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Blending and Beyond: Form and Feeling in Poetic Iconicity

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Abstract

This paper looks at how blending theory needs to develop in order to account for literary creativity and thus provide a more comprehensive picture of human cognition. Exploration of the emotional, formal, and aesthetic affects of a literary text suggests ways in which literary analysis may illuminate cognitive processes and contribute to the development of a theory of aesthetic emotion. I argue that the synthesis of material-medial-affect modes needs to be modeled in order to capture the nature of a literary text in achieving poetic iconicity, the semblance of felt life through forms symbolic of human feeling. The opportunity for poetic iconicity occurs when the structural schemas that trigger the blending of material-medial modes are metaphoric in nature and are motivated by the feelings of lived experience. Analysis of an Emily Dickinson poem shows how metaphorical schemas blend feeling, form, and functional perspectives on our embodied experience of reality to create such poetic iconicity.

Introduction

One of the most important developments in studies of human cognition in recent years has been the emergence of Gilles Fauconnier's and Mark Turner's (2002) Conceptual Integration Network theory, or "blending." The blending model accounts for many seemingly divergent phenomena, from talking donkeys to complex numbers. One of its most significant achievements is the principled way in which it shows how new meaning can emerge from old information. The creation of meaning occurs through the metaphorical processes of mappings across different mental spaces. Thus cognitive metaphor becomes a crucial element in the construction of meaning. Blending, it should be noted, is a theory still in process (as all good theories are), and a great deal of research is currently taking place to elaborate and extend

blending's original formulation to include art in general and literary forms in particular (Turner 1995-2009).

Focus on conceptual metaphor and blending reveals cognitive processes common to both logical reasoning and imaginative creativity. This, I believe, is an important step both in revealing the integral role of imaginative creativity in human cognitive processing and in providing a basis on which one might explore what makes aesthetic creativity "special." Although I explore aesthetic creativity in literature, I believe that the development of a cognitive theory for literature might apply to a theory of art in general (Langer 1953, 1967).

The questions I raise in this paper, then, deal with how blending theory is being developed to include consideration of the arts, and what is needed to enable the theory to encompass literary imagination. In the process, I argue for a special understanding of what I call poetic iconicity that is resultative not causal, not representational in the sense of "copy," but an aesthetic iconicity that is achieved through the application of full symbolic representation in order to capture and express the relationship between form and feeling in creating a semblance of precategory reality (Merleau-Ponty 1962[1945], 1968). This semblance occurs through an integration of the processes of motivation, isomorphism, and imitation (or mimesis), terms that are in themselves complex and understood in somewhat different ways in current iconicity research, as indicated in the various contributions to the Iconicity Project (<http://iconicity.ch>; see also Freeman 2007). I suggest that the opportunity for poetic iconicity arises when the isomorphic structures of the generic space that enable blending to occur depend on metaphoric schemas (Freeman forthcoming). Poetic iconicity is achieved when the conceived feeling of being emotionally engaged in the present moment of lived experience is expressed through form in creating the complex blend that is the poem as a whole (Freeman 2005).

1. Blending: An Overview

One problem in blending theory is identifying the principles that determine what gets selected for the various mappings across mental spaces to occur. The answer, I believe, lies in the role of feeling in formulating thought, in initiating what is generally known as “value-driven selection.” Feelings arise from the interaction of two sources: sensations, from the external world through the five senses, and internally generated emotions. In this way, we both act upon and are acted upon by our environment as we develop mental concepts. The role of feeling in creating meaning is not accounted for in Fauconnier and Turner’s original blending model. Nor is the notion of form, except for a very sketchy treatment of structure in the generic space.

The term cognition initially was restricted in its use to mental conceptualization and reasoning. However, with the development of the neurosciences, increasing evidence points to a more integral relationship among the various brain processes involving perception, memory, emotion, intuition, etc., in the way we think. As a result, the term cognitive has been broadened to include all aspects of brain-mind functioning, including the emotional. Some critics have assumed that emotion arises from cognition, an assumption known among psychologists as appraisal theory (Ortony, Clore, and Collins 1988; [Scherer et al. 2001](#)). More recent research, however, has acknowledged the primacy of the emotions in forming cognition ([Damasio 1999](#); [Frijda et al. 2000](#)). For literary texts, the challenge of determining the role of the emotions has been taken up by, among others, Raymond W. [Gibbs \(1994, 1999\)](#), David S. [Miall \(2006\)](#), Jenefer [Robinson \(2005\)](#), Reuven [Tsur \(1992, 1998, 2003, 2008\)](#), and Willie van Peer (2008). This research has focused primarily on readers’ emotional responses to literary works, though Robinson and Tsur also explore the emotional qualities of the text itself. There are, in fact, three points of entry for feelings in a literary text: the author’s initial motivation for the expression, symbolic conception within the language of the text, and the text’s subsequent affect upon the reader.¹

Line Brandt’s and Per Aage Brandt’s (2005) semiotic modification of the blending model incorporates the notion of feeling in motivation, symbolic conception, and affect. The advantage of the Brandts’ model is that it provides more specific information about the processes involved that include the important role of feeling as a dynamic schema at various points in the discourse situation, from the point

of view of both its originator and its respondent. Its disadvantage lies in losing the generic space that enables structural mappings among spaces to take place. In order to account for poetic iconicity, both form and feeling need to be incorporated into the blending model.

1.1 Blending and Iconicity

Studies of iconicity in the arts have usually adopted one of two perspectives: iconography and iconology. Iconography refers to an intentional (not arbitrary) relation between the elements of the art medium and the images or ideas expressed through them. Thus in music, for example, the ascending scale of the repetitions of the phrase “We are climbing Jacob’s ladder” in the gospel hymn simulates the ascending movement of the climbers. Poetry can simulate both aural and visual relations, aural as in Tennyson’s (1847) line “murmuring of innumerable bees,” where the phonetic sounds simulate the actual sound of swarming bees, or visual as in Herbert’s (1992[1633]) “Easter Wings,” where the line arrangements of the poem’s two stanzas form the shape of wings. Iconology, in contrast, refers to the study of the symbolic significance of these iconographic features in order to understand the principles of societal attitudes underlying them (Panovsky 1955). For example, Mitchell (2008) explores the elements of pictorial representations of Christ’s Passion in the notorious photograph of the Hooded Man of Abu Ghraib, which “transform” the photograph “into an indelible icon of what a Christian nation accomplished in its crusade to liberate the Middle East” (86).

The term iconism historically referred to the metaphorical quality of the icon. Although the term is not used much any more, it points to the integral role metaphor plays in creating an icon. As noted in the introduction, metaphor is also a crucial element in blending. Masako [Hiraga \(1994, 2005\)](#) was the first to apply blending theory to the relation between metaphor and iconicity in poetic texts. Following Charles Sanders Peirce’s theory of the icon as comprising image, diagram, and metaphor, Hiraga shows how iconic mappings occur, not simply through the rudimentary representation of auditory and visual images as in onomatopoeia and graphic design, but as diagrammatic components of meaning through structural and relational analogies.² Grammatical metaphor, in Hiraga’s theory, thus becomes the bridge that links

form and meaning.³ Building on Hiraga's work, I explore how meaning that emerges as the result of blending becomes iconic in nature, through the metaphorical fusion of what I (now) call the material-medial modes of feeling, form, and function (Freeman 2007, 2008, 2009, forthcoming).⁴

1.2 Blending: Feeling, Form, and Iconicity

Recent advances in blending theory and its relation to artistic creation, as represented in The Artful Mind (Turner 2006), provide a more complex and sophisticated account of the roles of emotion and form in the creation of meaning than have heretofore existed in the cognitive linguistic literature.⁵ Thus Terrence Deacon (2006, 41), noting that emotion and cognition cannot be dissociated, calls for an augmentation of blending theory in order to “link it to a theory of emergent emotional states—that is, to recognize the inescapable interweaving and interdependency of the dimensions of mind we divide into cognition and emotion.” He sees blending as “the basic iconic interpretive process that allows symbols to be projected to novel referential roles” (my emphasis). What I find missing in his explanatory blending diagrams, however, is the interrelation of emotion and form. In parallel vein, George Lakoff (2006, 167) focuses on form, not feeling. He explores the fact that “form has inferential structure” through his “cog hypothesis” that links sensory-motor components of the brain to neural processes: “Examples of cogs are aspectual schemas, image schemas, and force-dynamic schemas.” These schemas, Lakoff suggests, are what “give form to art” (154). They are, in my account, motivated by feeling. They are the structural links between the sensory and the emotional that engender meaning and significance. When they are metaphorical in function, iconicity may occur.⁶

Per Aage Brandt's (2006) contribution to The Artful Mind deals with aesthetic evaluation. In the situational context of an observer looking at a painting, the presentation and reference spaces of the Brandts' semiotic blending model become respectively the two-dimensional physical form of the painter's choice of brush strokes, color, and line, and the three-dimensional “scene, the landscape, the configuration of things that moved the painter's representational hand and mind” (182). The relation between the two spaces, Brandt argues, is one of both structural mapping and emotional resonance or

“passion,” resulting in a tension between presentation and reference that creates “the blend that our aesthetic sensitivity captures in its desire-based schema of attentional dynamics” with the impact of emotional response (181). The success of this dynamic tension in creating the blend constitutes aesthetic evaluation for the observer. Deacon’s, Lakoff’s, and Brandt’s explorations of the role of blending in emotional, formal, and aesthetic effects in art are suggestive in their anticipation of the fusion of these elements in the achievement of aesthetic or, specifically for the literary arts, poetic iconicity.

2 Beyond Blending: Poetic Iconicity

Fauconnier’s and Turner’s blending theory explains the cognitive processes by which we conceptually integrate multiple aspects of our experience in order to achieve human scale. This conceptual integration ability, I believe, developed in humans from aesthetic experience (Dewey 1925 [1981], 1934 [1987]).⁷ Johnson (2007, xi) defines aesthetic experience as “the vast, submerged continents of nonconscious thought and feeling that lie at the heart of our ability to make sense of our lives.” This aesthetic dimension enables the blending of material-medial modes to iconically create the semblance of felt reality. Although Johnson recognizes that an “adequate” aesthetics of cognition must reach beyond the arts, it is with the arts that any exploration of what Langer calls “the mind feeling” must begin.⁸ My title, “Beyond Blending,” might just as well, therefore, be called “Before Blending.” The time-space continuum that this play on words evokes (beyond :: spatial; before :: temporal) raises phenomenological issues that are also “at the heart” of how we “make sense of our lives.” By exploring the cognitive dimensions that create art in all its forms, we may plumb the depths of the human capability to create meaning and significance. For poetry, this exploration takes two major forms: 1) investigation into the phenomenology of our lived experience as part of the external world, and 2) investigation into how our feelings and attitudes both motivate and structure the patterns of language to iconically express those lived experiences.

Matching language to experienced reality is the goal of all poetry. Even the so-called “language poets” wrestle with this task. Words are made to work, not to communicate meaning but to express a reality that lies beyond words. Poets and writers, regardless of period or genre, speak in terms of poetry as

a “vision of reality” (Yeats 1983), of “things in their thingness” (Ransom 1938, 112-13), “the object as it really is” (T. S. Eliot 1964, 82-83). Anthony Hecht (1995, 130), to whom I owe these quotes, speaks of the multivalenced and dialectal nature of poetic discourse that “allows the poet to achieve a certain healthy impersonality, serving as a device by which to inhibit any limp tendency to narcissistic solipsism, on the one hand; and on the other, it lends to the poetry itself the rich complexity of actuality—the unsimplified plenitude of the objective world.” By making art the means by which we are able to “see into the life of things,” as Wordsworth (1798) put it, these writers suggest that art has the capacity to conjure up the feelings of experiencing the concrete, precategorical world before the mind conceptualizes it into more generalized abstraction, what Archibald MacLeish (1926) infers by his statement in Ars Poetica that “A poem must not mean / But be.” As Joseph Conrad, in his preface to The Nigger of the Narcissus notes:

A work that aspires, however humbly, to the condition of art should carry its justification in every line. And art itself may be defined as a single-minded attempt to render the highest kind of justice to the visible universe, by bringing to light the truth, manifold and one, underlying its every aspect. It is an attempt to find in its forms, in its colors, in its light, in its shadows, in the aspects of matter and in the facts of life, what of each is fundamental, what is enduring and essential—their one illuminating and convincing quality—the very truth of their existence....My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel—its is, before all, to make you see. That—and no more, and it is everything. (Zabel 1947, 705-08)

The matching of language to the forms of experienced reality is achieved through the ways in which our feelings and attitudes both motivate and structure the forms in which the language is expressed. Feeling intensifies the more form contracts. Consider, for example, the following epigram by Marcus Valerius Martialis (Heraeus and Borovskij 1976/82) and your own emotional responses to two recent translations (Bowersock 2009):

Dum Phaethontea formica vagatur in umbra,

Implicuit tenuem sucina gutta feram.

Sic modo quae fuerat vita contempta manente,

Funeribus facta est nunc pretiosa suis.

Shackleton Bailey (1993) translates the epigram almost word for word:

As an ant was wandering in Phaethonic shade, a drop of amber enfolded the tiny creature.

So she that was despised but lately while life remained has now been made precious by
her death.

The form Shackleton Bailey's translation takes is one of descriptive narration. The story it tells blends the fate of the ant with the moral that death can make precious what life despised.

A more recent translation by Garry Wills (2008) *may be less accurate than Shackleton Bailey's more literal translation, but, as Bowersock suggests, even outdoes the original in its pithy quality:*

A drop of amber hit an ant,

While crawling past a tree,

A brief and trifling thing preserved

For all eternity.

Intuitively, we feel the impact of fate on the ambered ant, just as we feel the apple that dropped on Newton. Space does not permit me to explore all the dimensions of Wills's translation: the prosodic choice of an iambic 8-6 meter, why Martial chose an ant for his image, the subtle implications of individual versus social value, or the feeling of being part of a perfective present, a moment "out of time." Let me point to just one crucial element that contributes to the iconicity of Wills's poem. Both translations preserve the two-part structure of Martial's original epigram. First we are given a description of the event, then we are invited to consider its significance. In Wills's translation, however, the words are working above the level of reportage. Note that the scope of the appositional phrase, "a brief and trifling thing," is ambiguous. On one level, the phrase obviously refers to the ant, a lowly, inconspicuous insect with a brief life span. But it can also refer to the event, that is, the entire preceding two lines. Not only is the ambered ant preserved for all eternity, but its story is too. In other words, the ambered ant

contains within its fossilized preservation the history of the event, and the forensic geologist who discovers the fossil may “read” its story accordingly, as we read the poem. Wills’s choice of the word preserved captures more specifically Martial’s funeribus, a focus on the burial that accompanies death rather than death (mortibus) itself. Shackleton Bailey (and perhaps Martial too) is reporting an event as if it actually happened. Wills is making the language of his poem enact the event, whether or not it did. The drop falls, the ant is ambered, and the story preserved. As we read, the poem enacts for us the perfective present of the happening.

It is not always easy to describe one’s feelings when such iconic enactments occur. Here, we may feel a positive sense of completion, a sense of fulfillment of the ant’s otherwise lowly destiny, a sense of amusement, the comforting recognition that eternity too can belong to the most inconspicuous of creatures, or indeed all or none of the above. However one might describe them, I think you’ll agree that the emotions we experience reading Wills’s version as opposed to Shackleton Bailey’s are more intensified.

By focusing on the concrete forms or qualia of “the visible universe,” artists and poets capture lived experience through the sensations and emotions that constitute feeling. As Coleridge (1817) notes, the poet “diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each to each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination.” This human capacity to synthesize through fusion or blending enables the poet to create through language a semblance, or icon, of reality, not the reality that arises from our conceptualized representations of the world—Shackleton Bailey’s descriptive narration—, but the reality of our being part of Merleau-Ponty’s (1968) in-visible world, the immediate, always fleeting present that forever escapes our objectivizing gaze—Wills’s moment of the drop falling (Freeman 2007).

This, then, is what I mean by poetic iconicity. It is the ontological actualization of being in the timeless moment of the perfective present, achieved through the cognitive processes of metaphorically blending the material-medial modes of feeling, form, and function.

Emily Dickinson's poetry characteristically makes this iconic connection through a metaphoric blend that creates identity among self, poem, and nature, especially flowers. The poet not only occupied herself in growing flowers in her garden and in the conservatory her father built especially for her, she identified her poems, her other occupation, with her flowers, and both became the "material anchors" of herself, as expressions of her love for others and her own spirit.⁹ "By a flower - By a letter / By a nimble love -" she wrote in an early poem (F163A/J109).¹⁰

Poems often accompanied gifts of flowers, and both were Dickinson's ways of moving outward into the world around her even as she remained within the confines of her home. Anecdotal evidence suggests that in the poem "I hide myself within my flower," she actually tucked the poem inside a flower blossom she sent to a friend, and the poem develops, both in its earliest form and in a later variant, with identity mapping of flower, poem, and self:

I hide myself within my flower
That wearing on your breast -
You - unsuspecting, wear me too -
And angels know the rest!

H 2 Fascicle 3 F80A/J903¹¹

Through identity mapping, the "I" of this poem is both the poem itself in its material manifestation and the poet writing it. The poem has a flirtatious, sexually suggestive feel to it, invoking physical contact with the flower-poem-poet "resting" on the breast of the wearer. The later version (F80C/J903) has a much more distant feel to it, as the flower is transferred from the breast to a vase, and the barely noticeable hint of death in "angels" is foregrounded by the fading of the flower which invokes, through the identification of flower with poet, the loneliness of physical absence:

I hide myself - within
my flower,
That fading from your
Vase -

You - unsuspecting - feel for

me -

Almost - a loneliness –

H 210 Fascicle 40 F80C/J903

Like a visual representation, a poem achieves iconicity, not simply by including a certain number of iconic-aesthetic (iconographic) elements, but by making them all interrelate and interact within a web of words and ideas to create iconologically a semblance of reality that draws the reader in through the three narrative strategies of suspense/curiosity/surprise (Sternberg 2003a,b). The meaning that emerges is, as the poet Wallace Stevens (1965, 96) observes, “the sense that we can touch and feel a solid reality which does not wholly dissolve itself into the conceptions of our own minds.”¹² The creative arts thus restore us to the primordial, precategorical experience of being part of the structure of reality through the processes of the imaginative faculty in individuating the feelings that structure the forms of material expression. In the case of poetry, the material expression is of course language. Just as the artist uses the elements of paint, brush, and color to create the contours and lines of a painting, so the poet uses the elements of sound, rhythm, and other linguistic features to create the rhythmic patterns, repetitions, and arrangements of a poem.

2.1 Poetic Iconicity at Work

How the structural forms of metaphor are realized as feeling in linguistic expression through blending the material-medial modes can be explored through poetic analysis. Consider, for example, the following poem by Emily Dickinson:

- 1 I dwell in Possibility -
- 2 A fairer House than Prose -
- 3 More numerous of Windows -
- 4 Superior - for Doors -

- 5 Of Chambers as the Cedars -
- 6 Impregnable of eye -
- 7 And for an everlasting
- 8 Roof
- 9 The Gambrels [Gables] of the Sky -

- 10 Of Visitors - the fairest -
- 11 For Occupation - This -
- 12 The spreading wide my
- 13 narrow Hands
- 14 To gather Paradise -

H 106 Fascicle 22.11 F466A/J657

The structural schema for the poem depends on a comparison between “Possibility” and “Prose,” based on the metaphor of a physical house, defined by windows, doors, chambers, and roof. But what is the house a metaphor for? Had Dickinson written “I dwell in poetry, not prose,” as some critics have interpreted the poem, the comparison being drawn would be obvious. But in writing “Possibility,” Dickinson invokes a different kind of comparison, plumbing the inferential meanings of the words she uses, so that “Prose” may be understood to refer to the matter-of-fact, taken for granted, everyday commonplace events of experience, and “Possibility” to the potential that exists in reaching beyond the prosaic into the transcendental reaches of the creative imagination. In this sense, a poet dwells in possibility. As a result, the argument of the poem is not simply that poetry is preferable to prose because it is better, but that “poetry” creates a relation between us and the world that is not possible to achieve by limiting ourselves to “prose.” That relation is the achievement of poetic iconicity, as the house of possibility becomes the poem itself in all its iconographic manifestations in creating the semblance of a poetic, not prosaic, self-world. In the following analysis of the poem I show how the blending of

metaphoric schemas structure the relation between the material-medial modes to create such poetic iconicity.

The prosodic features of a poem carry its emotional weight. That is, feeling becomes formulated when the motivations that inspired the poet are manifested through the selection of prosodic and linguistic features that result in the poem's poetic structure. An examination of that structure leads to the discovery of the metaphorical schemas (image, aspectual, force dynamic) that trigger the blending of the material-medial modes. In Dickinson's poem, these metaphorical schemas convey the positively valenced feeling of expansion (as opposed to contraction) that accompanies movement outward in order to gather in. The force-dynamic schema is comparative, realized through fictive motion in contrasting the seen and the unseen, inner and outer, less and more within a CONTAINER image schema.¹³

On the macro level, the poem's three stanzas set up the possibility of the CONTAINER schema: an outer frame of two enclosing an inner one. This frame is grounded by the opening words which contain the only main verb in the poem, dwel, together with the preposition in, and by the closing lines which refer to the subject persona's actions of spreading (out) and gathering (in). Several features support the idea of movement IN and OUT as schemas for this frame. First, each stanza repeats the pattern of the prepositions of and for, all of which describe the constitution of and the purpose for the "house" in which the speaker dwells: stanza 1 has "of Windows" and "for Doors"; stanza 2 has "Of Chambers" and "for [a] Roof"; stanza 3 has "Of Visitors" and "for Occupation." The constituting of prepositional phrases all indicate a certain inwardness, the purposive for prepositional phrases a certain outwardness. Thus windows reflect the image of being inside looking out; chambers are described as being inside and unseen from without; visitors are seen as they come in. On the other hand, from inside, doors lead one outside; the roof is described as the outermost reaches of the sky; occupation as "spreading wide." The order of these prepositions thus reflects a progressive, recycling movement from IN (constitutive-seeing) to OUT (participatory-moving), a movement that culminates in the final climactic moment of spreading out to gather in.

Second, external features of nature in the middle stanza are introduced by an analogy between “Chambers” that are hidden inside houses and the dense “Cedars” outdoors that block the eyes from seeing through them. The linguistic shift from simile to metaphor changes analogy to identity as the protective covering of a house roof becomes the “Gambrels [Gables] of the Sky -” so that the “fairer House” becomes external nature.

The schema of moving outward is reinforced by the schemas of LESS/MORE and MORE IS GREATER, both with respect to quantity (“more numerous of Windows”) and quality (“Superior - for Doors -”), that also invokes the metaphorical schema of MORE IS UP. Up and out is what the poem does in the inner stanza as it expands the CONTAINER schema by moving the image of the house outdoors at the same time as it shifts perspective from looking out (of windows in stanza 1) to not being able to look in (“Impregnable of eye -”), and moving the image upward to the “Gambrels [Gables] of the Sky -.” This seemingly paradoxical movement outward inside the unseen recesses of “Chambers” and upward to the covering roof of the sky establishes the underlying metaphorical schema that governs the poem as a whole, the blending of the interior self with external nature. One cannot stand outside nature looking in if we are part of nature, no more than we can stand outside ourselves to look in at our interior self. As Dickinson says at the beginning of another poem: “Growth of Man - like Growth of Nature - / Gravitates within -” (F790A/J750).

Perception (seeing) has to be connected to participation (moving) in order for the poet to grasp and contain this felt reality. The connection is created through the opening up that “Possibility” provides. This opening up is achieved through the way in which the metaphorical schemas described above blend the poem’s material images with the medium of its prosodic forms, which are crucial elements in a poem’s emotional affects and some of which, reflected in the poem’s sound patterns, metrical stress placements, rhyme schemes, and line breaks, are described below.

The metrical move from less to more. Although the poem ostensibly conforms to the hymn pattern of common meter, only half of the six 8-position lines realize all eight positions, and these occur in each of the three stanzas (lines 1, 7-8, 12-13). Of these three 8-position lines, line 1 has only two major stresses

that reinforce the iambic pattern, both in the first half of the line, so that the line opens out to unrealized potentiality on the word “Possibility -” (with Dickinson’s open-ended marking indicated here by a hyphen further extending idea and feeling).¹⁴ The other two lines both increase the number of realized major stresses from line 1 and increase the line count by placing “Roof” and “narrow Hands” on separate lines. Only two lines in the entire poem are regular both in the number and placement of stresses. It is not accidental that these lines occur after and before the framing first and last lines: the second line, “A fairer House than Prose -,” marks the comparison with “Possibility”; and the last but one lines, “The spreading wide my / narrow Hands,” describe what “Possibility” enables the speaker to do. These lines contrast with each other in at least two ways that indicate movement from less to more: the number of positions in the line, from 6 to 8, and the arrangement of the lines, multiplying one into two.

The line breaks foreground the weak stress positions at line end, a characteristic that is also true of the other three 8-position lines that are missing their final syllable (lines 3, 5, 10). These lines also occur in each of the three stanzas, all contain the constituting prepositional of phrases—of windows, of chambers, of visitors—, and all end on the seventh, weak position so that the final strong position is occupied by a stress rest (i. e. unrealized by a linguistic morpheme), prosodically inviting the idea of openness to potentiality that was introduced by “Possibility” in the opening line of the poem.

The effect of displacing metrical position across two lines in the last two stanzas creates double emphasis, both on the words before and after the line breaks, namely “everlasting / Roof” and “spreading wide my / narrow Hands,” which also reinforce the MORE IS GREATER, MORE IS UP, and MORE IS MOVING OUT schemas, as well as the schema of an expanding CONTAINER, in conceiving of the sky as a roof and the narrow spreading wide.

The phonetic move from contraction to expansion. On the micro level, sound patterning simulates the metaphorical schemas. The three words that begin with the capitalized letter “P” are “Possibility,” “Prose,” and “Paradise,” all occurring at line end, with “Possibility” and “Paradise” beginning and ending the poem. “Prose,” which comes between them, and what is being compared with them, is monosyllabic as against the polysyllabic, less rather than more. The polysyllabic words also differ from the

monosyllabic by opening up to a vowel after the [p] onset. The vowels move in quality, from the open back position in “POss” to front rounded position in “PrOse” to open central in “PAr,” a movement from open to less open to even greater opening at the end, a progression that indicates the need to move out then in, in order to achieve a greater movement out, a progression that the three stanzas as a whole create. It is like the force dynamic action of exerting some energy (stanza 1), then withdrawing somewhat into one’s inner resources (stanza 2) to enable even greater energy to be exerted (stanza 3). (Consider again Dickinson’s line: “Growth of Man - like Growth of Nature - / Gravitates within -”.) The [r] that closes off the [p] from the following vowel in “PRose” moves to open the [p] by the vowel in “PAradise, and that is not all. All three words repeat the same sound in [s], though contrasting: it is voiced in “ProZe,” another opposition to the unvoiced [s] in both “PoSsibility and ParadiSe,” which moves from the first syllable in “Possibility” to the last in “Paradise,” thus creating in the increasing distance between [p] and [s] an even further extension and opening up of sound as the poem concludes.

The demarcation of the second stanza as being “inside” the outer two is marked both by the material images of “Chambers” and “Roof” that enclose and cover and by a formalized change in the patterning of closed and open sounds. The unvoiced sound [p] occurs three times in the first and last stanzas and only once in the inner stanza. In contrast, its voiced counterpart [b] occurs once in the first stanza (in “Possibility”) and three times in the inner stanza, in “Chambers,” “Impregnable,” and “Gambrels [Gables].” The voiced consonant [m] also occurs in these three words (though not in the variant “Gables”). The consonants [p], [b], and [m] are the only three in the English sound system that are formed with both lips together, a closing as opposed to an opening up. The choice of the word impregnable seems fortuitous in bringing together the unvoiced and voiced sounds [p/b/m] in a word that implies the existence of what is hidden, unseen. Its association with the open sound [ai] in the phrase impregnable of eye marks the move from closed to open. This stanza is also the only one to realize perfect rhyme in the 6-position lines of the poem, on eye and sky, which are the only two words at line end along with my in the last stanza and possibility in the first that end in open vowels. The short [i] of “possibilitY” thus opens up, in the inner stanza, to the most open sound in English phonetics—the

diphthongized [ai]—as the images of the poem move outdoors to the “Cedars” and the “Sky.” The schemas of this stanza pair off in complex patterns: chambers : cedars; impregnable : eye; roof : sky. The effect is to create a blend of house, self, and nature.

The final stanza creates a climactic movement of form, as it brings together the patterns of the preceding stanzas. The comparative “fairer” in the first stanza becomes the superlative “fairest” in the last, a move from MORE to MOST. The capitalized “ - This -,” set off both by its position at line end and the markings that separate it from the rest of the sentence, suggests a deictic reference to the poem itself as well as referring anaphorically to the “Possibility” of line 1 and cataphorically to the final lines of the poem. The closed rounded “PrOse” in the first stanza moves to the open-ended vowels of [ae] and [ai]: “The spreading wIde mY / nArrow HAnds / To gAther PAradIse.” The [ai], denoting both the “I” persona of the poem and the widest sound in English, surrounds and thus contains the [ae], which is the most open, giving the feel of an expanding CONTAINER schema. The emotive force of these prosodic and sound forms culminate in the greatest move of all, from indoors to outdoors, with the heavens of the “everlasting” sky to the gathering in of Paradise itself.

Paradise, Dickinson notes elsewhere, is the “Eden of God” (L234, Johnson 1965), and Eden is frequently her description for Nature: “Eden is that old fashioned House / We dwell in every day” (F1734A/J1657). If “Prose” is the matter-of-fact, everyday life of the household, where “Occupation” consists in laying fires, setting clocks, dusting and sweeping, churning and baking, “Possibility” becomes the freedom of the garden, with its bees, birds, and butterflies the fairest “Visitors,” and “Paradise” the flowers the speaker gathers. However, this metaphorical schema goes further. The constitutive images of the house of possibility are “More numerous,” “Impregnable of eye,” and “the fairest.” The purposive images are “Superior,” “everlasting,” and “Paradise.” In each case, the movement IN to OUT from of to for increases the comparison with “Prose” to invoke the purposive images that transcend the everyday natural world. In Romantic terms, it is a movement from nature to Nature. The pun on the word occupation, with its dual meaning of residing in a place (constitutive) and being engaged in activity (purposive), becomes the central focus or, in Chinese terms, the “eye” of the poem, capturing both the of

that is constitutive and the for that is purposive, as the self is identified with Nature through poetic realization in the deixis of “- This -.”

This “Nature” is the unseen reality of the self-world, hidden from us by the processes of human cognition that create a conceptual barrier between us and the primordial, precategorical world, Paul Eluard’s autremonde that John Burnside (2005: 60) describes as

that nonfactual truth of being: the missed world, and by extension, the missed self who sees and imagines and is fully alive outside the bounds of socially-engineered expectations—not by some rational process (or not as the term is usually understood) but by a kind of radical illumination, a re-attunement to the continuum of objects and weather and other lives that we inhabit.

Poetry, as all art, thus connects us to that in-visible world that is present as an underlying reality to our “socially engineered expectations.” In fusing the constitutive, the IN (seeing) and the purposive, the OUT (moving), Dickinson’s poem presents the poem’s persona as becoming one with Nature. Poetry thus becomes an icon of reality, the means by which we reconnect and re-attune to our place as part of the universe.

Such blending of poet, poem, and nature is characteristic of Dickinson’s poetry. Readers of Dickinson’s poems invariably see one of her most famous poems as referring to her poetry, where “This” deictically points to the poem she is writing:

This is my letter to the World
That never wrote to Me -
The simple News that Nature told -
With tender Majesty

Her Message is committed
To Hands I cannot see -
For love of Her - Sweet - country -

men -

Judge tenderly - of Me

H 70 Fascicle 24 F519A/J441

Like Dickinson's flower poem discussed earlier, this poem too might also have accompanied a flower to a loved recipient, so that "This" deictically refers to a blend of both poem and flower. The ambiguity of the phrase "For love of Her - Sweet - country - / men -" invokes simultaneously the metaphor of Nature's flowers as Nature's countrymen and (a reading possible because of the markings separating the phrase) "Sweet - country - / men -" as addressing the recipients as members of the "World." By fusing the world of nature, the consciousness of the self, and the writing of poetry in a metaphoric blend, Dickinson makes them iconic of each other and her poetry an icon of (her) reality.

Conclusion

In the compressions of its complex blendings, poetry offers both challenge and opportunity for exploring in more depth the way the human mind engages in cognitive integration, cognitive in both concept and feeling. As I hope my analysis of Dickinson's poem (and its extension in the way her poetics reveals the connection between self and nature) has shown, integration in Fauconnier and Turner's sense is not simply a matter of meaning but of feeling and form too. In order for blending to fully account for literary creativity, the role of feeling in motivating the blending of the material-medial modes needs to be accounted for.

What makes art special is not the cognitive processes that enable us to make sense of our world and our lives, but how they are exploited in order to put us in touch with the conditions of our emotional and sensuous experiences as participants in the world we share. No less than studies in the natural and the social sciences, studies in the arts are crucial if we wish to understand and map human cognition. Aesthetic evaluation enables us to determine the extent to which a given work of art successfully simulates those conditions in being iconic of reality. Aesthetics may thus be understood both in its

philosophical sense of exploring the conditions of our sensuous and emotional experience and in its artistic sense of appreciating the nature of art in all its forms.

As cognitive researchers increasingly turn their attention to understanding how our emotional being is both a primary and necessary part of our rational being, the importance and significance of the ways in which emotion and reason are both integrated in the aesthetic dimension of the arts may become more relevant to the perennial question, not only of what makes us human, but, being human, of what makes us the way we are.

Notes

1. The emotion (conceived by the author) that the reader detects in the text may not be the same as the emotion the reader experiences as a result. As I have commented elsewhere, I am not frustrated or angry at Casaubon's treatment of Dorothea in Eliot's Middlemarch, though Will Ladislaw is. Recognizing his emotion, I rather empathize with him (Freeman 2009; see also Carroll 2008).
2. The term image is used in its philosophical sense as a conceptualization in the mind arising from any of the five senses. By image, Peirce means the mental representation of sense perception that is abstracted from the singular and individual impressions of physical experience; by diagram, he means the forms of relations that enable the mental representation of an image.
3. The dualistic notion of form and meaning (or content) as separate entities comes from their reification. That is, neither form nor meaning are entities. Both are dynamic processes: "form" produces the material realization of kinetic or dynamic relations that serve to differentiate what Merleau-Ponty (1962[1945], 1968) calls the precatégorial or primordial experience of the physical world; "meaning" results from the cognitive processes that draw significance from the differentiations caused by formal operations on undifferentiated or formless matter. Reification obscures the fluidity of form-meaning kineses. It occurs through the need for cognitive economy that results in naming. This cognitive economy has both advantages and disadvantages: naming can aid in memorization and concept formation; through this very same process, however, it can

block alternate ways of seeing. In an attempt to avoid the philosophical problems associated with terms such as form, content, image, diagram, meaning, and so on, I adopt in this paper the term material-medial mode to indicate that in language the distinction between them cannot be characterized by simple division into substantial (content) and functional (structure) terminology (see note 4).

4. Following Wellek and Warren's (1956, 129) discussion of the problems associated with the form-meaning distinction, Tsur (2008, 639) proposes "a theoretical framework that proposes to do away with the form-content distinction." All contents, he says, including such elements as meaning, sound representation, imagery, and so on, are "materials ("norms" in Wellek and Warren's terminology). "Structures," he says, "are the various combination of these norms." These combinations may be related to Fauconnier and Turner's Vital Relations: i.e., such operations as categorization, comparison, identity, change, and so on. Since these structures mediate among norms or materials, I call them "medial modes."
5. As documented in a comprehensive survey of the developing field of Cognitive Linguistics, for example, linguists have primarily focused on the language of emotion and metaphors for emotion but not so much on the cognitive processes involved (Geeraerts and Cuyckens 2007). A notable exception is Getz's and Lubart's (2000) Emotional Resonance Model. Mark Johnson's (2007) work calls for the need to re-evaluate the role of aesthetics and emotion in human understanding.
6. Metaphorical schemas are necessary but not sufficient conditions for iconicity. What is also involved is the perceiver's or reader's role in recognizing iconic emergence in making sense of the virtual blend (Brandt and Brandt 2005). Christina Ljungberg (personal correspondence), noting that for Peirce, a sign must stand for something to somebody, comments that metaphoricity is "a form of iconic parallelism between the viewer/reader and the sender of the message which must 'excite in the mind of the receiver familiar images, pictures,...reminiscences of sights, sounds, feelings, tastes, smells, or other sensations, now quite detached from the original circumstance' etc C P 3.433) – which the sender assumes are more or less the same but of course

are not always, which is what makes communication asymmetrical and dialogic and a prototypical example of the generation of new meaning.”

7. Aesthetic comes from the Greek αἰσθε-, “to feel, apprehend by the senses” (OED): “Applied in Germ. by Baumgarten (1750-58, Æsthetica) to ‘criticism of taste’ considered as a science or philosophy; against which, as a misuse of the word found in German only, protest was made by Kant (1781, Crit. R.V. 21), who applied the name, in accordance with the ancient distinction of αἰσθητά and νοητά, to ‘the science which treats of the conditions of sensuous perception’”
From the perspective of non-dualistic cognition, the quarrel between Baumgarten and Kant may be resolved by understanding that the arts may be defined as the sciences of sensuous (affective) experience (Gross 2002). Just as rational hypotheses in the natural sciences may be proven wrong, so affective representations in the arts may fail to capture the “truth” of lived experience. Thus evaluation plays an integral part in both.
8. As Langer (1967: 243-244) notes, “No matter how complex, profound and fecund a work of art—or even the whole realm of art—may be, it is incomparably simpler than life. So the theory of art is really a prolegomena to the much greater undertaking of constructing a concept of mind adequate to the living actuality.”
9. Dickinson’s nickname for herself was, not uncoincidentally, “Daisy” (“Day’s Eye”). A “material anchor” is Edwin Hutchins (2005) term for the input space from which material structure (in this case, the poem, the flower) is projected to create stabilization of conceptual representations in a blend. It is thus a crucial component in the creation of poetic iconicity.
10. Numbers attached to Dickinson’s poems refer to the (F) Franklin (1998) and (J) Johnson (1955) editions. The italic letter after the number in the Franklin edition indicates which of the extant copies of the poem is being cited. Quotes from letters are identified by the letter L (Johnson 1965).
11. Manuscripts marked (H) are archived at the Houghton Library, Harvard University; those marked (A) at Amherst College. Some are included in the forty bound booklets Dickinson made to contain her poems (known as fascicles). Line breaks follow the manuscript copies.

12. It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the philosophical difficulties inherent in the term reality. Wallace Stevens's quote captures Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological notion of precatatorial experience that balances between the Scylla of subjective solipsism and the Charybdis of objective mind-independent reality by recognizing that we are part, not mere observers, of the external, physical world (Freeman 2007). It is what Lakoff and Johnson (1999) mean by embodied realism.
13. "Fictive motion" is Talmy's (2000) term for conceptual as opposed to physical movement. In the poem, Dickinson blends fictive and physical motion, so that the poem transcends its own containment to become an icon of the self-world.
14. The word Possibility extends over five metrical positions so that three of its syllables fall on strong stress positions. As a lexeme with morphemic suffixes, it contains only one major stress. Although this stress would normally fall on the antepenultimate syllable, it shifts to the first syllable as a result of the pressure to accent Póss-, both because of its placement on a strong stress position and its alliteration with Próse. Because everlasting is a compound word, the fact that its original two major stresses (éver and lásting) fall on metrically strong positions reinforces the tendency to maintain their stress in spite of the tendency in conversational pronunciation to weaken the second stress (cf. Halle and Keyser 1971).

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