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Uncommon Measures: Emily Dickinson's Subversive Prosody

Discussion of Emily Dickinson's metrics has been remarkably uniform for a poet whose practice routinely suggests something other than familiar manipulation of metrical design.[1] Thomas Johnson's reading, which has had canonical force in Dickinson criticism since the 1960s,[2] presents Dickinson as a "self–taught" prosodist who garnered "a beginner's lesson in metrics" from her father's copy of Isaac Watts' hymns and who based her metrical designs in "English hymnology" (84–5). Brita Lindberg–Seyersted follows Johnson and posits a "metrical tension" between the standard forms of the hymn and the "speech rhythms" of Dickinson's verse. Readers such as Martha Winburn England and David Porter read hymnal form symbolically, as a code for traditional authorities against which Dickinson troped her ironic and critical difference. A.R.C. Finch reads Dickinson's occasional use of iambic pentameter as a code of patriarchal authority against which Dickinson's use of popular tetrameter and trimeter is figural. There has been some resistance to reading the poetry as hymn. Anthony Hecht argues that hymnal tradition cannot account for the poems' rhetorical structures, as he aligns the poetry with scripture, riddle, and mystical poetics. Judy Jo Small offers a trenchant critique of canonical readings of Dickinson's metrics as hymnal (41–8), arguing, in part, that the Common Meter endemic to English hymns was also widely used by the romantics, Wordsworth employing Common Meter more frequently than any other metric (44).

In any case, Johnson's original assessment was based on an assumption about Dickinson's education: hymnals provided a "beginner's lesson." But no well–educated person in the nineteenth century would have needed hymnals for a beginner's course in metrics. Metrics were part of a basic education, taught, as had been the case in antiquity, as part of grammar. Lindley

Murray's *English Grammar*, one of the most widely used textbooks in the nineteenth century, defines "ENGLISH GRAMMAR" as "the art of speaking and writing the English language with propriety. It is divided into four parts, VIZ. ORTHOGRAPHY, ETYMOLOGY, SYNTAX, and PROSODY" (13).[3] Not surprisingly, given the classical roots of European criticism, prosody in English developed through Graeco–Roman theory based on the rhythms of Greek and Latin. This tradition was recodified, in 1959, by W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley's seminal essay on "The Concept of Meter." Wimsatt and Beardsley developed the concept of "metrical tension" between "accent" and "stress," meter and rhythm, that organizes Lindberg–Seyersted's analysis of Dickinson.

David Perkins' study of nineteenth–century prosody and the scansions that romantic poets themselves created reflects the classical roots of English prosody. Nineteenth–century prosodists described metrics in terms equally well applicable to Latin and English verse, interpreting English "accent" as comparable to Greek and Latin "quantity." This conceptual ambivalence supported the development of a Romantic, expressive approach to metrical analysis. For example, Coleridge named and scanned "I hear a voice pealing loud triumph today" as "Amphibrach tetrameter catalectic": x/x x/x x/x x/ (Perkins 3). Perkins suggests that Coleridge might have scanned in irregular, iambic pentameter, but Coleridge might also have scanned in regular anapests: x/ xx/ xx/ xx/ . Anapests were, and remain, more widely recognized than amphibrachs as a basis for English meter. However, no single words are divided across two feet in Coleridge's scansion. They must be so divided in the anapestic scansion. Scansion in amphibrachs is more faithful to an expressive fusion of meter and rhythm, in preserving the rhetorical integrity of individual words. Wimsatt and Beardsley would define such a fusion as a failure to understand the necessary difference, and tension, between meter and rhythm (596).

In addition to its roots in classical tradition, English prosody has been organized by a host of assumptions about language that have varied over time. Dennis Taylor's introductory chapter on Victorian prosody offers a succinct summary of that variation: "In each [historical epoch] the metrical law is defined in a distinctive way — as classical law, as mechanical law, as musical law, as organic law, as dialectical law, as statistical law, as structural law, as generative law" (9). Each epoch teaches students to "hear" what its prosodic discourse defines as endemic to English. Wimsatt and Beardsley's essay established what is now the most widely received tradition of prosodic analysis in English (Woods 290). For all that Lindberg–Seyersted's analysis of Dickinson's metrics offers an interesting approach to the poetry, that analysis is grounded in a twentieth–century concept of dialectical "metrical tension," naturalized

by the wide reception of Wimsatt and Beardsley, that Dickinson could not have known.[4]

Richard Sewall presents Dickinson's training at Amherst Academy and Mount Holyoke[5] as among the finest to be had in her day. Her training in Latin, through E. A. Andrews and S. Stoddard's *Grammar of the Latin Language*, included Latin prosody. Sewall notes her allusion, in 1852 , to Samuel Parker's "Hill of Science," which functions as a metaphor for the study of literature in his "Preface" to *Aids to English Composition* (349). Parker offers a thorough course in the nineteenth–century hybrid of Latin–English prosody. Gary Stonum has pointed out that Samuel Newman's *Practical System of Rhetoric* and Lord [Henry Home] Kames' *Elements of Criticism* were sources for Dickinson's general knowledge of nineteenth–century aesthetics (204). Kames was used at Amherst College, Newman at Mount Holyoke, and both were used at Amherst Academy (Lowenberg 62, 78). Kames, like Parker, provided instruction in Latin–English prosody. The shift to romantic, expressive metrics was negotiated, in part, through analogies to music (Fussell 109–11), hymnals being one source of Dickinson's knowledge of music. But it is inaccurate to say that Isaac Watts is the exclusive, or even the primary, source of Dickinson's knowledge. Dickinson knew several nineteenth–century anthologies of hymns.[6]

The main lines of Dickinson's training and experience were organized by the eighteenth–century rhetorical tradition descended from John Locke, which had become hegemonic by the early nineteenth century. Kames was one of the most significant teachers of literary criticism derived from Lockean psychology; he had a significant impact on popular taste down to the turn of the twentieth century (Fussell 131–2). Parker and Newman were the two most widely received indigenous textbooks in North America prior to the Civil War (Emig). They offer redactions of two major texts of the Lockean tradition: George Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric* and Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belle Lettres*.[7] As in classical rhetorical tradition, the eighteenth–century teachers who grounded rhetoric in Lockean, rather than Aristotelian, psychology addressed themselves to the power of language to persuade and delight an audience. They promoted an aesthetics that makes expressive power the basis of rhetorical–literary effect and reader response. Stonum argues that Dickinson's poetic "is always at the service of rhetoric rather than the other way round" (67). Her prosody is part of that poetic and is created in service to rhetoric, as is the expressive tradition of prosody, generally speaking.[8]

Although Wimsatt and Beardsley argue that a fusion of accent and stress destroys metrical tension and therefore art, Dickinson created an expressive metric, based on such a fusion, that takes the rhythms of colloquial English for a model. Hymnal tradition offered some early models and remained a source

of general stanzaic patterns, but Dickinson does not write in syllabics. Romantic fusion of accent and stress, through trisyllabic substitution, also provided some models, but Dickinson does not represent that fusion as "true to nature" or to the representivity of natural language. She used her textbooks to create a uniquely expressive metric, based in Latin–English feet, that functions metacritically to subvert the totalizing assumptions about language that she inherited. Her consistently symbolic and critical use of metrical design is distinctive in the history of English poetics, revealing the assumptions about rhetoric and grammar that organize both classical and romantic approaches to scansion. I will begin by discussing the nineteenth–century textbooks that taught the historically specific, literary prosody available to Dickinson and then proceed to reading several poems, as I examine the prosodic strengths and critical force of Dickinson's subversive craft.

Nineteenth Century Rhetoric and Prosody

Wimsatt and Beardsley's essay on the "Concept of Meter" has been formative because it stabilizes prosodic analysis while providing for the considerable flexibility in stress placement endemic to English. By dividing "accent" from "stress," they create the potential for a complex, "dialectical" experience of metric as a tension between the formal, *a priori* designs of fixed "meter," on the one hand, and the potential variability of "stress" placement in any given performance, on the other. Lindberg–Seyersted's reading of Dickinson's poetry through a difference between the formal regularity of hymnal syllabics, on the one hand, and the variable stress placement of "natural speech rhythms," on the other, which is productive of aesthetically pleasing "metrical tension," is indebted to Wimsatt and Beardsley. However, as is the case for any other approach to interpreting semiotic material, theories of prosodic analysis necessarily fail to provide for the entire systematization of the aural–cultural phenomena that organize linguistic experience. Any prosody is limited in principle and, therefore, subject to variability that may be historically specific. The eighteenth– and early nineteenth–century traditions that organized Dickinson's training do not create the kind of division between meter and stress that Wimsatt and Beardsley posit as the basis of metrical tension. They assume a fusion of accent and stress.

Eighteenth–century prosodic tradition could be said to assume a fusion that privileges meter over rhythm. The regularity of metrical accent provides a standard for speech rhythms and is the means by which the stress–patterns of speech are "improved." The desirability of syllable and stress regularity, for example, is predicated on the belief that that regularity is a sign of reason, and

therefore, aesthetic perfection. The romantic break with neoclassicism could be said to assume a fusion that privileges stress over metrical accent. The expressive stress patterns of ordinary speech serve as a standard for meter newly varied by foot substitution. Fidelity to the variable stress patterns of speech is the means by which meter is rendered most natural and affective. Dickinson is distinctive because she creates a fusion of stress and accent in which neither meter nor rhythm is privileged. Latin metrical tradition is of considerable interest, because it provides a means for foot–based metrical control that responds equally well to variety in speech rhythm in two ways: occasional foot substitution (the romantic strategy generally speaking) and variability in the base foot (Coleridge's amphibrachs). Dickinson blends these two strategies and creates systematically varied base patterns of substitution, rather than occasional substitution within a uniform base pattern. She therefore appropriates the hegemonic fusion of accent and stress, and manipulates it, to undermine a regularist aesthetic, as did the Romantics, but she does so to subvert the totalizing force of both romantic and neoclassical "nature." Her prosody takes on a symbolic function that is increasingly performative and onomatopoeic and that provides a metacritical commentary on the rational and expressive totalities fostered and presupposed by hegemonic rhetorical and grammatical practice. The development of her metrical technique suggests that she returned in spirit, if not in fact, to Parker, Newman, and Kames, as the shift from the early poetry of the late 1850s to the strikingly novel poetry of the 1860s took place.

The Nineteenth–Century Concept of the English Metrical Foot

In the nineteenth century, prosodists were inclined to argue that an English syllable is "long," in the Latin sense, because it is accented, "quantity" and "tone" or "accent" used interchangeably to define the difference between strong and weak syllables in a metrical foot (Perkins 3). Murray's *English Grammar* states that Latin "quantity" and English "accent" are equivalent terms (220–1). Andrews and Stoddard, the authors of Dickinson's Latin textbook, argue that accent and quantity generally coincide in a strong syllable (285).[9] Kames discriminates between quantity and accent (II: 383–4, 387) but then argues that only long syllables can be accented and that all words having a long syllable should be (II: 416–7). Parker discusses the difference between long and short syllables as the basis of the metrical foot (231) but subsequently calls that difference a matter of accent (238). In any case, examples presented in Kames and Parker would be scanned no differently were the concept of accent used instead of duration.

Kames and Andrews and Stoddard discuss a full range of Latin feet,

Kames drawing examples from English as well as Latin (II: 459–63). The metrical feet presented by Parker are, however, closest to those now widely understood to organize accentual–syllabic meter in English.[10] His four "primary feet" are: iambus (x/, *betray);* trochee (/x, *hateful);* anapest (xx/, *contravene);* and dactyl (/xx, *thundering).* His four "secondary feet," available for foot substitution, are: spondee (//, *Pale morn);* pyrrhic (xx, *on the);* amphibrach (x/x, *coeval)* and tribrach (xxx, *–ritual* in the word *spiritual)* (231). The practice of exemplifying English feet with individual words, in Kames and Parker, creates the impression that, optimally, foot and word boundaries coincide. Parker's advice on poem revision also supports this conclusion. He states that, if we remove from a line a certain number of syllables "and substitute an equal number of others, exactly corresponding with them in accent, the metre will still be perfect, although the sense may be altered" (234). The alternative words and phrases that Dickinson began including in the fascicles in 1861 observe this principle. Parker's examples most often turn on lines for which foot and word boundaries coincide. The largest portion of exemplary lines for which they do not coincide divides only one word across two feet. As Perkins argues and Coleridge's scansion exemplifies, an expressive fusion of meter and speech rhythms seems to imply that the congruence of word and foot boundaries is desirable if not always achievable.

Both Kames and Andrews and Stoddard provide descriptions of metrical feet that are potentially more useful than Parker's, if the expressive fusion of speech and meter is desirable. Andrews and Stoddard describe Latin feet of more than three syllables as "double feet." A choriambus (/xx/) is represented as a "trochee and an iambus," for example (283). Kames offers examples of "A word of five syllables composed of a Dactylus and Trochaeus. Ex. *precipitation, examination*" and "A word of six syllables composed of a Tribrachys and Dactyle [sic]. Ex. *pusillanimity* " (II: 463). Significantly, Kames is presenting words as inherently made up of specific feet rather than presenting a line as the unit to be scanned for a base meter that can enforce accent promotion and suppression, in the style of Wimsatt and Beardsley's prosody. Where words are understood already to constitute specific feet, metrical craft is a matter of selecting semantically appropriate words that also fit with a poem's base metrical line. Andrews and Stoddard's and Kames' translation of words and measures into dipods therefore suggests that there re rhythmic units larger than a single English foot but smaller than a line, which can be measured and employed consistently to create new musical patterns. Indeed, and as I will discuss below, Kames argues that the phrase is a primary musical unit of English verse. In any case, the conjunction

of Kames' concept of musical/rhythmic phrasing with the possibility of dipodic metrical units appears to have fostered the development of what Lois Cuddy calls "metrical rhyme" in Dickinson's poetry ("Latin Poetics" 217). Traces of individual Latin feet are also discernable in some of the poetry, particularly as meter becomes more complex after 1861. Dickinson's frequent use of trochees with iambs often creates the effect of a choriambus, for example. Her scribal lineation frequently suggests that she heard a three syllable cretic (/x/) which disappears in normative, iambic scansion and lineation (e.g. *Manuscript Books*, J307, J368, J427, J583, J616).

It is not clear that Dickinson especially valued classical tradition. She makes only forty–some allusions to classical culture in the entire corpus of 1800 poems. "Classical allusion" is presented in Samuel Newman's *Practical System* as a particularly welcome figure, because it prompts nostalgic memories of schooling, more so than memories of Latin culture itself (91). Latin, in this view, is most significant as a school subject. That is how Dickinson defines it on at least one occasion: "Put it in Latin – left of my school – " (J426/Fr384). Her interest in Latin does not seem to be motivated by Latinity, per se, but by her experiments with English metrics.

The Rationale for English Meter — Kames' *Elements*

For Wimsatt and Beardsley, metric is a purely musical design having no relation to the rational potential or referential force of English. Kames, on the other hand, insists on unrelieved metrical regularity as a way to "improve" the ability of English to function as a rational system. The order of language in verse must also represent the order of things in the world. He argues repeatedly that inserting a strong pause between the syllables of a single word (II: 372, 391–2) or between articles, adjectives, adverbs, or particles and their proper substantive or verb violates the referential integrity of language and the natural order of things. For example, no mere quality, named by an adjective, is sustainable absent the substance in which it adheres, named by a noun. Therefore, no division between an adjective and its noun can be pleasing (II: 393–405). Similarly, accent promotion or suppression violates the integrity of a word's power to refer properly and constitutes a metrical blemish rather than the basis for metrical tension and prosodic success. On the other hand, Kames denies that metrical regularity accounts for the "melody" of English poetry. Because quantity (or stress) is variable in the pronunciation of most English words, it provides no fixed principle in relation to which artful control is audible. Unlike Latin, pauses and rhetorical stress/accent provide a basis for "melody" in English (II: 386–7).

Kames notes that every syllable admits of some slight pause between it

and other syllables, which makes a syllable the musical foot of poetry (II: 367). Where Wimsatt and Beardsley hear a structured alternation in the degrees of aural presence, as the grammatical principle operated through pronunciation and rhythm, Kames hears structured alternation between aural presence and absence, as the grammatical base of meter. In addition to the pause between syllables, there is a grammatical pause between words (II: 377), between the "members" of a sentence, and at the close of every sentence. These pauses are determined by the sense and are variable in their position and degree, as the sense demands (II: 359–61). Musical pauses are fixed (metrical) and structured in relation to grammar understood to be variable. Every poetic line has one fixed demi–caesura after the first long (accented) syllable. Every line has a strong medial caesura, having limited variability in placement after the 4th, 5th, 6th, or 7th syllable. Every line has an optional demi–caesura before the final iamb. Every line break is fixed by syllable counts and requires a pause at the close of the line. The highest degree of musicality is achieved when grammatical pauses endemic to the sense are made to coincide with fixed musical pauses. Controlled manipulation of pauses — or phrasing — is therefore the soul of art in English verse. However one interprets the material facts of Dickinson's scribal habits, they do create the impression of frequent pausing, through spacing, lineation, or diacritical marks.

Kames' discussion of the desirable fusion of "melody" and "sense" renders his prosody expressive and prompts him to valorize techniques that heighten the expressive effect of verse. His emphasis on the melodic potential of controlled phrasing leads him to argue for the unequalled power of "inversion" of normal syntactic order — classical "hyperbaton" or "transposition" — as a technique for manipulating melody, every inversion requiring a pause to mark it as such (II: 296, 408). Often intricate patterns of inversion are a signature of Dickinson's style. Kames also devotes a chapter to promoting the exceptional beauty of several kinds of onomatopoeic rhythmic design (II: 333–53). In one example, the words "rapidity," "impetuosity" and "precipitation" are defined as onomatopoeic. They sound like what they mean (II: 338). Kames also argues that the effect of "settled melancholy" and "grief" is created by the potential for aural attenuation latent in polysyllabic words (II: 343–4; 385–6). A signature use of polysyllabic abstraction is also important to Dickinson's poetic. Despite his strict syllabism, then, Kames is proto–romantic, pointing the way toward the expressive use of meter that Perkins exemplifies through Coleridge's scansion.

Practical Instruction

A more practical than theoretical work, Parker's *Aids to English Composition* introduces instruction in verse composition with a brief discussion of the principles of English poetry. He borrows from Wordsworth's "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* and states that "[t]rue poetry consists in the idea and it may be presented even in the form of prose. It addresses itself to the imagination and to the feelings." To define poetry in the technical terms of rhyme or metrics is to "mistak[e . . .] the dress for the substance which the dress should cover" (230).[11] Nevertheless, "verse" written in metrical feet is the only type Parker discusses. As in Latin tradition, genres of verse are described in terms of their of foot–based metrical design rather than hymnal syllabics, "iambic pentameter" being "the principal metre of our language" (240). Parker also discusses manipulation of meter through catalexis, as does Andrews and Stoddard. Stanzaic forms presented as hymn by Johnson are presented by Parker in a footnote as forms "not properly connected with the subject of English versification" (230–1).[12] The only more–than–passing mention of stanzaic form appears under discussion of the sonnet. Parker explictly defines the sonnet in Petrarchean terms, but his exemplary sonnet begins with a Petrachean quatrain and proceeds with Spenserian form (287). The "fourteener" couplet, also divided into Eights and Sixes, is presented as one species of iambic among others (236).

Parker, Newman, and Kames deploy the same general discourse on the principles of "verbal criticism," or linguistic precision, and on the widely received hierarchy of sensibilities and sensations called "the beautiful, the grand, and the sublime." Their shared principles, terms, references, and examples create the impression, as in fact was the case, of a canon and of widely shared beliefs with respect to aesthetic values and practices. The examples of onomatopoeia and caesura used by Kames in 1762 (e.g., II: 334, 412) are used, verbatim, by Parker, almost one hundred years later (235). Both Kames, as above, and Parker (77) promote "inversion," or "transposition," as endemic to poetic performance. Both Parker (76) and Kames (II: 281–3) promote the elision of particles and auxiliary verbs and, up to a point, so does Newman (152), Kames presenting Longinus as his source text. Parker also refers his student to Newman for instruction in the rhetorical figure of allusion (149) and in vivacity of style (n302).[13]Andrews and Stoddard and Parker also present three kinds of figuration: a) figures of etymology, such as *syncope* (list'ning for listening); b) syntactic figures, such as *hyperbaton* ; and c) rhetorical figures, such as metaphor (Parker 76–8, 11; Andrews and Stoddard, "Appendix," 298–303). Many of these techniques promoted creation of the "poetic diction" that Wordsworth rejected, Parker himself remaining somewhat

ambivalent (77–8). But the classical tradition presented in Dickinson's textbooks made every graphic, grammatical, and lexical feature of the language a basis for troping, which would render language, itself, palpable as figure or code. While Andrews and Stoddard provide a more extensive account of classical poetics, Parker offers a practical integration of that tradition within English verse composition.

Both Andrews' *Latin Exercises*, written to accompany his and Stoddard's *Latin Grammar*, and Parker's *Aids* enhanced the potential experience of language as pure form, through practical exercises. Students wrote "nonsense" poems, for example, that manipulated the purely musical form of meter and rhyme without concern for sense (Andrews 4; Parker 238–9). Parker assigned exercises in syntactic "transposition," which teaches fluency in *hyperbaton* (50–8) and supports the use of inversion that Kames promotes. One of Dickinson's letters to Abiah Root indicates that she performed this kind of exercise: "I recite a lesson in 'Pope's Essay on Man' which is merely transposition" (L18). Four additional features of Parker's instruction are particularly striking in connection with Dickinson's poetry: 1) trisyllabic substitution; 2) systematic metrical variation; 3) manipulation of accent; 4) caesura. Taken together, these elements allow for the construction of a highly flexible and complex metrical design.

1) Tri–syllabic Substitution. The examples of verse Parker selects for scansion suggest his familiarity with the historical touchstones of prosodic theory and debate and his affiliation with the liberal, Romantic tradition. Foot substitution provides a means for including, in accentual–syllabic English verse, many of the polysyllabic abstractions that Kames highly valued for their poetic sonority but for which Kames' conservative prosody had no place. Parker's examples of giving "variety to the melody of verse" emphasize trisyllabic substitution:

Amphibrachs mixed with Iambuses:
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery alp. x/x x/ x/x x/x x/

A Spondee and a Tribrach, with Iambuses:
Innumerable before th' Almighty throne. // xxx x/ x/ x/
(238)

The phrase "many a" had been read during the neo–classical period of strict syllabic regularity as disyllabic: "man ya." In the mid eighteenth century, Samuel Say created a widely pirated send–up of syllabic regularity through a nonsense couplet organized by repeated use of "man ya" (Fussell 116). Parker

teaches his student to hear three syllables where neoclassical readers and writers had heard two. The second line is from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Milton having been the whipping boy of tracts written in the eighteenth century to castigate metrical irregularity. George Saintsbury treats this line in his critique of eighteenth–century syllabic readings of Milton (II: 245). Parker's scansion acknowledges the typographically enforced elision ("th' Al) and treats it as one syllable, but he also presents "Innumerable" through trisyllabic substitution, where eighteenth–century prosodists would have contracted "innumerable" to two iambs. In so doing, Parker teaches students to hear Milton in Romantic terms.

2) Systematic Variation. Parker's instruction includes the following example of systematic variation:

There soon the sufferer sinks to rest.	// x/ x/ x/
There too was he, who nobly stemmed the tide.	// x/ x/ x/ x/
That breast the seat of sentiment refined.	// x/ x/ xx x/
Hail, long lost Peace! hail, dove-eyed maid divine.	// x/ // x/ x/
	(237)

Wimsatt and Beardsley would scan the same passage entirely in iambs, denying that there is a legitimate spondee in English, making "ment" in "sentiment" accented and the second "hail" weak, through accent promotion and demotion, the difference between meter and more familiar stress patterns creating "metrical tension." Parker's scansion creates an expressive fusion of accent and stress. The concept of foot substitution allows him to represent, as metrical, the stress patterns Wimsatt and Beardsley assign to performance only. Significantly, the lines produce a vertical regularity, which resembles a Latin third epitrit (//x/). Dickinson adopts this model of vertical metric and uses it with great frequency. While it is not uncommon for English lyric to create systematic variation in the first foot — most frequently trochee — Dickinson extends systematic variation to other foot positions, creating "metrical rhyme" schemes, organized around expressive phrasal units.

3) Manipulating Accent. Parker offered his reader a writerly account of the relationship between accent and metrical pattern, which also which also echoes Kames' descriptions of English versification. The following graphic representation supports Parker's discussion of techniques for manipulating iambic and trochaic meters:

Iambic:	When first from far I came to woo and win the maid.
	From far I came to woo and win the maid.

I came to woo and win the maid.
Trochee: First from far I came to woo and win the maid.
Far I came to woo and win the maid.
Came to woo and win the maid (232–3).

The model demonstrates how rhythm is created by manipulation of syllable counts and foot boundaries, denaturing linguistic form and revealing the metrical potential of its systematic structure. That manipulation allows one to create either the right–oriented accent of iambic and the steady lilt of a rising rhythm or the left–oriented accent of trochee and the staccato disruption of a falling rhythm.[14] The potential to shift with ease from one foot pattern to another allows for creation of an expressive "metrical tension" grounded in a fusion of accent and stress rather than their difference and dialectical relation. Johnson notes that Dickinson's metric often shifts back and forth between iambs and trochees. She frequently sets an iambic pattern in a first stanza and then shifts to other meters in subsequent stanzas, most characteristically to trochee (86).

Parker further volatilizes the principles of foot–based metrical design through catalexis. As Johnson observes, Dickinson employed the arts of catalexis "with uncanny skill" (89). Both iambic and trochaic verse can omit unaccented syllables or include catalectic or "broken feet," according to Parker. Iambic can begin with a broken foot, while trochaic verse usually ends with one. As a result, most catalectic lines can be scanned either as trochees or iambs: e.g., *Vital spark of heavenly flame*. As iambic, this line's first foot is broken and the accent shifts to the right: o/ x/ x/ x/. As trochaic, the last foot is broken and the accent shifts to the left: /x /x /x /o (232–3).

Depending, then, upon how a catalectic line is contextualized, it can figure either a rising or a falling rhythm. Parker's examples also include hyper catalectic or "hypermetrical" lines, which add an extra syllable at the end of a line and create "feminine" rhyme: e.g., "maiden" instead of "maid" (232). He discusses a brachycatalectic line, which omits two syllables, to demonstrate how dactylic verse can be made anapestic: e.g., *Drawn from the fountain of mercy and love* can be scanned as /xx /xx /xx /oo, with a falling rhythm, or as oo/ xx/ xx/ xx/, with a rising rhythm. All this variability could be said to suggest a metrical world somewhat other than stable and quite different from the regularity and rational congruence of word and world that Kames promotes. If, however, one understood human experience or "nature" to exhibit the volatility of the ephemeral rather than rational totality and fixity, then fidelity to Kames' injunction to fuse music, sense, and rational truth would ironically reveal the illusion of stability that either purely expressive or purely

regularist rhythmic performance constitutes.

4) Caesura. Parker borrows, from Kames, the following example of caesura, offering the highest praise for its musicality:

> Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
> Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
> Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
> Spreads undivided, operates unspent (235).

These lines can be scanned in iambic pentameter with initial trochees. Parsed with caesural pauses, however, the first two lines are made to rhyme, metrically, as if they were anapestic tetrameter, with amphibrachs, brachycatalectic: oo/ xx/ x/x xx/. Kames acknowledges the importance of iambic construction for the basic structure of a line, but he presents patterns of metrical pause, such as the above, as the basis of melody in verse, as does Parker, to the extent Parker appears to appropriate and repeat Kames' examples. Between the vertical marks of caesura, the standard punctuation, and the line breaks, almost every word is rendered discrete, with the exception of those that create a prepositional or adverbial phrase. Although Dickinson's base line is iambic, many of her poems create a fusion of meter and stress, organized in phrasal units that support patterns of metrical rhyme.

Reading the Poetry: "The Voice is the Palace of all of us"[15]

Poem J216/F124, "Safe in their Alabaster chambers," is one of the earliest examples of Dickinson's metrical innovations and an aural *tour de force*. She first composed it in 1859 but apparently did not share it until she received advice about revising it from Susand Dickinson in 1861. Samuel Bowles published the first draft in the *Springfield Republican*, in March of 1862, confirming Susan's judgment that the second draft is inferior to the first. Dickinson evidently preferred the second draft; she included it among the six she first sent to Thomas Wentworth Higginson in 1862 (*Variorum* I: 159–64). David Porter observes that "Safe in their Alabaster chambers" exhibits no pattern of syllabic regular–ity (9). It cannot, therefore, be scanned in hymnal syllabics.

Nor can it be scanned in any meter based on alternation of accent, which Wimsatt and Beardsley make normative for English–Latin foot–based scansion. Alternatively, Dickinson creates a fusion of meter and rhythm, and a nineteenth–century expressive foot–based prosody, that borrows from both Kames and Parker:[16]

Safe in their Alabaster chambers –	/xx	/x/x	/x	
Untouched by Morning – And untouched by Noon –	/xx	/x	xx/	x
Lie the meek members of the Resurrection –	/xx	/xxx	/x	/x
Rafter of Satin – and Roof of Stone!	/xx	x	x/	x/
Grand go the Years – in the Crescent – above them –	/xx/	xx/x	x/x	
Worlds scoop their Arcs – And Firmaments – row –	/xx/	x/xx	/o	
Diadems – drop – and Doges – surrender –	/xx	/	x/x	x/x
Soundless as dots – on a Disc of snow –	/xx/	xx/	x/	

(J216)

Wimsatt and Beardsley conceptualize the difference between meter and rhythm as follows: "You can write a grammar of the meter. And if you cannot, there is no meter. But you cannot write a grammar of the meter's interaction with the sense" or its rhythm (596). Through a fusion of meter and rhythm in "Safe in their Alabaster Chambers," Dickinson creates complex patterns of metrical rhyme, the grammar of which can be specified as follows: Stanza One — odd lines: trimeter, initial dactyl with ditrochees and substitution of a paeon and trochee; even lines: tetrameter, initial dactyl with iambs and trochees, one substitution of an anapest. The first quatrain also establishes a vertical pattern of initial dactyls and rhythmic alternation, in which odd lines have a falling rhythm and even lines a rising rhythm. Stanza Two — odd lines: trimeter; initial choriambus with amphibrachs, one substitution of a paeon; even lines: trimeter, initial choriambus with trisyllables, one substitution of a disyllable. The second stanza also establishes a vertical pattern of initial choriambi, which Dickinson marks through a demi–caesura and dash, disrupting and confirming the expected pattern. The poem exhibits metered stress patterns, creating metrical–rhythmic consistency or metrical rhyme.

When she sent Version F of the poem to Higginson, Dickinson revised the lineation, setting off the choriambi as individual lines, "Diadems – drop – " appearing on one line and mirroring other choriambi. Her lineation also constructs line two of stanza one as two lines, divided at the dash. These lineations suggest that Dickinson conceived the poem's metric in phrasal units made of "double feet." The only line that cannot be so divided is the first. Higginson's response to Dickinson apparently suggested that Walt Whitman had been an influence, her letter in return denying that that had been the case (L261). Scanning "Safe in the Alabaster Chambers" as a

fusion of metrical feet and phrasal stress makes Whitman's melodic control over phrasal units an understandable guess as to potential relationships between Dickinson and her contemporaries.

Scansion that reveals metrical rhyme also foregrounds the nuances of the poem's aural logic. The alternation of falling and rising rhythm in stanza one is ironic: "Safe" "members of the Resurrection" are articulated through falling rhythms, while their dark crypts appear with the lilt of a rising rhythm. This pattern is complicated in the second stanza, through the rocking rhythms of the amphibrachs and choriambi that only appear resolved in the final line, where a rising rhythm is used to describe the fall of kings. Are the monarchs resurrected or consigned to oblivion? The poem's aural power is reinforced by a manipulation of vowels and consonants. "Bright" and "dark" vowels alternate in the poem concomitant with the metrical rhyme.[17] Long bright vowels — "a" "e" "i" — appear in the even lines of rising rhythm; short darker "o" and "u" diphthongs and a long "o" appear in the odd lines of falling rhythm. The "brightest" vowels are invariable initial; the darkest vowels invariably terminal, the poem moving towards perfect rhyme of the dark vowels as it develops the rising rhythm expressive of the fall of kings. Are the kings achieving the snow's inaugural, bright perfection or the unambiguous finality of its cold? The poem's final two lines play out this musical logic with extraordinary power, in the movement from the brightest vowel, "i", to the darkest vowel, "o", through diphthongs of "o" and "u" and a and a syncopation of dental "D"s and sibilant "S"s. The effect, aurally, is of movement from bright fixity to a dark fall that is oddly soft and soundless, underscoring the emotional power of the poem, as well as its imagery and thematic.

The imagery is characteristic of the mature poetry and is proto–symbolist. It turns on precise rendering of natural phenomena forced to appear as abstract things of the mind. A "Disc" of snow exists only in the mind, but its emotional power is contingent on the experience of the soundless fall of an object — a silver dollar or a house key — in the deep brilliant powder of a New England winter. Such a fall leaves a black hole or "dot," your dollar or key perhaps unrecoverable, if ever, until spring. The intimate particularity of a lived experience constrained to the circumference of a "Disc" one can gestalt as an object forces consciousness to recall itself and its constitutive powers. The "chill" of the poem proceeds from the oscillation between the position of the dead and the metaphorical dark of inner experience. As a Disc of Snow can exist only in the mind, a future not–yet–arrived — "Resurrection" or finality — can only be thought.

In many respects, the poem is a *tour de force* of sonorous form that is integral to its over all poetic logic, unfolding at a point of intersection between

grammar and rhetoric, language and experience. The assumption made by Wimsatt and Beardsley, of a fixed difference between meter and rhythm, sug gests that it is possible to tell the difference between the rhetorical dancer and the *a priori* measures of the dance. Dickinson's poem employs virtually every formal feature of the language to produce an integration of meter and rhythm, that, like metaphor, cannot be definitively parsed.

J187/Fr237, which shares theme and tone with the revised "Safe in their Alabaster chambers," was transcribed in 1861, the same year as that revision. The similarity in rhythmic patterns suggests that Dickinson was experimenting with new metrical strategies, rather than creating a design for one poem only:

Buzz the dull flies – on the chamber window –	/xx/ xx/x /x
Brave – shines the sun through the freckled pane –	/ xx/ xx/x /o
Fearless – the cobweb swings from the ceiling –	/x x/x /xx /x
Indolent Housewife – in Daisies – lain!	/xx /x x/x /o
	(J187)

The blend of the initial choriambi with the paeon and the attenuation of the return to tri–and disyllabic feet, duplicates, to a considerable degree, the rhythmic design of "Safe in their Alabaster Chambers." Dickinson's continued interest in metrical rhyme and the stylistic force of her polysyllabic abstraction is suggested, as well, by poem J1040/Fr997, transcribed in 1865:

Not so the infinite Relations – Below	/xx /xx x/x x/
Division is Adhesion's forfeit – On High	x/x xx/x /x x/
Affliction but a speculation – And Wo	x/x xx xx/x x/
A Fallacy, a Figment, We knew –	x/xx x/x x/
	(J1040)

The systematic use of dipodes and trisyllabic feet, to integrate multisyllabic abstraction, is reminiscent of strategies taught in Parker, while the onomatopoeic force of the final line, which performs the truncation indexed by the sudden appearance of the past tense of knowing, extends the symbolic power of rhythm in critical directions never considered by Kames or Parker. The blend of duple and trisyllabic feet also creates a rush of weak syllables that is characteristic of spoken English. Dickinson succeeds, thereby, in using Latin abstraction to create a colloquial song, enacting, more paradoxically, her routine fusion of Latin and Anglo Saxon.

A further effect of Dickinson's fusing meter and rhythm is indexed by the design of poem J343/Fr375, "My reward for Being, was this."[18] The poem is a different kind of aural *tour de force.* The poem appears to establish a pattern of rhyme–mates most of which are so similar in sound as to make a definitive rhyme scheme difficult, if not impossible, to establish. Dickinson's metrical rhyme and lineation nevertheless create a tri– and dimeter sonnet of enveloped couplets: ABBCD ADDCCDDEE. On the other hand, because Dickinson fuses meter and rhythm, many phrase, word, and foot boundaries coincide, creating a text easily parsed into multiple stanzaic patterns. The poem can be relineated in iambic Eights and Sixes, for example, as well as iambic pentameter with Alexandrines. But the dimeter line is not attenuated enough to establish a very strong pattern of simple, iambic alternation in accent. Dimeter therefore allows alternative rhythmic patterns to emerge, signaled and shaped by the dash and other punctuation, as Dickinson creates complex, expressive patterns of metrical rhyme:

My Reward for Being – was this –	xx/	x/x	x/	A
My Premium – My Bliss –	x/xx	x/		B
An Admiralty, less –	x/xx	/o		B
A Sceptre – penniless –	x/x	/xx		C
And Realms – just Dross –	x/	//		D
When Thrones – accost my Hands –	x/	x/	x/	A
With "Me – Miss – Me" –	x/	//		D
I'll unroll – Thee –	x//	/o		D
Sufficient Dynasty –	x/x	/xx		C
Creation – powerless –	x/x	/xx		C
To Peer this Grace –	x/	//		D
Empire – State –	//	/o		D
To little – Dust –	x/x	/o		E
To Dower – so Great –	x/x	//		E
				(J343)

The first stanza is onomatopoeic. The progressive diminution in the number of syllables and accents, from the first line to the last, enacts the diminution that is the poem's theme. The second stanza performs an alternation between the powers that "accost" the "I" and those which the "I" commands. The demand of "Me – Miss – Me" is given rhythmic expression, to which the lyric "I" responds by unrolling the counter rhythm that the poem embodies. The melody created by accents and pauses <u>is</u> the poem in many respects. It also

mimics the accent clustering of emphatic speech, as in the demand of "Me – Miss – Me," which establishes the pace and tone of the poem as a series of met rical and thematic assertions and rejoinders. The thematic turns on weighing and measuring relative strengths — of the regal bounty of nature's ephemeral creation over against the immortal, musical perfection of the poet's script — as the poem's metric exhibits.

Relineated in traditional, iambic Eights and Sixes, the poem would appear as follows:

My Reward for Being – was this –	xx	/x	/x	x/
My Premium– My Bliss –	x/	xx	x/	
An Admiralty, less – A Sceptre –	x/	xx	/x	/x
Penniless – and Realms – just Dross–		/xx	x/	x/
When Thrones – accost my Hands – With "Me –				
	x/	x/	x/	x/
Miss – Me"– I'll unroll – Thee –	x/	x/	x/	
Sufficient Dynasty –		x/	x/	x/
Creation – powerless – To Peer	x/	x/	x/	x/
This Grace – Empire – State –	x/	/x	/o	
Too little – Dust – To Dower – so Great –	x/	x/	x/	x/
				(J343)

With this scansion, the poem becomes more regular, but it is, for the same reason, less regular. It exhibits respectable iambs, but they are not especially accomplished and do not create the proper alternation of lines in Common Meter. The price of iambic regularity is to obscure the stress patterns that had made the poem's rhythmic design participate in the emphatic rejoinders that organize its thematic. The onomatopoeia is lost. The dashes appear erratic. Scanned as a fusion of meter and rhythm, poem J343/Fr375 may not be a great poem, but it is a more interesting and accomplished one.

The canonical understanding of the poetry as syllabic has obscured, for close readers, the grammar of Dickinson's metrical designs. David Porter is accurate in saying that poem J319–F304 exhibits "no consistent syllabic pattern" (9). The poem has line lengths of ten, nine, seven, six, five, four, and three syllables in a poem of only sixteen lines. However, if it is scanned in metrical feet, with alternating di– and trimeter, the poem has a distinct regularity, along the lines of the total poetic logic it creates. First transcribed in 1862, poem J319/Fr304 exhibits Dickinson's symbolic evocation of pentameter and her onomatopoeic fusion of meter and rhythm.[19]

The poem begins by evoking iambic pentameter as the proper rhythm for expressing the limits of knowledge; its final diambus, required by the word/foot conjunction of meter and rhythm for the word "unrealized," is audible as two iambi. As a result, the poem seems to begin with five iambs. But lineation immediately shifts to alternating lines of di– and trimeter — a form of broken pentameter — with initial trochees. The poem therefore evokes and inverts the musically expressed ontology implied by Kames' emphasis on the rational force of stress and syllabic regularity in iambic pentameter.

Rhythmic disruption, in the broken pentameter lines, serves onomatopoetically to chart the movement of the phenomenal "bee" and the pursuit of the dream it metaphorizes. The rhythmic design works on several levels to create music and onomatopoeia, and to code the poem's counter ontology:

The maddest dream – recedes – unrealized –	x/	x/	x/	x/x/
The Heaven we chase –	x/	x/		
Like the June Bee – before the Schoolboy –	/x	//	x/	x//
Invites the Race –	x/	x/		
Stoops to an Easy Clover –	/x	x/x	/x	
Dips – Evades –	/o	x/		
Teazes – deploys –	/x	x/		
Then – to the Royal Clouds –	/o	xx	/x/	
Spreads his light pinnace –	/x	/o	/x	
Heedless of the Boy –	/x	xx/		
Staring – defrauded – at the	/x	x/x	xx	
Mocking sky –	/x	/o		
Homesick for steadfast Honey –	/x	x/x	/x	
Ah, the Bee	o/	x/		
Flies not – that brews	//	x/		
That rare variety!	x/	x/x/		

(J319)

The poem begins with what seems to be perfect iambic pentameter, as it formulates a limit on human experience. The appearance of the norm is disrupted by a comparison of the iambic perfection of the dream with the trochaic flutter of the phenomenal "Bee," which locates the dream so near as the immediate and so far as the ephemeral. The phenomenal is paradoxically transcendent in its very transience. Initial trochees evoke the falling rhythm of the phe nomenal "bee" at the head of iambic lines increasingly disrupted by tri syllabic feet and catalexis — too much and not enough — which evokes the inconsistent path of the elusive "Bee." The final line returns to the

appearance of iambic regularity, reaffirming the limit set by the initial line.

As in her revisionary return, in 1861, to the 1859 version of "Alabaster Chambers," Dickinson returned in 1861 to the 1859 version of J86/Fr98. This poem's rhythmic force strongly resembles "The maddest dream," again suggesting a metrical project rather than isolated designs:

South winds jostle them –	/x /xx
Bumblebees come –	/xx/
Hover – hesitate – drink – and are gone –	/x /xx /o xx/
Butterflies pause – on their passage Cashmere –	/xx/ xx/x x/
I – softly plucking –	/xx /x
Present them here –	x/ //
	(J86)

The onomatopoeic evocation of the erratic, phenomenal flight of bees, as in "The maddest dream," is striking. Similarly, "South winds jostle them" also uses catalexis, and it plays off rising and falling rhythms against each other.

And as does "The maddest dream," poem J706/Fr777 evokes iambic pentameter, in 1863, but for somewhat different symbolic purposes. J706/Fr777 appears in the same fascicle with poem J742/Fr778, " Four Trees – opon a solitary Acre," a more familiar and august version of the following:

Life, and Death, and Giants –	/ x /x /x
Such as These – are still –	/x/ x/
Minor – Apparatus – Hopper of the Mill –	/x /x/x /x xx/
Beetle at the Candle –	/x xx /x
Or a Fife's Fame –	/x //
Maintain – by Accident that they proclaim –	x/ x/x/ x/ x/
	(J742)

Finch argues that pentameter functions, in Dickinson's poetry, as a sign of patriarchal tradition, to which the poetry opposes its shorter, popular lines. While the sound of what would seem to be iambic pentameter in the final line is marked, in its difference, from shorter trochaic lines, it evokes, more generally, a point of ontological stability. Poem J706/Fr778 inverts the authority of that stability. As the falling rhythm might suggest, the grand abstractions of the categorical are empty sites — merely receptive mechanisms — through which the grist of experience gains entry to the trochaic "Mill" of thought. But those grand abstractions exhibit no salvific force or substance in relation to the two versions of "Accident" they would ordinarily displace. Instead, the

metrical–rhythmic fusion of the poem's design codes these two kinds of "Accident" as musical opposites. The small creep of a "Beetle at the Candle,"[21] with its deflationary little pyrrhic in the midst of otherwise forceful trochees, is the antithesis of the sharp, brief, musical peripety of the glory announced by "a Fife's Fame," though ultimately no less deadly. This musical, affective antithesis is not known through the categorical funnels supplied by "Life," "Death," and "Giants." The opposition is "Maintain[ed]" through the specific ity of equivocal experience itself, which evokes but eludes the categorical, in order to make the sense it does. The poem therefore acknowledges the structuring force of the categorical but voids it of any supersensible authority or substance. Alternatively, the final line grounds categorical thought in the disquieting stability of mortality itself, giving chilling regularity to the accidental.

Conclusion: "Nature's House / Remains but Balcony"[22]

Poem J745/Fr782 develops the implications of a ruptured dialectic and the displacement of an ultimate account, evoked by "Life," and "Death," and "Giants." Its rhythmic design organizes a progressive complication of familiar figures and rhythms:

Renunciation – is a piercing Virtue –	x/	x/x	xx/x	/x
The letting go	x/x/			
A Presence – for an Expectation –	x/x	xx	/	x/x
Not now –	//			
The putting out of Eyes –	x/x/	x/		
Just Sunrise –	/o	/x		
Lest Day –	//			
Day's Great Progenitor –	//	x/xx		
Outvie	//			
Renunciation – is the Choosing	x/	x/x	xx/x	
Against itself –	x/	//		
Itself to justify	x/	x/x/		
Unto itself –	x/	//		
When larger function –	x/x	/x		
Make that appear –	//	x/		
Smaller – that Covered Vision – Here –	/x	x/x	/x	/o

(J745)

Poem J745/Fr782 makes one of the last uses of the word "vision"[23] and the first use of the word "function" in the canon.[24] The conflict between "vision" and

"function," phenomena and structure, rhetoric and grammar, is at the heart of the poem. When "a Function die[s]," we are "stranded" in our own "Economy," all "Our Estimates a Scheme – /Our Ultimates a Sham –" (J1184/Fr1229). To witness the destruction of an *a priori* element at the base of one's vision is to become stranded within the schemata and purposes that had made vision possible. "Renunciation" is a technique for reorganizing the functional basis of *poiesis*, in which "piercing" is not a collateral effect of renunciation — a sign of mere affect. Piercing is the "Virtue" of "Renunciation," or its distinctive efficacy, in the Latin sense of "virtue" as a power, capability, or excellence.[25] The piercing affect of renunciation and the logic of affect — of what is affecting — is its critical power. The tension between the abdication and justification of the lyric "I"'s authority, which follows from renunciation, appears through the poem's rhythmic design, as a piercing affect re–establishes the basis of the "I"'s vision.

The force of spondees and catalexis in "Just Sunrise," "Lest Day," "Outvie" marks points of affective penetration in the slow process of "letting going." In the first half of the poem, lines appear in clusters of increasingly sharp reduction — four feet, one foot; three feet, one foot; two feet, two feet, one foot; two feet, one foot — as in a rhythm–scheme of loss. The manipulation of stress patterns, beginning with line ten, mimics the slow reversal of the "I"'s fortune, through her "Choosing" (xx/x) an even more severe renunciation of renunciation. The ironic shift from rising iambic rhythm and multisyllabic density, in the first line, is countered by the ironic force of the trochaic fall and catalectic paucity, in the final line. By negating the radiance of immediate vision, the "I's" inner experience becomes a source of critical and expressive power, displacing any "larger function" that immediate vision had represented. That "larger function" could be any number of things and one of the strengths of the poem is to have rendered moot its specificity. The general significance of any superior function is rather at issue. Recognition of the status of any claim to "Cover Vision" for the sake of any absolute, as well as the price of the "I"'s critical turn, is figured in the poem's final word, punctuated and distinct: " – Here – ." The transformation of the "I" is underscored by emphatic trochees and ironic, catalectic success, in which something less — the refusal of an absolute — is something more: the source of the "I"'s power.

Dickinson used a Latin–English hybrid prosody, widely available in nineteenth–century textbooks, to create distinctive metrical–rhythmic designs. While a strictly romantic fusion of meter and accent promoted a reversal of metrical values, the appearance of expressivity acquiring the metaphysical weight that had accrued to the rational regularity of Augustan metrics, Dick inson's fusion privileges neither rhythm nor meter. 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. Indeed, her musical art is metacritical, because it routinely exposes the illusion of representivity that both expressive and rationalist theories assume. Her subversive fusion of meter and rhythm is not only lyrical but metacritical. Through such a prosody, the music of the poetry "means" as well as "sounds," prosodic design part of the signifying, symbolic force of the poetry and a diacritical art that is integral to the critique of immediacy that the poetry performs. Dickinson's uncommon measures are therefore open to an interpretive process as opposed to standard scansion only. While Dickinson knew and used stanzaic patterns inherited from hymnal and literary tradition, it is unlikely that she left those forms entirely unmarked by her projects, where she so clearly arranged everything else in the poetry to suit her distinctive aesthetic.

Notes

1. I cite poems, letters, and hymns as follows: Dickinson's poems are cited by the system indicated below in Works Cited. I cite hymns by hymnal title and number: e.g., *Church Psalmody* H400. I cite Isaac Watts from a facsimile of the 1810 London edition of his *Works*. Hymns are cited by book and hymn number, e.g., *Works* IV, ii, H66. When I discuss Dickinson's scribal habits, I cite the Johnson poem number that appears in R.W. Franklin's 1981 edition of *Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson*, e.g., J216. I cite this edition as *Manuscript Books*. When I scan, I indicate syllables for each foot as follows: accented = /; unaccented = x; catalectic = o. To reduce visual clutter, foot boundaries are indicated by spacing rather than a more standard vertical bar.

2. Cristanne Miller's 1988 study of the variety of grammatical forms in the poetry offers a *de facto* update on Lindberg–Seyersted's linguistic approach, addressing stylistic elements that have not received significant attention: 21. She devotes only two pages to metrics, presenting hymnal form as the widely received, non–controversial basis of Dickinson's metric: 141–3.

3. For discussion of the dissemination of Murray, see Arthur Applebee's *Tradition and Reform in the Teaching of English*: 6–8; and Kenneth Cmiel's *Democratic Eloquence*: 74–82.

4. See Paul Fussell's *Theory of Prosody in Eighteenth–Century England* for a discussion of the problems created by imposing modern prosody on earlier texts: 157–63.

5. Mount Holyoke was named South Hadley Seminary when Dickinson attended.

6. Johnson's "Handlist of Books Found in the Home of Emily Dickinson at Amherst,

Massachusetts, Spring, 1950" and his *Emily Dickinson: An Interpretive Biography* present *Christian Psalmody, in Four Parts* and *Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs* as anthologies of Watts' hymns belonging to Dickinson's father and available for her use: 84-5. According to Henry Foote, as quoted in Porter, *Christian Psalmody* is a selected edition of Watts' hymns, with eighty tunes, edited by Samuel Worcester. First published in 1815, it was rejected by the public with a demand for "Watts entire": 58. Worcester followed up with *Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs*, first published in 1819, which reproduces the three books of Watts' sacred songs. See Watts' *Works* Vol. IV: 111-368. Known as "Watts & Select," Worcester's edition included a fourth book, of some 250 pages, titled "Hymns Selected from Various Authors." Martha England's "Emily Dickinson and Isaac Watts" and Carlton Lowenberg's *Textbooks of Emily Dickinson* both name *Church Psalmody*, edited by Lowell Mason and David Green, as among those available to Dickinson, England understanding it as the hymn book adopted by the Dickinson's church in 1838: 126, 131. Neither mentions *Christian Psalmody*. As England and Lowenberg note, Dickinson also knew *Village Hymns*, used at Mount Holyoke. Neither *Village Hymns* nor *Church Psalmody* appear on Johnson's "Handlist." Five copies of Edwards A. Park's 1858 *Sabbath Hymn Book* appear on Johnson's "Handlist" and are discussed by England and Lowenberg.

7. I agree with Judy Jo Small and others that the case for the pervasive influence of hymns, in general, and Watts, in particular, has been overstated. More significantly, Dickinson's unequivocal allusions to hymns are not to Watts most primarily. There are three known allusions to Watts. In "How doth the [little] busy bee," the 1852 poem J3/Fr2 alludes to a children's song by Watts and not a hymn. See *Works* IV, "Divine and Moral Songs . . . for the Use of Children," Song XX. Dickinson's letter L110 and poem J112/Fr114 allude to "There is a land of pure delight": Watts, *Works* IV, ii, H66. Her letter L521 alludes to Watt's "When I survey the wondrous cross": *Works* IV, iii, H7. All other allusions to hymns acknowledged by Johnson's poem notes, or by Johnson and Ward's letter notes, are to other authors. "Jerusalem! My happy home," in L42, is by William Burkitt. "God moves in a mysterious way," in L97, is by William Cowper. L110 alludes to *Village Hymns* not Watts. "How blest the righteous when he dies," in L146, is by Anna Barbauld. "Oh where shall rest be found," in L176, and "Servant of God, well done," in L414, are both by James Montgomery. All these hymns can be found in Worcester or *Sabbath Hymn Book*. The hymnals in the Dickinson home therefore do not appear to have functioned as the work of Watts most primarily but as collections of popular hymns written by a wide variety of authors. It would therefore be more accurate to speak of the general influence of "hymnal culture" rather than of any specific author.

8. For the reception of Blair and Campbell and their relation to Newman and Parker, see: Nan Johnson, *Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric in North America*; Thomas Miller, *Formation of College English*; Kenneth Cmiel, *Democratic Eloquence*; James Berlin, *Nineteenth-Century Writing Instruction in American Colleges*; and Sharon Crowley, *Methodical Memory*.

9. Perkins uses the term "expressive" to denote a fidelity to spoken, rhetorical stress

and effect. This use differs from the critical analysis first made by James Berlin, and now common in the literature on nineteenth-century rhetoric, which unders tands “expressive” to denote a transcendentalist and romantic theory of language grounded in individual human consciousness rather than any rhetorical, social understanding of spoken performance.

10. For a discussion of Dickinson's poetics as exclusively Latin and based in her study of Andrews and Stoddard, see Lois Cuddy's articles: "Latin Imprint on Emily Dickinson's Poetry." *American Literature*. 50.1 (1978): 74–84 and "Influence of Latin Poetics on Emily Dickinson's Style." *Comparative Literature Studies*. 13.3 (1976): 214–29. The hybrid English–Latin tradition of English poetics and the ambivalent use of "quantity" and "accent," in English textbooks and criticism, suggest that Latin criticism was not taught or heard as exclusively Latin in the nineteenth century. Poems Cuddy reads, such as J63/Fr155, are more regular and rhythmic if read through the accents of a Latin–English hybrid foot. Cuddy's articles are nevertheless of interest for interpreting the hybrid Dickinson learned.

11. See *Meter in English*, edited by David Baker, for a recent debate among poets and critics on current terminology for analyzing foot–based meter in English. The discussants in *Meter in English* present the following feet as standard: iamb, trochee, anapest, dactyl, pyrrhic, spondee. Of these, spondee and pyrrhic are controversial, based on the premise that simple alternation of accent in English is normal. The anapest and dactyl are the received triple feet acceptable for substitution. There is no discussion of the tribrach. Only one poet and critic, Lewis Turco, includes amphibrach as a potential basis for meter in English: 261–2.

12. See Johnson; Lindberg–Seyersted; and Small for treatments of Dickinson's rhyme. Small suggests that hymns provided a model for Dickinson's rhymes: 13 227. However, Parker includes a rhyming dictionary that discriminates between "perfect rhyme" and "allowable rhymes" and represents an additional, if not alternative, source.

13. Parker does not offer his reasons. The difference in the mode of metrical description — syllabics as opposed to foot–based metric — may be one. He may also understand sacred lyrics to be improperly included in discussions of secular art. Parker does describe the "ode" as a Greek "hymn" and "song sung in honor of the Gods": 286.

14. In addition, much of the discussion of versification and the examples used, in Parker, are duplicated, verbatim, in Murray's *English Grammar*. Parker either borrowed heavily from Murray or Murray and Parker share the same source. Parker includes a great deal that is not in Murray, but the basic examples and discourse on metrical feet are the same.

15. For a discussion of the potential difference in effect created by trochaic as opposed to iambic meters, see: Tarlinskaja, Marina and Naira Oganesova, "Meter and Meaning: The Semantic 'Halo' of Verse Form in English Romantic Lyrical

Poems (Iambic and Trochaic Tetrameter)." *American Journal of Semiotics*. 4.3–4 (1896): 85–106. For a discussion of Eights and Sevens, as a standard English form used by Milton and Shakespeare to "pirouette on either foot, iamb or trochee," see: George Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody* II: 213–5.

16. Quoted from L438.

17. See Franklin. I have scanned Version E, copied into fascicle ten, in the second half of 1861. I have relineated the poem, by combining lines two and three in one, and lines seven and eight in one, for illustrative purposes only, and discuss the force of the original lineation as the rhythmic effect Dickinson wished to create. As Version F indicates, Dickinson also relineated the poem when she sent a copy to Higginson in 1862.

18. If more than one version of a poem exists, I indicate, in a note, which version I have scanned. In selecting a version, I have usually chosen the latest fascicle version. In a forthcoming essay based on my analysis of the multiple versions of the poems made possible by Franklin's variorum, I understand fascicle versions to represent those Dickinson prepared for publication. When Dickinson sends a fascicle poem as a letter, she often omits formal regularities. When she transcribes a letter poem into the fascicles, she invariably creates a more regular form, standard stanza breaks being the most consistent revision. The existence of the revised fascicle versions suggests the project of a self–consciously professional poet and the state of the poems Dickinson understood as such. (Whether she personally preferred the fascicle versions is another matter.) In addition, and as I discuss, above, Dickinson's metrics became more experimental and complex after 1860. She sometimes revised earlier versions of poems, such as "Safe in their Alabaster Chambers," apparently to bring them into conformity with a more complex, emerging craft. For all these reasons, then, I focus largely on late fascicle version of the poems.

19. For recent discussion of the poetic effects of "bright" front vowels and "dark" back vowels, first studied by the Russian Formalists, see: Reuven Tsur, *What Makes Sound Patterns Expressive?*

20. See Franklin: I have scanned Version B, copied into fascicle twenty–four about early 1863. Version A was copied into fascicle eighteen in 1862. It differs substantially in the lines that follow "I'll unroll – Thee," to the extent of constituting a quite different poem.

21. See Franklin: I have scanned Version A, copied into fascicle fourteen about early 1862. Dickinson relineated the poem when she sent Version B to Higginson. The logic of the poem's metrical design therefore shifts to the extent it no longer exhibits "broken" pentameter after the first quatrain.

22. Dickinson frequently structures the force of "Heaven" through syncope, making it a one syllable word: "Heav'n."

23. The figure of the "Beetle" verges on the grotesque in other poems. In poem J290/Fr319, "Beetles" are an alternative to "Daisies," as the only creatures who will know the "I" when she is "An Island in dishonored Grass – ". In poem J1128/Fr1150, "the Nights that Beetles love" are terrifying. See also J328/Fr359; J949/Fr1068.

24. The quotation is from poem J1050/Fr936.

25. See Fabian Gudas, "Vision," *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, for a discussion of the concept of "vision" as a critical term first used to name "dream vision" in medieval poetry. The Romantics then used it as a trope of poetic power, as is suggested by Coleridge's "armed vision." Parker presents "vision" as a "figure of speech," in which poets "use the present tense of the verb, and describe the action or event as actually now in sight": 146. Dickinson's early uses of the word are evocative of Parker, in deploying the stock figure of beatific vision, generally visited upon others: J93/Fr72; J78/Fr125; J64/Fr162. In fascicles twenty through forty, her use of "vision" is romantic. For example, in poem J528/Fr411, "vision" is a sign of the "I"'s authority: "Mine – here – in Vision – and in Veto!" "Vision" usually figures an ecstatic experience of height, power, and prospect that is vast, eternalizing, and idealizing: e.g., J523/Fr635; J541/Fr661; J 736/Fr723; J646/Fr757. In fascicle thirty–two, the "I"'s vision is threatened by doubt: J462/Fr697. After "vision" is refigured in J745/Fr782, it appears twice in 1864: in the "compound vision" of a lens of experience in poem J906/Fr830 and as an attribute of personified time in poem J802/Fr858. "Vision" then disappears, as a figure, except for its appearance as a trope of poetic power, in poem J1126/Fr1243 (1872), and as part of an elegy for Samuel Bowles, in poem J1436/Fr1460 (1878).

26. After appearing in poem J745/Fr782, "function" appears in: J677/Fr876, J856/Fr1092, J1274 /Fr1218, J1184/Fr1229, J1209/Fr1239, J1482/Fr1513.

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J *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Ed. Thomas H. Johnson. 3 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1955. Citation by poem number.

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