

4 Whitman and Dickinson

M. Jimmie Killingsworth

Whitman scholars were especially active this year in bibliography and historicist criticism. An annotated bibliography by Brent Gibson extends previously published reference guides to Whitman scholarship, and Mark Maslan's critical study *Whitman Possessed* explores the intersection of poetics, politics, and culture—areas also covered in several major essays dealing with issues of gender, race, and national identity. Important new work on Whitman's reception in England appeared as well. Dickinson scholarship enjoys a surge of interest in biography with the publication of *My Wars Are Laid Away in Books: The Life of Emily Dickinson* by Alfred Habegger as well as a book by Marietta Messmer that consolidates and extends criticism of Dickinson's letters. Other works focus predominantly on topics in poetics, culture, and literary history.

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a. Bibliography and Editing *An Annotated Walt Whitman Biography, 1976–1985* (Mellen) by Brent Gibson builds on the reference guides of Scott Giantvalley and Donald D. Kummings, whose books (and supplementary articles) in the early 1980s provided annotated bibliographies for works about Whitman from his lifetime up through 1975. Gibson covers the next decade, during which, among other developments, critical approaches diversified in a field formerly dominated by biography and the New Criticism. Psychoanalytical studies in particular flourished. Like the works of Giantvalley and Kummings, Gibson's book is dependable in its coverage, brief but clear and informative in its introduction and annotations, and overall usable, though the lack of running heads hampers navigation because the index gives citations by year and item number rather than by page number.

WWQR editor Ed Folsom continues to produce benchmark work in “Walt Whitman: A Current Bibliography,” published in each issue of the journal (18: 156–62, 200–205; 19: 56–62, 114–18; available in an online version reformatted as an annual bibliography from 1975 to the present). *WWQR* also provides the best forum for articles on Whitman bibliography and textual criticism. This year’s offerings include Gary Wihl’s “The Manuscript of Walt Whitman’s ‘Sunday Evening Lectures’” (*WWQR* 18: 107–33), which documents a discovery in the Hanley Collection at the University of Texas overlooked by previous bibliographers. The lectures, which focus on the German idealist philosophers, were first published by Richard Maurice Bucke in 1902. Wihl’s transcriptions call into question some of Bucke’s interpretations and decisions about how to arrange the text. In “‘Ashes of Soldiers’: Walt Whitman and C. H. Sholes, a New Letter and a Newspaper Article” (*WWQR* 18: 186–87) Ted Genoways provides transcriptions and tells the story of Whitman’s correspondence with Sholes, a contemporary admirer of the poet’s work in the hospitals and his accounts of the Civil War. Another ardent defender of the poet was the sales agent E. C. Walker of Norway, Iowa, whose promotion of *Leaves of Grass* comes to light in Ed Folsom’s “‘The Suppressed Book!’: A Previously Unreported Whitman Broadside” (*WWQR* 18: 188–89 and back cover). Folsom reproduces another recent discovery in “A Manuscript Draft of Whitman’s Preface, 1876” (*WWQR* 19: 63 and back cover). In “A Sheaf of Uncollected Nineteenth-Century Whitman Notices and Reviews” (*WWQR* 19: 108–10) Gary Scharnhorst gives transcriptions of eight items published between 1841 and 1882 ranging in length from one sentence to two paragraphs and ranging in opinion from condemnations of Whitman’s “ravings” and “absurd theories of composition” to praise of *Leaves of Grass* as “an American classic.” In “A Newly Discovered Walter Whitman, Sr., Document” (*WWQR* 19: 111–12) Joann P. Krieg reports on a bill dated 1834 that was submitted by the poet’s carpenter father for the construction of a Methodist church on Long Island.

Whitman scholars will welcome an important new edited collection, Gary Schmidgall’s *Intimate with Walt: Selections from Whitman’s Conversations with Horace Traubel, 1888–1892* (Iowa). Traubel’s multivolume work *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, based on almost daily interviews with Whitman in old age, has long been recognized as an essential source for understanding the poet’s attitudes toward his life, times, and writing. But the complete work is in many ways inaccessible. The nine volumes were issued over the course of a century by different publishers. In

addition to the expense of the full collection and the tedium required of even patient readers (Traubel, who wrote down everything, had no heart for making selections of his own), the early volumes provide no index. Schmidgall's topically arranged, well-indexed selection with thematic headings on every page represents a fine contribution (though perhaps a stopgap measure on the way to what we really need: online access to the whole Traubel canon, fully searchable). Schmidgall's introduction, section headnotes, and the selections themselves capture the alternately funny, heart-wrenching, and intellectually challenging interplay of the old poet with the young admirer who, for all his worshipful attitude, still aspired to be a tough social and literary critic. Traubel responded with candor to the poet's questions and prodded Whitman toward new insights and trenchant accounts of his work and the public response to it. The selections achieve a nice balance between social commentary and literary or philosophical musings—a balance that adequately represents the emphases of the full work. In addition to reflections on Whitman's life and poetry, sample topics include sex and gender, city life, music, race, war, politics, and famous authors. The only major drawback of the work is that the principles for using quotation marks and the occasional introduction of the editor's paraphrases within the text, though consistently applied, can lead to confusion.

A short collection, *Earth, My Likeness: Nature Poems of Walt Whitman*, ed. Howard Nelson (Wood Thrush), reflects the growing interest in Whitman among ecocritics and students of nature writing (one topic missing in Schmidgall's selection from the Traubel conversations). Alluding to "Song of the Redwood-Tree" as "one of the most awful nature poems ever written . . . a pure dose of 19th Century boosterism," Nelson's introduction admits that Whitman was no conservationist but goes on to appreciate the poet's "amazement and gratitude" in the face of nature, his love of the outdoors, and his treatment of the animal foundation of human life. The selections include very brief excerpts from longer poems such as "Song of Myself" and "This Compost," a prose paragraph on nakedness from *Specimen Days*, and full texts of a few short poems such as "The Dalliance of Eagles" and "Wood Odors."

The economy of electronic publication is the topic of Kenneth M. Price's "Dollars and Sense in Collaborative Digital Scholarship: The Example of the Walt Whitman Hypertext Archive" (*Documentary Editing* 23, ii: 29–33). Price details the costs of producing such a site in time and money and argues that the Whitman Archive, often described as

“free” from the perspective of users, does not in the final analysis offer a good economic model for sustainable online publication, citing the generous grants and goodwill of libraries, universities, and publishers that have graced the project, not to mention the energy and commitment of the editors (Price and Folsom), who were beyond the tenure struggle when they took up the work.

Megan L. Benton blends the main streams of this year’s scholarship—historicist criticism and bibliography—in “Typography and Gender: Remasculating the Modern Book,” pp. 71–93 in *Illuminating Letters: Typography and Literary Interpretation*, ed. Paul C. Gutjahr and M. L. Benton (Mass.). Whitman’s 1855 and 1860 *Leaves of Grass* appear as examples of the “feminine printing” from which the Englishman William Morris and the American printer Theodore Low De Vinne recoiled in their calls for a return to the premechanical book, the “masculine printing” exemplified in Renaissance books. Grounding her analysis in Jerome McGann’s concept of bibliographical codes, Benton argues compellingly that “in exalting preindustrial type forms and production methods,” the late-century reformers “were also implicitly invoking the superiority of a past in which men (not machines, and not women) dominated book culture.”

b. Books Mark Maslan’s *Whitman Possessed: Poetry, Sexuality, and Popular Authority* (Hopkins) offers a provocative new approach to some well-known but still unsolved difficulties in Whitman’s poetics. Maslan argues that Whitman drew heavily on the theory of poetic inspiration, a tradition running from Plato to the British Romantics, particularly Shelley. One key feature of this tradition conceives inspiration as an external force that possesses the poet rather than as arising from within the self. Whitman’s key trope for inspiration was, in Maslan’s view, something like rape, an aggressive overwhelming of mind and body, followed by submission and ecstatic enlightenment. Sexual desire itself appears in Whitman as an external influence that overtakes the self. Figuring in both first-person and third-person narratives in *Leaves of Grass* (such as the soul’s possession of the body in section 5 of “Song of Myself” and the sexual inspiration of the female observer in section 11), this treatment of desire is consistent with the commentary on erotic health and hygiene in Whitman’s day. Nineteenth-century medical writers understood sexual energy not as arising from within (as an instinct or a drive) but rather as resulting from social and cultural influences. In acknowledging the reality of the desire that infuses him, the poet does not so much assert his individuality

against the restrictive norms of his society (as previous readers tend to claim), but embraces external factors that actually threaten the integrity of individual life. By submitting to this violation of self, the transformed poet comes to represent the forces that overwhelm him, and through this inspiration he discovers the source of his authority. Thus “for Whitman the decentering of the subject is dictated by a specifically literary logic—that of poetic inspiration—whose purpose is not to subvert authority but to establish it.” Ultimately, in a blend of Federalist and Romantic critiques of the self, reinforced by the contemporary hygienic commentary on sexual desire, Maslan’s Whitman “sees in erotic and poetic possession not a means of liberation from an oppressive system of political authority but rather a means of *authorizing* literature as a representative institution by *liberating representation* from the problems of personal, party, and regional interests that threaten to destroy representative government.” As for homosexuality, it becomes not an issue in its own right but “a token for the sacrifice of individuality upon which [Whitman] believes legitimate authority depends.” The poststructuralist theories that inform recent readings of Whitman’s homoeroticism are challenged by Maslan’s interpretation of Whitman in light of British Romantic poetics. Poststructuralism, he argues, bears “a striking resemblance to the theory of poetic inspiration” since like the inspired poet “the poststructuralist subject is an instrument of forces external to itself.” Instead of acknowledging this “distant echo” from Romanticism, poststructuralist concepts such as writing (for Derrida), power (for Foucault), and performance (for Judith Butler) reenact the kind of personified abstractions that Wordsworth and Whitman in their respective prefaces rebelled against as monsters of Western poetics. The poststructuralists merely replace the agency of Romantic subjectivity with a form of abstract agency, employing a kind of reification that the Romantics themselves had rejected. With this final step into the theoretical arena Maslan shows the full range and significance of his revisionist project. Subtle and systematic, the book’s argument is impressive, unsettling, and for the most part convincing. A few readings of individual passages and poems (section 5 of “Song of Myself” and “When I Heard at the Close of the Day,” for example), as well as some accounts of other scholars’ work, suffer from Maslan’s zeal for his own argument. He also ignores some relevant criticism, notably that of George Hutchinson and Lewis Hyde, which might be hard to fit into his narrative of how the concept of poetic inspiration has been neglected in Whitman studies. Even so, the entire work deserves careful

attention, especially the critique of poststructuralist agency; the newly reinforced appreciation of Whitman's Civil War writings, which builds on the work of Robert Leigh Davis; and the challenge to scholars who overemphasize the native originality of Whitman's work (ignoring his dependence on popular science and culture) or who use Whitman in an argument for American exceptionalism (ignoring the influence of Romantic poetics).

Whitman's place in cultural history, as understood from an internationalist perspective—the topic of a number of fine articles this year—has always had a spiritual as well as a literary dimension. Extending the tradition of reading that begins with Richard Maurice Bucke and William James, Robert C. Gordon's *Gospel of the Open Road According to Emerson, Whitman, and Thoreau* (iUniverse) traces the current interest in New Age perennialism to the Transcendentalists with a particular emphasis on Whitman. According to Gordon, the tradition was transmitted from the ancient East through Emerson to Whitman and Thoreau and then developed in successive stages, first with such thinkers as Bucke, James, and Jung; followed by the Beat poets; and culminating in the “post-'60s Aquarians” and “practitioners of Transpersonal Psychology.” While ignoring scholarly developments in Whitman studies and offering few new critical insights into *Leaves of Grass*, Gordon's book stands as an example of a remarkably persistent trend in the reception of Whitman's poems, one that partly accounts for the poet's widespread popularity and global reach. The book is also well written and avoids the gratuitous appeals to the ineffable and the dismissive attitude toward academic scholarship that marred Raymond P. Tripp's perennialist treatment of Dickinson (see *AmLS 2000*), pp. 79–80.

c. Articles and Individual Chapters The nexus of poetics, culture, and politics invoked in Maslan's book is also addressed in a number of major articles dealing with sexuality, gender, and national or racial identity. In “Debating Manliness: Thomas Wentworth Higginson, William Sloane Kennedy, and the Question of Whitman” (*AL* 73: 497–524) Robert K. Nelson and Kenneth M. Price reproduce and discuss a manuscript essay from 1908 written by one of Whitman's staunchest and earliest defenders, William Sloane Kennedy. The essay, titled “Euphrasy and Rue for T. W. Higginson” and left unpublished with instructions that it be kept secret for two generations, takes issue with Higginson's campaign to dishonor the poet in numerous reviews and articles published over a period of

almost 50 years in various magazines and journals. Nelson and Price provide a thorough and psychologically astute analysis of how Higginson tried to rescue the concept of manliness from Whitman. Distinguishing between true manliness and what he called “Boweriness,” Higginson attacked Whitman’s public persona by discrediting his wartime service in the hospitals with implications of cowardice, effeminacy, and homosexuality. The Kennedy essay is interesting not only for its defense of Whitman’s “phallicism” but also for the animosity the author reveals toward fellow Whitman defenders Horace Traubel and Richard Maurice Bucke. As Nelson and Price justly claim, Kennedy’s essay “illuminates in stark fashion the politics of late-nineteenth-century criticism,” particularly the way “literary judgments intervened in and were influenced by . . . gender identity, sexual predilections, and class status.” The construction of identity through style and ideological alignment also occupies the central focus of Peter Coviello’s “Intimate Nationality: Anonymity and Attachment in Whitman” (*AL* 73: 85–119), which contends that “virtually every strand of Whitman’s utopian thought devolves upon . . . an unwavering belief in the capacity of strangers to recognize, desire, and be intimate with one another.” Looking for “rhetorical collapses” in Whitman’s idiosyncratic development of persona (and political character) through the quirkiness of his style, Coviello shows how the poet failed in an effort to adapt the discourse of race to the task of communicating a “quality of attachment—potentially, of intimacy—between a dispersed and anonymous population.” Unable to overcome conventional racial categories, Whitman had more success with the (overlapping) discourse on sex. In particular, “Calamus,” even with its “double movements of occlusion and suggestion” that “test . . . the expressive possibilities of inspecificity and postponed disclosure,” gives a portrait of lovers who by “mutual anonymity . . . exemplify not merely the enviably avaricious quality of American sexual appetites but by their cruising . . . perform as well the utopian relation of citizen to citizen.” Whitman’s ideas on race and homoerotic attachment are precisely those that, according to Vivian R. Pollak’s “Poetic Value and Erotic Norms: A Response to Helen Vendler” (*WWQR* 18: 134–46), the poet felt he had to suppress in his Civil War poems and elegies on Lincoln. As Pollak shows, the poet wanted none of the “perturbations” (his code word for homoerotic desire) that distinguished earlier poems, including “Calamus,” to intrude on the “purified and whitened” texts of *Drum-Taps* and “When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloom’d.” On these grounds Pollak objects to Helen Vendler’s lec-

ture “Poetry and the Mediation of Value: Whitman on Lincoln” (see *AmLS* 2000, pp. 72–73) as a “formalist and broadly humanist reading of value” that following the poet himself represses “the particulars of Whitman’s Americanness, of his radicalized politics, and of his sexuality” and fails to account for “the relationship between subduing symbols and subduing races and minority cultures.” Another instance of such silencing is documented and discussed in Gary Schmidgall’s “Suppressing the Gay Whitman in America: Translating Thomas Mann” (*WWQR* 19: 18–39). A passage in Mann’s 1922 speech “On the German Republic” that invokes Whitman’s “manly love of comrades” in claiming Eros as “the figurehead of his democratic republic” was omitted in Helen Tracy Lowe-Porter’s English translation of the speech. Schmidgall restores the German original and provides a translation. Yet another perspective on Whitman and Lincoln, which appears to deny the repressive hypothesis, is found in “Lincoln’s Body” (*MStrR* 14: np), in which Shirley Samuels treats Whitman’s style of mourning in “When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloom’d” as “synaesthetic remembering,” an act that celebrates sensory response through language. She contrasts this approach with the body-denying and thus melancholic practices of notable contemporaries, including Mary Todd Lincoln.

On the question of race and poetic form, Jack Kerkering’s essay “‘Of Me and of Mine’: The Music of Racial Identity in Whitman and Lanier, Dvořák and DuBois” (*AL* 73: 147–84) compares the 1876 centennial writings of Whitman and the Georgia poet Sidney Lanier (the former Confederate soldier whose literary criticism, as Nelson and Price indicate, was enlisted by the veteran Union officer T. W. Higginson in his attacks on Whitman’s manliness). Whitman’s treatment of American progress as a “narrative of maturation” and Lanier’s “narrative of perpetuation,” based in the concept that Anglo-Saxon culture endures despite the war and the hardships of Reconstruction, form a contrasting pair of perspectives reproduced in the late-century works of the immigrant musician Antonin Dvořák and the great champion of African American culture W. E. B. Du Bois. Ironically, Kerkering argues, Dvořák’s progressive optimism matches Whitman’s while Lanier and Du Bois end up sharing the more static view, subordinating national citizenship to racial identity: “their respective commitments to Anglo-Saxon and Negro music together inscribe within literary form what would become ‘the problem of the Twentieth Century,’ the problem of the color line.” In “A Long Missing Part of Itself’: Bringing Lucille Clifton’s *Generations* into

American Literature" (*MELUS* 26, ii: 47–64) Edward Whitley shows how the African American writer uses quotations from "Song of Myself" as chapter epigraphs to position her own life as an artist against a prototype of male autobiography and a key representative of (white) American literature. Clifton's response to Whitman, Whitley argues, "speaks with a double voice as she embraces the Whitmanian spirit of inclusion and celebration, but replaces the autonomous individuality informing so much of 'Song of Myself' with a collective, generational sense of self." Michael Bennett follows a similar line of argument in "Frances Ellen Watkins Sings the Body Electric," pp. 19–40 in *Recovering the Black Female Body: Self-Representations by African American Women*, ed. Bennett and Vanessa D. Dickerson (Rutgers, 2000). Whitman also appears as a key point of reference on questions of self-definition in Maxine Hong Kingston's 1989 novel *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book*, whose protagonist is named Wittman Ah Sing. Kingston is not trying to write an immigrant novel or to imitate white cultural models, according to Elliott H. Shapiro's "Authentic Watermelon: Maxine Hong Kingston's American Novel" (*MELUS* 26, i: 5–28), but rather to participate in a redefined novelistic citizenship. "Like Whitman's poetry, Kingston's Authentic American Novel is a communal choir," writes Shapiro, and "her coalition is a coalition of many voices."

On the question of gender, Beth Jensen's "Ambiguous Struggle: Abjecting the M/Other in 'As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life'" (*WWQR* 18: 167–85) offers a counterbalance to the emphasis on male sexuality in Whitman studies since the 1970s. Drawing on the psychoanalytical theories of Julia Kristeva, especially the idea that as a child develops it experiences abjection in attempts to separate from the generalized life shared with the (ungendered) m/other figure, Jensen provides a careful analysis of the "intense maternal presence" that D. H. Lawrence hints toward in his famous claim that "Everything was female to [Whitman]: even himself" as well as the equally intense and even morbid preoccupation with gruesome images in many of the poems. Maire Mullins's "'I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love': The Whitman-Cather Connection in *O Pioneers!*" (*TSWL* 20: 123–36) considers not only Whitman's influence on Cather's novel but also "the dynamic that is created when a female writer looks back to male precursors for models." According to Mullins, Cather was most affected by the "meditative, reflective, visionary" aspects of Whitman's writing as well as his sensitivity to nature (a kind of erotic ecology) rather than the jingoistic and uncritical accep-

tance of westward expansion that predominates in the most immediate source for the novel's title, Whitman's poem "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" In "The Untold Want: Representation and Transformation: Echoes of Walt Whitman's *Passage to India* in *Now, Voyager*" (*LFQ* 29: 43–52) M. Lynda Ely argues that in the 1942 Warner Bros. film starring Bette Davis, an adaptation of Olive Higgins Prouty's popular 1941 novel, the allusion to Whitman's poem points toward problems with the representation of the strong female character. The film shares with the poet an inclination toward attenuated or partial liberation for women, a view that performed a serious ideological function in wartime America, when women were asked to defer but not give up their dependence on men.

The increasing ecocritical interest in Whitman is attested by several works. In Lawrence Buell's second major contribution to this critical genre, *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. and Beyond* (Harvard), Whitman appears with Frederick Law Olmstead as an exemplar, indeed a founder, of "Romantic urbanism," his treatments of the city ranging from naive boosterism to lyrical celebrations of a self embedded in the sense of place. Buell resolves a nagging problem in Whitman studies by suggesting that, at least on the topic of urban development, the "reformist emphasis of Whitman's journalism and the idealizing emphasis of Whitman's poetry are symbiotic. Both express commitment to the ideal of a city sweet and clean." A brief excerpt from *Notes on Walt Whitman as Poet and Person* by John Burroughs, a pioneering nature writer as well as Whitman's friend and early biographer, is included in the chapter "John Burroughs on Walt Whitman, Gilbert White, and Henry David Thoreau," pp. 33–47 in *A Century of Early Ecocriticism*, ed. David Mazel (Georgia), in which Whitman's poetry serves as a corrective to the treatment of "what is technically called Nature" in the literature of "Wordsworth and his school," signifying "some flower bank, or summer cloud, or pretty scene." "None of this," says Burroughs, "is in Walt Whitman." Whitman is "not merely an observer of nature, but is immersed in her, and from thence turns his gaze upon people, upon the age, and upon America." A close reading of this very passage (along with other writings by Burroughs) appears in Jim Warren's "Whitman Land: John Burroughs's Pastoral Criticism" (*ISLE* 8: 83–96). In the "green" revision of literary history, Warren suggests, Burroughs may have been more important as an ecocritic than as a nature writer, thanks largely to his link with Whitman. In Burroughs's view, Whitman discovered the key to a healthy human relationship to nature,

as well as a nature-based aesthetic, in poetic acts of “passionate affiliation and identity” expressing “a spiritual kinship” with the processes and objects of the earth. Using the metaphor “pregnable” to describe the poet’s sensitivity to natural influences, Burroughs was one of the first critics to comprehend the fluidity of Whitman’s gender identity. Acknowledging that Whitman edited and revised an early draft of the *Notes*, Warren discusses the interplay of Whitman’s and Burroughs’s voices as an example of the “corresponsiveness” between reader and writer that replicates the sensitivity of the poet to the natural world.

The cultural contexts of *Leaves of Grass* are illuminated in several essays. In *Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writing* (Princeton) Kirsten Silva Gruesz devotes an insightful chapter (pp. 121–36) to “resituating Whitman both biographically and ideologically in the Hispanized realm of midcentury New Orleans,” where in the late 1840s the poet, still at the time primarily a journalist, went to serve on the staff of the *New Orleans Crescent*. The sentimental “exaggeration and eroticization of the time he spent in New Orleans in his later efforts at self-fashioning,” his mix of antislavery but otherwise racist attitudes, his reputed regret over his early advocacy of the Mexican War, and his curious comment in *November Boughs* that “the Latin race contributions [*sic*] to American nationality in the south and southwest will never be put with sympathetic understanding and tact on record” are likely all rooted in his encounter with New Orleans. According to Gruesz, the city was “a polyglot, circum-Caribbean capital” at the center of a body of land and a people that “the Mexican War and the filibustering efforts of the moment had rendered open and vulnerable.” Of particular interest is Gruesz’s analysis of Whitman’s ambivalence toward the desire for “the subjugated, racialized body—both the enslaved black one and the conquered brown one.” In an essay on a very different city, Paul W. Schopp celebrates the return of the *Mickle Street Review* (revived as an online journal) with “Camden and Mickle Street: A Cultural History” (*MStrR* 14: np), which tells the story of the poet’s home in his old age, also an auspicious site of urbanization during the postwar years.

Historicist criticism this year gives special attention to the topic of Whitman’s self-promotion and marketing of *Leaves of Grass*. Edward Whitley’s “Presenting Walt Whitman: ‘Leaves-Droppings’ as Paratext” (*WWQR* 19: 1–17) discovers in Gérard Genette’s concept of the paratext a theoretical framework for understanding Whitman’s famous campaign of self-promotion. Whitley applies the theory to an analysis of the notorious

appendix to the 1856 *Leaves*, in which Whitman included Emerson's private letter praising the 1855 edition as well as an open letter giving Whitman's response. The story and the analysis illustrate conflicts over the status of authorship in democratic society and print culture. A more specific account of Whitman's place in U.S. print culture is the story of his reception at the *Atlantic Monthly*, as told briefly by Erin Rogers in "America's Bard" (*Atlantic Online* 7 Nov.: np). Brady Earnhart's "Peddling Whitman: *Leaves of Grass* and the American Marketplace" (*MStrR*14: np) argues that "the poet's unusually close involvement in the sale of his writing . . . helped determine what and how he wrote." Earnhart argues that "Whitman saw bookselling as both a necessity and an act of self-betrayal." One consequence of his engagement with "the hawker's art" was the "fluid sense of identity" that is not only evident in the protean persona of *Leaves of Grass* but also a "hazard among early advertising men." According to David Haven Blake's "Public Dreams: Berryman, Celebrity, and the Culture of Confession" (*AmLH* 13: 716–36), "the peculiar fusion of intimacy and publicity that has been central to the modern era of advertising" was also central to the work of late-20th-century confessional poets, such as Anne Sexton, Robert Lowell, and particularly John Berryman, who found in Whitman an authorizing precedent for the self-validation, self-promotion, and predictions of his own success.

Other aspects of the cultural context are treated in this year's influence studies. In "When Time and Place Avail: Whitman's Written Orator Reconsidered" (*WWQR* 19: 90–107) Jake Adam York suggests the possible influence of 19th-century newspapers that routinely printed the texts of important speeches after they were delivered. Orators as famous as Daniel Webster became familiar to most Americans through the print medium. York suggests that Whitman's hope of creating a written literature with the power (or "presence") of oral discourse—a hope derided by deconstructionists but praised by admirers of Whitman's dramatic techniques—might be founded in concrete cultural practices. *Leaves of Grass* could thus be interpreted as simulating reprinted oratory. In "Culture and Antipathy: Arnold, Emerson, and *Democratic Vistas*" (*Symbiosis* 5: 77–84) Ian McGuire identifies Matthew Arnold and Emerson as the sources of the "combative tone" with which Whitman engaged unnamed exponents of high culture in developing his own notion of democratic culture—"neither as an historically sanctioned set of values nor as the pursuit of individual perfection . . . but rather as a future-oriented bio-

social 'programme,' a 'democratic ethnology of the future.'" Arthur Versluis considers possible sources for Whitman's "new religion" in a chapter (pp. 157–70) of *Esoteric Origins*, which depends to a great extent on secondary works, notably the books of David Kuebrich and Harold Aspiz. Ultimately Versluis favors such popular purveyors of arcane doctrine as Emanuel Swedenborg and Thomas Lake Harris in this sketchy claim for "Whitman's Americanization of European esoteric currents as they were filtered through the popular movements and figures of his day."

The highlight of the 2001 reception studies is Andrew Elfenbein's "Whitman, Democracy, and the English Clerisy" (*NCF* 56: 76–104), which clarifies the role that Edward Carpenter played in the "great unintended outcome of nineteenth-century literary history": "the poet who strove for a quintessentially American voice spoke most eloquently to the English." In Elfenbein's view, Carpenter rescued Whitman from the aesthetic elite that first brought him to England (represented primarily by the Rossettis and their circle) and rehabilitated him for the expanding number of new intellectuals from diverse class backgrounds. Elfenbein provides new historical contours to earlier accounts of Whitman's English appeal which were based on oversimplified notions of homosexuality and the middle class. He also restores Carpenter's status as a central figure on the late-century literary scene rather than a mere admirer, imitator, or "comrade" of Whitman. In the key work *Towards Democracy*, Carpenter did not so much imitate as "translate" Whitman, substituting a mild middle style for Whitman's wild "creole" and a gentle tone for Whitman's "bossiness," on the way to revising Coleridge's old hierarchical concept of a "clerisy" (university professors, pastors, and schoolmasters) at the center of English intellectual life. While retaining the Romantic emphasis on the "vital warmth of education," Carpenter "rewrites the Victorian intellectual tradition by replacing culture with nature, the mind with the body, philosophy with love, the national with the universal, and hierarchy with democracy." Carpenter also takes a key role in the story of a late-century group of "self-cultivated" English intellectuals who gathered to discuss the works of Whitman, largely because of their attraction to his treatment of comradeship and mysticism. The story is told in Harry Cocks's "*Calamus* in Bolton: Spirituality and Homosexual Desire in Late Victorian England" (*G&H* 13: 191–223), an essay which, like Elfenbein's, adds new layers of historical depth and new subtlety to interpretations of Whitman's reception in England and the various critical constructions of "homosexuality" and "cosmic con-

sciousness” during a time when the limits of male love and spirituality were unsettled and hotly debated. Drawing on the diaries and letters of the Bolton Whitman fellowship, Cocks illuminates “the fascination with homosexual desire, understood and represented as ineffable.” Cocks argues that “passionate attachments . . . could develop without their being rendered erotic . . . through the substitution of inexpressible, spiritual communion for ‘unspeakable’ physical possibilities.” The Bolton group, through their own conversations and their interactions and correspondence with the likes of Carpenter, Richard Maurice Bucke, and the composer Philip Dalmas, represents, for Cocks, “both the limitations upon, and the opportunities available to those men outside metropolitan or bohemian cultures who were both attracted and repelled by the prospect of homosexual desire,” which could be “rationalized in the lives of ‘ordinary’ men” and could “inform utopian vistas of selfhood and consciousness.” On the American front, new light on the reception of Whitman’s work appears in the letters of the Episcopal minister and missionary George L. Chase of Washington, D.C., who not only defended the poet against charges of immorality but also used Whitman’s ideas and language in epistles to his future wife. The letters are reproduced and discussed by Jon Miller in “‘Dear Miss Ella’: George L. Chase’s Whitman-Inspired Love Letters” (*WWQR* 19: 69–89). As Miller notes, Chase provides an important touchstone for contemporary reaction to Whitman’s sexual themes and an equally important literary historical source because of his frequent references to other writers on ethics, mysticism, and love. In a brief chapter on “Walt Whitman and Early Twentieth-Century American Art,” pp. 11–25 in *Artist and Identity in Twentieth-Century America* (Cambridge), Matthew Baigell acknowledges the influence of Whitman, and Emerson before him, in the critical understanding of energetic American selfhood, particularly important in expressionism, but goes on to argue that Whitman’s actual influence on artists may have been overstated by art critics in the 1920s and 1930s. Ed Folsom provides insights into Whitman’s reception among contemporary American poets in “Philip Dacey on Whitman: An Interview and Four New Poems” (*WWQR* 19: 40–51). Picking up a key theme in Whitman scholarship from 1999 and 2000, Stephen Connock traces the poet’s influence on modern musicians in “From Down Ampney to Paumanok: Delius, Vaughan Williams and Walt Whitman” (*Delian: Newsletter of the Delius Society* June: 9–11), which argues that “for Whitman, exploration was a mode of existence and this sense of a great spiritual journey is pro-

nounced in the musical settings of [Frederick] Delius and [Ralph] Vaughan Williams.”

Articles on how to teach Whitman to undergraduates and younger students include Patricia S. Rudden’s “Bartleby on the Ferry: Teaching Melville in Brooklyn” (*MSEx* 121: 7), which recommends comparing and contrasting Melville’s “Bartleby” with Whitman’s “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”; Helen McKenna-Uff’s “Teaching House Museums” (*MStrR* 14: np), which reports on the benefits of learning about poetry in conjunction with visits to places like the Whitman House in Camden and the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site; Bill Zavatsky’s “Poets to Come: Teaching Whitman in High School,” pp. 80–109 in *The Teachers & Writers Guide to Classic American Literature*, ed. Christopher Edgar and Gary Lenhart (Teachers & Writers Collaborative), which argues for a wider use of Whitman in the classroom and a stronger representation of his works in high school textbooks; and Jordan Clary’s “Three Voices: Teaching Stephen Crane, Emily Dickinson, and Walt Whitman,” pp. 2–13 in *The Teachers & Writers Guide*, an essay on teaching poetry in prison and in programs for juvenile offenders, which locates Whitman’s popularity among teenagers in his “profusion and spontaneity” and his popularity among adult learners in his “introspection” and “visionary spirit.” Whitman (and other poets) can also be useful in teaching disciplines as seemingly unrelated as geography. Daniel P. Donaldson’s “Teaching Geography’s Four Traditions with Poetry” (*Journal of Geography* 100: 24–31) recommends Whitman’s poems as examples for three of the four research traditions within geography—the Spatial Tradition (“Passage to India,” “Prayer of Columbus”), the Area Studies Tradition (“I Hear America Singing”), and the Human-Environment Interaction Tradition (“Pioneers! O Pioneers!” and “Song of the Redwood-Tree”), with only the Earth Science Tradition left unrepresented (Adrienne Rich’s “Storm Warnings” and Emerson’s “The Snowstorm” filling the gap). Donaldson’s classification of these poems also speaks strongly to the favored themes of ecocriticism, which promises a reconsideration of poems sometimes neglected by other approaches.

Finally, in “Whitmanian Cybernetics” (*MStrR* 14: np), an essay in cultural criticism (and a sort of virtual geography) growing out of dissatisfaction with current spatial metaphors for computer-mediated communication, Paul H. Outka argues that “Whitman’s complex understanding of subjectivity”—which emerged during the 19th-century version of the information revolution, to which the poet was a witness and contribu-

tor—“offers a sorely needed way to understand cyberspace’s own tangled negotiations of identity, textuality, landscape, and democratic politics.”

ii Emily Dickinson

a. Bibliography and Editing Though bibliographical and textual scholarship subsided somewhat this year, interest in the material conditions of Dickinson’s productivity, particularly the relationship of manuscripts and printed editions, continues to arouse interest and controversy. In “The Grammar of Ornament: Emily Dickinson’s Manuscripts and Their Meanings” (*NCF* 55: 479–514) Domhnall Mitchell takes a hard look at “claims about aspects of Dickinson’s attention to what had previously been thought of as the accidentals of manuscript production, such as the size and shape of paper[,] the physical direction and placement of the writing,” as well as “patterns of spacing between letters and lines, and habits of chirographic inscription.” Mitchell suggests that a great deal of critical interpretation involving these textual factors—notably among the group he calls the “manuscript school” of Dickinson scholars (led by Ellen Hart, Martha Nell Smith, and Marta Werner)—often fails to account for 19th-century conventions and contexts, along with “the various levels of Dickinson’s work, both poetic and epistolary,” and ends up with interpretations that are fanciful and gratuitous. He argues that context-sensitive historical scholarship “may conflict with the aims of those critics for whom an autograph is primarily a playground for performative ingenuity.” At the same time, in applying a hands-off approach to editorial practice, “manuscript criticism” may severely bind “creative responsible editing,” which like writing itself “necessarily involves choices.”

Controversies surrounding issues of intellectual property, such as permission fees and copyright protection as they affect the publication, ownership, and citation of Dickinson’s works, are the topic of Elizabeth Rosa Horan’s “Technically Outside the Law: Who Permits, Who Profits, and Why” (*EDJ* 10, i: 34–54). Horan provides a detailed chronicle of the ownership of manuscripts and publication rights from the poet’s own lifetime (when she complained that she was “robbed,” that is, published without permission) to the present, when online publication complicates the picture.

In “An Emily Dickinson Manuscript (Re)Identified” (*EDJ* 10, ii: 43–51) Morey Rothberg and Vivian Pollak reproduce and discuss a short “letter-poem” signed by the poet and originally intended to accompany a

gift to her neighbor John Franklin Jameson. Though the discovery of the manuscript was first announced in 1991, it has not yet caught the attention of bibliographers despite its interest as a biographical curiosity and striking use of color imagery.

b. Books Alfred Habegger's *My Wars Are Laid Away in Books: The Life of Emily Dickinson* (Random House) gives us the most scrupulously documented and chronologically arranged critical biography of the poet to date. Building on the bibliographical work of Ralph W. Franklin, especially the new dating of the poems, as well as a solid factual base—an exhaustive scouring of letters and other writings by the poet and her family, friends, neighbors, and contemporary historical figures; newspapers, diaries, and journals; church, court, and medical records; and other archival materials—Habegger gives us an authoritative life of the poet that stresses her individuality. He steers a middle course between the recent social view that places the poet in the center of a primarily female web of love and letters and the romantic view of her as an eccentric recluse, heroic neurotic, or even pathetic psychopath (see Marianne Szegedy-Maszek's "‘Much Madness Is Divinest Sense’: Was Emily Dickinson a Genius or Just Bonkers?" *U.S. News and World Report* 21 May: 52). Empiricist care and caution guide every step in the book, an accomplishment of which the author is obviously proud, as we see in his occasionally dismissive treatment of other scholars' more speculative readings (Jay Leyda, Cynthia Wolff, and Martha Nell Smith suffer perhaps the strongest blows), an overrating of some new findings (such as the fact that Dickinson and her mother had the same schoolteacher), and a few self-congratulatory phrases, such as the characterization of his own method as "gimlet-eyed scrutiny and an insistence on plausible evidence." Regardless of what we may think about the appropriateness of the tone and the hardheadedness of the method, however, the results stand on their own merit. Reviewing the tendency of Dickinson biography to organize around particular relationships—with her mother, her father, Susan Gilbert Dickinson, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, various candidates for "Master," or a series of family and friends (as in Richard Sewall's biography)—Habegger writes in his introduction, "If biography is a narrative that integrates everything, no matter how complex, into a single life's forward-moving braid, it would seem that the biography of Emily Dickinson has yet to be attempted." Habegger has filled the gap with what promises to be the standard biography for the foreseeable future, a

book suitable for both general and specialist readers, rich in literary, historical, and psychological insights but written in a jargon-free, highly readable style. No one relationship dominates the life of the individual as presented here. No single psychological diagnosis or cultural trend is allowed to account for too much. Habegger's treatment of the poet's relationship with her father, Edward Dickinson, nicely illustrates the way the biographer prefers the middle course. "It misses the point to think of Edward as a tyrant," he writes, providing instead a closely detailed reading of how Edward, the last "squire" of Amherst, created a "walled patriarchy" and protective gentility that "conspired to both energize and silence Dickinson." While there can be little doubt that the closely protective atmosphere that Edward created at home contributed strongly to Emily's fear of public exposure and her decision not to publish, Habegger reveals that her social views, notably her aristocratic bearing and occasional lack of sympathy or coolness toward people with different social and ethnic standings, also derived from her father's opinions and attitudes. Ultimately, "her way of living with Father was to create a private domain of friendship, thought, and art that he could not enter." Her tendency to present herself to male figures of authority (and to the various audiences, fictional or real, in her poems) as alternately "childish and subservient, or childish and disobedient" derived from her dealings with her father, but so did "her way of pulling down the mighty." Her impatience with him, her enduring pride in him, and her occasional condescending humor toward him get equal treatment in this narrative. Her grief at his death receives close attention in a moving passage late in the book. In light of recent scholarship, Habegger seems at times to slight the relationship with Susan and other women friends. But his decision is consistent with his method, which keeps the narrative detailed and on track, the emphasis on different topics balanced. Some readers will sigh over the designation of Rev. Charles Wadsworth as "Master," but Habegger makes the identification with great reluctance and only after carefully weighing every available fact; and even then he argues that much of the relationship was a product of fantasy and one-sided infatuation. The realism of this book prohibits any one love or dominant emotion to color more than a part of the poet's life. Everything has its place, but no simple explanation receives too much emphasis in what becomes the most complex portrait of Dickinson we have. The portrait, filled out with brief but revealing readings of many poems and letters, is ultimately heroic. Despite a tendency to withdraw (a tendency that makes sense in light of

attitudes toward women at home and in society, according to Habegger), to wear others out with her intensity and her demands, and to brood over dark fantasies, the poet emerges from this narrative not only the consummate creative artist-in-the-garret on the Romantic model, but also a unique woman who worked through emotional and physical pain at every stage of her life, producing poetry that reflected her passions and varying states of mind—the early onset of inspiration; the period of personal “war” and powerful productivity in the early 1860s; and the last years, a time of increasing stability, family commitment, self-realization, and hard-won wisdom. In Habegger’s story, Dickinson’s life and work stand as a lesson of how art modifies hurt and how creativity can arise from and sometimes overcome adverse conditions.

Although in many ways Habegger’s book and Marietta Messmer’s *A Vice for Voices: Reading Emily Dickinson’s Correspondence* (Mass.) stand on opposite sides of the current critical divide in which the realism of empirical work (increasingly limited to biography and traditional bibliography) stubbornly confronts the abstract textualism of “theory” (increasingly narrowed to an elite pursuit), they share a suspicion of psychoanalytical readings and an appreciation of Dickinson as a deliberate artist. From there, they diverge in just about every way. Indeed, one of Messmer’s key aims is to rescue Dickinson’s letters from biography and from “poetocentric” criticism that treats the correspondence as mere background to the poems and gives priority to the fascicles, which Messmer sees as “scrapbooks” of draft poems never intended for readers other than the poet herself. By contrast, the letters, poems, and letter-poems she sent to a wide variety of correspondents (friends and family to be sure, but also editors, public intellectuals, and literary figures) constitute, in Messmer’s view, the only form of publication that Dickinson herself authorized. Her “letters to the world” thus become the true corpus of her public work, “her major form of artistic expression.” Moreover, they represent the one mode of sociability that Dickinson engaged in regularly throughout her life—“a highly popular nineteenth-century form of social exchange: letter writing.” Rather than giving insights into the “real” Emily Dickinson, according to Messmer, the letters reveal “strategies of self-fashioning . . . adapted to individual correspondents in order to interrogate various addressee-specific gender-inscribed power relations” from the perspective of “a wide range of (largely fictional, highly gendered) identities mostly identifiable by name and taken from a variety of literary, biblical, or historical contexts.” In addition to analyzing the multiplicity of voices by

applying poststructuralist theories of polyvocality and textuality, Messmer discusses the context of epistolary conventions in the 19th-century, offers a critique of the editing of Dickinson's correspondence, and gives a thematic analysis in two chapters of how "the 'female' world of love and duty" and "the 'male' world of power and poetry" are represented in the letters.

The center of Dickinson's life and work, her New England home, provides the focus of another book, *The Dickinsons of Amherst* (New England) with contributions by Jerome Liebling, Christopher E. G. Benfey, Polly Longworth, and Barton Levi St. Armand. This beautifully produced large-format book includes archival illustrations but is built around the remarkable color photographs of the Dickinson estate by the noted photographer Jerome Liebling. The only surviving dress of Emily Dickinson (white, of course), the window from which she lowered baskets of gingerbread to children in the garden, the garden itself full of summer flowers, her simple bedroom with the narrow bed and the small polished writing desk by the window, even a lock of her chestnut hair appear in the sharp relief of Liebling's compositions, recalling image after image from her poems and letters. Above all, the conflicts and drama of Dickinson's life come alive in the visual contrast between the simple appointments of the Homestead and the decaying brilliance next door in the Austin Dickinson family home, the Evergreens, with its fading reds, William Morris wallpaper pulling loose from the wall, and the room of Emily's eight-year-old nephew Gib, sealed at the time of his tragic death. Longworth's essay "The 'Latitude of Home': Life in the Homestead and the Evergreens" (pp. 15–106), perhaps the best short biography of Dickinson currently in print, serves as a commentary on that key drama and the sources of family conflict. As Benfey notes in his "Introduction: A Lost World Brought to Light" (pp. 1–13), the essays are intended primarily to illustrate the photographs rather than vice versa, and both the writing and the book's design succeed on these grounds, giving the general reader open access to the physical space of Dickinson's world. In "Keeper of the Keys: Mary Hampson, the Evergreens, and the Art Within" (pp. 107–67) St. Armand picks up the drama, beginning with a comparison of the Dickinson real estate with the "archetypal dwellings . . . rooted in the material base of American dynastic possession" found in the works of Hawthorne, Poe, and Faulkner. He also brings to bear a gothic-tinged eloquence of his own in an engaging narration of his dealings with Mary Landis Hampson, the last Dickinson heir, "a tireless

crusader for the Dickinson family honor” who remembered the old fights well enough to resent Richard Sewall for allowing his biography to be influenced by the heirs of Mabel Loomis Todd. She also refused to go again to the Amherst bookstore where Polly Longworth signed copies of her 1984 book *Austin and Mabel*. She welcomed St. Armand and opened the rich biographical field of the house to him (which he in turn opens to readers of this essay), but she bristled when he dared even to cite Sewall in footnotes to his articles. The story is a fascinating account of how scholars struggle to remain respectful of the heirs and surviving friends of literary figures and at the same time tell the truth. Combining an exploration of the cultural history of photography (and the photographing of history) with an analysis of Liebling’s work, Benfey’s essay “‘Best Grief Is Tongueless’: Jerome Liebling’s Spirit Photographs” (pp. 169–209) discusses how the photographer remains true to the tradition of documentary photography while yet strongly invoking the gothic qualities—the “ghostly or uncanny,” the “afterlife of things”—that adhere to the pictures of old clothes without their owners in them and the long-sealed bedrooms of dead children. To emphasize the haunting gothic quality of this work may suggest that it is dark and dreary, but such is not the case. As Benfey suggests, Liebling’s photographs bring light and color to the black-and-white world that 19th-century photography gave us. The images, like the essays that accompany them, form a kind of running dialogue with Dickinson’s poems, which are quoted prominently and at some length in this handsome and provocative book.

The historical, social, and cultural contexts of Dickinson’s writing—her “home” in the larger sense of 19th-century America and general literary history—provide the focus for *Emily Dickinson at Home: Proceedings of the Third International Conference of the Emily Dickinson International Society in South Hadley, Mount Holyoke College, 12–15 August 1999*, ed. Gudrun M. Grabher and Martina Antretter (Wissenschaftlicher). The volume includes essays that broaden the feminist perspective on Dickinson’s sense of identity and authority, both historically and theoretically, in Shira Wolosky’s “Modest Selves: Dickinson’s Critique of American Identity” (pp. 1–11); Helen Shoobridge’s “Dickinson the Mysterique: A Revision of the Anxiety of Influence and Authority” (pp. 13–33); and Sylvia N. Mikkelsen’s “Emily Dickinson, Two Twentieth-Century ‘Sisters’ and the Problem of Feminist Aesthetics” (pp. 89–102), the “sisters” being Marguerite Duras and Sylvia Plath, the informing critical perspective being that of Julia Kristeva. Dickinson’s theological musings as

informed by the contexts of biblical interpretation and contemporary revivalism occupy Richard S. Ellis in “‘A Little East of Jordan’: Human-Divine Encounter in Dickinson and the Hebrew Bible” (pp. 123–42), Daniel H. Strait in “Emily Dickinson and the ‘Balsam Word’” (pp. 143–151), and Jane D. Eberwein in “Aaron Colton’s Ministry to a Poet” (pp. 153–68). Thematic studies that link critical insights to biographical and social contexts include Nancy Johnston’s “The Loaf and the Crumb: Dickinson’s Aesthetics of Bread-Making” (pp. 35–49), a topic also treated with fascination in Habegger’s biography; Daneen Wardrop’s “‘The Ethiop Within’: Emily Dickinson and Slavery” (pp. 71–88); and Carolyn S. Moran’s “‘September’s Baccalaureate’: Emily Dickinson on the Philosophy of Aging” (pp. 103–21). Applications of new methodologies to problems in Dickinson scholarship appear in Susanne Shapiro’s “Secrets of the Pen: Emily Dickinson’s Handwriting” (pp. 223–38), which uses handwriting analysis to argue for dividing the poet’s life into distinct periods, and John F. McDermott’s “A Computerized Word Analysis of the Master Letters” (pp. 239–47, published previously and cited in *AmLS* 2000, p. 84). Influence and reception studies or those that situate the poet in literary history include Brad Ricca’s “Emily Dickinson: Learn’d Astronomer” (pp. 169–77, also previously published and cited in *AmLS* 2000, p. 87), Thomas Gardner’s “Enlarging Loneliness: Marilynne Robinson’s *Housekeeping* as a Reading of Emily Dickinson” (pp. 51–70; rpt. in *EDJ* 10, i: 9–33); Masako Takeda’s “The Belle of Japan: The Popularity of Emily Dickinson in Japan” (pp. 187–99); Eleanor Heginbotham’s “‘Whatever It Is, She Has Tried It’: Contemporary Poets on Editing—and Dickinson’s Fascicles” (pp. 267–87); and Rolf Amsler and Margaret H. Freeman’s “Emily Dickinson’s Double Language: An Introduction to the Writings of Hans W. Luescher” (pp. 249–66), which offers to public scrutiny excerpts from the extensive unpublished manuscripts of a late Swiss author who thought he had discovered the “key” to Dickinson’s “esoteric” poems, which constituted, in his view, an extensive narrative of actively sexual encounters with Samuel Bowles and Kate Scott Anthon. Cynthia L. Hallen provides a useful survey of the poet’s wide-ranging stylistic techniques in “At Home in Language: Emily Dickinson’s Rhetorical Figures” (pp. 201–22). Finally, Chanthana Chaichit’s “Emily Dickinson at Home: The Paradox of the Wandering Mind” (pp. 179–85) considers the ironically broad geographical reach of the “reclusive” poet’s knowledge and imagination.

Two books published in 2000 but inadvertently neglected in last year’s

chapter deserve mention. Domhnall Mitchell's *Emily Dickinson: Monarch of Perception* (Mass.) anticipates this year's interest in the immediate social and larger historical contexts of Dickinson's work. Rejecting the notion that Dickinson's reclusive life implies an ignorance or innocence of historical conditions, Mitchell sets out to show how Dickinson "negotiated with the historical, even when the historical appears to be absent from the writing" by offering a series of "case studies that . . . chart the interaction between the writer and a range of institutions, ideologies, and practices represented by the railway, domesticity, and horticulture," among other themes. A detailed reading of "I Like to See It Lap the Miles," for example, considers the tensions between nature and technology, the old and the new, the urban and the rural, the mythic and the real, in light of the Dickinson family's interests in developing the local railroad and the rapid industrial growth of the times. In "Publication—Is the Auction" Mitchell sees the fears of bankruptcy and insolvency that haunted the Dickinson family, so that for the poet, "publication is the equivalent to a bankruptcy auction, in the sense that it calls into question the social or literary status of the person doing the publishing." According to this reading, a refusal to publish becomes, ironically, "a way of authorizing one's work, imparting to it a kind of stability and permanence at a period when power and influence of established New England families were beginning to decline . . . and when the reputation of a writer was in part dependent on a volatile economy." The book also includes Mitchell's critique of the "manuscript school" of Dickinson bibliography, a study of the poet's style in light of Bakhtin's theories, and observations on the poet's biography. A tight focus is lacking in this study, which seems a compendium held together loosely by a concern with the theme of power, a theme that associates this work strongly with that of Messmer and particularly Habegger. Mitchell quotes from Habegger's manuscript, and Habegger acknowledges Mitchell's help. Together they represent a strong move in Dickinson studies toward close-reading bolstered by documentary evidence and exhaustive contextualization, a sort of deep historicism.

The other book from 2000, *Visiting Emily: Poems Inspired by the Life and Work of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Sheila Coghill and Thom Tammaro with a foreword by Robert Bly (Iowa), gives a lively sense of the depth and breadth of Dickinson's influence on American poetry from Hart Crane to Amy Clampitt and Ray Young Bear. Arranged alphabetically, the poets speak in a hauntingly transhistorical unison of their careful reading and

special understandings; but in style and perspective they range widely, influenced no doubt by the bold idiosyncrasy of Dickinson herself. Billy Collins gives us the poet naked in “Taking Off Emily Dickinson’s Clothes” (pp. 13–14) and Maxine Kumin imagines her updated and extraverted in “After the Poetry Reading” (p. 54). A surprisingly apt Whitmanian note sounds in Galway Kinnell’s “The Deconstruction of Emily Dickinson” (pp. 51–52)—written in the spirit of “When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer”—and Barton Levi St. Armand playfully considers the possibility of “Emily Dickinson Reading Walt Whitman” (pp. 91–92): “The bearded rapist lurking in those folds / of velvet mossy-green, the Gift Book’s gilt.” Words and images from Dickinson’s poems abound, as do famous phrases from her life and letters; “half-cracked” attracts both Joyce Carol Oates and Adrienne Rich. The 78 poets deserve to be named individually here, but since space forbids we can say that the table of contents reads like an anthology of poets chosen not for topic but for sheer skill and distinguished reputation. The editors discuss their project only briefly in the introduction but expand somewhat in a 2001 essay: “Emily Who?” (*Chronicle of Higher Education* 22 June: B16–B17).

c. Articles and Individual Chapters Biography takes center stage again in a few shorter works, including articles by Messmer and Habegger. An excerpt from Messmer’s book appears as “Emily Dickinson’s Love Letters to Sue” (*GLR* 8, v: 16–19). Here Messmer argues that Dickinson’s “loss” of Susan Gilbert Dickinson to both marriage and the church can be positively interpreted as a transformational event in which the poet replaced “a passionate love relationship” with an “idealized yet perpetually inaccessible textual construct.” Though methodologically (not to mention stylistically and temperamentally) distant from Habegger, Messmer makes a point similar to the biographer’s central claim that Dickinson’s greatness lies in her ability to transform personal loss into high art. An excerpt from Habegger, which appears as “A Glimpse into Emily Dickinson’s Reading” (*NER* 22, iv: 96–99), shows us Dickinson as a novel-reader in the 1840s, a habit she shared with her brother Austin (against their father’s wishes), documented by the distinctly different marks the siblings left in Dickinson family copies of such books as Longfellow’s *Kavanaugh* and in letters she wrote about Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, among other books. Dickinson’s class-consciousness and questions of ethnic identity, which Habegger treats with unblinking realism in his biography, also concern Lori Lebow in “Emily Dickinson: ‘She Don’t

Go Nowhere,' or A Nineteenth-Century Recluse's Guide to Cross-Culturalism" (*WW*8: 441–55.) Admitting that Dickinson's general "attitudes suggest a callous disregard for the disadvantaged," reflecting "the circumstances of a wealthy family's eldest daughter who enjoyed the gentry's privileges," Lebow considers the poet's interactions with two women—a brief encounter with a Native American who comes to the kitchen door and delights the poet with her "jargon" and appreciation of nature, and a long-term relationship with the Dickinsons' Irish servant Margaret Maher, which viewed within the context of contemporary class tensions illustrates both conventional elements and "the richness of a close relationship between women in the domestic sphere." The biographical question of Dickinson's awareness of the Civil War and its influence on her poems comes up in Lawrence I. Berkove's "'A Slash of Blue': An Unrecognized Emily Dickinson War Poem" (*EDJ* 10, i: 1–8). Using Franklin's redating of the poem (Fr233) to support his case, Berkove reads it as a "bitterly ironic" and "realistic" response to the Union defeat at First Bull Run.

Issues involving Dickinson's influences, reception, and position in literary history attract a great deal of attention. In "Because I, Persephone, Could Not Stop for Death: Emily Dickinson and the Goddess" (*EDJ* 10, ii: 22–42) Ken Hiltner questions the commonly accepted view that the poet made little use of classical sources and mythology in her poems. He argues for a reading of "Because I Could Not Stop for Death" as "a new and startling version of the myth of Persephone" which "framed a devastating critique of patriarchal exogamy," revealing an attitude that accounts for many of her "life decisions, not the least . . . being her reluctance to publish." In *Esoteric Origins* Arthur Versluis attempts to account for the presence of esoteric themes in Dickinson's work despite our knowing little about her reading and the absence of any sure evidence of her familiarity with writings on such topics as alchemy and mysticism. He argues that "her poetry reveals a highly literary form of what emerged elsewhere in American society as spiritualism, as well as what we might call a spontaneously auto-initiatic spirituality." Versluis considers the Book of Revelation and the writings of Sir Thomas Browne as possible sources. The Book of Revelation also figures significantly in a brief survey of the poet's biblical references provided by Cliff Edwards in "The Bible Through a Poet's Prism: Reading Emily Dickinson's Poems as Revelation Continued" (*Bible Review* 17, ii: 38–42). Adam Frank considers a different kind of influence in "Emily Dickinson and Photography" (*EDJ* 10,

ii: 1–21). He contends that “Dickinson’s writing . . . registers and theorizes experiences of looking conditioned by photographic materials” and “shaped by U.S. sentimentalism, especially in its . . . attempts to make outer appearance and inner character correspond.” The detailed argument pieces together comments from Dickinson (notably her substitution of a written self-portrait for a photograph in the famous letter to Higginson), readings from the poems, contextual sources such as Oliver Wendell Holmes’s essays on photography, and theoretical materials on the iconicity versus the indexicality of photographs. In “Emily Dickinson’s Place in Literary History; or, The Public Function of a Private Poet” (*EDJ* 10, i: 55–69) Heinz Ickstadt reevaluates recent possibly inflated claims for the poet’s “greatness” in light of three poetical movements since her time: French symbolism in the late 19th-century, modernism in American poetry, and “the intellectual climate of postmodernism and poststructuralist theory.” Considering points of connection and disjunction in each case, Ickstadt concludes that Dickinson’s writing holds “an appeal beyond the esoteric” in “shared experience”—“the need to confront and to transcend mere self in the very knowledge of the inevitability of our dying.” The appeal of Dickinson’s life and poetry for the British novelist A. S. Byatt becomes clear in her admission that Dickinson came to replace the original inspiration of Elizabeth Barrett Browning as the model for her poetic heroine in the novel *Possession*. Nancy Chinn considers some details of this influence in “‘I Am My Own Riddle’—A. S. Byatt’s Christabel LaMotte: Emily Dickinson and Melusina” (*PLL* 37: 179–204). In “Keeping Her Distance: Cisneros, Dickinson, and the Politics of Private Enjoyment” (*PMLA* 116: 1334–48) Geoffrey Sanborn takes up the vexed question of private enjoyment versus public responsibility in art, asserting that Sandra Cisneros, partly through negotiating the influence of Dickinson, discovers in “solitary pleasure” (sexual and textual) “not the end of interpersonal commitments and socially transformative acts but the beginning of alliances on new grounds.” Invoking again the ghost of Dickinson’s Irish housemaid Margaret Maher, “Cisneros revises Dickinson’s relatively elitist conception of privacy in two ways: by insisting on its contingency and by opening it to nonelite practices of identification.” Ultimately, “Dickinson is for Cisneros both an inspiration and a cautionary example. To ‘pull an Emily D.’ is to risk becoming one of those people who . . . ‘sleep so close to the stars they forget those of us who live too much on earth.’”

Similar themes come under consideration in Daneen Wardrop’s

thoughtful contribution to this year's rich outpouring of articles on Dickinson's poetics—"The Poetics of Political Involvement and Non-Involvement" (*EDJ* 10, ii: 52–67). Starting with the poet's apparent lack of concern with the Civil War, Wardrop suggests that Dickinson's relationship to her culture was richer and more complex than current critical methods can quite fathom. We are limited by "the extremely extroverted" model of political involvement currently embraced, especially in America. Wardrop proposes and briefly illustrates a new model, more sympathetic to introversion and based on the concept of "intussusception, a process by which Dickinson draws into herself the cultural and historical field of events, later to emerge in refracted and apolitical syntax and language, subject to the rules of fortuitous accident that guide the lyric impulse." In Vered Shemtov's "Metrical Hybridization: Prosodic Ambiguities as a Form of Social Dialogue" (*PoT* 22: 65–87) Dickinson and Guillaume Apollinaire serve as cases demonstrating "the simultaneous existence of several voices represented by a mixture of multiple prosodic structures, each referring to a different set of poetic and ideological conventions." In this ambitious study blending formalist and historicist methodology and questioning the suitability of applying Bakhtin's theories to poetics "literary voice" is considered as "the audible aspect of the text . . . forming an identity, a subject with certain characteristics and social affiliations" rather than a "metaphor for the discursive rendition of a particular consciousness." Building on Cristanne Miller's work, Shemtov argues that Dickinson carries on "hidden dialogues" in a meter that is "hybrid in the sense that it merges a feminine voice with a voice of the common people in its prosodic roots in the ballad, and with a childish voice in its intertextual relations to the meter of children's songs." Against these blended voices, remaining roughly within the hymn meter, she opposes the "rejected pentameter" as the voice of the "male tradition," the "'deep trace' of the other's voice," which she allows to intrude on the poems to "confront it directly." Rejecting claims of Dickinson's metrical innocence or her lack of training, Christine Ross studies the poet's innovations against the background of 19th-century textbooks in "Uncommon Measures: Emily Dickinson's Subversive Prosody" (*EDJ* 10, i: 70–98). Ross argues that the poet "used her textbooks to create a uniquely expressive metric . . . to subvert the totalizing assumptions about language that she inherited." Ross's detailed analysis of Dickinson's experiments with developing nonstandard but distinct rhythmic patterns concludes that "her imitations of spoken rhythms are too regulated to count

as natural expression; her metrical designs, while highly patterned, are too irregular to count as reason.” She thus “exposes the illusion of representivity that both expressive and rationalist theories assume.” The study of Dickinson’s textbooks also informs Michael Theune’s “‘One and One Are One’ . . . and Two: An Inquiry into Dickinson’s Use of Mathematical Signs” (*EDJ* 10, i: 99–116). Theune argues that the poet employed mathematical signs (including the minus sign—one way of looking at her famous dashes) that mingled visual and verbal elements and functioned as “signifiers of an ongoing . . . metaphysical inquiry” representing a “profound skepticism regarding the integrating tendencies” of both Christianity and Transcendentalism. In “Emily Dickinson Thinking” (*Parnassus* 26: 34–56) Helen Vendler analyzes Dickinson’s attempts to “plot temporality” as an exhaustive, “chromatic” scheme that sounds every note in the scale of a progression of events, the disruption of which, especially as dramatized in the poems of the 1860s, indicates periods of epistemological crisis. In “A New Redemption: Emily Dickinson’s Poetic in Fascicle 22 and ‘I Dwell in Possibility’ ” (*SoAR* 66, i: 50–83) A. James Wohlpart shows how Dickinson’s poems (not only the content but also the physical makeup of the fascicles, with their links to sewing and botanical collection or gardening) explore the limits of creativity and transform “the home and the activities of the home into a poetic force that undermined nineteenth-century [patriarchal] culture.” In fascicle 22 the metaphorical house of poetry “offers a re-valuation of domesticity and a new redemption through interconnectedness” while contesting “the dominant house of prose, with its confinement and oppression,” illustrating in Dickinson’s work the “dialectical relation . . . between constraint and liberation, between prose and poetry.”

The perennial interest in teaching Dickinson’s poetry is pursued in Jordan Clary’s “Three Voices: Teaching Stephen Crane, Emily Dickinson, and Walt Whitman,” pp. 2–13 in *The Teachers & Writers Guide*, which also draws on the themes of constraint and liberation. Clary tells of her success in using Dickinson, with her “rich inner life” and sensitivity to confinement and limitation, to teach creative writing in prison classrooms.

Explication and close-reading, another perennial activity in Dickinson scholarship, appear as the main concern in Tom Hansen’s “Dickinson’s ‘What Inn Is This’ ” (*Expl* 59: 185–87), seen here as a riddling poem about death from the perspective of a naive persona, and Collamer M. Abbott’s “Dickinson’s Letter 814” (*Expl* 59: 79–80), a brief look at the fig image in

Dickinson's references to George Eliot's biography, an image for poetry as well as life that applies to Dickinson's own artistic (and possibly erotic) experience. Dickinson's treatment of the night in "We Grow Accustomed to the Dark," a characteristic theme among New England poets, is compared with similar treatments in Emerson and Edwin Arlington Robinson, among others, in Wesley McNair's "Places in the Dark" (*SR* 109: 102-07).

Texas A & M University