by a love unrequited by a male admirer. Hart and Smith argue that the Dickinson who emerges from the letters she wrote to her sister-in-law, Susan Huntington Gilbert Dickinson, is a vital woman engaged in the workings of her art, needing as does any writer her privacy but not to the exclusion of intimate relationships with others, especially Susan. The editors attribute the lack of attention given to Sue as the result of a critical undervaluing of the biographical work undertaken by Martha Dickinson Bianchi, Susan's daughter and Emily's niece, and the overvaluing of the work done by Mabel Loomis Todd, who mythologized Emily as a retiring 19th-century "poetess." Susan lived next door to Emily for four decades, and the poet wrote to her more often than any other person, much more often and frequently than to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, previously understood to be Dickinson's primary artistic mentor. The edition retains the original line breaks from the letters, so that the letters take on a distinctive shape not associated with them before. Given the opportunity to read all material to one single correspondent, the reader can perceive these letters in the light of a new immediacy and interconnectedness. This edition makes a strong case for Sue as an important advisor and confidant in the matters of Dickinson's making of poetry—an important enough realization in itself—but it also shows Dickinson engaged in "the complexities of family life and human relationships," a person who "knew love, rejection, forgiveness, jealousy, despair, and electric passion."

An Emily Dickinson Encyclopedia (Greenwood), ed. Jane Donahue Eberwein, presents a panoply of Dickinsonia certain to captivate old-hand scholars and novices alike. Reflecting some of the diverse approaches to Dickinson, as Eberwein points out in her preface, the encyclopedia includes ample bibliographical information, theoretical approaches, themes within the poems, intellectual perspectives, and readings of many of the most controversial poems. Entries range among

the rubrics, presented here as a random sampling: Black Cake; Death, As Subject; Insects; Lovers, Speculation About; Musical Settings; Norcross Cousins; Postage Stamp; Puritan Heritage; Scandinavian Responses to Dickinson; Valentines, Words, and "The Yellow Rose of Texas." The contributors create through the intensity and rigor of their arguments capsule essays. For instance, Suzanne Juhasz's entry on "Metaphor" offers an excursis on poetics itself; Martha Nell Smith's entry on "Humor" proves to be astute as well as truly funny, given the Dickinson examples; Gary Lee Stonum's entry on "The Sublime" places Dickinson within European and American intellectual contexts. The encyclopedia uses the asterisk to cross-reference entries, affording the volume, without the clicking, a hypertext-like accessibility among varying concepts. Perusing here is a delight.

Finally, *The Emily Dickinson Handbook* (Mass.) provides a selection of exceptionally fine essays. Scrupulously edited by Gudrun Grabher, Roland Hagenbüchle, and Cristanne Miller, the handbook will undoubtedly provide a touchstone for anyone interested in Emily Dickinson and the ongoing conversations among those who read her works. At the same time retrospective and anticipatory, it contains lucid essays written by a who's who of Dickinson scholars. Initiated, appropriately enough, with an introduction by biographer Richard Sewall, "The Continuing Presence of Emily Dickinson" (pp. 3–7), the case is made again for the unabating engagement with Dickinson, whose "strangeness never wears off." Next, Martha Ackmann's "Biographical Studies of Dickinson" (pp. 11–23) commences the essays proper with a combination of recapitulation of biographical knowledge and discovery that is refreshing as well as representative of the volume as a whole. (One quibble, though: good as it is, I wonder why the handbook offers only one essay under the subtitle "Biography," as opposed to four, for example, under "Historical Context.") In her "Dickinson's Manuscripts" (pp. 113–37) Martha Nell Smith provides a fine discussion of the controversial arguments concerning the manuscripts, rendering commonsensical what has in the past sounded incendiary. Her smart, even, global tone makes her the ideal spokesperson for this discussion. Sharon Cameron's "Dickinson's Fascicles" (pp. 138–60), in reprising the concepts from her *Choosing Not Choosing* (1992), creates a reading as exhilarating as those about infinity or chaos theory. Cameron's first and last paragraphs, in particular, ask questions that provide a compendium of the issues that surround and invigorate the contemporary experience of reading Dickinson. One of

the joys of engaging with these essays derives from the experience of rejuvenation for the teacher of Dickinson, as for example in the insights offered by David Porter in "Searching for Dickinson's Themes" (pp. 183–96) and Robert Weisbuch in "Prisming Dickinson, or Gathering Paradise by Letting Go" (pp. 197–223). Porter confides that his "tactics in the classroom run to polar extremes," sometimes broaching "the random-chaotic approach" and sometimes resorting to the listing of themes. Weisbuch begins by offering the caveat: "I always give myself three dogmatic orders to reach this radically undogmatic poet: Don't point, don't pry, don't settle for one truth." Weisbuch's essay, as do many others, revisits his former scholarship, so as to showcase faceted minds constantly rethinking and reworking their involvement with Dickinson's poems. Probably this is the greatest reward of *The Emily Dickinson Handbook:* these authors grapple with their changing ways of approaching Dickinson over the years, thus providing the reader a universal perspective and depth.

b. Books Three books covering the divergent topics of religion, 19th-century women poets, and illness appeared this year. Roger Lundin's *Emily Dickinson and the Art of Belief* (Eerdmans) approaches Dickinson's particular type of Christianity, or resistance to Christianity, in a way that is both general and gracious, and also specific enough for the scholar who needs a counterweight to solely secular orientations to Dickinson. Lundin's book unfolds a religious biography of Dickinson using both well-known poems and poems not usually analyzed in other critical studies. Far from doctrinaire, Lundin argues that Dickinson's poetry addressed the certainties and uncertainties of belief, stressing that she was familiar with major theological questions of her time: "Emily Dickinson stands as one of the major religious thinkers of her age," he states, and she knew "the Christian tradition, and especially its scriptures and hymns, in depth." *Emily Dickinson and the Art of Belief* includes useful historical information concerning, for example, the Revival of 1850 as it affected the First Church of Amherst, and the revivalist societies at Amherst College and Mount Holyoke Female Seminary. Lundin reinforces his arguments by recourse to social historians and literary critics and at the same time contextualizes Dickinson within the framework of theologians, religious thinkers, and scholars such as Augustine, Karl Barth, C. S. Lewis, Louise Stevenson, and James Turner. His fresh approach allows him to ask moving questions, such as "Was Christ [for Dickinson]

the Son whose suffering pointed to the forgiving heart of God his Father and the heavenly mansion filled with many rooms? Or was Jesus just another orphan, like all the rest of us, destined to discover nothing but 'Frantic Chance' at the very heart of things?" Lundin's inquiry allows us to consider Dickinson at the core of her Calvinist persuasions even as she instigates postmodern despair and dissolution of faith.

Elizabeth Petrino, in *Emily Dickinson and Her Contemporaries: Women's Verse in America, 1820–1885* (New England), provides useful historical detail by which to perceive the writing market for women authors, especially in a long chapter on 19th-century publishing standards. There Petrino discusses the anthologizing practices of Rufus Griswold and Caroline May in compiling their collections of poetry, but she also assesses afresh the opportunities for women's poetry in the marketplace. To this effect she includes a discussion of the influence of "gentleman publishers," who along with editing would provide "gentlemanly services" for women writers, such as paying bills, giving financial advice, or performing personal favors. Male editors' prefaces to female writers' works, in presuming a kind of paternity to the text, continued throughout that century and the next to shape and predetermine the ways in which readers would erroneously approach the poems as incomplete, effusive, and fanciful. In the chapter on Lydia Sigourney and the child elegy, Petrino discusses such expected poets as Elizabeth Oakes Smith and Hannah F. Gould but also relatively little-known ones like Emma Alice Brown. She continues where Barton Levi St. Armand leaves off in his groundbreaking discussion of the 19th-century culture of death in *Emily Dickinson and Her Culture* (1984). Probably most usefully, Petrino intersperses delightful observations concerning the portrayal of children in the visual arts, including their oversized representation at the beginning of the century, and their perceived link with nature. Despite the flat introduction that examines her topic in well-traversed terms and offers arguments that sound like glosses of her predecessors, Emily Stipes Watts, Cheryl Walker, and Alicia Ostriker, *Emily Dickinson and Her Contemporaries* finds an intent and tone afterward, developing a useful restatement of the topic at the same time that it creates its own depths of observation regarding it.

Emily Dickinson's Vision: Illness and Identity in Her Poetry (Florida), by James Guthrie, finds an approach to Dickinson's biography and poetry by exploring her failings of health, especially in the first chapter, which targets Dickinson's eye illness, exotropia. Guthrie claims that Dickinson's

renunciation of society was not a strategy, as has usually been claimed in the last two decades, but a necessity, given her illness. Of course, Guthrie runs grave dangers of biographical fallacy by applying the poems to Dickinson's life: that issue had culminated in John Cody's *After Great Pain* (1971), and to see it resurface now seems odd. Guthrie, as was Cody, is careful to acknowledge this danger of his work, understanding that such an approach might diminish the poems. Still, it does seem worthwhile to point out, as Guthrie does, that considerable metaphors of sickness exist in the poems and that, patientlike, Dickinson wrote to Higginson "as if he were a doctor." It is also worth emphasizing that Guthrie pays careful attention to the poems, and his reading of each is valuable. After the first chapter, the other chapters move from medicine into different 19th-century empirical methods—astronomy, mathematics, the study of nature, among them—so that, overall, *Emily Dickinson's Vision* is most interesting as a book about Dickinson and science.

c. Articles and Chapters Several wonderfully daring articles redefine Dickinson, with reference to her manuscripts, gender identity and passion, and historical context. Domnhall Mitchell reexamines the assumptions of current textual scholarship in his "Revising the Script: Emily Dickinson's Manuscripts" (*AL* 70: 705–37). In an inquiry long overdue in Dickinson scholarship, Mitchell questions the recent tendency to see Dickinson's manuscripts as postmodern experiments that destabilize and challenge print culture. With a procedure fresh, rigorous, and open-minded, Mitchell's objective is not to debunk textual scholarship such as that conducted by Jerome McGann, Susan Howe, Martha Nell Smith, and Louise Ellen Hart, but to revisit many of the claims that he states need further testing. (Perhaps including empirical research: at one point Mitchell backs up his assertion concerning margin spacing by measuring, in centimeters, the indentation for each line in a poem.) One especially cogent example contrasts three versions of the poem, "Morns like these—we parted—" (J27). In the first, he transcribes Susan's copy of the poem contained in the obituary that she wrote for her sister-in-law; in the second, he provides a version transcribed from Dickinson's own holograph manuscript; in the third, he records Mabel Loomis Todd's version from the 1891 edition of poems that she co-edited. The three versions matter because they demonstrate each editor's assumptions concerning the chirographic elements of the text. Sue, who has been championed as understanding Dickinson's aversion to print culture and

the need for exact transcription of her eccentricities in meter and lineation, renders the poem in terms as conventional or nearly conventional as Loomis Todd. Mitchell's scrupulous, fair-minded argument forms a welcome and necessary addition to the ongoing discussion concerning the manuscripts. Mitchell states: "One hesitates to push the point too far, but the possibility I offer for consideration is that Dickinson would not have intended us to take similar phenomena [such as lineation eccentricities] in her own manuscripts as seriously as we do now."

Other essays that start from textual examinations or examinations of variant forms of the poems include Melanie Hubbard's "Dickinson's Advertising Flyers: Theorizing Materiality and the Work of Reading" (*EDJ* 7, i: 27–54), Maria Magdalena Farland's " 'That Tritest/Brightest Truth': Emily Dickinson's Anti-Sentimentality" (*NCF* 53, iii: 364–89), and Diana Wagner and Marcy Tanter's "New Dickinson Letter Clarifies Hale Correspondence" (*EDJ* 7, i: 110–18). Hubbard's essay on advertising flyers examines Dickinson's manuscript jottings as they arrange themselves on scraps of paper, including stationery with letterhead of the Home Insurance Company, and a bill advertising a remedy, "Boneset Bitters." In diction both lively and theoretically sophisticated, Hubbard intimates the connections, sometimes thin in my view, between Dickinson's scraps of poems and the commercial matter on the particular piece of paper shared by the poem. She speaks, as in the phrase, "A special set of pieces [of poems] do their own theoretical work," as if the poetry existed to enliven theory. A brilliant piece—wry or awry, or both—"Dickinson's Advertising Flyers" showcases some of the wide-ranging possibilities in Dickinson textual studies. Farland, working not from manuscripts but from differing print versions, offers a stimulating constrast of two versions of "Extol thee—could I? Then I will" (J1643), found in the shorter Johnson reader's edition and the three-volume Johnson variorum edition. The contrast shows Dickinson extremely concerned with the topic of sentimentality, a topic not often explored in Dickinson studies because of its relegation to fiction studies, and one that Dickinson both gravitates toward and, finally, resists. Finally, a newly discovered letter to Edward Everett Hale is discussed by Wagner and Tanter. The letter was discovered in 1996, and, though it has no salutation or date, Wagner and Tanter contextualize its content in terms of Hale and Dickinson's correspondence concerning the death of her friend Benjamin Franklin Newton to arrive at that information.

Daring in relation to gender identity and passion, two articles, one by

Robert McClure Smith in "Dickinson and the Masochistic Aesthetic" (*EDJ* 7, ii: 1–21) and the other by Marianne Noble in "The Revenge of Cato's Daughter: Dickinson's Masochism" (*EDJ* 7, ii: 22–47), take on a nearly taboo subject for feminism, the intentional accruing to the self of the passive, and painful, role of masochist. Smith, highly aware of the provocative stance he takes in positioning Dickinson in these terms, emphasizes the role-playing aspect of masochism, the creation of illusory dynamics in order to be able to enact and rearrange the play of power. Dickinson, he avers, "develops a subversive *masochistic aesthetic* that, by staging the thematics of domination and submission within a text, works against and undoes power hierarches, showing how they, like sexual identity itself, are fragile and fluid entities." Bravely, he sees the masochistic aesthetic as subversive because the subject can control the conditions of her fantasy, creating a "fantasy space" that enables her to explore the lack of power she must experience under the conditions of patriarchal society. The control of the fantasy is so essential to the aesthetic, and to the Dickinson poem, Smith suggests, that the reader too becomes implicated, often in the reader's own masochism, because of the "certain *unpleasures*" of the text. Marianne Noble is no less aware of the potentially controversial effects of her undertaking, claiming that "no feminist critic has attempted a focused and sustained reading of the ways that masochistic expressions might themselves function as feminist explorations on Dickinson's part." With the two essays together, we see a Dickinson even more complex than we previously thought, and more difficult to categorize. Whereas Smith relies on Kaja Silverman and Gilles Deleuze, among others, Noble draws primarily from V. N. Smirnoff, Nick Mansfield, and Georges Bataille. Their investigations lead them to divergent conclusions. Noble sees masochistic fantasy as an impossible state, one of "being simultaneously a strongly centered ego *and* an annihilated self." While Smith tackles the placing of the private workings of masochism within the public workings of the patriarchy, Noble focuses on problems of identity that masochism poses. Unlike Smith, she admits of the potential dangers of masochism because of its drive toward dissolution. Both essays, because of their density, read like long monographs.

Eric Murphy Selinger follows a similar line of inquiry in " 'Bondage as Play,' " pp. 56–76 in his *What Is It Then Between Us? Traditions of Love in American Poetry* (Cornell). He is concerned with how one might explain, in the midst of Dickinson's erotic devotions, the "flair for self-abasement

indulged by her otherwise grandly assertive 'I.' " Reviewing both Puritan and Victorian notions of love, Selinger pursues an understanding of Dickinson as operating at an intersection that makes her kind of love both more thrilling and more truly merging than Whitman's. Selinger approaches her masochism as an activity in which one plays at being a thing, but he offers the caveat that "we must stress the element of *play* to such an extent that the rest of the definition begins to tremble." This dazzling chapter includes a discussion of lesbian affection, including Dickinson's serious passion for Susan Gilbert Dickinson, and places the poet as a spur to American love poetry, which after her "will be more concerned with the ethics of the imagination than any we have seen so far."

Two especially fine articles conduct historical investigations that elucidate Dickinson's poetry. Notably, Benjamin Friedlander's "Auctions of the Mind: Emily Dickinson and Abolition" (*ArQ* 54, i: 1–26) traverses largely unexplored territory in reading Dickinson's "Publication—is the Auction" (J709) not only as a commentary on Dickinson's noninvolvement with the publishing industry—the traditional interpretation—but as a poem that draws from the language of abolition. Citing the participation of Dickinson's father, Edward Dickinson, in the Congressional debate on the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, and that of Thomas Wentworth Higginson in the cause of abolition, Friedlander makes a strong case for the image of slave auctions as affecting, "perversely, her imagination." Friedlander reviews the writings of Stowe, Poe, and Hawthorne and verses on abolitionist themes or slave characters in Whittier, Frances E. W. Harper, and Whitman; the references to abolition in the latter three writers prove more direct than Dickinson's. He states that "this much remains clear: if Dickinson has an opinion to offer on slavery, she will do her utmost to avoid putting this opinion on the block." At the same time that Friedlander places her within her cultural and literary milieu, he is able to explore the coyness and slantness of Dickinson's tone.

An enlivening examination of the influence of the railroad on one of Dickinson's most famous poems is undertaken by Domnhall Mitchell in "The Train, the Father, His Daughter, and Her Poem: A Reading of Emily Dickinson's 'I like to see it lap the Miles' " (*EDJ* 7, i: 1–26). Mitchell stresses Dickinson's ambivalence toward the forces of progress in which her family, particularly her father, were ineluctably involved. As such, she *likes* to see the train progress at breathtaking speed—but from her vantage point of stasis, because she can control, and perhaps conde-

scend to, the train, through the usages of language. Mitchell draws on many sources for his historical contextualization of the role of the train in the lives of the Dickinsons, including the letters of Edward Dickinson, the records of the East Hampshire Agricultural Society, reports in the *Springfield Republican,* and the investment records of Edward Dickinson that indicate the increasing value of his shares in the railroad. The essay forms an exemplar of New Historical research and evaluation at the same time that it treats the poem with a nuanced and subtle awareness of the interconnections of language.

A general grouping of articles addresses Dickinson in relation to other authors, including the influence of Shakespeare, Milton, and Lydia Sigourney, and conversely, the influence of Dickinson on Marianne Moore and Randall Jarrell. One of the most lively of these, Páraic Finnerty's " 'No Matter—now—Sweet—But when I'm Earl': Dickinson's Shakespearean Cross-Dressing" (*EDJ* 7, ii: 65–94), examines Dickinson's use of Shakespearean drama to effect her own gender-switching. Drawing from the cross-dressing of characters in Shakespeare plays such as *The Merchant of Venice, As You Like It,* and *Twelfth Night,* Finnerty poses Dickinson counterparts in such figures as are "composed of male and female parts: a Queen-page, an Earl-girl, a Woman-boy, a Wife-czar, an Earl-Bride." Unlike Shakespeare's characters, whose dramas are resolved within clear gender boundaries, Dickinson's cross-dressers defy resolution and resist stable gender identities. With regard to another predecessor, Elinor Heginbotham's " 'Paradise Fictitious': Dickinson's Milton" (*EDJ* 7, i: 55–74) bases its approach on a small 1819 volume of *Paradise Lost* in Harvard's Houghton Library that bears the handwritten name "E. Dickinson," complete with penciled marginalia. Though Heginbotham admits that it is impossible to know if the owner of the volume was the poet Dickinson, its existence allows a fresh look at the imagistic connections between her and the poet she "dryly labeled 'the great florist.' " Concerning Sigourney, Dorothy Baker's "*Ars Poetica/Ars Domestica:* The Self-Reflexive Poetry of Lydia Sigourney and Emily Dickinson," pp. 69–89 in *Poetics in the Poem: Critical Essays on American Self-reflexive Poetry,* ed. Dorothy Z. Baker (Peter Lang), revisits the theme of the domestic in women's poetry, using Sigourney as a sort of test case: her poetry closely aligns hearth and verse; Dickinson's both aligns and diverges.

Cynthia Hogue presents a fascinating pairing in " 'The Plucked String': Emily Dickinson, Marianne Moore and the Poetics of Select Defects"

(*EDJ* 7, i: 89–109). Hogue grounds much of her argument for the pairing on Moore's 1933 review of Mabel Loomis Todd's 1931 *Letters of Emily Dickinson,* as well as Moore's unpublished notes for the review or for a lecture. Moore's penciled copies and annotations of Dickinson's "After great pain, a formal feeling comes—" (J341) and "The Soul selects her own Society—" (J303) acknowledge "the psychological accuracy and complexity of Dickinson's poetry but also suggestively reinforce a sense of Moore's identification with Dickinson's poetic method of finding external analogies for emotional experience." In seeing new connections between the two women poets, Hogue posits an alternative—less wicked—to Betsy Erkkila's influential study of the conflicts between women poets in *The Wicked Sisters* (1992). Christopher Benfey likewise deals with manuscripts and their elisions in his " 'The Wife of Eli Whitney': Jarrell and Dickinson," pp. 266–79 in *Under Criticism.* Benfey examines Randall Jarrell's notes on Dickinson's poetry, which may constitute his last written words, "scrawled on the flyleaves and margins" of Johnson's 1955 edition. Perhaps only a Dickinsonian who revels in gaps and dashes and fragmentations would undertake with such relish Benfey's task of imagining from Jarrell's own gaps and jottings the essay that Jarrell might have been planning to write on Dickinson. Included is Jarrell's top ten list of Dickinson poems (there are one or two surprises). William Pritchard in "Talking Back to Emily Dickinson," in *Talking Back to Emily Dickinson and Other Essays* (Mass.), suggests that perhaps scholars should use Jarrell's type of list-making more often, by which he means that subjectivity is a viable and needed way to read Dickinson, whose poems Pritchard registers with frustration because of the uncertainties inherent in reading them.

Other essays explore the question of belief and mortality, including Anne West Ramirez's "The Art to Save: Emily Dickinson's Vocation as Female Prophet" (*C&L* 47: 387–401), which highlights the redemptive rather than the suffering side of Dickinson's vision of Christ, especially a female Christ. Eric Wilson's "Dickinson's Chemistry of Death" (*ATQ* 12: 27–43) consults Edward Hitchcock's science texts to determine Dickinson's dual stance of approving scientific examination of the corpse at the same time that she discredits the overly simple explanations of science concerning decease. Hiroko Uno traces Edward Hitchcock's influence on the poet, especially in terms of her faith, in " 'Chemical Conviction': Dickinson, Hitchcock and the Poetry of Science" (*EDJ* 7, ii: 95–111).

Finally, three essays examine poetics. Shawn Alfrey's "Against Calvary:

Emily Dickinson and the Sublime" (*EDJ* 7, iii: 48–64) contextualizes Dickinson's poetic values as depending on a particular form of the sublime, one that incorporates both "earth and sky," within a range of definitions of the sublime. Joseph Schöpp tracks Dickinson's use of language, the particular *logos* of New England, in " 'Amazing Sense Distilled from Ordinary Meanings': The Power of the Word in Emily Dickinson's Poems on Poetry," pp. 90–103 in *Poetics in the Poem.* Poet Carmela Delia Lanza's " 'And Who Counts "Us"?': Slipping In and Out of Emily Dickinson and Myself" (*EDJ* 7, i: 75–88) gives a poet's view of how Dickinson, both elitist member of a privileged economic class and personal muse, "slips into my language."

Texas A&M University
Western Michigan University