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EDITOR
Celina Scheinowitz

CO-EDITOR
Evelina Hoisel

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E S T U D O S
LINGÜÍSTICOS E LITERÁRIOS

S U M Á R I O

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APRESENTAÇÃO

Que alegria apresentar o número 9 de *Estudos:* linguísticos e literários – especialmente dedicado ao nosso "Simpósio Emily Dickinson"! Foi uma de duas notáveis realizações do Departamento de Letras Germânicas deste Instituto no ano de comemoração do 40º aniversário de fundação da Universidade Federal da Bahia. A outra foi o Sétimo Seminário Regional do Projeto "Ensino de Inglês Instrumental em Universidades Brasileiras". No mesmo mês de novembro de 1986, antecedendo a "Emily Dickinson Conference" – consensual e oficialmente bilíngüe – de 24 a 28 de novembro do citado ano, quando se completou o primeiro centenário de falecimento de Emily Dickinson (1830-1886): que não viu com olhos mortais o século XX, mas cuja obra de muito o antecipou. Através de fronteiras muito além de seu mítico jardim em sua mítica Amherst, Massachussets. Por toda a extensão dos Estados Unidos. Para além de suas fronteiras e das fronteiras de longínquos mundos nesta e noutra dimensão – "past the houses, past the headlands –/ Into deep Eternity –"

Extraordinário tento lavrou o DLG ao aprovar a realização do evento que a nossa admiração ilimitada pela arte de ED sonhou e projetou. E que uma comissão de decididos colegas que me deram a honra de presidí-los na elaboração do evento concretizou com entusiasmo e competência. A eles e, através deles, a todos os membros do DLG, este reconhecimento público. Ao trabalho de Josefina Dias de Freitas, então Chefe do Departamento, Thereza Borges Silva, Vice-Chefe, Annemarie Schaer, Responsável pelo Setor de Línguas, João Antenor de Carvalho Silva, Responsável pelo Setor de Literatura, Maria Lina Menezes Garrido, Responsável

pelo Setor de Extensão, sob a presidência do autor destas linhas, na qualidade de mentor do projeto inicial. Em suma, estivemos todos irmanados num trabalho intelectual por vezes literalmente braçal, vez que (não é demais recordar) foi durante os dias da mudança do Instituto para uma situação "provisória" que já se vai tornando permanente. O trabalho, entretanto, floresceu e frutificou numa festa de inteligência, sensibilidade e, sobretudo, de afirmação de presença e vitalidade. Seria, pois, demais esquecê-lo. E agora se torna impossível -com o registro definitivo dessa sonhada publicação. Que tardou, mas não faltou. Graças ao Curso de Mestrado em Letras da UFBa. -- que fundou esta Revista e, com o empenho de sua atual Coordenadora, Profa. Serafina Pondé, complementou as despesas deste número. Graças ao USIS/Recife, cuja generosa contribuição financeira para esta publicação agradecemos através de seu Diretor Martin Adler, que terminou por transformar em fato notável de 1989 o que para David Kurakane fora uma ideia entusiástica em 1986. Por razões diversas, hoje em sua maioria irrelevantes, só agora se torna fato aquele ideal: coisa que dificilmente aconteceria, sem a presença de Celina Scheinowitz no comando do trabalho editorial de *Estudos*. A ela um agradecimento muito especial.

O mérito maior de todos, entretanto, é o dos colaboradores deste número, em especial, e de todos os participantes do Simpósio, de um modo geral Dos membros do Painel que abriu o Simpósio - "A vida e a obra de Emily Dickinson: suas cartas e seus poemas" - (Professores George Monteiro, Carlos Daghlian, Letícia Tavares Cavalcanti, Sigrid Renaux e Luiz Angélico da Costa), passando pelos conferencistas convidados (Professores Monteiro, Daghlian, Terry Caesar e Aíla de Oliveira Gomes) e pelos autores de estudos ou pronunciamentos aqui publicados até aqueles que somente assistiram às sessões mas contribuíram com seus co-

mentários, perguntas, objeções, ou simplesmente com suas presenças honrosas - em especial aqueles que vieram de outros estados e/ou universidades.

Aqui abrimos espaço para registrar que a Profa. Aíla Gomes, especialmente convidada desde as primeiras gestões para a realização do Simpósio, não tendo podido vir a Salvador, enviou-nos um belo trabalho - "Algumas traduções de Emily Dickinson" - que, lamentavelmente, deixamos de publicar na íntegra (com conhecimento e aquiescência da autora) em razão da exiguidade de espaço desta edição de *Estudos*. Por idênticas razões, fomos impedidos de publicar trabalhos outros enviados por colegas que não puderam comparecer. Houve também alguns que, havendo comparecido e apresentado trabalhos, não nos entregaram (nem enviaram) cópias para publicação.

De um modo geral, ficam indelevelmente registradas nesta publicação todas as atividades do Simpósio ou *Conference*, em 3 partes: I) ESTUDOS - palestras e *papers*; II) TRIBUTO A EMILY DICKINSON - compreendendo traduções de poemas seus, poemas originais inéditos a ela dedicados e a encenação de poemas e cartas de ED, intitulada "Embriaguez de rum ou xerez no fundo do copo" - um belo trabalho amadorístico por um grupo profissional de Divinópolis. Mais uma vez, de público, a nossa grata recordação; III) CONCURSO DE TRADUÇÃO E.D. PARA ESTUDANTES UNIVERSITÁRIOS.

Além do USIS, contribuíram também para o sucesso do evento, em diferentes graus e meios, a Comissão Fulbright (enviando-nos conferencista), a Associação Cultural Brasil-Estados Unidos, Salvador, (imprimindo os programas do Simpósio) e a Casa Thomas Jefferson, Brasília, D.F., (com livros, impressos, fotografias e 2 filmes: 1) "Emily Dickinson: A Certain Slant of Light"; 2) "The Magic Prison".

Last but not least, uma rosa memorial para Maureen S. Taylor (então Diretora da Casa Thomas Jefferson):

que mais do que todos contribuiu para o sucesso do evento; que teria vindo a Salvador para uma participação ativa e encantada, mas não pôde fazê-lo porque – **Death** (most **UN**kindly to us who loved her) **kindly stopped for** her –

02.09.1989

Luiz Angélico da Costa
Presidente da Comissão
Organizadora do Simpósio

Casa **Thomas Jefferson**
SEP-Sul, Entrequadras 706/906
Caixa Postal 07-1201
70.390-Brasília-Distrito Federal

November 6, 1986

Prof. Luiz Angélico da Costa
Instituto de Letras
Universidade Federal da Bahia
Av. Joana Angélica, 183
Nazaré
40.000 Salvador-BA

Dear Luiz Angélico:

I am sorrier than I can say, but unfortunately it will be impossible after all for me to participate in the November 24-28 Emily Dickinson symposium.

I have been told by my doctor here that I should return to the U.S. for a fortnight or so for medical treatment. It is not anything serious, but it will prevent my attending the conference. I feel terrible about this – not because my contribution to the event was going to be anything special, but because I was so looking forward to hearing the other papers and meeting the professors and students there. So I feel as though I am being deprived of a unique and wonderful opportunity.

Please convey my apologies to the other symposium organizers. I hope it is not too late to remove my name from the programme for the opening panel discussion and the Thursday workshop session. I will be present in spirit, at least, the whole week long. My very best wishes to you personally, and to your colleagues, who have helped to make this splendid project a reality.

Sincerely,

Maureen S. Taylor
Director, Casa Thomas Jefferson

MST:gmf

P A R T E I

E S T U D O S

apresentados

durante a realização do SIMPÓSIO EMILY DICKINSON (EMILY DICKINSON CONFERENCE) na Universidade Federal da Bahia, de 24 a 28 de novembro de 1986, sob os auspícios do Departamento de Letras Germânicas do Instituto de Letras da UFBA e do United States Information Service (USIS), Salvador, Bahia.

Estudos (9): 11, março 1989

EMILY DICKINSON'S BUSINESS

George Monteiro
Brown University

"[A] Book is only the Heart's Portrait - every Page a Pulse -"
(*Letters* III, 756)

ABSTRACT

What Emily Dickinson would convey to Thomas Wentworth Higginson in her fourth letter to him ("My business is Circumference")was the notion that being a poet was a serious business with no restriction as to sex,and that the business conducted by the serious poet she was constituted nothing less than pursuit of the "Truth" — to exemplify one of Emerson's definitions — "whose center is everywhere and its circumference nowhere, whose existence we cannot disimagine."

When Emily Dickinson decided to write to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the author of "Letter to a Young Contributor," a piece published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1862, she was already in her thirty-second year. It was time that she get down to her life's business. It was time, in short, that she announce herself as a poet.

Her letter to Higginson received a reply, and that started a correspondence that would run sporadically until the poet's death in 1886. Her second letter, dated April 25, 1862, tries to answer a series of questions her correspondent had put to her in his first letter. She had been ill-prepared for her chosen vocation, she claimed. "I went to school —but in your manner of the phrase," she insisted, "had no education. When a little Girl, I had a friend, who taught me Immortality — but venturing too near, himself — he never returned — Soon after, my Tutor, died — and for several years, my Lexicon — was my only companion—

Estudos (9): 13-40, março 1989

Then I found one more — but he was not contented I be his scholar — so he left the Land" (*Letters* II, 404).

Imbedded in this first pathetic explanation of her deficiency in education, in her reference to her Lexicon — Noah Webster's *An American Dictionary of the English Language* — she makes implicity a claim for a kind of education perfectly suited to one who would be a poet. In her fourth letter to Higginson she writes: "My Business is Circumference" (*Letters* II, 412). Had Higginson consulted what Webster had to say about these two nouns, he might have learned (1) that *circumference* is both "a periphery" and "the space included in a circle;" and (2) that — in the very first definition for the word given by Webster — *business* is "employment; that which occupies the time, attention and labor of *men* (my italics)." One need not be particularly sensitive to matters of gender to see, particularly in her letters to Higginson, that Dickinson wrote obliquely and aphoristically, which is to say, poetically. What she would convey to him was the notion that being a poet was a serious business with no restriction as to sex, and that the business conducted by the serious poet she was constituted nothing less than pursuit of the "Truth" — to employ one of Emerson's definition — "whose center is everywhere and its circumference nowhere, whose existence we cannot disimagine" (Emerson 221). It was that high sense of "business" that informed the shared and exchanged substance of her most highly charged writing — both poetry and prose.

Let us start with the poet's late prose. In a letter written in early 1884 to the widow of the writer and editor Josiah Gilbert Holland, Dickinson writes:

> The Organ is moaning — the Bells are bowing, I ask Vinnie what time it is, and she says it is Sunday, so I tell my Pencil to make

> no noise, and we will go to the House of a Friend "Weeks off," as Dombey said — (*Letters* III, 814)

Knowing the poetry, we think of the heft of cathedral tunes, funerals in the brain when all the heavens are a bell, the joys of keeping the Sabbath at home, letters to a world that never wrote to the poet, and houses that try to be haunted. This is a particularly rich indication of the way Emily Dickinson's letters interleave with her poems, but it is far from unique. Indeed, without resorting to the now temporarily fashionable impulse to blur the lines between different kinds of writings — in this case, the demarcations between the letter and the poem — I would put forth the notion that the poet herself sometimes came close to failing to make this important distinction. She began one poem, after all, with the self-reflexive line, "This is my letter to the World" (*Poems* I, 340), thereby encouraging the reading of the entire corpus of her poetry as a single communication — unrequited, except, perhaps, for the hundreds of essays and dozens of books now devoted to understanding her life and explicating her work.

In her letter to Mrs. Holland, Dickinson reports that she asks the *time* and Vinnie tells her not that it is eight, nine or ten o'clock, but that it is *Sunday*. Surely the poet should have known well enoungh, from the sounds of the organ and the bells, that it was Sunday, but she would have us believe that so absorbed is she in her morning's business that she has, as her sister obviously senses, lost track not only of time but of the very day of the week. It is not church attendance that the information calls to her mind, however, but that she must not in any way disturb the day. She "tell[s]" her "Pencil to make no noise" and she will set down the very letter she is now writing, to a friend, who, keeping within the same long view of time (not

a matter of hours but days) is "Weeks off."

In this instance the poet employs her pencil to write a letter in prose that goes on to do "business," a poet's kind of business. She writes:

> Your reunion with Vinnie was amusing and affecting too, and Vinnie still rehearses it to admiring throngs of which Stephen and I are the thrilled components — I think Vinnie has grown since the interview, certainly intellectually, which is the only Bone whose Expanse we woo — (*Letters* III, 814)

Long ago the poet glossed this performance by Vinnie, who rehearses it, that is, retells it (perhaps theatrically) for the benefit of the Dickinson's stableman and the poet herself. "How dreary — to be — Somebody!/ How public — like a Frog —," she had written twenty some years earlier, "To tell your name — the livelong June —/ To an admiring Bog!" (*Poems* I, 206-07). But this amused account of Vinnie's rather harmless self-advertisement, enough to carry a paragraph in a seemingly ordinary letter leads to an aphoristic conclusion: the intellect is the "only Bone whose Expanse we woo." Surely Mrs. Holland would have seen that this aphorism was one of the sweet results of the injury the poet had suffered only the summer before, "a vicious sprain" that kept her from seeking out flowers and which resulted in lines that she sent to her friend, Mrs. Edward Tuckerman:

> Sweet Foot, that comes wher we call it!
> I can go but a Step a Century now —
> How slow the Wind - how slow the Sea - how late their Feathers be
> (*Letters* III, 781)

She continues her letter to Mrs. Holland with an acknowledge

ment of the incident in which Mrs. Holland, her daughter, her son-in-law and her granddaughter had been driven out of their house by a flood in the cellar caused by a clogged sewer. They had carried the baby's clothes in a small bathtub. This desertion reminds the poet at first of George Eliot's novel, *Mill on the Floss*, but then it recalls the metaphor that the body is the house for the spirit. "How quickly a House can be deserted," she writes fearfully; "your infinite inference that the 'Soul's poor Cottage' may lose it's Tenant so, was vaster than you thought, and still overtakes me" (*Letters* III, 814) This reference is linked to one made six years earlier, at the time of Mrs. Holland's recovery from illness, when the poet had written: "We rejoice in your repaired health, thought it grieves us that repairs should be necessary in a Structure so able — yet then we recall that the 'Soul's poor Cottage, battered and dismayed, lets in new light through chinks that time has made,' your predicament becomes one of congrutulation" (*Letters* II, 605). The quoted lines are from Edmund Waller, but by employing them as a link between thouthts of Mrs. Holland's bodily sickiness first and then of the soul's desertion of the body, she makes them her own. "How few suggestions germinate!" (*Letters* III, 814) she notices in the 1884 letter. Yet halfway through the six years separating the two letters with their complementary references to the "Soul's poor Cottage," she had worried the matter into a poem of religious affirmation:

> "And with what body do they come?" —
> Then they *do* come — Rejoice!
> What Door, What Hour— Run— run— My Soul!
> Illuminate the House!
>
> "Body!" Then real — a Face and Eyes —
> To know that it is them! —

Paul knew the Man that knew the News —
He passed through Bethlehem —
(*Poems* III, 1031)

When we return to the poet's 1884 letter to Mrs. Holland, we find that it ends with three one-sentence paragraphs:

> I shall make Wine Jelly Tonight and send you a Tumbler in the Letter, if the Letter consents, a Fabric sometimes obdurate—
>
> It is warm you are better,and was very cold all the while you were ill —
>
> Baby's flight will embellish History with Gilpin's and Revere's—
> (*Letters* III, 814)

Between the domestic reference to the making of jelly and a last word on the baby's flight from the house because of the flooded cellar, the poet alludes for the first time in this letter to Mrs. Holland's illness. The reference cinches our understanding of the point in the otherwise fanciful connection between the sudden flight of inhabitants from the house and the metaphor of house and occupant for matters of body and spirit. Nearly a quarter of a century earlier she had defined the problem to Samuel Bowles in this oddly Whitmanian way: "That *Bareheaded life* — under the grass — worries one like a Wasp" (*Letters* II, 364). It was a thought such as this that led her to say, a few years earlier: "I often wish I was a grass, or a toddling daisy, whom all these problems of the dust might not terrify" (*Letters* II, 324). Such fearful notions blossomed ultimately in this reconciling poem:

The Grass so little has to do —
A Sphere of simple Green —
With only Butterflies to brood
And Bees to entertain —

And stir all day to pretty Tunes
The Breezes fetch along —
And hold the Sunshine in it's lap
And bow to everything —

And thread the Dews, all night, like Pearls—
And make itself so fine
A Duchess were too common
For such a noticing —

And even when it dies — to pass
In Odors so divine —
Like Lowly spices, lain to sleep —
Of Spikenards, perishing —

And then, in Sovereign Barns to dwell —
And dream the Days away,
The Grass so little has to do
I wish I were a Hay —
(*Poems* I, 265)

That there is no immediately discernible structure in the letter to Mrs. Holland that I have been examining is typical of Dickinson's epistolary art. She holds herself responsible only for the coherence of her idiosyncratic mind and the clues to that coherence often are given obliquely or obscurely. But of one thing we can be sure: there was a purpose and a deep coherence — no matter what the coherence or lack of coherence on the surface — in everything the poet Dickinson wrote, especially after her discovery that writing was her occupation. In the sense that matters most, she wrote one book — in the "colossal cipher" Emerson allowed Dante — and, though we do not have the whole of it, we have besides a smattering of what her editors call "prose fragments," nearly eighteen hundred poems and over a thousand letters.

The late letter to Mrs. Holland that I started out with is neither particulary well known nor of any great use, apparently, to the interpreter of Emily Dickinson's poetry. It does not display the brillant phrasing and flashing wit of some of the late to Helen Hunt or any of the teasing portentousness of the notes to sister Sue, Austin's wife. In short, of letters *qua* letters there are in Emily Dickinson's bulging portfolio "better" examples than these.

Take the letters to her "Preceptor," Higginson, for example. Scholars have often combed them over for their biographical references, without heeding Dickinson's warning that her poet's job was to "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant" (*Poems* II, 792). The poet who marvelled and worried her way into a definition of both the source and the effect of "a certain Slant of light,/Winter Afternoons" (*Poems* I, 185) knew better than to settle at any time for face value. The letters to Higginson have been mined as well by the interpreters of Dickinson's poems for their clues to poetic meaning. When she says craftily that her Preceptor has "much business, besides the growth of me," the reader must not miss its relevance to her annoucement in the previous paragraph — when she capitalizes both nouns in the statement — "My Business is Circumference." The entire paragraph holds interest for us:

> Because you have much business, beside the growth of me — you will appoint, yourself, how often I shall come — without your inconvenience. And if at any time — you regret you received me, or I prove a different fabric to that you supposed —you must banish me — (*Letters* II, 412)

The reference to herself as "fabric" anticipates the refer-

ence in a passage from a later letter, one already quoted, when she had become, to all intents and purposes, her writing. Personifying the letter itself, she will enclose a tumbler of wine jelly "if the Letter consents, a Fabric sometime obdurate." But the bargain she offers Higginson is identical to the one she would strike with the Merchant--God she confronts in a poem written in the same year.

> I asked no other thing —
> No other — was denied —
> I offered Being — for it —
> The Mighty Merchant sneered —
>
> Brazil? He twirled a Button —
> Without a glance my way —
> "But — Madam — is there nothing else —
> That We can show — Today?
> (*Poems* II, 478)

Just the year before, in a letter to her Norcross cousins, the poet had written genially that the "note to Miss Whitney only stopped to dine. It went out with a beautiful name on its face in the evening mail. 'Is there nothing else,' as the clerk says? So pleased to enact a trifle for my little sister" (*Letters* II, 372). The phrase, as we have seen, would soon germinate.

In the same well-known letter to Higginson the poet implores her Preceptor to play the surgeon to her bone, that is, to put it directly, to instruct her in how to remove whatever defects he detected in her poetry. "And for this, Preceptor, I shall bring you — Obedience — the Blossom from my Garden," she promises, "and every gratitude I know. Perhaps you smile at me. I could not stop for that — My Business is Circumference" (*Letters* II, 412). Shortly thereafter she repeats herself (to Dr. and Mrs. Holland) but with a difference that signifies an important

change: "I can't *stop* to strut, in a world where bells toll.... Perhaps you laugh at me! Perhaps the whole United States are laughing at me too! *I* can't stop for that! *My* business is to love" (*Letters* II, 413). Here obviously,in both instances, occurs the conjunction of dramatic voice and weighty theme that would in the very next year enable Dickinson to write her great poem about journeying to and beyond circumference:

> Because I could not stop for Death —
> He kindly stopped for me —
> The Carriage held but just Ourselves —
> And Immortality.
>
> We slowly drove — He knew no haste
> And I had put away
> My labor and my leisure too,
> For His Civility —
>
> We passed the School, where Children strove
> At Recess — in the Ring —
> We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain —
> We passed the Setting Sun —
>
> Or rather — He passed Us —
> The Dews drew quivering and chill —
> For only Gossamer, my Gown —
> My tippet — only Tulle —
>
> We paused before a House that seemed
> A Swelling of the Ground —
> The Roof was scarcely visible —
> The Cornice — in the Ground —
>
> Since then — 'tis Centuries — and yet
> Feels shorter than the Day
> I first surmised the Horses Heads

> Were toward Eternity —
> (*Poems* II, 546)

There is a good deal of this sort of play between letter and poem in the Higginson correspondence, and some of it has been sifted out by the poet's interpreters. But the letters to Higginson have not yet been completely read in this fruitful way, it is clear to me, and although there are mysteries in them, as there are in many of her letters, that not only will we not fathom but perhaps not even surmise as being mysteries, it is the scholar's job to keep looking.

There remains, for example, the mystery of the signature the poet employed in her letter to Higginson after first learning that he had gone off to war, thereby making himself, in her terms, "improbable." The poet concludes her letter:

> Should you, before this reaches you,experience immortality, who will inform me of the Exchange? Could you, with honor, avoid Death, I entreat you — Sir — It would bereave
>
> Your Gnome —
>
> (*Letters* II, 424)

Before proceeding to the signature, which, as the editors of the poet's letters tell us, Higginson himself could never explain, we should detect in passing that the poet sees the potential change in Higginson's mortal situation from life to immortality as an "Exchange," which as a commercial transaction (so defined in her Lexicon) links this paragraph to "I asked no other thing," where the exchange the poet would make of "Being" for "Brazil" does not take place. Were her Preceptor to die, moreover, it would bereave not his "Scholar" (as she wrote elsewhere) but his

"Gnome." In no other surviving letter does Dickinson so name herself. Her editors conjecture that she did so this one time because "perhaps [Higginson] had earlier commented on the gnomic quality of her verses" (*Letters* II, 424). But is it not as likely that the poet was hereby acknowledging on her own that the pithy, wise saying was essentially the goal of much of her poetry and her letters — in this they are often of a piece, hence her decision, occasionally to flatten out a poem so that it will function in the context as if it were prose? In fact, it became second nature to her to hoard such gnomic observations. These materials became the blocks with which she constructed her edifices—poems and letters. The one scholar who has devoted an entire book to "the poet and her prose" offers us his construction of her procedure:

> Emily jotted sentences as they occurred to her while she worked in the kitchen or garden. The roughest of the scraps were penciled scrawls, almost illegible, on any handy bit of paper. Later, in her room, she added them to her workshop collection. When she wrote letters she chose appropriate fragments and worked them into her prose. Sometimes the letter as a whole would pass through two or more drafts before it satisfied her. Meantime she would have chosen poems from the scrap basket or from her "packets" and fitted them also into her letter. The final writing — the letter her correspondent actually received — might look spontaneous, but it was the last of several creative stages. (Higgins 7)

She behaved with words and phrases, to change the figure,

like her beloved wren — with which she so often identified— when it built its nest, gathering its materials bit by bit and weaving them into a whole.

No many readers would argue, I suspect, with the observation that of the poet's letters to Higginson, it is the earliest ones that remain the most useful to the student of Emily Dickinson's mind and art. It is in these that we can follow the poet's presentation of her case before her Master. We marvel at how in them she so often changes the direction of her thought and modifies her tactics. So much so, in fact, that one is tempted to apply to the letters the warning she directs at the reader of her poems, namely that "When I state myself, as the Representative of the Verse — it does not mean — me — but a supposed person" (*Letters* II, 412). One is tempted to accept the explanation and be done with the matter. Yet, despite the poses struck and the personae assumed, there is evident in her work a deeply needful psychological and creative life—one that saw itself, insofar as it lived in the heady realm of poetry, as in need of a poet's physician. As she implored, "Will you tell me my fault, frankly as to yourself, for I had rather wince, than die. Men do not call the surgeon, to commend — the Bone, but to set it, Sir, and fracture within, is more critical" (*Letters* II, 412). The metaphor of the surgeon and patient reappears in other letters to Higginson. "I will be patient-constant, never reject your knife" (*Letters* II, 450). The poet-patient was still acquiescing in 1866, as she played a potentially tragic game with Higginson, both courting his commentary and then having to suffer his criticism. In these references to her Preceptor's practical surgery, the attentive reader hears an echo of a line that Higginson could not have known during the poet's lifetime, for the lines that sound the note, probably written as early as 1859, were never sent to him:

Surgeons must be very careful
When they take the knife!
Underneath their fine incisions
Stirs the Culprit — *Life*!
(*Poems* I, 81)

Of course, there was another principle at work in the poet's relationship with her Preceptor. "Only Love can wound," as she later told Mrs. Holland, "Only Love assist the Wound" (*Letters* II, 493). Certainly the first part of this statement would rule out Higginson from the start, regardless of the poet's protestations ("Perhaps the Balm [of his second letter to her], seemed better," she knuckled under, "because you bled me, first" [*Letters* II, 408]). To the Hollands, at about the same time, she was insisting, not "My Business is Circumference" but "*My* Business is to Love" (*Letters* II, 413). It is small wonder that she found that the "sweet phusician," as she wrote late in life, to be "an approaching spring" (*Letters* III, 764). It was her one hope against the "Balmless Wound": the pain over "the departed Human Life we had learned to need" (*Letters* II, 637).

Yet "Balmless" wounds opened by the death of those beings the poet had learned to want continued to occur. Her correspondence is replete with notes of condolence intended to console and reassure the bereaved among her friends. Often she sent poems with those notes, as she did when Higginson's infant daughter died. Almost entirely in the form of a poem, her note reads:

I was sorry for what the Paper told me — I hoped it was not true —
The Face in evanescence lain
Is more distinct than our's —
And our's surrendered for it's sake
As Capsules are for Flower's —

Or is it the confiding sheen
Dissenting to be won
Descending to enamor us
Of Detriment divine?
(*Letters* III, 657)

"Evanescence" is one of Dickinson's famous words, of course, and the poem which has had the most to do with calling it to our attention was written just a few months before the poet sent Higginson her note of condolence.

A Route of Evanescence
With a revolving Wheel —
A Resonance of Emerald —
A Rush of Cochineal —
And every Blossom on the Bush
Adjusts it's tumbled Head —
The mail from Tunis, probably,
An easy Morning's Ride —
(*Poems* III, 1010)

This poem is read usually as one of pure description. But that it might owe something to the poet's notions of transcendence or, to use the term the poet employed elsewhere, "exchange," is possible given her employment of the term "evanescence" in the context of the letter to Higginson. It becomes likely when we notice, in the poet's next letter to the grieving father, that even while assuring him that "These sudden intimacies with Immortality, are expanse — not Peace — as Lightning at our feet, instills a foreign Landscape" and comforting him with the notion that "A Dimple in the Tomb/ Makes that ferocious Room/ A Home," she concludes: "The *route* of your little Fugitive must be a tender wonder" (*Letters* III, 661; my italics). One suspects that Higginson saw the connection between the hum-

mingbird's "Route of Evanescence" and her hopeful observation anent the route recently taken by his own evanescent child, a connection quietly insisted upon when the poet later in the same year sent him the poem itself. Did not this Christian clergyman see in that "Resonance of Emerald" a hint from Revelations of the "holy" Jerusalem, the foundation of the fourth wall of which was garnished with "an emerald" (after all, the poet had told him that for "Prose," besides Ruskin and Sir Thomas Browne, she had "the Revelations" [*Letters* II, 404]), as well as a strong reference to Ezekiel's wheel? Had she not been able to teach him, as well as others, not only that "All we secure of Beauty is it's Evanescences" (*Letters* III, 747) but that these flashes were earnest of the coming of immortality?

What I have thus far been about has been the laying out of the ways that one might get at what can be called the consubstantiality evident in Dickinson's poems and letters when they are read reflexively. Of course, the ratio of the carnal to the spiritual – that is to say, the everyday news and the poetic – may vary widely in the letters and poems that, to a greater or lesser degree, share the same substance or essential nature. A full investigation of the sort that I have undertaken so far would contribute much to our understanding of the ways of the poet's mind. For instance, when she writes to her final lover, Otis Lord, that "While others go to Church, I go to mine, for are not you my Church, and have we not a Hymn that no one knows but us?" (*Letters* III, 753) the magnitude of her devotion is not fully revealed until we recall that years earlier she had defined the nature of their relationship. Perhaps with Charles Wadsworth in heart and mind, she had once written, in a line from a poem dating from 1861 or so, that "Each was to Each The Sealed Church."

There came a Day at Summer's full,
Entirely for me –
I thought that such were for the Saints,
Where Resurrections – be –

The Sun, as common, went abroad,
The flowers, accustomed, blew,
As if no soul the solstice passed
That maketh all things new –

The time was scarce profaned, by speech –
The symbol of a word
Was needless, as at Sacrament,
The Wardrobe – of our Lord –

Each was to each The Sealed Church,
Permitted to commune this – time –
Lest we too awkward show
At Supper of the Lamb.

The Hours slid fast – as Hours will,
Clutched tight, by greedy hands –
So faces on two Decks, look back,
Bound to opposing lands –

And so when all the time had leaked,
Without external sound
Each bound the Other's Crucifix –
We gave no other Bond –

Sufficient troth, that we shall rise –
Deposed – at length, the Grave –
To that new Marriage,
Justified – through Calvaries of Love –

(*Poems* I, 249-50)

Until I hear better evidence for a different choice, this poem is my candidate for the unidentified "Hymm," as she

told Otis Lord, that "no one knows but us" – no one, that is, but Thomas Wentworth Higginson, who received a copy of the poem in 1862, probably Charles Wadsworth, and the Reverend Edward S. Dwight, who was sent, also in 1862, a version of the last stanza to honor the memory of Mrs. Dwight.

To another of her favorites among the men, Samuel Bowles (who was put forth by the poet Winfield Townley Scott as *the* lover [Scott, 40-49]), she wrote in 1858: "Good night, Mr. Bowles! This is what they say who come back in the morning, also the closing paragraph on repealed lips. Confidence in Daybreak modifies Dusk" (*Letters* II, 339), To Sue she added a month later, "We would'nt mind the sun, dear, if it did'nt *set*" (*Letters* II, 340). Five years later her aphorism from the letter to Bowles and her statement to Sue had germinated succinctly into as gnomic a poem as she ever wrote:

> Presentiment – is that long Shadow – on the Lawn –
> Indicative that Suns go down –
>
> The Notice to the startled Grass
> That Darkness – is about to pass –
>
> (*Poems* II, 581)

One need not endorse Scott's case for Samuel Bowles as the poet's great love to see a connection between a phrase in one of Dickinson's letters to him and a poem that might have already been percolating at the time of the letter. After all, he was a confidant. Yet in October 1861 she refused to see him. He was a patient at a water-cure in nearby Northampton, and when he took the opportunity to visit the Dickinson homestead, the poet spurned him. She wrote in explanation:

> Perhaps you thought I did'nt care – because I stayed out, yesterday, I *did* care, Mr. Bowles. I pray for your sweet health – to "Alla" – every morning – but something troubled me – and I knew you needed light- and air – so I did'nt come. Nor have I the conceit that you *noticed* me –but I could'nt bear that you, or Mary, so gentle to me – should think me forgetful –It's little, at the most –we can do for our's, and we must do that –flying –or our things are *flown!* Dear friend, I wish you were well –
>
> It grieves me till I cannot speak, that you are suffering. Wont you come back? Cant I bring you something? My little Balm might be *o'erlooked* by wiser eyes –you know –Have you tried the Breeze that swings the Signor the Hoof of the Dandelion? *I* own 'em – Wait for *mine!*
>
> This is all I have to say –Kinsmen need say nothing –but "Swiveller" may be sure of the
>
> "Marchioness."
>
> Love for Mary.
>
> (*Letters* II, 382)

It is not incidental that the poet should have chosen to cast both the redoubtable editor of the *Springfield Republican* and herself as characters from Charles Dickens' novel *The Old Curiosity Shop*, a couple who as the poet's editors remind us, marry in the end.

Surely, to Dickinson, marriage to the already married Bowles was out of the question, and most likely out of mind as well (at least to her conscious mind). But the thought of a "marriage" (perhaps some kind of posthu-

mous marriage) and the notion that the poet and her married friend enjoyed a form of kinship would, within a few months, resurface in what has turned out to be one of her best-known poems.

> I died for Beauty —but was scarce
> Adjusted in the Tomb
> When One who died for Truth, was lain
> In an adjoining Room —
>
> He questioned softly "Why I failed"?
> "For Beauty," I replied —
> "And I —for Truth —Themself are One —
> We Bretheren, are," He said —
>
> And so, as Kinsmen, met a Night —
> We talked between the Rooms —
> Until the Moss had reached our lips —
> And covered up —our names —
> (*Poems* I, 347)

Amends for not having met and talked with Bowles that time will be made in the tomb by the poet (she lived for "Beauty") who will talk with the editor (he lived for "Truth") until the moss reaches their lips and covers their memorialized names. As she had reminded Bowles on another occasion, it is "Business enough indeed, our stately Resurrection!" (*Letters* II, 338-39).

It is through "Melody" —"Bolts of Melody" (*Poems* II, 388) — that the poet most characteristically conducts her business, for it occupies a privileged place — whether it is nature that is melody, the song of the wind or the bird, the sound of the bell or the lyrical voice of the poet. In one canonical poem "Melody" stands both for itself and for profound friendship and deeply sensuous love.

> Title divine —is mine!
> The Wife —without the Sign!
> Acute Degree —conferred on me —
> Empress of Calvary!
> Royal —all but the Crown!
> Betrothed —without the swoon
> God sends us Women —
> When you —hold —Garnet to Garnet —
> Gold —to Gold —
> Born —Bridalled —Shrouded —
> In a Day —
> "My Husband" —women say —
> Stroking the Melody —
> Is *this* — the way?
> (*Poems* II, 758)

She sent this poem, written in 1862, to Samuel Bowles, with an appendant, also in verse form:

> *Here's* — what I had to "tell you" —
> You will tell no other? Honor —is it's
> own pawn —
> (*Letters* II, 394)

Bowles was not the first man to hear this from the poet. Later, in her first letter to Higginson, written the same year, she concluded: "That you will not betray me — it is needless to ask —since Honor is it's own pawn —" (*Letters* II, 403)

Nor was Dickinson finished with the substance of "Title divine —is mine!" — this central and circumferential poem. It would resurface, several years after Bowles' death, when Otis Lord died. Of the Judge she wrote to his attorney (she made a practice of initiating and keeping up correspondences with survivors of those she loved as she had done earlier in the cases of Bowles and Wadsworth):

"Abstinence from Melody was what made him die," she wrote, "Calvary and May wrestled in his Nature" (*Letters* III,861). Here, again, there came to an end one of "those melodious moments of which friends are composed," as she wrote to Maria Whitney (*Letters* III, 862), who, as the poet well knew, had been in love with, not Otis Lord but Samuel Bowles.

But if Emily Dickinson could claim, as she did on occasion, that her "Business" was "to love," it is her other claim —that her "Business" was "Circumference"— which has evoked the greater response from her critics. Of the great importance of this matter to her thought there can be no doubt. No less than seventeen of her surviving poems deal explicitly with "Circumference," and there are several others that impinge on the notion. All of them, of course, would be pertinent to any full discussion of the subject, but I shall not want to go too deeply into the matter. Elsewhere I have tried to account for the energies embodied in the starts and directions recorded in her remarkable worksheet for the unfinished poem "Two Butterflies went out at Noon," that central document on her poetic quest for mastering and transcending the bounds indicated by the term (Monteiro 211-25). But something should be said about another "Circumference" poem, one that her editors tell us was written for "a special occasion" —the unveiling in 1884 of Daniel Chester French's statue of John Harvard in front of University Hall in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The poet transmitted the poem to the famous sculptor in a letter:

> Dear Mr. French:—
>
> We learn with delight of the recent acquisition to your fame, and hasten to congratulate you on an honor so reverently won.
>
> Success is dust, but an aim forever touched with dew.

> God keep you fundamental!
> Circumference, thou bride
> Of awe, —possessing, thou
> Shalt be possessed by
> Every hallowed knight
> That dares to covet thee.
>
> Yours faithfully,
>
> Emily Dickinson

(*Letters* III, 822)

In another place the poet has welded the notion of "awe" with that of heat that will "consume": "'Am not consumed,' old Moses wrote,/'Yet saw him face to face'—/That very physiognomy/ I am convinced was this [awe]" (*Poems* III, 1167). The links between the poem sent to French and the lines just quoted come in her letters. Possession, from the poet's vantage, is a matter of high centigrade. If hallowness is the result and reward of pain, it is the poet's "own Words" that "so chill and burn" her, "that the temperature of other Minds is too new an Awe" (*Letters* III, 758). When Otis Lord died she made explicit the terrifying aspect of her decision to link awe to destruction, always remembering that the act of "possessing" and the state of being "possessed" were consubstantial, by writing to the Norcross cousins: "I work to drive the awe away, yet awe impels the work" (*Letters* III, 817). Indeed, as she had put it to Samuel Bowles, years earlier, "The hallowing —of pain— makes one afraid to convalesce" (*Letters* II, 383).

The poet well knew the power of language. Every surviving poem and fragment attests to that. So do her letters, which after her discovery that she was, willy-nilly, a poet become all business, whether that business called itself Love, Circumference or Resurrection. She marvelled

at this wondrous power. "What is it that instructs a hand lightly created," she asked in 1880, "to impel shapes to eyes at a distance, which for them have the whole area of life or of death? Yet not a pencil in the street but has this awful power, though nobody arrests it. An earnest letter is or should be life-warrant or death-warrant, for what is each instant but a gun, harmless because 'unloaded,' but that touched 'goes off'?" (*Letters* III, 670) The image of the loaded gun, incidentally, harks back to its use,for a seemingly quite different purpose, in her puzzling poem beginning "My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun –" (*Poems* II, 574).

In her last years, even as the number of new poems waned, she began to make aphoristic references to the nature and power of the "Letter." Decades earlier she had encouraged her friend: "earth is short Abiah, but Paradise is *long*" (*Letters* I, 131). Now she insisted over and over that "a Letter is a joy of Earth – it is denied the Gods" (*Letters* III, 857). If so, it was also dangerous, she warned. On a scrap of paper, she had written: "What a Hazard a Letter is – When I think of the Hearts it has Cleft or healed I almost wince to lift my Hand to so much as a superscription but then we always except ourselves" (*Letters* III, 884). When she returned to this notion, in a letter to Higginson written within a year of her death, she expressed it a little differently: "What a Hazard a Letter is! When I think of the Hearts it has scuttled and sunk, I almost fear to lift my Hand to so much as a Superscription" (*Letters* III, 884). It is curious that to another friend, that same summer, she rang still another change on the thought. This time it was "an Accent" that she called a "hazard." "When I think of the Hearts it has scuttled or sunk," she wrote, "I hardly dare to raise my voice to so much as a Salutation" (*Letters* III, 886-87). For all the

"hazards" involved, however, the word in the form of a letter was "like immortality." To James D. Clark, to whom the poet began to write after the death of Charles Wadsworth, she said in late 1882, "A Letter always seemed to me like Immortality, for is it not the Mind alone, without corporeal friend?" (*Letters* III, 752). On this occasion she put it, perhaps rhetorically, as a question. Higginson, thirteen years earlier, she had declared it:

> A Letter always feels to me like immortality because it is the mind alone without corporeal friend. Indebted in our talk to attitude and accent, there seems a spectral power in thought that walks alone – (*Letters* II, 460)

For this woman, who physically often walked in solitude, there was no loneliness in the practice of her art-whether poetic or epistolary. Indeed, in the ways that essentially matter she did not always distinguish between the two forms. Early on she had known of their consubstantiality.

Circa 1862 Emily Dickinson wrote two poems in which the words *poem* and *letter*, in the first instance,and *poet* and *correspondent*, in the second, can be viewed as biographically interchangeable, though only the words *poet* and *letter*, respectively, actually appear. In these familiar poems I will make two substitutions: *poem* for *letter* and *correspondent* for *poet*. Here is the first poem:

> This is my *poem* to the World
> That never wrote to Me –
> The simple News that Nature told –
> With tender Majesty
>
> Her Message is committed
> To Hands I cannot see –

For love of Her —Sweet —countrymen —
Judge tenderly —of Me

(*Poems* I, 340)

Now here, of the second poem, are the first two stanzas:

This was a *Correspondent* —It is That
Distills amazing sense
From ordinary Meanings —
And Attar so immense

From the familiar species
That perished by the Door —
We wonder it was not Ourselves
Arrested it— before —

(*Poems* I, 346)

The often complementary, sometimes duplicative substance of her poems and her letters —not to mention the highest value that she placed on each —bear out the notion that there is logic in making these substitutions even as there is logic, of course, in the poet's own choices. In spirit and in the flesh, the letters, like the poems she sometimes sent along with them, were the bulletins from her eternal being that she was permitted (or permitted herself)to send out from day to day. As she had written in 1870,

What Miracles the News is!
Not Bismark but ourselves.

The Life we have is very great.
The Life that we shall see
Surpasses it, we know, because
It is Infinity.

But when all Space has been beheld
And all Dominion shown

The smallest Human Heart's extent
Reduces it to none.

(*Letters* II, 483)

At the age of fourteen, Emily Dickinson confessed to a friend: "you know how I hate to be common" (*Letters* I,10). When twice that age, she promised Mrs. Holland that she would "make quite a fox, in time, unless" —she qualified — "I die early" (*Letters* II, 350). When she died, in her fifty-sixth year-though no one knew it at the time—the fox, with her auburn hair, had lived long enough and, more importantly, had written well enough to have made a hard and successful run at the immortality she could not escape.

R E S U M O

O que Emily Dickinson queria transmitir a Thomas Wentworth Higginson em sua quarta carta para ele ("Minha ocupação é a Circunferência") era a noção de que ser poeta era um negócio sério, sem restrições concernentes a sexo, e que o negócio dirigido pelo poeta sério que ela era constituía-se em nada menos do que a busca da "Verdade" — para empregar uma das definições de Emerson — "cujo centro está em toda parte, não estando em parte alguma a sua circunferência, cuja existência não podemos desimaginar".

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EMILY DICKINSON'S POETRY: NEW INSIGHTS
"As Imperceptibly as Grief" (1540)

Sigrid Renaux
Universidade Federal do Paraná

ABSTRACT

This paper intends to analyze, by means of a particular linguistic approach, (Geoffrey Leech), Emily Dickinson's poem AS IMPERCEPTIBLY AS GRIEF — in which the theme is developed in the first twelve lines, and then is resumed, in a microcosm,in the last four lines.

"As Imperceptibly as Grief" is classified among Emily Dickinson's "nature" poems. It is a poem in which "seasonal change", in Yvor Winters' words, is employed "as a concrete symbol for (...) moral change" and he considers this a "legitimate and traditional form of allegory."[1] I would like to present a reading which differs from Winters' opinion, in that I see "light" in the process of change being foregrounded, and in which the imperceptibility of this process, as summer lapses away, becomes the topos of the poem. This theme is developed in the first twelve lines of the poem to then being resumed, in a microcosm, in the last four lines.

The poem is presented as a compact block of sixteen lines (although the earlier versions are in stanzas), and this compactness enhances the amplification of the theme and its restating at the end. Moreover, the dashes and commas interspersed in the lines become much more visible than if the poem were segmented in stanzas.

The imperceptible leaving of light, involved in

a "quietness distilled" (line 5), becomes expressed first of all in the rhythm, as lines become more and more fragmented with pauses. For, although the iambic pattern of the poem maintains its regularity, there is almost a mathematical precision in the ever increasing number of pauses, slowing down the rhythm: line 2 dash; line 4 dash; line 6 comma; line 8 dash; line 9 dash; line 10 dash; line 11 comma and dash; line 12 comma and dash. This rallentando, projecting the silence which accompanies the stages of the change, achieves its end in "gone" (line 12) and reminds us of the effect of music dying out.

But another interpretation seems equally valid as to this increase in the haltingness of the rhythm: considering that summer light is in the process of leaving and autumn light through twilight and dusk is drawing in, the morning light associated with summer days is more and more reluctant to shine, and it is this reluctance in staying that could be expressed in the broken rhythm of lines 11 and 12. And rhetorical emphasis cuts against metrical regularity, for line 11 would become much more expressive if, besides the pauses, the iambic pattern would be read "A courteous, but harrowing Grace," an iamb followed by a pyrrhic, and this unstressed foot, followed by the silent stress of the comma, would make the whole weight of the line fall on "but harrowing Grace" (an iamb followed by an anapest), to then reach its dénouement in line 12.

And, after a last pause at the beginning of line 13, as if "reechoing" the silent and slow lapsing away of summer light, the rhythm again corroborates the restatement of the theme of light escaping, as a coda, by regaining its regularity undisturbed up to the end. The movement of the rhythm could even be slightly increased in the last line if the iambic pattern were once more, for rhetorical

purposes, delivered as a pyrrhic followed by an iamb and another pyrrhic, enhancing, in this way, through the removal of two stresses, the "lightness" of the escape and simultaneously the escape itself, through the acceleration of rhythm. Again, these are only suggestions pointing to places where tension can lead to meaning, for as above, the weight of the line would fall on the word which is the final destiny of the escape of light: "Into the Beautiful."

The imperceptibility of light is also foregrounded in relation to meter, for the contrast between the first four lines in Common Meter (8-6-8-6) and the other twelve lines in Short Meter (6-6-8-6), helps to foreground the first "stanza" as containing the longest and most meaningful word in the poem — "imperceptibly" — which characterizes the way in which light leaves. Winters, nevertheless, gives a different interpretation to this foregrounding, by saying that "the shift into the normal six, six, eight, and six in the second stanza (...) results in a subtle and beautiful muting of both meter and tone" and he considers this "a brilliant techincal invention."[2] The imperceptibility of the experience also receives a suggestion of remoteness by the fact that what is being retold is in the past — and the "toned down" words further corroborate this.

At the level of sound, quietness/twilight merge into assonance, while the alliteration imperceptible/Summer binds even more the quality of imperceptibility to summer leaving. This quality is further carried on in the poem by a series of sound parallelisms resuming this alliteration either in initial, medial or final position, such as in spending/sequestered/service/summer/herself/dusk/lapsed/last/quest/grace/thus/escape. "Lapsed" is actually contained in "imperceptibly," as if "lapsing away" came out of "imperceptibly."

The nasals and liquids in /long/begun/ prolong the impression of twilight having started in the past, reverberating in the nasals of /afternoon/ as also in the assonance morning/foreign. These last two words, similarly to quietness/twilight, also form an imperfect chiasm, i.e., the letters of the second word in inverse order, increasing in this way the similarity in sounds between them and their similarity in meaning: "twilight" in association with "quietness" and "morning" with "foreignness," as morning is a reluctant guest. This idea is further corroborated in the alliteration guest/gone, at the emphatic beginning and end of the line, as if being a guest pressupposes his going.

The hardness of the plosives /k/g in the consonant cluster grace/courteous reminds us of their synonymity, while the openness of "harrowing" which is further enhanced by being preceded by an aspirate, foregrounds its contrast in meaning to "grace."

The imperceptibility of light is further suggested in the alliteration "without/wing" (unstressed in first word) and its escape into the Beautiful is also visually suggested by these two words having their letters forming another chiasm, "light/beautiful", as if light were "hidden" inside "Beautiful,"for the letters of "light" are contained in inverse order in "Beautiful," and they are also contained in "imperceptibly "

Actually this last "stanza" in terms of parallelisms in sound, form, and meaning, results in what Samuel Levin calls "poetic coupling,"[3] and it projects again the topos of the poem:

the summer our summer	lapsed made (her light)	away escape	imperceptibly without wings without service of keel	into the Beautiful
NOUN PHRASE	VERBAL PHRASE		ADVERBIAL PHRASE	

In this way, although the poem is developed in terms of amplification of theme from line 1 to 12, and the last 4 lines present the theme in a "condensed" way (12 lines to 4 lines), it is actually in the added details of the conclusion that we perceive what was being "hidden:" the imperceptibility of light disappearing, for even in the last two lines "light" is presented indirectly, in a pun with the adjective "light." The pun actually fuses the sensorial image of a "light escape" with the visual image of "the escape of light." And by the time we become aware of this, "light" has already "tricked" us and is in another region. This is also why the poem ends on a "lighter" mood than it started, in which "grief," although not present, colors the images of vanishing light with quiet undertones. There is no real "presence" of light in the poem, we have only twi-light, two half-presences like dusk, and the sequestered afternoon and foreign morning confirm this. There is no edenic atmosphere, either, for summer lapsed away with light, and the grace that remains is "harrowing," distressing, for it is perfidious.

The very meaning of "imperceptible" is also confirmed by the abstractness of the Latin word, which is further increased by the Latinity of "grief" (gravis), "quietness" (quies=rest), "perfidy" (fides=faith), and "distilled" (to let fall in drops), all of them contributing to suggest the impalpability and imperceptibility of the experience. Even Nature (nasci= be born) is abstract, for there is no detail in the poem which would recall a natural scene, thus centering the leaving of light projected in time, and not space. (This is confirmed by Dickinson removing four stanzas of the earliest copy, which dealt exactly with details of nature). The abstractness of words goes on in "sequestered" (sequestrare= remove) which, together with "lapsed" (labi= to slip) and "escape" (ex+cappa

=out of cloak), corroborates again the imperceptibility of the moving out of light, besides these words being also related in sound ("escape" and "lapsed away" forming actually another chiasm, pointing to their synonymity, while at the same time the slower movement of "lapsed away" and the quicker movement of "escape" being corroborated, as seen, by the increase in rhythm in the last 4 lines).

The striking synonymity between "twilight" and "dusk," enhanced by the removed "afternoon" and the foreigness of the "morning," have their relationship further foregrounded by all of them being of Anglo-Saxon origin, like "summer" and "light," in this way pointing to the "concreteness" of their presence and to the "abstractness" or imperceptibility of their escape, as seen above. And this same idea is again perceptible in the "means" summer light does not have to use in order to flee, for besides "wings" and "keel" being preceded by "without," suggesting they are not there, their Anglo-Saxon concreteness is again undermined by the Latinity of "service" (servus = slave, while "to serve" comes from service = helpful action) which is explicit in relation to "keel" and is implicit in relation to "wing."

This leaves us only with the discussion of the "climactic" lines 11 and 12, in which the slowing down of rhythm achieved its greatest emphasis, confirmed by the tension existing between rhetorical and metrical stress. If the Latinity of "foreign" (foras = out of doors) already makes the shining of morning be somewhere else, situated in another country, with the further suggestion of not shining characteristically, but strangely — a foreign guest and not a familiar presence — this idea achieves its ultimate emphasis in the simile that follows. The Latinity of "courteous" (cohors = enclosure) and "grace" (gratus = pleasing) in relation to the "Guest, that would be gone —"

(all Anglo-Saxon words), pointing to this "acquired" gracious courtesy — the behavior due in a court is then undermined by the crushing reality of the Old Nordic "harrowing," working like a harrow to destroy the Latin roots of "courteous grace," and thus revealing the falsity or "perfidy" of the guest, who, behind his façade of courtesy, actually wants to leave.

The oxymoronic combination of "harrowing Grace" thus reminds us that the "grace" (as the love and favor of God upon man) bestowed on the poet by the light that remains in Antumn is "harrowing," hurting, distressing; it also reminds us, on another level, of the "trick" light is playing on us, for the perfidy of its "grace" (as pleasing behaviour, charm) in staying is revealed in "harrowing" (crushing). Thus, the light shining from this uncharacteristic morning is equaled, even metaphorized into the contradictory and perfidious grace of a condescending guest; and this perfidy, which actually is perfidy, and not only seems (or feels, as in the Variorum), seems to be "forgiven" by the poet, through the guest — summer light — moving out imperceptibly. Paul Ferlazzo's interpretation of the simile does not really convey the shocking revelation of this perfidy in "harrowing Grace," as he concentrates more on the guest growing "ever more withdrawn and restless," while his "behaviour remains courteous,"[4] than on the real issue, the metaphor. As the parallelism shows, the morning's foreign shining (light) is the guest's harrowing grace for both want to leave.

Thus, it is on the imperceptible process of summer light leaving that this poem concentrates. Enhanced by the quietness that accompanies the process — as silence is a great ceremony, enveloping great events as a prelude to revelation — Summer light is gradually transformed into twilight and dusk, the "suspended instant;" this image

and hour of nostalgia is set in contrast to the pure and paradisical light of morning, which characterizes Spring light. And the wing and the keel (the first a symbol of flight, liberation of the material and related to aerial movement, while the second is a symbol of voyage and also spiritualization); even if not used by light in its escape, they remind us of the airiness and movement of light's voyage; and the visual beauty of the wings and the keel prepare us for the ineffable realm of the Beautiful, into which light has fled. As the line suggests, the Summer is "ours," but light is "hers," and this is why Summer can make it escape, imperceptibly, confirming the ineffability of the noun "Beautiful" (from the Latin bell(us)+itat) as a concept or ideal of beauty connoting aesthetic delight, which always lies beyond our reach.

Emily Dickinson once remarked to Higginson that the change of seasons "hurt almost like Music -- shifting when it ease us most."[5] I believe this same statement could be made about her deep feeling about light in this poem: she has not only "arrested" light and grasped its essence in its imperceptible process of leaving at the end of summer. Through her mastery in adopting words for "expressive purposes" and thus redefining them,[6] she has also been able to redefine the significance of light for us.

R E S U M O

Este artigo pretende analisar, mediante determinado procedimento lingüístico, (Geoffrey Leech), o poema IMPERCEPTÍVEL COMO A MÁGOA de Emily Dickinson — no qual o tema é desenvolvido nos primeiros doze versos, sendo depois retomado, num microcosmo, nos quatro últimos versos.

N O T E S

1 Winters, Yvor, "Emily Dickinson and the Limits of Judgement." In: *Emily Dickinson*, A Collection of Critical Essays. Ed. R.B.Sewall, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1963. p. 36.

2 Ibid., p. 38.

3 Levin, Samuel. *Linguistic Structures in Poetry*. The Hague, Mouton, 1962. p. 39-41.

4 Ferlazzo, Paul J. *Emily Dickinson*. Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1976. p. 113.

5 Sewall, Richard B. *The Life of Emily Dickinson*. New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980. p. 409.

6 Wilbur, Richard. "Sumptuous Destitution." In: *Emily Dickinson*, A Collection of Critical Essays. Ed. R.B. Sewall. Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall Inc., 1963. p. 127.

EMILYDICTION

Thomas Laborie Burns
Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais

ABSTRACT

Much has been written about Emily Dickinson's innovations in prosody. I should like to consider here her gift in another *sine qua non* of a great poet: the intuitive feel for and conscious choice of the right word in the right place.

Much has been written about Emily Dickinson's innovations in prosody. It is agreed that she was revolutionary in rhyme, meter, sentence structure, and in relatively minor grammatical matters such as capitals and punctuation. I should like to consider here her gift in another *sine qua non* of a major poet: the intuitive feel for and conscious choice of the right word in the right place. We can see how much more striking some of her word choices are when we consider the brevity of her poems — none of them over fifty lines, many less than ten. The shortness of the individual poem and the shortness of the individual line — typically, an iambic trimeter — call more attention to individual words. The poet's skillful manipulation of sentence structure, punctuation, and line breaks often force the reader into recognizing the importance of a single word, force him in some cases to stumble on it, as it were, and be made to ponder its possibilities.

One strategy she uses we might call the first-line surprise. Consider the following first lines:[1]

(1) Immured in Heaven!
(2) The Soul has Bandaged moments
(3) Renunciation is a piercing Virtue

Estudos (9): 51-58, março 1989

(4) Crisis is a Hair
(5) A Coffin is a small Domain
(6) Superfluous were the Sun
(7) Death is the supple Suitor
(8) There is no Frigate like a Book
(9) I like a look of Agony

These rather aggressive beginnings take the reader by surprise, make him want to read on and see what is behind such curious usage. How do they work? In example (4), the prosaic word "Hair" begins as a simple but unexpected metaphor and ends in a short, convoluted poem by contrasting with the final "here," a slant rhyme, a modernist feature of Dickinson's prosody. In (5), the abstract noun "Domain" is applied to the chillingly concrete noun "Coffin." In (8), two concrete nouns are juxtaposed despite their radically different associations of action and intellect. In (2) and (3), the adjectives "Bandaged" and "piercing" are unusual, even bizarre for the nouns they modify. In (1) and (6), adjectives that lead to more prosaic expectations are immediately coupled with grandly cosmic nouns. In (7), both "Suitor" and "supple" surprise by their apparent inappropriateness to death. Finally, (9) surprises by the sheer outrageousness of the statement itself.

Dickinson's surprises are not confined to beginnings. "This World is not Conclusion"[2] begins rather conventionally:

This World is not Conclusion.
A Species stands beyond —
Invisible, as Music —
But positive, as Sound —

The invisibility of music and positiveness of sound manage

to convey both the subtlety and power requisite of a divine presence that commands our allegiance, but the problematic word in this stanza, the word that leaps to attention, is "Species." It sounds suspiciously Scholastic, in the sense of medieval philosophy, preoccupied above all with rational proofs for God's existence which might make sense in the context of a poem dealing with the presence of God and the struggle of philosophers to comprehend it. The word is, in any case, supremely Aristotelian.

It beckons, and it baffles —
Philosophy — don't know —
And through a Riddle, at the last —
Sagacity, must go —

"[B]eckons" is followed logically by "baffles" and both verbs are joined to Riddle: what beckons, like a Riddle, has to be deciphered — the sign must be read; what baffles, like a Riddle, is puzzling — it frustrates whoever is ignorant of the answer. The Sagacity in this stanza is a variant of philosophy ("love of wisdom") but is at the same time larger and includes popular wisdom and experience, the province of the sage, if philosophy is a narrower, scholastic activity. The next stanza extends the category of seekers after truth to academic researchers, putting scholars with martyrs:

To guess it, puzzles scholars —
To gain it, Men have borne
Contempt of Generations
And Crucifixion, shown —

All intellectual means of understanding have been exhausted, yet men have known sacrifice, even martyrdom, to gain it. The poem thus far has been a conventional expression of Christian piety. Then, abruptly, the tone changes:

Faith slips — and laughs, and rallies —
Blushes, if any see —
Plucks at a twig of Evidence —
And asks a Vane, the way —

The third person verbs are wonderful. One cannot escape the conclusion that they are personifying Faith as a goofy drunk, stumbling and laughing foolishly, recovering and worrying about how he looks, then grasping at something too flimsy to support him, and finally talking to an inanimate object (the "Vane" showing which way the wind blows), a comic picture of a familiar sight. The tone changes again in the last stanza:

Much Gesture, from the Pulpit —
Strong Hallelujahs roll —
Narcotics cannot still the Tooth
That nibbles at the soul —

"Gesture" and "Hallelujahs" give a picture of a somewhat hysterical evangelical brand of Christianity, so that the satire of the preceding lines seems to give way to serious comment. The metaphor "roll" gives some indication of the frenzied emotional pitch, which to an intellectual like Dickinson must have been all too familiar in its exaggeration. The last line but one offers the conceit of doubt as toothache. Narcotics will still or dull the pain, or rather will not be able to do so very long, and are identified with the emotional manifestations in church the poet is exposing as inadequate to quell serious religious doubts, an admission remarkably similar in effect to Marx's dictum of religion being the opiate of the masses. The hellfire sermons and hymn singing of the first two lines of the stanza are this kind of narcotic in that their effect is trivial on the soul's true needs and concerns. The

narcotic-induced state also recalls the drunk of the preceding stanza. If Faith is itself blind as a drunk, then believers must become that way to keep their faith. There is a small triumph in the word "nibbles." Faith is here internalized in the Tooth as gnawing doubt. The cliché of something eating away at one's insides, worrying one sick, is transformed into an appropriate image by its suitability to the context of ingestion and drinking. We take drugs to dull pain but drugs only treat the symptoms; there is no cure for the cause. Dickinson may be calling the project of religious faith into question in this poem or she may be establishing the basis of a truer faith, one which must always contend with real doubts.

Let us now look at the word choice in another poem on the theme of religious doubt that is even more radical, "I know that He exists:"[3]

I know that He exists.
Somewehere — in Silence —
He has hid his rare life
From our gross eyes.

'Tis an instant's play.
'Tis a fond Ambush —
Just to make Bliss
Earn her own surprise!

But — should the play
Prove piercing earnest —
Should the glee — glaze —
In Death's — stiff — stare —

Would not the fun
Look too expensive!
Would not the jest —
Have crawled too far!

There are several surprises in this poem. Like "This World is not Conclusion," the poet sets up conventional expectations by beginning with a statement of Christian piety. The parallel terms rare/gross explain our inability to perceive God: the molecules of our vision, as it were,are too gross to be applied to the rarified nature of spiritual substance. The verb "hid" seems inappropriate for God until it is glossed by "play" in the second stanza. We are, it seems, playing a metaphysical game, a sort of Hide-and--Seek with God, which has the effect of greater joy for us when He finally reveals Himself. The "But" beginning the third stanza introduces the notion that there may be a serious side to the game, which will be the concern of the second half of the poem, but that all is not well has been suggested above in the apparently innocent phrase "fond Ambush." The adjective carries on the idea of playfulness but to be ambushed is worse than being merely surprised; it is to be fatally caught out. There is in this word a sinister suggestion that the game may be more than a game. In the conditionals of the third stanza, this idea is developed. The "piercing" earnestness punctures the playground balloon and the word "glee" means not only sport, play, entertainment, but also has a connotation of mockery or scorn, a fun that is not all innocent. When the game is up, our smiles "glaze" in the stiff stare of Death, a macabre picture we find often enough in Dickinson's morbid imagination.

What if this Hide-and-Seek is not a game after all, the poet is saying, and we only find this out when we die, then, the last stanza completes, wouldn't "the fun/ Look too expensive," wouldn't the game have cost too much, what if, as Timothy Leary used to say about "cosmic laughter," the joke turns out to be on you? To put it in the language of a favorite American game for adults, poker: what if Death calls Pascal's bet? The final two lines seem

to be saying the same thing metaphorically,but look at the metaphor. We would expect the word "gone" but instead read "crawled." As in music, when we hear both what is played and (in our minds) what is not when a theme is followed by a variation, this is a good example of how the poet can concentrate our attention on a word. The word "crawled" we might associate not only with a game, where the verb is transferred from the children, but with a snake,more sinister in this context than the "narrow fellow in the grass"[4] of one of Dickinson's well-known nature poems. This snake might be the serpent in Genesis, the tempter and creator of doubt in God's wisdom and justice, leader of the assault on the Tree of knowledge, and so suitably present in this garden of pseudo-certainty where we "know that He exists." We can transfer, in this reading, the "Silence" and "Ambush" of a playful God in the first half of the poem to his treacherous arch-enemy. By this word, Dickinson has deconstructed her own statement of faith. She has confirmed her subversion of her controlling image and made the reader reconsider its implications, has, by the force of a well-chosen word, made us doubt our own positive beliefs and helped us toward believing in our own doubts.

R E S U M O

Muito se tem escrito a propósito das inovações de Emily Dickinson em questões de prosódia. Gostaria de considerar aqui os seus dotes relativamente a outro *sine qua non* de um grande poeta: o sentir intuitivo e a busca consciente da palavra certa para o lugar certo.

N O T E S

1 They refer respectively to the following numbered poems of Johnson's well-known 1955 edition: (1) 1594, (2) 512,

(3) 745, (4) 889, (5) 943, (6) 999, (7) 1445, (8) 1263, (9) 241.

2 Poem 501. DICKINSON, Emily. *The Poems of Emily Dickinson.* 3 volumes. Ed. Thomas H. Johnson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955.

3 Poem 338. Op. cit.

4 Poem 986. Ibidem.

WHITMAN AND DICKINSON: SELF AND SELF-TRANSCENDENCE

Sérgio Luiz Prado Bellei
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

ABSTRACT

My purpose in this paper is to discuss the poetry of Whitman and Dickinson in terms of the transition, in 19th-Century America, from the "epic" and from the notion of language as action and power to the "lyric" and to the notion of language as signification.

1. INTRODUCTION

My purpose in this paper is twofold. First, I would like to discuss briefly the poetry of Whitman and Dickinson in terms of the transition, in 19th Century America, from one form of poetic discourse to another. For the sake of brevity, I would like to call these two forms of poetic discourse the "epic," which implies the notion of language as action and power, and the "lyric," which implies the notion of language as signification. Second, I would like to suggest that this production of "lyric" discourse in Dickinson makes her poetry congenial with a certain Brazilian tradition in poetry and explains, to a certain extent, her unusually successful reception in Brazil.

Of course, when applied to Whitman and Dickinson, the words "epic" and "lyric" have to be qualified, as the dictionary definitions of "a long narrative poem on a great and serious subject, related in an elevated style, and centered on a heroic... figure," and or a "song rendered to the accompaniment of a lyre"are clearly insufficient.[1] How could we then define the epic as opposed to the lyric so as to include in these genres the poetry of Whitman and Dickinson? In the case of the epic, as James Miller, Jr. has suggested, there are certain formal and thematic concerns that are common to both *Leaves of Grass* and the epics

of Homer, Vergil, Dante and Milton.[2] Emily Dickinson, likewise, shares with lyric poets of all times some formal and thematic concerns.

Epic discourse is, first and foremost, a discourse directed to the outside, or more precisely, to a "great and serios subject" and to a "heroic figure." Being interested in the outside the epic poet is also, according to Nietzsche, more on the side of Appollo than on the side of Dionysus: he "is committed to the pure contemplation of images" and, for him, "even the image of angry Achilles is no more than an *image* whose irate countenance he enjoys with a dreamer's delight in appearance — so that his mirror of appearance protects him from complete fusion with his characters."[3] This discourse directed toward the outside, moreover, must be expressed in a language appropriate to its subject. One form of indicating this appropriateness is to say that the style is "elevated." But it is also important to realize that this elevated style is a form of discourse in which language is viewed as a moral and ethical force capable of educating and shaping the moral behaviour of the citizens of the state. Language is here essentially a force directed towards the production of moral action. Incidentally, as Jane Tompkins has recently observed, this view of language as power and action is central to the comprehension of literature from the Greeks to the Renaissance, the author in all cases being responsible for the social function of shaping public morals. Only after the Renaissance, and with the Romantics in particular, this social function of literature would be replaced by the function of literature as the locus of signification and interpretation.[4] The epic is then this socially oriented discourse celebrating in grand style the outside in the form of a "great and serious subject" and of a "heroic figure." And the epic poet, being in the serv

ice of this outside, is essentially a "being-for-otherness."

Lyric discourse, on the other hand, is a discourse directed towards the inside of the poet. It is a celebration of a state of mind or of a process of thought and feeling of the speaker or the subject. This inner feeling, in Nietzsche's view, would be closer to Dionysus than to Apollo. It would also be closely associated with the production of *music*, and not of a picture or an image as in the case of the epic. Nietzsche derives his definition of the lyric from Schiller's method of composition. Prior to composing, Schiller claimed to feel not "a logically connected series of images but rather a musical mood". "With me," he says, "emotion is at the beginning without clear and definite ideas; those ideas do not arise until later on." This movement from pure emotion to concrete imagery, Nietzsche argues, is the mode of being of the lyric poet:

> He is, first and foremost, a Dionysiac artist, become whole identified with the original Oneness, its pain and contradiction, and producing a replica of that Oneness as music, if music may legitimately be seen as a repetition of the world; however, this music becomes visible to him again, as in a dream similitude, through the Apollonian dream influence. That reflection, without image or idea, or original pain in music, with its redemption through illusion, now produces a second reflection as a single simile or example."

The lyric poet, thus, begins his composition with the cry of the self, a cry which comes not from images, but from emotion, from "original pain," and undergoes a process of "unselving" in which "the poet's spirit feels a whole world

of images and similitudes arise, which are quite different in hue, causality and pace from the images of the sculptor or the narrative poet."[6]

The language which is appropriate for this inward journey is of course different from epic discourse. Nietzsche's argument suggests that this difference lies in the power of this language to turn *away* from the world or from external language, from the contemplation of images. Perhaps I can describe this retreat from the world in language in terms of a retreat in the direction of the *WORD*, a retreat from a discourse of action and power to a discourse of *PURE STRUCTURATION*, a discourse of *STRUCTURE AND SIGNIFICATION*. Language, in this kind of discourse, tends to be more language structure than representation, more self-reference than reference, more language-in-itself than language for the world. Archibald McLeish expressed this view of language when he wrote, in his "Ars Poetica," that "a poem should not mean, but be."[7] The poet, in turn, becomes rather a being-for-oneself than a being-for-otherness.

Defined in terms of an outwardness or inwardness which requires appropriate discursive forms and alternative attitudes on the part of the poet-speaker, the epic and lyric discourses can easily be recognized as characteristic forms of expression in Whitman and Dickinson. Critics have often pointed to this distinction, although not always using the terms "epic" and "lyric." Robert Spiller, for example, in *The Cycle of American Literature*, includes in the "introspective" tradition of American Literature writers such as Poe, Dickinson, Hawthorne, Eliot, and Faulkner, writers that followed the road "that led inward to an exploration of the consciousness, to tradition, to restraint, and to concern for form," as opposed to writers such as Whitman and Mark Twain, who turned to the "outer world" of the expanding continent.[8] James Miller Jr. expands

on Spiller's categories when he discusses *Leaves of Grass* as "America's epic" in the sense that the poem "embodies at the same time that it creates America's image of itself," presented by the democratic epic hero of "One's Self I Sing."[9] Dickinson's lyricism on the other hand is always implied whenever critics refer to the "egocentric predicament" of her poems or to her poetry as "riddles" in which the importance of the structuring power of language is evident.[10]

2. WHITMAN: THE EPIC POET AS SPIDER

One of the best images of the role of the epic poet in the sense I am using the word is expressed in a lyric poem published by Whitman in 1868:

A Noiseless Patient Spider.

A noiseless patient spider,
I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood
isolated,
Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,
It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament,
out of itself,
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you O my soul where you stand,
Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of
space,
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking
the spheres to connect them,
Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till
the ductile anchor hold,
Till the gossamer thread you fling catch
somewhere, O my soul[11]

The poem expresses of course Whitman's version of the Ro-

mantic epistemological belief in the poet's function to achieve a relation of coherence and interdependence between self and nature, imagination and reality or, to use the adequate epistemological duality, between subject and object. But it expresses also the epic ideal of the public voice of the poet (the spider on a little promontory) giving shape and structure to a *VAST* surrounding by tying this surrounding, through filaments that are reeled out of the self, to the very self as public figure and controlling center. Like the spider in the poem, the self of the "Song of Myself" is at pains to establish a bridge between the self (both the real Whitman, "37 years old in perfect health" and the transcendental self) and the diversity of the world. Two basic techniques are involved in the construction of this bridge: the "catalogue technique," that is, the naming of the apparently chaotic diversity and the reference to the self that unifies the catalogue and produces the vision of transcendental unity.

The central voice of the self that unifies and in unifying produces his own identity is a voice defined in terms of John Stuart Mill's notion of eloquence as the expression of feeling to be *heard* and opposed to poetry (lyric poetry) as utterance *overheard*, since the lyric poet is unconscious of the listener and his utterance is "feeling confessing itself to itself in moments of solitude, and embodying itself in symbols which are the nearest possible representations of the feeling in the exact shape in which it exists in the poet's mind."[12] The "Song of Myself," therefore, presents an eloquent speaker that unifies, epically and by means of symbols, the diversity of the external world in America. The symbols tend to deal with the cyclical pattern of life, death and rebirth in nature. In section twenty-two, for example, the sea symbolically encompasses life and death, and in section six the grass is

depicted as a microcosm containing in itself the essence of things.

The catalogues in Whitman, necessary as they are for the presentation of the large panorama of the American democracy, tend to attenuate the effect of the lyric passages in the poem. There is lyricism in Whitman but it is dissolved in the vastness of the catalogues eloquently presented. The "Song" remains, to refer once again to Mill's dichotomy, a poem to be heard rather than a poem to be overheard, an epic rather than a lyric. As such, I would suggest, it is utterly different from a poem by Emily Dickinson.

3. DICKINSON: THE POEM AS RETREAT FROM THE WORLD INTO THE WORD

Approximately two years before Whitman had written his spider poem Emily Dickinson defined, in a poem of her own, her theory on how to write poetry:

> Perception of an object costs
> Precise the Object's loss --
> Perception in itself a Gain
> Replying to its Price —
> The Object-Absolute -- is nought
> Perception sets it fair
> And then upbraids a Perfectness
> That situates so far --[13]

The poem is certainly a violation of the Romantic idea of the poet as mediator between self and reality. In Dickinson's poem, to say the least, "the object absolute" is not perception. Moreover, it is displaced by perception and tends therefore to be reduced to nothing (nought). This nothingness of the object may be a "perfectness," as the last line suggests. But if so it is a perfectness that

"situates so far" (perhaps too far to be recovered in perception) and must therefore be upbraided by a perception which is "in itself a Gain."

What kind of poetry is this, which seems quite consciously to emphasize perception while at the same time rejecting the world? First, it is the kind of poetry described by Nietzsche as "lyric" in the sense that it avoids as much as possible the world as representation and strives to achieve the quality of non-representativeness characteristic of music. Of course, as poetry is expressed in language and is therefore always referential in a way that music is not, the result of emphasis on perception is that the world tends to be transformed into pure *WORD* or rather, since "pure word" (word devoid of referentiality) is an impossible concept, into the kind of word in which *structure* and *relation* is primary and representation is secondary. The French poet Mallarmē once said that "everything, in the world, exists to end up in a book" (tout, au monde, existe pour aboutir à un livre).[14] Emily Dickinson seems to write poems as if, paraphrasing Mallarmē, everything in the world existed to end up in a poem. The world, in this kind of composition, is only important as the raw material offered to the poet to be transformed into a structure of meaning in which structure is more important than the raw material to be worked with. The world becomes, as it were, useless except as an occasion for play and as materials to be related in a surprising way, the *RELATIONAL* being the primary aim of the poet.

Second, it is a kind of poetry in which time as succession, or chronological time tends to be abolished and in which there is an effort to produce the suggestion of (lyric) timelessness. In terms of the distinction used by Frank Kermode in *The Sense of an Ending*, time in the poems of Dickinson is *KAIROS*, not *CHRONOS*. Chronos, as Kermode

explains, "is 'passing time' or 'waiting time' — that which, according to Revelation, 'shall be no more' — and kairos is the season, a point in time filled with significance, charged with a meaning derived from its relation to the end."[15] Of course what we call reality (the real, historical time-space continuum) is associated with chronos. Kairos, on the other hand, is associated with fragmentary, historical moments of intemporal significance which tend to be indifferent to what we call the real. Perhaps the best way to define the poem as the effort to transcend chronos in order to achieve kairos is to say that the poem in this perspective becomes an epiphany in the Greek sense of the word, that is, epiphany as a sudden manifestation (revelation) or perception of the essential nature or meaning of something. In the lyric poem as epiphany the soul or whatness of the object "leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance." This is of course James Joyce's notion of epiphany: What is implied in the definition is the existence of a major difference between the things themselves and the epiphanies of things in the same way as, in Dickinson's poem quoted above, there is a difference between perception and its object. Emily Dickinson shows her awareness of this Joycean notion of epiphany in many poems. Consider, for example, a poem like "Did our Best Moment last-":

Did our Best Moment last -
'Twould supersede the Heaven-
A few - and they by Risk - procure
So this Sort - are not given-

Except as stimulants-in
Cases of Despair-
Or Stupor-The Reserve
These Heavenly Moments are-

A Grant of the Divine

That Certain as it Comes-
Withdraws - and leaves the dazzled Soul
In her unfurnished Rooms[16]

Or again, consider a poem like "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant," which is as good a definition of the technique required for producing epiphany as one could possibly wish:

Tell all the Truth but tell it slant -
Success in Circuit lies
Too bright for our infirm Delight
The Truth's superb surprise

As Lightning to the Children eased
With explanation kind
The Truth must dazzle gradually
Or every man be blind -[17]

Naturally, critical attention has not failed to perceive this epiphanic lyricism in Dickinson. Sharon Cameron, for example, in *Lyric Time: Dickinson and the Limits of Genre* has remarked that "Dickinson's poems attempt to stall time to a stasis... The deathless world of no time is a world we lose merely waking up. Dickinson's poems articulate the loss and, like all lyrics, they attempt to reverse it." But this is perhaps an excessively recondite definition of what Dolores D. Lucas calls the poem as riddle, which she claims is central to the comprehension of Dickinson's strategy in writing poems.[18] The literary riddle can be defined in more than one way, but for the purpose of this paper I would like to suggest that the riddle represents perhaps the essence of epiphanic lyricism in the sense that in riddles the object of perception is not important except as the raw material for the production of sudden surprise in language. In other words, the important thing in riddles is the language game by means of which the object, as per-

ception, is literally created. As, for example, in the poem which begins "I like to see it lap the Miles," which is of course a riddle in which the answer is locomotive.[19]

Third, Dickinson's poetry, being more lyric presentation than representation and being more kairos than chronos, is also fragmentary in nature. Her poems form rather a collection of fragments than an integrated whole in which a *Weltanschaaung*, a view of life or a philosophical system could be naturally perceived. This fragmentation allied to a void in terms of world view was accurately described by Roy Harvey Pearce in *The Continuity of American Poetry*:

> The traditional classification of her poems (Nature, Death, etc.) gives at best a too generalized plan by which to reconstruct her "world view." It seems more likely, especially in the light of the enormous variety in the 1.775 poems which we now have from her, that the matter of a coherent world view is hardly material to the comprehension and appreciation of her poems. This is not true of Poe, Emerson, and Whitman, whatever may be said against their aspirations toward a "philosophy."[20]

At this point the question of the adequate strategy for reading Dickinson becomes inevitable. If in her radical lyricism she seems, in the words of Roy Harvey Pearce, "to claim no more for her poem than it is - a composition,"[21] how should then the reader respond to her exercises in composition? What is, in other words, a reader of pure compositions as opposed, for example, to a reader of final meanings? I would suggest that a reader of pure composition tends to focus his attention rather in the process

of construction of meaning than in meaning constructed as a final product. He is more interested in the juxtaposition of paradoxical ideas than in the resolution of paradox in a final interpretation. He is perhaps the reader-interpreter against interpretation, that is to say, he is a paradox himself. May be I can best describe the attitude of such a reader by contrasting his hypothetical reading of a particular poem to the response of the usual reader-interpreter. The poem I would like to choose to illustrate alternative responses is "I heard a fly buzz - when I died -":

I heard a fly buzz - when I died -
The Stillness in the Room
Was like the Stillness in the Air -
Between the Heaves of Storm -

The Eyes around - had wrung them dry -
And Breaths were gathering firm
For that last Onset - when the king
Be witnessed - in the Room -

I willed my Keepsakes - Signed away
What portion of me be
Assignable - and then it was
There interposed a Fly -

With Blue - uncertain stumbling Buzz -
Between the light - and me -
And then the Windows failed - and then
I could not see to see.[22]

The fly, which of course in this poem is the occasion for the epiphanic, kairetic moment, has been the object of controversial critical attention. Predictably the controversy involves the attempt to show either that the fly has a positive or a negative meaning in the poem. Thus for Mr. Gerhard Friedrich the fly is bad because it represents that

"irrelevant, tangible, finite" object that tends to divert the dying person's attention from "that deeper perception which should clearly reveal... the infinite spiritual reality." A woman critic, Caroline Hogue, agrees with Mr. Friedrich and adds that Emily Dickinson was "a practical housewife, and every howsewife abhors a blowfly. It pollutes everything it touches. Its eggs are maggots. It is as carrion as a buzzard." Mr. John Ciardi, on the other hand, sees the fly positively. Dickinson, he claims, had a "special delight both in minute creatures for their own sake, and in minute actions for the sake of the dramatic implications that can be loaded into them."[23]

These definitions of the meaning of the fly in the poem do not spring from readers of "pure compositions," as they reveal the typical interpretive attitude to forget about composition and process in order to decide,using all available means, what is the ultimate meaning of the poem. One is here dealing with positive hermeneutics in its attempt to arrest the free play of signification in order to produce final meaning. Is it possible to avoid this kind of reading and try to produce an alternative which would presumably respond to the poem as process and composition? Thirty years ago it would probably be impossible to answer affirmatively. Today, after Roland Barthes and Derrida and textual reading, there is perhaps the possibility of seeing a text not as final product but as process and composition and to imagine a reader in search not of meanings primarily, but of meaningful compositions, that is, of juxtaposed images in com-position (the fly and the seriousness of death). Such a reader would direct his attention to the poem as a machine producing meanings rather than to the poem as an intentional message expressing a final meaning to be interpreted. His interest, in short, would be in production and radical lyricalness as construction and

not, or at least not so much, in the product as final meaning. To thim the poem would offer itself as free play of signification rather than as ambiguity to be reduced.

4. EMILY DICKINSON IN BRAZIL

According to James Woodress, outside the United States "the greatest enthusiasm for Emily Dickinson... has been shown in Italy. Not only have there been twenty-three translations of her poems into Italian, but five of them appeared in the thirties." As for criticism, "of the two hundred plus foreign critical pieces listed in the Buckingham bibliography, seventy-seven of them are in Italian."[24] Spanish and Portuguese translations and critical articles evidently cannot compete with the Italian superior production: Hensley C. Woodbridge compiled in 1968 a bibliography of eleven Spanish and Portuguese translations and eighteen critical articles.[25] Nonetheless, Emily Dickinson has been the object of considerable attention from Spanish and Portuguese writers, critics and translators. Since the late 70's in Brazil, at least three major translations of Dickinson have appeared, the last being only recently published by Augusto de Campos in *O Anticrítico*. I believe I am not exaggerating in saying that interest in Dickinson in Brazil is second only to interest in another 19th Century American poet, and that is not Whitman but Edgar Allan Poe.[26]

Is there any particular justification for this unusual interest in Dickinson in the last thirty years? In *O Anticrítico*, Augusto de Campos gives a tentative answer to this question. For Campos Emily represents the American poet who, more than any other, wrote modern lyrics in the 19th Century:

the density
of her poetic language
made it more modern than that of whitman
no north-american poet
(not even emerson or poe)
had taken so far
ellipsis and the condensation of thought
or sintactic disruptions
even punctuation was made free from rules
dashes intercept texts
replacing commas and stops
and giving the poems
a fragmentary fisiognomy
already completely modern.[27]

Campos tries of course, in the cannibalistic tradition of Oswald de Andrade, to appropriate Emily and make her a part of the tradition of Concrete poetry, which is perhaps the most radical form of lyricism. He is nonetheless accurate in placing Dickinson in a tradition of radical lyricism. There is one suggestion, however, that I would like to add to Campo's evaluation. I would like to suggest that Dickinson's successful reception in Brazil must be explained not only in terms of her modernity, but also in terms of our horizons of expectations in terms of poetry. By horizons of expectation I mean to say that our literature, particularly when compared to the literature of the U. S., has from the beginning evinced a strong preference for lyricism. Consider, in our Romanticism, the names of Alencar, Gonçalves Dias, Álvares de Azevedo, Castro Alves, Casimiro de Abreu, in which prose is obviously at a disadvantage, and for a contrast, in American Romanticism, the names of Emerson, Thoureau, Melville, Hawthorne and Whitman, in which poetry is at a disadvantage. Perhaps Alceu Amoro-

so Lima is right when he remarks in *The American Reality*, that Americans are naturally prose-writers, as prose is the natural expression of a nation in which pragmatism is more important than lyricism, and that Brazilians are naturally poets, as poetry is the natural expression of a people in which the means are more important than the ends."[28] If so, Dickinson is of course congenial to us.

The predominance of radical lyricism in a given culture is a double-edged weapon. On the one hand, radical lyricism, especially as it was defined after Romanticism (in which the poet without a public function turned inwards searching for his deep feelings in his own deep self to express), is a force in the construction of the self, real or imaginary, in the very act of constructing meaning. Construction of the self and construction of meaning are one in the sense that epiphany in language must necessarily reflect an epiphany in the poet who uses language. I play with language, therefore I am. Of Emily Dickinson's poetry Pearce has written that, in "writing poems she writes herself. She claims to do nothing more and dares do nothing less. She must know as much of the world as she can, yet in the end know it only as it serves to shape her knowledge of herself. Her words are exact: she is hounded by her own identity." Curiously enough, this identity is many times expressed in the achievement of status variously indicated by "such favorite words as *queen*, *royal*, *wife*, *woman*, *poet*, *immortal*, and *empress*."[29]

On the other hand, in constructing the self radical lyricism tends to neglect the construction of the other, or society. At this point one is immediately forced to notice Dickinson's presence in some places and her absence in others. Her presence as a recluse in her room, rarely coming down even to meet her guests. Emily herself once described this experience as a recluse in a letter to

T. W. Higginson:

> I went to school, but in your manner of the phrase had no education. When a little girl, I had a friend who taught me Immortality; but venturing too near, himself, he never returned. Soon after, my tutor died, and for several years my lexicon was my only companion. Then I found one more, but he was not contented I be his scholar, so he left the land.[30]

As for the places in which Emily Dickinson is absent, I would like to mention one example very briefly. She is a conspicuous absence in a book called *The Quest for Nationality: An American Literary Campaign*. Benjamin T. Spencer, the author, explains:

> Some authors who loom large in the national literature are all but absent from these pages simply because they left scant record of their participation in the quest for nationality: Emily Dickinson and Mark Twain do not appear so often as Bayard Taylor and John Neal.[31]

The negative and positive implications of radical lyricism are perhaps best expressed in one of Plato's dialogues, in which a story is told about the philosopher Thales and the clever witty Thracian handmaid:

> *Soc.* I will illustrate my meaning, by the jest which the clever witty Thracian handmaid is said to have made about Thales, when he fell into a well as he was looking up at the stars. She said, that he was so eager to

know what was going on in heaven, that he could not see what was before his feet. This is a jest which is equally applicable to all philosophers [and to all poets, I would add]. For the philosopher is wholly unacquainted with his next-door neighbour; he is ignorant, not only of what he is doing, but he hardly knows whether he is a man or an animal; he is searching into the essence of man, and busy in enquiring what belongs to such a nature to do or suffer different from any other; I think that you understand me, Theodorus?

Theod. I do, and what you say is true.[32]

These negative and positive implications of radical lyricism are also suggested in a poem about a spider, by a Brazilian poet, João Cabral de Melo Neto. The poem, I would like to suggest, defines the spider in isolation and in doing so summarizes perhaps the meaning of radical lyricism as a strong trend in our poetic tradition, and also the significance of a kind of poetry in which all that is at stake is the relationship between SELF and LANGUAGE, never the relationship between SELF and WORLD (through LANGUAGE).

A aranha passa a vida	(The spider spends her life
tecendo cortinados	weaving curtains
com o fio que fia	with the thread she makes
de seu cuspe privado.	out of her own private spit
Jamais para velar-se	Never to veil herself:
e por isso são ralos.	That is why they are rare
Para enredar os outros	It is to trap others
É que usa os enredados.	that she uses her weavings.

Ela sabe evitar	she knows how to avoid
que a enrede seu trabalho,	being trapped by her work
mesmo se, dela mesma,	even if from her own self
o trama, autobiográfico.	she weaves it, autobiographic.
E em muito menos tempo	And in much less time
que tomou em tramá-lo,	than she took to plot it
o véu que não a velou	the veil that failed to hide her
aí deixa, abandonado.[33]	She leaves behind, discarded.

This poem, I believe, could have been written by Emily Dickinson. Never by Walt Whitman.

R E S U M O

Meu propósito neste artigo é discutir a poesia de Whitman e de Dickinson em termos da transição, na América do século 19, do "épico" e da noção de linguagem como ação e poder para o "lírico" e a noção de linguagem como significação.

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ECCENTRICITIES IN EMILY DICKINSON'S NATURE POETRY

Maria Odirene Nogueira de Almeida
Universidade Federal do Ceará

ABSTRACT

These are the main points in this paper: Emily Dickinson's nature poetry as different from romantic nature poetry; discussion of the poems A NARROW FELLOW IN THE GRASS, SWEET IS THE SWAN WITH ITS SECRETS, THE MUSHROOM IS THE ELF OF PLANTS, THE RAT IS DUN, WITH WRINKLED WINGS, THE RAT IS THE CONCISEST TENANT; Emily Dickinson remains a skeptic observer in her treatment of Nature.

Nature provides subject matter and imagery in Emily Dickinson's poetry. However, her treatment of nature, in general, differs greatly from that used by her contemporaries. She was writing at the same time that Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman were writing, but while these poets emphasize the importance of nature in man's life, the oneness of the individual with nature, she approaches the subject from an objective point of view, describing the beautiful as well as the ugly details of nature with a keenly observant eye, managing to capture the essential qualities of the object she describes.

Clark Griffith discussing Emily Dickinson's nature poetry in his book *The Long Shadow* says that she did not abandon the Emersonian principles that nature is benevolent, compassionate, and kindly disposed toward the individual. However, she manages to invert these principles. She "agrees that natural processes are indeed deliberate — but deliberately treacherous and unpredictable. In her poetry, Nature is capable of conferring moments of great ecstasy. But the moments prove fleeting and transitory. They tenta-

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lize the observer, lull her into feelings of false security. Suddenly they pass, to be followed by periods when Nature glares back with a chilling hostility."[1]

This paper deals with Emily Dickinson's treatment of nature's eccentricities in poems such as "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass," "Sweet is the swamp with its secrets," "The Mushroom is the Elf of Plants," "The Bat is dun with wrinkled wings," and "The Rat is the concisest Tenant." The discussion will be based on critical material, but whenever possible original observations will be used.

The first two poems to be discussed deal with snakes. Although in "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass" she never mentions the word snake, there is no doubt she is dealing with one. She is accurate in her description being careful to describe how the snake rides, where it lives, and what it looks like when it appears and disappears. In discussing "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass" Charles R.Anderson sees the snake's appearings and disappearings as the main characteristic that makes the snake most alien to man.[2] The snake's home is remote from man, and to show this remoteness Emily Dickinson, instead of using the conventional swamp for the snake's habitat, shows the quality of separateness by juxtaposing "boggy" with "acre" and then saying "too cool for corn."[3] For Anderson "acre" symbolizes agriculture, and "corn," the basis of civilization.

The idea of separateness between man and the snake (i.e., man and nature) is developed throughout the poem, and it becomes more evident when the boy tries to catch the snake and it disappears: "When stooping to secure it / it wrinkled and was gone." (229) Is Anderson implying, then, that Emily Dickinson is saying that communication between man and Nature is impossible? Not only that, but he also sees the snake as the Serpent of Eden, and, therefore, it represents for Emily Dickinson the terror of

confronting cold, live evil. He sees this terror in the last two lines of the poem "Without a tighter Breathing/ /And Zero at the Bone,"(229) which for him clearly show how terrified the poet is of the snake.

If one is to follow Anderson's interpretation of the poem (i.e., the snake symbolizing evil), a closer look at the poem becomes necessary to show what Emily Dickinson might have thought about evil. In the first stanza

> A Narrow Fellow in the Grass
> Occasionally rides
> You may have met Him - did you not
> his notice sudden is - (229)

the occasional ride of the snake means that evil is not a constant in the world, but everybody has to come across it. This is implicit not only in the first stanza, but also in the second when she says "And then it closes at your feet/ /And opens further on" (229) meaning that evil is present in every place. The fact that evil exists in a "boggy acre" may indicate that it is not exactly where people live, but none the less, it is surrounding them. Even better is her allusion to the non-existence of evil among children. The boy tried to catch the snake and it escaped him, "When stooping to secure it/ It wrinkled and was gone".(229).

The fifth and sixth stanzas

> Several of Nature's People
> I know, and they know me -
> I feel for them a transport
> Of cordiality
>
> But never met this Fellow
> Attended, or alone
> Without a tighter Breathing
> And Zero at the Bone - (229)

are very effective in that they serve to show her attitude towards Nature. She is able to see the good aspects of Nature, but she can also see the treacherous elements in Nature. The last line "And Zero at the Bone" is an example of her power with words. It seems that one feels the kind of sensation she is describing when faced with the snake, with evil.

The snake as a symbol of evil is also present in "Sweet is the swamp with its secrets." "This poem and the previous one have a few characteristics in common — the snake's habitat, for instance. In the previous poem it lived in a "boggy acre;" in this, in a "swamp." The point is that none of these places are in civilization, but in the surroundings. Therefore, there is the same idea that evil does not exist exactly where one is, but is surrounding him.

The non-permanent quality of evil is another characteristic that these two poems share. In this poem it is represented in the line "A snake is summer's treason."(317). By specifying "summer" she may want to imply that evil is not among people all the time. It comes, but it goes. The idea of cycle is implicit in this line. Therefore, it reinforces the fact that although it is not permanent it does exist.

More important than the similarities concerning place and time is the childhood imagery that is also present in "Sweet is the swamp with its secrets." The speaker in this poem gallops away from the snake, from evil. The image seems to be stronger in this poem, since it is not clear if the poet is talking about a child or comparing the action of galloping with that of a child. If the speaker is an adult, then not only children run away from evil,but everybody. Her non-romantic attitude towards Nature is emphasized in the first line of the poem "Sweet is the swan with its secrets." A swamp is as sweet for her as anything

else in Nature, and she talks of a snake as she would talk of a bird. Previous Nature poets had grown accustomed to thinking of Nature as a cuddly companion, and this is not exactly what Emily Dickinson thinks of Nature.

Nature for Emily Dickinson seems to be quite deceiving, and not as serene as it looks. "Let us but turn our backs, she says, and this tranquil composition begins to waver and shift."[4] Her poem "The Mushroom is the Elf of Plants" is a good illustration of this affirmation. According to Anderson images of evanescence run throughout the poem. "The Mushroom is the 'Juggler' par excellence in the vegetable world, a wandering hobgoblin (Elf) that inhabits unfrequented places. It is also a mere 'Bubble' or an 'Alibi,' that last plea of the accused, 'Not me, I was elsewhere."[5] He also sees an image of evanescence in the Biblical overtones of the alliterating "tarried" and also in the fourth stanza when she says "I feel as if the grass was pleased/To have it intermit." (271) With "intermit" he sees the last action of disappearance. "Intermit" also introduces an unexpected corollary: the mushroom is a pariah, an outcast.

Although Anderson does not explicitly affirm that the mushroom may stand as a symbol for man, he leaves no doubt in his commentaries as to the human qualities of the mushroom. If Anderson's suggestion is to be taken into consideration, then one is faced with a bleak view of man, and, therefore, of life. This may exactly be what Emily Dickinson wants the mushroom to symbolize, and, since critics in general have a tendency to see her as a skeptical person in her attitudes towards man and Nature, Anderson's suggestion is quite logical.

However, considering that Emily Dickinson always uses metaphors and hyperboles to express her ideas and thoughts, many interpretations of her poems become possi-

ble. Therefore, the mushroom may also stand for a symbol of evil. If this interpretation is feasible, then it fits perfectly well within the pattern established for the first two poems discussed in this paper.

The first line "The Mushroom is the Elf of Plants"(271) immediately separates the mushroom from the other plants, i.e., evil from the other elements in life. This poem seems to have some of the characteristics of the previous poems, the time characteristic, for example. It is only at night that "The Mushroom is the Elf of Plants." (271) It does not come to remain. It is similar to "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass" in that the snake appeared suddenly. The same is true of the mushroom. Its appearance is sudden. Besides, all the other images of evanescence that Anderson suggests as symbols of man's transitory state may also work as symbols of the transitory state of evil. The symbols work well according to both interpretations. But what about the fourth stanza?

> I feel as if the Grass was pleased
> To have it intermit -
> This surreptitious scion
> Of summer's circumspect.(271)

Does this stanza imply that Emily Dickinson is happy with evil in the world? Not necessarily. She is simply accepting the fact that it does exist. Her use of "as if" undercuts any power that the statement might have.

Although this poem does not have a childhood image to symbolize avoidance of evil, the tone of the last stanza denies its total existence:

> Had Nature any supple Face
> Or could she one contemn
> Had Nature an Apostate
> That Mushroom, it is Him (271-2)

John B. Pickard sees this poem in a different way. He sees it as a humorous poem where the lighter side of Nature's offshoots is depicted. To him Emily Dickinson is "exploring the illusory, transitory qualities that underlie nature's surface."[6] He considers the phrases "vegetation's Juggler," "Germ of Alibi," and "surreptitious scion" as "mock heroic phrasing and they serve to capture the eccentric, defiant character of the mushroom. The poem concludes with nature's helpless chagrin over this rebel, whose unaccountable life is epitomized by a term of religious deviation and ungrammatical phrasing: 'Had Nature an Apostate/ That Mushroom - it is Him'."[7]

In the three poems discussed so far "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass," Sweet is the swamp with its secrets," and "The Mushroom is the Elf of Plants" an approach was used to show that Emily Dickinson may be using these grotesque aspects of Nature not only to show how far removed man is from Nature, but also to show how far removed man is from evil. This view may be optimistic provided that the common agreement among critics is that she is rather skeptical in her treatment of Nature, using Nature imagery to mock man's inability to comprehend the mysteries of Nature and of the natural process. However, since she writes about a multitude of subjects, and is able to view them from different angles, the interpretation that these eccentricities symbolize evil is quite feasible. In the next two poems to be discussed, however, "The Bat is dun, with wrinkled wings" and "The Rat is the concisest Tenant," it seems unlikely that symbols of evil are intended. Rather, by using these grotesque aspects of Nature she is able to mock religion and society.

"The Bat is dun, with wrinkled wings" is probably her finest treatment of Nature's misfits. This poem is a good example of her delight in exploring the religious basis

of the unusual and the odd. Both Anderson and Pickard agree that this poem raises some perplexing questions concerning the purpose behind creation and man's limitations in comprehending the divine plan. "The bat appears useless and eccentric to us, but just as we are unable to hear his song, perhaps we cannot understand how 'beneficent' he is within the total order of the universe."[8]

To Anderson, the bat used as a means to question man's inability to comprehend the ordered universe is very effective. It has wings, but they are not feathered. It flies, but is not a bird. It is a mammal with a mouth, but with feebly developed vocal cords. He utters no sounds, or if he does they are not perceptible to man. This fact reinforces the idea that man is unable to understand the mystery behind creation. Another image that supports this idea is the "Arc" that the bat makes when be flies. This too is "inscrutable."

Anderson also sees the second stanza as a sly thrust at Emerson, who proclaimed the humble bee an exalted seer in exactly the same phrase.

> His small Umbrella quaintly halved
> Describing in the Air
> An Arc alike inscrutable
> Elate Plisopher (301)

"Describing," he says, "suggests that the bat is writing on the air, his wings being really his hands, fingers with spread membranes. He is spelling out his philosophy."[9] But while the bee's philosophy is the union of man with Nature, the bat's philosophy is "inscrutable." No one is able to understand it, or the bat may be writing that no matter how hard one tries to understand Nature there is no way he will be able to.

If, according to Anderson and Pickard, the main

theme of the poem is man's doubt concerning creation, then the same relation that exists between bat and man can also exist between man and God. Then, one is faced with a bleak view of man and his position in the universe. The fact that it was the very silence of the bat that contributed to the poet's awe suggests that she may be struck with the silence of God in regard to man. The sound imagery of the first stanza "And not a song pervade his Lips-/Or none perceptible-"(301) may mean that whatever complaint man has to make will be of no avail because God will not hear him.

Also man's role on earth is of no importance, since he is moving in circles that no one is able to comprehend. Besides, the umbrella image connotes man's nervous, hesitant personality which always needs protection. To Emily Dickinson man never seems to be certain of where he stands in relation to God. In reference to the image of the bat being "beneficent because he kills other insects, how is man beneficent? because he kills other men? Not exactly that. She may be alluding to those who in order to achieve their objectives, do not care whom they hurt. Man's creator deserves praise because even the very product of his creation is not able to understand him, and man is, then, one of God's eccentricities. The value of this interpretation is questionable. However it seems possible, since this theme is not novel with her. She has poems that explicitly deal with God's disregard for people on earth.

In the last poem to be discussed, "The Rat is the concisest Tenant", the rat mocks man's complacent trust in law and social patterns. It ignores all that is unessential to its own needs. Not only does it fail to pay for food and lodging but it completely denies any moral responsibility. Man is aware of the rat's amoral acts, but man's hate for it is of no use since it does not care. Commenting on the poem Pickard says that "throughout, the satire

is double-edged she feigns puzzlement over the rat's parasitical traits, while ridiculing the chain-of-being concept and man's social laws."[10]

If the rat serves as a representation of Nature, then it reinforces the idea that Nature does not care, and acts according to her own wishes. Man, on the contrary, lives according to certain laws and principles. Emily Dickinson seemed to be highly aware of them, and apparently did not always approve of them. What usually happens in her poems on Nature is that in comparing Nature with Man she is aware of man's limitations as opposed to Nature's "different" limitations. She likes to draw metaphors from the external world to portray her views of man's limitations.

The unusual and odd areas of Nature that attracted Emily Dickinson so much have been explored in this paper. In some poems these oddities served as symbols of evil; in others, they served as a means to question man's relation to God and to society. But never did she embrace the belief that Nature and Man are one. "Though acutely observant and aware of precise detail, she distrusted scientific analysis and scoffed at its attempts to codify all nature. She tempered her genuine enthusiasm for the beauty of external nature with an awareness of its innate mystery and strangeness. Never certain of any clear correspondence among God, nature, and man, she remained a skeptic who both admired and doubted."[11]

R E S U M O

Estes são os pontos principais deste artigo: a poesia da natureza de Emily Dickinson diferenciada da poesia romântica da natureza; discussão dos poemas UMA CRIATURA ESGUIA NA RELVA, DOCE É O CISNE COM SEUS SEGREDOS, O COGUMELO É O DUENDE DAS PLANTAS, O RATO É PARDO-ACINZENTADO

COM ASAS ENRUGADAS, O RATO É O INQUILINO MAIS LACÔNICO; Emily Dickinson continua sendo um observador cético em seu tratamento da Natureza.

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1 Clark Griffith, *The Long Shadow: Emily Dickinson's Tragic Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton Unniversity Press, 1964), p.25.

2 Charles R. Anderson, *Emily Dickinson's Poetry: Stairway of Surprise* (New York: Hold, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p.121.

3 Thomas H. Johnson, *Final Harvest: Emily Dickinson's Poems* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1961), p. 229. All future quotations will be selected from this text.

4 Anderson, p. 123.

5 Ibid., p. 271.

6 John B. Pickard, *Emily Dickinson: An Introduction and Interpretation* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1967), p. 62.

7 Ibid., pp. 62-63.

8 Ibid., p. 64.

9 Anderson, p. 109.

10 Pickard, p. 55.

11 Ibid., p. 57.

THE INNER MOVEMENT IN EMILY DICKINSON'S DOUBLE VIEW OF LIFE

Maria Helena de Souza
Universidade Federal de Goiás

ABSTRACT

This essay focuses mainly on three of her poems: I NEVER HEAR THE WORD "ESCAPE", HOW HAPPY IS THE LITTLE STONE and MUCH MADNESS IS DIVINEST SENSE.

It is both easy and difficult to say something about Emily Dickinson's poetry. It is easy because much has been said about the poet and her poetry in this century and also because one feels a special attraction towards her poems at a first reading, desiring to question and discuss them. Though apparently easy, taking into account motivation and the many references to her work, the matter of criticism becomes difficult, considering both the richness of aspects revealed in her poems and the problem of escaping the tracks other critics have taken.

Rather than an attempt either to point out what in Emily Dickinson's life is reflected in her poetry or to show how she explored individual themes or categories such as individuality, love, death, immortality, nature, etc., this essay constitutes a view of human nature as revealed through a close reading of some of her poems.[1] Some features in the poems selected suggest both the dynamic condition of the human being on the one hand, and a dialectical mode of grasping reality, on the other, as in the first poem chosen for the present study.

I never hear the word "escape"
Whthout a quicker blood,
A sudden expectation,

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A flying attitude!

I never hear of prisons broad
By soldiers battered down,
but I tug childish at my bars
Only to fail again! (77)

The first stanza suggests an individual and personal feeling as an anticipation of liberty which is latent in the human being. The "I" we hear and the expressions "quicker blood," "sudden expectation," and "flying attitude" reveal at the same time an inner state of the human being ("blood," "expectation," "attitude") and a peculiar sense of movement ("quicker," "sudden," "flying").

The second stanza is articulated so that it presents a very obvious contrast with the first one in terms of escape/prison. Moreover, it provides a significant dialectical view of man's limitation ("tug childish"), on the one hand, and man's aspiration ("flying attitude"), on the other. The ambiguity of "prisons broad" and "By soldiers battered down," both in the plural form, suggests, among other possibilities, the connotation of controlled pressure upon man as a social being. However, it is interesting to note that the word "again" at the end of the poem adds to the previous meanings the idea of a continuous and alternating process of imprisonment and liberty ("only to fail again"), since the idea of a new failure brings to our mind the idea of a new attempt. Such a suggestion evokes in us the myth of Sisyphus, he who as form of punishment has forever to roll a rock uphill, which because of its weight always rolls back downward upon him. Camus describes Sisyphus' work and effort, serving to illustrate our concern and emphasize the tragic trait of human condition.

> ... one sees the face screwed tight against the stone, the shoulder bracing the clay-

> covering mass, the foot wedging it, the fresh start with arms outstretched, the wholly human security of two earth-clotted hands. At the very end of his long effort measured by skyless space and time without depth, the purpose is achieved. Then Sisyphus watches the stone rush down in a few moments towards that lower world whence he will have to push it up again towards the summit. He goes back to the plain.[2]

According to Camus, it is at each of those "breathing spaces" when Sisyphus leaves the heights to come down the slope, that he becomes conscious and superior to his fate.[3] Though conscious or exactly because he is conscious of his torture, Sisyphus does not give up hope, trying again and again to reach the top of the slope.

Using a different image, Emily Dickinson presents man as a tragic being too, who though conscious of his "prison bars" holds on to the expectation that freedom may eventually be achieved.

As a controversial being, man presents many facets; and depending on the circumstances, he may be viewed in a light and natural perspective, contrasting with that of conflict, as revealed in the first poem discussed here. Having the awareness of a great poet, Emily Dickinson combines form and content to present such a light view of the human being.

How happy is the little Stone
That rambles in the Road alone
And doesn't care about Careers
And Exigencies never fears -
Whose Coat of elemental Brown
A passing Universe put on,
And independent as the Sun

Associates or glows alone,
Fulfilling absolute Decree
In casual simplicity - (1510)

In one sentence that runs in a very natural tone the poet personifies "Stone" as child whose movement transmits a sense of carelessness, freedom and simplicity which result in happiness. The dynamic state of the child is explicited by the verb "ramble" and the inner force comes from her independence in the world — "that rambles in the world alone" — . The word "alone" is used by the poet not to convey loneliness but rather to emphasize the individuality of the human being. Furthermore, such a state of 'glorious' independence — "And independent as the Sun/Associates or glows alone" — grants energy and light not only to the child herself but to others as well. The poem suggests various associations, two of which I will illustrate. The first one taken from the Bible.

> Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow:
> they toil not, neither do they spin:
> And yet I say unto you,
> that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Therefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?
> .....
> Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.[4]

Let me consider some points in the two texts that in a contrastive way bring meanings together. In Emily Dickinson's poem 'nature' and man are fused together (stone-child) and the child "doesn't care about Careers/And Exigencies never fears," whereas in the biblical reference the elements nature

and man are separated from each other and revealing two different states: man's preoccupation about his future, on the one hand, and nature's lack of concern about this same future, on the other.

In Emily Dickinson's words, the stone receives natural garments — "Whose Coat of elemental Brown/ A passing Universe put on" — and the same thing happens to the lilies in the passage taken from the Bible.

Whereas an attitude of confidence and trust in the future is expected from man in the Bible, notwithstanding the present evil, the vision presented by Emily Dickinson is of complete realization — "Fulfilling absolute Decree" — despite or because of the stone's lack of concern for "Careers" or fear of 'pressing necessities.'

The second association comes from *The Scarlet Letter*, where Hawthorne introduces Pearl revealing some of her attibutes such as little, innocent, lovely and a mutable creature.[5] The picture that emerges from Hawthorne's text is in many ways similar to that of Emily Dickinson's poem. Pearl, a "creative spirit," in her relationship with the external world, where she is taken care of by her mother, Hester Prynne, communicates "itself to a thousand objects, as a torch kindles a flame wherever it may be applied".[6] The vision of spontaneity, freedom and happiness suggested by the child, who "laughed and danced up and down, with the humorsome gesticulation of a little imp, whose next freak might be to fly up the chimney" is not, however, a constant and lasting one. Hester Prynne's conflicts between good and evil and changeable feelings from 'pride' to "unalterable pain" affect the child, inciting doubt in her heart: peace is broken, leading Pearl even to question her mother about her origin: "Tell me! Tell me!"[8]

Though one may at a first reading of Emily Dickinson's poem only capture the image of a careless and happy

child, it suggests, after a more careful study, other implications as well. The capitalization of words such as "Stone," "Road," "Careers," "Exigencies," "Coat," "Brown," "Universe," "Sun" and "Decree," in the context of the poem, leads the reader to a threefold questioning: the first one, about the possibility or impossibility of complete happiness in this world; the second, about man, not only in his limited environment, but also, as a universal being; and the third, not only about man's goal in life but also about the process to achieve such a goal. Then, the meanings of the poem broaden and the vision presented by its new readings suggests that happiness is provisional and that the poet has captured that moment in man's life, when, as a child, his inner force, simplicity and faith give him strength and energy to proceed and face other times.

So far, one could envisage the duality of man in his alternating moments of ups/downs; freedom/imprisonment; simplicity/complexity; or peace/conflict as illustrated by the first poem, by its contrast with the second one or even thinking more deeply about the latter. The third poem to be discussed in this essay reveals again such a duality, but in an extreme and more painful view of the human being.

Much Madness is divinest Sense —
To a discerning Eye —
Much Sense — the starkest Madness
'Tis the Majority
In this, as All, prevail —
Assent — and you are sane —
Demur — you're straightway dangerous —
And handled with a Chain — (435)

The poet, right in the beginning of her poem, presents an antithetical metaphor — "Much Madness is divinest Sense"— which soon in the third line appears in juxtaposition, "Much Sense — the starkest Madness" emphatically providing

the reader ("a discerning Eye") with elements for a very serious questioning. The poet with a great economy of words and opposite implications succeeds in suggesting the absurdity of men's relationship with each other in society, where man's sanity or insanity is judged in terms of submission or objection to what dominates or prevails in such a society.

The poem is richly allusive, bringing to the reader's mind images which suggest a great variety of thematic implications. Among such images it may be pertinent to mention those of King Lear and Prometheus. In the beginning of Shakespeare's play,[9] King Lear appears as an arrogant and bitter man but 'sane.' With the development of the play, he becomes mad in consequence of his disillusionment in old age and internal and external conflicts, but reveals signs of unselfishness and love. Then one may inquire: "When is King Lear mad, when is he sane?" The answer to such a question may elucidate the paradox created by the various antithesis which serve as the central and basic issues raised by Emily Dickinson's poem.

Now, one may question: "What kind of association is there established between the myth of Prometheus and those lines of Emily Dickinson's poem?" According to the myth, in the war against Kronos, Prometheus had aided Zeus in overthrowing all the other gods. Later, Prometheus refuses to obey the orders of Zeus, by giving fire to men and teaching them all the arts and crafts. As a form of punishment, he is bound to a rocky cliff for eternity. Thus, Prometheus must suffer the consequences of his 'crime' for helping man, as he explains in Aeschylus' play: "...this is the crime that I must expiate/Hung here in chains, nailed 'neath the open sky."[10]

Referring back to the poem one realizes that the poet is suggesting that there is an inner and bipolar force

in man, which calls for a different response, depending on the direction it moves to: "assent — and you are sane/ Demur — you're straightway dangerous," thus called mad in the same way Prometheus was referred to by Hermes, the messenger of Zeus.

Her. These are the workings of a brain
More than a little touched; the vain
Of voluble ecstasy!
Surely he wanderth from the way
His reason lost, who thus can pray!
A mouthing madman he!...[11].

Though called mad, Prometheus was conscious and acting out of free will, as he says: "Of my free will, my own free will I erred / and freely do I here acknowledge it,"[12] in the same way as man in greatest madness of resistance may be in fact revealing the most profound sanity.

The poem might be suggesting, through the evocation of the myth, that man may, as Prometheus eventually did, escape from chain, even resisting, if not now, in a future to come, as the poet says in another poem:

.....
It yet remains to see
If immortality unveil
A third event to me. (1732)

The present study emphasizes the actual duality of man as suggested by the poet's double view of life: on the one hand, man's idealization of life — which is to achieve fredom, peace, happiness and harmony with the other men; and, on the other hand, man in the life process — which is of conflict, pain and pressure. When man faces his actual life in contrast to his ideal, he suffers frustration and pain; but only through an inner and constant movement of his own self, may he maintain hope and life itself.

Growth of Man - like growth of Nature —
Gravitates within —
.....

R E S U M O

Este ensaio focaliza principalmente três de seus poemas: NUNCA OUÇO A PALAVRA "ESCAPAR," QUÃO FELIZ É A PEDRINHA e MUITA LOUCURA É SUBLIME SENSATEZ.

N O T E S

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2 CAMUS, Albert. "The Myth of Sisyphus." In: ___. *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1957. p. 108.

3 Ibid., pp. 108-109.

4 St. Matthew VI. 28-34. NOVO TESTAMENTO. Rio, Casa Publicadora Batista. Is.d.I.

5 HAWTHORNE, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter and Other Tales of the Puritans*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961. pp. 88-90.

6 Ibid., p. 93.

7 Ibid., p. 96.

8 Ibid., p. 97.

9 SHAKESPEARE, William. *King Lear*. London, Methuen, 1968.

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THE INNER AND OUTER WEATHER IN EMILY DICKINSON'S POEMS*

Norma Corrêa Meyer Sant'Anna
Casa Thomas Jefferson (Brasília, D.F.)

ABSTRACT

When studying literature, we have learned that poems, like the weather, depend upon contrast for their effect.

INTRODUÇÃO

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) was born in Amherst, a quiet village in the Connecticut Valley of Massachusetts, nearly a hundred miles from Concord and Cambridge in space, and at least half the number of years in time.

For many years she lived as a recluse, seldom venturing outside the hedge that surrounded her father's house except to visit her brother's home nextdoor. There, along the path between the two houses, she took care of her garden, explored Nature and thought of her friends whom she would send flowers to with short and concise notes together with poems that puzzled them. Inside her house, she dedicated herself to a mysterious and nondeferrable assignment, that of writing a "letter to the world"-a letter that would express in poems that were fresh and original her feelings, the moods of nature, the sources of her inspiration, such as the animals and plants and, behind every thought, the need for assurance of the eternal. Her poems were so well-written that they have fascinated readers both in America and abroad. Actually, whoever reads them becomes fascinated by the vigor of her images, the terseness of the thought and the ease and grace of her rhythm and rhyme.

Except for a few trips that she took when she was a young woman, she never left her hometown; she even seemed to have little need of the outside world. She not only

avoided meeting people but also did not want her poems to be seen public. However, it is not our goal to focus on and study elements of Miss Dickinson's personal life: her father's image, which is currently said to have governed her simple and quiet existence; the friendship she enjoyed with several men whom she called "tutors," among whom Benjamin Newton, Reverend Charles Wadsworth, or Judge Otis P. Lord can be named. These aspects of her life have already been discussed and interpreted by important critics and essayists. We would like to study, though, Emily Dickinson's response to her environment; her "inner and outer weather," to borrow the words from Robert Frost's poem "Tree at My Window." Robert Frost, besides being one of the greatest American poets, is also intimately associated with New England.

When studying literature, we have learned that poems, like the weather, depend upon contrast for their effect. The sunlinght is brighter for the presence of shadow; the same duality of life and death, loneliness and companionship, freedom and imprisonment, desire and duty, can be found in poems, too. We would go further by saying that these are the weathers of poetry, while rain, sun, doldrums and wind are the weathers of Nature. Moreover, we have learned that a poem is a combination of sound, sense, and feeling, and that a poem makes its suggestions through the rhythm of its language, the organization of the total composition, the grammar and the punctuation. However, for the poem to be effective, it must be understood by the reader. It is necessary that its meaning be comprehended by the addressee, since the making of a poem is a process that is two-sidedly correlated and simultaneous — it is structure and re-structure. Both the writer and the reader must know the same code for the message to be fully understood. This rule-of-thumb seems to have been grasped by Miss Dickinson,

as we can see in the following lines:

A word is dead
When it is said,
Some say.

I say it just
Begins to live
That day.

The life of the spoken word does not depend upon the duration of the sound vibrations, but is is an inextricable part of the experience and being of the speaker and of those to whom he speaks. Thus, a word, no matter how simple, may be charged with imperishable significance because of its intimate relationship with human minds and souls.

Thus, to better understand Emily Dickinson's peculiarities in writing we must first understand the role they play in the text. Actually, the liberties she took with writing were her way to call the reader's attention to her message. She took liberties with grammar, punctuation and capitalization, it is true, but another American poet in the 20th century, E.E.Cummings, did exactly the same. "Why?", some of us may ask. Because he wanted to cast a slur on the massification of man after the coming of the Industrial Age. As for Miss Dickinson's poems, they were aphoristic in style, simple and even sentimental in expression, but chiefly concerned about immortality and Nature. Indeed, her poems, usually short and concentrated, get a message across through exact and concrete language. Their feeling is strong and sharp, and the poem "I Never Hear the 'Word Escape'" is a good example of what was said before:

I never hear the word "Escape"
Whithout a quicker blood

A sudden expectation,
A flying attitude.

I never hear of persons broad
By soldiers battered down
But I tug childish at my bars
Only to fail again!

This poem shows, as so many of Emily Dickinson's do, a strong emotional state.

I never hear the word "Escape"
Without a quicker blood,

The careful choice of words "a quicker blood"— meaning the heart beating faster and the blood flowing faster, too; "a sudden expectation in a flying attitude" -- suggesting the possibility of her own escape and the spiritual readiness to fly, together with the correct posture to leap, makes the reader think about the dream of being free; free to answer a call, to break through to a fuller life. Unfortunately, the writer lets the reader understand, almost immediately, that she cannot run away from the limits that circumstances and her own nature have placed upon her. Thus, the poem ends on a note of sadness and disappointment:

Only to fail again'.

But because of such discouraging lines we cannot justifiably conclude that Emily Dickinson was a pessimist. Not in the least! It is true that she seemed to have little need of the outside world, but on the other hand, paradoxical as it may sound, she was full of enthusiasm for Life. She even wrote once to a friend that: "to live is so startling that it leaves but little time for other occupations."

The simple, everyday-life events that touch the ordinary man were the theme of her poems. She liked to

write about death, nature, insects, birds, grass, but mainly about Man as a stranger in Nature. I would even dare say that Emily Dickinson felt curiosity and attraction for the "unknown." She tried to guess the stories behind the faces she met. Better than we could do, maybe, since she was a poet, she let us readers fancy and ponder about the secret life beyond the appearances:

I'm nobody! Who are you?
Are you nobody, too?
Then, there's a pair of us — don't tell!
They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!
How public, like a frog
To tell your name the livelong day
To an admiring bog!

Some critics insist on discovering in her lonely and secluded life a lack of interest for the world, in general, but again we feel we must make it clear that she, too, heard the call of the open road and felt the pull of the ocean tides. How did she respond to them? By traveling the hills of her imagination!

I like to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks;
And then, prodigious, step

Around a pile of mountains,
And, supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads;
And then a quarry pare

To fit its sides, and crawl between,
Complaining all .the while
In horrid, hooting stanza;

Then chase itself downhill

And neigh like Boanerges;
Then, punctual as a star,
Stop - docile and omnipotent -
At its own stable door.

According to Allen Tate, Miss Dickinson saw into the character of Nature in a very deep way — "the general symbol of Nature, for her, was Death." Actually, the theme of Death and Rebirth or, for some, Immortality, has not only been hers. Other well-known writers have chosen such subjects as their favorite themes. We cannot forget Edgar Allan Poe and his ideas about the principle of the Universe where Death explains the tendency to return to the starting Unity:

> The atoms were at some remote epoch of time even more than together... Because normally they were ONE... now in all circumstances they struggle back to this absolutely, this irrelatively, the unconditionally ONE.[1]

But while returning to the starting Unity, matter keeps existing and gives birth to a new form, or creation:

> But are we to pause? Not, so. On the Universal agglomeration and dissolution, we can readily conceive that a new and perhaps totally different series of conditions may ensue - another creation and irradiation.[2]

In the 20th-century literature, Henry James (1843-1916), the great American writer, felt his concern about people fated to withdraw from the world and to be destroyed. However, Emily Dickinson's advantages on the subject

were greater than James's since they lay in the availability to her puritan ideas on the theological plane. These ideas, Tate continues, "are momentarily assailed by the disintegrating face of Nature (appearing as Death) which, while constantly breaking them down, constantly redefines and strengthens them. The values are thus purified by the triumphant withdrawal from Nature and by their power to recover from Nature."[3]

A poem that can illustrate better than anything else she wrote the especial quality of her mind to see, not to understand, abstractions is certainly "The Chariot:"

Because I could not stop for Death
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played
Their lessons scarcely done;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

Allen Tate wrote the following about this poem:

> If the word "great" means anything in poetry this poem is one of the greatest in English language. The rhythm charges with movement the pattern of suspended action back of the poem. Every image is precise and, moreover, not merely beautiful, but fused with the central ideal. Every image extends and intensifies every other.[4]

One of the values of "meeting" death in poetry and other works of literature is that we readers are offered the possibility of thinking about the subject without being personally or emotionally involved. To contemplate Death objectively is a way to help us live. Emily Dickinson's poems always revolved about such themes of Death and Immortality. The two abstractions that form the framework of the above mentioned poem are, indeed, mortality and eternity, both associated with the images so well depicted by the poet. For Emily Dickinson, as for the Russian critic, Tzvetan Todorov, "Death is the origin and essence of life, the past in the future of the present, the answer that precedes the question."[5]

At this point of this analysis, a pause is appropriate for an explanation of the reason for its title. As we know, the title is "l'ensemble des graphes désignant les éléments linguistiques qui servent à indiquer le contexte, et qui fonctionnent comme le nom propre du texte."[6] Thus we might say that the title is, indeed, the proper name of the text, and that it refers to the text itself as a whole, or to only one of its elements. It is what we know by the referential function of a text. This function acts upon the readers because, while announcing the narrative, it represents a reflex of the text and, while selecting some fictional element, it programs the context, thus disclosing the anticipatory function. The choice of a title is, undoubtedly, deeply concerned with the degree of interest to be raised in the reader's mind. Well, have the rules of the literary critics been followed?

The title was related to the "inner and outer weather" elements of poetry and their interaction, and some of those aspects were discussed during the essay. Now, it could be summarized by saying that the way we respond to our world tells us what we are and what we will become. This can certainly be applied to Emily Dickinson and what she used to be. It is true that, unlike Miss Dickinson, few of us can recognize a poem in unimportant everyday things that surround us, or in the appearance of people's faces that cross our path... But those who, like Emily Dickinson, are able to make poems, know that the poetical work can teach us to fulfill our demands by using our faculties. The magic world "offered" us by the poets can make us learn to use the gift of memory to combine our past experience into a meaningful pattern. We may even be able to share a "magic moment" captured in arrangements of words, or look at some events in our lives and regard them as delightful and instructive. It is this capacity for thought and imagination that make us share some of God's creativity, which is given to us through real Poetry.

I would like to make use of the words written by the Brazilian novelist and literary critic Josué Montello, when he wrote about another writer, Carlos Nejar:

> It has always seemed to me that poets are strange and unique beings, placed in this world to call our attention to the mysteries that surround us. They *see* what we are not able to see, and they give their personal

visions the shape and rhythm that lead us to the frontiers of such mysteries so that we also become enlightened.[7]

In Carlos Nejar's poems, as in Miss Dickinson's, the reader is taken by the word to the very point in which human reality mingles with the realm of the marvelous and uncanny. "We need to understand the fantastic and private world of the poet." Montello goes on, "without what we will never fully understand his message."[8]

The same can be said about Emily Dickinson's poems. We should not only read them but also re-read them many, many times, till we are able to detect the light that illuminates the secret and magic words, the source of our meditation and wonder. Without a mystic perceptiveness that transcends the common meaning of the words, we will never understand Emily Dickinson's message. Her "letter to the world" was written following a system of poetic language that combined the advantages of conciseness with the capability of connoting a rich complex of suggestions. A fitting end to this essay is a quote from Paul Souday, the first to interpret Proust, since what he said about poets can be used to describe Miss Dickinson: "There are poets who say exactly what we would like to express under the same and spontaneous drive; but there are others who go further as interpreters of the Eleusinian mysteries of Death and Immortality."[9]

Emily Dickinson undoubtedly belongs to this second group.

R E S U M O

Estudando a literatura, aprendemos que os poemas, assim como as condições atmosféricas, dependem de contrastes para produzirem seus efeitos.

N O T E S

* All of Dickinson's poems or quotations from them in this paper are from *Selected Poems and Letters of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Robert N. Linscott. Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1959.

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4 Id. ibid., p. 22.

5 TODOROV, Tzvetan. *The Poetics of Prose*. Ithaca N. Y., Cornell University Press, 1977, p. 164.

6 HOEK, Leo H. *Pour une sémiotique du titre*. Documents de travail et pré-publications. Centro Internazionale di Semiotica e di linguistica, Urbino, 1973, p. 2.

7 MONTELLO, Josué. "Entre a Luz e o Enigma". Rio, *Jornal do Brasil*, August, 1986. Translated into English by the author of this paper.

8 Id. ibid.

9 ENGLISH THRU POETRY. Based upon Voice of America taped program series Poems in English, 1974.

"THE RECLUSE OF AMHERST: DICKINSON'S LIVING METAPHOR FOR FREEDOM"

Leticia N. Tavares Cavalcanti
Universidade Federal da Paraíba

ABSTRACT

The object of this paper is to concentrate on the apparent paradox of Emily Dickinson's toponymic allusions, and to focus on images of captivity and confinement, side by side. This double trend apparently runs parallel throughout Dickinson's poetic life. An attempt has been made to reconcile this double trend with biographical events, to prove that "Queen Recluse" of Amherst is just the expression of her own will, her living metaphor for freedom. Tables are included to prove these points.

Emily Dickinson's cryptic remark on Brazil is well known to all Brazilian scholars:

> I asked no other thing —
> No other was denied —
> I offered Being — for it —
> The Mighty Merchant sneered —
>
> Brazil? He twirled a Button —
> Without a glance my way —
> "But — Madam — is there nothing else —
> That We can show — Today?"
>
> (J. 621) /emphasis added/[1]

What is not so well known, at least to Brazilian scholars,[2] is that, apparently in the same year, 1862, Dickinson had used the adjective Brazilian in poems J. 541 and J. 574. Poem J. 541 is rather brief:

Estudos (9): 115-135, março 1989

Some such butterfly be seen
On Brazilian Pampas —
Just at noon — no later — Sweet —
Then — the License closes —

Some such spice — express and pass —
Subject to your Plucking —
As the Stars — You knew last Night —
Foreigners — This Morning — /emphasis added/[3]

Poem J. 574, on the other hand, is quite long:

"My first well Day — since many ill —
I asked to go abroad,
And take the sunshine in my hands,
And see the things in Pod —

A'blossom just when I went in
To take my Chance with pain —
Uncertain if myself, or He
Should prove the strongest One.

The Summer deepened, while we strove —
She put some flowers away —
And Redder cheeked Ones — in their stead —
A fond — illusive way —

To cheat Herself, it seemed she tried —
As if before a child
To fade — Tomorrow — Rainbows held
The Sepulchre, could hide.

She dealt a fashion to the Nut —
She tied the Hoods to seeds —
She dropped bright scraps of Tint, about —
And left Brazilian. Threads

On every shoulder that she met —
Then both her hands of Haze
Put up — to hide her parting Grace
From our unfitted eyes.

My loss, by sickness — Was it Loss?
Or that Ethereal Gain
One earns by measuring the Grave —
Then — measuring the Sun — /emphasis added/[4]

These are not the sole instances; Emily Dickinson was to use the term again, as a noun, and, as far as I know, for the last time, in 1864:

A Moth the hue of this
Haunts Candles in Brazil.
Nature's experience would make
Our Reddest Second pale.
Nature is fond, I sometimes think,
Of Trinkets, as a Girl. /emphasis added/[5]
(J. 841)

Why should Emily Dickinson's mind be engaged with Brazil from 1862 to 1864, if close at home, there was a war on, from 1861 to 1865? Critics have often commented on Dickinson's silence on the Civil War; as to Brazil, the Empire was soon to know the war effects to follow the major conflict with Paraguay, 1864-1870. Apparently, the four references to Brazil are part of a major interest in distant and far off places, difficult to relate to a poetical figure that has been repeatedly called, "The Recluse of Amherst."

Of a total universe of 1775 poems reproduced by JOHNSON in original form and punctuation, references to foreign or far-off places run to a total of 154, less than one tenth of the whole number of poems; they are unevenly

distributed throughout the years, if we take JOHNSON'S tra ditional chronology of the Dickinson canon for granted. The earliest reference to places dates of 1852; mysteriously, what is known is added to the unknown.

This basic juxtaposition of known versus unknown, near versus far is endlessly repeated as if Emily Dickinson used a peculiar poetical telescope to investigate both ends at a distance — the familiar and the unfamiliar, first-hand experience juxtaposed to vicarious guesses. Next, there is a table of references according to year and number of poem, as well as frequency of references in that specific year.

TABLE I

REFERENCES TO PLACES ACCORDING TO YEAR AND CHRONOLOGY OF POEMS

YEAR	NUMBER OF POEM J.	REFERENCE	TOTAL NUMBER OF REFERENCES
1852	3	Bunker Hill Doon Tuscarora	3
1858	29 32	Ghent Auburn	2
1859	59 80 85 119 123 137 138 148	Jordan Alps, Italy Bethlehem Potosi Rhine, Frankfort San Domingo Paris, Venice, Vevay Gethsemane Haworth, Yorkshire	14
1860	175 179 206 210 212 214	Pompeii Cashmere Vevay Appenine Caspian Frankfort, Rhine	7

TABLE I (cont.)

YEAR	NUMBER OF POEM J.	REFERENCE	TOTAL NUMBER OF REFERENCES
1861	230 236 243 247 251 252 287	Rhine Bethlehem North America Peru, Zanzibar Himmaleh Himmaleh Geneva	8
1862	299 300 313 348 350 364 373 383 395 403 422 424 430 452 453 481 492 506 511 525 534 541 549 550 553 555 561 574	Peru, Buenos Ayres, India Golconda Apennine Calvary Gethsemane Calvary Gibraltar Himmaleh Calvary Aragon Exeter Rhine Bolivian ground Ararat Popocatepelt Malay India Malay Chimborazo Himmaleh Ethiopia Jerusalem Persian Van Deemen's Land Dnieper, Don Lapland Cordillera Apennine Brazilian Pampas Calvary Asiatic rains Calvary Gethsemane Genoa Calvary Brazilian Threads	

TABLE I (cont.)

YEAR	NUMBER OF POEM J.	REFERENCE	TOTAL NUMBER OF REFERENCES
1862 (cont.)	577	Calvary	
	583	Bare Rhine	
	596	Potomac, Maryland	
	597	Canaan	
		Nebo	
	601	Naples	
	602	Brussels	
		Kidderminster	
	620	Calvary	
	621	Brazil	
	628	Mediterranean	
	1072	Calvary	52
1863	666	Teneriffe (2)	
	681	Libya	
	697	St. Domingo	
		Vera Cruz	
		Bahamas	
	715	Thessaly	
		Hybla	
	725	Calvary	
		Byseayan Hymn	
	754	The Doe	
	795	Carrara	12
1864	841	Brazil	
	851	Aretic	
	862	Himmaleh	
	914	Alpine	
	942	Russia	
	964	Judaea	
	970	Circassian	
	981	Timbuctoo	8
1865	991	Andes	
	994	Sicily	
	1029	Baltic	
		Cordillera	
	1046	Carrara	5
1866	1087	Pyrenees	1

TABLE I (cont.)

YEAR	NUMBER OF POEM J.	REFERENCE	TOTAL NUMBER OF REFERENCES
1867	1107	Caspian	1
1868	1117	Potosi	
		Indies	2
1869	1137	Azof	
	1146	Etna	
		Naples	
	1148	Batize	4
1873	1291	Caspian	
		Sahara	2
1874	1302	Mediterranean	1
1876	1366 B	Peru	
	1374	Birmingham	2
1878	1237	Bethlehem	
	1366 B	Ophir	
		Peru	3
1879	1432	Calvary	
		Gethsemane	
	1463	Tunis	
	1466	Burmah	
	1471	Mexico	
	1473	Ararats	
	1477	India	7
1880	1487	Bethlehem	
	1492	Bethlehem	
	1512	Great Britain	3
1881	1516	African	
		Asiatic	
	1528	Etruscan	
	1537	Mochas	4
1882	1545	Bethlehem	1
1883	1768	Athens	1

TABLE I (cont.)

YEAR	NUMBER OF POEM J.	REFERENCE	TOTAL NUMBER OF REFERENCES
1884	1627 1628 1642	Tripoli Jamaicas Red Sea	3
/1896/	1754	Caspian (2)	2
/1914/ ?	1664 1694 1696 1705	Sahara Australian Finland Sicily South America Vesuvius	6

TOTAL: 154

Keeping such data in mind, we may organize Table II, in order to identify the pattern of frequency according to years, during Emily Dickinson's life time. All this, of course, is a result of surmise and guesswork, since it is impossible to date Dickinson's poems with total accuracy.

TABLE II

FREQUENCY OF ALLUSIONS TO FOREIGN PLACES ACCORDING TO YEAR

YEAR	FREQUENCY
1852	3
1858	2
1859	14
1860	7
1861	8

TABLE II (cont.)

YEAR	FREQUENCY
1862	52
1863	12
1864	8
1865	5
1866	1
1867	1
1868	2
1869	4
1873	2
1874	1
1876	2
1878	3
1879	7
1880	3
1881	4
1882	1
1883	1
1884	3

TOTAL: 146

Numbers are, in fact, a poor guide to poetical creation; as a consequence, statistics may be the blind man's signpost leading to nowhere. But I prefer to run the risk and register here that, of the total of 154 references to places that included posthumously published work, 146 were clearly associated with definite periods of Dickinson's creation. With the sole exception of 1862 — her annus mirabilis — that registers 52 references, and 1863, that includes 12, the average of the rest runs between a

maximum of 14 in 1859 and a minimum of 1, in the years of 1882 and 1883.

The nature of this paper sets limits to the present investigations; I leave to others the task of assembling references according to kind, or trying to explain them somehow — biographically, linguistically, even geographically, cataloguing them according to regions, mountains, rivers and what not. The simplest of questions deserves the most direct of answers: what common fact led Dickinson to an interest in distant and far-off places? An early biographer, WHICHER (1938), indirectly answers the question thus:

> Moreover, the strong interest that the /Amherst/ College maintained in foreign missions served to keep the village aware of distant corners of the earth. By the 1840's Amherst graduates were at work in most of the mission fields: Syria, Turkey, India, China, Africa and the South Seas. (...) It was not her geography alone that led Emily Dickinson to attribute to the oriole "the splendor of a Burmah." She had heard a returned missionary speak of the wonders of that far country, and sing "From Greenland's icy mountains" in Burman. Emily Dickinson and Amherst College grew together.[6]

So, Emily Dickinson was familiar with distant, far-off places from a very early age. Missionary news opened her eyes to the wonders of the world outside Amherst. They become a poetical commonplace, her own way of escaping from the dull limits set by Amherst. Through imagination, first, with the help of missionary information next, and using names of places to disguise the real toponymy of the soul, Emily Dickinson writes her real letter to the world — and expects no answer. Such uses then become an act of inner and total freedom.

Emily Dickinson herself reports her gradual withdrawal from the world. As early as 1853, she writes "I do

not go from home (...)." Previously, she had travelled to Boston, Cambridge, and Worcester in 1844; she had gone to Springfield, Massachusetts in 1847-8. However, she was to contradict her 1853 statement by travelling to Washington, DC. in 1854, and to Philadelphia in 1855. Again, her self-willed actions, either of seclusion or of travels, reflect, first and foremost, the expression of her inner freedom.

And she travels again in 1861, this time to Middletown, Connecticut; and yet, in 1863 Samuel Bowles jokingly refers to her as "Queen Recluse."[7] But Emily Dickinson's seclusion, at this point, is not yet complete; by 1864 she went to Boston for eye treatment between February and November. This experience was repeated the following year, from April to October. As far as I know, this is the last time she leaves home. By 1874 she is living in complete seclusion.

Confined to the limits of her own house and garden at Amherst, Emily Dickinson very rarely expresses personal feelings of prison or confinement. When she does use such images, she expresses herself in terms foreign to America everyday experience or language. There is a subtle element of "medievalization:" prisons become "dungeons," and in one instance she uses the term "incarcerated," besides "captives" and "captivity." And yet, the total number of references to prison and confinement is 46, an index inferior to a third of the total of 154 references to distant and far-off places. To give parallel treatment to the theme of confinement, there is Table III to indicate the year, number of poem, as well as frequency of the term per year.

TABLE III

REFERENCES TO CONFINEMENT ACCORDING TO YEAR AND CHRONOLOGY OF THE POEM

YEAR	NUMBER OF POEM J.	REFERENCE	TOTAL OF NUMBER REFERENCES
1859	77 95 119	escape; prisons broad bars captives captive; dungeons	3
1860	178 184 318	scaffold Holy Ghosts in cages! evening Bars	3
1861	277 295	Dungeons Dungeons	2
1862	384 435 474 475 490 512 528 532 609 620 640 652 661	Captivity is Consciousness/So's Liberty handled with a chain Dungeons escape condemned lip escape (...) dungeoned Bars opposing cells like a Thief I fled Auto da fe - and Judgement - And I condemned to be A Prison gets to be a friend So captives deem (...) dungeons	13
1863	720 728 777	No Prisoner be Manacles be dim Dungeons And being under lock	4
1864	824 947 961	The Birds put up the Bars to Nests - Is Heaven then a Prison? Convicted, sentenced	3

TABLE III (cont.)

YEAR	NUMBER OF POEM J.	REFERENCE	TOTAL OF NUMBER REFERENCES
1865	1005 1065	Bind me - I still can sing Let down the bars, oh Death	2
1869	1136	We chased him to his Den	1
1870	1169	incarcerated	1
1871	1191	As limit of Dominion Or Dams - of Ecstasy -	1
1872	1208 1226 1242	Remembering the Dimensions of Possibility Ditches for Realms To flee from memory/Had we the wings	3
1875	1334	How soft this Prison is How sweet these sullen Bars A Dungeon (...) Incarceration - Home	1
1877	1400	What mystery pervades a well! (...) Whose limit none have ever seen!	1
1878	1434	Nor climb the Bars of Ecstasy	1
1879	1385	Dungeoned in the human breast	1
1881	1532	From all the Jails the Boys and girls Ecstactically leap - Beloved only Afternoon That Prison doesn't keep	2

TABLE III (cont.)

YEAR	NUMBER OF POEM J.	REFERENCE	TOTAL OF NUMBER REFERENCES
1882	1559	Tried always and Condemned by Thee (...)	2
1883	1593	We barred the windows and the Doors	1
/1945/	1729	Is immortality a bane That men are so oppressed?	1

TOTAL: 46

In order to keep a logical pattern, it is also necessary to organize Table IV, to register frequency of the image of confinement during Emily Dickinson's lifetime.

TABLE IV

FREQUENCY OF ALLUSIONS TO CONFINEMENT ACCORDING TO YEAR

YEAR	FREQUENCY
1859	3
1860	3
1861	2
1862	13
1863	4
1864	3
1865	2
1869	1

TABLE IV (cont)

YEAR	FREQUENCY
1870	1
1871	1
1872	3
1875	1
1877	1
1878	1
1879	1
1881	2
1882	2
1883	1

TOTAL: 45

Table IV coincides with Table II in indicating the year of 1862 as the most intense in frequency -- thirteen in all. The rest of Table IV is very well balanced, frequencies oscillating from four to one.

Table V contrasts the findings of Table II and IV as to the time span, defining respective frequencies per year.

TABLE V

YEAR	TOPONYMY	CONFINEMENT
1852	3	
1858	2	
1859	14	3
1860	7	3
1861	8	2
1862	52	13

YEAR	TOPONYMY	CONFINEMENT
1863	12	4
1864	8	3
1865	5	2
1866	1	
1867	1	
1868	2	
1869	4	1
1870		1
1871		1
1872		3
1873	2	
1874	1	
1875		1
1876	2	
1877		1
1878	3	1
1879	7	1
1880	3	
1881	4	2
1882	1	2
1883	1	1
1884	3	
TOTAL:	146	45

Table V allows us to conclude:

1. The trend of toponymy runs from 1852 to 1884, a period of thirty-two years, with an average of approximately three references per year; the trend of confinement,

on the other hand, is shorter -- from 1859 to 1883; it is a period of twenty four years, with an estimated average of approximately two references per year.

2. References to distant places, known or unknown, precede the theme of confinement, that is, apparently, only introduced in 1859.

3. From 1859 down to 1865 both themes are treated along parallel lines, with the stress lying mainly on references to distant places.

4. From 1866 to 1869, apparently, there is no sense of prison or limitation.

5. From 1870 to 1873 the stress lies on confinement, with no reference to distant places.

6. From 1873 to 1875 there is no sense of confinement; there are three allusions to distant places.

7. From 1875 to 1884 the two themes run parallel, with an increased incidence of toponymies in 1879 (seven in all), and absence of references to confinement in 1876, 1880 and 1884.

How can these facts be reconciled with what is known of Emily Dickinson's life? Her life — both inner and outer — are like the image she had for infinitude -- the circumference. And no one knows where the circumference starts or ends: it is all inclusive. But within Emily Dickinson's personal "circumference" one may find the bearings to match the findings of Table V. References to distant places prevail over the sense of confinement at a rate of three to two, for Dickinson's spirit was always a free spirit. Toponymies precede confinement, even though Emily Dickinson's seclusion, self-admitted by 1853, becomes the centre of her "circumference" and eventually the epicentre

of her emotional earthquakes; thus both themes are developed from 1859 to 1865, with extremely high incidence in 1862.

Important events of that period include the publication of "I taste a liquor never brewed" by the Springfield Daily Republican (1861), Charles Wadsworth's departure for San Francisco (1862, Spring), the publication of three more poems by the same newspaper. In April of the same year Emily Dickinson writes to T.W. Higginson and asks for literary advice. In 1863 Samuel Bowles refers to the poet as "Queen Recluse;" finally, 1864 and 1865 were the years of her visit to Boston, for eye treatment.

Surface evidence then is that, in the period, what ever emotional storms she had to face, she still thought of publication; if she had to take leave of one of her several preceptors, Wadsworth, a fortnight later she started the correspondence with T. W. Higginson -- the business of a lifetime.

Higginson's criticism probably hurt, because she ceased publication, but she kept writting poems to herself, and letters to a host of friends. Finally, for a lover of nature like Emily, eye-trouble would spell out disaster to the faithful watcher of bobolinks and sunsets. Failing eyes and inner vision somehow complement each other, and allow Emily freedom of imagination from 1866 to 1869. As to the period from 1870 to 1873 that stresses images of confinement, there is no doubt that it includes visits paid by T. W. Higginson, her severe "preceptor," that once referred to her as the "half-cracked poet of Amherst," and wanted her to write poetry like everybody else, following the rules and regulations of spelling and punctuation. His criticism was, indeed, so severe, that I venture to suggest that it was motive enough for her to cease publication, and feel herself somehow confined to the strict rules of her poetical preceptor.

References to distant places reappear in the poetry written between 1873 and 1875. The death of her father on June 16, 1874, made her turn to Judge Otis Lord, an old friend of her father's, for consolation. Their friendship turned into love later -- maybe this is the central fact leading to the essential paradox of Emily Dickinson's life. Going into deep seclusion, Emily, however, still considers love and a possible marriage to widowed Judge Lord in the period from 1877 to 1884.

The paradox -- confined to her house and yet set free through love -- may explain the curious juxtaposition of images of limitation, side by side with references to distant places used in those years. By 1878 "Success is counted sweetest' was published in *A Masque of Poets*; in that same year, Samuel Bowles, one of her several preceptors, died. Her mother, a victim of stroke, was nursed by Emily and Lavinia; Mrs. Dickinson was only to die on November 14, 1882; this may explain why the marriage to Judge Lord, then a widower, never took place. From then on death became almost a daily reality to Emily: she lost her beloved nephew Gilbert (1883), and Judge Otis Lord (1884). Such losses, so difficult to bear, brought her to a nervous collapse that ultimately confined her to bed; her free spirit was only allowed to part from matter and this valley of shadows on May 15, 1886. "Called back" was the tenor of her last message to her relatives.

The brevity of her last letter to the world echoed he fragmentary nature of her last poems, some left unfinished; they knew no limitations as to rhyming schemes, unctuation, or spelling. They were the last samples of er absolute inner freedom. The anacoluthon became her favourite device, as if she were looking for a superior style o express the inexpressible.

Paradoxical Emily, Metaphorical Dickinson, the poet has used toponymy and confinement as convergent lines, running to the centre of her personal sense of "circumference," or Freedom. We are only too glad, then, that her sense of Circumference included Brazilian Pampas and Brazilian Threads; that we, like moths, "haunt" her poetical candle in Brazil; but most of all we rejoice that the poet, once, was willing to trade her own being for immense Brazil. Emily Dickinson, the captive of circumstance, is, indeed, set free through consciousnes and pursuit of "Circumference" beyond Burmah or Brazil: after all, her self-willed seclusion was just another metaphor for her absolute inner, spiritual freedom, that would take her miles away from home without actually stirring from Amherst, to watch sunrises on the Alps. To this day her poetry is the source of a sense of inner and outer freedom, as long as "Liberty is Consciousness" -- either in Amherst, Brazil, Burmah, or anywhere else in Dickinsons's mind.

R E S U M O

O objetivo deste trabalho é concentrar no evidente paradoxo das alusões toponímicas de Emily Dickinson e focalizar as imagens de cativeiro e prisão lado a lado. Esta temática dupla aparentemente percorre paralelamente toda a vida poética de Emily Dickinson. Tentou-se também reconciliar esta dupla temática com dados biográficos, para provar que a "Rainha Reclusa" de Amherst é apenas expressão de sua própria vontade, sua metáfora viva para a liberdade. Tabelas são incluídas para provar estes pontos.

N O T E S

1. JOHNSON, Thomas H. ed. *The complete poems of Emily Dickinson.* London, Faber 1975; poem number 621, p.

306. Future references to this text will be abbreviated J. and will be inserted in the text, with an indication of number of poem. Poem J. 621, apparently written circa 1862, was first included in the 1890 edition of Poems, by Emily Dickinson, First Series, ed. by Mabel Loomis TODD and T. W. HIGGINSON.

2. The best critical pieces ever written on Dickinson's "Brazilian" poems are, undoubtedly, two articles by Professor George MONTEIRO, of Brown University, USA., here mentioned in chronological order: "Emily Dickinson's Brazil" nº 15 Alfa, 1969, Departamento de Letras, Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras, Marília, 201-6.

"Don Antonio's Gold Beads: Emily Dickinson's Brazilian poems" a paper, 11 pp.

3. Poem J. 541 was also composed circa 1862; it was published for the first time in the 1935 edition of *Unpublished poems of Emily Dickinson* ed. by Martha Dickinson BIANCHI and Alfred Leete HAMPSON.

4. Poem J. 574, written c. 1862, was also included for the first time in the 1935 edition of *Unpublished Poems* ed. by BIANCHI and HAMPSON.

5. The approximate date of composition is 1864, and the poem was only included in the 1945 edition of Dickinson's poems, *Bolts of Melody*: new poems of Emily Dickinson, ed. by Mabel Loomis TODD and Millicent Todd BINGHAM.

6. WHICHER, G.F. *This was a poet:* a critical biography of Emily Dickinson. Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1960. pp. 19-20.

7. HIGGINS, D. *Portrait of Emily Dickinson*: the poet and her prose. New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press, 1967, p. 161.

A RECLUSÃO DE EMILY DICKINSON VISTA SOB NOVO ÂNGULO

Carlos Daghlian
UNESP S.J. do Rio Preto

R E S U M O

Este trabalho tem por objetivo explicar a reclusão voluntária e a excentricidade de Emily Dickinson à luz de recentes ensaios biográficos, apontando causas mais concretas (o Mal de Bright e a frustração profissional) para o comportamento da poetisa que, a partir da juventude, passou a só se vestir de branco e a se afastar cada vez mais do convívio social.

Os estudiosos da poesia de Emily Dickinson percebem logo que existe íntima relação entre a vida e a obra da autora. E um dos aspectos mais discutidos pelos principais críticos e biógrafos é a sua reclusão voluntária.

O que teria levado Emily Dickinson a se tornar reclusa? Quando adolescente, ela era alegre e brincalhona. Depois dos vinte anos de idade começou a se afastar paulatinamente da sociedade. Aos quarenta já se tornara uma personagem misteriosa.

Até há pouco tempo os biógrafos atribuíam o comportamento excêntrico de ED à personalidade dominadora do pai ou a um amor não correspondido. Outros apontavam ainda, como possíveis causas, o medo de sair de casa, a epilepsia e uma deficiência visual. A mais discutida destas causas tem sido a do amor não correspondido. Assim é que, de acordo com um levantamento feito por Frederick Morey, os diferentes biógrafos chegaram a indicar dez nomes (nove homens e uma mulher) para o lugar do "amante misterioso". Recentemente alguns biógrafos têm levantado a hipótese de que ED tinha vários "eleitos" e não um só. Para outros, o

Estudos (9): 137-143, março 1989

"amante" situava-se no plano espiritual, pois ED é considerada abstêmia no que diz respeito ao amor físico.

Entretanto, nenhum dos motivos apontados justifica o comportamento estranho e curioso de ED, assim como não justifica o fato de que nos últimos anos de vida ela só se vestia de branco e carregava buquês de flores até mesmo dentro de casa.

Em 1983 Olivia Nichols publicou um trabalho convincente que, a meu ver, explica em parte as "excentricidades" de ED. E, em 1985, partindo de uma perspectiva feminista, Donna Dickenson publicou um estudo que, também a meu ver, completa a explicação das "excentricidades" de ED.

Em "ED e o Mal de Bright", Olivia Nichols começa por lembrar um fato normalmente registrado pelos biógrafos de Dickinson, isto é, o de que sua morte foi causada, de acordo com o próprio atestado de óbito, pela doença de Bright. Ora, o mal de Bright nada mais é do que a doença hoje mais conhecida por nefrite, ou seja, um distúrbio renal que, em estágio avançado, provoca incontinência urinária, odor corporal e diarréia. Hoje em dia, a doença pode ser controlada pelo uso de drogas adequadas. Tais remédios simplesmente não existiam no tempo de ED.

Portanto, Olivia Nichols acredita que a explicação para as supostas excentricidades de ED pode ser encontrada nos tratamentos de que ela então dispunha.

Um médico da época, ao descrever a aparência física da vítima de nefrite, dizia que a mesma teria a pele seca e áspera e a pele e os lábios seriam pálidos. A escritora Helen Hunt Jackson, amiga de ED que a visitou em 1876, escreveu-lhe de sua preocupação com o fato de que a amiga andava se escondendo do sol: "você me pareceu tão branca e pálida. Sua mão pareceu tão áspera que até me assustou". Na verdade, ED não andava se escondendo do sol. Movida pelo próprio interesse, assim como a conselho médico, para

que sempre procurasse o ar puro, sempre que o clima permitisse, freqüentava o jardim que ficava atrás das cercas vivas de sua casa.

ED não se tornou reclusa de uma hora para outra, o que sugere a progressão da doença de Bright. Ela teve uma infância feliz e normal. Cresceu no seio de uma família constituída pelos pais, pela irmã e pelo irmão. Tinha muitos parentes que residiam em sua região, com os quais mantinha contatos freqüentes. Tinha colegas de escola e de brinquedo, muitos dos quais continuaram a se corresponder com ela até o fim da vida. Seu pai era severo, mas não autoritário e tirano, como querem muitos. Ela o respeitava como toda criança de seu tempo era ensinada a respeitar, mas também tinha liberdade para fazer gracejos com ele.

ED saiu da escola logo no segundo período letivo por problemas de saúde; como era boa estudante, foi com relutância que deixou Mt. Holyoke. Nos anos seguintes, levou uma vida normal tanto em casa como na sociedade, freqüentando festas e reuniões na companhia de outros jovens. Foi só por volta de seus vinte e cinco anos que os amigos perceberam que ela estava se afastando deles e, quinze anos mais tarde, ela já dizia a Thomas Higginson, seu editor: "Não saio da casa de meu pai para ir a qualquer outra casa ou cidade".

Uma mulher jovem e sociável que, certa vez em tom jocoso dissera a uma amiga que pretendia ser a mulher mais popular de Amherst (The Belle of Amherst), não se transforma em tímida eremita a não ser no caso de grave distúrbio mental, como alguns biógrafos têm sugerido. Mas as cartas que escreveu nos anos em que foi se afastando não dão sinais de depressão, loucura ou frustração amorosa. Tudo indica, entretanto, que, ao invés de estar sofrendo uma mudança de personalidade, a doença de Bright é que já estava se tornando crônica. Em meados do século passado nos

Estados Unidos havia poucos sanitários públicos e, até mesmo nas melhores casas, os sanitários ficavam do lado de fora e as pessoas usavam urinóis. Ora, uma jovem com problemas de enurese e diarréia não tinha outra alternativa a não ser a de ficar sempre por perto de casa.

Os familiares de ED mostraram-se sempre tolerantes com relação ao seu retraimento, o que indica que a causa era perfeitamente compreensível para eles, que não viam a necessidade de dar explicações. Lavínia, sua irmã, recusava-se a insistir para que ela saísse, quando alguém lhe pedia que o fizesse, dizendo: "Não vejo por que. Ela está bem assim". Quando seu pai era deputado em Washington, ele convidou a esposa, o filho e Lavínia para irem visitá-lo e acrescentou: "E Emily também, se ela quiser, mas eu não insistirei para que ele venha". Em outra ocasião, quando toda a família tinha sido convidada para jantar em casa de amigos, o pai aceitou em nome de todos, ressalvando que Emily não mais saía de casa. Tal resposta, sem justificativa, indica que o pai dela, longe de ser o autocrata de alguns biógrafos, era um pai que se recusava a obrigar a filha a enfrentar uma situação embaraçosa ou desconfortável.

Quanto mais Emily "se escondia" atrás das cercas vivas da casa paterna, mais o mito crescia. E o mistério aumentou mais ainda quando, a partir de meados da década de 1860, passou a só se vestir de branco.

Quando outras freguesas perguntavam à costureira da família de ED a respeito de seu trabalho ali, ela lhes contava que Emily nunca aparecia para provar os vestidos brancos e que estes eram feitos com base nas medidas de Lavínia.

A maioria dos biógrafos consideram a preferência pelo branco como mais um dos gestos teatrais de ED. Mas, ao contrário, a cor de seu vestido foi determinada por suas

condições de saúde. Ela passou a usar vestido branco por motivos de ordem higiênica. Num livro intitulado COMO UMA PESSOA AMEAÇADA PELO MAL DE BRIGHT DEVE VIVER, publicado cinco anos antes da morte de Emily, o autor referia-se à vestimenta apropriada, dizendo: "A pele assume a função das bombas de um navio furado... Qualquer interferência na livre ação da pele causará impressões prejudiciais nos rins... A roupa usada junto à pele deve ser de tecido poroso, para absorver a água que vai sendo eliminada". A roupa branca, portanto, fazia parte da "receita". Além disso, era mais prática e apropriada para os métodos de lavagem e esterilização utilizados na época.

Algumas pessoas que visitaram os Dickinson, além de observarem o vestido branco, informaram que tinham visto Emily com grandes buquês de flores nos braços até mesmo dentro de casa. Os biógrafos têm atribuído os buquês à teatralidade de uma amante da natureza. Entretanto, o mal de Bright proporciona uma explicação mais plausível. Uma jovem da época, sem o recurso dos desodorantes que temos hoje, usaria quaisquer fragrâncias naturais então disponíveis para disfarçar odores corporais.

Uma explicação recente, segundo a qual a reclusão de ED fora motivada por uma crescente deficiência visual, pode ter algum fundamento, mesmo porque a nefrite pode afetar também os olhos. Mas a fraqueza da vista e a caligrafia ilegível não poderiam explicar os brancos, os buquês desodorantes e nem a comunicação com outras pessoas através de algum tipo de barreira. Admitir a própria cegueira não é embaraçoso. Até mesmo na era vitoriana seria fácil explicar isso aos visitantes, mas, com toda certeza, seria muito difícil explicar todos os sintomas e efeitos da nefrite.

O segundo estudo a que me referi no início é o livro intitulado *Emily Dickinson* de Donna Dickenson. Creio

que, somada às revelações de Olivia Nichols, a opinião desta autora ajuda a explicar o comportamento estranho de ED.

Donna Dickenson argumenta que "o aspecto pessoal tem sido indevidamente enfatizado na maioria dos estudos sobre a vida e a obra de ED e que o aspecto profissional tem sido menosprezado". Os mitos que ajudaram a vender seus poemas ao público depois de sua morte têm-na apresentado como um gênio amador e ingênuo.

Segundo a citada autora, a tragédia de Dickinson foi não ter conseguido publicar em vida.

Para ela, as questões do "amante misterioso" e do autoritarismo paterno não passam de hipóteses extravagantes, que resultaram na terceira lenda, a da reclusa deplorável que resolveu afastar-se totalmente do mundo.

Além de falsos, tais mitos são notoriamente sexistas. Thoreau também foi eremita durante boa parte da vida, mas ninguém atribui o seu auto-isolamento a uma mãe dominadora ou a uma amante incógnita e misteriosa. Só porque ED era mulher, assume-se que o aspecto pessoal era mais importante para ela do que o profissional. Entretanto, há muitas provas de que ED era uma poetisa profissional, e não apenas uma solteirona prendada que escrevia poemas para passar o tempo que outras mulheres dedicavam ao tricô, ao bordado ou às visitas.

A mais clara indicação de que ela não era amadora está no volume de sua obra: só em 1862 ela escreveu mais de trezentos dos seus quase mil e oitocentos poemas. Ela tinha por hábito fazer revisões, listas de palavras, assim como experiências com a métrica. Ela tentou publicar e fez tudo o que os poetas fazem. Ela só não foi profissional quanto ao sucesso.

A fama póstuma de que ela tem sido alvo leva-nos a esquecer que, para ela, sua própria vida foi um fracasso. Apesar disso, ela continuou a escrever até o fim da

vida, o que por si só é um sinal de profissionalismo.

Não se pode negar, entretanto, que o aspecto pessoal é importante e deve ser levado em conta. E não há contradição entre o reconhecimento de ED como uma profissional consciente e a admissão de que a sua formação e o seu ambiente tiveram uma influência extraordinária em sua obra. O que está errado é valorizar o aspecto pessoal em detrimento do profissional.

Como muito bem observou o crítico e poeta Frederick Morey, qualquer que tenha sido o problema de ED, ele foi o fator responsável pelos temas principais de sua poesia, fazendo com que o seu estilo humorístico inicial evoluísse para uma poesia madura e de reflexão profunda. Seja como for, o seu problema fez com que ela, depois dos vinte e cinco anos de idade, escrevesse poemas e cartas originais e de qualidade incomparável.

ABSTRACT

This is an attempt at explaining Dickinson's seclusion and excentricity in the light of recent biographical essays, which present more concrete causes (Bright's Disease and professional frustration) for the poet's behavior in the second half of her life, when she used to get dressed only in white and increasingly isolated herself from society.

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A POESIA METAFÍSICA DE EMILY DICKINSON

Edson Miranda dos Santos
Universidade Estadual de Feira de Santana

R E S U M O

Sem nenhum compromisso filosófico, Emily Dickinson pôde desenvolver em seu trabalho poético temas em que se destaca o enfoque do homem material e sua tentativa de uma relação com o imaterial, o desconhecido.

Dentre os vários temas que podem ser estudados na poesia de Emily Dickinson, a nossa atenção tem se voltado especialmente para aquele que diz respeito ao homem e seus conflitos com o desconhecido, sua ânsia de aproximar-se do abstrato, do imaterial.

Nosso trabalho é uma tentativa de destacar essa abordagem da autora em questão, notadamente a maneira como ela coloca o homem diante do grande mistério realístico, a morte.

Tudo leva a crer que essa postura de Emily Dickinson, ou seja, seu interesse profundo por esse tema é fruto da formação religiosa, não vinda de sua família mas em conseqüência de sua ligação com alguns amigos; entre eles, Benjamin Newton, que alimentou o seu gosto pela literatura e pela cultura e influenciou suas idéias sobre religião. Ela faz referências a Benjamin Newton como "um amigo que me ensinou Imortalidade". Afora isso, sua educação foi normal como a de seus irmãos. Mas à medida que seus amigos casavam-se e ela ia ficando só, ela também ia se frustrando, pois seus sonhos de amor nascidos do relacionamento que manteve por vários anos com esses amigos jamais se materializaram, mesmo porque eles não conseguiam entender sua poesia.

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A verdade é que a poesia acabou sendo seu único caminho para a vida espiritual, assim como um meio de descobertas e renovação.

Sua reclusão, que pouco a pouco se evidenciava, acabando por concretizar-se, ofereceu-lhe tempo para a meditação. Seu estado de concentração mental era constante e elevado. Cada vez mais sensível pelo exercício da observação, ela tornou-se íntima das coisas abstratas a ponto de nomeá-las e definí-las como se faz com os objetos materiais, com o que é palpável, concreto. E do uso constante da mente surgiram seus poemas.

O mais simples de seus poemas intelectuais são aqueles que meramente registram um fenômeno mental. Ela era curiosa por saber como o cérebro trabalha, ansiosa de achar palavras para cada pensamento que lhe vinha à cabeça. Tais anotações na mente podiam ter sido escritas somente por um poeta que estava incessantemente interessado na história natural do intelecto.

No seu modo de ver, a capacidade intelectual do homem é ilimitada, tão vasta quanto o universo. Utilizando o que parece ser uma hipérbole, ela escreve:

> The brain is wider than the sky,
> brain is deeper than the sea, The brain
> is just the weight of God.

O que se pode dizer é que o homem não se dá conta da potencialidade de seu raciocínio e muitas vezes se auto-menospreza por duvidar do que é capaz a sua imaginação. Emily vai mais além e arremata:

> We never know how high we are
> Till we are called to rise;
> And then, if we are true to plan,
> Our statures touch the skies.

Sua mente às vezes a confundia, de modo que algumas idéias precisavam ser estudadas até que ganhassem as-

pecto familiar e pudessem ser identificadas. Observe-se o poema abaixo:

> A thought went up to my mind to-day
> That I have had before,
> But did not finish, — some way back,
> I could not fix the year.
> .....
> But somewhere in my soul, I know
> I've met the thing before,
> It just reminded me — 'twas all —
> And came my way no more.

É difícil ler-se alguma coisa de E. Dickinson sem que se encontrem exemplos do imaterial declarado com elaboração surpreendente em termos do material. A identificação de coisas aparentemente desiguais era seu constante hábito e a surpreendente virilidade de suas metáforas constituem um elemento chave de poder em seus poemas. Como no seguinte:

> The difference between despair
> And fear is like one
> Between the instant of a wreck
> And when the wreck has been...

Ela pesa os dados da consciência, faz distinções e generalizações, e, finalmente, personifica a abstração isolada resultante. Procura sempre estabelecer uma linha de demarcação entre sentimentos similares, tentando individualizar cada um como uma entidade psicológica separada.

O tempo é mencionado como uma coisa concreta. É um rio amigo no qual somos forçados a navegar sem remo; o futuro não pode falar — ele não tem ocupação a não ser executar os telegramas que recebe do destino; o passado é uma criatura curiosa, e, provavelmente perigosa em disfarce feminino a quem se deve evitar. A esperança é uma coisa com asas que pousa na alma e canta para conservá-la aquecida.

O ódio, assim que se alimenta, morre. Sua fome é que o torna gordo.

Nessa linha de observação e classificação das coisas não vistas, ela personifica o desespero, o medo, a perda, a alegria, a esperança, o sucesso, a derrota, a felicidade, o amor, e até fala da eternidade como sendo um amigo que mora ao seu lado. Ela escreve:

He joins me in ramble
Divides abode with me
No friend have I that so persists
As this eternity.

Os assuntos relacionados com morte e imortalidade, contudo, são os mais freqüentes nos poemas de Dickinson, pelo fato de ela ter observado e se impressionado com o desaparecimento de várias pessoas íntimas suas. Assim, nos seus poemas, a morte aparece como um fenômeno de percepção consciente, ou como uma concepção abstrata, ou ainda como uma mera ilusão sujeita a profundo exame crítico.

O poema "I heard a fly buzz when I died" é uma tentativa de medir a realização subjetiva da morte. É também uma antecipação da sensação de morrer. Enquanto isso, em "I felt a funeral in my brain" é descrito o sentimento de estar presente no seu próprio funeral.

A morte considerada abstratamente pode também tornar-se um conceito na mente, sendo personificada e colocada para usos figurativos e associada com o desejo humano de uma existência futura. Emily projeta essa fantasia quando escreve:

Because I could not stop for Death
He kindly stopped for me.

Neste poema ela pinta em detalhes, de acordo com sua época, o começo de uma jornada para a eternidade. E em outro poema:

Death is a dialogue between

The spirit and dust.

Aqui ela sugere a morte como estando apressada para a dissolução do corpo, a fim de torná-lo pó. Enquanto isso, o espírito defende sua verdade, sua inviolabilidade eterna. Há também a sugestão de ser a morte uma ponte, um traço-de-união entre a vida mortal e uma outra logo a seguir, ou seja, a extensão da existência em outro mundo. A imortalidade, enfim.

Embora curto o hífen da morte, embora instantânea a passagem da alma de um mundo para o outro, o intervalo com os últimos rituais, com a procissão funeral e os serviços finais é longo de modo a permitir um tempo para meditação. Há um século passado tais cerimônias eram muito mais carregadas de solenidades e pompas do que atualmente, e faziam parte dos costumes do povo.

Com referência ainda ao poema "Because I could not stop for Death", pode-se dizer que é o que melhor descreve esse tipo de cerimônias, apresentando metáforas que levam a níveis de significado bastante profundos. Vejamos o poema na sua íntegra:

Because I could not stop for Death —
He kindly stopped for me —
The Carriage held but just Ourselves —
And Immortality.

We slowly drove - He Knew no haste
And I had put away
My labor and leisure too,
For His Civility —

We passed the School, where Children strove
At Recess - in the Ring —
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain —
We passed the Setting Sun —

Or rather - He passed Us —
The Dews drew quivering and chill —
For only Gossamer my Gown
My Tipped - only Tulle —

We paused before a House that seemed
A Swelling of the Ground —
The Roof was scarcely visible —
The Cornice - in the Ground

Since then - 'tis Centuries - and yet
Feels shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses' Heads
Were toward Eternity —

À primeira vista, a ortodoxa confiança contra o medo da morte parece estar envolvida, embora com a inovação de um noivo substituindo o anjo tradicional, para se enfatizar a difícil missão de tirá-la da aflição deste mundo para a alegria do próximo. A "Morte", usualmente grosseira, súbita e impessoal, é transformada em um cavalheiro bondoso, atencioso. Embora ela estivesse prevenida de que aquela era sua última caminhada, o terror é diminuido pela "Civilidade" do condutor que está meramente servindo ao propósito da "Imortalidade". A solidão da viagem, com a morte sentada ao lado do condutor e seu corpo estendido na carruagem atrás, é dissipada pela presença de sua parte imortal que caminha com ela como uma co-passageira, sendo que essa ligeira personificação é justificada pelo conceito de uma alma separada. Ocupada demais com a vida propriamente dita para parar, como todos os mortais, a "Morte" "bondosamente parou" para esperá-la. Essa figura de um cavalheiro levando uma dama para um passeio de carruagem muda cuidadosamente depois de duas estrofes.

O paralelismo equilibrado da primeira estrofe é

ligeiramente acelerado pela aliteração "labor" e "leisure" da segunda, que mostra nitidamente tudo o que deve ser renunciado para se caminhar rumo à eternidade. O movimento sugerido na colocação das palavras mostra uma espécie de inevitabilidade das coisas que aconteceram e das que estão por acontecer. ("We passed the School", We passed the Fields", "We passed the Setting Sun").

Implicitamente, nestas palavras, estão incluídos os três principais estágios da vida: juventude, maturidade e velhice. O ciclo do dia, desde a manhã até a noite. O trabalho e o lazer da vida são concretizados na atividade alegre das crianças, contrastando com a passividade da natureza, pela ilusão de ótica do pôr-do-sol na imagem de movimento que antecede o descanso. Mas, absorvidos com os passatempos da infância e juventude, os jogadores da vida não param nem mesmo para olhar a carruagem da morte que passa.

Nas estrofes finais, o movimento do poema diminui até quase parar. Então aparece a expressão "We paused" contrastando com os sucessivos "We passed" nos primeiros estágios da jornada. E com os termos "Dews", "Quivering and chill" é projetada a conscientização de como será o solo frio, ponto final da cerimônia.

Como se observa, o poema é de uma riqueza incomparável de figuras, apresentado uma linguagem altamente metafórica, o que é bastante característico da autora.

Na verdade, o que acontece é que quando os autores trabalham esse tema (morte, imortalidade) fica evidente uma preocupação até certo ponto obsessiva com a morte, pelo imenso desejo de se escapar dela. A essência da condição humana, diferenciando o homem dos outros animais, é a sua certeza inelutável de que um dia morrerá. Aliás, esse é um dado positivo em favor do homem, que sendo o único animal que tem consciência de que um dia morrerá ainda as-

sim é capaz de sorrir, de criar, de amar. Esse princípio começa com o homem amando a sua própria vida. E o complemento natural para um intenso amor pela vida é um intenso medo da morte. Os poemas de Emily Dickinson são um triunfo sobre esse medo.

Sem nenhum compromisso filosófico, e sem evidenciar nenhuma ligação a qualquer corrente, e mesmo sem possuir uma vasta experiência do mundo fora dos limites de sua cidade, ela pôde desenvolver em seu trabalho poético essas idéias de alta relevância, como mensagem para o ser humano, que pouco conhece de si mesmo.

Concluindo, podemos dizer que a poesia de Dickinson emerge da sua teoria de arte, sua estratégia de sabedoria, sua exploração de circunferência e centro, sua teoria de percepção, seu tratamento dos polos dramáticos da existência humana, que consiste de êxtase e desespero. Emerge ainda, e principalmente, de sua preocupação temática, que envolve o conhecimento (ou desconhecimento) do homem sobre a morte e seu sonho com o inexplorado, com o infinito, com a própria imortalidade.

ABSTRACT

Uncommitted to any philosophical system, Emily Dickinson was able to develop her poetics around themes the main focus of which is material man and his attempt at a relation with the immaterial, the unknown.

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A POESIA MODERNA DE EMILY DICKINSON

Cecy B. Campos
Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora

R E S U M O

Considerando a Poesia Moderna como liberação da imaginação, por meio de imagens que conduzem o leitor "através" das palavras até a percepção de um mundo interior intraduzível verbalmente, podemos dizer que Emily Dickinson antecipou o século 20.

Emily Dickinson é uma figura ímpar, não só na literatura norte-americana, mas na literatura mundial. Uma poeta "descontrolada", como disse Thomas Higginson, ou talvez, controlada a seu próprio modo, que apresenta uma obra multifacetada, não se enquadrando em épocas ou escolas.

Não pode ser rotulada de poeta clássica, romântica ou moderna, simplesmente, porque, se em alguns poemas ela mostra características semelhantes às de poetas românticos seus contemporâneos ou anteriores a ela, em outros vai ser precursora de tempos modernos, sempre única, nunca atrelando sua mente criadora a injunções pretéritas.

Abominando os conceitos puritanos, ferozmente expressos por Jonathan Edwards nos terríveis sermões que abalavam a sociedade da época, tinha entretanto pontos de contacto com pensamentos emitidos pelo vigoroso pregador, no ensaio *A Natureza da Verdadeira Virtude*. Ambos diziam que "o crescimento do homem só é possível através da auto-descoberta" ou "Growth of Man-like Growth of Nature/Gravitates within –[1].

Seria impossível falar-se em considerações acerca da obra completa de Emily Dickinson, haja vista a sua extensão: 1775 poemas e 1049 cartas. Dedicar-nos-emos, então, a alguns aspectos de sua poesia que são peculiares à

obra de poetas modernos, seja no que se refere ao conteúdo ou no que se refere à forma.

Artista instintiva, não aceitava conselhos para modificar sua poesia de acordo com o gosto da época, mantendo a espontaneidade e liberdade que deram à sua obra fisionomia própria.

Os temas predominantes em sua poesia são: o Amor, a Morte, a Imortalidade e a Natureza.

O *Amor* é expresso em poemas que refletem intensa emoção e sofrimento por uma separação como em "Twas a long parting – but the time" ou "I cannot live with you". Não se sabe ao certo se estes poemas foram inspirados por um amante real ou imaginário. São infrutíferas as tentativas de seus biógrafos de retratar a sua personalidade e procurar justificar os seus poemas. Alguns chegam a explicar o repentino explodir poético que aconteceu a partir de 1860 como um engano na transcrição de datas, o que faria com que muitos poemas tivessem sido escritos em décadas anteriores. Outros biógrafos vêem nesta efervescência literária o resultado de sua frustração amorosa conseqüente à partida do Reverendo Charles Wadsworth para a Califórnia.

Segundo depoimento de seu irmão Austin Dickinson, citado por Austin Warren[2], "Emily se apaixonou várias vezes, a seu próprio modo". Na verdade, observamos que ela sentia sempre a necessidade de ter um mentor espiritual, a quem parecia devotar-se com exagero. Foi o que aconteceu em relação a Ben Newton, Charles Wadsworth e Thomas Higginson, entre outros. Até mesmo em relação ao pai, Edward Dickinson, ela parecia nutrir um amor algo neurótico.

Fato é que, com ou sem motivo, sua reclusão data desta época. A partir de 1862 passou a vestir-se sempre de branco e, mesmo no jardim, cuidando de flores, tornou-se uma aparição rara.

A idéia de *Morte* está presente em cerca de 500 a

600 poemas e todos eles apresentam um ponto comum: o fato de que a morte interrompe nossa comunicação com aqueles a quem amamos e nos deixa na incerteza quanto ao restabelecimento desta comunicação. Morte para Emily Dickinson não era apenas a morte física, mas as partidas, as separações, (ou por distância ou por deslealdade), as ausências, as disjunções.

A *Imortalidade*, assim como Eternidade e Céu, eram representações de felicidade, reencontro, fim da saudade. Nos poemas relativos à Imortalidade se evidencia a mestria de Emily Dickinson em representar, de maneira concreta, idéias abstratas. Na concretização de suas abstrações, usa símiles e metáforas de grande alcance.

A *Natureza* é representada por flores, insetos, animais, o nascer e o pôr do sol, que sempre alertaram seus sentidos. Em seu entusiasmo por um dia fugitivo de verão que aparece no meio do outono ou pela força de um relâmpago que "esquarteja uma árvore", ela se aproxima dos poetas transcendentalistas. Mas, embora apreciando Emerson e Thoreau, a linha de influência é tênue e Emily logo toma os seus próprios caminhos.

Estes temas são abordados de maneira muito especial, graças à percepção de Emily Dickinson, que,mergulhando para dentro de si mesma, procurava descobrir não o mundo da realidade mas o mundo da Essência. Quando ela fala de um grão de milho ou de uma pequena pedra, não reproduz o que vê fisicamente; vai "através de".

Embora vivesse aparentemente sozinha, não era solitária, e sim, um *ser-no-mundo* que se preocupava com os acontecimentos ao seu redor, compreendendo-os, estabelecendo ligações e, conseqüentemente, sofrendo influência, de sua educação puritana, das doutrinas transcendentalistas, dos hinos que cantava na juventude. Um exemplo de sua participação é a referência que faz à locomotiva, manifestan-

do entusiasmo ao dizer "I like to see it lap the miles".

"A obra literária não é constituida por formas; ela engendra formas. A obra é sua própria forma", segundo Eduardo Portella, em seu livro *Fundamento da Investigação literária*[3]. E por isso, na "confecção" da obra de arte, que é a sua poesia, Emily Dickinson abandona as convenções poéticas de seu tempo e libera a sua imaginação, antecipando o século XX.

Uma das peculiaridades modernas da poesia de Emily Dickinson é a quase total ausência de pontuação.

Travessões são usados em lugar de vírgulas, dois pontos, reticências ou ponto final, servindo também para indicar pausas necessárias à respiração ou para enfatizar algo que se seguia ou que vinha anteriormente.

A irreverência e a liberdade no uso de maiúsculas é outra característica. Serviam para chamar a atenção para uma determinada palavra, não importando que fossem substantivos comuns ou que estivessem no princípio ou no meio da frase.

Contrastando linhas longas com outras bem curtas, (às vezes de uma só palavra) e dispondo os versos de maneira irregular, Emily Dickinson mostra-se, mais uma vez, precursora de poetas modernos; assim como pelo uso da elípse, que dando concentração e economia a seus poemas, transmite-lhes, em alguns casos, tom coloquial.

Palavras nativas usadas em contraposição a palavras de origem grega ou latina, monossílabos em oposição a polissílabos, elementos concretos para expressar abstrações, paradoxos, junções de palavras e assonâncias, pervadem sua poesia de maneira a torná-la diferente de qualquer outra poesia de seu tempo.

Até no tratamento que dava a temas tradicionais deve ter chocado os seus contemporâneos. É claro que, tendo nascido Puritana e como tal tendo sido criada, o meio e

a educação forçosamente exerceriam influências sobre a sua expressão poética. O vocabulário teológico e as figuras do Velho Testamento lhe eram familiares, mas ela usa essa familiaridade de maneira totalmente original, passando de um tom muito formal para um tratamento íntimo e até mesmo zombeteiro, como quando diz: "'Father', I observed to Heaven, /You are punctual".

Apesar da métrica cadenciada que algumas vezes aparece em seus poemas e que é remanescente dos hinos que cantava na infância, Emily Dickinson deu flexibilidade à sua poesia através do contraste com uma grande variedade de realizações métricas, chegando quase ao verso livre.

Quanto às rimas, não a preocupavam; mas não devemos por isto dizer que fossem imperfeitas. Melhor dizer que eram "sui generis" e continham um extremo cuidado da nossa poeta para a harmonização dos sons.

Outro aspecto da poesia Dickinsoniana que merece ser ressaltada é a imagística. A Natureza aparece freqüentemente, não como uma ilustração mas como uma visualização do invisível. Mudanças de estação expressam transições morais ou têm ligação com a idéia de Vida ou de Morte. Tanto o Mar, como a Montanha, uma Pedra ou uma Flor transmitem a complexidade concernente às coisas essenciais. A liberdade de seu espírito se manifesta na audácia de suas imagens.

Considerando que a Poesia Moderna é a liberação da imaginação por meio de imagens, símbolos, metáforas e mistura de contrastes que conduzem o leitor "através" das palavras até a percepção de um momento intraduzível verbalmente, chegamos à conclusão de que a poesia de Emily Dickinson é, em grande parte, poesia moderna.

Observando o acervo de vários autores posteriores a Emily Dickinson, de fins do século XIX e do século XX, notamos pontos de contacto que vêm reforçar a nossa o-

pinião: sua poesia é precursora da poesia de nossos tempos.

Os poemas de Stephen Crane têm o mesmo estilo não-convencional e a mesma precisão de símbolos e imagens. Travessões, letras maiúsculas, linhas irregulares, elípses e ausência de rimas são uma constante. John Berryman diz que, quando Crane mostrou seus versos a Hamlim Garland, "Garland ficou surpreso, impressionado e incrédulo, e achou que eles lembravam os poemas de Emily Dickinson, embora não fossem imitativos[4]. Além disso, Crane escreveu alguns poemas em forma de parábolas e a Bíblia o influenciou do mesmo modo que influenciou a poeta de Amherst. "Possivelmente, a noção de linhas muito curtas lhe tenha chegado depois de ouvir Howells ler Emily Dickinson"[5], continua John Berryman.

O contraste entre os tons formal e informal também está presente na poesia de Stephan Crane. Às vezes ele dá uma resposta repentina, como se estivesse participando de um diálogo, o que acontece também com freqüência na poesia Dickinsoniana. A economia e a brevidade de *Black Riders* nos fazem lembrar a grande economia verbal de Emily e, tanto Crane como Dickinson tinham uma "voz de protesto", conforme Jean Cazemajou[6].

Frank Bergon diz que, estudando a imagística de Stephen Crane, verificou que seu poder de definição é tão iluminador quanto o poder de definição das imagens de Emily Dickinson[7].

A poesia de Robert Frost também apresenta pontos de contacto com a poesia de Emily Dickinson. O uso que faz de palavras latinas contrabalançado com palavras nativas, torna seu estilo "reminiscente do estilo de Emily Dickinson", segundo Brita Lindberg Seyersted[8]. A Natureza é tema presente em ambos e montanhas, pássaros, caminhos e flores levam à profundeza dos significados, transmitindo força e beleza aos poemas.

Edward Estlin Cummings (E.E.Cummings) aproxima-

se de Emily Dickinson por seu estilo individual, em oposição a toda técnica poética tradicional. Usa letras minúsculas ou maiúsculas sem observação aos critérios habituais e, conforme deseje chamar a atenção do leitor para determinada palavra, usa maiúscula, não só no início, mas às vezes no meio da palavra, como em "slOwLy" com o O e o L maiúsculos, ou no fim, como em "stopS" com o s maiúsculo. E. E. Cummings usa também letras minúsculas quebrando as convenções: em nomes próprios, títulos, início de frase, ou no pronome I, que normalmente é escrito com letra maiúscula.

Na disposição irregular das linhas e pela presença de paradoxos, também os dois pontos se assemelham. Como Dickinson, Cummings evita rimas e é adepto da junção de palavras. Em Emily Dickinson, a maioria das palavras formadas por junção é de adjetivos. O mesmo acontece em Cummings, levando Robert E. Maurer a dizer que Cummings, "formando um adjetivo de uma palavra que é normalmente um substantivo ou um verbo, exercita seu hábito de assegurar que as palavras são flexíveis"[9].

Cummings dizia que "a poesia e todas as outras artes tem sempre que ser, estritamente, uma questão de individualidade"[10]. Este é um modo de pensar que podemos considerar Dickinsoniano, pois Emily também sempre foi muito peculiar em relação à sua maneira de ser e de escrever.

É interessante observar que, ao mesmo tempo em que se caracterizam por sua inconvencionalidade, tanto Emily Dickinson como E. E. Cummings, em certos momentos apresentam temas poéticos muito tradicionais, como ao manifestar gratidão a Deus por tudo que de belo existe na Natureza. Mas, mesmo em conteúdo tradicional, a forma sempre quebra qualquer convenção.

Há ainda afinidades entre a poesia de Emily Dickinson e a poesia de outros poetas modernos. Archibald Mac

Leish em sua *Ars Poetica* faz abstrações semelhantes às que faz Emily Dickinson: "Poetry should not mean / But be", diz Mac Leish, e Emily Dickinson antes dele: "Beauty is not caused, / It is"[11]. Sylvia Plath tem sido comparada à sua antecessora por muitos críticos, devido a similaridades temáticas. Ambas escreveram sobre Morte, Dor e Separação.

O Imagismo, movimento surgido no século XX, em princípio liderado por Ezra Pound e depois tendo em Amy Lowell sua principal figura, estabeleceu um credo próprio e através de seus princípios verificamos quão próxima do grupo de poetas Imagistas estava Emily Dickinson.

Pregavam os adeptos deste movimento a criação de novos ritmos, liberdade na escolha do tema poético, individualidade de expressão, estivesse o poema escrito em versos livres ou não, uso de imagens e concentração como elementos essenciais à poesia[12]. Já vimos que todos esses princípios são seguidos por nossa poeta.

Por tudo isso, chegamos à conclusão de que Emily Dickinson teve uma pré-visão do que seria a poesia do século XX e conseguiu assim um lugar especial na literatura norte-americana. Ela antecipou a Poesia Moderna usando a sua imaginação com o máximo de liberdade para a formação da imagem literária, empregando a metáfora de modo anti-convencional, criando uma sintaxe própria e abandonando a pontuação tradicional e formas gráficas normais.

Acreditamos que, pelas características de sua poesia, Emily Dickinson levou muitos poetas modernos a sentir a flexibilidade da língua e a necessidade de ser livre para alcançar a verdadeira expressão poética.

ABSTRACT

Considering Modern Poetry to be the liberation of imagination, by means of images that lead the reader

"through" words down to the perception of a verbally-untranslatable inner world, we can say that Emily Dickinson anticipated the 20th century.

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CINEMA E LITERATURA: A PRESENÇA DA POESIA DE EMILY DICKINSON NO FILME "A ESCOLHA DE SOFIA"

Maria das Vitórias de Lima Rocha

R E S U M O

O filme "A Escolha de Sofia" de Alan Pakula tem sua ação costurada por poemas da autoria da poeta americana Emily Dickinson.
É o poema "Because I could not stop for Death" (poema nº 712) que enseja o encontro dos protagonistas Nathan e Sophie.
Também é um poema de Dickinson, "Ample make this Bed" (poema nº 829), que celebra o início e o fim da trágica história de amor dos dois.
Sem ser citado no filme, o poema "Much Madness is divinest Sense" (poema nº 435) nos sugere uma pergunta que extrapola a ação do próprio filme quando nos coloca diante da loucura tão facilmente detectada a nível das relações entre indivíduos e tão irresponsavelmente ignorada pela coletividade ao nível do político.
Dickinson, limitada pela sua história pessoal, foi capaz de transcender esses limites, legando-nos uma fonte inesgotável de inspiração e deleite para gerações de artistas que a sucederam.

Dentre os vários pontos de excelência que existem em profusão no filme "A Escolha de Sofia" destaca-se o uso que faz da literatura americana, em particular da poesia, que nele funciona como elemento unificador dos seus temas principais. Em uma das cenas do filme, por exemplo, temos os personagens Sophie, Nathan e Stingo, reunidos na ponte de Brooklyn, deliberadamente escolhida por Nathan para brindar o jovem amigo Stingo, que escreve seu primeiro

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livro. Na ocasião do brinde Nathan se refere a poetas americanos como Walt Whitman (1819-1892) e Hart Crane (1899-1932), que homenagearam aquela ponte em imortais poemas. Ao estabelecer a relação entre Stingo e seus predecessores, colocando-o dentro do quadro da literatura americana, Nathan quer desejar-lhe boa sorte ao mesmo tempo em que, consciente ou inconscientemente, repete o famoso gesto do poeta-filósofo Emerson em relação a Whitman, saudando-o "no início de uma grande carreira", um século antes. A ponte de Brooklyn adquire portanto, nesse contexto, um caráter poético, metafórico, evocativo.

Tematicamente, porém, é através dos poemas de Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) que são montados os elos sutis que vão unindo as partes do filme, tal como o risco para um bordado: pressentido mais do que notado. Emily Dickinson, um espírito rebelde e avançado, permaneceu praticamente desconhecida até o século vinte, quando foi finalmente reconhecida como uma das maiores expressões da poesia de língua inglesa. Sua influência na poética americana é enorme devido à delicadíssima sensibilidade, sutileza, surpreendente uso de imagens e enganosa candura.

A estrangeira Sophie, apesar do seu limitado domínio da língua inglesa, estabelece um dos primeiros elos com a América através da poesia de Dickinson. Polonesa, recém-saída de um campo de concentração nazista, com uma dolorosa história pessoal de perdas (pais, marido, filhos, tudo) procura reaprender a viver. Estuda inglês, juntamente com um grupo de refugiados de guerra. Durante a aula é lido um poema de Dickinson, "Because I could not stop for Death" (Porque não pude me deter para a Morte). O tema do poema chama sua atenção de imediato mas não entende bem o nome do autor: "Emile Dickens", alguém lhe informa. Impressionada com o poema, vai à biblioteca em busca de um livro do tal poeta. Gasta suas últimas reservas de energia na

tentativa, mas à sua má pronúncia casa-se a má vontade do bibliotecário em ajudá-la. O esforço, desproporcional para suas minguadas forças, fazem-na desmaiar. É solicitamente amparada por um jovem -- o judeu Nathan. Embora ainda não totalmente explícito para nós, é aí que se estabelece o primeiro elo entre a temática do filme e a poesia de Dickinson:

> Because I could not stop for Death —
> He kindly stopped for me — (Poema nº 712)
>
> (Porque eu não pude me deter para a Morte —
> Ele gentilmente deteve-se para mim —)

Vejamos a possível relação do poema lido em classe com a história de Sophie. No primeiro verso, "Death" (Morte) está grafada com uma maiúscula, claramente sugerindo uma personificação. A personificação é confirmada no segundo verso com o uso do pronome pessoal "He" (ele). A Morte está então personificada e assume o gênero masculino, quando gramaticalmente normal em língua inglesa seria o uso do pronome "it", o neutro. Não pára aí a caracterização/personificação da Morte; no verso seguinte temos "He kindly stopped for me" (grifo meu): a Morte parou, deteve-se gentilmente. É interessante observar a gradação conotativa que se vai estabelecendo no poema. Nos últimos dois versos da estrofe temos:

> The Carriage held but just Ourselves —
> And Immortality.
>
> (A Carruagem levava tão somente Nós dois —
> E a Imortalidade).

Esta Morte que foi de início identificada como um homem é logo em seguida descrita como sendo gentil. Nos últimos versos temos uma informação adicional de que a Morte anda de Carruagem. O contexto sugerido, embora macabro,

hajam vista os personagens envolvidos — Morte, Imortalidade — reporta-se a um outro contexto familiar, o dos contos de fadas. A Morte, tal qual um príncipe encantado, sai com a mocinha de carruagem... e foram felizes para sempre.. Retornaremos ao poema mais adiante pois sua pertinência para o filme não se encerra aí.

Vai-se delineando sutilmente a relação entre o poema e o filme. De início apenas o aspecto mais óbvio, o fato de Nathan deter-se para auxiliar Sophie, lembra-nos a figura cavalheiresca do poema. Este aspecto é ampliado na seqüência seguinte quando Nathan desvela-se em cuidados com a saúde de Sophie, trazendo-lhe presentes, preparando-lhe refeições, ajudando-a com o seu inglês ainda trôpego. O aspecto nefasto do personagem só é desenvolvido posteriormente,pois o cavalheiro gentil será o mesmo com quem Sophie empreenderá sua última viagem, a que não tem retorno. É durante a fase da corte e dos cuidados que Nathan lhe traz um livro de poemas de Dickinson. Sentados na cama,ele lê em voz alta para Sophie o poema "Ample make this Bed — :"

Ample make this Bed —
Make this Bed with Awe —
In it wait till Judgment break
Excellent and Fair. (Poema nº 829)

(Faça esta Cama larga —
Faça esta Cama com reverência —
Espere nela até que raie o Julgamento
Excelente e Justo).

Tendo em vista o desfecho do romance de Nathan e Sophie,o poema funciona profeticamente como uma ironia dramática, pois é naquela mesma cama larga, da qual Nathan lhe recita poemas de Dickinson, que ambos, mais tarde esperarão "que raie o Julgamento". Da mesma forma, o poema marca o início e o término da relação amorosa dos dois: é es

te mesmo poema que Stingo lhes recita, em lágrimas, ao encontrá-los mortos, entrelaçados na cama, vestidos com suas roupas de festa. Para eles "Ample make this Bed" fôra epitalâmio e epitáfio.

Um terceiro poema de Dickinson, este nem mencionado nem citado no filme, torna-se relevante para "A Escolha de Sofia". Trata-se de "Much Madness is divinest Sense" (Muita Loucura é a mais divina Lucidez). Nathan, aparentemente são, tem ataques de loucura furiosa durante os quais fica totalmente obliterado o homem delicado e sensível que é em outras ocasiões. A origem do seu mal está ligada ao ódio obsessivo, a sua absoluta incompreensão diante do holocausto a que foram submetidos os judeus durante o período de poder dos nazistas. Não consegue se reconciliar com a idéia de que um só carrasco escape à justiça. Mantém um quarto secreto com fotos, recortes de jornais, todo tipo de registro que diz respeito ao nazismo e seus "heróis". Enquanto isso, ele, judeu, alimenta ilusões megalomaníacas de salvador da humanidade, acreditando no mito de que ele e sua equipe (imaginária) estão trabalhando para descobrir a cura da poliomelite. O passado de Sophie, as suas marcas, apesar de não ser judia, a tornam mais cara, encarnando para ele todas as vítimas de Hitler; daí sua devoção. Por outro lado, ele não aceita que ela tenha conseguido escapar com vida do campo de concentração. Nos paroxismos da loucura, sempre acompanhados de intenso ciúme, Nathan tortura-a com perguntas sobre as mil artimanhas que poderia ter utilizado para escapar de seus carrascos. A loucura de Nathan, seus sonhos de grandeza, suas contradições remetem-nos diretamente à grande loucura que foi a Segunda Grande Guerra. Ao confrontarmos Nathan com Hitler e seus auxiliares,resulta a pergunta inevitável: quantos perceberam a loucura em que estavam inseridos naqueles anos de guerra? O absurdo era tamanho e de tal forma indiscriminado que os

próprios mentores das teorias eugenistas (no filme representados pelo pai e pelo marido de Sophie) foram levados de roldão pela máquina monstruosa que ajudaram a montar. Esses, alguém desconfiou que eram loucos?

É aí, suponho, que está o traço mais significativo na relação entre o filme de Alan Pakula e a poesia de Dickinson. Na relação que se estabelece entre o individual e o político. Para mim ficou no ar a pergunta: por que é tão óbvia para a sociedade a loucura dos anônimos, que são logo trancafiados, alquebrados, amarrados, enquanto fecha os olhos para os grandes loucos que desencadeiam genocídios descomunais? Quem é mais louco: aquele que perde a "sanidade" por não conseguir ajustar-se num mundo cujos valores são totalmente distorcidos, virados de cabeça para baixo, ou aqueles que baixam a cabeça, seguem as ordens mais absurdas e cruéis, baseados em teorias falaciosas e descabidas? Dickinson responde à pergunta:

Much Madness is divinest Sense —
To a discerning Eye —
Much Sense — the starkest Madness —
'Tis the Majority
In this, as All, prevail —
Assent — and you are sane —
Demur — you're straightway dangerous —
And handled with a Chain — (Poema Nº 435)

(Muita Loucura é a mais divina Lucidez —
Para um Olho capaz de discernir —
Muita Lucidez — a mais absoluta Loucura —
É a Maioria
Nisto, como em tudo, que prevalece —
Concorde — e você será são —
Discorde — e será tido como perigoso —
E atado com uma Corrente —)

Os temas Vida/Morte, Amor/Ódio, Loucura/Sanidade estão assim intimamente interrelacionados no filme e as articulações são realizadas justamente através dos poemas de Dickinson. Voltando a Sophie e Nathan, a primeira relação que se estabelece é a de Vida/Morte. Sophie, egressa do mundo dos mortos — o campo de concentração e, posteriormente de uma tentativa frustrada de suicídio — é resgatada de volta ao mundo dos vivos por Nathan, com quem mais tarde encontra a morte num suicídio mútuo e consentido. Mas é claro que Sophie não se apercebeu de imediato da natureza da relação que os uniria, natureza esta que está prenunciada no poema já citado:

Because I could not stop for Death —
He kindly stopped for me —

E esta natureza mórbida da relação, que Sophie pressente mais tarde numa espécie de fatalismo estóico, também está refletida na última estrofe do mesmo poema:

Since then — 'tis Centuries — and yet
Feels shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses' Heads
Were toward Eternity —

(Desde então passaram-se Séculos, e no entanto
Parecem mais curtos do que o dia em que
Eu entendi pela primeira vez que as Cabeças dos Cavalos
Estavam voltadas para a Eternidade —)

Paradoxalmente, o momento de revelação (da Morte) dá-se exatamente quando Sophie é pedida em casamento por Stingo, depois da fuga com medo de um Nathan enfurecido. Stingo propõe-lhe começar de novo. Stingo é jovem, inocente, apaixonado, cheio de planos e esperanças. O que Stingo oferece — o casamento, filhos, um lar bem pacato — de al

guma forma ela já tivera: um dia, quando fora também inocente. A proposta de Stingo, a vidazinha na cidade do interior, no tradicional sul dos Estados Unidos, corresponde a um retorno à inocência. Neste momento Sophie recorda-se da primeira escolha terrível que tivera de fazer em sua vida: qual dos filhos deveria entregar aos nazistas para morrer. É esta lembrança, sem dúvida, que a faz compreender que não há um retorno possível para ela. Uma vez perdida a inocência, não há como recuperá-la. E ela faz sua segunda escolha trágica, a volta para Nathan. Fora ao vislumbrar a Vida (Stingo) que Sophie percebeu que a sua intimidade maior era com a Morte (Nathan). E é com muita serenidade que ela parte para a sua escolha; com o fatalismo dos condenados. Sua carta de despedida para Stingo deixa transparecer esses sentimentos. Esta serenidade está refletida na união dos dois corpos sem vida na "cama larga". Aqueles dois corpos unidos parecem ter reencontrado uma velha e esperada amiga, amorosamente, como quer Dickinson.

Dickinson, a reclusa da provinciana Nova Inglaterra do século dezenove, parecia saber muito do amor, da vida, da loucura e da morte na sua enganosa vidinha sem eventos, sem ter jamais arredado os pés de sua cidade natal senão umas duas ou três vezes. Contudo, sua ciência de fatores tão fundamentais continua gerando frutos, retro-alimentando as novas gerações que se debruçam curiosas e encantadas sobre os seus curtos e misteriosos poemas.

ABSTRACT

Alan Pakula's film "Sophie's Choice" has its action unified through poems by the American poet Emily Dickinson.

It is through the poem "Because I could not stop for Death" (poem nº 412) that the protagonists Nathan and

Sophie meet.

Poem nº 829, "Ample make this Bed," celebrates both the beginning and the end of their tragic love story.

A third poem, "Much Madness is divinest Sense," (poem n. 435), not explicitly quoted in the film but surely in the back of the mind of anyone barely familiar with Dickinson's poetry, puts the audience before the question of private madness, so easily detected and dealt with by society, and public madness, so often overlooked and ignored by most people until it is too late.

Despite the fact that Dickinson had a very limited sphere of action and experience, her genius transcends these limits, a fact clearly attested by the joy and inspiration she has become a source of to generations of artists who have followed her.

NOTA BIBLIOGRÁFICA

Todas as citações dos poemas de Dickinson são retiradas do volume de sua obra completa e definitiva, editada por Thomas H. Johnson, Little, Brown and Company (Boston, 1960).

MANUEL BANDEIRA TRADUTOR DE EMILY DICKINSON

Luiz Angélico da Costa
Universidade Federal da Bahia

R E S U M O

Este estudo introdutório das traduções que Manuel Bandeira fez de 5 poemas de Emily Dickinson é apresentado como um modesto tributo a Dickinson e ao próprio Bandeira, que, como poeta maior, prestou seu tributo maior a um de seus pares — neste ano de comemoração de centenários: do nascimento dele; da morte dela; da imortalidade de ambos.

Com a recriação de cinco de seus poemas, Bandeira junta-se a Emily na imortalidade. Muito mais os une, todavia, do que a mera circunstância de ser ele um dos seus tradutores para a nossa língua, vez que a simples escolha do poeta e/ou do poema que se traduz de logo denota alguma forma de afinidade entre o autor e o tradutor. A questão aqui, entretanto, é muito mais do que de forma. É uma questão de essência — se bem que por essa mesma razão, explícita em suas características formais.

Como Emily, Bandeira apolineamente cortejou a morte, embora diuturnamente vivendo um culto dionisíaco da vida. Como Emily, inova uma lírica de contrastes entre a imponência de grandes temas e a simplicidade e a sem-cerimônia de seu tratamento, misturando, (melhor diríamos, combinando), na mesma visão, o chistoso e o patético, o corriqueiro e o transcendente. Como Emily, realiza uma poesia de grande eloqüência, calçada, paradoxalmente em deliberado despojamento verbal. E, aliado a estas características, nos dois ressai o gosto por uma suave musicalidade, pela expressividade de certos ritmos populares, pela inventiva de certos *turns of phrase* — malgrado possíveis desrespei-

Estudos (9): 173-182, março 1989

tos ao *establishment* morfossintático.

Tudo isto somado é que melhor explica a excepcional qualidade (salvo alguns reparos) do trabalho de Manuel Bandeira como tradutor de Emily Dickinson.

Bandeira traduziu os 5 seguintes poemas que aparecem na 4a. edição (José Olímpio, 1976) de seus Poemas Traduzidos, com os títulos que às suas traduções outorgou o nosso poeta — já que, como sabemos, Emily não titulava seus originais: À PORTA DE DEUS (correspondente ao poema nº 49 da edição de Thomas Herbert Johnson), BELEZA E VERDADE (correspondente ao poema 449 da Johnson), NUNCA VI UM CAMPO DE URZES (Johnson, 1052), CEMITÉRIO (Johnson, 813) e MINHA VIDA ACABOU DUAS VEZES (Johnson, 1732).[1]

O poema 1052 da edição Johnson tem sabidamente duas famosas variantes no quarto verso da 2a. estrofe: "As if the checks were given" (Johnson) e "As if the chart were given" (edições anteriores), sendo óbvio que, ao traduzir o referido verso por "Tivesse em mãos um guia", Bandeira deve tê-lo feito a partir de uma edição anterior -- escolhendo o equivalente guia para traduzir chart. A palavra checks, da edição Johnson, no seu emprego coloquial da época como "railroad tickets",[2] significando "bilhetes de trem" em português, provavelmente teria oferecido maiores dificuldades ao tradutor. A este respeito, aliás, manifesta-se expressivamente Aila de Oliveira Gomes, em seu Emily Dickinson: uma centena de poemas.[3]

Aíla opta pelo texto da Johnson, que a leva a traduzir o 2º quarteto de Emily por um quinteto. Mas, no correr de importante nota explicativa, oferece nova tradução para a 2a. estrofe — com o vocábulo chart — e essa, respeitando, inclusive, a forma da estrofe original, nos parece melhor, porque mais espontânea e formalmente fiel ao original de Emily Dickinson, em sua bem simulada candidez da fé absoluta, da fé cega, da "fé que remove monta-

nhas".[4] E, no particular e no todo, essa tradução (como tradução) é superior à de Bandeira -- na qual o ânimo de recriação aí parece ter dado menor importância às características formais de deliberada singeleza do original, com sua pretendida ingenuidade melódica, suas repetições intencionais, seu ritmo hipnótico. Comparem-se, para julgamento de nossa posição, o original da edição anterior à de Johnson, a tradução de Bandeira e a tradução de Aíla (em cima do texto da edição de Mrs. Bianchi).[5]

I never saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet know I how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

BANDEIRA:	AÍLA:
Nunca vi um campo de urzes.	Eu nunca vi o urzedo,
Também nunca vi o mar.	Eu nunca vi o mar —
No entanto sei a urze como é,	Mas posso tanto a urze
Posso a onda imaginar.	Como a onda advinhar.
Nunca estive no Céu,	Eu nunca falei com Deus,
Nem vi Deus. Todavia	Nem nunca o céu visitei,
Conheço o sítio como se	Mas — como quem tem um mapa—
Tivesse em mãos um guia.[6]	Que o lugar existe, eu sei.[7]

Entre outras coisas, o *enjambement* do 3º verso da 2a. estrofe da tradução de Bandeira introduz um toque de sofisticação que quebra a seqüência melódica e rítmica

do original e modifica a identidade do "eu" lírico, contrastando com aquele elemento de candidez que nos parece fundamental ao desenvolvimento temático-estrutural deste pequeno grande poema.

O poema correspondente ao de nº 49 na edição de Johnson

I never lost as much but twice,
And that was in the sod;
Twice have I stood a beggar
Before the door of God!

Angels twice descending,
Reimbursed my store.
Burglar, banker, father,
I am poor once more!

não parece ter provocado o bastante a inventiva de Bandeira, resultando, por isso, numa tradução sem maiores problemas concernentes ao chamado dilema da fidelidade ou lealdade dividida — conforme habitualmente se apresenta ao tradutor de textos literários, particularmente ao de textos poéticos, mormente em versos:

Duas vezes perdi tudo
E foi debaixo da terra.
Duas vezes parei mendiga
À porta de Deus.

Duas vezes os anjos, descendo dos céus,
Reembolsaram-me de minhas provisões.
Ladrão, banqueiro, pai,
Estou pobre mais uma vez![8]

No presente caso, afora o idiomatismo sintático da expressão "I never lost as much but twice" — que Bandeira acertadamente preferiu traduzir pelo equivalente direto de uma simples inversão da ordem sintática, com a expressão "Duas vezes perdi tudo" — talvez mereça apenas uma nota de destaque a tradução do verso "Twice have I stood a beggar" por "Duas vezes parei mendiga", em que a denotação lexicográfica de stood é enriquecida semanticamente pelo padrão verbal (verbo de ligação stand + substantivo com função adjetiva-qualificativa beggar), que Bandeira admiravelmente traduziu pela expressão "parei mendiga" — na qual, o vocábulo parei acumula os conceitos e a carga semântico-emocional de termos como fiquei parada, postei-me, deparei-me, encontrei-me, fiquei, permaneci, encontro-me, etc.

Olívia Krähenbühl, por sua vez, traduziu "have I stood" por "postei-me".[9] Além do que já se disse, a tradução de Bandeira ganha pela qualidade do processo direto e instantâneo e pela síntese da comunicação do

Duas vezes parei mendiga
À porta de Deus (Bandeira)

em comparação com o rodeio analítico do símile no

Duas vezes postei-me, qual mendiga,
Junto ao portal de Deus... (Olívia).

No mais, há a ressaltar apenas a própria originalidade do tratamento temático que Bandeira, Olívia ou quaisquer outros tradutores, nacionais ou estrangeiros, teriam de transpor para o idioma de suas respectivas pátrias e o de suas sensibilidades pessoais.

No "Beleza e Verdade" — o sempre antologizado poema 449 da edição Johnson — Bandeira realiza um bom trabalho, que, entretanto, questionamos quanto à propriedade dos termos do 4º verso da 1a. estrofe, no qual, para a rica sugestividade da metáfora "in an adjoining room" Bandeira usa

da pobreza da expressão "no carneiro contíguo" – que frontalmente contraria não só a questão da fidelidade para com o texto da *source language*, mas também o tom e as intenções essenciais do texto original. Comparem-se:

I died for Beauty – but was scarce
Adjusted in the Tomb
When One, who died for Truth, was lain
In an adjoining Room –

Morri pela beleza, mas apenas estava
Acomodada em meu túmulo,
Alguém que morrera pela Verdade
Era depositado no carneiro contíguo.

Na terceira estrofe, de novo Bandeira opta por uma interpretação referencial do termo room – traduzindo "We talked between the Rooms" por "Conversamos de Jazigo a Jazigo" – que, embora sendo um bom verso na economia do texto recriado, representa um empobrecimento em termos de fidelidade ao texto original. Olivia Krähenbühl,[10] em sua tradução deste poema, apresenta, para a expressão do original "between the rooms" o feliz achado da expressão "paredes-meias" – que melhor guarda a inteireza do texto de Emily, numa recriação que, por outro lado, acrescenta percepção e sensibilidade à nossa apreensão do texto original. Aíla, por seu turno, usa o nosso vocábulo "aposento" para traduzir "room" no contexto em questão. É uma boa contribuição também.

O poema "Cemitério" – tradução do poema correspondente ao de nº 813 da edição Johnson – exibe tal fluência e expressividade na totalidade de seus níveis de entendimento e realização (sobretudo em dicção, ritmo e torneio de frase) que mais parece um texto original. Outrossim, há aqui uma real dificuldade de decisão quanto à melhor

sensibilidade artesanal. Sem deixar de ser fiel ao original no todo, Bandeira oferece aqui surpreendentes equivalências (que denominaríamos ultracontextuais), tais como "espírito e suspiro" para "ability and Sighing" e "tranças finas" para "curls" – neste caso, evidentemente, levado pela necessidade da rima com "meninas".[11] Isto, na primeira estrofe. Na segunda, o trabalho de recriação é total e, indubitavelmente, realizado com ainda maior inventiva. Observe-se, por exemplo, a extraordinária funcionalidade do verso "Findo o verão, findava o seu destino". Magistral em si mesmo e na organicidade do texto poético de que faz parte. Enfim, vale a pena recordarmos os dois textos:

This quiet dust was Gentlemen and Ladies
And Lads and Girls –
Was laughter and ability and Sighing
And Frocks and Curls.

This passive place a Summer's nimble mansion
Where Bloom and Bees
Exists an Oriental Circuit
Then cease, like these –

Este pó foram damas, cavalheiros,
Rapazes e meninas;
Foi riso, foi espírito e suspiro,
Vestidos, tranças finas.

Este lugar foram jardins que abelhas
E flores alegraram.
Findo o verão, findava o seu destino
E como estes, passaram.[12]

Dificilmente há de se encontrar, em língua portu

guesa, melhor registro de tranqüila e vivenciada consciência da transitoriedade da vida – mesmo levando-se em conta o fato de tratar-se de um texto recriado. É que somente o texto o era. A emoção era igualmente original em Bandeira – como o fora em Emily Dickinson.

O "Minha vida acabou duas vezes" – tradução de outro dos mais freqüentes poemas de antologias da lírica de língua inglesa – pode ser tomado como paradigma do trabalho de recriação poética. Neste, igualmente, Bandeira dá a forte impressão de haver escrito um original seu. E não seria errado admitir que sim, tantas são as liberdades que se permite na inspirada transposição do texto de Emily para o nosso idioma. É bem possível (provável até) que o grau de proximidade biográfica que o texto de Emily lhe sugere o tenha influenciado nesta realização. Comparem-se os dois poemas:

My life closed twice before its close –
It yet remains to see
If Immortality unveil
A third event to me

So huge, so hopeless to conceive
As these that twice befell.
Parting is all we know of heaven,
And all we need of hell.

Já morri duas vezes e vivo.
Resta-me ver enfim
Se terceira vez na outra vida
Sofrerei assim

Dor tão funda e desesperada,
O pungir quotidiano e eterno.
Só sabemos do Céu que é adeus,
Basta a saudade como Inferno.[3]

A totalidade do texto de Bandeira flui antes paralelamente a do que em cima do texto de Emily, sendo que cada uma de suas partes (quase verso por verso) representa uma chapa paradigmática da chamada "tradução livre" – acrescida e aprimorada pela inventiva de outro grande poeta. E ainda assim, não se poderá argüir carência de fidelidade ao texto original, pois nunca é demais repetir: falta de correspondência formal não significa necessariamente falta de fidelidade ao texto original. O quase proverbial "tradutor, traidor" não tem praticamente qualquer sentido na tradução-recriação poética. A este respeito, o único reparo (sem negar a validade da opção do tradutor) recairia na inclusão do verso "O pungir quotidiano e eterno", que, manifestamente preparando a rima com a palavra "Inferno", no verso final, obviamente não tem qualquer equivalência para com o verso "As these that twice befell" – que fica totalmente introduzido no texto de Bandeira. Por outro lado, como a coroar a majestade de sua realização, termina por nos brindar com a joia irmã do

Parting is all we know of heaven,
And all we need of hell

que é o seu precioso

Só sabemos do Céu que é adeus,
Basta a saudade como Inferno.

ABSTRACT

This introductory study of the translations that Manuel Bandeira made of 5 of Emily Dickinson's poems is presented as a modest tribute to Dickinson and to Bandeira himself, who, as a major poet, paid his major tribute to one of his peers – in this year of centennials: of his

birth; of her death; of their immortality.

N O T E S

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3 GOMES, Aíla de Oliveira. *Emily Dickinson*: uma centena de poemas. São Paulo, Editora da Univ. de São Paulo, T.A. Queiroz, Ed., 1985, p. 224-25.

4 Expressão proverbial — a partir do relato bíblico em Marcos, 11:20-26 e Mateus, 21:18-22.

5 AOG, op. cit., nota ao poema J. 1052 — "I never saw a Moor" — p. 224-25.

6 BANDEIRA, Manuel. Cinco poemas de Emily Dickinson. Poemas Traduzidos. In: *Estrela da vida inteira:* poesias reunidas. Rio de Janeiro, José Olympio, 1966, p. 452-53.

7 AOG, loc. cit.

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9 KRÄHENBÜHL, Olívia. *Poesias escolhidas de Emily Dickinson*. Coleção Cântico dos Cânticos. São Paulo, Edição Saraiva, 1956, p. 59.

10 OK, op. cit., p. 20-21.

11 Por óbvio erro de impressão, aparece "meninos" na edição de 1966 do *Estrela da vida inteira*. O erro permanece na edição de 1988 da mesma José Olympio.

12 MB, loc. cit.

13 Id. ibid.

P A R T E II

T R I B U T O

A

EMILY DICKINSON

DIVINÓPOLIS

.....

O *Grupo de* ESTUDO do TEATRO apresenta
"EMBRIAGUEZ DE RUM" ou "XEREZ NO FUNDO DO COPO"
tributo a EMILY DICKINSON

Criação e Direção Geral de *Osvaldo André*
com HELENA ALVIM AMENO * EMILY DICKINSON
OSVALDO ANDRÉ * MR. HIGGINSON

Assistente de Direção, Cenário e Iluminação: Carlos Antônio Lopes Corrêa/ Música: Fools Overture (Supertramp) e efeitos/ Montagem: Eduardo Martins Guimarães/Assessoria Técnica: José Laerte Brum e Maria Isabel Alvim Ameno/ Figurinos: Celma Corgozinho e Francisco Alberto Silva.

Agradecimentos: Divinópolis Clube/Prof. Celso Gomes da Silva/ Jô Assunção - Calçados e Acessórios/ Duarte Ind. e Comércio - Tecidos e Malhas/ Joice Conci Russo/ JB Palace Hotel/ Padaria e Confeitaria 1º de Junho/ 5ª Avenida Magazin.

Traduções: Rosaura Eichenberg/ Aíla de Oliveira Gomes/Helena Alvim Ameno.

PROMOÇÃO DO INSTITUTO DE LETRAS - DEPTº DE LETRAS GERMÂNICAS, COMEMORANDO O 40º ANIVERSÁRIO DE FUNDAÇÃO DA UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DA BAHIA/ DIA 27 DE NOVEMBRO DE 1986 ÀS 14H30M/ LOCAL: PAF, CAMPUS DE ONDINA/UFBa.

SALVADOR - BAHIA

ALGUMAS TRADUÇÕES DE EMILY DICKINSON

Aíla de Oliveira Gomes

Há críticos que acusam Emily Dickinson de uma certa necrofilia, como se a morte não fosse o tema favorito de tantos poetas maiores, em todas as épocas e povos. Moldá-la em arte pode ser até a pedra de toque da grande poesia.

Não era o caso, em Emily, de uma obsessão mórbida, mas de uma teimosia no perscrutar daquele eterno mistério -- "hífen do mar" -- entre dois territórios -- um que ela conhecia e amava, outro com que vivia a imaginar; havia um desejo de entender aquela experiência, pois as experiências mais íntimas eram o seu maior fascínio; havia até, muita vez, uma desconfiança de um zênite da consciência após seu instante de nadir. Por outro lado, entre os poemas ditos da morte, há casos de um lirismo imperturbável, como na delicada pavana para uma menina morta (poema 45), ou no cromo da pequena viajante, enxoval às costas, rumo ao sol (poema 150), ou na paz de um abandonado campo santo, por onde a memória adeja como borboleta à procura de uma certa flor...

Estudos (9): 187-192, março 1989

There's something quieter than sleep
Within this inner room!
It wears a sprig upon its breast —
And will not tell its name.

Some touch it, and some kiss it —
Some chafe its idle hand —
It has a simple gravity
I do not understand!

I would not weep if I were they —
How rude in one to sob!
Might scare the quiet fairy
Back to her native wood!

While simple-hearted neighbors
Chat of the "Early dead" —
We — prone to periphrasis,
Remark that Birds have fled!

.....

Coisa mais queda que o sono
Naquele quarto se esconde;
Tem um raminho no peito
E não quer dizer seu nome.

Alguns a tocam ou a beijam,
Outros lhe aquecem a mão fria,
Tem singela gravidade —
Entender, como eu queria!

Fosse eu eles, não chorava —
Soluço é coisa funesta —
Se assusta a quieta fada,
Ela foge p'ra floresta!

Enquanto ingênuos vizinhos
A "morte cedo" deploram,
Os mais propensos à imagem
Ponderam, os pássaros voam.

She died -- *this* was the way she died.
And when her breath was done
Took her simple wardrobe
And started for the sun.
Her little figure at the gate
The Angels must have spied,
Since I could never find her
Upon the mortal side.

.....

Ela morreu — e foi assim:
Quando seu ar chegou ao fim,
Tomou seu simples enxoval
E partiu para o sol.
Sua figurinha no portal
Certo algum Anjo descobriu,
Pois nunca mais ninguém a viu
Deste lado mortal.

After a hundred years
Nobody knows the Place
Agony enacted there
Motionless as Peace

Weeds triumphant ranged
Strangers strolled and spelled
At the lone Orthography
Of the Elder Dead

Winds of Summer Fields
Recollect the way --
Instinct picking up the Key
Dropped by memory --

.....

Cem anos passados, ninguém
O lugar reconhece mais —
A agonia aqui encenada
Imóvel ficou -- como a paz.

O mato dali se apropria —
Passantes soletram alheiados
A deslembrada ortografia
Desses mortos antepassados --

Ventos dos campos de verão
Relembram o caminho a seguir --
No chão o instinto apanha a chave
Que a memória deixou cair

Emilly disse uma vez a Higginson que, quando usava nos poemas uma primeira pessoa, não se tratava dela, mas de uma "supposed person." Isso se aplica principalmente aos poemas das perturbações da mente, do desespero, de angústias, depressões, vazios, onde ela não dá nunca lugar à auto-compaixão, ou ao sentimentalismo. Sofre excruciantes experiências, mas a consciência como que se destaca da mente sofredora para espiá-la, analisá-la sem reservas e sem as regras do decoro comum a esses temas. "O prisma não assume as cores", lembra ela num poema, só as revela em seus jogos caprichosos.

Para os indispensáveis artifícios de objetivação, que estranhamente não anulam, antes aguçam a emoção do leitor, à arte de Emily aliou-se o seu modo de ser tipicamente "New Englandy." E muito ela consegue por meio de um seguro controle de tom; de um manejo muito especial de coloquialismos e imagens da vida cotidiana da província; de um dizer indireto; de súbitas reviravoltas de atitude. Alguns desses traços característicos se ilustram no poema que segue.

É importante relembrar, também, que, a despeito de tudo, como Emily escreve em carta a Maria Whitney, a dor de viver, é mais doce suportá-la que omiti-la. ("The pang of Life, sweeter to bear than to omit")

There's a certain Slant of light,
Winter Afternoons –
That oppresses, like the Heft
Of Cathedral Tunes –

Heavenly Hurt, it gives us –
We can find no scar,
But internal difference,
Where the Meanings, are –

None may teach it – Any –
'Tis the Seal Despair –
An imperial affliction
Sent us of the Air –

When it comes, the Landscape listens –
Shadows – hold their breath –
When it goes, 'tis like the Distance
On the look of Death –

.....

Há um certo descambar de luz
Nessas tardes hibernais –
Que nos oprimem como o peso
Dos dobres nas catedrais –

Chaga do Céu isso nos traz –
Sem nenhum sinal de dardo –
Mas diferença íntima faz
Em todo significado.

Nem ninguém nos dá a explicação –
Do Desespero é o ferrete –
É uma soberana aflição
Que do ar nos acomete.

Chega – e a paisagem fica à escuta –
Das sombras estaca o recorte –
Quando parte – é como a distância
No olhar da morte.

HOMENAGEM A EMILY DICKINSON: POEMAS TRADUZIDOS NO CENTENÁRIO DE SUA MORTE

Solange Ribeiro de Oliveira
Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto

(Johnson, 301)

I reason, earth is short,
And anguish absolute,
And many hurt;
But what of that?

I reason, we could die:
The best vitality
Cannot excel decay;
But what of that?

I reason that in heaven
Somehow, it will be even,
Some new equation given;
But what of that?

.....

A vida é curta,
A dor absoluta,
Muitos caem na luta;
Mas, e daí?

Mesmo o mais forte,
Não vence a morte,
Essa é a humana sorte;
Mas, e daí?

No céu de algum modo as contas
Se acertarão
Em nova equação;
Mas, e daí?

(J. 875)

I stepped from plank to plank
So slow and cautiously;
The stars about my head I felt,
About my feet the sea.

I knew not but the next
Would be my final inch, --
This gave me that precarious gait
Some call experience.

.....

Eu pisava de prancha em prancha
Bem lenta a me equilibrar;
Estrelas sobre a cabeça,
Aos pés, o mar.

Só via que o próximo passo
Seria fatal;
Isso me dava o andar incerto,
Que é a experiência, afinal.

(J. 829)

Ample make this bed.
Make this bed with awe;
In it wait till judgement break
Excellent and fair.

Be its mattress straight,
Be its pillow round;
Let no sunrise' yellow noise
Interrupt this ground.

.....

Arruma a cama bem larga
Arruma a cama com susto;
E nela espera o Juízo
Excelente e justo.

Travesseiro redondo,
Bem firme o colchão;
Rumor louro de aurora
Não perturbe este chão.

Estudos (9): 193-198, março 1989

(J. 1052)

I never saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet know I how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

.....

Nunca vi o deserto,
Nunca vi o mar;
Porēm conheço o cactus,
E a vaga a ondular.

Nunca falei com Deus,
Nunca fui ao paraíso;
Mas conheço o caminho
Qual mapa preciso.

(J. 1078)

The bustle in a house
The morning after death
Is solemnest of industries
Enacted upon earth, --

The sweeping up the heart,
And putting love away
We shall not want to use again
Until eternity.

.....

Que alvoroço na casa
Onde alguēm morreu
Trabalho mais solene
Entre a terra e o cēu, --

Varrer do coração,
E guardar com saudade
O amor que não se vai usar
Até a eternidade.

Estudos (9): 193-198, março 1989

(J. 623)
It was too late for man,
But early yet for God;
Creation impotent to help,
But prayer remained our side.

How excellent the heaven,
When earth cannot be had;
How hospitable, then, the face
Of our old neighbour, God.

.....

Tarde demais para o homem,
Cedo ainda para Deus;
A ajuda humana impotente,
Mas a prece ao nosso lado.

Que excelente o céu,
Quando a terra nos foge;
Que hospitaleira, então, a face
Desse velho vizinho, Deus.

From Selected Poems & Letters of Emily Dickinson
Edited, with an Introduction,
by Robert N. Linscott.
New York, Doubleday, 1959.

TRIBUTE TO EMILY DICKINSON

Sigrid Renaux

Emily from Amherst
Who taught us all we need to know
Still shares with us her Nature
And Immortality.

THERE'S A CERTAIN SLANT OF LIGHT

Emily Dickinson

There's a certain Slant of light,
Winter afternoons –
That oppresses like the Heft
Of Cathedral Tunes –

Heavenly Hurt, it gives us –
We can find no scar,
But internal difference
Where the Meanings, are –

None may teach it – Any –
'Tis the Seal, Despair –
An imperial affliction
Sent us of the Air.

When it comes, the Landscape listens –
Shadows – hold their breath –
When it goes, 'tis like the Distance
On the look of Death –

HÃ UMA CERTA LUZ OBLÍQUA

Há uma certa luz oblíqua,
Em tardes hibernais,
Que oprime tal fora o peso
De sons de catedrais.

Nos fere celestialmente;
E cicatriz não há,
Mas internas diferenças
Onde o sentido está.

Nada se pode ensinar-lhe,
O selo é, desespero, –
Uma afliação imperial
Que nos vem do ar ligeiro.

Quando vem, ouve a paisagem,
A sombra não respira;
Quando vai, é como o longe
Que o olhar da morte inspira.

Tradução de Ildázio Tavares

Estudos (9): 200-202, março 1989

POEMA IMAGEM

Ildázio Tavares

Death is the Sovereign Game
One has to play alone —
A Battle flagless — subjects
And Kings gambol the same —

And take the Prize — a Freezing —
The White Keepsake — Despair —
The Diadem of Adamant
No tooï can split or pare.

POEMA XCIX

Evandro Barrêto

"And I and silence some strange race,
Wrecked, solitary, here."
Emily Dickinson

Entre cinco e seis de paus
dança a eternidade
ou a chama amorosa?

Onde escondes tua face
infância pretérita e rara?
Nas galáxias das palavras
nunca apreendidas no abecedário inconsútil?

Soletrarias alguma sílaba (querida)
ou negarias o amor
talvez escasso para o entendimento
de que, nas cartas do jogo,
(entre cinco e seis de paus
nunca ouro copa espada)
dança e balança
a chama amorosa
que se quer eterna-idade.

S O L O

(para Emily Elizabeth Dickinson)

Luiz Angélico da Costa

Nasci flautista
mas vivo (facticiamente)
como guarda-livros.
É uma questão de precisão científica
ou talvez
só de precisão...
(semântica, neste caso).
Não faço bem o que quero,
mas antes o que querem que eu faça:
sobraçando volumes
enganosos
de contabilidades mil,
enquanto longe,
silenciosa e atenta,
docemente expectante,
a minha flauta doce
em seu escrínio de veludo púrpura
pacientemente
por mim espera.
É a espera triunfante
da natureza morta
daquele quadro vivo
que ainda hoje tenho na memória.
E em meio à poeira dos velhos livros
de entrada e saída do Caixa
das mercadorias da loja
de meu pai, meu avô, meu bisavô,
respiro as melodias
que me querem, que me têm
e me mantêm vivo
até hoje,
até sempre...
pois (em verdade)
vivo como flautista.
Que importa se morri
um mero guarda-livros?

EMILY, AO MODO DE EMILY

Carlos Daghlian

A Dor -- sua maior glória —
A Dúvida -- seu caminho rumo à Fé --
O Amor -- doce fruto de solidão amarga —
A Morte — a superior devoção --

Nascida em mortal dezembro --
Morta em maio Florescente --
Justo -- tardio -- respondeu-lhe o mundo
Com a ternura em verso almejada --

De nave minúscula rumo ao infinito --
Passageira sem Nome —
De volta aos braços do mundo
Canta os mares — os rios — as montanhas --

Comentário do autor:

Este poema lembra (1) os temas principais da poesia de Dickinson, (2) o fato simbólico de seu nascimento ter ocorrido em dezembro (no fim do ano = "no fim da vida") e sua morte, em maio (na primeira parte do ano = "no início da vida"), isto é, simbolicamente, ela nasceu na "hora de morrer" e morreu na "hora de nascer", (3) o reconhecimento póstumo do valor de sua poesia, antecipado em um de seus poemas, e (4) sua "insignificância" física ("nave minúscula") e seu anonimato em vida e, novamente, o seu reconhecimento póstumo, desta vez como poeta da natureza, como gostaria de ser chamada.

THE OTHER HEMISPHERE

George Monteiro

Dear Perceptor --
    The word — said — lives,
I say, and my word
Said here, in this place --
lives still -- a century
to the year when my
head was first turned
Away from the things
of this world --

    Against evanescence --
to last long -- to bear the spirit
of the body, to hear my
letters echoing in the blues
and reds of Brazil --
where the sun arcs
across Northern skies --

Themselves go out — I said --
Speaking of poets whose
words do not yet have
the right to expire --

    As for me — I
breathe — I breathe
the air of Bahia --
Mr. Higginson -- I
thought you would
like -- to know --
                Emily

P A R T E III

C O N C U R S O

D E

T R A D U Ç Ã O

EMILY DICKINSON

PARA

ESTUDANTES UNIVERSITÁRIOS

"CONCURSO DE TRADUÇÃO EMILY DICKINSON PARA ESTUDANTES UNIVERSITÁRIOS"

1 Denominação

1.1 O prêmio intitula-se "CONCURSO DE TRADUÇÃO EMILY DICKINSON PARA ESTUDANTES UNIVERSITÁRIOS".

1.2 O prêmio inscreve-se nas comemorações do primeiro centenário de morte de Emily Dickinson durante a realização de EMILY DICKINSON CONFERENCE na Universidade Federal da Bahia, de 24 a 28 de novembro de 1986.

2 Finalidade

2.1 Estimular a recriação da obra poética de Emily Dickinson em língua portuguesa entre estudantes universitários, particularmente os de Letras.

2.2 Fomentar o estudo da literatura de língua inglesa.

3 Condições e Características do Prêmio

3.1 O prêmio será concedido às três melhores traduções em língua portuguesa do poema WILL THERE REALLY BE A MORNING? de Emily Dickinson (Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson, with an introduction by Conrad Aiken, New York, Modern Library, 1925, p. 66):

Will there really be a morning?
Is there such a thing as day?
Could I see it from the mountains
If I were as tall as they?

Has it feet like water-lilies?
Has it feathers like a bird?
Is it brought from famous countries
Of which I have never heard?

Oh, some scholar! Oh, some sailor!
Oh, some wise man from the skies!
Please to tell a little pilgrim
Where the place called morning lies!

3.2 O prêmio (oferecido pelo United States Information Service - USIS, Salvador, Bahia) compreenderá:

a) primeiro lugar - The Poems of Emily Dickinson, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Harvard University Press, 1955). 3 volumes.

b) segundo lugar - Letters of Emily Dickinson, eds. Thomas H. Johnson and Theodora Ward(Harvard University Press, 1958). 3 volumes.

c) terceiro lugar - Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson,ed. Thomas H.Johnson(Little,Brown and Company, 1960). 1 volume.

EXISTIRÁ NA VERDADE O AMANHECER?

Ana Paula Gordilho Pessoa
Escola de Administração de Empresas da Bahia

Existirá na verdade o amanhecer?
Existe alguma coisa como o dia?
Seria possível das montanhas ver
Se de sua altura estivesse?

Terá pés como os nenúfares?
Terá penas como os pássaros?
Virá de famosos lugares
De onde jamais tive notícia?

Oh! Vocês, estudiosos! Vocês, homens do mar!
Oh! Vocês, sábios homens dos céus
Favor a este pobre peregrino responder
Onde se encontra o amanhecer?

1º lugar no "Concurso de Tradução Emily Dickinson para Estudantes Universitários".

OBSERVAÇÃO: Esta e as traduções vencedoras em 2º e 3º lugar, a despeito do que diz o Parecer da Comissão Julgadora, vão publicadas aqui sem quaisquer alterações – para o devido registro do evento.

EXISTIRÁ MESMO A MANHÃ?

Maria Jovanka Dias Simões
Universidade Federal da Bahia
(Letras/Língua Estrangeira)

Existirá mesmo a manhã
Algo que seja assim como um dia?
Poderia eu vê-la das montanhas
Se eu tivesse sua altura?

Terá ela dos lírios a forma?
Terá asas como os pássaros?
Ou vem de terras tão distantes
Que eu nunca ouvi nem falar?

Oh, alguém me diga! Marinheiro, professor!
Oh, homem sábio das estrelas!
Ensina a este pobre peregrino
Onde fica o lugar chamado manhã!

2º lugar no "Concurso de Tradução Emily Dickinson para Estudantes Universitários"

HÃ MESMO UM AMANHECER?

Ana Helena Barbosa Bezerra de Souza
Universidade Federal de Pernambuco
(Letras)

Hã mesmo um amanhecer?
Coisa como o dia existe?
Poderia eu o ver
Se nas montanhas subisse?

Tem os pés dos lírios-d'água?
E as plumas de um pássaro?
Vem de países longínquos
Dos quais nunca ouvi falar?

Ó sábios! Ó marinheiros!
Ó entes celestiais!
Contem a um pobre peregrino
Onde o amanhecer jaz!

3º lugar no "Concurso de Tradução Emily Dickinson para Estudantes Universitários"

SERVIÇO PÚBLICO FEDERAL
UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DA BAHIA
INSTITUTO DE LETRAS
DEPARTAMENTO DE LETRAS GERMÂNICAS

EMILY DICKINSON CONFERENCE, NOVEMBER 24-28, 1986

"CONCURSO DE TRADUÇÃO EMILY DICKINSON PARA ESTUDANTES UNIVERSITÁRIOS"

P A R E C E R

A Comissão Julgadora do Concurso, havendo detidamente examinado os 7 (sete) trabalhos inscritos no Concurso, fez a seguinte avaliação:

1º lugar: ANA PAULA GORDILHO PESSOA, estudante da ESCOLA DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO DE EMPRESAS DA BAHIA, Av. Cardeal da Silva, 132, Salvador, Bahia.

2º lugar: MARIA JOVANKA DIAS SIMÕES, estudante do Curso de Letras (Língua Estrangeira) da UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DA BAHIA.

3º lugar: ANA HELENA BARBOSA BEZERRA DE SOUZA, estudante do Curso de Letras da UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE PERNAMBUCO.

A Comissão faz a ressalva de que, a despeito da premiação acima indicada, as 3 (três) traduções vencedoras do Concurso, para que possam ser publicadas, devem sofrer ligeiras alterações. Entretanto, A Comissão é de parecer que os prêmios se justificam por serem atribuídos a estudantes, aos quais é de toda conveniência estimularmos.

Salvador, 27 de novembro de 1986.

A COMISSÃO JULGADORA:

Prof. George Monteiro, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, U.S.A.

Prof. Carlos Daghlian, UNESP, S. José do Rio Preto, São Paulo.

Prof. Luiz Angélico da Costa, UFBA, Salv., BA.

SIMPÓSIO EMILY DICKINSON /EMILY DICINSON CONFERENCE

R E L A Ç Ã O D O S I N S C R I T O S

Amélia Augusta Machado de Brito	- Univ.Federal da Paraíba (UFPB)
Ana Lúcia Almeida Gazolla	- Univ.Federal de Minas Gerais(UFMG)
Annemarie Schaer	- Univ.Federal da Bahia (UFBA)
Cecy Barbosa Campos	- Univ.Federal de Juiz de Fora(UFJF)
Celeste Aída Galeão	- Univ.Federal da Bahia (UFBA)
Denise Scheyerl	- Univ.Federal da Bahia (UFBA)
Edson Miranda dos Santos	- Univ.Estadual de Feira de Santana (UEFS)
Edmilson Francisco S.de Queiroz	- Univ.Estadual da Bahia (UNEB)
Eveline Correa Gonçalves	- Univ.Federal da Bahia (UFBA)
Gerald Peter Morris	- Univ.Federal da Bahia (UFBA)
Gerenice Gusmão Cunha	- C.de Espec.em L.Inglesa e Lit.Anglo-Americana (CELILAA)/UFBA
Gustavo Ribeiro da Gama	- Estudante do DLG/UFBA
Helena Alvim Ameno	- Inst. de Ensino Superio e Pesquisa (INESP) Divinópolis, MG
Jacira Sampaio Gaudenzzi	- CELILAA/UFBA
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Ma. Vitória Alves de Oliveira	- Univ.Federal da Bahia (UFBA)
Ma. Zélia Costa de Oliveira	- Univ.Federal da Paraíba (UFPB)
Marlene da Rocha Tunes	- CELILAA/UFBA
Norma Corrêa Meyer Sant'anna	- Casa Thomas Jefferson (CTJ), Brasília
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Robinete Santana Augusto	- Univ.Federal de Goiás (UFGO)
Rosa Virginia S.Galvão Faraco	- Univ.Federal da Paraíba (UFPB)
Rosana Aparecida A.da Silva	- CELILAA/UFBA
Rosicler M. Martins Diniz	- Fac.Filosofia, Ciências e Letras de Santos
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Solange Ribeiro de Oliveira	- Univ.Fed.de Ouro Preto (UFOP)
Sônia Moura Costa e Costa	- Univ.Federal da Bahia (UFBA)
Tânia Pedrosa Barretto	- Univ. Federal da Bahia (UFBA)
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Thomas Laborie Burns	- Univ.Fed.de Minas Gerais (UFMG)
Waldette Maria dos Santos	- Univ.Federal da Bahia (UFBA)
William H. Davis	- ACBEU (Salvador, Ba.)
Winifred Kera Stevens*	- Univ.de São Paulo (USP)
Zilma Heringer *	- Univ. de Guarulhos, São Paulo

* Lamentavelmente, não pôde comparecer.

Capa: Larry Guerra

Composição gráfica: