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Emily Dickinson in "The land of dye-wood"

"The Other Hemisphere"

Dear Preceptor -

*The word - said - lives,
say I, and my word
said here, in this place -
lives still - a century
to the year when my
head was first turned
away from the things
of this world -
Against evanescence -
to last long - to bear the spirit
of the body, to hear my
letters echoing in the blues
and reds of Brazil -
where the sun arcs
across Northern skies -
Themselves go out - I said
- speaking of poets whose
words do not yet have
the right to expire -
As for me - I
breathe - I breathe
the air of Bahia -
Mr. Higginson - I
thought you would
like - to know -*

Your Scholar
(Salvador, 1986)

Abstract: Included in my teaching in USP for eighteen months in 1969-70 were classes on Emily Dickinson's poetry at several levels. My preparation led to several publications, including studies of Brazilian translations of her work and of the handful of her poems that make reference to Brazil. My

interpretations of the so-called “Brazil poems” were to be contested by the noted Dickinson scholar Rebecca Patterson in a preface intended for the book she was just finishing. The story of these conflicting interpretations is told largely through quotation from Patterson’s unpublished letters to me and to my colleague and friend Barton L. St. Armand. Patterson’s death preceded her final preparation of the book for publication; when *Emily Dickinson’s Imagery*, edited by Margaret H. Freeman, did appear in 1979, the volume failed to contain the preface Patterson had written for it.

Keywords: Emily Dickinson, “Brazil poems”, Rebecca Patterson.

Resumo: Minhas atividades docentes na USP durante dezoito meses (1969-70) incluíram aulas sobre a poesia de Emily Dickinson em vários níveis. Sua preparação levou-me a publicar diversos trabalhos, incluindo estudos de traduções brasileiras de sua obra e dos seus poemas que fazem referência ao Brasil. Minhas interpretações dos assim chamados “poemas do Brasil” seriam contestadas por Rebecca Patterson, renomada especialista em Dickinson, no prefácio de um livro então em fase de conclusão. Grande parte da história destas interpretações conflitantes encontra-se nas citações das cartas inéditas de Patterson enviadas a mim e ao meu colega e amigo Barton L. St. Armand. A morte de Patterson ocorreu antes da conclusão do livro para publicação; quando *Emily Dickinson’s Imagery*, organizado por Margaret H. Freeman, apareceu em 1979, o livro não continha o prefácio que Patterson havia escrito para ele.

Palavras-chave: Emily Dickinson, “Poemas do Brasil”, Rebecca Patterson.

During my eighteen-month stint as a Fulbright Lecturer in American Literature at the Universidade de São Paulo in 1969-70, I was privileged to teach Emily Dickinson’s poetry in several courses. In undergraduate classes in American poetry, graduate seminars in selected modern poets, and a seminar for American literature teachers drawn from a half dozen Brazilian states, it required the most effort on my part – beyond having to explain Dickinson’s more unusual terms and intentional solecisms – to convey her transcendent symbolism of the sharply demarcated New England seasons. What I did not have to do, as I soon discovered, was introduce my students to Emily Dickinson. Even then, as I was soon to learn, Carlos Daghlían was already engaged in the study of Dickinson’s poetry that would result in *A obsessão irônica na poesia de Emily Dickinson*, the dissertation he presented in his “Concurso de Livre-Docência” in 1987, and the comprehensive list of the publication on a world-wide basis of Dickinson’s poems in translation that would engage him for years.

So in 1969 Dickinson was hardly an unknown quantity in Brazil. As early as 1943 the journal *Lanterna Verde*, published in Rio de Janeiro during World War II, had dedicated an issue (its seventh) to “some

aspects of North-American life." To that issue the poet Manuel Bandeira contributed translations of poems by four Americans: Archibald MacLeish, Langston Hughes, Adelaide Crapsey, and Dickinson. To represent Dickinson he chose "I died for beauty" and "I never lost as much but twice." In the same year, in *Pequena história da literatura norte-americana* the scholar-translator-journalist Brenno Silveira devoted three paragraphs to Dickinson.

In 1947 there appeared in Rio de Janeiro an historical and critical volume entitled *A literatura dos Estados Unidos*. Published by Livraria Agir, this volume devoted an entire chapter – twenty-four pages – to Dickinson. Beyond its perceptive survey of Dickinson's themes and forms, as well as its insistence on her centrality to American lyric poetry, this book is a translation from the English of the well-informed American critic Morton Dauwen Zabel. In 1944, Zabel, best remembered now for his editing of the (still in print) Viking Portable volumes of Henry James and Joseph Conrad, was recruited by the American State Department with support from the Rockefeller Foundation, to teach the first courses in Brazil on the literature of the United States. His book grew out of his teaching at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. Interestingly enough, Zabel did not publish his book in English, and this Portuguese-language edition remains the book's only publication to date.

The first Brazilian dissertation on Dickinson, as I was told by colleagues in São Paulo, was entered in the competition for a chair at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais around 1950. But my efforts to locate a copy of that first dissertation on Dickinson, putatively the work of Hygino Aliandro, proved unsuccessful, as did even the attempt to establish conclusively that such a dissertation had once existed. The one time I was with the reputed author of this work – we served on the examining committee in a defense of dissertation in São José do Rio Preto – I did not have the temerity to broach the subject of his authorship of a dissertation on Dickinson. Hygino Aliandro's fame in the United States rests on his compilation of the still useful two-volume *English-Portuguese / Portuguese-English* pocket dictionary.

In 1956 Oswaldino Marques, an accomplished poet and a student of Anglo-American literature, brought out his *Videntes e sonâmbulos*, a bilingual anthology of North-American poems, beginning with Emerson's "Days" and ending with Charles Edward Eaton's "The Snake." The Dickinson selection was comprised of five poems translated by Manuel Bandeira. To the two translations he had already contributed to *Lanterna Verde* in 1943, Bandeira added translations of

"This quiet Dust was Gentlemen and Ladies," "I never saw a Moor," and "My life closed twice before its close." In the same year appeared *Poesias escolhidas de Emily Dickinson*, the fourth volume in the series *Coleção Cântico dos Cânticos* – the first three volumes being the Songs of Songs, Shakespeare's sonnets, and the sonnets of Luís Vaz de Camões. The Dickinson (bilingual) volume presented forty-one poems translated by Olívia Krähenbühl.

At the end of the 1950s the North-American teacher-translator John Nist arrived in Brazil to serve, I believe, as USP's first ever Fulbright Lecturer in American Literature. In his highly productive Brazilian tenure, he embarked on a series of ground-breaking translations of modern Brazilian poetry into English. He also published, in the Brazilian publication *Anhembi* (1959, pp. 480-84), a piece entitled "Dois poetas americanos e uma aranha," the two poets being Walt Whitman and Dickinson.¹ That same year – 1959 – also saw the first prize in a competition instituted that year by the Instituto Brasil-Estados Unidos, the bi-national center in São Paulo then sponsored by the U.S.I.S, go to an essay on Dickinson. Nise Martins Laurindo's piece was published in the newspaper *A Gazeta* on November 3, 1959. And in 1960 Dickinson was the subject of an essay by Leo Gilson Ribeiro published in the *Diário de Notícias*. Ribeiro was well-informed in American literary matters, having spent some time in the United States working as a journalist-scholar. I recall reading his sprightly and informative essay "Brazil: Between Dogpatch and Yoknapatawpha" when it appeared in the *Kenyon Review* in 1961.²

In that same year the poet Henriqueta Lisboa, whose poetry has been compared with Dickinson's, included one Dickinson's poem – "I never saw a moor" (in Bandeira's translation) – in her *Antologia poética para a infância e a juventude*, a volume sponsored and published in Rio de Janeiro by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the National Institute for the Book.³ In 1965, the Rio de Janeiro publisher Lidador brought out *Mistério e solidão: a vida e a obra de Emily Dickinson*, Vera das Neves Pedroso's able translation of Thomas H. Johnson's 1963 interpretive biography of the poet. In 1966, Oswaldino Marques's 1956 anthology, which included Bandeira's translations of five Dickinson Poems, was brought out in the popular series "Edições de Ouro" (no. 1320) under a new title, *Poesia dos Estados Unidos: coletânea de poemas norte-americanos*. And in 1967, in Rio de Janeiro under the imprint of José Olympio, there appeared *Retrato dos Estados Unidos à luz da sua literatura*. The author of this highly original, well-informed survey of the literature of the United States was Carolina Nabuco. As the daughter

of Joaquim Nabuco, the Brazilian diplomat long in service in the United States in the early years of the twentieth century, she was well-educated in matters North-American. She, too, pairs Whitman with Dickinson in a chapter entitled "Farol e lâmpada." No less than Zabel's book does Carolina Nabuco's, for its insight into American literary culture, deserve to be translated into English.

So, it can be seen that regardless of how I might have wished to set myself up – with my shipped-in Dickinson library, including the six volumes of Johnson (letters and poems), the Rosenbaum concordance, and all the scholarly-critical-biographical works I owned (from Whicher and Wells to Griffith, Higgins, and Sherwood) – I soon enough learned that I had come too late, well after the fact, of course, to set myself up as Dickinson's Brazilian John the Baptist. Indeed, if I were to do right by Dickinson and my students, I then decided, it would be useful to ferret out for my own edification what was already available to the Brazilian scholar interested in Dickinson. It was then that I discovered the books, essays, and translations I have just surveyed. At this time, early in my year-and-a-half stay in Brazil, I also hit upon the notion that I might improve my Portuguese by studying Brazilian translations of North-American poetry. Subsequently, my study of the Krähenbühl translations, a copy of which I acquired at the Livraria Pioneira on Rua Maria Antonia during my first week in Brazil – coupled with an itch to figure out what Bandeira was doing in his quite different translations of Dickinson – led to a paper first presented at a conference on English language and literature held in Rio de Janeiro in 1970 – meetings that saw the founding of ABRAPUI.⁴

Aside from the conference paper and the publication, my work with the translations benefited me in an earlier and more immediate way. It was useful in my classes, for I was able to use examples of the different ways words and images were rendered by the Brazilian translators whose work I was then examining. On occasion I would even devote part of the hour to an examination of different translations of the same poem. Twice, feeling especially heady, I even brought in a Spanish translation to go along with a Portuguese one. Actually the first time I tried this – teaching the poem in three languages – was in Guayaquil, where I was conducting a two-week seminar on American poetry for Ecuadorian teachers of English in 1970.

The poem was "I died for beauty," and the translations were those of the Brazilian Manuel Bandeira in Portuguese and the Uruguayan Gastón Figueira in Spanish. First, here is Figueira's Spanish version.

Morí por la Belleza. Cuando ya
en el sepulcro yacía
sentí que alguien bajaba
a la tumba vecina.

Me preguntó muy suave por qué había muerto.
"Por la Belleza", contesté.
"Y yo, por la Verdad. Los dos, pues, somos uno.
Hermanos somos", dijo él.

...Y así, parientes reencontrados en la Noche
de tumba a tumba nos hablamos
hasta que el musgo cubrió nuestros nombres
y selló nuestros labios.⁵

What I wanted my students to see was that this translation was competent, straight-forward, but curiously not totally literal. Obviously content to convey what he takes to be the poem's literal meaning, the translator focuses on bread-and-butter renderings. Some of the subtleties and nuances disappear. There is no attempt to convey the element of time in the word "scarce," for instance, or the suggestion in the word "failed" (which is translated as "muerto"). Nor is the primacy of Dickinson's speaker's death retained. The somehow more "lively" notion of speaking "between the Rooms" of the original becomes "de tumba a tumba" we speak, picking up the literal translation of Dickinson's "tomb" in the second line but evaded at that point by the translator, who there renders "Tomb" as "sepulcher." For the "Room" of line four, the translator had substituted "tumba." As for "reached our lips / And covered up - our names - ," the translator opts for "covered our names / And sealed our lips."

There is one slight change in meaning. Whereas Dickinson has a singular "He" say that "Truth" and "Beauty" "Themselves are one," Gastón Figueira - in "Y yo, por la verdad. Los dos, pues, somos uno" - chooses to say that "the two [of us], then, are one."⁶

Turning then to Bandeira's translation (1966, p. 452), I wanted my students to see what an acknowledged master of modern poetry would allow himself to do in a translation of a poem he greatly admired. As late as 1963, just five years before his death at the age of eighty-two, he wrote of Dickinson's "I died for Beauty," "the other day, at the Academy, while attempting to recite the poem, my voice kept breaking so through the emotion that dominated it that I nearly failed to get through the poem."⁷

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

Perguntou-me baixinho o que me matara:
- A beleza, respondi.
- A mim, a verdade - é a mesma coisa,
Somos irmãos.

E assim, como parentes que uma noite se encontram,
Conversamos de jazigo a jazigo,
Até que o musgo alcançou os nossos lábios
E cobriu os nossos nomes.

What I have said about this translation elsewhere I repeat now. When the translation is read aloud, it can be readily seen that it is a poem in its own right. Although Bandeira has varied the original meter, he has done so while preserving the meaning of the poem and while sustaining the original tone. If “room” in the fourth line becomes the more precise and harsher “carneiro,” the change enables the translator to rhyme “contíguo” with “túmulo,” thereby preserving the rhyming pattern of the original “tomb” and “room.” Something further of his overall success with the poem can be measured in his rendering of the tenth line; “We talked between the rooms” becomes “Conversamos de jazigo a jazigo.” The comparatively neutral term becomes the more precise “jazigo” – sepulcher, vault – but in the figurative sense “jazigo” also suggests the equally valid terms deposit, shelter. Both meanings – sepulcher and shelter – are appropriate to the argument of the Dickinson poem. Bandeira achieves a similar triumph in translating line eleven – “Until the Moss had reached our lips” – as “Até que o musgo alcançou os nossos lábios.” With its additional sense of “catching” and “succeeding,” a suitable extension of the literal meaning of “reached,” “alcançou” is undoubtedly preferable, for example, to “chegou.” And one wanting to measure the Bandeira version as a translation need only compare it with the Olívia Krähenbühl version, keeping in mind that Bandeira’s version was available to Krähenbühl when she undertook her own translation (Monteiro, 1971, pp. 51-52).

One poem that Krähenbühl undertook to translate from scratch (no Portuguese versions were available to her at the time, I believe) was “Because I could not stop for Death.” I often used her translation of that poem, I must confess, to make a simple point about the pitfalls inherent in these exercises (sometimes) in futility in trying to carry

meanings across the boundaries of languages. (And here I am, shamelessly, about to use it still once again.) First, I would suggest that the simplest conventions of a given language can bring a translator to disaster, a case in point being the Krähenbühl rendering of "Because I could not stop for death" (1956, p. 125). We would then read carefully through Dickinson's poem in the original English, for the purpose of listening to the translation. The first two stanzas were enough to make the point.

Fazer convite à Morte eu não podia:
Ela foi quem mo fêz, só de bondade...
Na carruagem, nós duas só havia -
...e a Imortalidade.

Ela, pressa não tinha: íamos indo...
Mas, antes, pus de lado
Horas de ócio e labores, retribuindo
Seu trato delicado...

Now it is absolutely clear that in this poem Dickinson intends to personify Death as a male suitor who has come to pay a civil call on a woman. The carriage-ride towards eternity suggests that nature of his gracious, if inevitable, call. The Masculine-Feminine courtship is Dickinson's trope for the inevitable pairing of Death and, I take it, the Poet. Dickinson's metaphor is courtly, and as such she chooses to personify Death as masculine. It is a choice that is available in English.

The rub for Krähenbühl's translation is obvious. In Portuguese (as in several other languages, of course) "Death" ("Morte") is feminine in gender. This personification, inherent in the language itself, is inflexible. In Krähenbühl's poem the heterosexual metaphor disappears. Two women, of indeterminate age, move toward eternity. Now, that's o.k. But it is more in the line of the principal duo of Thelma and Louise in the film of the same name than of Dickinson, at least in this poem.

Now giving papers and publishing articles and books, I always told my graduate students and young colleagues (especially those who too readily adduce Dickinson's talk about "auction of the mind"), are also ways of trying to teach. The next Brazilian translator of "Because I could not stop for Death" was Paulo Vizioli, my erstwhile colleague at USP. A distinguished specialist in modern British and American literature and the author of the first dissertation written anywhere on William Carlos Williams's long, ambitious poem *Paterson*, Vizioli tackled the first two stanzas of Dickinson's poem (1976, p. 43):

Não podendo esperar pelo morrer,
De me esperar teve a bondade:
Levava a carruagem a nós dois,
E mais a Imortalidade.

Viajamos devagar, não tinha pressa;
E acabei pondo de lado
O meu labor, e o meu lazer também,
Por sua civilidade.

To avoid the sticky problem of the female gender of “Morte” in the first line, he cleverly slides “Death” into “dying” – “morrer” – which is masculine in gender. This is an excellent solution to the problem, in my opinion. But Vizioli feels compelled to explain his verbal maneuvering in a note. “[T]he central image of this poem is subverted in translation by the divergence in cases of gender between the Portuguese and English languages. In English, “Death,” when personified, becomes masculine in gender; therefore, I was forced to substitute the expression “dying.” This solution is obviously not very satisfactory, but at least it retains the basic idea of Death as a cavalier who comes to court his dame, later marrying her.”

Paulo Vizioli’s translation, first published in the 1970s, was followed by Aíla de Oliveira Gomes’s translation published in 1985 in her prize-winning collection *Emily Dickinson: uma centena de poemas*. Here is her version of the first two stanzas (p. 105):

Porque não pude parar p’ra Morte, ela
Parou p’ra mim, de bondade.
No coche só cabíamos as duas
E a Imortalidade.

Viagem lenta - Ela não tinha pressa,
E eu já pusera de lado
O meu trabalho e todo o meu lazer,
P’ra seu exclusivo agrado.

Bravely, she follows not Paulo Vizioli’s lead, but, in an implicit endorsement, Krähenbühl’s. If “Morte” is feminine in gender in Portuguese, then the poem must survive that fact, and it must do so with no extraordinary ingenuity on the part of the translator. But Aíla Gomes does follow Paulo Vizioli in one respect. She, too, offers a note of explanation. “The Portuguese language, which does not permit the masculine personification of Death, fails to insinuate that this is a very genteel case of love’s ravishment.” Yet, no matter, for “Various other

poems use the carriage, the cavalier, the invitation, associated with death: but the 'admirer' can be a lover who is already dead, or Christ himself and, in that way, death is transfigured" (Gomes, p. 204). So, it's a choice, not an error, and the explanation for that choice opens out to the consideration, possibly, of some other rather important questions for Dickinson.⁸

Besides my study of Brazilian translations of Dickinson's poetry, I also managed to place a checklist of work on Dickinson and Brazil and a short piece on Dickinson's references to Brazil. The latter would provide an aftermath to my Brazilian stay, when shortly after my return to the United States, I received a letter from the Dickinson scholar, Rebecca Patterson. The author of *The Riddle of Emily Dickinson* (1950) had read a brief description of my article, "Emily Dickinson's Brazilian Poems," in which I argued that the red (color and dye) associated with the *pau-brasil* was central to an understanding of Dickinson's handful of poetic references to Brazil. On the basis of Bernice Slotte's account of this piece, Patterson had concluded that I must be taking issue with the argument in her portion on Brazil in an essay on Dickinson's Latin-American geography - which, incidentally, I had not seen. Here is what Patterson had read in Slotte's review of Dickinson scholarship for 1972:

Unified themes and patterns in Emily Dickinson's poetry are subjects of several substantial articles. George Monteiro in "Emily Dickinson's Brazilian Poems" (*Inter-americana di Bibliografia* 22: 404-10) reviews symbolic geographical references in five poems of the early 1860s ("I'll clutch - and clutch -," "Some such Butterfly be seen," "My first well Day - since many ill -," "A Moth the hue of this," and "I asked no other thing -"). Sources for some of the Brazilian themes are noted in *Exploration of the Valley of the Amazon* by William Lewis Herndon and Lardner Gibbon (1853-1854). The symbolism of Brazil is seen as "something desirable, beautiful, and exceeding rare." On some details (particularly that "Brazil" means red, not blue) this article disputes statements in Rebecca Patterson's "Emily Dickinson's Geography: Latin America" (Slotte, 1974, p. 68).

Here now is an excerpt from Patterson's letter to me, dated November 7, 1974. After requesting a copy of my article, she writes:

I have just read a brief discussion of it by Bernice Slotte in the newest what's what on studies in our field. She gives no date, but I take it you were writing in full awareness of the attention I had called to Herndon and Gibbon's *Exploration of the Valley of the Amazon*. I too had made notes of other possible borrowings, but had decided they were a bit far-fetched and not of any significance. I should like to know what you discovered that I overlooked. From the poems you selected I *think* you were writing with special reference to my article in Nicholas Joost's *Papers in Language & Literature* on her Latin

American geography. But I am sure it is Ms. Slote's howler that I ever said anything so foolish as that Emily regarded Brazil as *blue*. Slote then went on to talk of my jewel imagery article and actually credited me with affirming "that she [Emily] increased her use of such allusions through the years." I almost went through the roof. Couldn't the woman read or interpret a chart? This was the exact opposite of what I had been so careful to state and to prove. Emily Dickinson's symbols march up to the end of 1865 and then disappear as into a great gulf. When she tentatively resumes her pen – and in a very hesitant and meager way – *the symbols have virtually all disappeared*. I make believers of my students every year by having them trace a particular symbol or symbol-cluster. *The symbols disappear* – except for a few examples that may actually have survived in revisions of 1859-1865 poetry of which early worksheet drafts and even packet copies have been destroyed. And this is a fact that must be taken account of in the study of her work – and in her biography. The hummingbird poem is a good example. Every source of that poem was staring her in the face in 1862!⁹

As you can see, Patterson has gone off message here, turning her critical attention to Bernice Slote; but in the next paragraph she returns to her quarrel with my work as she understands it from her reading of Slote's brief description:

As for your main point of difference with me, if I gather Ms. Slote aright (or *she* gathers you aright, to put it more properly), I have already good-naturedly added to my revised color article (in my completed ms. of her symbolism) the possibility that Brazil is red. It is of no importance to me. Red and purple are both colors of passion, the main difference being that purple is also loaded with pomp and death and that red can have the added significance of suffering but not pomp and death. What I do want to know and hope to find in your article is the explanation of just *why* Brazil-wood should have attracted her notice. Is it likely to have been a substance in common use around the Dickinson household? Did they lay in a supply for dyeing? Do you know of any book, short story, or poem of provable importance to her life that lays stress on Brazil-wood? *Par exemplum*, you and I don't read the dictionary for pretty words to add to our vocabulary, neither did Emily. I tried it once as a young girl and came out with "austral," for which I have had absolutely no use [until this moment in this letter, I would add editorially], and the memory even embarrasses me.

I have quoted slightly less than half of Patterson's letter, which goes on, interestingly, to offer several examples of sources for Dickinson's poetry that she has located.

So, as requested, I sent off a copy of my article, with a covering letter offering background details on my work on Dickinson while in Brazil:

During 1969-70 I served as Fulbright Lecturer in American Literature at the Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil. It was in the São Paulo Municipal Library that I first discovered Herndon and Gibbon in the course of looking for English-language accounts of Brazil. I also happened to be teaching Dickinson to a small group of graduate students. The "Brazil" poems were, naturally, a particular interest of my students. Imagine my surprise when I found Herndon and Gibbon's book relevant to the poems. Imagine my further surprise when I learned that the Herndon and Gibbon volumes were in the Dickinson library. I did not learn of your *PLL* piece until my return to the United States late in 1970.¹⁰

I also enclosed a copy of an explication of a poem by Herman Melville in which the word "Brazilian" is used to describe a flag's red stripes.

Surprisingly, I did not hear back. But I did learn something about her reaction to my piece when she actually read it and what it prompted her to do next. The information came from my colleague Barton L. St. Armand, who shortly after receiving it provided me with a copy of Rebecca Patterson's letter to him dated September 1, 1975. He had originally asked her for a reprint of her two-part article on "color" in Dickinson's poetry. She had sent the reprint but it had somehow gone astray, and now Patterson offered St. Armand an opportunity to read the entire manuscript of her book. Her reason for making such an offer struck me as quite extraordinary, especially since she had not answered *my* letter of November 12, 1974. Patterson explained to St. Armand:

I have one particular reason for wanting you to look it over. I've been guilty of taking Professor Monteiro's name in vain. Not that I don't relish his work or approve of his general direction. He and I are agreed, I think, that a knowledge of her reading, of the influences on her work, is an essential first step to the understanding of the symbolism. My only objection to his Brazilian article is that he makes one really negligible source do so much work for him, and I tease him on that account. Then I saw how I could use his article as a means of getting into my own work, of indicating the complexity of influences, of showing how image clusters come together and explicate each other. I began to use poor Professor Monteiro as a stalking horse (though I like him) for getting at other scholars I deplore. I'm afraid I even suggest things of which he is totally innocent - *but the others are not*. You can tell me whether I have gone too far or whether Professor Monteiro can join me in what I should like him to consider a shared joke. He can have the fun of answering me and pointing out my errors. After all, I devote my whole introductory chapter to him in a book I can't help believing is important.

St. Armand kindly provided me with a copy of the introductory chapter (though not of the entire manuscript); and I read it immediately. It puzzled and amused me, but I decided to say nothing.

I was to hear once more from Patterson. In a letter dated November 29, 1975, written shortly before her death, as it turned out, she acknowledges receipt of my note on Melville's poem sent a year earlier, and then goes on to write about now being on "indefinite sick leave," which leads her to talk about the several "clinical" deaths she has already suffered. She describes one of those experiences:

Twelve years ago to the month, after a car accident and a bad brain concussion (neglected by doctor of that era) I was taken by ambulance on a three-hour midnight run to Kansas City. From a coma I went into convulsions, then suffered respiratory and cardiac arrest. The young ambulance nurse threw herself on me and pulled me back with mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. I remained in a coma for some time, however. Weeks later, when I had time to think about it, I remembered Emily Dickinson's death poems. And do you know how they impressed me? Phony. Until you have died you cannot have the remotest notion what it is like to die.

It was not Rebecca Patterson's fortune to see her "important" book published. When *Emily Dickinson's Imagery* did appear, under the aegis of the University of Massachusetts Press in 1979, "Letter to a Dickinson Scholar," the introductory chapter in which Patterson had set me up as "a stalking horse" and that she had hoped I would take as a "shared joke," had disappeared – without a trace. In fact, her discussion of Dickinson's "Brazil" poems runs to less than a page and a half (Patterson, 1979, pp. 144-145); and I do not figure in it. Thus was I deprived of whatever "fun" I might have had in "answering" Patterson and pointing out her "errors."

Notes

1. John Nist's piece appeared in English two years later – "Two American Poets and A Spider," *Walt Whitman Birthplace Bulletin* (Jan. 1961), 4:8-11.
2. "In 1940," Ribeiro writes, "history repeated itself as we ended 200 years of monolithic French influence and entered a phase called 'the Age of American Enlightenment' – by its proponents – or 'the Era of Coca-Colonization of Brazil' – by its detractors" (1961, p. 395).
3. See Blanca Lobo Filho (1969, 1973).
4. ABRAPUI is the abbreviation for "Associação Brasileira de Professores Universitários de Língua Inglesa." An expanded version of my conference paper appeared in Monteiro (1971).
5. I came across Gastón Figueira's translation, which appeared in the newspaper *El Día* (Montevideo, Uruguay) on August 25, 1960, in a clipping (no page number) in the files of *O Estado de São Paulo*.

6. Interested readers might want to consider two other translations of Dickinson's poem "I died for Beauty." First there is Cecília Meireles's fine Portuguese version (in *Obras-primas da poesia universal*, 3d ed., organized by Sérgio Milliet [São Paulo: Martins, 1957], p. 84):

Morri pela beleza, e ainda não estava
Meu corpo à tumba acostumado
Quando alguém que morreu pela verdade
Foi posto do outro lado.

Brandamente indagou: "Por quem morreste?"
"Pela beleza" disse. "Pois
Eu, foi pela verdade. Ambas são o mesmo.
Somos irmãos, os dois."

E assim, parentes de noite encontrados,
Conversamos entre as paredes,
Até que o musgo nos chegasse aos lábios
Nossos nomes cerrando em suas redes.

Secondly, there is the Venezuelan poet-translator Rafael Pineda's Spanish version (*Hierbas, Púrpura y Magnolias* [Caracas, Venezuela: Monte Avila, 1973], pp. 59-60):

*Morí por la Belleza, pero la tumba
tan escasa, apenas me contenía.
Alguien que murió por la Verdad,
desde la cripta vecina
me preguntó suavemente:
"¿Por qué moriste?"
"Por la Belleza", respondí.
"Y yo, por la Verdad.
Ambas son una sola,
y nosotros, hermanos", dijo él.
Y así, hermanados, nos conocimos una noche,
y hablamos a través de las tumbas,
hasta que el musgo nos creció en la boca
y nuestros nombres cubrió para siempre.*

7. Manuel Bandeira, "Emily Dickinson," *O Cruzeiro* (Aug. 24, 1963). I quote from a clipping (no page given) in the files of *O Estado de São Paulo*.
8. Idelma Ribeiro de Faria's choice is also interesting; she opts for "Senhor da Morte" – the "Lord" or "Master" of Death (Farias, 1986, p. 27). Other Portuguese translations of "Because I could not stop for Death" include those of Vera das Neves Pedroso (1965, pp. 238-40); Carolina Matos (1978, p. 69); Ivo Bender (2002, p. 149); Nuno Júdice (2000, p. 85); and Mário Faustino in 1957. Faustino's version appears in *Poesia-experiência*, ed. Benedito Nunes (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1977), p. 88; see Carlos Daghlían (1987, p. 287).
9. Rebecca Patterson's letters are quoted with permission.
10. George Monteiro to Rebecca Patterson, November 12, 1974.

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