(2nd half – Jackson, Dickinson's Misery)
plus notes

perhaps terminal, American modernism of which [Dickinson] is the first practitioner" (1). Thus, in what was by then a tradition of lyric reading, the subject of the poem became an abstract person accessible to modern readers.

As we have begun to see, such claims for Dickinson as representative have been made consistently for over a century, and some of them may even be true, but what concerns me here is what such statements suppose about the genre of Dickinson's work. For as Dickinson also became representative of the lyric, the lyric in turn came to represent a distinctly twentieth-century form of interpretation, and the aftermath of this interpretation removed lyric poetry from everything it may or may not have been about and made it about modern lyric reading—about fictive rather than historical persons, and, inevitably, about the historical pathos attached to those fictions.

Lyric Alienation

In 1938, Yvor Winters published an essay entitled "Emily Dickinson and the Limits of Judgment."[34] The essay bears an epigraph taken from the poem published in 1891 under the title "My Cricket":

> Antiquest felt at noon
> When August, burning low,
> Calls forth this spectral canticle,
> Repose to typify.[35]

As Winters's essay unfolds, the epigraph comes to stand for both Dickinson's and her twentieth-century readers' critical blind spots. According to Winters, both Dickinson and her modern readers underestimate the value of lyric poetry: Dickinson because "no poet of comparable reputation has been guilty of so much unpardonable writing"; and Dickinson's readers because "one cannot shake off the uncomfortable feeling that her popularity has been mainly due to her vices; her worst poems are certainly her most commonly praised" (283). The punch line is that "as a general matter, great lyric poetry is not widely read or admired" (283). For Winters, "My Cricket" is an instance of Dickinson's lyric power, *not* the sort of thing that the public would appreciate, and the sort of poem Dickinson herself rarely achieved.

Winters is not just interested in elevating this particular poem, but in placing lyric itself in such an elevated position that it must be alienated from both ordinary poet and ordinary reader. That elevation was for Winters a moral stance, a perspective that made him controversial among the literary critics that John Crowe Ransom would dub "New" in 1941.[36] As

Winters put it, his "theory of literature" was "absolutist" in the sense that he believed that "the work of literature, in so far as it is valuable, approximates a real apprehension and communication of a particular kind of objective truth." He goes on: "The form of literature with which I am for the most part concerned is the poem; but since the poem exhausts more fully than any other literary form the inherent possibilities of language, what I say about poetry can be extended to include other literary forms with relatively unimportant qualifications" (11). Winters's lyricization of poetry ("the poem" rather than any particular kind of poem) thus extended to a lyricization of literarature tout court, with the result that the reading of lyric became for Winters, as for New Criticism generally, the test case, the zero-sum game, of literary interpretation, and literature became the test case of cultural interpretation.[37]

The importance of the lyric to the New Critics has become the most characteristic—and oft caricatured—aspect of the mid-twentieth-century criticism that continues to have a formative influence on the study and, especially, the pedagogy of literature in the United States. As Mark Jeffreys has written, "lyric became a metonymy for New Critical ideology" in the literary critical eras that emerged as New Criticism began to loosen its hold; but as my attribution of grasping agency and Jeffreys's attribution of the term "ideology" to New Criticism indicate, that metonymy was hardly a neutral or purely contingent association.[38] It would be more accurate to say that lyric became a *metaphor* for the New Criticism, in the sense that both the genre and the critical perspective on that genre came to stand for one another—so much so that the ahistoricism attributed to New Critical close reading became confused and identified with an inherent ahistoricism of the lyric genre itself. Yet while many studies have exposed just how historical New Criticism actually was (as a conservative reaction to the new Left of the 1930s, as a post-Reconstruction Southern phenomenon, as a product of Eliot's literary theology, as an institutional grab for power in the postwar university), few have focused on how historically inflected the still-prevalent New Critical notion of "the lyric" was.[39]

One place to notice that inflection is in the New Critics' embrace of Dickinson. In Winters's reading of the poem he knew by the title "My Cricket," lyric isolation is actually the subject of the interpretation. Winters' reading is worth citing in its entirety because it frames Dickinson's lines in exactly the terms that would be so influential, not only for the interpretation of Dickinson but for the interpretation—and formation—of the genre:

> In the following poem, we are shown the essential cleavage between man, as represented by the author-reader, and nature, as represented by

the insects in the late summer grass; the subject is the plight of man, the willing and freely moving entity, in a universe in which he is by virtue of his essential qualities a foreigner. The intense nostalgia of the poem is the nostalgia of man for the mode of being which he perceives imperfectly and in which he cannot share. The change described in the last two lines is the change in the appearance of nature and in the feeling of the observer which results from the recognition of the cleavage:

> *Farther in summer than the birds,*
> *Pathetic from the grass,*
> *A minor nation celebrates*
> *Its unobtrusive mass.*
>
> *No ordinance be seen*
> *So gradual the grace,*
> *A pensive custom it becomes,*
> *Enlarging loneliness.*
>
> *Antiquest felt at noon*
> *When August, burning low,*
> *Calls forth this spectral canticle,*
> *Repose to typify.*
>
> *Remit as yet no grace*
> *No furrow on the glow,*
> *Yet a druidic difference*
> *Enhances nature now.*

The first two lines of the last stanza are written in the author's personal grammatical short-hand; they are no doubt defective in this respect, but the defect is minor. They mean: There is yet no diminution of beauty, no mark of change on the brightness. The twelfth line employs a meaningless inversion. On the other hand, the false rhymes are employed with unusually fine modulation; the first rhyme is perfect, the second and third represent successive stages of departure, and the last a return to what is roughly the stage of the second. These effects are complicated by the rhyming, both perfect and imperfect, from stanza to stanza. The intense strangeness of this poem could not have been achieved with standard rhyming. The poem, though not quite one of her most nearly perfect, is probably one of her five or six greatest, and is one of the most deeply moving and most unforgettable poems in my own experience; I have the feeling of having lived in its immediate presence for many years. (292–93)

The scrupulous formalism for which the New Critics, and especially Winters, became known is abundantly evident here, as is the cultivated appreciation of each formal feature. As R. P. Blackmur wrote of Winters in 1940, "his observations carry the impact of a sensibility which not only observed but modified the fact at hand; and we feel the impact as weight, as momentum, as authority."[40] That presumption of moral authority alienated Winters from much of the contemporary critical culture with which he was in conversation.[41] But the important thing about his formalist, somewhat picky reading of Dickinson is that its aim is to establish her as "one of the greatest lyric poets of all time" (299). What Winters wanted to isolate and secure was the *literary* Dickinson—or Dickinson as definition of the literary, and especially of the lyric. He accomplishes that isolation in his full critical (and aesthetically italicized) citation of the poem and in his demonstration of its craftsmanship. The one "defect" that Winters finds in Dickinson's artistry are two small lines "in the author's personal grammatical shorthand." Winters quickly dismisses the lapse as "minor," but his remark speaks volumes by the time we get to his reading's stunning conclusion: the "personal" touch interferes with the critic's own personal identification with the poem's portrait of isolation. What matters for Winters's reading of the poem is not when it was written, how it was written, or who read it—in fact, for the image of literary isolation he wants to find in the poem, it is just as well that he does not know any of that. If he did, the lines would seem insufficiently lyric.

The ways in which Winters's investment in Dickinson's abstract alienation is also an investment in a certain definition of the lyric become even clearer when we notice that Winters's essay was in part a response to an essay on Dickinson that Allen Tate had published in 1932. Entitled "New England Culture and Emily Dickinson," Tate's essay also identifies Dickinson's work as definitively literary, going so far as to claim that in order to appreciate Dickinson, one must have "a highly developed sense of the specific quality of poetry—a quality that most persons accept as the accidental feature of something else that the poet thinks he has to say. This is one reason why Miss Dickinson's poetry has not been widely read."[42] Tate's conclusion is a counterfactual statement: as we have seen, Dickinson's poetry *had* been widely read by 1932, most recently in a flurry of attention surrounding Aiken's and Bianchi's editions in 1924. But what is interesting about Tate's assertion is why it matters that his view of Dickinson rests on that fiction. As his title suggests, Tate wants Dickinson to represent not only "the specific quality of poetry" but to personify culture, namely American intellectual culture before and after what Tate calls by the Southern title "the War between the States." As others have pointed

out, Tate's view is certainly informed by his own regional loyalties, and the form that regionalism takes in his version of Dickinson is that her work becomes regionally representative. In the passage that Winters cites from Tate just before his reading of "My Cricket," Dickinson's local culture becomes evident in her relation to nature:

> The enemy of all New Englanders was Nature, and Miss Dickinson saw into the character of this enemy more deeply than any of the others. The general symbol of Nature, for her, is Death, and her weapon against Death is the entire powerful dumb-show of the Puritan theology led by Redemption and Immortality . . . we are renewed by Nature without being delivered into her hands. When it is possible for a poet to do this for us with the greatest imaginative comprehension, a possibility that the poet himself cannot create, we have the perfect literary situation. Only a few times in the history of English poetry has this situation come about: notably, the period between about 1580 and the Restoration (159).

Vanderbilt and Norcross and Higginson and Niles and Todd would be surprised by Tate's view of Dickinson's "weapon against Death," but perhaps that is because they shared Dickinson's culture. Tate's view is possible only from a temporal and regional purchase outside that culture—indeed, it is the otherness of "all New Englanders" in his account that allows his characterization of "the entire powerful dumb-show" in which they were, apparently, puppets. Tate's Dickinson becomes the voice of that "dumb-show," a poet able to redeem not nature but culture itself: a Shakespeare, a Milton.

What Dickinson also redeemed for the New Critics was the profession of literary criticism. If Winters's response to Tate was to personalize the cultural alienation that Tate attributed to Dickinson, Blackmur's response a year before Winters's was to objectify alienation: "Mr. Tate builds up a pretty good historical prejudice and makes it available in the guise of insight," Blackmur wrote, and he went on to identify Tate's partial account of intellectual history as

> the prejudice contained in the idea of imagination being fed and dying, or for that matter living or doing anything whatever—that is to say, a prejudice about the nature of poetry itself as the chief mode of the imagination. Poetry is composed of words and whenever we put anything into poetry—such as meaning or music; whenever poetry is affected by anything—such as the pattern of a culture or the structure of a stanza; whenever anything at all happens in poetry it happens in the medium of words. It is also near enough the truth to say that whenever we take anything out of poetry, either to use it or to see just what it is, we have to take

> it out in the words—and then put it right back before it gets lost or useless. The greatness of Emily Dickinson is not . . . going to be found in anybody's idea of greatness, or of Goethe, or intensity, or mysticism, or historical fatality. It is going to be found in the words she used and in the way she put them together; which we will observe, if we bother to discriminate our observation, as a series of facts about words.[43]

Blackmur's manifesto may certainly be read as what is now a truism about New Criticism: he insists on divorcing poetry from the sources of self-expression, rendering the poem a pure text to be read by the scientifically detached observer of linguistic "facts" (one can hear structuralism and poststructuralism rustling in the wings beyond Blackmur's performance). But Blackmur's phrase for his abstraction of poetry as pure language is curious: "whenever we take anything out of poetry, either to use it or to see just what it is, we have to take it out in the words—and then put it right back before it gets lost or useless." Why would we have to take anything out of poetry? What would it mean to take something out of poetry? What is it that we could take out? Could we say that Dickinson's familiar readers "took something out" of her verse (even when it did not contain dead crickets)? If they did, why or how would they "put it right back"? Winters's response to Blackmur was to cast as subjective experience the objective scene of reading that Blackmur describes. Winters scrutinized the formal elements of the poem in order to abstract them and thus identify with their subject; Blackmur's version of an intersubjective relation to the poem is selective and utilitarian: rather than live in the poem's presence, he fiddles with its parts. Thus Blackmur concludes his evaluation of Dickinson by claiming that "she never undertook the great profession of controlling the means of objective expression" (223). Blackmur wants Dickinson to be a professional because he wants literary critics to be professionals, which is to say that the intersubjective function of the poem for Blackmur is not to reflect Dickinson's own intellectual culture or to reflect the individual taste of the reader but to create academic culture.[44]

One of the foundational texts of the culture that Blackmur projects as the lyric's proper sphere was published in the same year as Winters's essay on Dickinson (1938), a year after Blackmur's, and six years after Tate's. In the first edition of *Understanding Poetry: An Anthology for College Students*, Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren specifically reject moralist, subjectivist, historically representative, and purely mechanical approaches to poetry, instead recommending that we—that is, "we" teachers and students in college classrooms—think "of a poem as a piece of writing which gives us a certain effect in which, we discover, the 'poetry' inheres."[45] It is an interestingly tautological recommendation. We read a

poem in order to discover "'poetry'"? Like Winters, Tate, and Blackmur, Brooks and Warren identify poetry as lyric, they identify the lyric as the literary, and they specify the literary as what they want to teach the student in turn to identify in poetry. The logic represents a seamless rationale for literary studies as a separate academic discipline. But what is this "'poetry'" in quotation marks that English professors teach students to discover in poems? Dickinson is one of the poets Brooks and Warren select to analyze as an exemplary instance of the poetry in the poem. Their explication of "After great pain a formal feeling comes—" emphasizes the imagery of the poem line by line in order to lead to the following conclusion: "the formality, the stiffness, the numbness . . . is an attempt to hold in, the fight of the mind against letting go; it is a defense of the mind" (471). Could not the reader have come to that conclusion by reading the first line? Perhaps, but according to Brooks and Warren, the reader could not have discerned the "'poetry'" of that conclusion, since such discernment requires that the imagery of each line be made the site of not just one reader's intersubjective experience but the common reference point for a select group of individuals who need to be directed to experience particular moments of intersubjectivity—of "reading." As Brooks and Warren put it in their introduction, "poetry is not an isolated and eccentric thing, but springs from the most fundamental interests which human beings have" (25). The purpose of *Understanding Poetry* is to direct students' individual interests toward a common goal, a common culture of the class. That is where, after 1938, "'poetry'" will be found.

As the many different cultural sites where Dickinson's poetry was found collapsed into the community of professional (or apprentice) readers, so the contingent details, referents, genres, enclosures, circumstances, addressees, occasions, secrets, and textures of her work were collapsed into an idea of the lyric generated by that community. It would be interesting to compare the abstractly useful model of the lyric that the New Critics developed in their conversation around Dickinson to Adorno's introductory apology in "Lyric Poetry and Society" (1957) to the effect that his title might make his audience think that "a sphere of expression whose very essence lies in either not acknowledging the power of socialization or overcoming it through the pathos of detachment . . . is to be arrogantly turned into the opposite of what it conceives itself to be through the way it is examined."[46] American readers have sometimes mistaken the object of Adorno's address here as New Criticism, especially since Adorno's essay first appeared in translation in the American Marxist journal *Telos* in 1974 next to an article by John Fekete on "The New Criticism: Ideological Evolution of the Right Opposition."[47] But New Criticism never pretended that the lyric is not social in nature—it simply claimed that the social is only

available in the lyric through linguistic and personal abstraction, since words and fictive personae are what the poem (or the book or class in which we receive the poem) gives us to read. Adorno comes to a strangely similar conclusion: "the paradox specific to the lyric work, a subjectivity that turns into objectivity, is tied to the priority of linguistic form in the lyric; it is that priority from which the primacy of language in literature in general (even in prose forms) is derived" (43). Yet the world of difference between the reasons that the New Critics and Adorno come to the conclusion that the lyric is an alienated, or objectified, formal structure that renders personal expression abstract may account for why Adorno's view of lyric has not had much influence on American criticism and pedagogy.[48] His idealist view of the genre itself is derived from the European romantic tradition, in which the "genreness" of the lyric is not what is at stake in its interpretation. Benjamin's interpretation of Baudelaire is the more immediate subtext of Adorno's essay, and Benjamin's version of "A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism" (like the New Critics' reading of Emily Dickinson, also a product of the 1930s) would also seem to have found curiously little purchase in American lyric reading—though, as we shall see, American critics continue to try to integrate Frankfurt School thought about aesthetic abstraction into poetic interpretation.[49]

Instead, another European critic who then studied with the latter-day New Critic Reuben Brower (who coined the phrase "close reading") and was the formative influence on the post–New Critical Yale School of lyric interpretation combined the European idealization of the lyric with the American academic will to power through interpretation.[50] Paul de Man did not take up Emily Dickinson as his lyric example (he took up no American literary examples), but since I take the notion of "lyric reading" from de Man's interpretation of the genre, I shall consider his construction (which he claimed was a deconstruction) of the lyric in some detail. The complicated shorthand genealogy I have just given for de Man's approach to the lyric also betrays the extent to which the lyric became the creature of twentieth-century criticism: by the time of the conversation between Tate, Blackmur, and Winters over Dickinson in the 1930s, academic critical culture had already replaced the sociable versifying and verse-reading culture of Dickinson's contemporaries. The consequences and history of that shift have been the implicit subjects of these pages; in order to tell the full story, we would need to retrace the emergence of professional literary criticism out of familiar culture's path toward the genteel literary criticism that brought Dickinson's work into circulation. But since my purpose here has not been to trace a reception history but instead to trace in and through Dickinson a history and theory of lyric reading, de Man's post–New Critical focus on lyric reading itself becomes important to consider here. For although de Man did not

write about Emily Dickinson, he followed the New Critics' emphasis on the lyric by writing about virtually nothing but lyric reading, and his theory of lyric reading will bring us straight back to Dickinson as representative of the very reading practices de Man tried to take apart.

Lyric Theory

When de Man suggested that "no lyric can be read lyrically, nor can the object of a lyrical reading be itself a lyric" in 1979 in "Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric" (*The Rhetoric of Romanticism* 254), he was making the argument of *Dickinson's Misery* in reverse. I have been suggesting that New Critical readings of texts like "Further in Summer than the Birds" (or "My Cricket") created an abstract personification in place of the historical person, and consequently created an abstract genre accessible to all persons educated to read lyrically in place of the verse exchanged by people with varying degrees of access to one another who may have read according to their own historical referents. I have also been suggesting some ways in which we might recover some of the practices that preceded critical lyric reading, and even some ways to retrieve some of those material historical referents. But because de Man began from the perspective of twentieth-century lyric reading, he took a different theoretical tack. For de Man to prove that the lyric was a modern critical fiction, he needed to begin by declaring that it did not exist: "The lyric is not a genre, but one name among several to designate the defensive motion of the understanding, the possibility of a future hermeneutics."[51] How could the genre for which de Man's own essay was named not exist? While the primary and much-debated aim of the essay was to question the phenomenal or experiential subject of lyric utterance (the infamous deconstructive dismantling, or death, of the subject), another and less noticed effect of the assertion that "the lyric is not a genre" is that critical reading has made it so. What de Man's reading performed was not the disappearance of the lyric subject, but the appearance of the critical subject of the lyric.

De Man proclaimed the death of the lyric with such bravado that it may obscure the fact that the latter contention that genres are not born but imperfectly made was hardly new by the end of the 1970s. In *Beyond Genre,* ten years before de Man's essay was published, Paul Hernadi had suggested that an essential account of the lyric genre seemed not to exist: "As for lyric poetry, I am not aware of any widely shared concept of its generic structure. While deep insights have been attained with regard to certain kinds of non-dramatic, non-narrative writing, critics do not seem to have succeeded in providing a unified conceptual map of this 'no man's

land.'"[52] Likewise, René Wellek had at around the same time complained that "lyrical theory" had led to "an insoluble psychological cul de sac." According to Wellek, "the way out is obvious. One must abandon attempts to define the general nature of the lyric or the lyrical. Nothing beyond generalities of the tritest kind can result from it. It seems much more profitable to turn to a study of the variety of poetry and to the history and thus the description of genres which can be grasped in their concrete conventions and traditions."[53] Given this context of an unravelling lyric hermeneutics already beginning to forfeit the name of its object ("no man's land," "the variety of poetry") we can begin to see that de Man's sentence was (as he might put it) set in motion by a performative ("the lyric is not a genre") masquerading as a statement of fact. This statement could only be said to be "true" if "the possibility of a future hermeneutics" had not already come to pass and begun to be surpassed. If "there is no significant difference between one generic term and another" because "all have the same apparently intentional and temporal function" (261), that *apparent* function makes all the difference. Since the lyric was already firmly in place as a critical convention—as a basis for the production and reception of poetry—saying that it did not exist would not unmake what literary tradition had already made. "Generic terms such as 'lyric'" may be, as de Man argued, "at the furthest remove from the materiality of actual history" (262), but they are also themselves historical.

But rather than historicize the idea of the lyric, de Man chose to emphasize the alienation of that idea from history. De Man's reading of the lyric later became associated with the inherent ahistoricism of high literary theory in the academy, yet at the end of "Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric," it was history, of all things, that de Man thought might be salvaged from his deconstruction of the lyric. If generic terms are, according to de Man, "always terms of resistance and nostalgia," (262), was de Man's point that "non-lyrical, non-poetic, that is to say, prosaic, or better, *historical* modes of language power" (262) *could* be recovered from their idealized or "defensive" or resistant or nostalgic categories of "understanding"? How? What would "the materiality of actual history" look like on the page? Like a flower, like an ad, like a dead cricket? The irony of de Man's assertion that the genre that was his criticism's central preoccupation did not exist is that Paul de Man—proper name for the scandals of late twentieth-century academic literary theory—appears to have intended to restore to his own and others' constructions of the lyric an aspect of contingent, perhaps even historical, practice.

This, at least, is one implication of de Man's lyrical unreading of Baudelaire's "canonical and programmatic sonnet 'Correspondances'" (243). Like Benjamin, de Man took up Baudelaire as the iconic modern poet, and

he selected that poet's most iconic poem. The adjectives attached as introduction betray at the start that what is at stake in de Man's interpretation was what he elsewhere distinguished as "the canonical *'idée reçue'* of the poem," as opposed to "the poem *read*."[54] Yet how could a poem possibly be *read* apart from its *"idée reçue"* or detached from its identity as *a poem?* The question should sound familiar to readers of *Understanding Poetry* as well as of the previous chapter of this book. Since the entire trajectory of de Man's essay is, as Jonathan Culler has remarked, "in effect, if not in principle, a reading of lyric" in the sense that it is "an exposition of [the genre's] constitutive conditions," this turns out to be in de Man, as in Brooks and Warren and in "Dickinson Undone," not only a tricky but perhaps a trick question.[55] The conditions that make "Correspondances" a convenient paradigm for examining the lyric's "constitutive conditions" are the conditions of the sonnet's reception *as* paradigmatically lyrical, and this reception is, according to de Man, already inscribed in the intersubjective logic of the poem itself. In other words, in order to expose the lyric as a modern critical fiction, de Man adopted the very strategy of modern literary criticism: a close reading of the iconic modern poem as a purely linguistic artifact. The crux of this logic rests in the repetitively analogical structure of the lyric's rhetoric, a structure that, as de Man reads it, comes to an abrupt halt in the sonnet's final tercet in precisely the term for identity by analogy, the word "comme" (which, as de Man informs us, is not incidentally "the most frequently counted word in the canon of Baudelaire's poetry" [248]). In order to see how in de Man's *very* close reading a monosyllable could be seen to allow a reading that it then disallows, we need to consider the sonnet in its entirety:

La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers
Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.

Comme de longs échos qui de loin se confondent
Dans une ténébreuse et profonde unité,
Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté,
Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent.

Il est des parfums frais comme des chairs d'enfants,
Doux comme les hautbois, verts comme les prairies,
—Et d'autres, corrompus, riches et triomphants,

Ayant l'expansion des choses infinies,
Comme l'ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l'encens,
Qui chantent les transports de l'esprit et des sens.

The pillars of Nature's temple are alive
and sometimes yield perplexing messages;
forests of symbols between us and the shrine
remark our passage with accustomed eyes.

Like long-held echoes, blending somewhere else
into one deep and shadowy unison
as limitless as darkness and as day,
the sounds, the scents, the colors correspond.

There are odors succulent as young flesh,
sweet as flutes, and green as any grass,
while others—rich, corrupt and masterful—

possess the power of such infinite things
as incense, amber, benjamin, and musk
to praise the senses' raptures and the mind's.[56]

According to de Man, in the course of these lines "the transcendence of substitutive, analogical tropes linked by the recurrent 'comme,' a transcendence that occurs in the declarative assurance of the first quatrain, states the totalizing power of metaphor as it moves from analogy to identity, from simile to symbol to a higher order of truth" (248). To paraphrase: the identities that seem to be so seamlessly accomplished in the opening quatrain ("La Nature *est* un temple . . .") are the results of an elaborate verbal performance motivated by an apparently threatening "totalizing" desire inherent in the very rhetorical structure of metaphor, which depends on the grammatical structure of analogy and leads inevitably to the generic structure of "a higher order" of symbolic, or lyric, value ("truth"). That this "higher order" precedes the "substitutive, analogical tropes" that make its existence possible allows it to seem to be a cause when it is in fact, de Man argues, an effect. And yet even if we grant this reversal, we are left with the question of how an effect can also be causal: if metaphors may have desires (or "totalizing power") then so may genres. The fact that "Correspondances" is a sonnet means that all of its "confuses paroles" will be read as if they were ("comme") their rhyming terms, "symboles." Thus the formal architecture (or "temple") of the poem will, generically, donate the effect of a significant intention to the words—and therefore to the subject—it contains and confuses.

Wary of this confusion, de Man proceeds carefully "à travers" each line of the poem, in a movement caught in the ambivalence he himself notes in the phrase "passer à travers," which can mean to "cross" the wood but also "to remain enclosed in the wood" (248). This ambivalence reaches its crisis—in the poem as in de Man's reading of it—when, a belated Dante,

"à travers des forêts de symboles" in both senses, the critic arrives at the final "comme" in the poem: "Il est des parfums frais comme . . . / Doux comme . . . / /—Et d'autres . . . / / Ayant l'expansion des choses infinies / *comme* l'ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l'encens." At this point, de Man remarks, in a performative statement of his own: "Ce comme n'est pas un comme comme les autres" (249). Lapsing from his lapidary English prose into "the declarative assurance" of Baudelaire's French (and, oddly, into an English pentameter rhythm in the French if pronounced as prose, and into Baudelaire's alexandrine if the line is pronounced as verse), this statement does much more than it says. While in one sense the declaration breaks away from the analogical movement of the preceding seven lines of the poem, in another it is entrapped by their "confuses paroles" so utterly that it is reduced to an imitative stutter ("comme . . . Comme comme . . ."). Here indeed the lyric and its interpretation, or, literally, the language of the poem and the language of the interpreter are difficult to tell apart. The French sentence that occurs nowhere in the poem "sounds" like Paul de Man, the smuggler of French theory into American literary studies, taunting his American readership. Thus at the climax or aporia of his strongly persuasive challenge to an essentially anthropomorphic or intentional subject of the lyric, the critic is suddenly possessed by that subject. In the most literal sense—in the sense peculiar to this shift in literacy—what this sentence enacts is exactly the sort of identification that de Man describes as "anthropomorphism," which

> is not just a trope but an identification on the level of substance. It takes one entity for another and thus implies the constitution of specific entities prior to their confusion, the *taking* of something for something else that can then be assumed to be *given*. Anthropomorphism freezes the infinite chain of tropological transformations and propositions into one single assertion or essence which, as such, excludes all others. It is no longer a proposition but a proper name, as when the metamorphosis in Ovid's stories culminates and halts in the singleness of a proper name, Narcissus or Daphne or whatever. (241)

Taking one entity for another—French for English, performance for statement—de Man's sentence eventuates in exactly the sort of metamorphosis he deconstructs on the level of an evocatively linguistic substance. Rather than taking apart the expressive subject, his reading gives the genre a critically expressive subject. No longer a proposition, the sentence culminates and halts in an identification to which we should give the name "lyric": a genre resurrected from its theoretical abolition in the doubled proper name of "de Man" and (or as) "Baudelaire." That momentary metamorphosis—as de Man's prose freezes into Baudelaire's verse, and

reader and writer exchange places—complicates the concluding move of de Man's essay, after ce comme qui n'est pas un comme comme les autres becomes comme un autre de Man qui est comme un autre Baudelaire. Following his show-stopping line (worthy of the accoutrements of the séances of which Baudelaire's verse was so fond), de Man goes on to soberly explicate the rhetorical difference between this final "comme" and the instances preceding it, concluding that while the other "commes" link "the subject to a predicate that is not the same: scents are said to be like oboes, or like fields, or like echoes," the same word in the last tercet "has two distinct subjects" (249). If joined to the first of these subjects, "l'expansion," "comme" would function "like the other 'commes,' as a comparative simile." Yet by this point in the extended sentence of the final two tercets, "comme" also refers back to "parfums": "Il est des parfums frais . . . / /—Et d'autres . . . / / . . . / comme l'ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l'encens." In the latter case, "comme" comes to mean "such as, for example" and thus enumerates rather than analogizes the attributes of its subject. It is as much as to say that "'Il est des parfums . . . / / Comme (des parfums)'" (250).

While such a distinction between exemplification and analogy makes impressive sense of the strangeness of the penultimate catalogue of scents, the conclusion that the poem ends in a tautology is also only a weaker version of the confusion between "the two distinct subjects" named prose and poetry or de Man and Baudelaire, a confusion performed by the French sentence that hovers between or gives one over to the other. Likewise, de Man's extended comparison between "Correspondances" and Baudelaire's later sonnet "Obsession," a comparison intended to demonstrate that the later poem lyricizes the earlier sonnet's resistance to lyric reading, stages as a merger of two texts the marriage that has already occurred between the two subjects. If, as de Man writes, "the relationship between the two poems can . . . be seen as the construction and the undoing of the mirrorlike, specular structure that is always involved in a reading" (252), a more striking exemplification of that relationship may be the mirrorlike, specular structure of the sentence that had already prescribed the phantasmatic recovery of the lyric subject in the confused practice of de Man-Baudelaire.

In effect, "Obsession" could be said to read "Correspondances" as a parody of de Man's rather possessed or obsessed reading of "Correspondances." It is actually in the literal sense a *parody* or ode parallel to the earlier sonnet, the apostrophe latent in the first poem's abstractions having emerged as a direct first-person invocation:

> Grands bois, vous m'effrayez comme des cathédrales;
> Vous hurlez comme l'orgue; et dans nos cœurs maudits,

> Chambres d'éternel deuil où vibrent de vieux râles,
> Répondent les échos de vos *De profundis.*
>
> Forest, I fear you! in my ruined heart
> your roaring wakens the same agony
> as in cathedrals when the organ moans
> and from the depths I hear that I am damned.[57]

According to de Man, the opening of "Obsession" reverses that of "Correspondances": "it naturalizes the surreal speech of live columns into the frightening, but natural, roar of the wind among the trees" (254). What the direct address to the "Grands bois" does, according to de Man, is to anthropomorphize the woods that in "Correspondances" remained purely symbolic. "The claim to verbality in the equivalent line from 'Correspondences,'" de Man writes, "'Les parfums, les couleurs, et les sons se répondent' seems fantastic by comparison. The omnipresent metaphor of interiorization, of which this is a striking example, here travels initially by ways of the ear alone" (256). If the lyric is, as de Man claimed, the instance of represented voice, then the later poem's naturalization of voice is a lyricization of voice. But what travels where how? De Man's use of the English idiom slips just slightly in its own "claim to verbality." Few English speakers would *say* "by ways of," but the plural makes an odd textual sense to an ear caught between languages. What is "the omnipresent metaphor of interiorization" that is said to be transported "by" these "ways"? As de Man notes, "no 'comme' could be more orthodox than the two 'commes' in these two lines. The analogy is so perfect that the implied anthropomorphism becomes fully motivated" (255). Yet if anthropomorphism "is not just a trope but an identification on the level of substance," whose internalized, subjective identity is thus "motivated"? Are these lines driven by "a totalizing desire" toward the private interior or by means of (the idiom that must have crossed "by way of" in de Man's ear) a litany of conventional lyric figures? Whose depths—the poet's, the critic's, or the genre's—does this *De profundis* sound?[58]

De Man's answer is contained in one word: "pathos." The experiential subject dispersed in the closing catalogue of "Correspondances" is "retrieved" by the opening swell of "Obsession":

> The gain in pathos is such as to make the depth of *De profundis* the explicit theme of the poem. Instead of being the infinite expanse, the openness of "Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté," depth is now the enclosed space that, like the sound chamber of a violin, produces the inner vibration of emotion. We retrieve what was conspicuously absent from "Correspondances," the recurrent image of the subject's presence to itself as a

> spatial enclosure, room, tomb, or crypt in which the voice echoes as in a cave. The image draws its verisimilitude from its own "mise en abyme" in the shape of the body as the *container* of the voice (or soul, heart, breath, consciousness, spirit, etc.) that it exhales. At the cost of much represented agony ("Chambres d'éternel deuil où vibrent de vieux râles["]), "Obsession" asserts its right to say "I" with full authority. (256)

The indictment leveled at the recuperative anthropomorphism of the later poem is palpable in this prose; at the same time, however, there is a recuperation *of* the poem taking place in the critic's rendition of it. The analogies that de Man imports here—"like the sound chamber of a violin" and "the voice echoes as in a cave"—are not derived from the corpus of Baudelaire's lyrics but from the corpus of Paul de Man's readings of the lyric. The first alludes to de Man's comprehensive reading of Rilke in *Allegories of Reading* (1979), at the center of which is an analysis of the figure of the poet as the string of a violin (from Rilke's "Am Rande der Nacht"). De Man much admired the trope of the violin in Rilke's poems because, he writes, "The metaphorical entity is not selected because its structure corresponds analogically to the inner experience of a subject but because its structure corresponds to that of a linguistic figure: the violin is *like* a metaphor because it transforms an interior content into an outward, sonorous "thing" . . . it is the metaphor of a metaphor."[59]

Whereas in his reading of "Obsession" de Man's analogical use of the violin is meant to evoke "the subject's presence to itself," in his reading of Rilke the violin "corresponds" to a linguistic figure; on one hand the metaphor is said to evoke "emotion" but on the other merely to mime a "structure." When a comparison of de Man's own figures reveals is that it is not the figures themselves that evoke "the inner experience of a subject" that de Man identifies as lyric; instead lyric reading produces the effect of that subject.

It is evident in both passages that de Man wants to oppose subjective experience to pure figuration; as in his comparison between "Correspondances" and "Obsession," however, a comparison of de Man's own figures tends to collapse the very opposition that sustains his analyses. Yet perhaps that was de Man's point all along. In several earlier essays de Man had invoked the notion of the poem as a "spatial enclosure" ("room, tomb, or crypt . . . cave") that figures the illusion of an interior consciousness, and in each his central move had been to turn that illusion inside out so that the enclosure was itself transformed from the subject's protective "shelter" (a favorite de Manian charge) into a device for its production.[60] Yet in his passage on "Obsession," de Man employed these analogies accumulated from his reading of other lyrics in order to mimetically enclose an analogy *to* the lyric. Baudelaire's "Chambres d'éternel deuil" are echo

chambers not so unlike those "de longs échos" of "Correspondances," and what they echo is a lyric convention (*De profundis*) rather than an unmediated personal cry of anguish. Certainly this is "*represented* agony" at least as expansive as the sensations of the earlier poem, dispersed as it is among several figures ("bois," "cathédrales," "l'orgue") and several persons ("*nos* cœurs maudits") as well as transferred to an explicitly literary and textual register by the Latin phrase. It is hard to understand how that dispersion allowed de Man to assert that "'Obsession' asserts its right to say 'I' with full authority," since the subjective form of the first-person singular pronoun appears nowhere in the stanza itself. Perhaps—as the accidental omission (bracketed in our text) of the closing set of quotation marks in de Man's closing citation of "Obsession" in parentheses ironically suggests—it is the critic's rather than the poet's "I" that emerges here "with full authority," an authority derived from the pathos of his own elegy for the genre that is his subject.[61]

This is to say that if, as de Man wrote in an earlier essay on the formalist interpretation of the lyric, "poetry is the foreknowledge of criticism," the reverse must also be true.[62] Criticism that knows its object as poetry (as a "canonical and programmatic sonnet") sustains that generic identification even (or perhaps especially) in its negation. Indeed, in the vehemence of his rejection of the term, de Man ends by reviving a more idealized sense of the lyric than most readers would have had at the start of his essay. "In the paraphernalia of literary terminology," de Man concludes, "there is no term available to tell us what 'Correspondances' might be. All we know is that it is, emphatically, *not* a lyric. Yet it, and it alone, contains, implies, produces, generates, permits (or whatever aberrant verbal metaphor one wishes to choose) the entire possibility of the lyric" (261–62). "It and it *alone*"? "The *entire* possibility of the lyric"? De Man's concluding declarations are so excessive that one is tempted to call them, indeed, *ob*sessive. The claim that "Obsession" embraces the lyric experience artfully repressed by "Correspondances" has shifted from the declarative assurance of the details of de Man's rhetorical reading into the affective register of a performative attachment to just what those statements deny—into an expressive attachment, that is, to the lyric.

This structure of highly emotionally inversed attraction and denial actually rather suggestively parallels Freud's structural description of obsession, in which "the symptoms acquire, in addition to their original meaning, a directly contrary one. This is a tribute to the power of ambivalence, which, for some unknown reason, plays such a large part in obsessional neuroses. In the crudest instance the symptom is diphasic: an action which carries out a certain injunction is immediately succeeded by another action which stops or undoes the first one even if it does not go quite

so far as to carry out its opposite."[63] *Ambivalenz*, a word coined by Freud in his analysis of obsession, certainly characterizes de Man's "specular" coupling of Baudelaire's lyrics, as its power saturates the "aberrant verbal" qualifications which attend the "Yet . . ." syntax that undoes his reiterated injunction against the lyric. The strategy of taking away with one hand what has been given by the other is, of course, a typical feature of deconstructive reading—yet in this passage the usual order is reversed: de Man's essay ends by restoring (albeit ambivalently) "the entire possibility" it has worked to undo.[64] By generating a string of approximations of what the lyric *would* be if it had not been so "emphatically" negated by the previous statement, de Man ends by pushing "the lyric" just outside the field of representation. Thus the pathos of his elegy for the subject with which the criticism that obsessed de Man was obsessed also makes of the lyric a subject for obsessional elegy, for in the last lines of his essay "the lyric" is no longer a proposition but a proper name.[65]

Still, as Freud would have it, the name that de Man gives to the extrametaphoric, uncanny "possibility" of the postlyrical "does not go quite so far as to carry out its opposite": what "the desired consciousness of eternity and of temporal harmony as voice and as song" (the "chambres d'éternel deuil où vibrent de vieux râles") is opposed to at the end of the essay is, we recall, "the materiality of actual history" (262). Presumably, the former would be the property of "generic terms such as 'lyric,'" while the latter would escape the "resistance and nostalgia" that de Man has associated with "the defensive motion of the understanding, the possibility of a future hermeneutics" (261). My point is that the hermeneutic practice of "Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric" had already comprehended, despite itself, a contrary meaning of "*historical* modes of language power" (262). According to de Man's own (Nietzschean) logic, "language power" should read as an oxymoron, since the "unintelligible" force of extreme materiality is what the language closely read as lyric, in its "defensive" or purely aesthetic aspect, cannot admit. That is as far as de Man got, and it is a long way. But when de Man wrote, elegiacally, that lyric pathos cannot allow for "*historical* modes of language power," modes he characterized as "non-anthropomorphic, non-elegiac, non-celebratory, non-lyrical, non-poetic" (262), he was not allowing that before modern lyric reading became a form of critical power, poetry itself may have been such a mode.

Against (Lyric) Theory

Although I have attempted to show that de Man worked very much within the grain of the New Criticism in his adoption of the lyric as a

synecdoche for literature and in his construction of the lyric through the practice of close reading, in the profession of literary study built around the lyric, de Man came to stand for the incursion of European literary theory into American practical criticism.[66] De Man personified that incursion, in part because his deeply subjective investment in the dismantling of the lyric made other critical readers uneasy. The reaction against de Man took many forms, and one form it took was to oppose a pragmatist approach based in Anglo-American analytic philosophy to de Man's basis in Continental philosophy. It also took the form of a reaction against the lyric. In the issue of *Critical Inquiry* for Summer 1982, Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels published an essay provocatively entitled "Against Theory," which claimed to argue that "the whole enterprise of critical theory is misguided and should be abandoned."[67] Naturally, several professional critical theorists took up the challenge and responded—thus fulfilling, one assumes, Knapp and Michaels's intention. Despite, that is, the essay's stated aim to put an end to "the theoretical enterprise" (AT 30), its locus of publication and its polemical stance suggested that what Knapp and Michaels were actually out to do was, as W.J.T. Mitchell put it, to "out-theorize the theorists" (AT 9).

By pointing to a discrepancy between the implicit and explicit purposes of the piece—or between the essay's "intention" and its "meaning"—what I have just done is exactly what Knapp and Michaels argued should not be attempted, since "the clearest example of the tendency to generate theoretical problems by splitting apart terms that are in fact inseparable is the persistent debate over the relation between authorial intention and the meaning of texts" (AT 12). Against my consideration of such a tendency on the part of the theorist who was Knapp and Michaels's most prominent unnamed target, I want to consider briefly only one aspect of the argument in "Against Theory" (an argument that, as we shall see, Michaels repeated over twenty years later with explicit reference to Dickinson) that "the meaning of a text is simply identical to the author's intended meaning" (AT 12): namely, that the text central to this contention is a lyric poem.

While the debate that ensued in and around Knapp and Michaels's essay was based entirely on this one small text, neither the authors nor their critics appeared to think that the genre of their example made much of a difference. Yet just as the critical situation of "Against Theory" cast its goal of abolishing its own situation in an ironic aspect, so the situational definition of the lyric may have decided "the persistent debate over the relation between authorial intention and the meaning of texts" in advance. While on one hand Knapp and Michaels argued that "once it is seen that the meaning of a text is simply identical to an author's intended meaning, the project of meaning in intention becomes incoherent," on the other they

supported that claim with an instance of the literary genre traditionally devoted to begging the question of first-person coherence. What their essay did not say about the specific structure of lyric reference spoke volumes about the importance that structure held (and still holds) for both the "pragmatic" and the "theoretical" extremes of literary study. Knapp and Michaels's silence on the theory of the genre that served as a condition for their practice suggests, among other things, that whatever the relation between textual meaning and authorial intention may be taken to be, there are no "generic" intentions, or intentions uninfluenced by the conventions of genre. While de Man's theory idealized a pure and practically impossible historical practice removed from the fiction of genre, Knapp and Michaels's practice paradoxically ended by idealizing the very theoretical potential of the genre they adopted to render theory impractical.

That potential became immediately (and excessively) obvious in the anecdote Knapp and Michaels offered as empirical proof that "the moment of imagining intentionless meaning constitutes the theoretical moment itself":

> Suppose you're walking along a beach and you come upon a curious sequence of squiggles in the sand. You step back a few paces and notice that they spell out the following words:
>
> A slumber did my spirit seal;
> I had no human fears:
> She seemed a thing that could not feel
> The touch of earthly years.
>
> This would seem to be a good case of intentionless meaning: you recognize the writing as writing, you understand what the words mean, you may even identify them as constituting a rhymed poetic stanza—and all this without knowing anything about the author and indeed without needing to connect the words to any notion of an author at all. You can do all these things without thinking of anyone's intention. But now suppose that, as you stand gazing at this pattern in the sand, a wave washes up and recedes, leaving in its wake (written below what you now realize was only the first stanza) the following words:
>
> No motion has she now, no force;
> She neither hears nor sees;
> Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
> With rocks, and stones, and trees.
>
> (AT 15)

According to Knapp and Michaels, the arrival of the second stanza of "the wave poem" makes clear "that what had seemed to be an example of

intentionless language was either not intentionless or not language" (AT 16). Why should this be the case? Although they do not say so, the authors seem to assume that the two stanzas together call for an explanation because "you" will recognize them now as *a poem*. Though continuing to call the lyric "the wave poem" rather than "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal," they even assume that "you" may recognize it as a poem by Wordsworth: "You will now, we suspect, feel compelled to explain what you have just seen. Are these marks mere accidents, produced by the mechanical operation of the waves on the sand (through some subtle and unprecedented process of erosion, percolation, etc.)? Or is the sea alive and striving to express its pantheistic faith? Or has Wordsworth, since his death, become a sort of genius of the shore who inhabits the waves and periodically inscribes on the sand his elegiac sentiments?" (AT 16). The alternative speculations offered above are meant to be mutually exclusive: either the poem has been written by the sea or Wordsworth's ghost or it is the effect of a nonintentional natural process. In the latter case, the marks would not constitute a "poem" at all but would be "accidental likenesses of language." The intent of the anecdote was to make this latter alternative unimaginable, as indeed it is: "you" already knew that this is a poem by Wordsworth, a poem about the loss and potential recuperation of human agency and, since you were reading this hypothetical narrative in the pages of *Critical Inquiry* and not on a beach, you might have also known, as Knapp and Michaels concede in a note (AT 15n5), that the same short lyric had been employed by E. D. Hirsch, P. D. Juhl, J. Hillis Miller, and M. H. Abrams in essays on the question of authorial intention.[68] In fact, from the first line of the poem, the rest of the argument would have seemed more amusing than relevant to you, not only because its citation indicates a receding series of critical citations but because knowledge of the poem's authorship has never decided much about its interpretation.

The ruse in which Knapp and Michaels left the question of authorship open until "you notice, rising out of the sea some distance from the shore, a small submarine, out of which clamber a half dozen figures in white lab coats" (AT 17), made possible a deus ex machina of empiricism that was never suspended in the first place. This "new evidence of an author" emerging from the submarine and shouting "'It worked! It worked! Let's go down and try it again'" was, of course, a better allegory for the strategy of the essay than for any possible reading of the poem. If, as Knapp and Michaels conclude, "the question of authorship is and always was an empirical question; it has now received a new empirical answer," we might concede the point only in the sense that the old empirical answer—that "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" was a lyric written by Wordsworth in 1799 in

Germany—had to be forgotten in order to make us believe that we were remembering that this "theoretical moment" had been a set-up.

The fallacy of the anecdote established in order to prove the fallacy of "doing theory" drew much immediate fire from critics on both sides of the "intentionalist" debate, and it is not my purpose to recount the details of that debate here. I sketch its outlines merely in order to notice that this particular discourse "for" and "against" the "theoretical enterprise" depended upon certain unstated assumptions about lyric reading which it therefore ended by exemplifying. In one of the most pointed responses to Knapp and Michaels, Jonathan Crewe found their style characterized by a "maneuver in which the authors disqualify a distinction only to appropriate its effects," a maneuver Crewe felicitously labeled "smash and grab, or S. & G. for short" (AT 59). The "wave poem" was, according to Crewe, a signal instance of S. & G., since "the wave poem does not *resemble* a poem by Wordsworth but is actually identical to one. What the authors have, whether they like it or not, is a wave *poem* that happens not to lend itself to pragmatic interpretation" (AT 61–62).[69]

Crewe did not insist on the genre of the linguistic conventions smashed and grabbed by the wave-poem narrative, but his description helps me to do so. Suppose you are walking along a beach and you come upon a curious sequence of squiggles in the sand. You step back a few paces and notice that they spell out the following words:

> Who that cares much to know the history of man, and how the mysterious mixture behaves under the varying experiments of Time, has not dwelt, at least briefly, on the life of Saint Theresa, has not smiled with some gentleness at the thought of the little girl walking forth one morning hand-in-hand with her still smaller brother, to go and seek martyrdom in the country of the Moors?

It is fair to say that the distinction between authorial intention and textual meaning disqualified and then reappropriated in the story of finding the Wordsworth poem would have to be made in a very different way for the Prelude to *Middlemarch*. Whether or not you recognize this prose as George Eliot's, chances are that it would not occur to you that in order to understand what this sentence means you would first need to determine the author's intention; even if the sentence washed up in two stages (and therefore could not have been etched with a stick by some previous beachwalker), wondering how these words appeared in this place and wondering what the words say would remain two distinct questions. In the imaginary context of the sand, the question the sentence poses might seem to have more to do with Saint Theresa or the nature of belief than it does in

the context of the novel, but that belief is not contingent on finding out whether this is one of "the varying experiments of Time" or whether ghosts or the sea are capable of writing. In "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal," however, one does want to know something more about the identity of the "I" who "had no human fears" (when? of what?) and about this person's relationship to the "she" who "seemed" (like a poem?) an object of contemplation. Without thinking along these lines, neither the reader of the sand nor the reader of the book can make much sense of the two sentences of Wordsworth's lyric.

The problem raised by the "found" poem is a smashed version of the problem grabbed from the moment embedded within the poem as-it-is-received-as-a-lyric—that is, as it becomes accessible to lyric reading. As Lukács wrote in 1914 (echoing Hegel's and anticipating Adorno's and Heidegger's lyrical notions), "such moments are constitutive and form-determining only for lyric poetry; only in lyric poetry do these direct, sudden flashes of the substance become like lost original manuscripts suddenly made legible; only in lyric poetry is the subject, the vehicle of such experiences, transformed into the sole carrier of meaning, the only true reality.[70]

We may notice just how much the beachwalker's failure to imagine "intentionless language" owes to this notion of the lyric's revelation of language *as* intentional. One's entrance into a lyric often delivers this very Wordsworthian "shock of mild surprise," since to come upon such lines as "phainetai moi kenos theosin" or "voi ch'ascoltaie in rime sparse il suono" or "Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war" or "Jezt komme, Feuer!" or "When I have fears that I may cease to be / Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain," is to be privy to an experience for which we have no immediate context. In order to establish a context, we will inevitably have recourse to what we know about Sappho's fragments or to the sonnet sequences of Petrarch and Shakespeare or to Hölderlin's hymns or to Keats's occasional sonnets. Which is to say that in order to interpret these lines we will immediately ask a double-sided question concerning the intentions of the author and the intentions of the form. Both the correlation and the difference between these two sides of the question will depend (as they do in the Wordsworth poem and in Knapp and Michaels's allegorical version of it) on the relation between an irrecoverable past ("like lost original manuscripts") and an isolated moment of illumination in the present ("suddenly made legible"). The question is how we get from past to present—or how a text read as lyric is "suddenly" discovered *as* a lyric, since it is unlikely that one will encounter it on a beach.

Indeed, alas, these days it is much more likely that one will encounter the transformation of lyric into "the sole carrier of meaning, the only true

reality" in literary criticism than anywhere else. In 2004, over twenty years after the publication and reception of "Against Theory," Michaels returned to the question of literary intention by creating a complex conversation between Dickinson, Susan Howe—one of Dickinson's most prominent lyric readers—and Paul de Man. Although Michaels still does not raise the question of the lyric explicitly, all of his questions about literary meaning in *The Shape of the Signifier* revolve around lyric poets such as Dickinson and Wordsworth or lyric readers such as Howe and the New Critics and de Man. Thus Howe's deeply invested lyrical reading of the details of Dickinson's manuscripts in *My Emily Dickinson* and *The Birthmark* become for Michaels instances of a "commitment to the materiality of the signifier" that aligns her reading of Dickinson with de Man's opposition between "the materiality of actual history" and aesthetic ideology.[71] The fact that both Howe and de Man would be horrified by such a comparison, since Howe's version of textual materialism has everything to do with Dickinson's original poetic intentions and de Man's utopian view of "*historical* modes of language power" would by definition escape poetic intention, is part of Michaels's logic. His point in taking up the recent materialist interest in Dickinson's manuscripts and comparing it to de Man's interest in an illegible materiality is to return to the argument in "Against Theory" that "texts mean what their authors intend" (11). By making Howe and de Man say the same thing when they had intended to disagree, Michaels wants to raise the question "of what a text is—of what is in it and what isn't, what counts as part of it and what doesn't" (11). It is one thing to raise that question in relation to the relatively recent work of literary critics. In those cases, Michaels's conclusion that the answer to what a text is will always depend on the position of the reader, on "what's there to you, a question about what you see" (11) makes sense. Interpreters of literature do (sometimes despite themselves) offer their own perspectives. But how would we know what we are seeing when we already know that we are reading a lyric; if, say, a poem was written in 1799 or 1862, and we encounter it neither on a beach nor in a lost manuscript, but in a book or on the Web in the twenty-first century?

My point has been that we would only know that a poem intended (if poems could intend) to be a lyric once it has been critically rendered as such at various moments before the moment in which you encounter it. As in the instances of de Man's reading of Baudelaire's by then paradigmatic modern sonnet or Knapp and Michaels's reading of Wordsworth's iconic romantic lyric, or Howe's reading of Dickinson's every blot, dash, and swerve as poetry, what every literary interpreter must assume about such texts is that they are poetic texts. Further, since for twentieth- and twenty-first-century literary critics, all poetic texts are lyrics, all of these readers—

including Michaels—must assume some of the protocols of lyric reading in order to read them at all. In his latter-day version of an apparently innocent encounter with Wordsworth's poem, it is telling that this time Michaels situates that fantasy not on a beach but on Mars, within the genre of science fiction. Whereas in "Against Theory" Knapp and Michaels had to allow for the possibility that someone had written the words that you encounter on the beach, in *The Shape of the Signifier* (or on Mars) "where there are no other persons, you know right away that the marks have not been made by anyone and that if what you're looking at is a poem (a poem apparently about Earth), it is the planet itself that produced it" (57). "*If what you're looking at is a poem*"?

How would you know? It is by now apparent that the opening paragraph of *Dickinson's Misery* is a smashed & grabbed version of the literary theoretical problem of how to recognize a poem when we see one—not in a possible world but in the one in which we find ourselves at the moment. In the chapters that follow, I will argue that neither a purely theoretical nor a purely pragmatic answer can adequately address that problem, since the question of how to get from past to present—from lyric history to lyric theory and back again—requires a combination of the two. It requires us to think both historically and theoretically: in Dickinson's case, to think through the differences between what Dickinson's texts might have been at other moments (notes of consolation, say, or newspaper verse, or commentary on enclosed flowers, elegies for soldiers or a dog or a culture or a season, or thank-yous, or appeals for publication, or scandalous secret winks, or language surrounding a dead insect) and the lyrics they have become. Because we cannot go back to a moment before they became lyrics, or back to a moment before lyric reading was the only way to apprehend a poem, we must try to keep both their material and contingent as well as their abstract and transcendent aspects in view at the same time. As the history of lyric reading attests, that is not easy to do.

As we have seen in New Criticism and in de Man and in Knapp and Michaels and, again, in Michaels, one reason such double vision is so difficult is that what is at stake in it has come to be not only the definition of the lyric, but the definition of texts and even of persons and the worlds in which they encounter texts and make them into lyrics. In a recent impassioned plea for the understanding of poetry as "an anthropomorphic project," Susan Stewart has ventured one solution to the problem of how to mediate between the abstraction of the lyric available to all interpretation and its historical and material contingency.[72] "The cultural work of lyric," Stewart writes, is the "work of individuation under intersubjective terms" (13). Against the tendency in literary theory to imagine texts on other theoretical planets, or to imagine that history is what poetry leaves out, Stewart emphasizes "the human image as a consequence of representational practices rather than a prior referent. Only in this way can human subjectivity be viewed in historical terms" (342 n. 107). In the pages that follow, I will suggest that Dickinson's work accomplishes exactly what Stewart's humanist reading of the lyric would find there, but that it does so precisely because it so strenuously resists substituting the alienated lyric image of the human—the very image the modern reading of the lyric has created—for the exchange between historical persons between whom the barriers of space and time had not fallen.

64. As my reader will already have noticed, the question of how we refer to the "titles" of Dickinson's texts opens all sorts of other questions, and the negotiation of these questions can be awkward. Since titles designate texts as individual poems, I usually avoid the practice of using first lines as titles, but some referential title is unavoidable. Since Franklin has no doubt that Dickinson wrote poems, he provides an appendix of "Titles, Characterizations, Signatures" that Dickinson used in her correspondence to refer to her verse (F 1545–46, app. 6). For an extended meditation on, history of, and speculation about the relation between lyric titles and generic definition, see Anne Ferry, *The Title to the Poem*.

Chapter Two: Lyric Reading

1. The *Republican* notice is cited by Jay Leyda in *The Years and Hours of Emily Dickinson*, 2:87, though Leyda changes the assailant's name to "Cutler."

2. Bowles's and Beecher's comments on the Vanderbilt shooting are reported by Alfred Habegger, *My Wars Are Laid Away in Books*, 464.

3. On Dickinson's *Drum Beat* poems, see Karen Dandurand, "New Dickinson Civil War Publications," and "Dickinson and the Public" in Orzeck and Weisbuch, eds., *Dickinson and Audience*, 255–77. Dandurand's discovery opens important questions for Dickinson scholarship, which has been so focused on the possibility that there are more poems hidden in some attic or drawer that scholars have not gone in search of Dickinson's *public* circulation during her lifetime. Dandurand speculates that Dickinson volunteered the poems for the cause (more soldiers died of disease during the Civil War than fell in battle). If so, then she may either have conveyed them to Vanderbilt or to Richard Salter Storrs, the editor of the *Drum Beat* and an Amherst alumnus. Dandurand and others have thought Storrs the more likely candidate, but it is hard to say why, since we know that Dickinson had a correspondence with Vanderbilt while there is no evidence of a correspondence with Storrs.

4. Todd's notes to transcript, 59, 59a, 59b, 59c, Amherst Special Collections.

5. In Franklin's edition, the verses that Dickinson sent to Vanderbilt are Poems 505, 815, 895, and 946. They were all sent between 1863 and 1865. Franklin notes (p. 1556) that Gertrude Vanderbilt was "a friend of Catherine Scott Turner and through her of Susan Dickinson," a note that makes it clearer why Dickinson would have corresponded with Vanderbilt as part of an intimate genteel circle.

6. What is now Franklin's Poem 815 was first published in *Letters of Emily Dickinson* (1894), 154, as a ten-line stanza, then in *The Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson* (1924), 259, and *Letters of Emily Dickinson* (1931), 152, then as J Poem 830 in 1955.

7. F 946, Set 7. The difference between the "sets" and the "fascicles" is the string that binds the fascicle sheets but does not bind the sets. Since Dickinson apparently stopped binding fascicle sheets in 1865, during the time she was in Cambridge under treatment for eye trouble, Franklin views the unbound sets as a stage in the "winding down" of Dickinson's ambitions for her "workshop" (F 25).

8. Shira Wolosky, *Emily Dickinson: A Voice of War*, 7.

9. I have no doubt that these lines did contain an enclosure, though since there is no autograph copy, I have no evidence other than the lines themselves and Dickinson's habits of correspondence that the flowers were there.

10. Fascicle 39; MB 968.

11. *Ancestors' Brocades*, 36.

12. Dickinson's reversal of the usual referential relations between flowers and poems was one of her favorite puns, and there are too many instances to list, but it is worth noting that in the Bullard portrait of the Dickinson children in 1840, Emily holds a flower on an open book (see Habegger, *My Wars Are Laid Away in Books*, 366).

13. The manuscript is at Scripps College. Franklin prints the lines in quatrains (F 895), the first editor to include this early version in his variorum edition. Johnson broke this manuscript (or the transcript he had seen of it) into two poems (as had Bingham in BM, 1945) and made the last one (from the last two stanzas of this manuscript, beginning "The Earth had many keys—") the last poem in his edition (J 1775).

14. For an account of the poem's bibliographical history, see Franklin, "The Manuscripts and Transcripts of 'Further in Summer than the Birds.'" In "Dickinson and the Public," Dandurand makes the point that Storrs sent copies of the paper to all of his contributors, so he would have sent a copy to Dickinson. If Vanderbilt gave the poem to the paper, however, Storrs might not have known to send the paper to Amherst—though Vanderbilt may have done so.

15. Readers of Dickinson will recognize absurd anthropomorphism as one of her favorite tropes—as, for example, when she wrote to Louise Norcross that "it is lovely without the birds today, for it rains badly, and the little poets have no umbrellas" (L 340).

16. The address on the first manuscript, sent to Susan in the 1850s, has been erased. Hart and Smith note that in the context of Dickinson's correspondence with Susan, "Emily's poem echoes a poem by Susan, 'There are three months of Spring,' suggesting a call-and-response relationship in their writing life" (OC 71).

17. Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club*, x. I am simplifying Menand's argument, which is not only about the failure of the particular ideas that could no longer be held after the war, but about "a certain idea about the limits of ideas" (4). Ultimately, Menand sees that failure as the generative force behind the development of American pragmatism.

18. See Jenny Franchot's *Roads to Rome* for an argument that "anti-Catholicism operated as an imaginative category of discourse through which antebellum American writers of popular and elite fictional and historical texts indirectly voiced the tensions and limitations of mainstream Protestant culture" (xvii). Dickinson does not exactly fit Franchot's sense of that category, but Franchot's argument is suggestive for a reading of the Catholic imagery that pops up here and there in Dickinson's writing, since it makes clear that such imagery was not a quirk of Dickinson's but a common, and complex, cultural currency.

19. Diehl, *Dickinson and the Romantic Imagination*, 97. Since Diehl was reading the

poem in Johnson's edition, she did not have the last eight lines sent to Vanderbilt, so she did not know how right she was about the echo of Keats. See Mary Loeffelholz's commentary on Diehl's suggestion about the echo in *Dickinson and the Boundaries of Feminist Theory*, 145–46. Because Loeffelholz also had stanzas as they were printed as two different poems in Johnson's edition, she reads the last lines sent to Vanderbilt, which became the last poem in Johnson, as Dickinson's self-elegy.

20. *Atlantic Monthly* 93 (July 1865): 11.

21. See Michael Warner's "What Like a Bullet Can Undeceive?" for a reading of the way in which "violence" is defined against pastoral in Civil War poetry, specifically in Melville's elegy "Shiloh."

22. Compare Dickinson's "Beauty is Nature's fact" to Emerson's line in "The Rhodora" (published almost thirty years before Dickinson's lines were written): "Then beauty is its own excuse for being." We will return to Emerson's "The Rhodora" in the final chapter, but for now we should note that among the many exchanges that seem to have gone on between these lines, Dickinson's ongoing response to Emerson was one of them.

23. L 324; Boston Public Library manuscripts 21 and 22.

24. Habegger, in *My Wars Are Laid Away in Books*, calculates the dog's age, and speculates that the dog may have been named for St. John Rivers's dog in *Jane Eyre* (226), a speculation that would mediate even Dickinson's relationship with her dog through literature.

25. Dickinson's letter to Higginson in June 1864 is a striking condensation of life, death, and literature: "Are you in danger—I did not know that you were hurt. Will you tell me more? Mr. Hawthorne died" (L 290). For a partial account of Higginson's experiences as the white leader of a group of black soldiers during the war, see his autobiographical account in *Army Life in a Black Regiment*.

26. It was actually Helen Hunt Jackson who was responsible for the publication of the lines that begin "Success is counted sweetest" in what she called a "volume of 'no name' poetry" in 1878 (*A Masque of Poets*, Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1878). A copy of the book was sent to Dickinson either by Jackson or by Roberts Brothers as a matter of course, but Dickinson seems to have considered the book a gift from the publisher himself, so she sent a thank-you note to him, thus initiating a private correspondence. The exchange between Dickinson, Jackson, and Niles is included by Johnson as L 573a, 573b, 573c, and 573d.

27. It should be said that the intimacy of textual gift exchange does not mean that those gifts do not participate in their own economy, and it would be interesting to speculate along these lines in relation to Marcel Mauss's classic text on cultural economy, *The Gift*. In the context of the exchange with Niles, Dickinson seems to have transgressed his sense of the decorum that separated gift and business exchange when she sent him her own copy of the Brontë sisters' poems (L 813, 813a, 813b).

28. On the relation between singular objects and commodity forms, see Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things." For an extended discussion of the relation between "thing theory" in anthropology, art history, political science, and

American literary studies (a discussion I wish I could expand here in more detail), see Bill Brown, "Thing Theory" and *The Sense of Things*.

29. Austin Warren, "Emily Dickinson," in Lubbers, ed., *The Recognition of Emily Dickinson*, 268–86. Warren's response to the 1955 Johnson scholarly edition was nostalgia: "This is not the edition in which to enjoy Emily," he wistfully remarked. "I recall the pleasure of reading her in the slender gray volumes of the 1890s. For pleasure, as for edification, Emily should not be read in big tomes, or much of her at a time" (269).

30. Todd's comment is cited by her daughter in *Ancestors' Brocades*, 17, in a story Bingham compiles from a number of sources, including the draft of Todd's essay, "Emily Dickinson's Literary Début," which appeared in *Harper's Magazine* for March 1930, as well as Todd's diaries and their personal conversations. Thus both Todd's account itself—and Bingham's account of it—are intended for both a private and public audience.

31. In a juicy account of the affair between Dickinson's brother and her editor, Polly Longsworth published letters back and forth between them, from this period and others. Toward the end of September 1883, Todd wrote to Austin asking him to "destroy this," and commenting, "how the crickets are chirping today" (*Austin and Mabel*, 169).

32. Cited in Longsworth, *Austin and Mabel*, 168.

33. Porter, *Dickinson: The Modern Idiom*, 9.

34. Yvor Winters, "Emily Dickinson and the Limits of Judgment," in *In Defense of Reason*, 283–99.

35. Notice that the 1891 editorial substitution of "Calls forth" for "arise" in these lines attributes the "canticle" to the season, whereas in the manuscripts its source is left in suspense.

36. John Crowe Ransom, *The New Criticism*.

37. This is why, as Jonathan Arac points out, "for New Criticism 'lyric' was not an object of theoretical concern. Allen Tate locates 'structure' not in 'genre' but in 'language.' *The Well Wrought Urn* is about 'poetry,' not about lyric, and this 'critical monism' was attacked in *Critics and Criticism* (1952) by R. S. Crane, a Chicago neo-Aristotelian for whom genre was deeply important" ("Afterword: Lyric Poetry and the Bounds of New Criticism," 352).

38. See Jeffreys, "Ideologies of the Lyric," 203. Jeffreys and I agree that "from a welter of other poetic genres, lyric gradually emerged as the most common catchall category, and only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was it mythologized as the purest and oldest of poetic genres and thus transformed into a nostalgic ideological marker" (197). As Jeffreys also points out, the view of the New Criticism as associated with a certain version of the lyric is hardly new: see Murray Krieger, *The New Apologists for Poetry*, and Gerald Graff, *Poetic Statement and Critical Dogma*.

39. For historicist accounts of the New Criticism (if not of the New Critical idea of the lyric), see John Fekete, "The New Criticism: Ideological Evolution of the Right Opposition," Frank Lentricchia, *After the New Criticism*, and John Guillory, *Cultural Capital*. Guillory's assessment of New Critical culture resonates with Win-

ters's reading of "My Cricket": "the effect of New Critical pedagogy," Guillory writes, was "to produce a kind of recusant literary culture, at once faithful to the quasi-authority of literature but paying tribute at the same time to the secular authority of a derogated mass culture" (*Cultural Capital*, 175).

40. Blackmur, "A Note on Yvor Winters," in *The Expense of Greatness*, 167.

41. For a recent example of the return to Winters as example of the moral authority literary criticism *should*, by some account, wield, see David Yezzi, "The Seriousness of Yvor Winters."

42. Allen Tate, "New England Culture and Emily Dickinson" (1932), included in *The Recognition of Emily Dickinson*, 154. In *Becoming Canonical in American Poetry*, Timothy Morris argues that Tate "constructed a unitary central self for Dickinson" in his reading (76), though that seems a property of the genre that Tate attributed to Dickinson , and in any case it is not true that Tate is acting, as Morris claims, simply as a representative of New Critical "canonization" or as "a virtual Eliot" in his reading of Dickinson.

43. R. P. Blackmur, "Emily Dickinson: Notes on Prejudice and Fact," in *The Expense of Greatness*, 118.

44. On the creation of academic culture out of the reading of individual texts, see Gerald Graff and Michael Warner, *Professing Literature*, and Michael Warner, "Professionalization and the Rewards of Literature."

45. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Poetry*, 18.

46. Theodor Adorno, "Lyric Poetry and Society," 38.

47. Actually, as Bruce Mayo points out in his useful introduction to the *Telos* publication of Adorno's essay, "Lyric Poetry and Society" was "originally broadcast as an adult education lecture over RIAS in Berlin" (51). The essay was then revised several times, though it remains tantalizingly brief.

48. This is not to say that Adorno has had *no* effect on American lyric reading; critics have turned to "Lyric Poetry and Society" at various moments; yet it has had little influence in the *way* that poetry is read in the United States. As representative exceptions, see Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 281–99; Annabel Patterson, "Lyric and Society in Jonson's *Under-wood*," 162–63; Margaret Homans, "'Syllables of Velvet,'" 570; Forest Pyle, *The Ideology of Imagination*, 120–25; and especially John Brenkman, *Culture and Domination*, 108–21. As the length and eclecticism of my partial list suggests, we are still trying to take what we can from Adorno's brief remarks on the lyric. In order to extend those remarks, we would need to look beyond "Lyric Poetry" and into Adorno's work as a whole, and especially to his theory of music. Robert Kaufman's work on Adorno promises to be the best guide so far to Adorno as guide to romantic and modern lyric reading: See Kaufman's "Adorno's Social Lyric, and Literary Criticism Today: Poetics, Aesthetics, Modernity." For a modern poetic meditation on Adorno's poetics, see Drew Milne, "In Memory of the Pterodactyl: the limits of lyric humanism," and for a transformative sense of Adorno's scope, see Stathis Gourgouris, *Does Literature Think?*

49. As in the case of Adorno, Benjamin has become for many critics a figure of what criticism *should* or *would* do in relation to the lyric if we could only figure out

how to do it, a figure of utopian critical possibility rather than a model for practice. See Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, and especially Jonathan Arac, "Walter Benjamin and Materialist Historiography," in *Critical Genealogies*, 177–214. Arac's suggestive comparison of Dickinson and Baudelaire under the auspices of Benjamin is especially relevant to the present study, though in light of my argument here, Dickinson and Baudelaire begin to seem comparable not, as Arac would suggest, because they do or do not share some essentially modern experience, but because they have both become such paradigmatic instances of the lyric.

50. De Man's place in the Yale School is much discussed, but his relation to Brower, who was also an influence on other exemplary lyric readers such as Vendler, Poirier, Hertz, and Orgel, and who coined the phrase "close reading" in *The Fields of Light* has been less discussed. My thanks to John Guillory, whose point it is that Brower coined "close reading," for pointing me toward Brower.

51. Paul de Man, "Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric," in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 261. This is the sort of statement that prompts Barbara Johnson to remark that "Anthropomorphism and Trope" is "one of the most difficult, even outrageous" of de Man's essays. See her reading of the essay in "Anthropomorphism in Lyric and Law," 206. It is also the sort of statement that makes it clear that Jonathan Arac was right to make explicit "the beginnings of de Man's work in countercommentary, more an intervention within criticism than a direct response to works of literature" (*Critical Geneologies*, 239).

52. Paul Hernadi, *Beyond Genre*, 79.

53. René Wellek, *Discriminations*, 252.

54. Paul de Man, "Hypogram and Inscription," 35n.

55. Jonathan Culler, "Reading Lyric," 105. For a genealogy of what de Man means by "lyric reading," and of one sort of lyric reading leading directly to de Man, see also Culler's "Changes in the Study of the Lyric."

56. Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal*, translated by Richard Howard, 193; 15.

57. Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal*, 254; 77.

58. For an extended answer to this question (though not with reference to "Anthropomorphism and Trope"), see Rei Terada, *Feeling in Theory*. I hope that it will be obvious in these pages how much I owe to Terada's eloquent insight that "poststructuralist thought about emotion is hidden in plain sight" (3).

59. Paul de Man, "Tropes (Rilke)," in *Allegories of Reading*, 37.

60. See especially de Man's reading of Mallarmé's "Tombeau de Verlaine" in "Lyric and Modernity" in *Blindness and Insight*, 166–86; the elaborate allusion to Porphyry's esoteric interpretation of the Homeric ode "The Cave of the Nymphs" in de Man's reading of Yeats in "Landscape in Wordsworth and Yeats" in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism;* and, most suggestively, his reading of the figure of the pyramid in Baudelaire's "Spleen II" as "un immense caveau" in "Lyrical Voice in Contemporary Theory."

61. I hope that the trope of authority that I attribute here to de Man will not be confused with Frank Lentricchia's argument in his essay "Paul de Man: The Rhetoric of Authority" (in *After the New Criticism*). There Lentricchia claims that de Man "has always given the impression of having a grip on the truth" (284) and then

indicts that "impression" as "the realm of the thoroughly predictable linguistic transcendental" (317). I would argue instead that the impression of authority in de Man's discourse derives from a much more complex identification with the "transcendental" literary moment that holds the critic, despite himself, in its unpredictable and contingent grip.

62. Paul de Man, "Form and Intent in the American New Criticism," in *Blindness and Insight*, 31.

63. Sigmund Freud, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, 37–38.

64. For a similar recognition of this "typical" critical gesture see, for example, Neil Hertz's tribute to Derrida's "remarkable ability to both fish *and* cut bait" in *The End of the Line*, 208.

65. My sense of de Man's prose as "in mourning" for its subject is indebted to conversations with Eric Santner; see Santner's suggestive discussion of de Man's "uncompromising elegiac rigor" in *Stranded Objects*, 13–19.

66. For a reading of de Man as a figure for "theory," see Guillory, "Literature After Theory: The Lesson of Paul de Man," in *Cultural Capital*, 176–265. I intentionally leave aside here the scandal of the "discovery" of de Man's career in Europe around World War II, but obviously the surcharge of de Man's personification of "theory" derives from that scandal.

67. Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels, "Against Theory," originally published in *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 4 (Summer 1982), and reprinted in *Against Theory: Literary Studies and the New Pragmatism*, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell, 11–30. The Mitchell volume includes the essay itself alongside most of the relevant immediate critical responses to it, as well as Knapp and Michaels's "A Reply to Our Critics" (*Critical Inquiry* 9, no. 4 [Summer 1983]); hereafter citations from the essays included in this volume will be designated AT.

68. See, for example, E. D. Hirsch Jr., *Validity in Interpretation*, 227–30 and 238–40; P. D. Juhl's revision or refinement of Hirsch's use of this example in *Interpretation*, 71–72; J. Hillis Miller, "On the Edge: The Crossways of Contemporary Criticism"; and M. H. Abrams, "Construing and Deconstructing," both in Morris Eaves and Michael Fisher, eds., *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism*. It is Abrams who recalls that Hirsch's previous use of the poem was already an attempt to adjudicate the conflicting claims of still earlier readers: Cleanth Brooks and F. W. Bateson (145n27).

69. Actually, as William C. Dowling suggests, what Knapp and Michaels had was a paradigm of New Critical interpretations based on the distinction between author and speaker. "What Knapp and Michaels make clear," Dowling writes, "is that the formalist argument succeeded in its season by exploiting to the fullest an intentionality that is already and inevitably entailed by the very notion of meaning" (AT 94). Or by lyric meaning?

70. Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, 63. Adorno's theory of the lyric as "a sphere of expression whose very essence lies in defying the power of social organization" would seem to grow directly out of Lukács's Hegelian rendering of the lyric (as opposed to the novelistic) subject. Likewise, Heidegger's widely influential idealization of poetry as "the saying of the unconcealedness of what is" seeks

to isolate the lyric subject from "the world's outer space," orienting it at the extreme verge of "the world's inner space" (*Poetry, Language, Thought*, 74). For an explicitly Heideggerian reading of Dickinson's poetry, see Sharon Cameron, "The Interior Revision" (CC 190–94).

71. *The Shape of the Signifier*, 9. Michaels's reference here is explicitly to the essays in the posthumously published *Aesthetic Ideology*, essays in which de Man explored the contradictions of textual materialism to which he gestured at the end of "Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric." The implications of Michaels's argument as well as his deep reading of de Man (among much else) reach far beyond what I can discuss in these pages, though it is worth noting that his eloquent conclusion that "history, as of this writing, is still over" (182) is not unrelated to de Man's utopian and elegiac sense that history is by definition what cannot be represented in theory.

72. Susan Stewart, *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses*, 2. Stewart's ambitious project is also an attempt to bridge what has become an intellectual and institutional divide between poets and critics, or to re-establish the American tradition of the poet-critic (a tradition to which Susan Howe also belongs). Because there is some perception that this divide, which dates from the twentieth-century shift between figures like Higginson (a poet-critic who did not teach at a university) to figures like Tate and Winters (poet-critics who did), was more recently a schism caused by literary theory, Stewart explicitly opposes her project to de Man's. In a long footnote, Stewart counters de Man's argument that "the linguistic basis of . . . anthropomorphization is always a kind of defacement, inadequate to its object," by writing that she "would argue that this approach constantly reinscribes the very allegory it seeks to discover" (341–42, n. 107).

Chapter Three: Dickinson's Figure of Address

1. Anne Carson, *If Not, Winter*, fragment 96, 191; note 96.3, 371; (Dickinson L 56).

2. Yopie Prins, *Victorian Sappho*, 3.

3. The notion that passages of Dickinson's letters that fall into hymnal meter should be excised as individual lyrics is an old one, but its most recent and extreme practitioner is William Shurr in his *New Poems of Emily Dickinson*.

4. Anne Carson, *If Not, Winter*, ix.

5. Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry*, 111. Surprisingly, there has been no real study of Dickinson's relationship to the Victorians, or to the issues raised in Victorian poetry, and especially Victorian lyric. For Susan Dickinson's notes to *The Princess*, see Alfred Habegger, *My Wars Are Laid Away in Books*, 266.

6. Alfred Lord Tennyson, *The Princess: A Medley* (1847; 1850); this song is the introduction to Part III.

7. "Roll on, silver Moon," arranged by Joseph W. Turner; Oliver Ditson & Co., Boston (1847). This was the most popular arrangement and publication of the song. The Dickinsons had a large collection of sheet music which was (unlike their library, which now has a separate room to itself at the Houghton Library at Harvard) as far as I know not preserved, since it was considered ephemera rather than